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The correlation between college students' familiarity with potentially offensive popular music and self-reported tolerance of obscene language and sexual behavior

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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN COLLEGE STUDENTS' FAMILIARITY
WITH POTENTIALLY OFFENSIVE POPULAR MUSIC
AND SELF-REPORTED TOLERANCE OF OBSCENE
LANGUAGE AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Music

in

The School of Music

by

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B.M.E., Louisiana State University, 1996
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the correlation between popular music preference and sexual behavior tolerance and potentially obscene language usage. Subjects (target $N = 80$) will be racially mixed college freshmen that have graduated from high school within the past year and are over the age of 18. The subjects will be drawn from 7 music Appreciation classes and 6 Introduction to Music Study classes. The top 20 songs from the October 27, 2001 Billboard Top 100 charts will be analyzed for occurrences of potentially obscene words and whole lines of lyrics containing potential references to sex. Inter-observer agreement will then be calculated. To measure musical preference potential subjects will respond on a 6-point Likert scale that will indicate their familiarity with the 20 analyzed song titles. The example will be listed in a random order. Then the subjects will express their tolerance for certain behaviors by responding to 10 questions involving potentially obscene language usage and 10 questions involving hypothetical sexual situations derived from the song lyrics. Requested demographic information will include age, gender, year in college, and high school graduation date. Results from the survey will be analyzed for a correlation between music preference for selected songs and subject survey question responses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Popular culture envelops us all, young and old. Overwhelmingly we are influenced by our surroundings. A primary difference between individuals seems to exist in our acceptance of cultural behaviors and how we allow it to affect our psychological conditions and ultimately our lives. Our identities are products of our environment and the information that environment provides. In particular, the process of adolescent development thrusts young people into a variable quagmire of information.

Unfortunately, psychologists suggest that this is also the time when humans seem to be most susceptible to outside pressures. Defined as the period of growth between puberty (biological change) and adulthood (social and economical independence), adolescence is the time when humans begin to develop identity (Rice, 1975; Germaine and Bloom, 1999; Jackson and Davis, 2000). Almost solely a cultural phenomenon, adolescence is, in effect, a postponement of adulthood. It is believed that, although commonly associated with the teenage years, this transition has no definite end or beginning and is different for each individual (Rice, 1975; Germaine and Bloom, 1999).

With the onslaught of puberty, the fascination with romance, and an almost biological need for independence, adolescence is a time when young people are extremely susceptible to outside influence. Germaine and Bloom (1999) adopt the “it-takes-a-village-to-raise-a-child” stance, stating that society as a whole must fulfill certain tasks and responsibilities in response to key transitions in the lives of its young.

However, with increasingly intense sexual stimuli in the world surrounding them, teenagers in the United States grow up in a society that teaches them these behaviors are

the norm (Germaine and Bloom, 1999). If left alone, the adolescent is likely to become a virtual Pinocchio and jump on the first bandwagon that comes along.

Popular Music

Although throughout the years popular music has fallen under scrutiny for the behavior it sometimes advocates, no one can reasonably deny its importance to culture. Today's mass media has created generations of young people who are driven by instant information. Through the media, young people have been exposed to the world around them in ways never before encountered (Rice, 1975). As a result, today's adolescents are much more sophisticated than in previous generations and are quick to question what they are told but readily accept what they see. By many regards, they are much more sophisticated in their thinking. They are better equipped to make important decisions that affect themselves and others, yet their inexperience renders them vulnerable to outside influences (Jackson and Davis, 2000). They are filled with information from the Internet, exposed to visual images of sex and violence daily on television, and wiser in their worldviews than ever before (Rice, 1975).

Popular music often is used to characterize and categorize whole generations (Frith, 1978). It defines age groups to future generations by its political obligations, morals, humanity, and even taste through messages contained within the lyrics. In the 1960s, social and political upheaval fueled the music industry. Music of the 1970s reflected the emergence of the discotheque and the increasing popularity of social drugs and casual sex. The 1980s brought upon the increasing glamour of the body with a heightened emphasis on fashion and a dependence on the television for information (not to mention the music video) (Nuzem, 2001). Philosopher Simon Frith has reported that

we do not define popular culture; rather popular culture defines us (Frith, 1978). The notion that culture defines the individual, however, is not universally accepted. Patrick Heimers, Public Relations Director for the Recording Industry of America offers a different view stating that Rock lyrics mirror society's behavior more rather than mold them (Powell, 1985).

Censorship

To say that popular music has been the brunt of controversy is a gross understatement. Since its conception in the 1950s, popular music has embodied parents' worst fears and nightmares for their children. It seems that older generations readily accept their own music as harmless entertainment but typically deems their children's music as suspect (Rosenbaum and Prinsky, 1991). In a 1956 *New York Times* article, Psychiatrist Francis J. Braceland called Rock and Roll "a communicable disease" and "a cannibalistic and tribalistic" form of music (Trzcinski, 1992). Popular music has so outraged the adult world that it seems a part of the appeal of popular music to young people is its forbidden mystique. Adults often find it difficult to regulate what their children are listening to unless they immerse themselves in youth culture – an activity few adults wish to do. To protect the youth of America from the alleged corruption of popular music, several measures have been taken. Among them, the most prominent is music censorship prompting the restriction of many potentially objectionable songs by radio stations and record stores, the condemnation of some popular music as immoral, and spawning the passing of legislature to protect young people (Nuzem, 2001).

Adult rejection of popular music, however, is not a new phenomenon and music censorship is not a recent development. Although commonly associated by recent generations with popular music today, censorship is an age-old practice. In 16th century

England, before they moved to the New World, our American forefathers expressed disdain over the bawdy lyrics sung in public (Powell, 1985). Following the Civil War, Southerners were forbidden from singing pro-Confederate songs. In the 20th century, censorship became a common trend in American popular music. Duke Ellington's song "The Mooche," for example, was banned for fear that it would inspire rape (1928). Other instances, such as the 1940s list of 147 songs by such artists as Billie Holiday and Cole Porter that were banned by NBC radio, exhibit the growing use of restrictions due to perceived obscene content in the mass media (Nuzem, 2001).

In the 1950s, popular music censorship centered primarily on the emerging Rock and Roll industry. Although, the actual origin of Rock and Roll is somewhat hazy, it was in 1952 that Alan Freed, a Cleveland, Ohio disc jockey, in an attempt to avoid racial stigmas associated with Rhythm and Blues, first used the words "Rock and Roll" (Martin & Segrave, 1988). Still the earliest examples of "pure" Rock are fuzzy at best. The list of Rock and Roll's first song is as varied and countless as it is controversial and disputable. It includes such hits as Ike and Tina Turners' "Rocket 88" (1951), the Chords' song "Sh-boom" (1954), "Gee" by the Crows (1954), and most notably Bill Haley and the Comet's "Rock Around the Clock" (Martin & Segrave, 1988; Trzinski, 1992). Regardless of the specifics of Rock and Roll history, however, its dramatic rise in popularity was instantly met with dissention. A significant agent in the opposition to the beginnings of Rock and Roll centers on its roots in Rhythm and Blues, known at the time as "black" music. Until the early 1950s, rhythm and blues was generally segregated from the white community. These songs were played only on black radio stations and recordings were sold only in black record stores (Martin & Segrave, 1988). With the rise

of popularity of television, radio station listenership began to fall. Subsequently, radio became more genre-specific and stations that specialized in Country and Western music, Rhythm and Blues, and the like surfaced (Martin & Segrave, 1988). So as the number of Rhythm and Blues stations increased, a broader and more diversified audience began listening. Once “Black Music” encountered the ears of America, teenagers became especially entranced with the music because of its unencumbered dealings with, among other taboos, sex (Martin & Segrave, 1988). Even the name “Rock and Roll” evokes sexual imagery (Brown & Hendee, 1989). In the meantime, mainstream adult music made no attempt to appeal to black and teen audiences. It continued in the tradition of the previous decades, spoke of no taboos, and catered to the adult white Anglo-Saxon Protestant population of listener (Martin & Segrave, 1988).

During the 1940s, the major record companies encountered difficulty due to World War II and halted much of their production. In response to the continued demand for recorded music, an estimated four hundred independent record companies emerged to support the Rhythm and Blues and emerging Rock markets. As a result, the early 1950s found the industry alive and growing. Eventually, the major labels reentered the market rejecting Rock and Roll and continuing with the traditional music that they previously produced. In fact, the major labels joined in the opposition to Rock and Roll citing that the aesthetic value of Rock was poor and themes in the lyrics were against American traditional values (Martin & Segrave, 1988).

Rock and Roll’s first national exposure came from the movie *The Blackboard Jungle*. Although the delinquent nature of the film itself sparked controversy, the use of Bill Haley and the Comets’ “Rock Around the Clock” in the opening credits really

excited young people (Trzcinski, 1992). The lyrics of the song referred to a dance party that lasted “around the clock.” According to Billboard, it was the very first Rock and Roll album to reach number one in the United States (Trzcinski, 1992). Although the nature of the song’s lyrics may seem innocent by today’s standards, the song drew reports of riots at movie showings and Haley and the Comets performances (Trzcinski, 1992). Soon however, “Rock Around the Clock” was overshadowed by the likes of Little Richard Penniman and Chuck Berry who spoke to teenagers about thinly veiled sexuality and Jerry Lee Lewis who shocked the world not just with songs like “Great Balls of Fire,” but also by marrying his thirteen-year-old cousin. And of course, there was Elvis Presley who burst onto the scene in 1956 burying the competition with his unabashed blatant use of sexuality in his music and in his suggestive dancing (Trzcinski, 1992).

Although moral corruption clouded public opinions of Rock and Roll, it seemed the primary opposition to Rock music existed in its ability to separate generations (Martin & Segrave, 1988). Rock became the music of the young. It threatened the established norms of society, questioned authority, and adults feared it was a rallying cry for young people to rebel. The adult world saw Rock music as its moral replacement as young people employed music to establish their own standards of behavior (Martin & Segrave, 1988). Soon an almost religious crusade to save the nation’s youth from the corruption of Rock and popular music began. Censorship became commonplace. No where was this more apparent than in the mass media. On two separate occasions the producers of *The Ed Sullivan Show* requested that visiting artists alter their lyrics for the show. In 1967, the Rolling Stones were asked to change the lyrics “Let’s spend the night together” to “Let’s spend some time together” (Nuzem, 2001; Brown & Hendee, 1989). Two years

later, the producers demanded that Jim Morrison of the Doors change the *Light My Fire* lyrics “Girl we couldn’t get much higher” to a less controversial phrase. However, in one of Morrison’s most infamous moves (and in the history of Rock and Roll), he denied the request and sang the original lyrics with special emphasis to the camera (Nuzem, 2001).

Television was not however the only media to censor Rock music. For instance, the classic Rolling Stones song “(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction” was banned in radio stations across the country in 1965 because the lyrics were thought to be too suggestive (Nuzem, 2001). In response to such instances, Ted Randal, a radio programmer, introduced the first rating system for music in 1970 and began releasing a weekly list of songs rated on their treatment of drugs, sex, and language – an idea that has been replicated countless times since (Nuzem, 2001). Yet throughout the succeeding decades, popular music continued to push the “moral gambit.” In 1987, for example, the George Michael song “I Want Your Sex” was banned from many radio stations for fear that it promoted promiscuity among young people at a time when the world was just beginning to fully understand the severity of the AIDS crisis (Nuzem, 2001). In order for some songs to receive airplay, radio stations began the practice of “bleeping” out possible controversial statements. In 1971, a John Lennon song “Working Class Hero” was altered for the radio without the artist’s consent to remove an expletive. Today this is a common practice often initiated by the record companies and artists in order to insure play time on the radio and to increase record sales (Nuzem, 2001).

Eventually retail businesses also jumped on the bandwagon. At the prompting of the Reverend Jimmy Swaggart, for example, Wal-Mart discontinued sale of all major rock magazines in 1985. Titles that were banned include *Rolling Stone*, *Hard Rock*, and

Tiger Beat (Nuzem, 2001). Similarly, both JC Penny's and Sears pulled controversial material off of their shelves. Further, in 1987, many mall retailers refused to carry recordings with the word "fuck" in the title for fear of eviction. In 1991, Wal-Mart refused to stock items bearing the Parents Music Resource Center's parental advisory stickers and instead opted to carry edited versions of albums that did not conflict with customers' "family values." Subsequently, record companies began altering recordings in order to maintain a grasp on Wal-Mart's considerable clientele (Nuzem, 2001).

Religious and political leaders also championed the movement against popular music. Monsignor John B. Carroll, head of the Catholic Youth Organization, said in 1957 "there is no doubt that the by-product of Rock and Roll has left its scar on youth" (Trzcinski, 1992). In 1977, Jesse Jackson condemned disco music for its "suggestive lyrics," calling it "sex rock," and claiming that it promoted promiscuous behavior (Nuzem, 2001). Also, churches during the late 1970s and early 1980s were often known to have after-church-service record burning ceremonies of such artists as the Carpenters, John Denver, and Perry Como, who by today's standards are practically harmless (Nuzem, 2001). Eventually other local organizations began to express concern. In 1984, members of the Cincinnati, Ohio Parent Teacher's Association (PTA) expressed concern over a Prince album that their children purchased. The parents were angered because they were not aware of the subversive content of the album. At the next national PTA conference, the Cincinnati group called for a music ratings system similar to the existing movie rating system (Nuzem, 2001).

Incidentally, it should be noted that Prince was the source of much controversy during the 1980s. Prince, although a critically acclaimed talent, combined sophisticated

music performance with blatant sexual innuendo. His lyrics included references to incest, fetishism, and group sex (Nuzem, 2001). His soundtrack to the movie *Purple Rain* sparked Tipper Gore's condemnation of his music as "vile smut" and, with Susan Baker and twenty other wives of prominent Washington politicians and businessmen, to organize the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) in 1985. The PMRC's primary goal was to lobby the music industry to get lyrics printed on album covers, remove graphic covers from the music counters within eyesight, develop an effective music ratings system for recordings and concerts, regulate the behaviors of popular musicians, and to create a citizens' watch to pressure broadcast companies not to air questionable content (Nuzem, 2001).

It is important to realize that the PMRC was not created to censor popular music but rather to inform parents of the contents of popular music recordings so that they are more able to police what their children listen to (Nuzem, 2001). Even so, the PMRC has become a major force in the criticism of popular music in America. In September 1985, the PMRC prompted a hearing on the explicitness of music lyrics with the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Among those present at the hearing, representatives from the PMRC and the National PTA to advocate music regulation and Frank Zappa, Dee Snider (of the Rock/Heavy Metal band Twisted Sister), and John Denver to speak on the behalf of performers (Nuzem, 2001; Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987). The hearings prompted a blitz of media response. Eventually after much public scrutiny, the Recording Industry of America released the black and white stickers that read "Parental Advisory: Explicit Lyrics" in late 1989 and early 1990 to be attached to the lower right-hand corner of all controversial recordings (Nuzem, 2001;

Ballard & Coates, 1995). Controversy exists however about the effectiveness of these labels. They were founded on the tainted-fruit theory which states that young people are made uncomfortable by sexual imagery so if they understand what these stickers mean, then young people will not desire the recordings (Christenson, 1992). A 1992 study by Peter Christenson showed that of the middle school children he surveyed, seventy-nine percent of them had at least a vague notion of what the parental advisory sticker meant (Christenson, 1992). On the other hand, the forbidden-fruit theory states that adolescents desire labeled recordings more because they are perceived as taboo (Christenson, 1992). In fact, statistical studies conducted in 1990 by the PMRC showed that 22 percent of parents surveyed believed that controversial music should be labeled while 24 percent believed that labeling was wrong (Nuzem, 2001). Interestingly enough, the Christenson study also showed that 62 percent of the same middle school children said that advisory labels would make no difference in music preference, while 22 percent said that it would make them want it more (Christenson, 1992). Additional studies further indicate that song lyrics often require sophistication beyond the reach of young people such that adult interpretations of lyrics differ from adolescent interpretations (Brown & Hendee, 1989; Ballard & Coates, 1995).

Parental Advisory labeling did not, however, hinder popular music artists' creative ambitions. Some opponents suggest that some artists and recording companies exploited the labels as marketing ploys by catering to the young person's draw to the taboo surrounding them (Ballard & Coates, 1995). In a 1998 United States Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee meeting, *Entertainment Monitor* editor-in-chief Charlie Gilreath commented that children looking for hardcore rap are not

going to buy a recording without a sticker on it (Sticks & Stones, 1998). The ever-increasing amount of disposable income that young people possess became a focus for the mass media market and despite attempts at censorship on the children's behalf, it seemed that popular music has continually gotten more risqué. In 1990, 2 Live Crew's album *As Nasty as They Wanna Be* became the brunt of much controversy due to the amount of explicit lyrics in the album (it reportedly contained eighty-seven references to oral sex alone) (Nuzem, 2001). The recording, as well as 2 Live Crew concerts, was prohibited to minors and record stores across the nation refused to carry or promote the group. In fact, in a 1990 court hearing, a Florida judge found that 2 Live Crew's recordings were, under the Florida "sale of harmful material" statute, legally obscene (Nuzem, 2001). In the coming years, countless similar incidents spawned the passing of numerous state and local legislation banning concerts by particular artists and/or restrictions on the sale of their recordings.

The question of performers' rights underneath the first amendment of the United States Constitution has been the backbone of anti-censorship champions. This amendment reads that Congress shall make no laws abridging the freedom of speech. The specifics concerning what is protected under this amendment have been the center of much controversy. How can the courts determine what is suitable for public consumption? In October of 1985, President Ronald Reagan commented to a meeting of Republicans

"I don't believe that our Founding Fathers ever intended to create a nation where the rights of pornographers would take precedence over the rights of parents, and the violent and malevolent would be given free reign to prey upon our children" (Powell, 1985).

Although this sentiment seems to be rather one-sided, it characterizes much of the opposition to popular music. In *Miller v. California*, the United States Supreme Court established criteria for obscenity that do not violate the first amendment. These criteria include:

1. Does the average person find the work appealing to the prurient interests?
2. Does the work describe or depict sexual behavior an offensive way?
3. Does the work, as a whole, lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value? (Van Camp, 1997)

In his State of the Union speech in January 2000, President Bill Clinton called for a universal entertainment industry ratings system (Nuzem, 2001). Although Clinton's request was initiated mostly by suspected connections between popular music and severe teenage violence, it still marked a victory for advocates of "moral music." It seems that every generation is destined to condemn the music of its succeeding generations (Rosenbaum & Prinsky, 1991). Although music censorship, in theory, seems like a bad idea, it might be a necessary evil in this world. Could it be that if popular musicians took a more vested moral interest in their music that much of the controversy could subside or does it all boil down to the ideas that "sex sells" and the easiest way to become famous is to become infamous?

Adolescence

The adolescent developmental process is fraught with a myriad of influences. As they grow both physically and mentally, young people encounter societal forces that structure their decision-making skills. Among the many theories of adolescent development, sociologist Allison Davis suggests that maturation is related to the process of adopting the ways, ideas, beliefs, values, and norms of culture and assimilating them into a personality. This occurs through positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior and

repeated punishment for unacceptable behavior (Rice, 1975). Thus according to this theory, adolescents learn to make decisions based upon what environmental influences dictate is good and bad. In a perfect world, parental figures who ideally have their children's best interests in mind, provide this guidance; however, financial needs of the modern family often pull both Mom and Dad out of the home and into the workplace which leaves young people to fend for their own moral development. Since young people are reported to be easily influenced by the culture around them, the maturation process is, consequently, often structured by the adolescent's peer group, his/her school and church environment, and the mass media (Larson et al., 1989). If these influences reinforce negative behaviors, in effect teaching that "bad" behavior is "good," then it stands to reason that the adolescent will incorporate such behaviors into his/her personality (Rice, 1975; Germaine & Bloom, 1999).

According to F. Philip Rice, author of *The Adolescent: Development, Relationships, and Culture* (1975), the adolescent subculture is defined as the "sum total of the ways of adolescents." It includes the behaviors recognized and accepted by other adolescents but not necessarily by adult society. This structure is vaguely constructed and varies by any number of social influences including location, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Rice, 1975). In fact, it should be noted that the traditional view of youth culture reflects urban, middle class youth and thus is not the sum total of all adolescent behaviors (Rice, 1975). Emergence of the adolescent subculture commonly occurs in high school where teens are, in effect, segregated from the adult world. They form a separate society with "its own subcultures of norms and values, dress codes, leisure activities, music, and language" (Germaine & Bloom, 1999). A desire to be more

adult, yet less like adult culture remains a primary cause of the emergence of this subculture. In particular, adolescents develop their own language, a dialect indigenous to their age group and their time. Possibly in the quest to become more “grown up,” young people will adopt language generally considered inappropriate to the older generations (Bleich et al., 1991). In the end it becomes more important to receive peer acceptance than adult approval for behavior (Rice, 1975).

This is also the time when people tend to experiment with alcohol, drugs, sex, and other potentially risky behaviors (Jackson & Davis, 2000). It has been reported that fewer teens are sexually active today and that the young people who are having sex are well informed about the dangers of unprotected sex and are using contraception. However, the United States still has the highest birth rate among developed nations and every year three million teenagers become infected with a sexually transmitted disease (Jackson & Davis, 2000).

Adolescence and the Mass Media

As previously suggested, the media historically has had a profound effect on the adolescent world. Exposure to mass media indirectly affects behavior by shaping cultural norms for adolescents (Bleich et al., 1991). In particular, music helps teens define social and sub-cultural boundaries (Christenson, 1992; Rice, 1975). Research suggests that during adolescence, especially the shift from middle school to high school, focus is diverted away from the often parental-controlled, more “family-oriented” values of television to popular music. In a study by Larson, Kubey, and Corelletti, 6% to 10% of fifth and sixth graders surveyed spent their free time watching television while there was a significant increase in music listening time among seventh, eighth, and ninth graders (16% to 28%) (Larson et al., 1989). Popular music accessibility is difficult for parents to

control due not only to an unfamiliarity with the music, but also the inherent private nature of music listening in general (Larson et al., 1989). Since popular music serves as a central feature of the youth culture and, in effect, seems to function as a symbol of youth, then its influence is paramount to adolescent maturation. Indeed, adolescent personal identities are often defined by their musical tastes (Epstein, 1994; Anderson, 1967). Other research suggests that non-rebellious youth are drawn to defiant music as much as rebellious youth. The difference seems to exist in how often the young people listen to the music suggesting that song familiarity may encourage subversive behaviors. It has even been suggested that if the consumption of particular genres of music meets and satisfies critical adolescent needs, then it can be assumed that aspects of personality guide those music choices (Bleich et al., 1991). Rock and Roll helps teenagers identify with their friends. Created primarily by young people and for young people, popular music delineates youth culture from the adult world (Bleich et al., 1991; Epstein; 1994, Marple, 1968).

As early as the 1960s (note that Rock and Roll has only been around since the 1950s), youth began to separate from mainstream culture. Possibly due to the black roots of Rock and Roll or, of course, the explicit nature of its lyrics, Rock music ushered in a new youth identity and has remained a constant generational barrier ever since (Epstein, 1994). However, with the onslaught of popular music came a transformation in the acceptance of particular behaviors at one time considered by all to be prohibited and dangerous.

At a time when the adolescent body is waking up sexually, today's popular music possesses the ability to bombard teens with messages about adult sexuality. As

adolescents have become more sophisticated in their worldly knowledge, however, the number and frequency of risky adolescent behavior has skyrocketed. Research shows that Heavy Metal music, for example, is a marker for risky behavior including drug usage, suicide, and sexual behavior (Kalof, 1999). In addition, researchers also found that exposure to sexually aggressive music videos increased young African-American women's' acceptance of dating violence (Johnson et al., 1995).

However, the question remains how young people perceive popular music lyrics. Research provides extensive information on adult interpretation, but little data on youth (Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987). The little research done on adolescent interpretation of lyrics reports that their interpretations tend to be literal, lack sophistication, and do not take into consideration complex metaphors (Ballard & Coates, 1995; Brown & Hendee, 1989). Further, studies also suggest that adolescents often focus more on the music than the lyrical content (Ballard & Coates, 1995). Subsequently, it seems that a danger here may exist in avoiding an overreaction to Rock lyrics by adults.

Even with these potential dangers, Rock and Roll has survived not despite its association with youth culture, but because of its youthful connections. The concept of "youth" has, in effect, become an ideal to which people of all ages aspire. Rock music, as an identifiable feature of youth, maintains its status because it encompasses the idea of staying young (Epstein, 1994). Research shows that song lyric themes have evolved over the past fifty plus years from more "traditional" values of love and sex to a more recent emphasis on physical love and non-traditional relationships (Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987). It seems that as each successive generation condemns the music of the younger generation, as adult society in general becomes more sexually tolerant, and in order for

Rock and Roll to continue to express rebellion and autonomy, the explicitness must be taken to a higher level (Brown & Hendee, 1989). Subsequently, the question remains: have music lyrics become more risqué in response to heightened youth sophistication and the onslaught of the information age or have the knowledge bases of young people regarding these behaviors grown in response to a loosening of music lyric rhetoric (Epstein, 1994). Here exists a gap in adolescent research, as there is a lack of cause and effect studies regarding popular music. This is possibly due to an inability to establish a clear cause and effect relationship between music preference and behavior. It seems almost inconceivable to monitor every musical sound that a teenager hears and even more impossible to control the other outside forces that factor into his/her decision making thus rendering a truly controlled environment a virtual impossibility (Brown and Hendee, 1989). Music listening is not always a passive event. It often involves many complex, personal, and internal processes and thus is resistant to empirical research (Brown and Hendee, 1989).

PROCEDURE

Subjects for this project were drawn from one section of a college undergraduate Music Appreciation course ($n = 70$) for non-music majors and one section of a college undergraduate Introduction to Music Study course ($n = 58$) for music majors from Louisiana State University. The questionnaire was administered to all of the students present in class on the survey days ($n = 128$ total subjects surveyed). Data were collected, however, only from subjects whose high school graduation date fell within one year of the survey date and who reported to be 18 years of age or older. Six students returned incomplete survey forms and were removed from the study. This resulted in data collected from 81 students (46 subjects from the Music Appreciation Class and 35 subjects from the Introduction to Music Study class).

This study was designed to look at possible relationships between familiarity with popular music/lyrics and teenagers' use of offensive language and tolerance for sexual behaviors. In order to examine these relationships, a survey was developed by the author. The first step in the survey creation was to identify popular songs with potential offensive lyrics and sexual references by analyzing song lyrics from the top 20 songs on the October 27, 2001 Top 100 Billboard Magazine charts for generally considered obscene language and sexual references. One song, Whitney Houston's "Star Spangled Banner," was eliminated because of its suspected inclusion in the charts as a result of the recent resurgence of patriotism due to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks indicating that that the song was not an actual representation of current popular music. As a result, the song the song ranked 21st was included for a total of 20 songs.

The songs' lyrics were then obtained from various lyric search engines and individual artists' web sites. The sexual reference analysis consisted of the number of whole lines of lyric text that mentioned or alluded to sexual behavior. A line of text was determined by the format of the scripted lyrics as printed on the web sites used by the author. Percentages were calculated based on the number of lines with sexual references per total number of lines in the song. Inter-observer agreement was calculated, $r = 0.97$, for the lyric analysis (See Table 1).

From this information, a survey was constructed containing three sections: a behavioral questionnaire, a song familiarity questionnaire, and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). The first part of the behavioral questionnaire addressed subjects' self-reported use of generally considered obscene language. Eight words used most frequently in the 20 songs were used. Subjects were asked to indicate on a 6-point Likert scale how often they used words from the generally considered obscene language analysis (see Figure 1).

The second part of the questionnaire posed 12 questions asking subjects to respond to sexual situations derived from the song lyrics. In the first 6 questions, participants responded to sexual situations in a multiple-choice format that indicated their reactions to certain situations concerning an imaginary friend (see Figure 2).

The remaining six questions in this portion of the survey ask the subjects their opinions of statements involving sexual behavior (see Figure 3).

In order to assess song familiarity, the second portion of the survey contained a list of the 20 song titles from the analyzed songs with performing groups listed in

alphabetical order by song title. The subjects responded to each song title on an 8-point Likert-type scale to indicate familiarity with the listed songs (see Figure 4).

The demographic portion of the questionnaire asked the participants their age, gender, race, and their high school graduation date. The subjects were also asked approximately how much music they listened to in one day. Possible responses were:

- Never
- Less than one hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 3 or more hours

The author administered the approximately 10-minute survey during the spring semester 2002 after approval by the Louisiana State University Internal Review Board (see Appendix B). Participation in the study was contingent upon the person signing a consent form indicating that s/he understood that s/he would be exposed to sexually explicit material and language generally considered obscene and would be asked personal information about his/her sexuality. The subjects were also made aware that if they decided to participate in the study that they could refuse to answer any question and withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix C).

The author administered the approximately 10-minute survey during the spring semester 2002 after approval by the Louisiana State University Internal Review Board (see Appendix B). Participation in the study was contingent upon the person signing a consent form indicating that s/he understood that s/he would be exposed to sexually explicit material and language generally considered obscene and would be asked personal information about his/her sexuality. The subjects were also made aware that if they decided to participate in the study that they could refuse to answer any question and

Table 1**Number of Potentially Offensive words and Percentages of Sexual Reference Lines Per Song**

	Number of potentially Offensive words	Percentage of sexual reference lines per song
“Differences” by Genuwine	0	0%
“Drops of Jupiter (Tell me)” by Train	0	0%
“Everywhere” by Michelle Branch	0	0%
“Fallin” by Alicia Keys	0	0%
“Family Affair” by Mary J. Blige	1	4%
“Fill Me In” by Craig David	0	10%
“Hanging By A Moment” by Lifehouse	0	0%
“Hero” by Enrique Iglesias	0	0%
“Hit ‘Em Up Style (Oops!)” by Blu Cantrell	0	5%
“I’m Real” by Jennifer Lopez/Ja Rule	9	7%
“It’s Been Awhile” by Staind	6	0%
“Izzo (H.O.V.A.)” by Jay-Z	10	0%
“Let Me Blow Your Mind” by Eve/Gwen Stefani	0	0%
“Livin’ It Up” by Ja Rule/Case	37	11%
“Only Time” by Enya	0	0%
“Turn Off the Light” by Nelly Furtado	0	0.60%
“Where’s the Party At” by Jagged Edge/Nelly	0	.10%
“Ugly” by Bubba Sparxxx	0	0%
“U Got It Bad” by Usher	0	0%
“U Remind Me” by Usher	0	0%

Words Chosen as Potentially Offensive from the Selected Songs

1. Ass
2. Bitch
3. Damn
4. Fuck
5. Nigga'
6. Shit
7. Sucks
8. Whore (or "Ho")

Possible responses were:

- I have never heard of this word
- I have heard of this word but I never use it.
- I have said this word a few times in my lifetime.
- I only say this word when I am upset or angry.
- I use this word in casual conversation with my friends.
- This is a part of my normal vocabulary.

Figure 1

Questions 9-14 posed in the Situational Section of the Questionnaire

1. A good friend of yours had a one-night stand with someone they met at a party. How do you react?
2. A good friend of yours is in a purely physical relationship with someone. How do you react?
3. You observe a good friend addressing his/her significant other using a derogatory name. How do you react?
4. A good friend is cheating on his/her significant other. How do you react?
5. A good friend has had an unexpected sexual encounter with a complete stranger. How do you react?
6. A good friend is dating someone that his or her parents disapprove of. How do you react?

Possible responses were:

- I would stop speaking to my friend.
- I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
- It would not bother me.
- I would think that it was great.

Figure 2

Questions 15-20 posed in the Situational Section of the Questionnaire

1. I often wear clothes because it makes me feel "sexy."
2. The first thing I notice in a person is sex appeal.
3. Romance is more enjoyable than physical behavior in a relationship.
4. Looks are important in a significant other.
5. Premarital sex is acceptable if the two people are in love.
6. Premarital sex is okay if you use a condom.

Possible responses were:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree.

Figure 3

Billboard Magazine Top 21 from October 27, 2001

1. * "I'm Real," Jennifer Lopez featuring Ja Rule
2. "Fallin'," Alicia Keys
3. * "Family Affair," Mary J. Blige
4. "Differences," Ginuwine
5. * "Where the Party At," Jagged Edge with Nelly
7. * "It's Been Awhile," Staind
8. * "Hit 'Em Up Style (Oops!)," Blu Cantrell
9. "Hero," Enrique Iglesias
10. "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)," Jay-Z
11. "Turn Off the Light," Nelly Furtado
12. * "Livin' It Up," Ja Rule featuring Case
13. "Only Time," Enya
14. "U Remind Me," Usher
15. * "Let Me Blow Your Mind," Eve featuring Gwen Stefani
16. * "U Got It Bad," Usher
17. "Everywhere," Michelle Branch
18. * "Fill Me In," Craig David
19. "Hanging By A Moment," Lifehouse
20. * "Ugly," Bubba Sparxxx
21. "Drops of Jupiter (Tell Me)," Train

* indicates songs that contained the highest number of potentially offensive words and percentages of sexual references per line content

Possible responses were:

- I've never heard of this song.
- I am familiar with the title.
- I have heard this song but I don't like it.
- I have heard this song and I like it.
- This is one of my favorite songs.
- I know all of the words to this song.

Figure 4

withdraw from the study at any time (see Appendix C).

Instruction with a consent form were printed on the cover sheet of the survey and the author read the following statement aloud to the class before administering the survey:

“The purpose of this investigation is to determine some type of relationship between individual familiarity with specific popular music taken from the Billboard Top 100 charts and tolerance for potentially offensive language and sexual behavior. Enclosed in this packet is a simple 10-minute questionnaire that asks you to indicate your reactions to hypothetical situations, your use of specific words, and your familiarity with specific popular songs. Please be advised that this survey does contain language and situations that can be offensive to some. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you think that this type of material may offend you or you are under the age of 18, then please remain seated and turn in a blank questionnaire at the end of the class. The survey is completely anonymous.”

Subjects were assigned three scores as a result of their responses on the survey. The first, the word usage score, was determined by assigning values from 0 points ("I have never heard of this word.") to 5 points ("This word is part of my normal vocabulary.") for each response to the 10 songs containing potentially offensive language and sexual situations. Scores for the 10 songs were added together for a total score of 60 points.

The second score, the situational score, was determined by assigning values from 1 point ("I would stop speaking to my friend.") to 4 points ("I would think that it was

great.") for each response to the first 6 questions of the second portion of the survey concerning sexual situations derived from the selected songs. Further, the subjects were awarded 4 points ("Strongly agree.") to 1 point ("Strongly disagree.") for each response to the final 6 questions in the second portion of the survey also involving sexual situations from the selected songs. Scores for the 12 questions were added together for a total score of 48 points. The third score, the familiarity score, was determined by assigning values from 0 points ("I've never heard of this song.") to 5 points ("I know all of the words to this song.") for each response to the 10 selected songs from the October 27, 2001 Billboard Magazine chart list. The 10 songs chosen for analysis contained the most potentially obscene language and sexual situation content as determined by the author. Scores for the 10 songs were added together for a total possible score range from 0 - 50 points.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between popular music preference, tolerance for sexual behavior, and potentially obscene language usage. In order to examine these issues, a survey instrument was devised and administered to college freshmen music and non-music majors by the author. The subjects were assigned scores based upon their responses to the survey. Each subject received three scores: a song familiarity score, a word usage score, and a sexual situation score.

To see if differences existed between areas of study, comparisons were made between non-music majors and music majors on the three scores. For song familiarity, subjects' responses to each of the 10 song titles whose lyrics contained obscene language and possibly offensive sexual subject matter were numerically coded and totaled to provide one composite "familiarity" score per subject. Possible points for each song ranged from 0 ("I've never heard of this song") to 5 ("I know all of the words to this song"), resulting in individual scores ranging from 0 to 50 points. Raw data for music and non-music subjects' familiarity are provided in Appendix D. Subjects were further classified as "low" scorers if they scored 0 to 25 points and "high" scorers if they scored 26 points or higher. Based on this information, Chi Square analysis revealed a significant difference between majors [$\chi^2 (2, N = 81) = 4.89, p < .05$]. As can be seen in Table 2, only 1 of 35 music majors scored in the "high familiarity" category and of the 46 non-music majors, 11 scored in the "high familiarity" category indicating that the non-music majors were more familiar with the selected songs. Interestingly enough, though, overall 85% of the total subjects fell into the "low familiarity" category indicating a relative lack of familiarity across the subject pool.

Table 2
Observed Frequencies for Majors and Familiarity Scores

	High scorers	Low scorers	Totals
Music majors	1	34	35
Non-music majors	11	35	46
Totals	12	69	81

To examine differences between majors on the word usage score, subjects' responses to each of the 8 offensive words presented on the survey were numerically coded and totaled to provide one composite "word usage" score per subject. Possible points for each word ranged from 0 ("I have never heard of this word") to 5 ("This word is a part of my normal vocabulary"), resulting in each subjects' composite score ranging from 0 – 40 points. Raw data for music major and non-music major subjects' word usage are provided in Appendix E. The subjects were classified as "low" scorers if they scored 0 to 20 points and "high" scorers if they scored 21 points or higher. Based on this data, Chi Square analysis revealed no significant difference between majors [χ^2 (2, N = 81) = 1.44, p > .05]. As can be seen in Table 3, only 10 of 35 music majors scored in the "low usage" category and of the 46 non-music majors, only 8 scored in the "low usage" category indicating that the majority of the subjects' reported use of the chosen words at some level of frequency.

Table 3
Observed Frequencies for Majors and Word Scores

	High scorers	Low scorers	Totals
Music majors	25	10	35
Non-music majors	38	8	46
Totals	63	18	81

To examine differences between majors on the situational score, subjects' responses to each of the 12 sexual situations presented on the survey were numerically coded and totaled to provide one composite "situational" score per subject. Possible points for each situation ranged from 1 point ("I would stop speaking to my friend.") to 4 points ("I would think that it was great.") for the first 6 questions and 1 point ("Strongly disagree") to 4 points ("Strongly agree") for the remaining 6 questions. It should be noted that because of wording, one question was scored 1 point ("Strongly agree") to 4 points ("Strongly disagree"). This resulted in each subjects' composite score ranging from 0 – 40 points. Raw data for music major and non-music major subjects' situational scores are provided in Appendix F. The subjects were classified as "low" scorers if they scored 0 to 20 points and "high" scorers if they scored 21 points or higher. Based on this data, Chi Square analysis revealed no significant difference between majors [$\chi^2 (2, N = 81) = .58, p > .05$]. As can be seen in Table 4, only 10 of the 35 music majors scored in the "high" category and of the 46 non-music majors, only 14 scored in the "high" category (overall out of 81 subjects, 24 scored in the "high" category) indicating that more subjects seemed less tolerant of the listed sexual behaviors.

Table 4
Observed Frequencies for Majors and Situational Scores

	High scorers	Low scorers	Totals
Music majors	10	25	35
Non-music majors	14	32	46
Totals	24	57	81

Given the significant difference between music majors and non-music majors' familiarity with song titles, correlation among the sets of scores were computed separately by major.

In order to examine the relationship between subjects' familiarity with song lyrics and self-reported use of the chosen words; comparisons were made between individual familiarity scores and word usage scores. Rather than the categorical data previously used in the Chi-Square analyses, this analysis used composite scores for individuals. Pearson Product Moment analysis of the music majors' raw scores revealed a low positive correlation, $r = .22$, between song familiarity and word usage scores. Using a Z conversion, this relationship was not significant ($z = 1.26, p > .05$) as they reported high word usage regardless of familiarity with the chosen song titles. Similarly, a low correlation between non-music majors' scores also existed, $r = .22$. Using a Z conversion, this relationship also was not significant ($z = 1.45, p > .05$) due to a similar uniform unfamiliarity with the listed songs and more variability in self-reported word usage scores.

To investigate the relationship between subjects' tolerance for sexual behavior and song familiarity, comparisons were made between individual familiarity and

situational scores. Again, rather than the categorical data previously used in the Chi-Square analyses, this analysis used composite scores for individuals. Pearson Product Moment analysis of the music majors' raw scores revealed a low negative correlation, $r = -.20$, between the scores. Using a Z conversion, this relationship was not significant ($z = -.91$, $p > .05$) as their reported song familiarity scores were consistently low in comparison to more variable situational scores to indicate a strong relationship. This was not the case for non-music majors. Score analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between non-music majors' scores, $r = .33$, that was significant ($z = 2.26$, $p < .05$). Although the raw data suggests that the situational scores between music majors and non-music majors are relatively similar, the significant difference in the non-majors' scores can be attributed to more variability in song familiarity scores.

Comparisons between subjects' word usage scores and situational scores were used to examine the relationship between the scores. Rather than the categorical data previously used in the Chi-Square analyses, this analysis used composite scores for individuals. Pearson Product Moment analysis of the music majors' raw scores revealed a positive correlation, $r = .53$, between situational and word usage scores. Using a Z conversion, this relationship was significant ($z = 3.37$, $p < .05$). Similarly, a positive correlation between non-music majors' scores also existed, $r = .39$. Using a Z conversion, this relationship was also significant ($z = 2.73$, $p < .05$). These results indicated that as the subjects' word usage increased, so did their tolerance for sexual situations.

Demographic analysis of the subjects revealed that the mean music major age ($n = 35$) was 18.63 years old and 18.64 years old for the non-music majors ($n = 46$). The

music majors were 54 % female (46% male) and the non-music majors were 54% male (46% female). Overall, 8% of the subjects polled reported that they listen to less than one hour of music a day, 36% reported 1-2 hours a day, 25% reported 2-3 hours a day, and 31% reported listening to 3 or more hours of music a day. A majority of those surveyed (71 %) reported that they commonly listened to music via compact discs, cassette tapes, or MP3s (28% reported the radio and 1% reported music video as their primary music source). The most striking demographic information, however, concerned racial information. Of the music majors surveyed 92% of them reported that they were “White/non-Hispanic” with the remaining 8% distributed equally among the other races (2% Black/Non-Hispanic, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 2% Hispanic, and 2% multi-cultural). Similarly 89% of the non-music majors reported that they were “White/Non-Hispanic” (5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% Hispanic, and 3% multi-cultural). This meant that the overwhelming majority of subjects (90% of the overall subject pool) reported to be “White/Non-Hispanic.”

DISCUSSION

When the PMRC was initialized in 1985, it instantly fell under scrutiny. Champions of popular music and entertainment across the world rallied to stop the apparent wave of censorship they feared the PMRC and their Parental Advisory Labels would foster. Protests were organized, senate hearings held, all to combat an inevitability that was not the intentions of the PMRC. As it has been suggested, the PMRC was created not to censor popular music as is commonly believed, but to serve as a watchdog to inform parents of what is going on in the world of popular music (Nuzem, 2001). The unfortunate truth here is that music stars are much more popular, seemingly more respected, and definitely more plentiful than the Pro-PMRC population of the world. Here there exists a dichotomy of views. It seems axiomatic that knowledge of what our young people are listening to is an essential part of regulating what they hear, yet no one wants to hinder the creative juices of today's popular artists. Censorship is not the prime operative here, but protection is. The Parental Advisory Label was not conceived as a method to downgrade the music of popular artists as pornographic, immoral, or evil, rather the stickers were designed to serve as a caution light for adults warning them that the lyrical content of the labeled recording may not be what they would consider appropriate for their children. Ultimately and ideally, the decision exists in the supervising adult's hands. Of course if this becomes the case, then record sales will probably drop and that may be the real fear in the music world. Research concerning the effects of popular music on children, although inconclusive on many levels, is essential to organizations like the PMRC, hopefully, all parents, and anyone concerned about our nation's youth.

There is a dire need for the adult world to be familiar with what music their children are listening to not just to prevent behaviors that might be associated with the music, but also to realize that the music they listen to may not be the cause of the behavior. Interestingly enough, the present study revealed no real relationship between popular music containing subversive material and the same behavior in its listeners. Even though across the subject pool word usage scores were relatively high, familiarity with the chosen songs was consistently low indicating little relationship between these songs and word usage. Strangely enough, despite the high word usage scores, a good majority of the subjects fell into the “low” category concerning their tolerance for sexual behavior and even though moderate correlations existed between word usage and situational scores, a relationship to the song lyrics could not be established.

As previously stated, across the subject pool, there was a collective general low familiarity with the 10 songs chosen for analysis. Although the non-music majors were more familiar with the songs than the music majors, speculation as to the nature of these results exists in the demographic make-up of the subjects and the experimental design. Of the entire subject pool, 90% reported on the questionnaire to be “White/non-Hispanic.” Although this was not an anticipated issue of the experiment, the predominance of this demographic might have had some bearing on the results of the familiarity survey. Of the 10 songs chosen for analysis, 9 of them featured non-white artists and music that might appeal to a more culturally diverse audience. A more probable explanation for the lack of familiarity, however, might be the inability of the subjects to recognize the chosen songs by song title alone. Given that these songs were included in the Top 21 Billboard charts (a list that is based on both radio airplay and

recording sales) and that 99% of those surveyed reported to primarily listen to music via compact disc, cassette tape, MP3 (71%) and radio (28%), then it would be expected that these subjects would be more familiar with the chosen songs. On the other hand, a song title does not always reflect the lyric content of the song as is the case with some of these songs (Mary J. Blige's "Family Affair" for example). Thus it can be speculated that subject responses may indicate a general unfamiliarity with the song *titles* and not necessarily the songs themselves. Further research may include brief representative excerpts of each recording in order to establish familiarity. Previous research reporting that young people often pay more attention to the music and not the lyric content of popular music reinforce this assertion (Ballard & Coates, 1995; Brown & Hendee, 1989). Of course if this is the case, then it might be construed that popular music lyric content may have very little to do with behavior after all. However, it should be noted that one major component of this study involves tolerance and not the actual action of the behaviors on the part of the subjects and thus, a limited knowledge of a song's lyrical content may be all that is required in order for a young person to be familiar with the general ideas and concepts behind a song.

Another result that was common of subjects from both groups is the relatively high number who fell into the "high" category based on their word usage scores. A considerable 69 out of 87 subjects reported that they are not just familiar with or tolerant of the chosen words, but that they use them with some degree of regularity. To fully understand the extent of these results, however, the specific words that received the highest raw scores should be considered as well as what category the word primarily fell into (see Appendix E). The words "ass," "shit," and "sucks" are the words with the

highest scores and the bulk of the points were awarded in the “I use this word in casual conversation with my friends” category indicating that word usage is primarily in the presence of people of similar age and/or interests.

The lack of significant correlation between familiarity scores and word usage seemingly indicate no relationship between the scores. However, if as previously suggested the songs were not identifiable to the subjects merely by their title, then these results might not be representative of the true relationship. Similarly, the lack of a significant correlation between the music majors’ familiarity and situational scores can also be attributed to a lack of song title knowledge. Given these results, however, it seems unusual that a significant correlation did exist in the non-music majors. Further investigation may include analysis of these particular songs with non-music majors to see what specific behaviors they were most tolerant of and how (and if) those behaviors were addressed in the lyrics.

The strongest correlation existed between word usage and situational scores. As one increased so did the other indicating that those who regularly employed these words had a higher tolerance for the chosen behaviors. Perhaps these results have less to do with the music than they do with teen culture in general. Historically foul language and sexual activity interest has been a staple of adolescent activity as they go against the "established norms" of society. The desire for teenage rebellion coupled with their new spending power has prompted the recording industry to target this group by including these themes in their recordings.

Although primarily in response to youth violence, drug use, and suicide, youth music preference research is not plentiful enough to provided substantial foundations for

the censorship of the mass media. The inability for true cause and effect relationships to be established between behavior and music preference remains a debilitating factor in the research. Sociologists and adolescent textbooks agree that young people (all humans actually) are primarily products of their environments (Nielsen, 1991). Music is, for most, an inevitable part of their environment. So the question really is not whether music influences human behavior, but to what extent it does. Research concerning offensive language and all mass media states that there are more instances of offensive language in television programming and motion pictures than in song lyrics, however, they failed to establish any connection between the media and human behavior (Rude & Crude, 1999). Future research should center on developing these relationships through correlation. In particular, experimentation involving offensive language seems lacking. There are many aspects involved in adolescent development (especially involving behavior and the media) that addressing every issue is impossible, however, concerned adults should feel obligated to continually chip away to get to the “truth.”

Regardless of individual beliefs concerning the regulation of the entertainment industry, no one can reasonably deny the importance of knowing what our children are exposed to. In the same manner that we want to make sure that they have a healthy diet so that their bodies can grow up strong and disease-free, we should be equally concerned about their intellectual and moral development. As the world becomes more and more explicit with the display of sexual behavior and looser in its definition of appropriate and inappropriate language, the young people of the world need to equip themselves with knowledge. Otherwise, they stand the chance of falling prey to mindless acceptance of

what the media tells them. Perhaps future research should not focus on youth behavior in reaction to the changing world, but in pro-action to it.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

1. Study Title: The correlation between college students' familiarity with potentially offensive popular music and self-reported tolerance for generally considered obscene language and sexual behavior.
2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
3. Investigators: The following investigators are available to answer questions about this study:

Harry Martin (225) 387-0130
Dr. Jane Cassidy (225) 578-3258
4. Purpose of this study: The purpose of this study is to investigate the correlation between popular music familiarity among college freshmen and their tolerance for sexual behavior and usage of generally considered obscene language.
5. Subject Inclusion: College freshmen enrolled in Music Appreciation (non-music majors) and Introduction to Music Study (music majors) at Louisiana State University during the spring semester 2002.
6. Number of subjects: target 80
7. Study Procedure: You will complete a survey that indicates your familiarity with 20 songs from the October 27, 2001 Billboard Top 100 Charts and answer questions about your tolerance for potentially obscene language and hypothetical sexual situations taken from the song lyrics. You will be asked personal information about your sexuality and you will also indicate your familiarity with profane words used in the song lyrics.
8. Benefits: This study will yield information involving a relationship between the content of popular music lyrics and themes and human behavior.
9. Risks: The only risk involved in this study is the possibility of your being offended by the use of scripted offensive language and sexual situations contained in the survey. Your responses will be anonymous.
10. Right to Refuse: You may choose not to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which you might otherwise be entitled.
11. Privacy: Results of this study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication. Again, your responses will be anonymous.

12. Signature:

This study has been discussed with me and all of my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigators. If I have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert Matthews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-1492. I agree to participate in the study described above and I confirm that I am over the age of 18.

Signature of Subject:

Date of Signature:

APPENDIX B

GENERALLY CONSIDERED OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE AND SEXUAL TOLERANCE SURVEY

How often do you use the following words?

1. Ass

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

2. Bitch

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

3. Damn

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

4. Fuck

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

5. Nigga'

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

6. Shit

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

7. Sucks

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

8. Whore (or “Ho”)

<input type="checkbox"/> I have never heard of this word.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have heard of this word but I never use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> I have said it a few times in my lifetime.	<input type="checkbox"/> I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	<input type="checkbox"/> I use This word in casual conversation with my friends.	<input type="checkbox"/> This word is a part of my normal vocabulary.
---	--	---	---	--	---

9. A good friend of yours had a one-night stand with someone they met at a party. How do you react?

- I would stop speaking to my friend.
- I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
- It would not bother me.
- I would think that it was great.

10. A good friend is in a purely physical relationship with someone. How do you react?

- I would stop speaking to my friend.
- I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
- It would not bother me.
- I would think that it was great.

11. You observe a good friend addressing his/her significant other using a derogatory name. How do you react?

- I would stop speaking to my friend.
- I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
- It would not bother me.
- I would think that it was great.

12. A good friend is cheating on his/her significant other. How do you react?
- I would stop speaking to my friend.
 - I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
 - It would not bother me.
 - I would think that it was great.
13. A good friend has had an unexpected sexual encounter with a complete stranger. How do you react?
- I would stop speaking to my friend.
 - I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
 - It would not bother me.
 - I would think that it was great.
14. A good friend is dating someone that his or her parents disapprove of. How do you react?
- I would stop speaking to my friend.
 - I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend.
 - It would not bother me.
 - I would think that it was great.
15. I often do you wear clothes because it makes you feel “sexy.”
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
16. The first thing I notice in a person is sex appeal.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
17. Romance is more enjoyable than physical behavior in a relationship.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
18. Looks are important in a significant other.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

19. Premarital sex is acceptable if the two people are in love.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

20. Premarital sex is okay if you use a condom.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please mark the appropriate column that best reflects your familiarity with the following popular music songs (mark only one).

	<i>I've never heard of this song</i>	<i>I am familiar with the title</i>	<i>I have heard the song</i>	<i>I like this song</i>	<i>This is one of my Favorite songs.</i>	<i>I know all of the words to this song</i>
"Differences" by Genuwine	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Drops of Jupiter (Tell me)" by Train	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Everywhere" by Michelle Branch	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Fallin" by Alicia Keys	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Family Affair" by Mary J. Blige	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Fill Me In" by Craig David	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Hangin' By A Moment" by Lifehouse	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Hero" by Enrique Iglesias	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Hit 'Em Up Style (Oops!)" by Blu Cantrell	0	0	0	0	0	0
"I'm Real" by Jennifer Lopez/Ja Rule	0	0	0	0	0	0
"It's Been Awhile" by Staind	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Izzo (H.O.V.A.)" by Jay-Z	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Let Me Blow Your Mind" by Eve/Gwen Stefani	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Livin' It Up" by Ja Rule/Case	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Only Time" by Enya	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Turn Off the Light" by Nelly Furtado	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Where's the Party At" by Jagged Edge/Nelly	0	0	0	0	0	0
"Ugly" by Bubba Sparxxx	0	0	0	0	0	0
"U Got It Bad" by Usher	0	0	0	0	0	0
"U Remind Me" by Usher	0	0	0	0	0	0

Please tell me about yourself:

Age _____

Gender

- Male
- Female

Race

- Black/Non-Hispanic
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- White/Non-Hispanic
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Other _____

High School Graduation Date (mm/yy) _____

Estimate how much music you listen to in one day?

- never
- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 2-3 hours
- 3 or more hours

How do you most frequently listen to music?

- Compact disc/cassette tape/MP3
- Radio
- Music Video

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION ON
PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall
Louisiana State University and A&M College
Baton Rouge LA 70803

(225) 578-8692

FAX: 578-6792
irb @lsu.edu

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Jane Cassidy, Music Education
Harry Martin, Music Education

FROM: Robert C. Mathews
Chair, Institutional Review Board for Research with Human Subjects

RE: IRB# 2305

TITLE: "The Correlation Between College Students' Familiarity with Potentially Offensive Popular Music and Self-reported Tolerance for Obscene Language and Sexual Behavior"

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation : N

Review type: Full X Expedited _____ Review date: 04/12/2002

Approved X Disapproved _____

Approval Date: 04/22/2002 Approval Expiration Date: 04/22/2003

Risk Assessment: Minimal X Uncertain _____ Greater than Minimal _____

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated) _____

Number of subjects approved: 80

By: Robert C. Mathews, Chairman 

APPENDIX D

FAMILIARITY SCORE RAW DATA FOR MUSIC AND NON-MUSIC MAJORS

	I've never heard of this song	I am familiar with the title	I have heard the song	I like this song	This is one of my favorite songs.	I know all of the words to this song
"Family Affair" by Mary J. Blige	20 16	4 4	7 11	1 8	0 2	1 5
"Fill Me In" by Craig David	22 20	3 6	7 7	1 7	0 2	2 4
"Hit 'Em Up Style (Oops!)" by Blu Cantrell	17 15	2 5	7 10	3 7	2 3	4 6
"I'm Real" by Jennifer Lopez/Ja Rule	13 2	6 5	9 17	5 8	0 6	2 8
"It's Been Awhile" by Staind	7 3	1 1	10 11	5 11	2 4	10 16
"Let Me Blow Your Mind" by Eve/Gwen Stefani	14 5	2 5	9 16	7 8	1 2	2 10
"Livin' It Up" by Ja Rule/Case	23 11	3 6	7 10	1 6	0 6	1 7
"Where's the Party At" by Jagged Edge/Nelly	17 7	2 9	5 8	9 8	1 5	1 9
"Ugly" by Bubba Sparxxx	25 19	1 4	5 10	3 6	1 3	0 4
"U Got It Bad" by Usher	15 10	2 3	9 9	7 12	0 3	2 9

Note: top numbers are music major scores ($n = 35$) and bottom numbers are non-music major scores ($n = 46$)

APPENDIX E

WORD SCORE RAW DATA FOR MUSIC AND NON-MUSIC MAJORS

	I have never heard of this word.	I have heard of this word but I never use it.	I have said this word a few times in my lifetime.	I only say this word when I am upset or angry.	I use this word in casual conversation with my friends.	This word is part of my normal vocabulary.
Ass	0 0	4 0	7 8	5 7	15 26	4 5
Bitch	0 0	5 1	5 7	10 18	13 18	2 2
Damn	0 0	0 0	7 8	7 9	12 21	9 8
Fuck	1 0	6 4	5 8	13 18	8 13	2 3
Nigga'	1 0	22 15	8 12	2 6	2 9	0 4
Shit	0 0	3 0	7 5	7 11	11 24	7 6
Sucks	0 0	0 1	1 3	1 2	13 17	20 23
Whore (or "Ho")	0 0	7 4	9 9	5 9	12 19	2 5

Note: top numbers are music major scores ($n = 35$) and bottom numbers are non-music major scores ($n = 46$)

APPENDIX F

SITUATIONAL SCORE RAW DATA FOR MUSIC AND NON-MUSIC MAJORS

	I would stop speaking to my friend.	I would disapprove, but continue to accept my friend	It would not bother me.	I would think that it was great.
A good friend of yours had a one-night stand with someone they met at a party. How do you react?	0 0	25 26	7 18	3 2
A good friend is in a purely physical relationship with someone. How do you react?	0 2	22 18	11 20	2 6
You observe a good friend addressing his/her significant other using a derogatory name. How do you react?	3 2	28 36	4 7	0 1
A good friend is cheating on his/her significant other. How do you react?	13 11	20 34	2 1	0 0
A good friend has had an unexpected sexual encounter with a complete stranger. How do you react?	1 0	27 32	6 14	1 0
A good friend is dating someone that his or her parents disapprove of. How do you react?	0 1	9 9	25 33	1 3

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I often wear clothes because it makes me feel “sexy.”	4 2	11 16	15 18	5 10
The first thing I notice in a person is sex appeal.	1 2	9 16	21 24	4 4
Romance is more enjoyable than physical behavior in a relationship.	17 8	13 30	4 8	1 0
Looks are important in a significant other.	1 3	22 30	11 13	1 0
Premarital sex is acceptable if the two people are in love.	4 6	16 19	7 9	8 12
Premarital sex is okay if you use a condom.	5 5	12 15	9 13	9 13

Note: top numbers are music major scores ($\underline{n} = 35$) and bottom numbers are non-music major scores ($\underline{n} = 46$)

VITA

Harry E. "Skip" Martin was born a little over 28 years ago in Beaumont, Texas. He received his Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Music in clarinet performance degrees from Louisiana State University in 1996. From 1997 – 2000, he served as the Assistant Band Director and Fine Arts Survey teacher for Northshore High School in Slidell, Louisiana (a suburb of New Orleans). He does not sleep much, loves dancing, chips and salsa, and independently owned coffee shops (although Starbucks will do in a pinch). He hopes to one day adopt a fruitful hobby so that he can stop buying people Christmas presents. He is currently employed as the first Assistant Band Director at Cy-Fair High School in Cypress, Texas (a suburb of Houston) and is the proud parent of one cat named Snizz.