

Is Music Censorship Needed? The Effects of Sexualised Lyrics influencing Young Adults Sexual Attitudes and Gender Stereotypes.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
INTRODUCTION	4
The Changeover to the Sexualisation of Music	5
The skyrocket of female exploitation.....	7
Sexualisation in the music industry.....	9
Research in the sexualisation in lyrics.....	10
Different effects by different lyrics.....	11
METHOD	17
TYPE OF DESIGN.....	17
PARTICIPANTS	18
PROCEDURE	19
MATERIALS.	22
RESULTS.	24
DISCUSSION	31
REFERENCES	36
APPENDICES	40

Is Music Censorship Needed? The Effects of Sexualised Lyrics influencing Young Adults Sexual Attitudes and Gender Stereotypes.

Abstract:

The effects of censored versus uncensored sexually explicit music on young adults' attitudes toward women, gender stereotype of men as sex driven and females as sex objects, and attitudes toward women and communion of relationships were examined. The experiment involved randomly assigning participants to one of four groups which contained either a sexualised lyrical song, a censored version of that song, the same artists and beat as last song but non sexual song, or the control group with no song. Significance was reported when the sexualised lyrics group were compared to the censored lyric group on the attitude that men are sex driven, Significance was also found between the control groups and sexualised lyric group on communion of relationships. Males and females did not differ significantly across these dependent variables. Although there was no continuous significant results between the groups on all the dependent variables, however the significant results on those few variables show that sexualised lyrics' can indeed effect attitudinal change

Introduction:

Music plays an important role in the socialization of children, adolescents and adults, listening to popular music is considered by society to be a part of growing up. Adolescents use music in their process of identity formation and their music preference provides them a means to achieve group identity and integration into the youth culture (Hall, C., West, J., & Hill, S. (2011). Research on popular music has explored several areas such as its effects on schoolwork, social interactions (Peterson, 1991), mood and affect (Sheftall, 2007,) and particularly behaviour (Bandura, 1977, Amezcua, 2005). For most people, music is part of everyday life, they hear it at work, while driving, in social situations, in TV and movies, and for many people it is a hobby and they actively go out of their way to hear music and go to concerts. Seeing that music has existed for so long and is used so extensively by so many people in everyday situations, it is hard to believe how understudied it has been in the field of Psychology (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2007; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003.). The importance music can have on people can be shown with research by Gentile (1999), they found that not only is music one of the most frequently occurring activities that people engage in, but people consider it important to them, not only as a hobby, but as a insight into their own personalities. They had their participants fill out questionnaires relating to their attitudes and beliefs about their various lifestyle and leisure activities. The results indicated that most people considered music along with hobbies their most important activity, ranking higher than food preference, movies, books, magazines, and TV programmes and clothes choice. The majority of participants also believed their music preference to reveal as much if not more information about themselves as the other domains. However the lyrical content as well as the messages these modern song conveys has changed dramatically.

The Changeover to the Sexualisation of music:

Sexualisation is everywhere, and it is no surprise that music lyrics are one of the main sources and also how greatly lyrics have changed over the decades in regard to the attitudes they reflect (Page, 2000). Just like mainstream music today, the songs from 60 years ago were heavily focused on relationships; however the way in which men approached the topic of women was changed (Parden, 2005). Love songs which held women up as sources of beauty, awe, and strength to the overwhelming joy of having someone love you back, women were a man's muse – a source of wonder to write and sing about. For example the lyrical content and message from *I'll wait for You* by *Frankie Avalon, 1958* (Hitchcock, 2005)

*“Oh, I know we both are young,
And must wait til school is through, I'll wait for you
Oh, I tell my impatient heart,
There is nothing I can do, I'll wait for you”*

The music lyrics described the essence of women through metaphors and stories. Now song writing has skyrocketed towards a tendency to characterise women in a stereotyped persona of hyper-sexuality, viewed as sexual object (Johnse, 1995, Recording Industry, 2003, Ward, 2006).

Nowadays society's acceptance of the lyrical expression describing the opposite sex has changed dramatically. A study by Hall, West and Hill (2011) analysed the lyrics of songs from Billboards 'Hottest 100' list every decade from 1959 to 2009, and found that the prevalence of degrading, sexualised lyrics did not develop gradually but rather skyrocketed in the late 1990's. They also found that the prevalence of sexualised lyrics was higher overall in 2009. Music industry in particular hip hop/rap now focuses on painting a picture of women

based on a sexual caricature, Lyrics have developed in terms of sexual content, but also the prevalence of sexually depictions. Degrading sexualizing lyrics were defined as those in which “one person has a large sexual appetite, the other person is sexually objectified, and sexual value is placed solely on physical characteristics.” (Hall, 2011, p13). But the increase in degrading sexualizing lyrics was not at all gradual. Instead, according to Hall (2011), starting in 1999, it “skyrocketed.” Between 1999 and 2009, the amount of degrading sexualisation found in the lyrics tripled. Furthermore, non-White artists produced degrading sexualized lyrics almost 3 times as often as White artists in 1999 and 2009, and male artists were more than twice as likely as female artists to perform lyrics with sexualisation.

And with students listening to music for 14 hours per week on average, (Steven, 1996, Farr 2004). With young people consuming about 2.5 hours of music everyday (Farr, 2004) it is more important than ever to take a look at what exactly this music is communicating. The majority of students are being exposed to music every week for this length of time as well as being exposed to music unintentionally in restaurants, shops, night clubs, television and radio, it is important to further understand the immediate effects of music on psychological variables (Gerber, 1994, Strause, 1996). Parden, (2005) discusses how teen girls actively spend 15% more on music purchases than boys – equating to over 78% of girls purchasing every 3 months. They also readily admit that music influences the way they act and talk. This equates to millions of girls who are consuming music actively and passionately on a regular basis. So the question needs to be asked; what sort of messages are these lyrics having on the sexual attitude of listeners?

Rentfrow and Gosling(2003) stated that , “an activity that consumes so much time and resources and that is a key component of so many social situations warrants the attention of mainstream social and personality psychologists”(p. 1236). Therefore its necessary to

further research this socially significant activity that up to recently is far understudied to its effects on listeners, especially when the themes and lyrical content of songs are becoming hugely over –sexualised, and to experiment the effect these sexualised lyrical themed songs have on listeners subsequent attitudes towards sex

The skyrocket of female exploitation:

In 2013 we can no longer lay the blame solely on male artists, as the tsunami of sexualised content in the music industry has well and truly spilled over into the female-artist scene; and often with the same highly sexualised messages we are used to hearing in male rap/hip hop songs. Also with many of the popular female artists singing about their sex-skills are marketed specifically to young girls. Nicki Minaj, Rihanna, Lady GaGa, these artists are featured in teen magazines, popular teen cd compilations such as ‘So Fresh’ and other recommended teenage sites (Gentile, 1999)

The effect music lyrics females:

“One of the biggest challenges we face is getting more women to understand that this music is harmful. It’s harmful for young people in particular to consume and internalize these kinds of messages every day, especially when there are no counter messages and no filter.” Guy-Sheftall (reported by Recording Industry, 2003, para 3)

Music preference:

This controls for their attitudes and stereotypes prior to music exposure. Based on Bogt (2010) claims, that music preference not exposure are associated with attitudes and gender stereotypes preferring the most stereotypical media may be connected more strongly with

permissiveness and stereotypical gender attitudes. as described above participants who favoured music like hip-hop which contains high amount of sexualised depictions, would thus be exposed to these lyrics more often than someone who rated highly on country music several studies have demonstrated that preference for certain types of music could be correlated or associated with certain behaviours, such as the association of drug and alcohol use with “rave” music or electronic music dance events. Roberts et al (1997) performed a study in 1997 at an adolescent clinic, and their results suggested that best predictor of risk in adolescents related to music is their self-report of negative feelings or emotions when listening to any type of music. The authors of that study described an association between negative emotional response to music and risk-taking behaviours and even suggested that what triggers risky behaviour in some adolescents is the negative emotional response rather than the type of music. In “Prude” Liebau (2007) supported this suggestion. Heavy metal and some rock music have been associated in some studies with an increased risk of suicide. Fans of heavy metal music have been reported in the literature to have more problems with school authorities and teachers than students who are not fans of that type of music (Christopher, 1985). Heavy metal music-listening has also been associated with increased depression, delinquency risk behaviour, smoking, and conduct problems (Christopher, 1985, Johnson, 1995, Page, 2000). Fans of heavy metal and rap music showed a greater tendency to engage in reckless behaviour than their peers who were not fans of those types of music(Johnson, 1995, Farr, 2004) A study performed to explore the possible effect of heavy metal music containing either sexually violent or nonviolent lyrics on males' attitudes toward women revealed that those exposed to heavy metal music, with either sexually violent or nonviolent lyrics, showed significantly more negative stereotyped attitudes toward women than those in a group instead exposed to classical music (Farr, 2004) Likewise, in a study performed by Fischer and Greitemeyer (2006) men who listened to misogynistic lyrics showed increased

aggressive responses toward women as well as a more negative perception of them

Popular music is present almost everywhere, and it is easily available through the radio, various recordings, the Internet, and new technologies, allowing adolescents to hear it in diverse settings and situations, alone or shared with friends. Thus if violent lyrics can influence dangerous behaviour then it is feasible to ask and try to research whether sexualised music lyrics can influence the listener in the same way.

Sexualisation in the music industry:

Current research on sexualisation of music focuses on the sexualised videos and images in music (Johnson, Jackson & Gatto, 1995, Sprankle and Bretz, 2012, Johannes and Konig, 2013) on the audience's sexual attitudes and behaviour. Continuous finding suggest exposure to sexual images in music videos influence and reinforce the attitude and gender stereotype that men are only sex driven where females are viewed as sexual objects and casual sexual relationships becomes the norm (Meulemans & M. Zwambag, 2008, Ward 2002, Ward and Friedman 2006)

But within these sexualised music videos can be a systematic confounding variable; the actual lyrical content of song's.

Lyrics have become more explicit in their references to drugs, sex, and violence over the years, particularly in certain genres (Hall, 2011). Research related to music and its effects on children and adolescents has been expanded into another expression of popular music: the music video. Music videos are appealing to children and adolescents. Considering that music videos mix 2 media that are attractive to youth, television and popular music. In 2003, a report of the Kaiser Family Foundation (Sprankle, 2009) revealed that 3 of 4 of those in the 16- to 24-year-old group watch MTV, 58% watch it at least once a week, and 20% watch it for an hour or more every day. Analysis of the content in music videos has reported that

exposure to violence, sexual messages, sexual stereotypes, and use of substances of abuse in music videos might produce significant changes in behaviours and attitudes of young viewers. Frequent watching of music videos has been related to an increased risk of developing beliefs in false stereotypes and an increased perceived importance of appearance and weight in adolescent girls. (Sprecher, 1988). In studies performed to assess the reactions of young males exposed to violent rap music videos or sexist videos. In 1999 Kalof (referenced by Ward, 2005) reported that college students who were exposed to videos with stereotyped sexual images showed more acceptance of adversarial relationships than those who were not exposed. A survey performed among 214 adolescents revealed that there was an association between music-video-watching and permissive sexual behaviours. (Ward, 2006)

Research on sexualisation in lyrics:

In a 2003 study by Anderson and Carnagey (2003) the authors explain that one of the many reasons why lyric content affects adolescent's cognitive patterns so strongly is because music requires the person to use their imagination more vividly than if they were watching a video. Unlike video content, music does not 'fill in the gaps' visually – and this is where the listener's imagination comes to play.

The damaging effect of music lyrics on women is also discussed online by The State Hornet's Elizabeth Ramirez

“These type of lyrics can influence society into thinking a woman is something to be played with. They give the notion that a woman would not care if she was passed along from one man to the next. It gives the green light to whoever is listening to the lyrics to do the same”
(Ramirez, para 2, 2012)

Referencing Pitbull's song 'Hey Baby (Drop to the Floor)' Ramirez suggests that its

demeaning to women – irrespective of whether ‘bitch’ is used as a term of humiliation or endearment – because both songs focus on a woman’s body rather than her intelligence.

Research can show that these mere words can prime sexual objectification (Roberts and Gettman 2004). In an experiment conducted by Roberts and Gettman (2004) students unscrambled sentences with which were either sexual in content or body competence based, the results showed that by merely looking at sexual objectification words a state of self-objectification could be primed. These findings would suggest that it is extremely likely that exposure to sexual objectification lyrics would increase self objectification

Different effects by different music lyrics:

Research has shown that music may serve useful for many different functions for people such as emotional regulation(Zentner, Granjean, Scherer, 2008; Larsen & Stastny, 2011), inducing moods(Hunter, Schellenberg, Griffith, 2011) relaxation(de Niet, Tiemens, Lendemeijer, Hutschemaekers, 2009), evoking memories(Barret, Grimm, Robins, Wildschut, Sedikides, Janata, 2010) self expression and as a form of social identity (North & Hargreaves, 1999)

The influence of lyrics has been studied on a number of studies, but mainly surrounding the effects violent lyrics have on behaviour. Anderson and Carnagey (2005) conducted 5 experiments with 59 student’s examining the effects of lyrics with this violent content. They found overall that music with violent lyrics correlated with increased aggressive thoughts and hostile feelings. However looking at the more positive outlook of songs influences Greitemeyer (2009) found with 3 experiments with 162 students, that prosocial lyrics increased prosocial thoughts, interpersonal empathy and even fostered helping behaviour.

Interestingly similar research by Boulbry (2010) in experiment containing 786 customers in a restaurant setting showed that music with prosocial lyrics significantly correlated with an increase in tipping behaviour. So if research can show if violent music correlates with hostile attitudes and aggressive behaviour, and pro-social lyrics increases positive attitudes, then it would be valid to consider and to further research that sexualised lyrics in songs may influence the sexual attitudes and gender stereotyping of its listeners..

Just to emphasise how little research is done on the effects of sexualised music lyrics, a paper by Escobra-Chaves and Toetolaro (2005) outlining the effects of different sexualised media outlets on adolescents attitudes and behaviours, reported in the music section that no studies were identified that examined the effects of sexually explicit lyrics on adolescent sexual attitudes and behaviours, and with popular music present almost everywhere, from the supermarket to the mall, often as background music. It also is easily available through the radio, various recordings, the Internet, and new technologies (Sprankle, 2009) allowing people to hear it in diverse settings and situations, alone or shared with friends, and with the lyrical content of music becoming ever more sexualised on top of this huge amount of exposure to it , research on its effects on listeners attitudes towards sex and of gender stereotyping is crucial. Lyrics have become more explicit in their references to drugs, sex, and violence over the years.

Currently there are both limited and conflicting results about the effects of sexual lyrics. Much research on music looked at violent lyrics on hostile attitudes and aggressive behaviour overshadowing the numbers studying sexual lyrics (Fischer and Greitemeyer, 2006, Johannes 1995), however some findings coincide with the this effect of lyrics, showing that listeners of sexual lyrics from both genders, endorsed and approved of sexual permissiveness, in other

words that appearance and sexiness count for women and men are sex creatures, (Aubrey 2006, Bogt et al 2010) but other studies (Sprankle, & End, 2009) showed no relationship between sexualized lyrics and subsequent attitudes and stereotypical portrayals. However these studies had a limitation in their choice of music. For the censored song they used the “radio edit” versions, but this contains just as equivalent sexual messages, metaphors in the song, so no difference in sexual attitudes- stereotypes across groups because no difference between the two songs. And with former music producer Mike Stock's claim (Hitchcock, 2010) that pop music is becoming “too over-sexualised”, with sexualised music now not specific to a genre but within pop, dance, rap with the target audience for this music ranging from 12-34 with 65% listening to sexually explicit music everyday (Ward, 2002, 2006, Hitchcock 2010) and contrary to belief but no law for censoring sexual themes or references of songs, this is as Mike Stock stresses (Hitchcock, 2010) a huge modern crises that needs to be regulated.

Although the music industry has adapted to the regulatory measures, empirical evidence that establishes the rationale for these efforts, specifically that sexual content in music instigates negative sexual attitudes or behaviours, is lacking (Escobar-Chaves et al., 2005). Moreover, empirical evidence examining whether the record companies’ and musicians’ attempts to censor or edit sexually explicit content reduces or eliminates any possible change in attitudes or behaviour is nonexistent (Fischer, 2006). The purpose of the current study is to experimentally examine and compare the effects of censored and uncensored sexually explicit music on sexual attitudes and perceptions of sexual activity and gender stereotypes. A report by the APA task force in 2007 on the “sexualisation of children” found that there was plenty of evidence to show the presence of sexual objectification in Television, advertising, movies, sport magazines, music the internet. Its findings also included that in the studies reviewed it was women more so than men that were portrayed as sexual objects. 57%

of the videos featured a woman portrayed exclusively as a decorative sexual object. In the 182 videos analyzed by Strouse (1992), 37% of women wore revealing clothing, compared with 4.2% of men, 70 % of popular music contains degrading sexual content , The portrayal of women as sexual objects is highly damaging to the development of adolescents.

“In the current environment, teen girls are encouraged to look sexy, yet they know little about what it means to be sexual, to have sexual desires, and to make rational and responsible decisions about pleasure and risk within intimate relationships that acknowledge their own desires” – Tolman (In APA Report, 2007, p4)

However this sexual objectification of women is also emerging in the lyrics that modern music produce and with this area been so under studied with little research to its effects these lyrical content have on listeners, research addressing the sexualisation of girls via media ,it recommend that psychologists conduct research to “ examine the sexualisation of girls and women in all media but especially in music videos, music lyrics...In particular, examine the extent to which girls are portrayed in sexualised and objectified ways...specifically on sexualisation on other constructs such as gender-role stereotyping” (APA, p4, 2007). Thus research needs to look at specifically these lyrics and there subsequent effects on listeners attitudes around sex and gender stereotypes

Therefore the purpose of this relative investigation is to examine the thus far unstudied relationship between sexual lyrics and what effects these have on listeners subsequent sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes, These sexual attitudes are measured under 5 sub attitudes such as men as sex driven, the communion of relationships, sexual permissiveness, viewing woman as sexual objects, and gender stereotyping.

Rationale:

The aim of this research design is to look at these short term lyrical effects by censoring every sexual word, metaphor and reference and innuendos depicting woman as sexual objects, men as sex driven all the time etc. and comparing this with the uncensored song on young adults sexual attitudes towards permissive sex, communion of relationships and traditional gender stereotypes in female sexual objectification, males as dominate sexual initiators and gender roles in society. Young adults will be studied because numerous media influences are taken mainly on adolescents with little research on ages between 18-25 (median 21); also young adults are music industry's largest target audience for pop-dance music containing sexual themes (Basil G. Englis, *para 7* 1991)

The implication for this research should contribute to the literature within lyrical effects, and may apply in challenging music industries to censor sexual content and themes of songs, contributing to the question, Is Music Censorship Needed?

Main Hypothesis:

The purpose of the current experiment was designed to test whether short term exposure to sexual lyrics (group 1) will influence subsequent sexual attitudes and gender attitudes. To measure this, comparing a censored version (group 2) of same song, a non sexual song (group 3) with same artists and tempo as the sexualised song, and a control group (group 4) with no music. Comparing these with the sexual attitudes (sexual permissiveness, communion in relationships) and gender stereotypes (gender roles, female objectification, males as sex driven) of the sexual lyrics to find whether these lyrics actually cause a problem to listeners.

Thus there be will one main research question:

RQ1: will listening to sexualised lyrical content of songs effects both listeners acceptance of sexual attitudes towards casual sex (permissiveness), communion in relationships and traditional gender stereotypes on females as sex objects, sex driven men, gender roles and whether censoring this sexual content, will make a difference on these sexual attitudes gender stereotypes?

Hypothesis:

H1: It was hypothesised that those exposed to the censored version of the song would report less permissive attitudes show more support for value of love in sexual relationships (communion in relationships), and be less accepting of traditional attitudes toward women than participants exposed to an uncensored version of a song. It was also hypothesized that the effect of the censored version on the participants would not differ from the control conditions (a nonsexual song or no music).

H2: It was hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between sexual lyrical exposure and song preference on the with listener's acceptance of sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes with higher exposure resulting in higher acceptance of gender stereotypes and permissive sexual attitude.

H3: It was hypothesised that there would be a significant difference between males and females report differences in levels of acceptance of sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes. With males to report stronger attitudes towards men as sex driven, females as sex objects and traditional gender roles.

Methods:

Type of Design:

Online Quantitative study: Based on the research question, an online experimental design is used. The study utilized between-groups, with four levels. The uncensored lyric group, censored lyric group, nonsexual lyric group and no music group are the independent variables, with attitudes toward permissive sex, communion in relationships and stereotypical attitudes toward women and men serving as the dependent variables. Participants were randomly assigned to each group by placing their email address into an excel sheet that placed them into the group of either sexual lyrics, censored, non sexual or control. Then from this the link of the experiment would be sent out in correspondence to their groups.

Participants:

The target population for this experiment are young adults aged between 18 and 25, who are accessible to online access. 44 participants took part across the four groups, 21 male and 23 female. The exclusion criteria are people under the age of 18 years. However participants will be still included if some happened to be above 25, as these age groups are still subjected to these song lyrics from the media. Participants aged 18 to 25 to fit in with young adults age range, however 4 participants were aged 26-above will be still included because these ages are still exposed to this music and thus contribute to “adults” influences of these sexual attitudes.

The sample was collected through an online survey through social websites and email. This provides the possibility to gain a large amount of participants, participants use internet

devices to listen to music thus the survey will replicate that environment that people normally listen to music.

The method used to gain this sample will be snowball sampling by using social media sites and emails.

Each person randomly allocated to *one* of the four groups (e.g. sexual- censored-nonsexual-control) and the groups tested once for scores on five dependent variable.

Then random allocation of these samples into groups is produced by an Excel sheet. This will produce a random sample of participants in each group. Once the Excel sheet places them into the groups of either sexual group, censored, non sexual or control group. Then from this, the link of the experiment would be sent out in correspondence to their groups.

Materials:

Questionnaires:

Music Preferences and Sexual Lyrical Exposure:

Participants music preference was assessed before they listened to the music. This included 2 items on liking the most genres within music. “How much do you like the following types of music:” chart pop music, hip hop, rock, heavy metal, dance/house, techno, and classical music? Participants rated their responses on a 4-point Likert scale with response categories 1 (*dislike very much*), 2 (*dislike*) 3(*like*), and 4 (*like very much*). The second question asked how much music they listen and are exposed to songs that contains sexual lyrics. Participants rated their responses on a 4-point Likert scale with response categories 1 (*never*), 2 (*not often*) 3(*sometimes*), and 4 (*All the time*).

In order to reduce the transparency of the study and for participants to be more attentive to the lyrics, the participants were informed that they would be completing a task in how music lyrics affect memory. After listening to the music subjects next complete the questionnaires measuring their sexual and gender attitudes:

Understanding and Familiarity with Lyrics: Disguised as the memory task, the participants’ understanding and familiarity with the music lyrics were assessed after listening to the music, with a two-item measure in order to measure if participant were attentive during music exposure and whether they understood songs contained sexual references and whether censoring these lyrics made an difference in their recognition of sexual theme. Two questions asked if the participant had heard the song preceding being exposed to the music during the experiment. Response choices were “yes” and “no.” The second question, an open-ended item which asked participants to briefly account for the main theme or messages of the song’s

lyric. This item was scored as correct if the participant recognized sexual themes (e.g., references to casual sex) in the experimental song and if the participant recognized non sexual themes in the other control songs.

A translated version of the Attitudes toward Dating and Relationships (ATDR) (Ward 2002) was used to assess participants' sexual attitudes towards permissive sex and gender stereotypes. This 23 item questionnaire had consisted of three subscales. The first subscale, *"Men are sex driven"* contained 7 items. Sample questions read as follows: *"Men are always Ready a willing for sex; they think about it all the time"*. The second subscale, *"Casual sex is OK"*, contained 6 items. *"You don't need a relationship to have good sex; all you need are two people who are attracted to each other"* is an example of used items. *"Women as sexual objects"* is the third subscale, containing 10 items. Sample questions read as follow: *Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man. Reliability for this questionnaire was adequate, again taken from previous experiments (Ward, 2004, 2006)*

Attitudes towards women:

Participants' attitudes toward women were assessed using the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (ATWS) (Spence, Helmreich, & Stapp, 1973), a simplified 11-item survey was used, this scale examines beliefs about the roles women should play in different social situations (e.g., academia and employment settings) A sample question, *"In general the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions"*. Reliability for this is high (Cronbachs alpha .88) which was taken by previous experiments using this questionnaire.

Communion in Relationships:

Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS) (Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., & Reich, D. A. (2006) was used to select the subscale “communion in relationships” containing 5 questions, to test participants' attitude toward the value of love in sexual relationships. A sample question is “A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction”.

All attitude questions adopted the 4 point scale with the same response categories, 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*agree*), and 4 (*strongly agree*).

Confidence can be assured that these questions have succeeded in reliability and validity, since all questionnaires were used previously and been reported as valid and reliable by their experimenter

Equipment and resources:

In order to test whether regulation of music is needed, it is vital that this study censor every sexual reference within a song and test this against uncensored lyrics on subsequent sexual attitudes and gender stereotypes, the Audacity programme was used, this censored every instance of sexual reference by reversing those lyrics.

The song choice needed to represent and reflect modern music thus two songs were chosen to represent both male and females and the genres rap/ pop-dance contribution to different sexualisation of music lyrics, and also the modern genres of music contributing to this

sexualisation of song lyrics from the traditional explicit sexualised content in hip-hop (rap) which now filtered to mainstream pop-dance music

Thus the two songs chosen are,

Pitbull "*Shake*" containing rap lyrics depicting women as play-toys, sexual objects and men as wanting these of women, "*I wanna see u in the nude*", and "*Shake that ass if u Back that ass up*" and the dance-pop genre the song by,

Wynter Gordon "*Dirty Talk*" containing lyrics that depict women as sexual objects and sexually permissive, *S&M, on the floor, I like it hardcore, I wanna do some dirty things to you tonight.*

For comparison of a song that's non sexual but contains the same artists as above, and roughly the same beat as the songs previous, songs chosen:

Pitbull "Get It Started" and Wynter Gordon "Believer" will be listened in the non-sexual lyrics group.

All songs and questionnaires will be included in the online survey by using Qualrics.

Procedure:

One of the inclusion criteria is that participants must have internet access to complete the experiment.

When participants receive an email they will be informed that they are been invited to take part in a research that will experiment how music will affect memory, this will be explained to them at the start of the online survey (Information Sheet, see Appendix B). The debriefing about the nature of the study will provided when the online questionnaire is completed.

participants anonymity, with just gender and age been asked

For ethical consideration, before listening to the sexualised lyrical song, participants will be warned of the sexual (Sexual Warning content) content of songs, and if it would cause them offence, that it would be completely acceptable if they don't feel like participating in the online survey (See Appendix A)

Also debriefing participants when they complete they complete the questionnaire will occur No personal questions about the subject's sexual "experience" will be asked, rather about subjects "attitudes" towards sex and the opposite gender

Before they start the survey, they will be asked to listen to two songs before moving on the next section of answering the questionnaire. Depending on which group they are placed in, they will either listen to the song with full sexualised content, censored content, and songs with no sexual content, or in the control group where they listen to no songs and just fill out the questionnaire.

The time taken to listen to the songs and fill out the survey takes approximately 20 minutes.

When this is done participants are debriefed of the nature of the study.

Results:

Descriptive Statistics:

Disguised as the memory task, both the participants' understanding and familiarity with the music lyrics were assessed after listening to the music.

In order to ensure that the participants were attentive during the music exposure and were able to correctly understand and comprehend the song's lyrics, this memory task was analyzed. Results indicated that 97.8% of the participants correctly recalled the lyrical themes and were familiar with the songs they listened to across their respective conditions, indicating that participants listened and understood the songs lyrical content within their retrospective groups. The 2.2% of incorrect marked responses were due to the question not been answered and left blank.

The descriptive of participant music genre preference are shown in table 1, which shows Chart Pop and Hip/Hop the emerging genres contains sexualised lyrics' scoring higher on preference.

Table 1: Frequency of music preference percentage

Table 1	Chart-Pop	HipHop/Rap	Dance	Country	Rock
25%-below	0	4	1	13	4
26-50%	5	11	10	19	21
51-76%	22	20	21	10	12
77-100%	17	9	12	2	7

Inferential Statistics:

Hypothesis 1:

In order to determine whether censoring sexually explicit lyrics affected the participants' attitudes toward Sexual Permissiveness Scale, communion in relationships, men as sex driven, females as objects, and Attitudes Toward Women Scale, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. ANOVA was also conducted to test this possible effect of sexual content in music lyrics (uncensored and censored conditions vs. nonsexual and control conditions) on the participants' responses to the 5 dependent variables

When examining the mean number for scores for each group (see table 2 for the means and standard deviations), it can be seen that the control group reported lower mean scores across the 5 dependent variables (men as sex driven, sexual permissiveness, communion of relationships, women as sexual objects and attitudes towards women). A one-way analysis of variance was used throughout these groups and showed that there was a significant difference between the four groups in terms of scores on participants' attitudes toward sexual relationships, perceptions of sexual activity, and attitudes toward women and men, for example results indicated that the control group reported significantly lower scores across these 5 dependent variables compared to the other 3 group on the attitude that *men are sex driven* ($F(3,40) = 5.2$, $p < .004$).

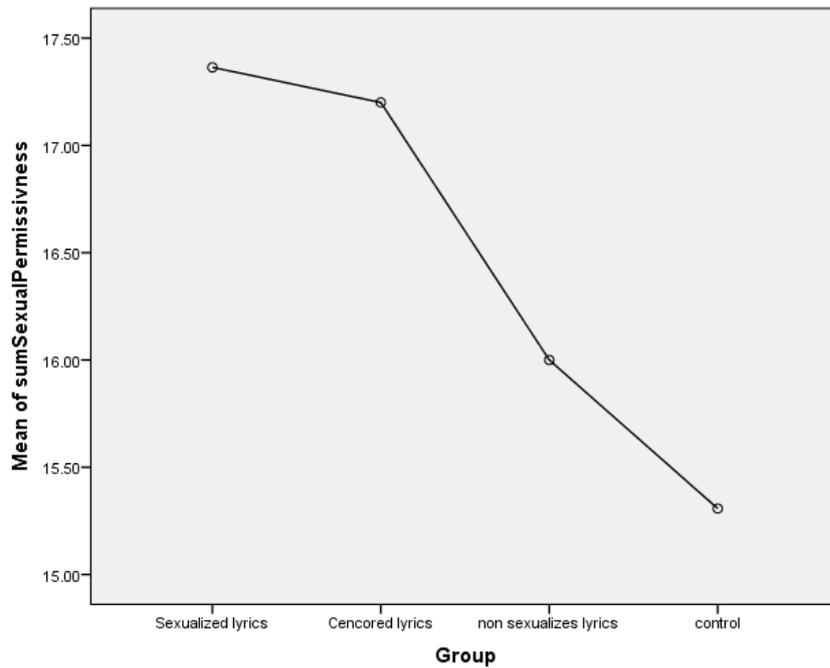
More specifically Tukey HSD Post hoc analysis confirmed that that differences were significant between the sexualised lyric group ($M = 19$, $SD = 2.4$, $p = .013$) the censored lyric group ($M = 19.2$, $SD = 2.5$, $p = .012$) and with the non sexualised lyric group ($M = 18.9$, $SD = 3.8$, $p = .024$).

With the *sexual permissiveness* dependent variable, it was expected that sexualised lyric, censored lyric and non-sexualised lyric groups would all differ across scores on permissive attitudes following their groups songs, however there was a significant difference between only two groups; again with the control group scoring significantly lower compared to the sexualised lyric group ($M=17.3$, $SD= 1.5$. $p=.046$) participants in the control group endorsed less permissive attitudes toward premarital sex and more progressive attitudes toward women. Although the censored lyric and non-sexualised lyric group did not reach significant, the groups however, as expected reported lower scores than the sexualised lyrics groups (See figure 3)

The hypothesized effect that sexualised lyric group would cause change in attitudes towards sexual objectification of women but which failed to reach statistical significance, $F(3, 40) = 2.2$, $p = .092$, there was no significant difference across any of the groups with scores on the attitude scores on *women as sexual objects* variable. Also rejecting this hypothesis, with no significant result achieved on the *attitudes towards women* variable. $F(3,40)=.2$, $p= .853$)

the *communion of relationships* variable reported significant results between two groups in terms of higher scoring reflecting a respect and value of sexual relationships. It was hypothesised that the censored lyrics group would score higher here in comparison to the sexualised lyrics group and results reflected this prediction with a significant difference between the groups $F(3 ,40)= 4.3$, $p=.010$.

Figure 3: Comparison of Sexual permissiveness mean scores



Summing up the results of this hypothesis:

The hypothesized effect that sexual content in music lyrics stimulates attitudinal change and that censoring these sexual lyrics protect from their effects, both these hypothesis failed to reach continuous statistical significance across all the dependent variables, although they achieved statistical significance with a difference in the groups attitudes towards the variable that men are sex driven and communion of relationships so the null is rejected with these variables.

Table 2 Means and (standard deviations) for hypothesized comparisons

Group	Men as Sex Driven	Sexual permissiveness	Communication of Relationships	Women as Sexual Objects	Attitude towards women
Sexualised Lyrics	19 (2.4)	17.3 (1.5)	14.6 (1.7)	26.8 (3.0)	29.7 (5.9)
Censored lyrics	19.2 (2.5)	17.2 (2.2)	15.1 (2.9)	28 (2.7)	27.8 (4.9)
Non Sexualised Lyrics	18.9 (3.8)	16 (1.7)	13.5 (1.5)	26.3 (3.6)	28.4 (6.8)
Control	15.4 (1.9)	15.3 (1.7)	12.3 (1.7)	24.5 (3.3)	28.6 (2.1)

Hypothesis 2:

A Spearman's rho correlation was conducted to find a relationship between previous sexual music exposure and music preference on the 5 dependent variables.

Results show that participants who favoured Hip/Hop or Rap music significantly correlated with the attitude that men are sex driven ($r_{s(44)} = 0.2, p = .05$).

There was a significant relationship also between scores on the genre dance music preference with previous exposure to sexualised music ($r_{s(44)} = .360, p = .009$). Indicating dance music is heavily linked with sexual lyrics.

However when focusing on whether a previous exposure to sexualised lyrics, or a preference

for a genre of music, and whether either of these were related with the 5 dependent variable, no significant relationship was observed ($r(44)=.24, p=.330$)

Indicating that participant's music preference of a genre or whether they were exposed to sexualised lyrics in the past. Neither of these influenced or effected results. The alternative hypothesis that music preference or previous exposure of sexualised lyrics would be related to the 5 in-dependent variables is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3:

In order to assess whether any gender differences exist, independent t-test was conducted with the five scales again serving as the dependent variables.

Surprisingly males and females reported similar mean scores across the five dependent variables, for example scores on attitudes towards men as sex driven, males (mean=18.2, SD=3.3) compared to females (mean=17.7, SD=2.9). An independent samples t-test found that there was no statistically significant difference between sexual attitudes across the 5 dependent variables of males and females, for example on attitudes towards women scale there was no significance ($t(42) = -1.4, p = .152$). Therefore the alternative hypothesis 3 can be rejected.

Discussion:

The main research aim was to test whether sexualised music lyrics would cause a change in listeners' attitudinal change in comparison to censoring these sexualised lyrics on the 5 dependent variables of men as sex driven, women as sexual objects, the communion of relationships, attitudes towards women, and the attitude towards sexual permissiveness. This study hypothesised that listening to these sexual lyrics would influence participants attitude towards are more accepting view on sexual permissiveness, women as sexual objects, and men as sex driven. Results support this hypothesis but only with two independent variables, that significant difference occurred between censored and sexual lyrics on the attitude of communion in relationships, and the attitude that men are sex driven. These results continue to show that type of lyrics participants listened to reflected their attitudes to some variables, for example the control group reported significantly lower results compared to sexualised lyrics group on the attitude that sexual permissiveness is ok. Although the censored lyric and non-sexualised lyric group did not reach significance here, the groups however, as expected reported lower scores than the sexualised lyrics groups. However results showed itself with no significance on the variable women as sexual objects across the groups indicating that there isn't a straightforward link between listening to sexual lyrics and attitudinal change.

The present findings contribute to the existing literature because of the difference between this study and previous research in the utilization of an experimental design.

This design enables the researcher to manipulate music type while controlling extraneous variables, which, in turn, reduces the likelihood of a pre-existing bias based on the participants exposure to previous sexual lyrics. Also previous research like Spankle and End, (2009) reported no significant results with sexualised lyrics and attitudinal change, however

they used “radio edit” songs as a comparison to the sexualised version, this study whereas focused directly on the lyrics and removed their effect by reversing the sexualised speech sound which would allow to test the direct effects of lyrics on attitudes. Previous research found a relationships between media consumption habits sexual attitudes or behaviours (Zillman, 1982, Wingood, 2003), and research that indicates that a single exposure to media can impact attitudes and behaviours (Parden 2005; Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006; St. Lawrence & Joyner, 1991; Wester et al.,1997). Because statistical significance was achieved for some variables in this study, such as the difference in sexual permissiveness, communion of relationship and that man were sex driven, and then results support previous research that lyrics can indeed effect attitudinal change.

Limitations:

The lack of consistence results, in that the music group (sexualised, censored, non sexual, control) inability to effect participants attitudes in sexual permissiveness, attitudes towards women and gender stereotypes consistently may be explained by the lack of difference between the songs, participants in the censored group could of “filled in the blanks” of the missing sexual words. This would be consistent as stated above with Anderson and Carnagey (2007) theory of filling in the gaps and using imagination of the replaced words. Therefore, exposure to the censored version of the song may have affected the listeners in a manner similar to the uncensored version. Additionally, an “artist effect” is also an explanation, although unlikely, for the current study’s finding. It could be argued that the artist might function as the stimulus that primes sexual attitudes. Thus, sexual attitudes would be affected across music conditions resulting in no differences. However this explanation may be ruled out, as results would expect a difference between the music conditions and the control (no

music, thus, no artist), which was not seen.

Age may be another limitation within this study. In order to test whether music lyrics' are influential, then testing them on susceptible minds would be more beneficial, thus college students may be less susceptible to sexual content than children/adolescents. However, arguing his claim indicated by Sears (1986) reporting that college students, who are predominantly asked to participate in experimental, psychological research, have less crystallized attitudes and less clearly-formulated senses of self than older adults. This indicates that college students are still susceptible to stimuli that might induce attitudinal change.

There are also limitations shared by most research with an experimental design and sexually-related dependent variables. The generalizability of the music is always a concern in media research. Given the sensitive nature of the items in the questionnaire, it is possible that participants responded in a way they believed to be socially desirable. Also because of the increased focus on the lyrics during the experiment, there is a possibility that participants were aware of the explicitness of the lyrics, which may have induced a correction of any effects that may have occurred. Although this is a possibility, other studies (Carpentier et al., 2007; Fischer & Greitemeyer, 2006; St. Lawrence & Joyner, 1991; Wester et al., 1997) have had similar artificial listening conditions and found significant differences between groups. Despite the attempt to mask the experiment as a memory study, participants may have guessed the true nature of the experiment and reacted accordingly.

Implications and the debate:

This research further adds to the empirical findings surrounding the newly researched area of the effects of music lyrics, especially the understudied sexualised lyrics that seem to be flooding our music outlets. Since this study found significant difference between the sexualised group, the censored group and the non sexual groups, although inconsistently for example they differed on the sexual attitudes such as communion of relationships and the gender stereotypes such as the attitude that men are sex driven. Nevertheless this does show that listening to sexualised music lyrics may influence a short term effect on some sexual attitude, and thus is a concern for music industries. Although for ethical reasons participants here were young adults, but this doesn't mean children or adolescents are buffered from this type of music. The music produced in the sexualised lyric group can be found on daytime music channels, radios, background music in store, and the lyrics still effected young adults attitudes on variables such as sexual permissiveness, therefore what about the younger listeners, children and adolescents who are also more greatly susceptible to their effects, are of great concern to parents. Perhaps censoring every sexual innuendo, metaphor and reference to sex as did this experiment, may be the extreme not be the way forward, although for this study censoring the sexualised lyrics caused significant difference on some attitude variables. But do we want as a society to prevent sexual expression in the likes of art, music and movies altogether?

However it's not the expression of sex that's the problem in lyrics, it's the expression of woman as a sexual object, that man is sex driven, and the wiping away the romance, respect and value of committed sexual relationships by using these damaging lyrics. But prohibiting these sexualised lyrics in music would be so insignificant towards the topic of sexualisation in the media, because of society's acceptance of this sexualised culture. On the other hand

banning derogatory lyrics depicting women as slaves of sex and appearance may set the marker, an example for other media outlets that are becoming sexualised to follow suit. From this experiment of the effects of sexualised lyrics therefore more questions than answers arise, which means more debates are needed as well a warrant for more research into the effects these lyrics can have on listeners. For example albeit with difficulty, a longitudinal study of the effects different kind's music lyrics' has on the listener's attitudes, behaviour and values. This would greatly pin-point the influences song lyrics' can have on people,

Conclusion:

The results of this study indicate that explicitness of sexual content within a song, there is significant differential impact on the listener when examining attitudes toward communion of relations, and the attitude that men are sex driven in comparison to either the censored group or control group. This study's design has allowed for the exploration of the causal effects of sexually explicit music and impacted in lyrical understanding. Past research has reported no significant relationships between listening to sexually explicit music and in attitudinal change. Because of the limitation in not censoring the sexualised lyrics in past research, this resulted in the failure to determine whether a significance between the censored and sexualised groups existed, thus limiting the understanding of the impact of lyrical content .As stated above, future research could also attempt to incorporate experimental methodologies in order to explain the effects of sexually explicit music because correlation effects does not tell enough.

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Appendices:

A: Questionnaire:

Are You? : Male/Female

Music Preferences and Sexual Lyrical Exposure:

Please rate how much you like the following types of music on a scale of 0 (Don't like at all) to 100 (Like very much). 4-point Likert scale with response categories 1 (*dislike very much*), 2 (*dislike*), 3 (*like*), and 4 (*like very much*).

How much of the music you listen to contains sexual lyrics? 4-point Likert scale with response categories 1 (*never*), 2 (*not often*), 3 (*sometimes*), and 4 (*All the time*).

Understanding and Familiarity with Lyrics:

Did you hear the two previous songs before? "Yes" and "No."

Briefly account for the main theme or messages of the songs lyric.

Men as sex driven (Gender stereotype and sexual attitude)

1. Men are usually interested in women as potential sex partners, and do not want to be "Just friends" with them
2. It is hard for men to resist their sexual needs
3. It is very natural for a man to worship a woman, to ogle women and to care about their appearance, even if he has a partner commitment
4. There is something wrong with a man who rejects the possibility of sex

5. Men who "are good with women" and get a woman in bed are cool.
6. Men always want and are always ready for sex, they think about it all the time
7. It is natural for a man to make sexual advances toward a woman he find attractive.

Positive attitude toward casual sex relationships: (sexual permissive attitude)

8. It is normal to have sex in the early stages of a relationship
9. A good way to reward or punish someone is to give or refuse someone sex
10. You don't need a relationship to have good sex; all you need are two people who are attracted to each other
11. There is nothing wrong with enjoying sex without affection (love for the person)
12. It's OK to have sex with several different people, because then you start getting good at it
13. The best sex is with no strings attached

Women as sexual- objects: (Gender stereotype and sexual attitude)

14. If a woman is attractive, she should use it. It is in her favour
15. "A beautiful woman attracts comments on her appearance and should be able to handle that
16. Women should focus more on their appearance than men.
17. Women should take care of their appearance, because men prefer a girlfriend whose good-looking
18. There is nothing wrong with men whistling at shapely women.
19. It annoys me when a man is only interested in a woman if she is attractive.
20. There is nothing wrong with men who are only interested in a woman's body.

21. Women prefer a handsome, strong and muscular man as a partner.
22. Women should not initiate sexual contact but should wait for the man to make his move.
23. Using her body and looks is the best way for a woman to attract a man

Communion in the relationship (Sexual attitude)

24. Sex is the closest form of communication between two people.
25. A sexual encounter between two people deeply in love is the ultimate human interaction.
26. At its best, sex seems to be the merging of two souls.
27. Sex without love is meaningless.
28. Sex is usually an intensive, almost overwhelming experience

Attitudes toward women scale:

29. Swearing is worse for a woman than for a man.
30. On a date the boy should be expected to pay for expenses.
31. On average women are as smart as men
32. More encouragement in a family should be given to sons than daughters to go to college
33. It is alright for a girl to play rough sports like football
34. In general the father should have greater authority than the mother in making family decisions
35. It is alright for a female to ask a male on a date
36. It is more important for males than females to do well at school
37. If both husband and wife have jobs, the husband should do a share of the housework such as washing dishes and laundry

38. Males are better leaders than females

39. Girls should be more concerned in becoming good wives and mothers rather than desiring a professional or business career favour

40. Girls should have the same freedom as boys

All attitude questions adopted the 4 point scale with the same response categories, 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*agree*), and 4 (*strongly agree*). The items were summed, in each subscale, resulting in a possible score ranges of

7–28 (men as sex objects),
6-24 (sexual permissiveness),
and 8-32 (women as sex objects),
and 5-20 (communion in relationships),
and 11-44(Attitudes toward women: the exception of items 31, 33, 35, 37 and 40. These items should be reversed coded, so that a higher score indicated) with higher scores indicating more progressive attitudes toward that subscale. With lower scores indicating a lesser attitude in favour of that subscale

Items	Scoring Key
1-7	Men as Sex-Driven
8-13	Sexual Permissiveness// Casual sex is Ok
14-23	Women as Sex-Objects
24-28	Communion in the relationship
29-40	Attitudes towards Women

Scoring:

point values as indicated, with the exception of items 31, 33, 35, 37 and 40. These items should be reversed coded, so that a higher score indicated

Appendix B: The information sheet

Dear Participant:

My name is Shane Lynch and I am a psychology graduate student at Dublin Business School. For my undergraduate thesis, I am examining the effects different music lyrics have on memory. It will involve listening to two modern songs followed by the questionnaire. This research is being conducted as part of my studies and will be submitted for examination.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the subsequent survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 30 minutes completing.

However a warning that songs do contain sexual lyrics

Participation requires you to be over 18 years of age,

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time

If you choose to participate in this project, please answer all questions as honestly as possible.

Following completion participants will be debriefed on the nature of the study.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

The questionnaires will be securely stored in electronic format and stored on a password protected computer and will be deleted shortly after completion of the study.

It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting you are over 18 years of age to participate in the study

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in my educational endeavors. The data collected will provide useful information for the effects today's song lyrics has on listeners,

If you would like a summary copy of this study please or If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me on the email listed below. If you are not satisfied with the manner in which this study is being conducted, you may report (anonymously if you so choose) any complaints to

