



Hip-hop and education: A literature review of experiences

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe educational initiatives that use hip-hop culture as a means of socio-educational action. To this end, the authors carried out a systematic review of relevant articles published over the last 10 years in high-impact peer-reviewed journals and written in English, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian. After applying inclusion/exclusion criteria, 68 articles were analysed. This analysis revealed how most of the reported experiences refer to formal secondary education. Although a third of these experiences are linked to critical pedagogies, these were not derived from the critical use of hip-hop – which was largely instrumental. But by means of a thematic content analysis, the authors identify the main strengths and limitations of hip-hop culture as an educational medium. Among the strengths they highlight are its potential to build culturally relevant educational contexts for students traditionally excluded from the academic curriculum, its fostering of students' political and social participation, and its facility to promote critical thinking. Among the challenges encountered in using hip-hop culture in educational spaces are some educators and families' perceptions of hip-hop as anti-educational, the imposition by educators of a vision of hip-hop that is not shared by young people, and the lack of systematisation of experiences that can provide guidance on how to carry out this type of initiative.

Keywords Hip-hop education · Rap music · Hip-hop pedagogy · Critical pedagogy · Systematic literature review

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Résumé

Hip-hop et éducation : une analyse documentaire d'expériences – Cette étude a pour objectif de décrire des projets éducatifs utilisant la culture hip-hop comme moyen d'action socio-éducatif. À cette fin, les auteurs ont effectué une analyse systématique d'articles pertinents en anglais, en espagnol, en portugais ou en italien, publiés ces 10 dernières années dans des revues à fort impact évaluées par des pairs. Après application de critères d'inclusion et d'exclusion, 68 articles ont été analysés. Cette analyse a révélé que la plupart des expériences dont il est fait état se rapportaient à l'enseignement secondaire formel. Bien qu'un tiers d'entre elles fussent liées à des pédagogies critiques, elles ne découlaient pas de l'usage critique du hip-hop, qui était largement déterminant. Toutefois, les auteurs ont recouru à une analyse thématique du contenu pour identifier les principales forces et limites de la culture hip-hop en tant que moyen d'éducation, dont ils soulignent entre autres points forts les possibilités de créer des contextes éducatifs culturellement pertinents pour des étudiants traditionnellement exclus du cursus académique, le fait d'encourager les étudiants à participer à la vie politique et sociale, et la facilité à promouvoir la pensée critique. Parmi les difficultés rencontrées dans l'utilisation de la culture hip-hop au sein des espaces éducatifs, notons le fait que certains éducateurs et certaines familles considèrent que le hip-hop est anti-éducatif – une vision imposée par les éducateurs que les jeunes ne partagent pas – et le manque de systématisation des expériences susceptibles d'offrir une orientation sur la façon de mener ce type de projets.

Resumen

Hip-hop y educación: una revisión bibliográfica de experiencias – El objetivo de este estudio fue describir iniciativas educativas que utilizan la cultura hip-hop como medio de acción socioeducativa. Para ello, las/os autoras/es llevaron a cabo una revisión sistemática de artículos publicados en los últimos 10 años en revistas revisadas por pares, de alto impacto y escritos en inglés, español, portugués o italiano. Tras aplicar criterios de inclusión/exclusión, se analizaron 68 artículos. Este análisis reveló cómo la mayoría de las experiencias relatadas se refieren a la educación secundaria formal. Aunque un tercio de estas experiencias están vinculadas a pedagogías críticas, éstas no se derivaron en uso crítico del hip-hop, que fue en gran medida instrumental. Además, mediante un análisis de contenido temático, los autores identifican los principales puntos fuertes y las limitaciones de la cultura hip-hop como medio educativo. Entre los puntos fuertes destacan su potencial para construir contextos educativos culturalmente relevantes para alumnado tradicionalmente excluido del currículo académico, su capacidad para fomentar la participación política y social de las/os estudiantes y su facilidad para promover el pensamiento crítico. Entre los retos encontrados en el uso de la cultura hip-hop en espacios educativos se encuentran la percepción de algunos educadores y familias de la cultura hip-hop como antieducativa, la imposición por parte de los educadores de una visión del hip-hop que no es compartida por los jóvenes y la falta de sistematización de experiencias que puedan orientar sobre cómo llevar a cabo este tipo de iniciativas.

Introduction

Hip-hop is a socio-cultural phenomenon that emerged during the 1970s in the South Bronx area of New York City. In recent decades, researchers have identified a range of factors underlying the development of this culture (Haider 2020, 2018; Chang 2017, 2005; Carbone 2017; Lamotte 2014; Naison 2014). These include a scarcity of social resources, racism, segregation, exclusion from the labour market, and the decline of associative networks and social movements opposing class- and race-based discrimination. Due to a lack of other leisure options, young people began organising neighbourhood “block parties” where music was the main attraction. These events, which were sometimes promoted by gangs, developed into a common form of youth self-organisation in South Bronx neighbourhoods (Piskor 2015) and gradually became part of a community organising strategy (Lee 2020). Block parties represented a response by urban youth to the inequalities they experienced (Urbanek et al. 2021), as well as an expression of cultural resistance (Willis 1978). Thus, hip-hop culture emerged both as a movement of celebration and as a way to rebel against discrimination and demand social rights (Chang 2017, 2005; Piskor 2015).

Although hip-hop culture comprises various forms of expression, it has traditionally been defined around four elements: graffiti, breakdance, turntablism and rap music (Travis 2015). Hand in hand with cultural globalisation, this phenomenon has been virally successful, reaching young people around the world in a wide range of contexts (Vito 2019; Gadet 2015). Hip-hop has also had a major impact on education. Some educationists have regarded hip-hop culture as anti-intellectual or unsuitable for educational environments (Lee 2020; Akom 2009). This may be explained by a tendency in educational spaces to privilege forms of cultural capital that are aligned with the dominant culture (Khalifa 2013; Bourdieu and Passeron 2003 [1964], 1979). Hip-hop culture exists outside this dominant cultural discourse; it criticises educational institutions for this very reason (Mustaffa 2022; Khalifa 2013; Akom 2009). Rap songs also address issues of stratification, lack of support for marginalised students within educational institutions, and overt discrimination (Mustaffa 2022; Hebdige 1979, as cited in Dedman 2011).

However, despite criticisms, more and more educational actors are incorporating hip-hop culture into processes and initiatives (Lee 2020), giving rise to the terms *hip-hop-based education (HHBE)* and *hip-hop pedagogy (HHP)*. Although these terms tend to be used interchangeably throughout the literature, we have identified some key differences between them.

Hip-hop-based education (HHBE)

Educational initiatives that include some elements of hip-hop culture into their practices are classified as *HHBE* (Hall 2011, as cited in Love 2016, p. 415). These can have very diverse aims: for example, to improve certain educational

competences (music, languages or sciences, for instance), to improve self-esteem or other psychosocial factors, or to make an educational subject more attractive to students, etc. As Edmund Adjapong and Cristopher Emdin point out:

Though much research has been published in regards to Hip-Hop-Based Education (HHBE), researchers mainly focus on how to incorporate Hip-Hop culture into school-based curricula, particularly using English Language Arts curricula (Adjapong and Emdin 2015, p. 67).

HHBE aims to bring specific contents and competencies closer to the students in an attractive and more participatory way. This approach is based on the idea that educational spaces should be culturally responsible and responsive by incorporating the knowledge and languages of all students into the curriculum (Chetty and Turner 2018; Parmar 2005). Very often, hip-hop is used in the classroom to promote the achievement of traditional educational standards by a section of the population that has historically suffered discrimination (Lee 2020). Authors such as Lauren Kelly and Donald Sawyer (2019) remind us that the use of hip-hop in the classroom may, thus, be purely utilitarian and does not necessarily imply a critical approach to the subject matter.

Hip-hop pedagogies (HHP)

On the other hand, we find hip-hop pedagogies (HHP) representing certain values of hip-hop culture and thus acting as a protective factor for youth suffering racism or poverty (Lee 2020). In this sense, there is a clear intersection between HHP and critical pedagogies, as both seek social justice and increased critical literacy (Travis 2015). While the school system has become subordinate to the economic and labour systems and is failing to reduce inequalities, critical educators have for years been exploring, advocating and organising alternative ways of seeing, learning and living (Mayo and Vittoria 2022). This is one of the main reasons for the emergence of hip-hop pedagogy. However, there is neither an agreed definition nor a homogeneous characterisation of what hip-hop in education entails. Thus, when this subject is approached, we speak rather of hip-hop pedagogies, emphasising their plurality. For example, Marcella Runnell and Martha Díaz (2007; cited in Travis 2015, p. 165) point out that HHP initiatives are characterised by three essential aspects: they encourage the analysis of power relations that privilege dominant groups, whether around class, race, gender, or other “cultural or institutional entities”; they use hip-hop to inspire action for positive change; and they seek social justice, even when using hip-hop culture occasionally. Antwi Akom (2009) is more specific, referring to characteristics such as the agency of young people, the cooperative nature of these initiatives, the analysis of racism and other axes of oppression, the application of an intersectional perspective, and the promotion of local capacity. Regardless of how it is defined and characterised, the success of hip-hop pedagogy depends largely on the educator’s purposes and accumulated experience.

Educationists agree that hip-hop culture – including rap music – can be used in a variety of educational scenarios and contexts to serve a variety of objectives.

However, there is no consensus among them on what constitutes the specific benefits of hip-hop pedagogies. This article attempts, through a systematic review of the academic literature, to answer the research question:

RQ What is the value of using hip-hop in educational contexts?

Aligned with this research question, the specific objectives of this analysis were: (1) to outline the main characteristics of the articles included in the systematic review; (2) to describe the most relevant features of the educational initiatives described in the articles; and (3) to identify the major benefits and challenges of using hip-hop culture as an educational tool. Our interest in this topic arose from the experiences of the first author of this article. She came across rap music by chance during her childhood, a fact that she considers to have been a protective factor in her life. Later, after earning a degree in pedagogy, she began to use rap as an educational tool, without being aware of its background. The impact it had on young people made her even more interested in the subject, and she finally decided to pursue doctoral studies and conduct research for a thesis that would shed light on some of these issues. This article is the beginning of a broader work on hip-hop as a means of socio-educational action.

Methodology

The methodology we used in this research is a systematic literature review, which synthesises the results of multiple previous studies (Beltrán 2005). To do so, we posed an initial question and established analysis criteria we had already developed in the context of a related study (Laforgue Bullido et al. 2022). To guarantee the rigour of the present study, we referred to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guide (Moher et al. 2009), which offers specific indicators to check the adequacy of each phase of the analysis. The search, inclusion/exclusion, and analysis of the articles we included in the present study are described in detail in the following sections.

Article search and inclusion criteria

The criteria we used to select articles for this systematic review were: (1) inclusion of the terms “hip-hop” or “rap” AND “pedagogy” or “education” in the title of the paper; (2) articles published in high-impact peer-reviewed journals; (3) papers written in English, Spanish, Portuguese or Italian; (4) works published in the last ten years (2012–2022). The databases we used for this search were Web of Science (WOS), Scopus, ERIC Proquest, ERIC EBSCO and Dialnet. We selected these criteria by common agreement among the research team on the basis that they would reflect the most relevant literature of the last decade. In this first search, we obtained 175 results, mostly from Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus databases (see Fig. 1).

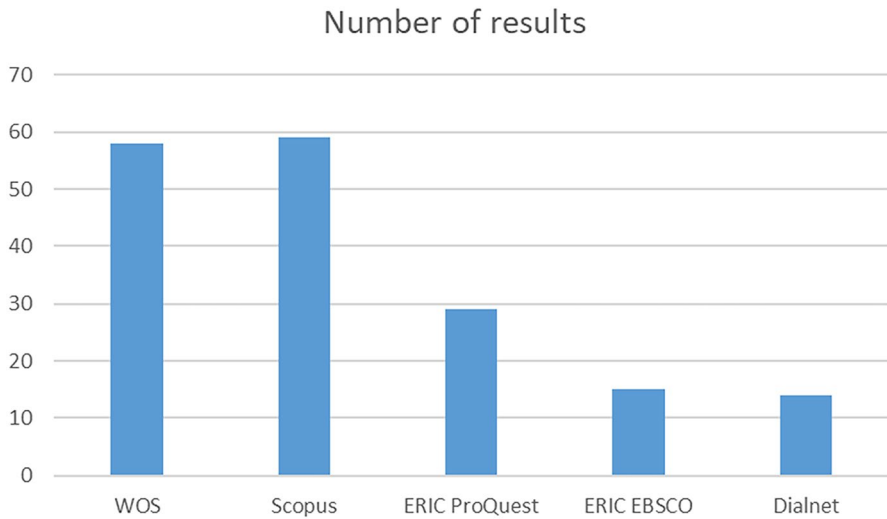


Fig. 1 Number of results by database

After an initial review, we excluded 93 of the results for the following reasons: 74 were duplicates; 11 did not have the full text available; 5 were book chapters; and 3 referred to subjects of little relevance to our research objective. This left us with a sample of 82 articles for in-depth reading, after which we excluded 14 additional articles because two of them were not scientific papers and the other 12 did not address education directly; they focused rather on content analysis of songs and movies, for example, or were causal studies that inquired about the correlation between rap music consumption and drug use. After these two review phases, we were left with 68¹ scientific articles from different disciplines for further analysis and categorisation. Inclusion/exclusion criteria, as well as decisions regarding articles, were jointly made by the entire research team. This ensures greater reliability of the data and decisions (Leiva et al. 2006).

Proposed classification of the articles

We generated the categorisation proposal through a repeated circular process of agreement among all members of the research team (the authors of this article) involving individual review and group discussion on the adequacy of the subcategories for addressing our research questions. The most descriptive categories we established were: year of publication of the article; type of research; language; and country or countries where the research was carried out. The other categories explored the nature of socio-educational interventions using hip-hop culture: educational setting; duration of the intervention; educational level; inclusion (or not) of

¹ The 68 corresponding bibliographical references to scientific articles included in this systematic review can be consulted on Figshare at <https://bit.ly/45XtaG6>.

Table 1 Thematic categories and frequencies

Category name	Subcategories	Frequency (<i>n</i>)
Category 1: Educational setting	Formal	45
	Non-formal	22
	Informal	4
	Not applicable	2
Category 2: Duration of the intervention	Sustained	33
	Punctual	20
	Not specified	2
	Not applicable	13
Category 3: Educational level	Primary education	10
	Secondary education	28
	Higher education	13
	Not specified	13
	Not applicable	15
Category 4: Incorporation/non-incorporation of gender perspective	Yes	15
	Not specified	53
Category 5: Framework/Approach of the intervention	Critical pedagogies	31
	Partial use or linked to subject	15
	Prevent racism and other forms of discrimination	14
	Critical position on the use of hip-hop in education	6 2
	Others	
Category 6: Use of hip-hop	Teaching specific subjects	24
	Developing attitudes	16
	Developing competences (not related to specific subjects)	10
	Teaching hip-hop/Students' identity	5
	Not applicable	13

gender perspective; objectives of the intervention; and use of hip-hop (see Table 1). Once we had defined these categories, we classified the articles accordingly, using an Excel spreadsheet. This first classification was followed by a more in-depth interpretation (subcategory) of each thematic category.

In addition, in order to identify the main challenges presented by this educational proposal, we analysed the benefits and challenges that the authors of the articles pointed out about hip-hop as a socio-educational medium (see Table 2). In this phase of our analysis, we found some articles that did not mention any aspect in this regard and others that mentioned several.

Analysis

In this section, we analyse the content and purpose of the articles we included in our systematic review to reveal the focus of those studies that were conducted on the educational dimension of hip-hop. Next, we examine the nature of the educational experiences described in these articles. Finally, we analyse the potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop as an educational tool, according to the articles reviewed.

Characteristics of the studies included in the systematic review

Through our systematic review of the literature, we found that between 2015 and 2018 the number of papers on the topic increased, but then declined in the following years (see Fig. 2).

The articles included in our review came from 17 different countries, with the United States the most frequent source ($n = 40$), followed by Brazil ($n = 7$) and Spain ($n = 5$). Most of the articles included in our review were written in English ($n = 55$), with some in Portuguese ($n = 6$) or Spanish ($n = 7$). This is due to the fact that hip-hop culture was born in the United States, but also because most of the scientific literature is written in English, even when it refers to research conducted in non-Anglophone countries.

Most of the articles are case studies ($n = 49$), followed by theoretical studies ($n = 11$) and other types of research ($n = 8$) such as perception studies, content analysis of song lyrics, discourse analysis of rap songs or correlation studies between rap music and other social phenomena.

Description of the educational experiences presented in the articles

After analysing the educational settings where the reported experiences took place, we were able to verify that most of the studies were carried out in formal educational contexts ($n = 45$). However, we also found a large number of articles that referred to educational experiences in non-formal settings ($n = 22$). To a lesser extent, we found research related to informal settings ($n = 4$) or in which this classification was irrelevant ($n = 2$). By informal education we mean those activities which, without having an educational intention, result in social learning.

Regarding the age and educational level of the participants mentioned in the articles we reviewed, we found that most were in secondary education ($n = 28$ articles) or equivalent, with significant numbers in university contexts ($n = 13$ articles) and primary education ($n = 10$ articles). Numerous articles did not mention the age of the persons participating in the experiences studied ($n = 13$) or did not include experiences involving a specific age group ($n = 15$).

Regarding the duration of these educational experiences, most interventions were sustained over a period of at least one school year ($n = 33$ articles). However, a large number of articles studied occasional experiences ($n = 20$). In some of these cases, the focus was on how beneficial it could have been to extend these educational

Table 2 Potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop as an educational tool

Category name	Subcategories	Frequency (<i>n</i>)
Category 7: Benefits	Instrumental use	14
	Linking	3
	Personal skills	8
	Political participation	14
	Culturally relevant	23
	Critical educational proposals	13
	Accessibility	2
Category 8: Challenges	Arising from the use of hip-hop	13
	Stereotyped perception	8
	Derived from the context	6
	Challenges specific to hip-hop culture	4
	Other	1

interventions over a longer period of time. Two of the articles did not specify the duration of the experience studied, and in thirteen articles this categorisation was not applicable.

Since one of the main criticisms of rap music is its representation of macho violence, we thought it would be interesting to see how many of the articles included a gender perspective ($n = 15$). Most interventions are characterised by a transformative approach, mainly aligned with critical pedagogies ($n = 31$). We understand critical pedagogies as defined by Henry Giroux, namely as interventions that aim to link the practice of schooling to democratic principles, the prevention of racism and discrimination, and transformative social action in the interests of oppressed communities (Giroux 1988; Darder et al. 2003). Most of the articles describe experiences based on this view, or they defend them from a theoretical point of view. The remainder refer to a partial and instrumental use; that is, to improved learning of specific subjects or competences, such as literature, English, science, or music ($n = 15$), or to the use of hip-hop as a tool to fight against racism and other forms of discrimination in educational contexts ($n = 14$). Just a few articles ($n = 6$) contain a radical critique of hip-hop as an educational tool, arguing against teachers' resistance based on their negative perception of hip-hop culture or the language of rap music lyrics.

Just over one-third of the articles ($n = 24$) describe experiences aimed at teaching curricular contents, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), literature, language or music. Several experiences focus on developing attitudinal changes as well as gaining critical awareness of oppression and other social issues through the use of hip-hop ($n = 16$), including religious values in two cases. Ten papers focus on developing competencies outside the standard curriculum – that is, not related to a particular subject – and five address issues related to student identity or to the role of the teacher more closely linked to hip-hop culture. Finally, thirteen papers focused on theory, not describing any specific activity.

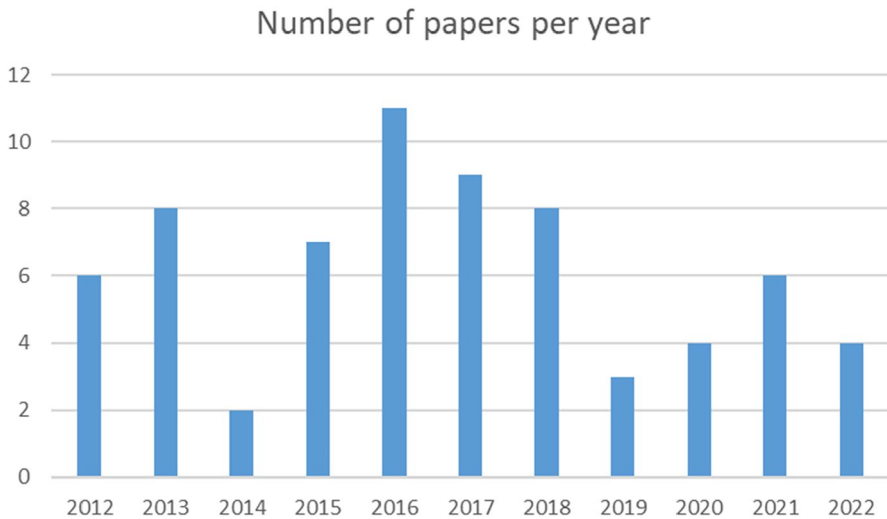


Fig. 2 Number of publications per year

Potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop as a means of socio-educational action

Some articles mention more than one benefit/challenge and others none at all. This is why the number of benefits/challenges we identified does not coincide with the total number of articles we analysed.

Potential benefits

The potential benefit of hip-hop as an educational tool was mentioned 77 times, in most cases referring to the fact that hip-hop offers a culturally relevant context ($n = 23$) for many adolescents, making it possible to connect school life to social life outside school. This allows students to feel that their previous knowledge is recognised. However this use of hip-hop is sometimes superficial, merely a “hook” to make certain educational content more attractive. In this sense, the second most mentioned potential benefit was its capacity at an instrumental level ($n = 14$), that is, as a means to introduce theoretical contents. This type of content ranges from language to literature, religious content, and even mathematics and science.

We also found articles that pointed out the potential benefits of hip-hop culture beyond the utilitarian model as a means to stimulate student participation ($n = 14$), both in the classroom and at the community and political levels. In this sense, the point was made that hip-hop culture has the potential to foster awareness of a person’s social position, thereby stimulating agency to improve living conditions.

Another important potential benefit relates to the facilities offered by hip-hop culture to promote critical educational proposals ($n = 13$). In their comments related

to this aspect, the authors point out that hip-hop promotes dialogues that favour the teaching of critical thinking. Its special capability for this lies in the fact that the experiences recounted in rap music are connected to the experiences of the adolescents themselves. This fact, together with its accessible language, provides a starting point from which to build knowledge from one's own experience. In addition, the application of a hip-hop pedagogy directly recognises, highlights and establishes connections between students' cultures and scientific content.

The potential of hip-hop culture to promote certain social skills and psychosocial factors was mentioned in fewer articles ($n = 8$). Regarding psychosocial factors, the ability of hip-hop culture to promote the construction of positive self-esteem and identity was mentioned, especially when working with historically oppressed groups of people. Authors of these articles also point out that hip-hop, and especially rap music, gives people the opportunity to talk about themselves in other terms, opposing negative stereotypes. Some of the articles also mention the potential of hip-hop to foster social skills such as teamwork and critical thinking.

Finally, two other potential benefits being mentioned were the potential of hip-hop culture to foster an emotional connection between educators and students ($n = 3$), and its easy accessibility ($n = 2$) given that few materials and prior knowledge are needed to begin working with hip-hop, as well as the mutual support that is common among practitioners.

Potential challenges

In relation to the challenges mentioned in the articles related to the use of hip-hop culture as an educational tool, we identified 24 comments based on ten general arguments (see Table 3). The most frequently mentioned challenge ($n = 13$) is that some educators adhere strictly to the values they experienced in the hip-hop movement when they were young, thereby ignoring the fact that hip-hop is a living movement with emerging interests, forms of expression and concerns. Such pre-conceptions do not generate a horizontal space for dialogue, but rather impose certain valuable and permitted themes and forms of expression within hip-hop culture and exclude others. In such cases, students are treated as passive objects, without personal agency and without the critical ability to generate their own value judgments. This results in a perception among adolescents that the teachers are using hip-hop culture merely as an ornament, imposing an unrealistic image of a culture they do not own.

In this same sense, some articles pointed out the challenge of "appearing real" in cases where educators have not experienced the situations described in hip-hop culture. It is important to remember that this is a deeply valued aspect of hip-hop culture; "being real" or "keeping it real" refers to talking about personally lived experiences. Given the history of hip-hop and its protagonists, these experiences are often related to poverty and injustice, but also to overcoming obstacles, and celebrating brotherhood and community life. Thus, when educators who try to approach students through rap appear to have certain identity privileges, it is difficult for students to believe that they appreciate this attribute of hip-hop culture, and this can create an initial barrier. On the other hand, some articles pointed out that hip-hop-based

educational initiatives tend to “essentialise” certain identities, making it difficult to value diversity.

Another challenge mentioned in the reviewed literature is the common misperception of hip-hop culture as a form of cultural expression that promotes marginality rather than resistance ($n = 8$). In this sense, it is pointed out how the commercial use of this culture has generalised the idea that it is sexualised, misogynistic and violent. This explains why, as four of the papers highlight, teachers and families are often reluctant to embrace the use of hip-hop in education. These perceptions are not completely unfounded, and in fact the use of hip-hop in educational spaces sometimes does involve dilemmas ($n = 4$), such as how to deal with sexualisation or apologies for violence in certain lyrics. The concern among parents and educators is that youths validate these attitudes without questioning them. One article discussed the contradiction inherent in rap music’s strong critique of the educational system without proposing alternatives.

Another major challenge relates to the particularities of the contexts in which these practices take place ($n = 6$). This is sometimes attributed to the violence that occurs in certain contexts of vulnerability ($n = 2$). Such was the case with the educational experience reported in one of the articles, which took place in a context of armed violence in the Colombian city of Medellín (Montoya and Valencia 2022). These situations permeate the lives of the youth, making participation and communication more difficult. On the other hand, some articles ($n = 3$) highlighted how the dynamics of formal educational initiatives may hinder the implementation of these methodologies due to the use of numerical grading (instead of qualitative assessments) to assess students’ academic performance or due to the imposition of conventional linguistic standards. Another contextual challenge lies in the lack of youth participation in hip-hop-based volunteer activities.

Finally, one paper mentioned a lack of systematisation of experiences, and the need for scientific evaluation of relevance and effectiveness in different contexts and situations (Ball 2013).

Discussion

In this section we interpret the results based on the objectives of our study and on literature outside the systematic review.

First, with respect to the nature of the articles we included in our review, two conclusions can be drawn. The first is that the use of hip-hop as an educational tool has not yet been consolidated as a topic of scientific interest. Despite multiple existing initiatives, the number of analytical studies published is not constant over time, so it is very difficult to systematise this type of practice. However, it is important to recognise that there are many other sources of information on this type of experience beyond academic journals – including books, video documentaries and websites. We have considered these sources in the theoretical framework of this article. Table 4 lists some of the most relevant ones.

Second, to date, most studies of hip-hop pedagogy have been conducted in the United States, which supports the idea that the spread of hip-hop has gone hand in

Table 3 General arguments about the potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop as a socio-educational medium

Potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop as a socio-educational medium	
Benefits	Challenges
Hip-hop is a culturally relevant context for adolescents. It brings recognition and connects the school to its social context.	Inadequacy due to educators' own biases.
Hip-hop improves the social and political participation of youth.	Hip-hop must be and stay "real"; it must be based on life experience, however many educators lack that experience.
Hip-hop can promote critical thinking.	The stereotypical image of hip-hop culture among teenagers, families or educators may cause them to reject these initiatives.
Hip-hop can facilitate the acquisition of social and emotional skills.	Some of the discourses reproduced by rap music are not educational.
Hip-hop promotes positive bonds between teachers and youth and between youths.	Peculiarities and difficulties of the context where learning takes place.

hand with cultural globalisation. However, several authors point to the ability of hip-hop to adapt to the needs and peculiarities of very diverse contexts, serving as a tool of struggle for various populations (Lee 2020; Gadet 2015; Vito 2019). This is the case for initiatives such as those presented by Nancy Hornberger and Karl Swinehart (2012) or Ángela Montoya and Gladys Valencia (2022), recounting youth experiences of political and epistemological resistance in Bolivia and Colombia, respectively – both included in our systematic review. Likewise, most of the articles refer to adolescents in contexts of formal education. Our fieldwork experience² showed us that many initiatives take place in non-formal contexts, however, and tend not to be systematised. This prevents us from learning more about the methodology and results of these initiatives, which makes it difficult to study the possibilities of hip-hop as an educational tool.

We believe that this is a little-explored field in which there is still much to be analysed. Regarding the difference between the formal and non-formal contexts, we believe that many children and adolescents would benefit from the incorporation of the language of hip-hop culture into formal education. This would make them feel that their educational centres are culturally receptive (Chetty and Turner 2018) and are spaces where their voices are respected. An example of this type of experience is that proposed by Edmund Adjapong (2021, 2017) in which, through hip-hop culture, commitments and achievements by young people in the field of science are promoted. On the other hand, educational institutions are very often overwhelmed by the demands of the labour market, which makes it difficult to go beyond content aimed at job skills training. By contrast, interventions in non-formal spaces can be much more ambitious and flexible, adapting to the real

² The first author of this contribution completed her doctoral thesis on this topic, but she has also worked as a hip-hop educator in numerous projects with adolescent and adult populations.

needs and desires of the participants. However, despite the great importance that these initiatives often have, they are too often treated with little seriousness, with few human and economic resources allocated to them.

We believe that there should be greater contact between formal and non-formal initiatives to ensure greater continuity between the academic and non-academic lives of young people. Certain educational experiences have shown that this continuity is possible; one example is that described by Jared Ball (2013), in which the political participation of university students is encouraged through the incorporation of hip-hop culture in the curriculum; or that described by Kevin Gosine and Emmanuel Tabi (2016), in which the incorporation of hip-hop culture in educational centres helps foster connection with students' worldviews and enhance their academic commitment.

Within the framework of the articles we analysed, we observed several elements of tension that complement the previous reflections and should be taken into account. The first of these is the tension over diversity and relevance in the use of hip-hop, with the risk of labelling it as education intended only for minority groups. The second are gender tensions which, though evident in hip-hop culture, are almost entirely absent in the research. Finally, there is a tension between hip-hop and the dominant culture of schooling, which also offers an opportunity to revise that culture, including teaching styles.

Regarding the potential benefits and challenges of using hip-hop culture as a means of socio-educational action, several aspects may be highlighted: first, that its incorporation due to its cultural relevance does not *per se* entail the use of critical pedagogies in the classroom (Kelly and Sawyer 2019). As we have seen on many occasions, the use of this culture may have purely utilitarian objectives – such as making a subject more meaningful for students. On other occasions, although the intention is to connect social issues, it fails to generate spaces for dialogue and democratic relationships in the classroom. This is because hip-hop culture is sometimes used by teachers as a “Trojan horse” to convey a curricular content or idea. This clashes directly with what hip-hop means to young people, namely an authentic expression of their own ideas and interests. Similarly, these conceptions are based on an adult-centric bias that does not understand adolescents as people with agency and critical capacity (Rawls and Petchauer 2023; Kelly and Sawyer 2019; Kim and Pulido 2015). We propose to bring hip-hop culture into the classroom as a way of listening to and bringing out the ideas of young people. Of course, there is a risk that ideas we consider “dangerous” may appear, but we believe that educational spaces should be predisposed to dialogue with these ideas. Only in this way will we be able to build real and responsible citizen participation. An example of this way of working, described by Jason Rawls and Emery Petchauer (2023), involves educators incorporating youth culture into the classroom without imposing their own ideas on it.

Second, we would like to highlight the barrier that negative stereotypes pose to hip-hop pedagogy. Several articles (Brown 2019; Karvelis 2018; Schönfeldt-Aultman and Morrison 2015) mention the reluctance of families and teachers to include hip-hop in education due to what they perceive as its negative influence. It is important to point out that hip-hop and more specifically rap music have

Table 4 Other sources on hip-hop and its educational dimension

Other sources on hip-hop and its educational dimension	
Books	<p>Chang, J. (2017). <i>Generación Hip-hop</i> [originally published in English in 2005 as <i>Can't stop, won't stop: A history of the hip-hop generation</i>]</p> <p>Morgan, J. (1999). <i>When Chickenheads come home to roost: A Hip-hop feminist breaks it down</i></p> <p>Terkourafi, M. (Ed.). (2010). <i>The languages of global hip hop</i>.</p> <p>Travis, R. (2015). <i>The healing power of hip hop. Intersections of race, ethnicity and culture</i></p>
Documentaries	<p>Bonet, C. (2017). <i>Crónicas de Rap</i> [Rap chronicles] [Spanish TV documentary series, 12:47 hours]</p> <p>Emdin, C. (2012). <i>Urban Science Education for the Hip-hop Generation: The documentary</i> [YouTube, 5:32 minutes]</p> <p>Haaken, J. (2009). <i>Moving 2 the beat</i> [American documentary, 43:27 minutes]</p> <p>Ice T (2012). <i>Something from Nothing: The Art of Rap</i> [American documentary, 1:46 hours]</p>
Websites	<p><i>Hip Hop Works Inc</i>: a global non-profit organisation providing workshops for children, teenagers, young adults, engaging in community development, setting up concerts and conferences etc. https://www.facebook.com/HipHopWorksInc/ [accessed 12 July 2024]</p> <p><i>HipHopEd</i>: a US-based non-profit organisation, and, according to its own website, “a ... lifestyle brand that functions to empower communities and reimagines the relationship between hip-hop and education”. https://hiphoped.com/ [accessed 12 July 2024]</p> <p><i>Blueprint for Life</i>: a Canadian organisation which, according to its own website, uses “HipHop as both a community development tool and as a model for alternative education and healing”. https://www.blueprintforlife.ca/ [accessed 12 July 2024]</p> <p><i>Asociación Cultural Bombo y Caja</i> [Bass drum and snare drum association]: a cultural association based in Madrid which seeks to promote creativity and self-esteem among young people through tools such as music, graffiti, photography and participatory artistic events. https://www.intermediae.es/comunidades/asociacion-cultural-bombo-y-caja [accessed 12 July 2024]</p>

been widely commercialised and put at the service of the dominant culture (Vito 2019). The ideas communicated by commercial and mainstream rap are not so different from those conveyed by other musical styles, yet it faces greater stigma (Dunbar et al. 2016). We understand as legitimate the concern that young people may embrace ideas that are harmful to them and to society, however, this is difficult to control. What is certainly in the hands of educational figures is to generate spaces for dialogue that contradict these ideas and encourage critical literacy (Izquierdo Montero 2023).

Finally, it is worth noting that many of the educational initiatives involving hip-hop culture have taken place in contexts beset by various forms of violence. Since hip-hop was born it has been closely linked to social struggles (Adjapong and Emdin 2015; Chávez Mejía 2015). In the same way, adolescents connect with rap music because it relates life experiences similar to their own (Hill Collins and Bilge 2019, 2016; Bell 2017). However, this poses certain challenges. One of these is the normalisation of violent language. Thus, educational processes involving such content must emphasise tenderness, respect for limits, and empathy. In addition, self-esteem and self-concept should be strengthened without making the mistake of

essentialising certain social identities. In this sense, there are several articles in our systematic review that point out how some educational projects involving hip-hop culture tend to support or generate stereotypes (Ringsager and Madsen 2022; Zambon and Uca 2016). We believe that one of the strengths of hip-hop culture is precisely that it allows us to uncover the oppressions experienced by certain sectors of the population. This is crucial in organising and fighting for social justice. However, we must not forget that people are much more than their social conditions and that with our demands we must not fall into the same essentialisation that we are trying to fight.

Limitations and further research

We would like to point out that the study presented here has some limitations. The first of these has to do with the fact that many of the published works use terms such as “hip-hop-based education” or “hip-hop pedagogy” without defining what these refer to, which complicates the analysis. Moreover, most of the studies included in this systematic review refer to formal educational systems, due to the lack of evaluation and systematisation of the experiences that occur in non-formal contexts. As a result, a study such as this can offer only a partial overview of the potential benefits of hip-hop culture as an educational tool. Finally, the distance of our research team from the American context – to which most of the articles belong – may have led to a biased interpretation of some of the data collected.

Issues worthy of further and deeper study include the motivations of educators to use rap as an educational means; the response of students to these practices; the improvement (or not) of knowledge and/or skills through this methodology; the incorporation of the gender perspective in these initiatives; the conditions in which rap can serve as a tool for youth participation; the methodology used by these educators; and the validity of hip-hop pedagogy in different contexts and with different audiences.

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