

Smells Like Teen Spirit: The Impact of Aggressive Music on Bullying Participant Roles

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Guided by research on bullying and bullying participant roles (Olweus, 1991; Salmivalli et al., 1996), along with research (or lack thereof) indicating music's ability to influence aggressive and violent behaviour (e.g. Treadwell, 2007), the primary objective of this study is to determine if listening to violent and aggressive music can influence bullying participant roles (victim, bully, reinforcer of the bully, assistant of the bully, defender of the victim, and outsider). Through the use of a true experimental design (Creswell, 2012) the proposed study will answer the following research question: will listening to violent and aggressive music lead youth to adopt bullying-supportive roles in bullying situations? Using the Overt Aggression Scale (Yudofsky et al., 1986) to control for initial aggression all participants from local youth organizations will first complete the scale. Participants will be randomly divided into experimental and control groups, the experimental group will listen to expert approved aggressive music, while the control group will listen to expert approved non-aggressive music. After the intervention, all participants will be required to complete the Revised Participant Role Questionnaire (Sutton & Smith, 1999) to determine bullying participant roles. Results will be analyzed using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA); initial aggression will be accounted for by covariance, the song selections will serve as the independent variable, and bullying participant roles will serve as the dependent variable. With the current accessibility and prevalence of music (Shuker, 2008) we expect that aggressive music will have an impact on bullying participant roles in youth.