



The Analysis of Popular Music and The Societal Implication It Has on Its Audience



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Introduction

In 2020 the world experienced the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, they were subjected to quarantining and various lockdown measures. This caused great emotional turmoil, increasing mental health issues in the process. In this study, we'll examine how music plays a role in times of socioeconomic distress.

Research Questions

- Is there a significant difference between the messages found between pre-Covid and in the most recent year 2022?
- In general, what common themes did we find in the messages within the lyrics?

Background

- COVID-19 has impacted mental health by increasing anxiety, depressive disorders, and PTSD
- Music lyrics can reflect the change in socioemotional content trends in society

Lyrical Content Analysis

- Mental Health Discourse in Rap Music
- Substance Use
- Violence Against Women
- Expressions of Love and Sexuality

Materials & Methods

Data was collected from the Top 100 Billboard Charts

700 songs from 2019 – 2022

Qualitative Study: Secondary Analysis

MAXQDA software used for coding purposes

| Coding Category | Description | Example |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Mental Health References | | |
| Depression | Persistent feeling of sadness and/or loss of interest in activities | "I'm just depressed that you're gone Not holdin' on," |
| Anxiety | Intense, excessive, and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations | "Anxiety killin' me" |
| Emotional Pain | Pain or hurt that originates from non-physical sources. | "I been through the pain and all of the torment" |

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Results & Discussion

Theme 1:

Relationships (Love Life)

Theme 2:

Coping Mechanisms vs Escapism

Theme 3:

General Mental Health Struggles

Limitations

- Depending on the listener, different interpretations may arise
- Individual listeners
- Data looks at the US population only

Conclusions

- Increase of these messages in popular music lyrics
- Findings of the qualitative study

Future Work

- Create a survey to collect songs on an individual level
- Investigate popular music lyrics surrounding other events



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM