8-17-2017

The impact of hip-hop culture on freshman student identity

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THE IMPACT OF HIP-HOP CULTURE ON FRESHMAN STUDENT IDENTITY

by

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A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Master of Arts in Higher Education
at
Rowan University
July 27, 2017

Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Dedications

First off I would like to dedicate this thesis My mother Eulonda Shanks, from her I learned what sacrifice means, but words can't express her importance in my life. I would also like to dedicate this to my brother and best friend Darin Shanks Jr. for always being there when I needed it most. This is also for my sister Tammy and for my grandmother Bettie Loftin for being the spine of our family. I would also like to give a special dedication to my niece Jurnie Shanks, I hope to inspire her to never quit on her goals and to pursue a life that makes her happy. Finally, I would like to dedicate this to all my family and friends who have supported me since day one. This is for Hip-Hop Culture, #S.U.I.T.S.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Dr. James Coaxum and James Gaymon who granted me the opportunity to further my education. Further I would like to think Gardy Guiteau and Dr. J.T. Mills and Richard Jones, for modeling the steps required to be a successful African American male working as an administrator in Higher Education. Lastly, I can't give enough thanks go to Dr. Burton Sisco, without him none of this would be possible, he never gave up on me, he supported me at my lowest points, and he challenged me through this process. Through his guidance, I was able to grow as a researcher and scholar.

Abstract

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HIP-HOP CULTURE:
THE IMPACT ON FRESHMAN STUDENTS IDENTITY
2016-2017
Dr. Burton R Sisco
Master of Arts in Higher Education

The purpose of this investigation is to explore the impact that hip-hop has on the identity of freshman students at Rowan University during the spring 2017 semester. The survey questions were geared toward answering the primary focus. The survey has 34 items, the first five questions were used to collect demographic information from the students including Gender, GPA, Ethnicity, Class rank, and Age. The next 29 questions divided into three factor groupings, these groups were used to investigate the identity of select freshman, what students believe about their knowledge of hip-hop culture, how committed these students are to hip-hop culture, and what impact hip-hop has on their views toward the educational experience at Rowan University. This study takes a quantitative approach to answer the research questions. Based on the research (66%) believe that people are more judgmental of hip-hop that other genres. The study also shows that hip-hop had a big impact on the language that is used by students, as 69% reported using slang and idioms that come from hip-hop. Further, the study shows that a majority of the students 70.8% listen to hip-hop every day this shows that many students have a daily connection with hip-hop culture

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In contemporary society change is swift, to adjust to these changes educational institutions need to be flexible (Battle, 1969). The growth of hip-hop culture adds an element to college students that might be unfamiliar to educators and administrators in the traditionally formal environment of higher education. In the early 1990s, colleges began teaching classes on hip-hop. According to Nielson (2013), there are over 700 books related to hip-hop, and this number continues to increase. Hip-hop culture has progressed into popular culture in America and has even seen global assimilation. With the help of technology trends are spreading faster than ever. For example, the music industry has gone digital, streaming platforms such as Spotify, Apple Music, Soundcloud, and Tidal began dominating the way for fans to listen to music. Because of technological advancements, purchasing compact disc's is a thing of the past. *Views,* the album by hip-hop artist Drake was the top selling music album in 2016 (Nielson, 2016). Additionally, the growth of hip-hop culture can be seen by the financial success of the top artists. *Forbes Magazine* began to track the top money earners in hip-hop in 2006, the top cash earner on the list made $34,000,000. The top earner on the 2016 list made nearly double that amount earning $62,000,000 (Forbes.com, 2016). As hip-hop culture grows, studies have investigated its impact as some of the scholarly research conducted on hip-hop has debated the history of hip-hop culture and the components that create a hip-hop identity. Scholarly work related to hip-hop culture exists in many disciplines, including sociology, psychology, philosophy, higher education, communications, black studies, cultural

studies, women's studies, spirituality, ethnomusicology, critical literacy, curriculum studies, sociolinguistics, and others (Petchauer, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Higher education aims to meet the needs of every student that attends an institution. No matter what culture they come from, all students should feel accepted on campus. Many details must be considered when defining the elements of a hip-hop identity. Petchauer (2007) states, "a hip-hop worldview suggests that participants of hip-hop may construct, make meaning of, and engage in the domain of education in a unique and different manner than other groups of students" (p. 6). According to McWhortor (2003), hip-hop culture's ideology emerged from the 1960s black civil rights movement. Dimitriadis (2009) notes, "early hip-hop cannot be understood as an aural text alone but must be approached and appreciated as a multitiered event, in particular contexts of consumption and production" (p. 22). Kitwana (2005), suggests hip-hop allows for cross-cultural engagement where ideas can be shared about race and politics in America. Black strength, authenticity and sometimes militant attitudes toward American society were components of this identity (McWhortor, 2003). With so many different variables that create a hip-hop identity, students who embrace hip-hop may be confused by the mixed messages contained in the lyrics. Although campuses provide a variety of services that support retention some students still fall between the cracks. Students may find the college they selected does not meet their cultural needs. Learning more about hip-hop culture could add to the tools already being used to support students that attend college.

Significance of the Problem

As hip-hop grows it continues to connect with students who attend college. This study examined selected freshman students at Rowan University who lived in Evergreen, Mimosa, and Chestnut residence halls and the impact that hip-hop culture has on their identity. This study is the first of its kind at Rowan University. Research has not been conducted investigating the impact that hip-hop has on the identity of college students. The research could provide educators and administrators a deeper understanding of the impact that hip-hop culture has on freshman students at Rowan University. This study can be useful for administrators and educators to develop resources that connect with students who are impacted by hip-hop culture. The more students are able to connect to the campus the more likely it is they will graduate.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated hip-hop culture, and the impact it has on freshman students at Rowan University. The purpose was to explore the identities of freshman students who were attending Rowan University and the role that hip-hop culture played on their identities. This research explored if students who embrace hip-hop culture shared similar identity and concepts about the campus and of the world. Kitwana (2005), suggests that hip-hop must be considered beyond what it does mainstream, its local level is critical, and has a life of its own. This research also explored the student's commitment to hip-hop and the level of knowledge they reported having about hip-hop culture. Students who support hip-hop culture attend college and few studies have explored the impact it has on identity of college students from a quantitative approach. This study

helps expand the knowledge base of hip-hop and the impact the culture has in postsecondary educational settings.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study assumes that all the subjects had a clear understanding of the questions on the survey and answered them all honestly. Also, the study assumes that the students who completed the survey did so voluntarily. Students had to be at least 18 years old to complete the survey. Further, it is believed that the students who participated in the survey represented the freshman living on campus at Rowan University. The research is limited to the freshman students at Rowan University during the 2016-2017 academic year therefore the findings cannot be generalized to students who attend other institutions. The sample was limited to freshman students who lived in Evergreen, Chestnut, or Mimosa residence halls. The data for the study were gathered through random and convenience sampling. There is also potential for researcher bias due to my exposure to and long interest in hip-hop culture.

Operational Definitions of Important Terms

1. Freshman: Refers to the college students who attended Rowan University with less than 24 credits.

2. Hip-Hop: (noun) participatory, oppositional culture or subculture containing many hybrid characteristics of Black culture expressed most commonly through four interrelated elements: rapping, deejaying, b-boying/b-girling, and writing graffiti.

3. Identity: How Rowan University freshman students view themselves as a person; constructed set of beliefs and assumptions through which people view reality and

make sense of their lived experience

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What role does hip-hop culture play in the identity development of selected freshman students at Rowan University?

2. What are the levels of knowledge and commitment to hip-hop culture?

3. How do freshman students living on campus feel about hip-hop culture's impact on their educational experience at Rowan University?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of the literature related to the study. The chapter includes the history and elements of hip-hop. A review of the results from previous research are also included.

Chapter III describes the methodology and the procedures used for data collection, along with a description of the population and demographics, data collection instrument, and how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. This chapter provides answers to the research questions posed in Chapter I. Survey data are summarized using statistical and narrative and analysis of the responses from the subjects of the study.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses major findings of the study and presents conclusions from the results with suggestions for practice and further research.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Introduction

The Bronx, New York during mid-1970s is where the story of hip-hop begins. During this time, the Bronx neighborhoods were mostly populated by African American and Latino residents with low incomes, struggling while America restructured its economic and social agendas (Watkins, 2005). As economic gaps between races were increasing, this decade was faced with American neighborhoods becoming more racially segregated. Factories that employed many working class African Americans and Latinos were closing, and the federal government cut funding provided to schools and social service programs (Rose, 1994). The Bronx was severely impacted by these economic changes and the youth of the city sought ways to create new identities for themselves. Kitwana (2002), suggests parents of the first hip-hop generation traditionally received their values from families, schools, and churches, having a worldview centered on civil rights, black power, and popular Afrocentric movements.

DJ Kool Herc, known as the father of hip-hop, learned how to set up sound systems in his birthplace Kingston Jamaica and came to America in 1963 at age 12. DJ Kool Herc began to use two copies of the same record to extend the instrumental breaks in the records he played during his sets; this technique was called the "Merry-Go-Round" (Chang, 2005). Another DJ, Afrika Bambaataa, was known for his assorted record collection. He was a former gang leader and is also credited for leading the establishment of early hip-hop culture and identity. He recognized the potential for hip-hop to create social change (Watkins, 2005). Afrika Bambaataa wanted to raise consciousness among

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youth and created the Zulu Nation, a hip-hop organization. This organization helped

formalize hip-hop's original elements.

Elements of Hip-Hop and Functions

A brief description of the four original elements of hip-hop and their functions

aids in an understanding of hip-hop culture and its potential to reach and gain the

interested youth representing various cultures. DJs or deejays, scratched and mixed the

most popular records to get a party started spontaneously outdoors or booked for gigs.

Break dancers (b-boys) danced, flipped, spun and morphed at parties or on street corners

around New York City to the music played by djs. Graffiti artists claimed territory

around their communities by spray-painting their aliases or murals on playgrounds,

subways, and abandoned areas throughout New York City. MCs or Emcees (Rappers)

used microphones to talk to the audience, keep the energy of the party up, or to use their

voice as an instrument to rhyme cultural inequities that faced their communities (Chang,

2005; Rose 1994).

Hip-hop has expanded beyond its four elements helped by the commercialization

of rap in the 1990s; this expansion is described by Kitwana (2005) who argues that the

culture also includes, "hip-hop specific language, body language, fashion, style,

sensibility, and worldview" (p. xii). According to Stoute and Rivas (2011), hip-hop

culture confronted the failures of religion, education, government and parenting, the

aspirational content of rap music and it's from nothing to something stories allowed the

culture to become a commodity by linking it to major brands. The first hip-hop song with

huge commercial success came in 1979, The Sugar Hill Gang released *Rappers Delight*

which went to the top of the pop charts and sold millions of copies (Chang, 2005; Rose,

1994). Stoute and Rivas (2011) suggest, the first mainstream endorsement deal involving hip-hop culture was offered to the rap group Run-DMC by the sneaker brand Adidas. Run-DMC embodied the attitude of hip-hop and the love for fashion by making the song *My Adidas* and inviting Adidas executives to attend their Madison Square Garden concert. This deal was the trailblazer supporting hip-hop's progression from the underground into the mainstream American culture. Hip-hop has not always been well received; Stoute and Rivas (2011) suggest that for corporations to gain brand credibility when marketing to specific demographics, hip-hop culture or its artists have been used by fashion companies like GAP or Versace, liquor brands like Moet and Cristal, automotive companies like BMW and Cadillac, digital media giants MTV and BET, food and beverage companies like Sprite or McDonald's, and technology companies like Apple and Samsung. Similar ideas regarding hip-hop's marketing appeal were expressed in the research by Kitwana (2002). Hip-hop is an inclusive culture that becomes more recognizable when following the major brands that have paid hip-hop artists to market products.

Hip-Hop Identity and Culture

Bakari Kitwana (2002) created the term "hip-hop generation," using this terminology to separate black youth born between 1965 and 1984 from the Generation X label that applied to black and whites. Additionally, Kitwana (2002) provides six socio-political developments that he suggests impact the worldview of the hip-hop generation. Kitwana's suggestions help provide a framework to begin investigating the identity of the first hip-hop generation beginning with the visibility of black youth in popular culture advertisements. Young blacks are watching music videos and commercials, they are

seeing people on television that look similar, causing them to relate more with the subject matter or product being marketed. Kitwana further noted, the emergence of the global economy as the second major impact on the identity of black youth, warehouse jobs were moved overseas and black communities saw an increase in unemployment. As poverty increased, many blacks relied on the underground economy such as selling drugs, leading to the incarceration of many black males. The third impact on the identity of the first hip-hop generation listed by Kitwana, is the continuous discrimination being received by blacks, even when they are equally skilled or educated as white counterparts they are still less likely to be hired, elected, or paid equal wages (Kitwana, 2002). Further, Kitwana argues that the implementation of racially motivated public policy in relation to criminal justice such as the penalties for possession of crack cocaine vs powder cocaine. During the 1980s and 1990s policies were implemented that gave harsher sentences for crimes that were committed more frequently by blacks and Latinos. Fifth, in the discussion of the influences on the black youth identity, is the negative mainstream media portrayal of black youth. News channels were increasing coverage of black crimes for drugs and violence, leading black youth to feel alienated by the mainstream. Finally, Kitwana states that blacks saw an overall decline in their quality of life blacks were the majority of those living below poverty or unemployed. The first generation of hip-hop youth saw an increase in black males and females going to prison, along with rising numbers of death by homicide or suicide, additionally they saw an increase in aids diagnosis (Kitwana 2002).

Rose (1994) states, "Identity in hip-hop is deeply rooted in the specific, the local experience, and one's attachment to and status in a local group or alternative family (p.

34). Rose shares similar views with Kitwana relating the economic shift to the identity of the first hip-hop generation when she states, "it is the tension between the cultural fractures produced by postindustrial oppression and the binding ties of black cultural expressivity that sets the critical frame for the development of hip-hop" (p. 21).

Kitwana (2005) suggests, white youth identified with the activist and inclusive mindset of hip-hop as early as the mid-1980s. Limited job opportunities, credit-card debt, and rising cost to attend college are a few examples Kitwana (2005) used to support his reasoning behind why white youth felt more alienated from mainstream America leading to their eventual embracing of hip-hop. The same issues that were predominately faced by African American and Latino's have spread into white America (Kitwana, 2005). Stoute and Rivas (2011) suggest, those who support hip-hop cross racial and socioeconomic lines and these people share a "mental complexion." Corrado (2013), in her dissertation, examined how white youth develop identities based on their involvement with hip-hop culture. Using a qualitative approach, Corrado interviewed teenagers from two different high schools in the state of New York. In total, 43 "white hip-hop kids" were interviewed with some from suburban mostly white neighborhoods and others from urban multiracial neighborhoods. Corrado reports three ways both groups of white hip-hop kids were able to cross racial boundaries: (a) by making black friends, (b) by using hip-hop cultural styles, and (c) by using language that is commonly associated with black youth. Further, Corrado (2013) found that a complex of white privilege and the potential of appropriation existed among many of the youth interviewed. Although youth from urban and suburban settings discussed being flexible with their use of hip-hop culture depending on the setting, suburban youth reported using these methods more frequently.

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Condry (2007), studied the ways that hip-hop influenced youth culture in Japan, as hip-hop became more popular in Japan the reproduction of black racial stereotypes was visible. Condry evaluated the messages of Japanese hip-hop artists and found connections to American hip-hop, such as Japanese artists using their platform to discuss divisions among Japanese society, and questioning race and power within their own cultures. Recognizing that hip-hop is a tool for youth to reflect on their marginalized experiences, Tickner (2008) researched hip-hop in the Latin American countries of Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico. Ticker's research suggests each of these locations has shared meanings and aesthetics of hip-hop, further demonstrating how the capitalistic globalization of hip-hop is interpreted and given local meanings. According to Ariefdien and Chapman (2014), hip-hop made its way to Africa during the early 1980s. Marxist (2014), finds hip-hop artists in Africa have used their lyrics to fight for social change such as police brutality and drug abuse. According to Marxist (2014), due to the extreme cultural differences hip-hop has not been accepted as an educational tool in Africa (Clark & Koster, 2014).

Critics of Hip-Hop Culture

In the early 1970s graffiti was at the forefront of hip-hop culture although it was being considered lawless by critics. Trains were the preferred canvass of a graffiti artist; the New York Transit Authority spent millions buffing graffiti off trains and building fences to keep graffiti artists out of train yards. Rose (1994) highlights, among rap music and hip-hop culture critics arguments are made, in support of its lyrics as educational, progressive, and a reflection of real life. In comparison, the media focuses its attention on violence, illegal sampling, sexism, and racism found in some of the music created in hip-hop. As rap music and hip-hop culture was emerging Williams (1989), a *Washington*

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Post writer, compared hip-hop artists to Adolf Hitler's defense of Nazi ideology for suggesting acceptability of the sexist, racist, and homophobic lyrics being performed. Harvard University Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., in a 1990 *New York Times* article, argued that hip-hop is an acceptable form of free speech and adding, critics for censorship should be "literate in the vernacular traditions of African Americans"(p. A23). Kelley (1996) argues that rap is the scapegoat for problems in urban America suggesting gangsta rap is a necessary response to racial inequities (as cited in Green, 2003). Murray Forman (1990) offered support of hip-hop suggesting the lyrics are recognizable realities, imploring police officers to listen to rap in order to better understand the voice of black youth (Green, 2003). Tipper Gore (1990), wife of former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, wrote in the *Washington Times* protesting lyrics of rap music being degrading to humans, especially youth consumers being sold sexism, racism and anti-Semitism, and hate in exchange for profits. In 1996, Ronin Ro used the increase in gun violence in predominantly white neighborhoods to argue that rap music has a negative impact on young blacks and whites alike. Chang (2005) noted, "By attacking hip-hop conservatives, could move their culture-war agenda out of obscure Congressional debates and campus Academic Senates into the twenty-four-hour media spin cycle" (pp. 392-393).

Hip-Hop's Political Movements

Watkins (2005) suggests that hip-hop created nontraditional political movements that came second to its commercial success by noting, "The movements political identity has played a subordinate role to the power and popularity of hip-hop's commercial identity" (p. 149). Hip-hop has earned an anti-establishment reputation; politically aimed

rap music and videos were used as tools to critique policing, government, media, and those who spoke against the hip-hop movement.

During the late 1980s, the new mainstream visibility of hip-hop stemming from its first commercial hit "Rappers Delight" in the late 1970s and its first mainstream corporate sponsorship in the mid-1980s, artists like KRS-One and Public Enemy were some of the earliest to get national attention for using their music as a political voice. KRS-One led *The Stop the Violence Movement* and raised $200,000 for the National Urban League's anti-violence programs. The success of this movement was aided by KRS-One releasing a song "Self Destruction." He later shot a video for the song marching through the streets of Harlem New York advocating for an anti-violence cause. The politically charged song and video, "Fight the Power" by Public Enemy, were released helping to promote film director Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* movie that ends with a scene of an African American male dying due to police brutality. These examples support Chang's (2005) claim that benefits of commercial success will take precedence over political agendas for hip-hop culture.

Hip-hop's political agenda has put emphasis on voter registration, for example the Hip-Hop Coalition used artists to register 70,000 people of color for the 1996 presidential election. Later in the 1990s, CHHANGE (Conscious Hip Hop Activism Necessary for Global Empowerment) led a million youth voter registration drive. REACH (Rappers Educating All Curricula through Hip-Hop), and the Million Youth March funded by Master P, are a few early political movements supported by hip-hop culture (Ards, 1999). Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons in 2001, with the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, lead to a meeting in 2003 when Simmons sat with top state elected officials and led a

campaign against strict laws in New York aimed at crimes known to be committed more frequently by black people (Watkins, 2005). In 2004, while advocating for young people to vote, Sean Combs led the "Vote or Die" campaign. MTV aided the push with their "Choose or Lose" campaign through these efforts the 2004 presidential election that saw the youth vote increased by 4.2 million in comparison to the previous national election (Watkins, 2005). During the 2008 presidential election, Barack Obama also benefited from the support of the hip-hop community and young voters (Soute & Rivas, 2011). Kitwana (2005), suggests some may argue that for any substantial hip-hop political movement to work, white hip-hop kids are important. Kitwana (2002), states that if rap had a unified front to carry its sociopolitical agenda much more could be achieved, for example, African American hip-hop artists, insiders and fans could challenge white hip-hop artists, insiders and fans to use their knowledge of hip-hop culture to help improve race relations. This further suggests that a unified agenda could challenge successful rap artists to pool their resources to assist poor communities with rebuilding along with pushing the artists to be responsible for the integrity of black culture.

Hip-Hop and Education

Researchers have investigated the role that hip-hop plays in school settings. In 2015, Williams interviewed three types of teachers; those who use hip-hop in the classroom, teachers who do not use hip-hop, and hip-hop teaching artists to investigate teachers feelings toward teaching hip-hop in their classrooms. Williams found that teachers had different perspectives regarding how hip-hop music and culture were defined but had similar responses supporting hip-hop as beneficial for, engagement, raising consciousness, and motivation among students. Williams admits that her small

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sample size was a limitation to the study. In a similar study, Manheimer (2016) used interviews to explore the views and uses of hip-hop among 24 teachers at low-income high-minority high schools. Manheimer found the majority of teachers agreed that hip-hop has a negative impact on their students. Some teachers reported using hip-hop to teach lesson regularly while other teachers never used hip-hop. Manheimer argues the importance of using culturally relevant pedagogy to increase student outcomes

Studies have also been conducted related to hip-hop and college students. Petchauer's 2007 dissertation attempts to find the meaning of education for hip-hop collegians. Petchauer described hip-hop collegians as, "college students who make their active participation in hip-hop relevant to their educational interests, motivations, practices, or mindsets" (p. 7). The students' selected for the study were involved in one or more of the four main elements, affiliated with a hip-hop organization on campus, or organizer of hip-hop events (2012). Using a phenomenological design, Petchaur collected data using field notes, an impressionistic record, participant-observation, and open-ended in-depth interviews (2007). Petchauer chose three very contrasting locations for his research. He gave the institutions fictitious names; Pacific State, a diverse public research institution located in the southwest with an enrollment of 38,000 students, Weston College in the northeast with an enrollment of 1600 students enrolled in a private college with little diversity, and Colonial University, a public university located in the southwest with an enrollment of around 20,000. Participants were found by using operational construct sampling and maximum variation sampling (2007). Fifteen ethnically diverse students were selected for the study that included Caucasians, African Americans, Afro-latina, and Filipina. Petchauer's participants acknowledged participating in hip-hop

culture on- and off-campus in varying types of environments. Results indicated that hip-hop collegians linked to the hip-hop culture provided on campus, can lead to positive outcomes and identity development based on their levels of campus involvement, although students might also distance themselves from campus because of the limited hip-hop culture being provided. Further, the study found that students sometimes brought their hip-hop skill sets into the classroom to help support their learning. For example, graffiti writing skills to an art class or an emcee showing his/her ability to speak publicly during class presentations. Further, Petchauer identified ways that a hip-hop identity can be formed without participation in hip-hop's four major elements as well as the potential for a hip-hop collegian to participate in hip hop activity for the pure enjoyment without connecting to the political and oppressive subjects found in many of its texts.

Iwamoto, Creswell, and Caldwell (2007) conducted a phenomenological study by interviewing eight college students ranging from ages 18-26 at a large Midwestern university to find the meaning of rap, the context that it was experienced, and the ways that it was used. Purposive sampling was used to find participants who included, white, Asian, African American, and Latinos; all participants were from lower and middle-class neighborhoods

From the data analysis, listeners of hip-hop were classified as avid fans and casual listeners. Avid fans listened more frequently than those identified as casual listeners. The findings showed the level of the connection to hip-hop varied based on the listening frequency. Iwamoto et al., found that avid fans connected with rap music on a personal level, and had educational, motivational, and greater cultivation of pride and self-concept. Based on their study, the authors believe that rap extends across races with no

international boundaries and that rap can be used in education settings, as well as in individual and group counseling sessions (2007)

Researchers Wessel and Wallaert (2011), used a phenomenological approach to answer the question, "How has identification with the hip-hop culture influenced the educational experiences of undergraduate students at a Midwestern, predominately White university?" (p. 170). Using an ethnically diverse sample of 11 undergraduate students who self-identified as immersed in the hip-hop culture, there were four African Americans, four Caucasians, two with bi-racial ethnicities, and one Samoan. Wessel and Wallert found that most students expressed listening to hip-hop influenced their educational persistence. Additional findings suggest hip-hop culture allowed students to expand cultural appreciation and form friendships based on listening to music and sharing dialog.

A similar study by Sulé (2016) investigated, "educational aspirations, transitions to higher education, academic participation, social memberships, diversity experiences, the perception of campus climate and commitment to hip-hop culture" (p. 184). Sulé conducted a phenomenological study finding participants using criterion sampling and snowball referrals at two Midwestern universities, a doctoral granting predominantly white institution and a research intensive predominantly white institution. Students who self-reported active expression in hip-hop culture via participation in rap, music, dance, poetry, visual art, activism, blogging or programming, were selected for the study. Among the 19 participants, 15 were males from diverse racial and ethnic and economic backgrounds. Six black students, seven white students, one Chaldean, one Pakistani, one

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Black/Turkish, one Filipino/Chinese, one Asian American and one Black/White made up

the racial/ethnic sample

Sulé (2016) found that belongingness and diversity were achieved by hip-hop

collegians based on their investments in hip-hop culture. Some students reported that hip-

hop was a part of their core existence, making hip-hop a very critical piece of the students

identity. Most students reported a limited amount of campus engagement with hip-hop.

Sulé also found hip-hop can create a dialog between cultures and races acting as a bridge

to address important social issues helping to promote diversity.

Chickering's Identity Development Theory

Attending college provides opportunities for students to gain a deeper

understanding of themselves. Chickering (1969) developed a theory to explain how the

environment can create issues that influence student development by acknowledging that

students move through a series of vectors at a different pace. The seven vectors are

developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward

interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity,

developing purpose, and developing integrity (Chickering, 1969).

To better understand Chickering's theory, I will explain the seven vectors

beginning with the first vector developing competence. In this stage, there are three types

of competence that are gained in college; intellectual competence, physical and manual

skills, and interpersonal competence. The second vector is managing emotions where

students learn how to recognize their emotions, accept, and express them appropriately.

The third vector is moving through autonomy through interdependence; according to

Chickering (1969) in this vector, students can move independently and make decisions

building on the last vector into a level of maturity. In this stage, the goals are more self-driven. The fourth vector is developing mature interpersonal relationships where students in this vector begin to appreciate the differences in other people and develop culturally. Students begin to recognize the value in their relationships. The fifth vector is establishing identity, in this vector students become more secure with themselves, build self-esteem and have greater acceptance of their lifestyles. Next is developing purpose; in this vector students develop personal and vocational goals that are set for clear purposes. The last vector is developing integrity; Chickering (1969) states in this vector, students develop a value system that is also congruent with their behaviors.

Erickson's Identity Development Theory

Understanding how college students develop their identities is important. Erickson (1994) developed a model to explain the stages of identity development. Stage One: Basic Trust versus Mistrust is an attitude towards oneself and the world derived from the experiences of the first year of life. Erickson (1994) describes the meaning of trust as trustworthiness as far as one is concerned and truthfulness as far as others are concerned. During Stage Two: Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, students in this stage learn to regulate love and hate, self-expression, and self-suppression. Saving face and understanding shame are also characteristics that develop in this stage. Stage three is Initiative versus Guilt; according to Erickson (1994) a person begins to move around more freely, having perfected language, and widening their imagination. Stage four, Industry versuss Inferiority, is a stage where children want to watch what adults do and repeat the observed behavior (Erickson, 1994). In stage five, Identity versus Role Confusion, Erickson (1994) suggests children identify their social roles and begin to

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worry about how they are perceived in the eyes of others. In stage six, Intimacy versus

Isolation, students focus on how one has established a reasonable sense of who they are

and begin working toward specific goals and isolation away from those forces that are in

the way of one's purpose. Erickson's (1994) stage seven is Generativity versus

Stagnation. Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next

generation (Erikson, 1994). The last stage is Ego Integrity versus Despair which deals

with the acceptance of one's own life cycle and of the people who are impacted by it

significantly, further defending this lifestyle against physical and economical threats

(Erikson, 1980).

Summary of the Literature Review

This study seeks to understand the impact that hip-hop has on the identity of

freshman students at Rowan University. Hip-hop can be traced back to the mid-1970s

originating in the Bronx New York; prior to commercializing the culture it was organic

and deeply connected to its grassroots. The youth behind the hip-hop movement were

responding to the struggles faced by members from inner city neighborhoods. Its

elements are embraced globally from a grassroots level, the culture has been self-aware

and politically conscious. Although the culture is often condemned by critiques like

McWhorter's (2013) comment, "hip-hop retards black culture," the culture has managed

to be successful in mainstream America. The literature on hip-hop has made its way into

academia. Previous research like the qualitative study by Petchauer (2007) on hip-hop

and the impact that hip-hop has college students focused on students who participated in

one of the four original elements of hip-hop. There has been minimal quantitative

research conducted to on how hip-hop impacts the identity of college students. Theories

like Chickering and Erickson on identity development provide a lens for looking into the identity and cultural growth of students. Hip-hop continues to spread across cultures, this study responds to the existing literature and the need for a quantitative approach to researching hip-hop's impact on college students.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University located in Glassboro, New Jersey. Rowan also has campuses in Camden and Stratford, New Jersey. Rowan University opened as Glassboro Normal School in 1923 with the purpose of training elementary school teachers. Rowan University has a student to faculty ratio of 17 to 1 and currently has an enrollment above 16,000 students, of which 28% of the student body are minorities. It is a medium-sized, selective state research institution accredited by the Middle States Regional Accreditation body and offers bachelors, masters, and doctoral programs (www.rowan.edu/about). Rowan University has 12 academic colleges and schools, including Business, Biomedical Science & Health Professions, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Communication and Creative Arts, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Education, Engineering, Global Learning and Partnerships, Humanities and Social Sciences, Performing Arts, Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, and Science and Mathematics. Within these colleges and schools Rowan has 80 bachelors, 60 masters, and 5 doctoral programs (www.rowan.edu/about). Students at Rowan University are able to enhance their college experience by joining one of 146 clubs and organizations. Rowan participates in Division III varsity sports for men and women. Rowan's Division of Student Life offers support for students inside and outside of the classroom. Some of the opportunities that are offered to students include Student Government Association, Greek life, student publications, volunteerism, and other leadership opportunities.

Population and Sample Selection

The target population in this study was 732 freshman students living in Evergreen, Chestnut, or Mimosa residence halls at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey during the spring 2017 semester. Only students of the age 18 and above were permitted to participate. To ensure diversity of the survey, there were no ethnic, gender, or lifestyle restrictions. The total number of freshman students living in Chestnut, Evergreen, and Mimosa residential halls was 732 freshman, the total sample size for this study was 434; this number was obtained by using a sample size calculator utilizing a margin of error of 3%, a confidence level of 95%, and a target response rate of 50%. To distribute this survey, an online program called Qualtrics was used. The survey was sent to students via email. These emails of the students were obtained through Rowan's Department of Information Resources and Technology (IRT). Due to a low response rate of 23% from the online distribution, a convenience sample was also used to collect data. To boost the sample size and response rate, a convenience sample was used by printing paper copies of the survey and distributing them to freshman students in the Chamberlain Student Center at Rowan University, Campbell Library, Mimosa, and Evergreen residence halls.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to assess the impact that hip-hop has on freshman students identity was designed using information from the knowledge base (Appendix B). The primary focus of the study was to determine the impact that hip-hop culture had on freshman students' identity. This survey consists of 34 items, the first five questions were used to collect demographic information from the students including gender, GPA,

ethnicity, class status, and age. The next 29 items were divided into three factor groupings to investigate the identities of selected freshman, what the freshman students believed about their levels of hip-hop knowledge, how committed the students were to hip-hop culture, and what impact hip-hop had on their views toward the educational experience at Rowan University. The survey used a Likert scale five point system, with level of agreements given value labels ranging from 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree. The instrument was designed through review of relevant literature and went through several iterations. Additionally, the survey was pilot tested for clarity and readability. The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software was used to analyze Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to check for instrument reliability of the 29 Likert scale items. Results produced an r coefficient of .861 indicating that the instrument is internally consistent, as scores greater than .70 exhibit consistency and suggest a reliable instrument.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting data, an Institutional Research Board (IRB) application was completed and submitted on March 30th and approved on March 31st (Appendix C). Once the study was approved, Rowan's Operations Research Analyst was able to release the emails of the desired students. On April 13th, the email was distributed twice per week for three weeks. Within this email there was a generic letter to each subject stating the purpose of the study, the importance of completing the survey, and that the survey was completely voluntary and anonymous it also included the link that would direct them to an alternate consent form and the electronic survey.

While random sampling is preferred for any research study, due to the poor response rate of 23% using online distribution, I distributed paper copies of the survey in the Chamberlain Student Center as well as the Campbell Library, Evergreen, and Mimosa residence halls. I introduced myself to all students who walked by and asked if they were freshman. Those that self-identified as freshman, I asked if they were willing to participate in my research study while also stating that participation was completely anonymous and voluntary. Moreover, I alerted each person that this survey was randomly sent to Rowan University freshman students who were living in Evergreen, Chestnut, or Mullica halls via email and if they already completed it then not to take it again. Before each paper survey was completed the students had to read and sign an informed consent contract (Appendix A). This form contained information about the study while also explaining that the study was completely voluntary. The informed consent explained that all surveys submitted were anonymous meaning that any given survey could not be attached to the identity of the student. Also, the informed consent explained that at any time during the survey administration the subject could withdraw from the study and leave without completing the survey. After completing the informed consent form each subject was administered the survey

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 24. This computer software was used to describe the data that were gathered in order to answer the three research questions listed in Chapter I. Those questions were used to determine what role hip-hop plays in the identity development of selected freshman, what these freshman students believed about

their levels of hip-hop knowledge, how committed these students were to hip-hop culture, and what impact hip-hop had on their views toward the educational experience at Rowan University. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Chapter IV

Findings

Profile of the Sample

The subjects in this study consisted of 237 freshman students from Rowan University who lived in targeted freshman residence halls during the spring 2017 semester. On April 13th, 2017, an email was sent to a randomly selected sample of 434 freshman students that contained a link to the electronic survey. This version was sent twice a week for three consecutive weeks. At the end of the third week after the electronic surveys were distributed a total of 119 responses were received. Of that number, 21 surveys were incomplete and thus removed from the survey results giving me a 23% response rate. A conversation occurred with my thesis chair about what to do to increase the response rate. It was decided that I would distribute a paper survey. On April 21st, a paper format of the survey was given out to students at Evergreen and Mimosa residential halls as well as the Chamberlain Student Center and Campbell Library, A total of 139 paper surveys were collected which gave a response rate of 31.2%. By combining the online and paper copies of the survey, the overall response rate was a respectable 54%.

Table 4.1 describes the demographics of the subjects in the study. Of those subjects who responded to the question about gender, 134 (56.8%) were male, and 102 (43.2%) were female. Of the students who responded to the question about age, 225 (95.3%) were between 18 and 19 years old, 7 (3.0%) were between 20 and 21 years old, 1(0.4%) was between 22-23 and 3 (1.3%) were between 24-24. The majority of the students, 118 (50.2%) reported being White, 84 (35.7%) reported being African

American, Latino/Latina accounted for 19 (8.1%) of the sample, Indian/Alaska Native

students accounted for 2 (0.9%) of the sample, Asians accounted for 10 (4.3%), and other

accounted for 2 responses (0.9%). A total of 36 (15.3%) subjects reported having a G.P.A

between 2.0 and 2.5. Seventy (29.7%) of the subjects reported a grade point average

between 2.6 and 3.0. Eighty-five (36.0%) of the responses reported a GPA between 3.1-

3.5 and 45 students (19.1%) reported G.P.A's between 3.6-4.0.

Table 4.1

Demographics of Freshman Subjects (N=237)

Variable	Category	*f*	*%*
Gender	Male	134	56.8
(*n*=236,	Female	102	43.2
Missing=1)			
Age	18-19	225	95.3
(*n*=236,	23-24	1	.4
Missing=1)	24-25	3	1.3
Ethnicity	White	118	50.2
(*n*=235,	African American	84	35.7
Missing=2)	American Indian/Alaska Native	2	.9
	Asian	10	4.3
	Latino/Latina	19	8.1
	Other	2	.9

Table 4.1 (continued)

Variable	Category	f	%
G.P.A	2.0-2.5	36	15.3
(*n*=236,	2.6-3.0	70	29.7
Missing=1)	3.1-3.5	85	36.0
	3.6-4.0	45	19.1

Analysis of the Data

Research question 1. What role does hip-hop culture play in the identity development of selected freshman students at Rowan University?

Table 4.2 shows agreement levels for survey items scaled from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each item in the factor group is arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The subjects considered statements regarding what role hip-hop has on the identity development of the students. An overall inspection of the data in Table 4.2 reveals that 69% of the subjects either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I use slang that comes from hip-hop culture." Similarly, 68% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "most adults view hip-hop negatively. Conversely, 45% of the students disagreed with the statement, "People who listen to hip-hop have the same worldviews."

Table 4.2

Impact on Identity
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I use slang that comes from hip-hop culture *n=226, M=3.79,* SD=1.079 Missing=11	61	27.0	95	42.0	43	19.0	15	6.6	12	5.3
Most adults view hip-hop negatively *n=236, M=3.78, SD=.968* Missing=1	54	22.9	107	45.3	51	21.6	18	7.6	6	2.5
I feel a strong connection toward hip-hop culture *n=228, M=3.48, SD=1.240* Missing=9	61	26.8	55	24.1	63	27.6	31	13.6	18	7.9
I relate to hip-hop music more than other music genres *n=236, M=3.44, SD=1.299* Missing=1	64	27.1	59	25.0	54	22.9	36	15.3	23	9.7
Hip-hop culture is a part of my identity *n=221, M=3.21, SD=1.276* Missing=16	45	20.4	45	20.4	69	31.2	35	15.8	27	12.2

Table 4.2 (continued)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I think about how my life will be affected by hip-hop culture n=227, M=3.09, SD=1.239 Missing=10	32	14.1	60	26.4	61	26.9	45	19.8	29	12.8
The way I dress is influenced by hip-hop culture n=227, M=3.09, SD=1.287 Missing=10	37	16.3	55	24.2	58	25.6	45	19.8	32	14.1
My worldview is similar to lyrics expressed in hip-hop music n=221, M=2.99, SD=1.116 Missing=16	22	10.0	48	21.7	79 3	5.7	50	22.6	22	10.0
My attitude towards politics is influenced by hip-hop culture n=221, M=2.91, SD=1.244 Missing=16	64	27.1	59	25.0	54	22.9	36	15.3	23	9.7
People who listen to hip-hop music have the same worldviews n=221, M=2.67, SD=1.113 Missing=16	14	6.3	35	15.8	72	32.6	65	29.4	35	15.8

Research question 2. What are the levels of knowledge and commitment to hip-hop culture?

Table 4.3 shows agreement levels for survey items scaled from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each item in the factor group is arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. Table 4.3 reveals the depth of knowledge and commitment the subjects reported having for hip-hop. For example, 71% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "I listen to hip-hop music every day." The subjects also noted that, "People are judgmental of hip-hop more than other musical forms," with 66% either strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement. Interestingly, a total of 40% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "I spend time with people who are not supportive of hip-hop culture."

Table 4.3

Knowledge and Commitment (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I listen to hip-hop music every day *n*=236, *M*=4.02, *SD*=1.137 Missing=1	110	46.6	57	24.2	39	16.5	23	9.7	7	3.0
People are more judgmental of hip-hop more than other musical forms *n*=220, *M*=3.79, *SD*=1.203 Missing=17	78	35.5	67	30.5	37	16.8	26	11.8	12	5.1

Table 4.3 (continued)

Knowledge and Commitment (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I have a clear understanding of hip-hop cultures history *n=236, M=3.63, SD=1.125* Missing=1	59	25.0	83	35.2	50	21.2	35	14.8	9	3.8
I have a lot of pride in hip-hop culture and its accomplishments *n=228, M=3.61, SD=1.112* Missing=9	60	26.3	60	26.3	77	33.8	20	8.8	11	4.8
There is a difference between hip-hop culture and hip-hop music *n=236, M=3.57, SD=1.103* Missing=1	54	22.9	77	32.6	63	26.7	33	14.0	9	3.8
Staying up to date with hip-hop culture is meaningful to me *n=235, M=3.48, SD=1.217* Missing=2	61	26.0	58	24.7	63	26.8	38	16.2	15	6.4

Table 4.3 (continued)

Knowledge and Commitment (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Compared to my peers I am very knowledgeable about hip-hop *n*=235, *M*=3.34, *SD*=1.241 Missing=2	52	22.1	58	24.7	61	25.7	45	19.1	19	8.1
I spend time with people who are not supportive of hip-hop culture *n*=226, *M*=3.14, *SD*=1.175 Missing=11	33	14.6	57	25.2	61	27.0	58	25.7	17	7.5

Research question 3. How do freshman students living on campus feel about hip-hop culture's impact on their educational experience at Rowan University?

Table 4.4 shows agreement levels for survey items scaled from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Each item in the factor group is arranged from most to least positive using mean scores. The table shows the impact that hip-hop has on the educational and campus experiences as reported by the students. For example, 69% agreed or strongly agree with the statement, "I am able to express myself freely on campus." Additionally, 65% of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Campus should offer more events that are supportive hip-hop culture." Interestingly, only 16% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "My professors understand what hip-hop culture is."

Table 4.4

Educational Impact (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Campus should offer more events that are supportive of hip-hop culture *n=227, M=3.89, SD=1.031* Missing=10	79	34.8	68	30.0	62	27.3	12	5.3	6	2.6
I am able to express myself freely on campus *n=223, M=3.89, SD=1.127* Missing=14	82	36.8	72	32.3	41	18.4	18	8.1	10	4.5
I am able to connect with other students by talking about hip-hop *n=227, M=3.71, SD=1.115* Missing=10	63	27.8	80	35.2	48	21.1	27	11.9	9	4.0
Hip-hop culture is supportive of education *n=235, M=3.09, SD=1.117* Missing=2	27	11.4	43	18.2	75	31.8	45	19.1	46	19.5

Table 4.4 (continued)

Educational Impact (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
The attitudes of my peers towards education is influenced by hip-hop *n=236*, *M=2.98*, *SD=1.158* Missing=1	26	11.0	48	20.3	86	36.4	47	19.9	29	12.3
I am active in organizations that include mostly people that embrace hip-hop culture *n=227*, *M=2.97*, *SD=1.288* Missing=10	32	14.1	52	22.9	56	24.7	51	22.5	36	15.9
Hip-hop music influences my attitude toward education *n=236*, *M=2.83*, *SD=1.260* Missing=1	27	11.4	43	18.2	75	31.8	45	19.1	46	19.5
My peers are negatively influenced by hip-hop culture *n=226, M=2.72*, *SD=1.170* Missing=11	21	9.3	33	14.6	68	30.1	69	30.5	35	15.5

Table 4.4 (continued)

Educational Impact (N=237)
(Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1)

Variable	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
I would like to have a career that involves hip-hop culture *n*=234, *M*=2.69, *SD*=1.274 Missing=3	29	12.4	30	12.8	61	26.1	67	28.6	47	20.1
My professors understand what hip-hop culture is *n*=235, *M*=2.59, *SD*=1.044 Missing=2	14	6.0	23	9.8	84	35.7	80	34.0	34	14.5

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

  This study sought to understand the impact the hip-hop culture has on the identity of selected freshman students at Rowan University during the spring 2017 academic semester. The target population of the study was 732 freshman students living in Chestnut, Evergreen, or Mimosa residential halls. Since 732 freshman students lived in these three dorms, the total sample size for this study was 434; this number was obtained using a sample size calculator with a margin of error of 3%, a confidence level of 95%, and a target response rate of 50%. Rowan's Department of Information Resources and Technology (IRT) provided emails of the targeted population. I used Rowan's online survey program Qualtrics to distribute the instrument, which generated a random sample of the population and emailed out an electronic version of the survey instrument. On April 13th, the email was distributed twice per week for 3 weeks. At the end of the third week the electronic version of the survey yield 119 responses giving me a 23% response rate. To get closer to the targeted response rate of 50%, paper copies of the survey were printed and distributed to freshman students in the Chamberlain Student Center at Rowan University, Campbell Library, Mimosa, and Evergreen residential halls; this change resulted in a convenience sample. A total of 139 paper surveys were collected which combined with the online surveys gave a total response rate of 54%.

  There were three research questions that guided the analysis of the data. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program. This program analyzed the data by calculating the frequencies,

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percentages, means, and standard deviations of survey responses. The survey was developed using information from the knowledge base and the statements were placed into three factor groupings based on the impact hip-hop has on student identity, their knowledge and commitment of hip-hop, and the impact that it has on the education and campus environment.

Discussion of the Findings

  Research question 1. What role hip-hop culture play in the identity development of select freshman students at Rowan University?

  The impact on identity factor grouping was analyzed showing the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages for each item. The items in the identity factor grouping averaged a mean of 3.24 out of 5 which was the second highest among the three factor groups. Seven out of the 10 survey items in this factor group produced mean scores between "somewhat agree and neutral." Freshman students who responded to the statement, "I use slang that comes from hip-hop culture," strongly agreed or agreed at a 69% rate and this had the highest mean score in the factor group of 3.79. This indicates that the way freshman students speak has been impacted by hip-hop. The second highest mean score in this factor group was 3.78 out of 5. The statement, "most adults view hip-hop negatively," suggests students believe that adults look poorly upon hip-hop culture. Over the years many politicians and writers, for example Tipper Gore (1990), have spoken against hip-hop and how it negatively impacts youth. Further, the third highest mean score of 3.48 out of 5 was for the statement, "I feel a strong connection toward hip-hop culture," showing students reported feeling a positive connection to hip-hop culture. The statement, "I relate to hip-hop more than other musical genres," had the fourth

highest mean with a 3.44 out of five. With over 52% of the students either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement suggests that students felt that they relate to hip-hop music. The fifth highest mean score in the impact on identity factor grouping was the statement, "hip-hop culture is a part of my identity," with a mean score of 3.21 out of 5 and over 40% of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. These responses are consistent with the fifth vector in the identity development model by Chickering (1969). In this vector students begin establishing their identity, accepting their lifestyles and building self-esteem. The sixth highest mean score was a tie between the statements, "I think about how my life will be affected by hip-hop culture," and the statement, "the way that I dress is influenced by hip-hop culture." Both items had a mean score of 3.09 out of 5 and suggest that students are not thinking about how hip-hop will impact their lives long term. The last three statements in the factor grouping fell between neutral and somewhat disagree. The statement, "my worldview is similar to lyrics expressed in hip-hop music," had a mean of 2.99 out of 5. Over 52% of the students strongly agreed or agreed to the statement, "My attitude towards politics is influenced by hip-hop culture," which had a mean score of 2.91 out of 5. Chang (2005) and Watkins (2005) both believe that hip-hop's political success is second to its commercial success and the statement with the lowest mean score was, "People who listen to hop-hop music have the same worldviews," with 2.67 out 5 showing that freshman students did not agree that people who listen to hip-hop view the world in the same way.

Research question 2. What are the levels of knowledge and commitment to hip-hop culture?

The knowledge and commitment to hip-hop factor grouping was analyzed

showing the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages for each item. The

items in this factor group averaged the highest mean score of all the factor groupings with

a 3.54 out of 5. All of the statements in this factor group averaged mean scores that were

between slightly below "somewhat agree" and slightly above "neutral." The statement, "I

listen to hip-hop music every day," produced an average mean score response of 4.02 out

of 5. Respondents answered, "strongly agree" or "agree" 70.5% of the time. These data

indicate a majority of the students listen to hip-hop as part of their daily routines.

Iwamoto et al. (2007) suggests the more people listen to hip-hop the more they relate on a

personal level, and this contributes to identity development. Moreover, 66% of the

students reported that, "People are more judgmental of hip-hop than other musical

forms." The third highest mean score among the items in this factor group was 3.61 out

of 5 and this came from the statement, "I have a clear understanding of hip-hop culture's

history." This suggests that students have a favorable understanding of the history of hip-

hop culture. Slightly more than half of the students (50.6%) either strongly agreed or

agreed with the statement, "I have a lot of pride in hip-hop culture and its

accomplishments." The fifth highest mean score 3.57 out of 5 came from the statement,

"There is a difference between hip-hop culture and hip-hop music." This suggests that a

majority of the student's were able to separate hip-hop culture from hip-hop music

Kitwana (2005) asserts that beyond the music, the culture has "hip-hop specific language,

body language, fashion, style, sensibility, and worldview" (p. xii). "Staying up to date

with hip-hop culture is very meaningful to me," was the sixth highest mean score among

items in this factor group. "Compared to my peers I am very knowledgeable about hip-

hop." produced a mean score of 3.34 out of 5. "I attend events off campus that support hip-hip," had a mean score of 3.29, with 46% of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Additionally, the lowest mean score of the factor group was the statement, "I spend time with people who are not supportive of hip-hop culture."

Research question 3. How do freshman students living on campus feel about hip-hop culture's impact on their educational experience at Rowan University?

Ten items on the survey helped to address the impact of hip-hop culture's on students' educational experience at Rowan. This factor grouping was analyzed showing the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentages for each item of the factor group. This factor group had the lowest mean score of 3.13 out of 5 amidst the three groups. The top four mean scores in this factor group are between "somewhat agree" and "neutral." Two statements were tied for the highest mean score of 3.89. The statement, "campus should offer more events that are supportive of hip-hop culture," produced 64.8% of the respondents either strongly agreeing or somewhat agreeing. This suggests that the majority of the freshman students would like more events that support hip-hop and this finding is similar to the results found in Sule (2016). The statement, "I am able to express myself freely on campus," also had a mean score of 3.89 showing that a favorable number of freshman students believed that they are able to be open with who they are on campus. Also, the survey results suggest students are able to connect through talking about hip-hop. Sule (2016) found students believed hip-hop helped them connect with other cultures and races. A total of 54% of Rowan students either strongly agreed or with the statement, "I am able to connect with other students by talking about hip-hop," with a mean score of 3.71. In Chickering's (1969) model of identity development, he

states that in the fourth vector students begin to develop mature interpersonal relationships. The statement, "hip-hop culture is supportive of education," produced a mean score of 3.09, which is the fourth highest in the factor group. This mean score suggests that students did not believe that hip-hop is supportive of education.

Six items in the factor group had mean scores between "neutral" and "somewhat disagree." Thirty-one percent of the students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "The attitudes of my peers towards education is influenced by hip-hop." The fifth highest mean score in this factor group was for the statement, "I am active in organizations that include mostly people that embrace hip-hop culture," with a mean of 2.97 out of 5. Further, "Hip-hop music influences my attitude toward education," had a mean score of 2.83 out of 5. This indicates that students mostly disagreed, that they allowed hip-hop to impact their attitudes towards education. The seventh highest mean score was 2.72 out of 5 with the statement, "My peers are negatively influenced by hip-hop culture." Moreover, students showed a range of disagreement with the statement, "I would like to have a career that involves hip-hop culture." The lowest mean score in this factor group was 2.59 and it came from the statement, "my professors understand what hip-hop culture is," indicating a majority of students did not believe their professors understand hip-hop culture. Wessel and Wallaert (2011) found that students felt that hip-hop music influenced their educational persistence.

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that hip-hop culture does have an impact on freshman students at Rowan University. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the majority of freshman students (68.2%) at Rowan University reported

that hip-hop is viewed negatively by adults. The study also shows that hip-hop had a big impact on the language that is used by students, as 69% reported using slang and idioms that come from hip-hop. Over half (50.9%) of the students believed that they felt a strong connection to hip-hop culture.

Further, the study shows that a majority of the students (70.8%) listen to hip-hop every day, suggesting that many students have a daily connection with hip-hop culture. This could explain why more than half of the students (52.6%) reported that they have a lot of pride in hip-hop culture and its accomplishments. Based on my research (66%), believed that people are more judgmental of hip-hop that other genres. The responses to this statement are consistent with the final stage of the identity development model by Erikson (1980), in this stage of development one begins to accept his/her lifestyle and defend it against threats. Freshman students appear to show high levels of commitment to hip-hop culture as slightly more than half (50.7%) reported staying up to date with hip-hop is important, while (47.6%) reported attending events off campus that support hip-hop culture. The students reported that only 15.8% agreed or strongly agreed that their professors are knowledgeable about hip-hop while in contrast, 55.2% reported having a clear understanding of the history of hip-hop culture. Finally, 64.8% of the freshman either strongly agreed or agreed that the campus should have more events that support hip-hop culture.

Recommendations for Practice

1. A system should be implemented to identify students who identify with hip-hop culture.

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2. A voluntary workshop should be held for faculty, administrators, and students to learn about hip-hop music and culture.

3. If a student identifies with hip-hop culture, he/she should be paired with faculty or administrators who support hip-hop culture as well to serve as mentors.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Research should be conducted on the impact that hip-hop has on college students beyond the freshman year.

2. A larger study at a regional or national level to investigate the impact that hip-hop has on college students.

3. A study that looks into whether the longterm impact that hip-hop has on college students.

4. Further research should be conducted to differentiate between the races and ethnicities of the students.

5. Research should be conducted on the impact the hip-hop culture has on faculty and administrators.

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<center>**Appendix A**</center>

<center>**Consent Form**</center>

<center>**SURVEY CONSENT**</center>

You are invited to participate in this research survey entitled Hip-Hop Culture: The Impact on Select Freshman Students' Identity. You are included in this survey because you are a freshman student living in one of the following dorms Chestnut, Evergreen, or Mimosa halls during the 2017 spring semester. The number of subjects to be enrolled in the study will be 486 freshman students living in Evergreen, Chestnut or Mimosa.

The survey may take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, do not respond to this online survey. Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate in the survey. We expect the study to last until May 2017.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the impact of hip-hop culture on freshman college identity. Students bring unique cultural worldviews and this study will explore how hip-hop impacts these students. There are no risks or discomforts associated with this survey. There may be no direct benefit to you, however, by participating in this study, you may help us understand and support of students from hip-hop culture.

Your response will be kept confidential. We will store the data in a secure computer file and the file will destroyed once the data has been published. Any part of the research that is published as part of this study will not include your individual information. If you have any questions about the survey, you can me at **davidshanks1221@gmail.com** or my thesis advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at **sisco@rowan.edu** at the address provided below, but you do not have to give your personal identification.

Please complete the checkbox below.

To participate in this survey, you must be 18 years or older. ☐

Completing this survey indicates that you are voluntarily giving consent to participate ☐

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Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Section I: Demographics
Place a (X) next to the appropriate item. Choose only one answer for each question.

1. Gender:
   _____Female   _____Male

2. Age:
   _____18-19   _____20-21   _____21-22   _____23-24

3. Class Rank:
   _____Freshman   _____Sophomore   _____Junior   _____Seniors

4. GPA
   _____2.0 - 2.5   _____2.6 - 3.0   _____3.1-3.5   _____ 3.6-4.0

5. Ethnicity
   ____White ___African American ___Latino ____Asian
   ____American Indian/Alaska Native ___ other

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is a difference between hip-hop culture and hip-hop music					
I have a clear understanding of hip-hop culture's history					
Most adults view hip-hop negatively					
I listen to hip-hop music every day					
I attend events off campus that support hip-hop culture					
Compared to my peers I am very knowledgeable about hip-hop					

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Staying up to date with hip-hop culture is very meaningful to me					
My professors understand hip-hop culture					
Hip-hop influences my attitude toward education					
I relate to hip-hop more than other musical genres					
Hip-hop culture is supportive of education					
I would like to have a career that involves hip-hop culture					
The attitudes my peers have towards education is influenced by hip-hop					
I feel a strong connection with hip-hop culture					
I am active in organizations that include mostly people that embrace hip-hop culture					
Campus should offer more events that are supportive hip-hop culture					
I spend time with people who are not supportive of hip-hop culture					
I am able to connect with other students by talking about hip-hop					

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The way I dress is influenced by hip-hop culture					
I regularly use slang that comes from hip-hop culture					
I think about how hip-hop culture will affect my life					
My peers are negatively influenced by hip-hop culture					
I have a lot of pride in hip-hop culture and its accomplishments					
Hip-hop culture is a part of my identity					
People who listen to hip hop have the same worldviews					
My worldview is similar to those expressed in hip-hop lyrics					
People are more judgmental of hip-hop music than other musical forms					
I am able to express myself freely on campus					
My attitude towards politics is influenced by hip-hop culture					

Appendix C

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Rowan University

** This is an auto-generated email. Please do not reply to this email message.
The originating e-mail account is not monitored.
If you have questions, please contact your local IRB office **

DHHS Federal Wide Assurance Identifier: FWA00007111
IRB Chair Person: Harriet Hartman
IRB Director: Sreekant Murthy
Effective Date: 3/31/2017

eIRB Notice of Approval

STUDY PROFILE

Study ID:	Pro2017001661		
Title:	Hip-Hop Culture: The Impact on Select Freshman Students Identity		

Principal Investigator:	Burton Sisco	**Study Coordinator:**	
Co-Investigator(s):	David Shanks	**Other Study Staff:**	There are no items to display
Sponsor:	Department Funded	**Approval Cycle:**	Twelve Months
Risk Determination:	Minimal Risk	**Device Determination:**	Not Applicable

Review Type:	Expedited	**Expedited Category:**	7	**Exempt Category:**	There are no items to display
Subjects:	891	**Specimens:**	0	**Records:**	

CURRENT SUBMISSION STATUS

Submission Type:	Research Protocol/Study	**Submission Status:**	Approved
Approval Date:	3/31/2017	**Expiration Date:**	3/30/2018

Pregnancy Code:	No Pregnant Women as Subjects	**Pediatric Code:**	No Children As Subjects	**Prisoner Code:**	No Prisoners As Subjects

Protocol:	Protocol ALTERNATE CONSENT SURVEY&AlternateConsent	**Consent:** There are no items to display	**Recruitment Materials:**	There are no items to display

* **Study Performance Sites:**

Glassboro Campus   301 Mullica Hill Road

There are no items to display

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