



Latino and European American early adolescents' exposure to music with substance-use references: Examining parent–child communication as a moderator



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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Music
Parent–child communication
Latino
Substance use
Theory of planned behavior
Social cognitive theory

This study hypothesized that frequent exposure to and attention to music with substance-use references would be indirectly related to alcohol, cigarette, or marijuana use through pro-substance-use beliefs (e.g., norms, outcome expectancies, and refusal efficacy). Parent–child communication, however, would attenuate such associations, which would differ by ethnicity. Multigroup mediation and moderation analyses were conducted, using cross-sectional survey data from 253 Latino and 308 European American 6th–8th grades students. For Latino and European American early adolescents, best-friend-injunctive norms and weak refusal efficacy were significant mediators, but not positive outcome expectancies. Descriptive norms were a significant mediator, but only for European American early adolescents. Although targeted parent–child communication and parental mediation did not moderate the associations between the music-exposure variables and the pro-substance-use beliefs variables, targeted parent–child communication attenuated the association between listening to favorite songs and alcohol consumption. Parental mediation attenuated the association between attention to music and alcohol consumption.

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Given that early adolescents grow up in media-saturated environments (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010), researchers and educators have raised concern over the possibility that certain types of music and lyrics may contribute to the onset of early adolescents' delinquent behaviors, including substance use (e.g., Primack, Douglas, & Kraemer, 2009). In particular, music is one medium that is inundated with pro-substance-use references (Christenson, Roberts, & Bjork, 2012; Primack, Dalton, Carroll, Agarwal, & Fine, 2008); however, limited research has examined early adolescents' music exposure in relation to their substance-use behaviors, despite the popularity of this medium among early adolescents (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). Prior studies that have considered this link have found a significant association between adolescents' and young adults' music preferences (e.g., heavy metal, rap/hip-hop, rave) and their substance-use behaviors (e.g., Chen, Miller, Grube, & Waiter, 2006; Miranda & Claes, 2004; Mulder, ter Bogt, Raaijmakers, & Bollebergh, 2007; Mulder et al., 2009; Selfhout, Delsing, ter Bogt, & Meeus, 2008). Nevertheless, few studies have examined these associations among early adolescents or have considered the underlying psychological mechanisms that explicate the associations between music exposure and substance use (Mulder et al., 2010).

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A focus on music exposure among early adolescents is important because changes may occur in their media use, as well as their cognitive processing of the media messages. For example, preadolescents are often major consumers of television. Nevertheless, TV viewing often decreases substantially as children enter adolescence, while listening to music increases (Roberts, Henriksen, & Foehr, 2004). Early adolescents' interest in music may stem from the lyrics that frequently address their developmental concerns, such as romance, sexuality, peer relationships, and the need for independence. Hence, music may help early adolescents make sense of their life events and construct a sense of self during this developmental period (ter Bogt et al., 2012; Larson, 1995).

To shed light on the association between music exposure and substance use among early adolescents, this study examines whether frequent exposure to music with substance-use references, favorite songs with substance-use references, and attention to music with substance-use references are indirectly related to substance use through pro-substance-use beliefs. In addition, it is important to identify factors that attenuate these associations because such findings can inform the design of substance-use-prevention interventions and campaigns for early adolescents. Although a number of protective factors exist, parents may function as socialization agents by conveying anti-substance-use messages to their offspring (i.e., targeted parent-child communication) or by specifically criticizing media that contain substance-use references (i.e., parental mediation) (Austin & Chen, 2003; Austin, Pinkleton, & Fujioka, 2000; Miller-Day & Kam, 2010). Thus, the present study also examines whether targeted parent-child communication against substance use and parental mediation attenuate the associations between music exposure and pro-substance-use beliefs, and in turn, substance-use behaviors.

Lastly, this study determines whether the aforementioned associations apply to Latino and European American early adolescents (in 6th–8th grades). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), Latinos have become the largest underserved ethnic group in the United States. For example, Latinos experience many disadvantages in terms of their socio-economic status, access to healthcare, and health conditions, which in turn, can affect their morbidity and mortality rates (Isaac, 2013). Moreover, recent national data indicate that Latino early adolescents are particularly at risk for substance use (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2012) and have reported listening to more rap/hip hop music than European American early adolescents (Roberts, Foehr, & Rideout, 2005), a music genre that contains more substance-use references than other genres (Primack et al., 2008). Prior studies have primarily investigated music exposure in relation to European or European American adolescents' substance use (e.g., Miranda, Gaudreau, Morizot, & Fallu, 2012; Mulder et al., 2007), but such findings may not apply to Latino early adolescents.

Early adolescents' attention to popular music with substance-use references

Content analyses of lyrics from popular music have shown that substance-use references are disturbingly prevalent. For example, in 1988, 12% of the top 100 *Billboard* songs included substance-use references, which increased to 30% in 2008 (Christenson et al., 2012). Nevertheless, examining music exposure among early adolescents begs the question of whether early adolescents actually pay attention to the lyrics of music or if they focus on other aspects instead. Although early, middle, and late adolescents report that they like the music's sounds and that lyrics are comparatively less important (Martino et al., 2006), a considerable number of adolescents also report paying attention to the lyrical content because it helps them express their feelings (Prinsky & Rosenbaum, 1987) and provides moral or social guidance (Rouner, 1990). Furthermore, adolescents often pay more attention to lyrics of songs containing delinquent and controversial ideas (Roberts & Christenson, 2001). In particular, middle adolescents may engage in fantasizing and social role-playing when listening to the narratives of songs (Miranda et al., 2012). When early adolescents listen to songs that describe substance use as "cool", early adolescents may picture themselves acting "cool" among peers when using substances. Hence, music appears to be particularly powerful during adolescence.

Using theory to explicate the motivational mechanisms of substance use

The theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) has been utilized to examine the underlying mechanisms that motivate adolescents of different ages to use substances (Guo et al., 2007; Kam, Matsunaga, Hecht, & Ndiaye, 2009; Marcoux & Shope, 1997). TPB suggests that as individuals maintain greater subjective norms (also referred to as injunctive norms; i.e., believe that important others think they should engage in a particular behavior), positive outcome expectancies (i.e., believe that engaging in the behavior will result in positive outcomes), and efficacy (i.e., believe they have the ability to engage in the behavior) that are in favor of a particular activity, they are more likely to develop intentions to carry out that behavior, and in turn, enact it (Ajzen, 1991). Furthermore, as individuals perceive that others around them are participating in the behavior (i.e., descriptive norms; Reno, Cialdini, & Kallgren, 1993), the more likely they are to engage in it.

TPB focuses on motivational factors, but it does not answer one critical question: how do early adolescents develop norms, attitudes, and efficacy regarding a particular behavior? One notable media effects theory, social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 2009), has been frequently used to understand the effects of media exposure on children and adolescents' aggressive behaviors (Wilson, 2008), as well as sexual attitudes and sexual behaviors (Ward & Friedman, 2006). SCT suggests that children and adolescents learn behaviors from observing models in their environment, and media can provide particularly powerful models (Bandura, 2001; Tickle, Sargent, Dalton, Beach, & Heatherton, 2001). Further, SCT (Bandura, 2009) suggests that media messages are more likely to exhibit an influence when individuals pay attention to media content and are able to retrieve the messages for imitation. Also, if media show people experiencing positive outcomes when performing a

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