

Teen-Oriented Radio and CD Sexual Content Analysis

National Institute
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Teen-Oriented Radio and CD Sexual Content Analysis

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Teen-Oriented Radio and CD Sexual Content Analysis

7/15/99

Executive Summary

The sexual content of teen-oriented radio programming and top-selling compact discs was measured. Overall, 22 percent of radio segments contained sexual content, and 20 percent of these were “pretty explicit” or “very explicit.” When there is sexual content on the radio, it tends to be during music segments (44% include sexual content) or during talk segments (30%). Almost half (44%) of sexual messages during talk segments referred to sex outside of pre-existing relationships, whereas fewer than one in ten (6%) messages referred to sex within a pre-existing relationship.

Each of the top 10 CDs includes at least one song with sexual content. Forty-two percent of the songs on these CDs contain sexual content, and 41 percent of these are “pretty explicit” or “very explicit.” There were large differences in the amount and degree of sexual content among the CDs. Five of the top 10 CDs included the warning: “Parental Advisory: Explicit Content.”

For both the CDs and the radio programming, very few songs or segments included messages about sexual planning/responsibility, the consequences or risks of sexual behavior, the benefits of sexual patience, or fidelity.

Purpose

To provide information about the sexual content of (1) teen-oriented radio programming in the Minneapolis-St. Paul market, and (2) top-selling music compact discs (CDs).

Overview of Method

Selection of Radio Programming

One radio station in Minneapolis dominates the teen market--KDWB (101.3 FM). This station controls approximately 47 percent of the teen (ages 12 - 17) market share. The station with the second largest percentage of market share (KXPT, 104.1 FM) only controls approximately 10 percent of the teen market share, and the rest of the teen share is distributed among numerous other stations. Because KDWB is the dominant teen station, we chose to sample programming only from KDWB.



KDWB has the highest weekday ratings among the teen market during the 6 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m. time slots.¹ These correspond roughly to the Dave Ryan morning show and the Tone E. Fly afternoon show. Thus, we chose to sample two hours of programming (from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.) each day for one week. KARE-11 ordered one week's worth of programming during these times from a private source. We received tapes from the week of February 8 through February 12, 1999. Although KARE-11 specifically requested a week when both Dave Ryan and Tone E. Fly were on the air, the tapes from this week only included the scheduled Dave Ryan show. The afternoon show was entirely music programming (there are normally talk segments interspersed with the music). Therefore, our sample included a week of the Dave Ryan morning show and a week of afternoon music programming. We subsequently taped one hour of afternoon programming during the week of April 19 through April 23, 1999. The normal host was present during this week.

Selection of CDs

KARE-11 received a list of the top 200 albums (measured by retail sales) for the week ending February 7, 1999. This information would have been used to help select the music to be aired on the radio for the week of February 8. We chose to analyze the top 10 CDs from this list. The CDs are:

1. Britney Spears, Baby One More Time
2. Lauryn Hill, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill
3. Offspring, Americana
4. Foxy Brown, Chyna Doll
5. N Sync, N Sync
6. Dixie Chicks, Wide Open Spaces
7. Silkk the Shocker, Made Man
8. 2Pac, Greatest Hits
9. DMX, Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood
10. Everlast, Whitey Ford Sings the Blues

Coding for Sexual Content

Three trained media raters conducted the content analysis. All three raters were female. They participated in five hours of training to learn to use the coding sheets (Appendices A and B). The raters coded independently of each other. Every CD and radio program was coded by two raters. Average agreement among the raters was 91%. Conflicts were resolved by having two raters re-listen to the segment in question and reach agreement together about the segment.

¹ In contrast to market share, which is the percentage of the listening audience that is listening to a specific station, ratings are a percentage of the population of teens (listening or not) tuned into a specific station.

Two types of sexual content were rated: (1) sexual innuendo or seductive talk/lyrics, and (2) direct discussion or description of sexual intercourse. These categories are based on similar categories used in sexual content analyses of television programs (Heintz-Knowles, 1996). These categories are used to capture specifically sexual dialogue or lyrics, in contrast to romantic dialogue or lyrics.

We measured a number of content areas, including whether there was any mention of (1) planning or sexual responsibilities, such as condoms or birth control methods, (2) consequences or risks of sexual behavior, such as pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases, (3) the benefits of sexual patience or abstinence, (4) fidelity or monogamy, or whether there were (5) sexual or suggestive sound effects.

The relationship context of every segment including sexual content was coded to determine whether the discussion of the potential or actual sexual encounter was (1) within a pre-existing relationship, (2) outside a pre-existing relationship or prior to a relationship, or (3) undeterminable from the information given.

Finally, each segment including sexual content was coded on a four-point Likert scale for amount of explicitness. The four points were verbally anchored as follows: not at all explicit, a little explicit, pretty explicit, and very explicit.



Examples of Sexual Content Ratings:

1. “Oh baby, baby / The reason I breathe is you / Boy you got me blinded / Oh pretty baby / There’s nothing that I wouldn’t do / It’s not the way I planned it / Show me how you want it to be” (Britney Spears, *Baby One More Time*). This is coded as containing no sexual content.
2. “And get this, a Drew Carey love triangle. Three guys, one girl, hey, use your imagination.... So, if you’re looking for a better way to spend time with your valentine, stay home for valentine’s the ABC way -- a twosome, a threesome, and a free-for-all!” (ABC “Valentine Wednesday” commercial, 2/10/99). This is coded as sexual innuendo, “not at all explicit.”
3. “I won’t even tell you the kind of stuff that I did when I was a teenager, ‘cuz I, I’m just embarrassed about what we used to do to entertain ourselves with farm animals on weekends.” (Dave Ryan, 2/11/99). Coded as sexual innuendo, “a little explicit.”
4. “...It was so dumb / should’a used a condom...Let him do his thing / I’m the one he’s loving / I’m here to show y’all / having the kid ain’t meaning nothing / That ain’t keeping him / especially if he in love with another chick / then you’re stuck with the baby mother shit” (Foxy Brown, *My Life*). Coded as sexual innuendo, “pretty explicit,” including discussion of responsibilities and consequences.
5. “It’s been three weeks since you’ve been looking for your friend / The one you let hit it and never called you again... You act like you ain’t hear him then gave him a little trim...Plus when you give it up so easy you ain’t even fooling him / If you did it then, then you probably fuck again...The quick to shoot the semen stop acting like boys and be men...” (Lauryn Hill, *Doo Wop (That Thing)*). Coded as direct discussion of sexual intercourse, “very explicit,” including discussion of planning, the benefits of sexual patience, and fidelity.
6. “Give me some room / Oh y’all just want to dig in my womb / You don’t even know me / Want to fuck my friends?...Leave you numb / Make me come / Five more times, need five more bottles to get my shit wet / You ain’t even sucked the tits yet...Fuck you right” (Foxy Brown, *Tramp*). Coded as direct discussion of sexual intercourse, “very explicit,” outside of a pre-existing relationship.

Summary of Results

Radio

Overall Results

The five hours of morning show programming and the ten hours of afternoon music programming were combined for analysis. The unit of analysis is a segment. A segment is defined as a sequence for which the setting was continuous. For example, in this analysis, a talk segment would be considered one segment even if the topic of conversation shifted. As soon as a commercial started, a new segment would begin. As a general rule, brief (under 15 seconds) spoken introductions were considered part of the song being introduced. Table 1 below shows the overall distribution of segments.

Table 1
Types of Radio Segments

| Type of Segment | Percent of Segments (N=473) |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Talk | 13% |
| Music | 29% |
| Commercial | 42% |
| Public Service Announcement | 1% |
| News/Weather/Sports/Traffic/Station ID | 5% |
| Promo/Intro/Outro | 10% |

Overall, 22 percent of radio segments contained sexual content (Table 2).

Table 2
Percent of Segments Including Sexual Content

| Type of Sexual Content | Percent of Segments (N=473) |
|--|-----------------------------|
| No Sexual Content | 78% |
| Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 18% |
| Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 4% |

We measured the relationship context of the sexual content. Of the 100 segments that included sexual content, almost three-quarters (72%) did not make it clear whether the sexual encounter was between people who were within a pre-existing relationship or were outside of a pre-existing relationship (Table 3). However, of those that were clear, more (17%) were between people outside of a relationship than between people in a pre-existing relationship (11%).

Table 3
Relationship Context of the Sexual Content

| Relationship | Percent of Segments (N=100) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Within a pre-existing relationship | 11% |
| Outside or pre-relationship | 17% |
| Undetermined | 72% |

Of the 100 segments including sexual content, 20 percent were “pretty explicit” or “very explicit” (Table 4).

Table 4
Level of Explicitness of the Segments with Sexual Content

| Level of Explicitness | Percent of Segments (N=100) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Not at all explicit | 27% |
| A little explicit | 53% |
| Pretty explicit | 12% |
| Very explicit | 8% |

We measured a number of content “messages” of the segments with sexual content, including whether the segments included each of the following:

- ◆ Any mention of planning or sexual responsibilities
- ◆ Any mention of the consequences or risks of sexual behavior
- ◆ Any mention of the benefits of sexual patience or abstinence
- ◆ Any mention of fidelity or monogamy
- ◆ Sexual sound effects

As shown in Table 5, very few segments included any of these messages. However, 26 percent of segments including sexual content also included sexual sound effects (77% of these were in songs).

Table 5
Specific Content of Segments

| Content Area | Percent of All Segments (N=473) | Percent of Segments with Sexual Content (N=100) |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Planning or Responsibilities | 0% | 1% |
| Consequences or Risks | 1% | 4% |
| Benefits of Sexual Patience | 0% | 0% |
| Fidelity or Monogamy | 1% | 5% |
| Sexual Sound Effects | 6% | 26% |

Segment-Specific Results

There are large differences among the types of segments regarding the prevalence of sexual content. In general, when there is sexual content on the radio, it tends to be during music segments (45%) or talk segments (30%). Table 6 shows the type of sexual content broken down by segment type.

Table 6
Sexual Content by Segment Type

| Segment Type | Type of Sexual Content | Number of Segments | Percent of Segments |
|--|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| Music | None | 75 | 55% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 47 | 34% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 15 | 11% |
| Talk | None | 42 | 70% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Talk | 16 | 27% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 2 | 3% |
| Commercial | None | 179 | 91% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Talk | 18 | 9% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| Promo/Intro/Outro | None | 45 | 94% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Talk | 3 | 6% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| News/Weather/ Sports/Traffic/ Station ID | None | 25 | 100% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Talk | 0 | 0% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| PSA | None | 6 | 100% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Talk | 0 | 0% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |

There are differences among the types of segments regarding the relationship context of the sexual content. Specifically, mention of sexual activity outside of pre-existing relationships is much more common during talk segments than other segment types, and also much more common than discussion of sex within pre-existing relationships. Table 7 gives the details for the three types of segments that compose the majority of sexual content.

Table 7
Relationship Context of the Sexual Content by Segment Type

| Segment Type | Type of Sexual Content | Number of Segments | Percent of Segments |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Music | Within a pre-existing relationship | 7 | 11% |
| | Outside or pre-relationship | 9 | 14% |
| | Undetermined | 47 | 75% |
| Talk | Within a pre-existing relationship | 1 | 6% |
| | Outside or pre-relationship | 7 | 44% |
| | Undetermined | 8 | 50% |
| Commercial | Within a pre-existing relationship | 3 | 17% |
| | Outside or pre-relationship | 1 | 5% |
| | Undetermined | 14 | 78% |

Most of the sexual content during the talk segments we analyzed was of short duration. On average, the sexual content only made up about three percent of the total time spent talking.



Summary of Results

Compact Discs

Overall Results

Each of the 10 CDs included at least one song with sexual content. There were a total of 159 songs on the top 10 CDs. Of the 159 songs, 42 percent contained sexual content (Table 8).

Table 8
Percent of Songs Including Sexual Content

| Type of Sexual Content | Percent of Songs (N=159) |
|--|--------------------------|
| No Sexual Content | 58% |
| Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 23% |
| Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 19% |

We measured the relationship context of the sexual content. Of the 66 songs that include sexual content, over two-thirds (68%) do not make it clear whether the sexual encounter is between people who are in a pre-existing relationship or are outside of a pre-existing relationship (Table 9). Fourteen percent of the songs with sexual content are about sexual activities occurring between people who are not in a pre-existing relationship.

Table 9
Relationship Context of the Sexual Content

| Relationship | Percent of Songs (N=66) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Within a pre-existing relationship | 17% |
| Outside or pre-relationship | 14% |
| Both within and outside relationship | 1% |
| Undetermined | 68% |

Of the 66 songs including sexual content, 41 percent are “pretty explicit” or “very explicit” (Table 10).

Table 10
Level of Explicitness of the Songs with Sexual Content

| Level of Explicitness | Percent of Songs (N=66) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Not at all explicit | 15% |
| A little explicit | 44% |
| Pretty explicit | 21% |
| Very explicit | 20% |

We measured a number of content “messages” contained in the songs, including whether the songs included each of the following:

- ◆ Any mention of planning or sexual responsibilities
- ◆ Any mention of the consequences or risks of sexual behavior
- ◆ Any mention of the benefits of sexual patience or abstinence
- ◆ Any mention of fidelity or monogamy
- ◆ Sexual sound effects

As shown in Table 11, very few songs included any of these messages. However, 18 percent of songs including sexual content also included sexual sound effects.

Table 11
Specific Content of Songs

| Content Area | Percent of All Songs (N=159) | Percent of Songs with Sexual Content (N=66) |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| Planning or Responsibilities | 3% | 6% |
| Consequences or Risks | 3% | 8% |
| Benefits of Sexual Patience or Abstinence | 2% | 5% |
| Fidelity or Monogamy | 3% | 6% |
| Sexual Sound Effects | 8% | 18% |

Individual CD Results

While all of the top 10 CDs include at least one song with sexual content, there are large differences among the 10 CDs. Table 12 shows how many songs include sexual content for each CD. For three of the 10 CDs (highlighted below in yellow), a majority of songs include sexual content.

Table 12
Sexual Content of Individual CDs

| CD | Type of Sexual Content | Number of Songs | Percent of Songs |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Britney Spears | None | 10 | 91% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 1 | 9% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| Lauryn Hill | None | 13 | 93% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 0 | 0% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 1 | 7% |
| Offspring | None | 11 | 84% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 1 | 8% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 1 | 8% |
| Foxy Brown | None | 1 | 6% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 6 | 35% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 10 | 59% |
| N Sync | None | 7 | 54% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 6 | 46% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| Dixie Chicks | None | 8 | 67% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 4 | 33% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 0 | 0% |
| Silkk the Shocker | None | 14 | 70% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 5 | 25% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 1 | 5% |
| 2Pac | None | 11 | 44% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 5 | 20% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 9 | 36% |
| DMX | None | 7 | 44% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 2 | 12% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 7 | 44% |
| Everlast | None | 11 | 61% |
| | Sexual Innuendo or Seductive Lyrics | 6 | 33% |
| | Direct Description of Sexual Intercourse | 1 | 6% |

Five of the top 10 CDs have the warning label “Parental Advisory: Explicit Content” on their covers. These five are:

- ◆ Foxy Brown, Chyna Doll
- ◆ Silk the Shocker, Made Man
- ◆ 2Pac, Greatest Hits
- ◆ DMX, Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood
- ◆ Everlast, Whitey Ford Sings the Blues

Four of these five were rated as having songs that include “Very Explicit” or “Pretty Explicit” sexual content. Only Everlast, Whitey Ford Sings the Blues, was not rated as such. There was also one CD, Lauryn Hill, which had one song rated as “Very Explicit,” although the CD carried no parental warning.



References

Heintz-Knowles, K. E. (1996). Sexual activity on daytime soap operas: A content analysis of five weeks of television programming. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.



APPENDIX A

Radio Program Sexual Content Coding Sheet

Program: _____

Rater Initials: _____

Program Date: _____

Program Time: _____

Segment number: _____

Total Length of segment: _____

1. Type of Segment:

- a. _____ Talk → **CODE FOR AND TIME SEXUAL CONTENT**
- b. _____ Music/Song → **CODE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT**
- c. _____ Commercial → **CODE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT**
- d. _____ Public Service Announcement → **CODE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT**
- e. _____ News/Weather/Sports/Traffic/Station ID → **CODE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT**
- f. _____ Promo/Intro/Outro → **CODE FOR SEXUAL CONTENT**
- g. _____ Other (Specify: _____)

2. Record the total length of time there is sex-related talk in this segment (regardless of type)

_____ Total length of sex-related talk (**ONLY FOR TALK SEGMENTS**)

3. Type of sex-related message (*Mark one*):

- a. _____ None
- b. _____ Includes sexual innuendo/seductive talk/lyrics
- c. _____ Includes direct discussion/description of sexual intercourse
- d. _____ Other (Specify: _____)

4. Content (*Mark all that apply*):

- a. _____ Includes discussion of **planning/responsibilities** (e.g., condoms, the pill, the sponge, etc.)
- b. _____ Includes discussion of **consequences/risks** (e.g., pregnancy, STDs, etc.)
- c. _____ Includes discussion of benefits of **abstinence**
- d. _____ Includes discussion of **fidelity/monogamy**
- e. _____ Includes sexual/suggestive **sound effects**

5. Is the discussion of the potential/actual sexual encounter:

- Within a pre-existing relationship Outside or pre-relationship Undetermined

6. In your opinion, how explicit is this segment/song? (*Mark one*)

- Not at all explicit A little explicit Pretty explicit Very explicit

7. Please write verbatim any particularly salient sexual statement(s)/lyric from this segment



APPENDIX B
CD Sexual Content Coding Sheet

Artist: _____

Rater Initials: _____

CD Title: _____

Song: _____

3. Type of sex-related message (*Mark one*):

- a. _____ None → **ONLY CODE FOR SOUND EFFECTS**
- b. _____ Includes sexual innuendo/seductive talk/lyrics
- c. _____ Includes direct discussion/description of sexual intercourse
- d. _____ Other (Specify: _____)

4. Content (*Mark all that apply*):

- a. _____ Includes discussion of **planning/responsibilities** (e.g., condoms, the pill, the sponge, etc.)
- b. _____ Includes discussion of **consequences/risks** (e.g., pregnancy, STDs, etc.)
- c. _____ Includes discussion of benefits of **abstinence**
- d. _____ Includes discussion of **fidelity/monogamy**
- e. _____ Includes sexual/suggestive **sound effects**

5. Is the discussion of the potential/actual sexual encounter:

- Within a pre-existing relationship Outside or pre-relationship Undetermined

6. In your opinion, how explicit is this segment/song? (*Mark one*)

- Not at all explicit A little explicit Pretty explicit Very explicit

7. Please write verbatim any particularly salient sexual statement(s)/lyric from this segment

