

Psychological influence of music on teenagers psychology essay



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Teenagers listen to music about 2.5 hours a day which is more than any other age group does which depicts that teenagers are more exposed to the effects of music whatsoever. Writers as far back as 600 B. C. report the curing of plagues, mental disorders, snake bite, deafness, sciatica and fevers through the aid of music (Gilliland, E. G. 1944., pp. 18-20). Both harmful and beneficial effects of music have been recognized by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Some renowned philosophers like Plato, Cicero and Seneca all believed that music profoundly affected the behavior of the whole society. One of the causes of the decline of the West was the 12-tone compositional styles of the early 20th century (Spengler, O., c1991). Musicologists think that music is the form of language that directly accesses the emotions without a rational thought. Music has the potential to affect emotions, it can help teenagers identify, process and express their emotions. As for teenagers struggling with psychological issues surrounding adolescence, anxiety, aggression or depression, identifying these emotions in music can motivate teenagers in struggling against them.

Bill Clinton, former President of The United States, regarding the education of students proposed, “ Music is about communication, creativity and cooperation, and by studying music in school, students have the opportunity to build on these skills, enrich their lives, and experience the world from a new perspective.” The purpose of the paper is to determine how music can help teenagers express themselves and fight through mood disorders or other psychological defects. There are studies that tell that music can be a successful therapy for mood disorders, however music does not simply

create an emotion instead it triggers a certain type of emotion already present within that person.

This gives rise to certain questions as such:

1. Does mood affect the music preferences of teenagers?
2. Is Music a “ Wonder Drug”?

The ancient Egyptians had firm belief in the music’s remedial virtues and further, great progress in music therapy was made during and after the World War I when music was prescribed for war neurosis, aphasia, temporary insanity and paralyzed muscles. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that music improvisation can be a treatment for mood disorders among teenagers. It can be possible, that music which many of us take for granted as benign background noise, could have unrecognized effects either positive or negative.

People in positive mood states want to maintain this state through musical choices only. In a speech before the Music Teacher National Association in March, Dr. Ira Altshuler said, “ Words and their meanings do not only affect thought processes, ideologies and emotions, but provoke action. . . . Music has an even stronger power than the spoken word. In addition to affecting thinking and emotion it also affects the spirit.” (as cited in Gilliland E. G., 1944., pp. 18-20). Teenagers may choose music that can either enhance their feelings and emotions or completely change them. D. Zillmann (1988a), a renowned entertainment scholar and professor at College of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Alabama, introduced

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the Mood Management Theory which may clear this situation by explaining the fact that teenagers use music to regulate the positive feelings or to overcome the feelings of depression. Thus, when a teen is in a depressive mood, he/she listens to the type of music that actually depicts his/her mood so that he/she could cope with his/her feelings the way he/she wants to. Calming or exciting music can decrease or increase the level of excitation in teenagers respectively which shows that listening to music is an effective coping strategy for the clinically depressed teenagers. In another study it was found that teenagers use music for emotional management either for mood enhancing or mood tranquilizing purposes (Wells and Hakanen, 1991). This study focuses on the direct relation of the mood and the choice of the music of a teenager which suggests that choice of music may depict the mood of a teen. Mood regulation may differ between male and female teenagers but in general it does require the use of music. A large survey study was conducted to measure differences in adolescents' use of music in mood regulation (Saarikallio, S., 2006). The survey was based on the author's previous theoretical model of mood regulation by music. The model consists of seven regulatory strategies: Entertainment, Revival, Strong Sensation, Diversion, Discharge, Mental Work, and Solace. Based on those strategies, a new scale was developed. The scale was labeled " Music in Mood Regulation" (MMR), and it was employed to measure the differences in music related mood regulation. The sample consisted of 1515 adolescents, whose mean age was 15. 01 years, were given questionnaires, and general mood regulations were recorded by giving them to choose the type of musical activity they want. In all groups, girls used music for regulation of mood more than that of boys. The results further indicated that most teens

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were more likely interested in the kind of music which suited their mood. The mostly used regulatory strategies for both boys and girls in all age groups were the same: Entertainment, Revival, and Strong Sensation. However, the results also showed significant differences in the use of music in mood regulation based on gender, age, musical background and general mood regulation abilities. This study supports the hypothesis that music can be used to improve or maintain the mood of teenagers. These musical selections whether positive or negative will provide positive mood managing effects. In the case when negative or depressive music is selected, the selectee may not actually view such music negatively and the emotions the music elicits despite being perceived as negative may in turn be positive and pleasurable. Music being psychologically effective on human mind does have healing power for the teenagers if they feel their selves psychologically sick.