"Rock the mic!" the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys' attitude in school: a critical ethnography

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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M.ED. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA, 1997

“ROCK THE MIC!” THE INFLUENCE OF HIP-HOP CULTURE ON BLACK BOYS’ ATTITUDE IN SCHOOL: A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Committee Chair: Dr. Barbara Hill

Dissertation dated December 2012

Hip-Hop educational research is critical to understanding the plight of black boys in public schools throughout the United States. This qualitative inquiry fills a void in the research literature that often fails to include the emic perspectives of the participants involved. To confront the challenges black male youth face in school studies that capture their salient voices about lived-experiences are crucial. Nonetheless, this critical ethnography provides a praxis for educational practitioners to use to gain valuable insight into the minds of school age black males. This study contributes to the canon of educational research by situating hip-hop culture and its various elements as independent variables that have a direct impact on black male youth and their attitude in school. This study is also different in that it adds three additional components to hip-hop culture that include fashion/style, language, and behavior. Historically, these three elements are discussed as a part of the four cornerstones: DJing, Rapping/emceeing, Breakdancing, and Graffiti Art. However, this investigation isolates these three as separate elements
that should be included in discussions about hip-hop educational research due to their profound influence on the current generation of black male youth in public schools throughout the United States.
“ROCK THE MIC!” THE INFLUENCE OF HIP-HOP CULTURE ON BLACK BOYS’ ATTITUDE IN SCHOOL: A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

DOUGLAS M. SANDERS, JR.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

DECEMBER 2012
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Who can find a virtuous woman?

for her price is far above rubies

The heart of her husband doth safely trust

in her, so that he shall have

no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil

all the days of her life.

Proverbs 31: 10 - 12

To my wife, Mujadilah Aisha Amrullah-Sanders, the pleading one who lives. Thank you for your patience, diligence, encouragement, and unwavering support in my pursuit of excellence and academic achievement. To my mother, Nancy L. Gilbert, THANK YOU for all the years of sacrifice and dedication making sure my brothers and I had all the comforts of life and introducing us to GOD!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is Hip-Hop Culture Important?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Social Foundations of Hip-Hop Culture</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip-Hop Pedagogy</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip-Hop-Based Educational Research</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip-Hop and Its Influence on Youth</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Variables</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Variables</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Co-Generative Dialogue Transcript: Session One</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Co-Generative Dialogue Transcript: Session Two</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Essay: What is Hip-Hop?</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Rap Lyrics: &quot;So Ambitious&quot; by Jay-Z</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Rap Lyrics: &quot;Juicy&quot; by The Notorious B.I.G.</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Rap Lyrics: &quot;School Spirit&quot; by Kanye West</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Informed Consent Letter and Form</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. IRB Approval Letter</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theoretical Model of Influence of Hip-Hop Culture</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Levels of Association with the Seven Elements of Hip-Hop Culture:</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJing, Rapping/Emceeing, Graffiti Arts, Breakdancing, Fashion/Style, Language, and Behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Content and Count of Rap Sub-Genres, 1979-1995</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Count of Rap Sub-Genres by Year: 1979-1995</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Influence of Hip-Hop Culture Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS)</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Data Coding Matrix</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the face of under- and/or misrepresentations in the traditional media, black youths have turned to hip-hop as a means to define themselves...hip-hop provided a forum from which black youth can portray what it means to be young and black in America and protest against it. (Stapleton, 1998, p. 221)

Why is Hip-Hop Culture Important?

Hip-hop culture is a way of knowing. It has its own set of customs, beliefs, practices and schematic understandings that are unique to those immersed in the culture (Emdin, 2010). Hip-hop also represents a place of comfort for black boys who are often separated from the mainstream school culture through racially stereotypical practices (Forman, 2000). When black male youth experience feelings of alienation from the school milieu they respond by closely aligning themselves with hip-hop cultural aesthetics. This response allows them to assume a hardened exterior that hides their desire to be a part of the mainstream school culture. As a result, black boys submerge themselves in hip-hop music, including spending a significant amount of time studying the lives of rap artists and chronicling it through the use of social media. For educators, black boys’ affinity for hip-hop provides them with instructional strategies that can be utilized in the classroom (Emdin, 2010).
Understanding the relationship between hip-hop culture and black boys’ attitude toward learning requires a paradigm shift. School systems must redefine achievement targets for black boys using culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2009). By retooling school curricula to include hip-hop culture successful outcomes for black males can be produced. In order to reframe urban school curricula, district leaders must embrace the realities of hip-hop culture in an effort to understand what lived-experiences of black boys influence their attitudes in school. Curriculum is the main connection between black boys’ and their disposition toward academic pursuits. To that end, the everyday experiences of black male youth in school are significantly impacted by the curriculum educators’ use. Furthermore, adding hip-hop pedagogy to school curricula would academically engage black boys in the classroom (Emdin, 2010).

This investigation contradicts other studies in that it focuses on the words, notions, meanings, and interpretations drawn from hip-hop culture that influence black boys’ attitude toward learning. This qualitative analysis also suggests that if hip-hop is an important cultural resource for black boys, then, it should be linked to the curricula to enhance their learning experiences in school.

What is Hip-Hop Culture?

Hip-hop culture is a rare occurrence in American history that has permanently altered the social conscience of a generation for the last four decades (Brown, 2010; Stovall, 2006). Moreover, this popular culture phenomenon has generated passion and enthusiasm among young people (Ogbar, 2007). To this end, it has permeated the social constructs of race, class, ethnicity, and gender. According to Emdin (2010), the term
“hip-hop” constitutes more than just another type of popular music. Furthermore, he advocates that hip-hop is, indeed, a culture that enables young people all over the world to connect through their common experiences. It is through these common experiences that school age youth develop identity and resist the oppressive nature of American public education (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum, 2008). Moreover, the controversial nature of hip-hop expresses the language and attitudes of many urban youth in today’s schools. As a result, educational researchers have begun to utilize the contradictory nature of hip-hop culture to capture the voices and themes of an ethnically diverse population of inner-city youth enrolled in America’s schools (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2000; Ogbar, 2007; Irizarry, 2009; Emdin, 2010). In response, educational researchers have begun to conduct analyses that integrate hip-hop culture into curricula and the cultural milieu of public education throughout the United States (Low, 2010). Therefore, future analyses of this kind are important to understanding the cultural and social dynamics that affect the lives of school age black male children. This study is critical because hip-hop culture is the fundamental matrix of self-expression for this whole generation (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Watkins, 2005).

**What Does Hip-Hop Culture Represent for Black Boys?**

While hip-hop culture is regarded by many as a reference to urban music, in recent years it has become increasingly utilized as a reference for understanding youth culture (Brown, 2010). The cultural activities associated with hip-hop, which are discussed later in this study, have created new grounds of study for educational theorists and practitioners. Hip-hop culture bears great implications for studies in education due to
its far reaching influence in political and cultural circles (Brown, 2010). Emdin (2010) supports these claims in the following passage:

When I refer to hip-hop, or when students in urban communities refer to it, it is not seen as a title or label. Urban youth see themselves as hip-hop. My research indicates that urban youth, who are marginalized from achievement in science, see themselves as not only participants in hip-hop, but as a living embodiment of the culture. (p. 12)

Brown (2010) further claims, for many youth immersion in hip-hop culture has become a rite of passage. Moreover, Emdin (2010) points out that urban youth’s firm grasp on hip-hop should signal to educational practitioners that today’s students are not only connected by ethnicity but, also through experience. He writes:

The cosmopolitan nature of hip-hop includes people from backgrounds other than black American and makes it clear that in hip-hop, one’s kin are not just those related by blood, but those related by experience. This is particularly the case if the shared experience is of oppression at the hands of the same institutions and the same political and social economics that exclude a particular set of people from fully participating in the activities within a particular social field. (p. 46)

The preceding excerpts from Emdin’s (2010) study reveal that black boys develop close associations and collaborative identities based upon themes that are presented within hip-hop culture. This is significant because hip-hop culture enables black male youth to resist the hegemonic culture they are confronted with in public school. The conclusion is
that if black boys’ lives are vividly depicted in hip-hop culture, then classroom teachers should take advantage of it. In foresight, Emdin’s (2010) conclusions suggest that incorporating hip-hop into school curricula can inspire positive learning outcomes for black boys in K-12 schools and centers.

While hip-hop educational research has expanded over the last decade, the field of research needs more studies that explore the complicated relationship between hip-hop culture and pedagogy (Ogbar, 2007; Rodriguez, 2009). Hence, more inquiries are needed that examine the countercultural aspects of hip-hop and its impact upon the attitudes of black male youth toward learning. According to Davis (2005), black boys are undereducated, and overrepresented in every negative statistical category in public schools. They are most often suspended and/or expelled from school, systematically alienated and marginalized from the school environment, and in danger of dropping out of public school through repeated incarceration (Davis, 2005; Fashola, 2005; Monroe, 2005). By examining the complex nature of hip-hop culture and its influence in the lives of black boys’ solutions to existing problems may be found. Hip-Hop culture represents the reality of many black boys’ lives. More importantly, hip-hop culture lends them cultural capital through the subgenre of rap music, dance, fashion/style, and sound (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994). Moreover, the vast majority of rappers are black and male. These artists are role models for black boys that are absent from their local schools and communities. Their everyday experiences are what rappers often rhyme about with lyrical expression as they cut records in the studio and perform at sold-out concerts. For
these reasons, the fate of many of America’s black male youth is inextricably linked to hip-hop culture (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

Hip-hop culture represents a common bond that exists among black boys. For them, hip-hop represents an endless struggle to be recognized by their peers and gain social status in the community (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994; Prier & Beachum, 2008). Theoretically, hip-hop gives cultural capital and social status to black boys who are often discriminated against in public schools. Societal oppression, led to the creation of hip-hop culture; just as alienation and discrimination has led to the current plight of black male youth in urban education. Thus, hip-hop culture and the life experiences of black boys are intertwined. Therefore, the relationship between the latter and the former, as it exists in public schools today, warrants further inquiry. This critical ethnography examines the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitudes in school.

**Statement of the Problem**

The research literature is replete with studies that situate hip-hop culture as a pedagogical tool used to stimulate learning among marginalized youth. However, this critical ethnography fills a gap in the research literature by examining the complex nature of hip-hop culture and its impact on gender, race, and schooling. This study is unique because it re-imagines hip-hop as an independent variable that has a profound psychological effect on black male youth and their attitude in school. It is also different in that it adds three additional components to hip-hop culture that include fashion/style, language, and behavior. Historically, these three elements are discussed as a part of the four cornerstones: DJing, Rapping/emceeing, Breakdancing, and Graffiti Art. However,
this study isolates these three as separate elements that should be included in discussions about hip-hop educational research due to their profound influence on the current generation of black male youth in public schools throughout the United States.

To understand the complex nature of hip-hop culture it must be examined in historical context. More specifically, hip-hop culture is a worldwide art and entertainment platform that started in New York (Rose, 1994, 2008; Chang, 2005, Ogbar, 2007; Irizarry, 2009). Hip-Hop culture began in the postindustrial Bronx during the 1970s. The Bronx represented one of the five boroughs in New York City. Specifically, it was the south Bronx neighborhoods that gave birth to hip-hop. America’s inner cities were experiencing a large influx of African American and Latina/o immigrants from other regions of the country and the Caribbean. Northern cities found it difficult to house new residents and the population increased to alarming proportions. The once middle and upper class Bronx neighborhoods had become wastelands that would serve as the springboard for one of the largest sociocultural movements in history—HIP HOP!

The Social Foundations of Hip-Hop Culture

Hip-Hop culture began as a way for young, disenfranchised, and ethnically diverse youth to identify themselves. Furthermore, through racial residential segregation the abandoned people of the South Bronx formed their own identity groups as a means of survival. Identity is a common theme in hip-hop circles. Identity consists of the people, places, and experiences associated with a person or cultural group (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994; Prier & Beachum, 2008). Identity is a central element in hip-hop (Rose, 1994; Williams, 2001). Eventually, gangs formed and became crews or families that provided
support and insulation from the oppressive conditions plaguing their communities in the South Bronx. In essence, the rise of hip-hop culture sprang from the tensions and contradictions of everyday life in America’s inner cities. Those who were dispossessed found a way to capture their daily struggles and morph them into a highly visible socially-conscious platform (Chang 2005, Rose, 1994). Gang members used hip-hop culture to transcend the void in economic resources and opportunities in their communities. The notion of unity is epitomized throughout the subgenre of hip-hop culture known as rap music. During internationally televised events such as the Grammys, MTV Video Music Awards, and BET awards, posses, groups, and entourages can be seen taking the stage along with the rap artists. Nonetheless, gangs are briefly discussed in this study because they typify the idea of unity and loyalty that urban youth and hip-hop culture vehemently ascribe to. The unified presence that exists within the hip-hop community is a key element in this analysis for two reasons:

1. Black boys have a deep sense of unity and loyalty to each other. They call it “being down” for each other. Emdin (2010) supports this view in arguing that marginalized groups form close bonds within their social circle. As a result, they form a distinct culture that centers around their interests and sensibilities which, by and large, include rap music, graffiti, dance, spoken work, and other aesthetics of hip-hop. Moreover, this cultural exchange becomes the primary method of communication between them.

2. Hip-hop culture is a bridge between racial and ethnic barriers (Chang, 2005, Rose, 1994). Youth of all ages and ethnicities share a fascination with the
various aspects of hip-hop culture such as DJing, breakdancing, graffiti art, and rapping or M.C./emceeing. However, DJ's and noted hip-hop icons Kool Herc and KRS-One (Chang, 2005) also add that hip-hop culture includes fashion/style, language, and behavior. Each representation of hip-hop culture is discussed in greater detail below and function as important independent variables in this study.

**Djing**

In the early days of the hip-hop movement, DJs were highly visible and more prominent than the rap artists who would later dominant the genre (Rose, 1994). DJs created the beats and a variety of sounds that were later paired with words. The piece of equipment that was synonymous with early DJs is the turntable. The turntable would be transported to various shows the DJ would play and then connected to a power source along with huge speakers. DJs were the featured entertainers in the 1970s. They were who the audience came to see. The bigger the DJ's reputation, the larger the following. DJing became fierce competition among young people in the South Bronx. They would battle each other for status and respect in the community. As music technology grew over time DJs would perfect their techniques and develop their own styles of musical play. GrandMaster Flash is credited for mastering an element known in DJing circles as "scratching." Scratching is a skilled art early DJs had to master to be considered credible. Scratching involves playing a record back and forth with the hands while adjusting the needle against and with the flow of music. Large audiences would come to see the quick hand movements associated with scratching and the mixing of different
samples of music and sounds. Scratching also gave way to what became known as backspinning which allowed DJs to play repeated words or phrases from a record. DJs who were skilled tradesman learned how to master this skill and established themselves as legitimate players in the growing world of hip-hop culture (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994).

**Breakdancing**

Breakdancing emerged during the disco era of the 1970s. DJs perfected a way of extending the breaks in a song. During these break points dancers would move their bodies along with the music in a syncopated fashion. Breakdancing involves body contortions such as spins and back flips that are appropriately timed with the music. Breaking refers to dance moves that are performed while the DJ mixes his music. Breaking couples music and physicality together to form a unique style of dance. Breakdancers began practicing their craft on street corners, school hallways, and community centers. Neighborhoods began competing with one another and before long breakdancing had become a fascination for inner city youth across America. Breakdancing sparked a national craze among youth across the globe. Students would establish dance crews and compete against one another. During the 1980s breakdancing solidified itself as an established art form. Dance studios began to offer lessons in it. Televisions shows began to use it and journalists began to write about it. In fact, breakdancing had become so popular that it was featured in a series of movies about breakdancing which were released in the mid 1980s (Rose, 1994).
**Graffiti Art**

Graffiti art gained prominence during the 1960s. Like the other aspects of hip-hop culture it began as a way of establishing identity. Literally, hundreds of young people began spraying graffiti on subway trains and railcars in attempt to establish their own identity and gain recognition among their peer groups. As time went on the graffiti became more elaborate and bold. Buildings, walls, bridges, and so forth were subjected to the cultural expressions of ethnically diverse youth. Graffiti artists began to paint large murals, logos, cartoons, and signatures all over town.

While graffiti art had gained prominence throughout the New York region, it began to raise the ire of city officials. What was once regarded as a simple juvenile delinquency had become a city wide epidemic. Graffiti art was considered by city leaders at that time to be an eyesore, a plague on the community that brought considerable depravity and decline to it. The racial politics were also involved in the branding of graffiti art as outlandish. Most graffiti artists were of black and Latina/o heritage. Soon city officials and the transit authority began to take measures to rid the city of graffiti artists by erecting fences, using attack dogs, and establishing an elaborate railway car washing system. Nonetheless, graffiti artists continued to defy city leaders and post graffiti throughout New York City. Although graffiti art has ceased to be widely practiced in the streets it has led to more creative ways of expressions such as painting, videography, cinematography, and photography (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994).
Rapping/Emceeing

The most recognized element of hip-hop culture, rap music was the last one to be established. Clive Campbell aka DJ Kool Herc is a Jamaican born musical pioneer that is regarded as the “godfather” of the hip-hop movement. Herc began to assemble groups of DJs, dancers, and rappers whom he traveled to parties with. DJ Kool Herc’s musical efforts reverberated throughout the West Bronx community and started the musical revolution known as hip-hop. Although Herc’s DJing and emceeing ability led to prominence throughout New York’s five boroughs his notoriety did not go unchallenged. The start of hip-hop music gave rise to other artists that eventually eclipsed Herc’s success. Hip-hop legends Afrika Bambaataa and GrandMaster Flash emerged as the new leaders in hip-hop aristocracy. Afrika Bambaataa’s seminal recording entitled, “Planet Rock” has been a party favorite for more than three decades. GrandMaster Flash, along with the Furious Five, recorded “The Message,” which has been heralded by Rolling Stone and other music magazines as one of the greatest social anthems of all time (Rose, 1994).

As previously discussed, DJs surpassed rappers in the early stages of hip-hop. However, the rappers verbal ability and lyrical prowess eventually overshadowed the DJs spinning, mixing, and scratching. The manner in which rappers spoke in song captivated audiences like nothing before it. Rapping is associated with boastful, aggressive, storytelling that involves profane, sexually explicit language, and sociopolitical messages (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994). For rappers, it is all about the performance fused with technology. The “weapon” of choice for rappers is the microphone. As they step to the
mic to deliver a rhyme, they generally say “mic check” to announce their arrival on stage. Rappers are often heard in concert or in the studio “Microphone check one, two . . .” This method of sound checking originally began as a way to test the sound system. However, it has become a bold and brash way for rappers and emcees to let the world know, “I’m here and I’m ready to rock the mic!”

The local battles between DJs and rappers attracted large crowds. Small independent labels began to notice this trend and sought to tap into the market and capitalize from it. Looking to profit from the latest musical sensation, Sylvia Robinson, Rhythm and Blues singer started Sugar Hill records. Robinson was no stranger to the music business. She had experienced success with a sultry disco-era hit entitled, “Pillow Talk.” Subsequently, in 1979 Robinson formed the Sugar Hill Gang and produced a record called “Rapper’s Delight.” The events that followed solidified rap music as a major musical genre. “Rapper’s Delight” is the first rap song to experience nationwide success and reach the top of the Billboard charts in 1980. The first rap song that started it all reached multi-platinum status and permanently altered the landscape of popular music. For many rap connoisseurs, “Rapper’s Delight” was there first encounter with this new and exciting art form. Over the course of the next few years a plethora of upcoming rap artists infiltrated the industry and solidified their place in pop-culture history.

Fashion/Style

Fashion has always been associated with hip-hop (Rose, 1994). Hip-hop’s cultural influence on the fashion styles of its listener’s is apparent in the lyrics of the first commercially successful rap song, “Rapper’s Delight” (1979):
You see, I'm six foot one, and I'm tons of fun

When I dress to a T,

You see, I got more clothes than Muhammad Ali

and I dress so viciously.

I got bodyguards, I got two big cars

That definitely ain't the wack,

I got a Lincoln Continental and a sunroofed Cadillac.

Here, the rapper associates clothing and style with that of a black cultural icon. Using words and music the rapper is establishing his identity as someone of importance who has allegedly gain prominence, wealth, and social status. Furthermore, he accentuates the expressions and attitudes of hip-hop culture that are prominent in rap music. In the late 1970s several sportswear brands burst onto the scene of hip-hop culture. Retailers soon realized the enormous marketing power hip-hop culture held with its growing fan base. The fashion craze started by hip-hop culture also spanned into the 1980s in the form of brightly colored track suits, exotic animal skins coats and jackets, and various brands of tennis shoes (e.g., Pro Keds, Puma, Converse, and Adidas). Clothing was not the only facet captivated by hip-hop. Hair styles also demonstrated the enormous influence of this new and exciting culture (Kitwana, 2002). During the 1980s and 1990s hi-top fades and jheri curls were popularized by hip-hop culture. Moreover, accessories such as large eyeglasses, Kangol caps, jewelry such as name plates and belts, and finger rings soared in popularity. Heavy gold chains were particularly viewed as a statement of material wealth
and success (Cochran, 2005). Rose (1994) illustrates the impact of hip-hop culture on fashion:

Hip hop artists use style as a form of identity formation that plays on class distinctions and hierarchies by using commodities to claim the cultural terrain. Clothing and consumption rituals testify to the power of consumption as a means of cultural expression. Hip hop fashion is an especially rich example of this sort of appropriation and critique via style. (p. 36)

Language

What's Gucci my nigga?

What's Louie my killa?

What's drugs my deala?

What's that jacket, Margiela?

Doctors say I'm the illest

Cause I'm suffering from realness

Got my niggas in Paris

And they going gorillas, huh!"

[(Chazz) & Jimmy]

I don't even know what that means.

(No one knows what it means, but it's provocative)

No, it's not

(It gets the people going!)
Kanye West’s (2011) lyrics from “Niggas in Paris” is an example of the coded language that is so prevalent in hip-hop culture. For avid fans of hip-hop the words are difficult to understand. Listeners often ask each other “what does that mean?” It is the ambiguity within rap music that often makes hip-hop culture an intriguing field of study. In the song, the brief exchange between Chazz and Jimmy illustrate this point by stating: "I don’t know what that means. (No one knows what it means, but it’s provocative. It gets the people going)." The way of talking and communicating embodied by hip-hop artists is reflective of the conversations black boys have within their cultural sharing groups (Emdin, 2010). Hip-hop culture contains a language they alone understand. To them hip-hop is “theirs.” Hip-hop represents cultural capital that expresses their attitudes and feelings about life.

**Behavior**

Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Edward, Huesmann, Rowell, et al. (2003) studied the effects of media violence on young people. The findings indicated that repeated exposure to rap music videos that contained violence had a strong correlation with aggressive and violent behavior in youth. The researcher concluded that the potential for youth to exhibit violent behavior is exacerbated by exposure to media violence. In another study, Mahiri and Conner (2003) investigated whether or not black youth were more violent than other ethnic groups. They posed the question: “Is it [the] rap music that they listen to?” They surveyed 41 middle school students and discovered that the participants viewed the rap artists as role models. The rap artists used frequent references to violence against women, sex, and assault that had become firmly planted in
the consciousness of the subjects. Their study proved that black youth interpret hip-hop culture in harmful ways sometimes. Their study also showed that black youth who listen to violent music and watch similar music videos get into more fights, frequently use inappropriate language, make inappropriate gestures, and harbor misogynistic views.

Likewise, violence and drug use are recurrent themes in hip-hop music and culture. The messages carry great concern because they are associated with high morbidity and mortality rates among black youth (Travis & Deepak, 2011). Wingood, DiClemente, Bernhardt, Harrington, Davis, and Robillard (2003) supports this purview with findings from his research that indicate a positive relationship between hip-hop videos and negative behavioral health outcomes, including greater likelihood of assaulting teachers, incarceration rates, transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, and substance abuse. Clearly, the evidence gives rise to deep concerns about the influence of hip-hop culture on the behavior of black youth.

The hip-hop cultural movement that began in the 1970s has had long-lasting effects on society today. It is both dangerous and alluring. As a pop-culture phenomenon it is both loved and loathed. For music industry executives, scholars, artists, politicians and youth of all ages and ethnicities hip-hop culture represents a wealth of opportunity in American culture and capitalism. Between 1990 and 2005, the rap music industry experienced a 40% increase in sales. The year 2000 alone experienced for the first time the domination of hip-hop culture’s subgenre, rap music, surpass that of country music and become the third highest grossing art form in the United States. More importantly, it totaled an astounding $1.6 billion in sales worldwide. As a result, music
industry executives made huge profits from a genre of music that was originally thought to be a temporary fad in the late 1970s (Rose, 1994). It became apparent that hip-hop culture had established considerable leverage in the lives of American youth. The vast majority of buyers of rap music were school age youth. Likewise, educational researchers began to study hip-hop culture and its impact on pedagogy (Watkins, 2005; Rose, 1994). Scholars began to make cultural connections between hip-hop and learning. Evidence from the studies that have followed the hip-hop phenomenon demonstrates that it has a profound psychological effect on young people who ascribe to it. The last 40 years has witnessed a cultural explosion of hip-hop influence on African-American, Latina/o, and white youth in America. Moreover, hip-hop artists with "street cred" were eager to sign record deals in an effort to escape from life in the urban ghetto. Even politicians could no longer ignore the power of hip-hop culture and its sway on the attitudes and opinions of young people throughout the country. A Politico Blog post by Caitlin McDevitt (2012) reported that President Obama joked and quipped about playing hip-hop artist Young Jeezy at his second inauguration if he were to be elected. Hip-hop culture is a strong social force to be reckoned with; its influence has grown to reach youth from various regions of the world. However, none have been more impacted by this social movement than black male youth in the United States (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

This study has previously discussed hip-hop culture's beginnings as a social movement that sprang from the oppressive conditions experienced by Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, and Latina/o in the South Bronx. Likewise, its foundation sprang from the efforts of marginalized groups to escape their plight in the inner city. By the account
of its many critics, what began as a socially conscious art form has transformed into a dangerous mix of homophobia, misogyny, violence, sexual exploitation, and glorification of “thug life” (Rose, 2008). Industry executives have skillfully and divisively marketed hip-hop culture as a socially deviant art form. The music industry clearly has established a double standard in terms of promoting music by white artists and that of black hip-hop artists. Rose (2008) discusses the troubling downturn in rap music. She contends that while the hip-hop industry has amassed enormous power and wealth, it has been hijacked by industry insiders who have situated the hip-hop community as a venue for promoting the “gangsta, pimps, and ho" image to the world. This narrow depiction of hip-hop music by mainstream media has resulted in the constant portrayal of hyper-masculine and feminine images of black people. These imaginary figures are both dangerous and detrimental to the social development of black youth whom are the major consumers of hip-hop. The uplifting messages that were prevalent in early hip-hop songs such as “The Message” by Grand Master Flash and the Furious Fives have been replaced by Rick Ross’s “You the Boss.” The disparity in messages of both songs speaks to a tumultuous trend in rap music—the elimination of positive messages in exchange for ones that espouse materialism, sexism, violence, and drug abuse (Rose, 2008).

The world of hip-hop came from difficult cultural experiences and the impact of racially divisive policies which contributed to the perpetual disenfranchisement and alienation of ethnic minorities throughout the South Bronx. Therefore, "hip-hop," as it is known, possesses the remarkable ability to shape black boys attitudes about learning. Likewise, it is imperative that educators harness the transformative properties of hip-hop
culture to increase student achievement among black boys whom are particularly
captivated by hip-hop's brash and bold demeanor. Moreover, for the many black boys
who occupy classrooms within America's public schools hip-hop culture represents
cultural capital—something that belongs to them. This cultural capital allows them to
carve out space within public schools where they are often alienated, ostracized and
disenfranchised (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum, 2008). While black boys comprise a
vast majority of students in urban schools, very little research exists about their
experiences there. For this reason, critical inquiries about black boys and learning are
important. To this end, even less research addresses the gender-specific impact hip-hop
culture has on students’ attitude toward school.

Research Questions

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to understand the influence of hip-hop
culture on black boys’ attitudes in school. The rationale for the research design should
give attention to the following research questions:

RQ1: How do the seven elements of hip-hop culture—DJing, Rapping/
    emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion/Style, Language, and
    Behavior—influence black boys’ attitude in school?

RQ2: How many of the seven elements of hip-hop culture have a more
    significant influence on the attitude of black boys in school?

RQ3: How does the level of association with hip-hop culture differ among black
    boys’ in a secondary public school?
RQ4: Does hip-hop culture have a positive and/or negative influence on the social aspects of school for black boys?

RQ5: Does hip-hop culture have a positive and/or negative influence on the academic work of black boys in school?

RQ6: Can school be made a more fun and engaging experience for black boys through hip-hop culture?

RQ7: Do black boys see any positive aspects of hip-hop culture in school?

Critiques of hip-hop culture provide valuable data for school personnel and educational researchers to study the attitudes of black boys toward school. This inquiry examines the complex relationship between hip-hop culture and black boys’ attitudes toward school. This investigation also provides a brief synopsis of this ethnic group’s alienation, ostracism, and disenfranchisement from U.S. public schools. Furthermore, this study demonstrates how co-generative dialogues can be used to effectively change teaching and learning practices educators employ with black males in their classrooms.

As discussed earlier, hip-hop culture is rooted in alienation; therefore, it provides a space of comfort for black boys who are often left out of the cultural milieu that exist within public schools (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum, 2008). The affinity, affection for, and association with hip-hop culture is a response to the alienation they experience in school. This close alliance with hip-hop culture involves a unique set of characteristics that should be considered in the classroom when teaching black boys.

Hip-hop is palatable with the field education in that teachers are using it each day in their classrooms. Many teachers have learned that hip-hop culture gives them a way of
empowering black boys. In addition, it provides teachers with an opportunity to challenge many of the assumptions that black boys are presented with through the subgenre of rap music. Hip-hop is an important tool in the classroom to help black male youth form their identity (Irizarry, 2009; Duncade-Andrade & Morrell, 2000; Prier & Beachum, 2008).

Hip-hop is unlike anything the world has ever seen (Watkins, 2005). In fact, it started in the United States and has become a nonpareil occurrence that has permanently altered the terrain of popular culture for approximately four decades (Brown, 2010). Stoute (2011) refers to hip-hop culture as a “catalytic force majeure” that encompasses more than just rap music. Rather by using hyper-masculine imagery, urban slang, and street culture it has crept into the psyche of African-American youth.

Ethnographical studies about hip-hop culture are critical to the field of qualitative analysis. More specifically, hip-hop educational research has the unique ability to help others comprehend different forms of language, establish new ways of learning, and shape curricula by harnessing the power of urban youth culture (Petchauer, 2009; Stoute, 2011). In short, hip-hop culture has the power to bring people together in unprecedented ways. An example of the centrifugal force of hip-hop culture is President Barack Obama’s election as President of the United States. President Obama took advantage of the common themes young people shared and mobilized this power to catapult him into the oval office. Stout (2011) argues this phenomenon never could have taken place without the global influence of youth culture. Irizarry (personal communication, February 13, 2012) supports these claims by asserting, “These young people . . . they
really look out for each other, they’re down for each other in ways that many teachers are not down for their kids.”

Previously referenced, unity or connectedness is a common theme found in hip-hop educational research. Moreover, young people form bonds with one another based upon a reticent familiarity derived from the cultural interests they have in common. More often, these relationships are established by students who are viewed as abnormal by school personnel. Therefore, hip-hop culture, which is rooted in alienation, becomes a comfortable “space” for marginalized youth to exist within (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

Located within a vast majority of large inner-city, urban schools are countless numbers of black boys who identify with hip-hop culture. Educators can learn valuable lessons about black masculine identity, coded language, and what matters most to black boys from hip-hop research (Irizarry, 2009; Emdin, 2010; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2000). Furthermore, hip-hop culture is often the social structure that black boys use to validate their existence and shape their identity. Knowledge or ignorance of the preceding variables often factor into the success or failure of black male youth in school (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

This investigation conceptualizes hip-hop culture as a place of resiliency for black boys who are historically disenfranchised and estranged from traditional school culture. Hip-hop culture is the medium through which black boys express feelings of alienation and ostracism from the mainstream school environment. Thus, their association with hip-hop is a way of rejecting the dominant school culture that has historically rejected and excluded them. Therefore, hip-hop has become a comfortable place to retreat for black
male youth who find they struggle to survive in the often hostile territory of public school. To this end, there are deeply rooted connections between hip-hop culture and black boys’ attitudes about school (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

It is important to add that black boys’ fervent association with hip-hop culture can also pose a dilemma. For many of them, hip-hop culture has become a means of survival (Emdin, 2010). Unfortunately, many of the negative aspects of hip-hop culture involve criminal activity. For this reason, black boys who ascribe to it sometimes fall victim to the harsh codes typified in hip-hop culture (Prier & Beachum, 2008; Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001; Rose, 1994). As a result, they have difficulty following school rules and codes of conduct. Contrarily, hip-hop culture gives power to the powerless by promoting hyper-masculine images of black men (Ogbar 2007). These images of self, that many black boys emulate, frame their behavior and shape their attitudes about school. Their relentless association with hip-hop culture gives them cultural capital which they have little of in school. As a result, their method of survival often clashes with that of mainstream society (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum, 2008).

**Significance of the Study**

Rap megastar Jay-Z’s lyrics exemplify the stereotypical attitude black boys are exposed to while in school. Teachers like the one Jay-Z characterizes in this song harbor negative views of black male youth that are detrimental to their success in school.

*This a special dedication,*

*I wanna thank you for the fuel,*

*No really thank you,*
I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,
Said I'd either be dead or be a reefer head,
Now sure if that's how adults should speak ta kids,
Especially when the only thing I did was speak in class,
I teach his ass . . .

Lyrics from "So Ambitious" by JAY-Z

According to Noguera (2002a, 2002b), those negative opinions of black males stem from environmental factors that restrict how the identity of African American male youth are perceived in and out of their respective neighborhoods. For instance, black males lead the nation in homicide rates. Black males also contract HIV and AIDS at faster rates. Moreover, the incarceration rates of black males have soared at the top of criminal statistical charts for several decades. Even the infant mortality rate of black babies is higher than other ethnic groups. Economically, black males are most likely to not be hired by businesses due to racial stereotypes. Given these data, it is not difficult to understand the quality of life issues that impact black males in larger society that also affect their educational outcomes (Noguera, 2002a).

Furthermore, teachers and practitioners who exhibit such feelings toward marginalized groups contribute to their often tumultuous existence in public schools (Monroe, 2005). Moreover, research that focuses on black boys and their school experiences is small in comparison to the seemingly insurmountable problems they encounter there (Davis, 2005). Unfortunately, the causal factors that contribute to the demise of black male adolescents in public schools often go unnoticed. Nonetheless,
through the use hip-hop culture in the classroom the anger, angst, and frustration black male youth feel toward school can be investigated (Emdin, 2010).

**Significance to Educational Leadership**

Analyses of the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitude in school challenge educational leaders to retool urban education through changes in the existing curricula. This study is also significant because it calls for educational leadership to reframe the goals of public education through which social justice is achieved and the voices of black boys are heard. Likewise, this investigation provides school leaders with a praxis which takes hip-hop culture into account. Furthermore, it provides school principals and teachers with insight into the reality of black boys’ social experiences. Moreover, it engages educational practitioners in dramatic and unrestricted discussions about the possibilities of increasing scholarship to include hip-hop educational based research. Specifically, this qualitative inquiry advocates the use of hip-hop culture as an investigative tool which can be used to develop important conceptual debate toward social change and transformation.

**Black Boys in School**

“...Theorizing about hip-hop culture, and the significance and impact it brings to the lives of urban black male youth, can inform curricular, pedagogical and administrative praxis within institutions of urban, public schools” (Prier & Beachum, 2008, p. 521). Education practitioners throughout the United States have a familiar problem. Black male youth receive disciplinary consequences at a greater rate than their peers and continue to score below proficiency on standardized measures.
According to Johnston (2000), black students receive disciplinary action in far greater numbers than other racial groups. What is more, African-American students are suspended at a rate two to five times more frequently than their peers (Irvine, 1990). Likewise, research indicates that classroom teachers redirect the behavior of black children only, while students of other ethnicities are participating in the same behavior (Monroe, 2005). Moreover, Skiba, Michael, Nardo, and Peterson (2000) argue that black boys are the recipients of tougher disciplinary actions in comparison to other students. Research studies also indicate that black boys are often victims of inequities in school discipline policies (Ferguson, 2000). Therefore, educators much utilize new methods in working with black boys (Monroe, 2005). Schools are important places to conduct analyses of ethnically diverse populations (Davis, 2005). More specifically, schools are the places where black boys spend their formative years of human growth and development. Much of the resistance black males exhibit toward the dominate culture is acquired at an early age while attending public schools. Majors and Mancini-Billson (1992) argue that black males exhibit gender-specific behaviors such as cool pose as a form of defiance toward the dominate culture. Further, hip-hop culture allows black boys to form a separate identity outside of school that often clashes with the schools code of acceptable behavior (Emdin, 2010). Studies of this magnitude are important in considering the cultural influences of black boys that often clash with those of school personnel. Surprisingly, a scarce amount of research has been conducted that attempts to determine how black boys attitudes toward school is impacted by hip-hop culture. This study attempts to generate discussion about how gender, race, and hip-hop culture
intersect in school settings. More importantly, little research has been conducted that investigates how black boys construct their own gendered meanings (Davis, 2005). While a number of research articles about black males in school has entered the field of study, a scant amount have focused on hip-hop culture and its impact upon black boys’ attitude in school. Furthermore, an even smaller amount of research has been conducted that examines how black male youth derive meaning from their lives at home and in school (Davis, 2005).

**School Discipline and Black Boys**

Historically, black boys have been negatively impacted by traditional public schooling. Statistically, black males are more frequently the recipients of discipline action from schools and districts than any other ethnic group. More specifically, according to Slaughter-Defoe and Richards (1994), black boys are treated differently than their counterparts as early as kindergarten. Likewise, Irvine (1990) and Rong (1996) concluded that black boys receive lower expectations for social behavior and academic ability from teachers. Moreover, according to Davis and Jordan (1994), disciplinary consequences leveled against black boys are instrumental in their school failure. As a result, their achievement levels and graduation rates have been skewed in the wrong direction. In short, black males are in crisis in public schools. Hip-hop educational research studies are critical to solving the dilemma facing black boys trapped in U.S. public schools (Davis, 2005; Monroe, 2005; Fashola, 2005). For example, one study found that merely 2% of black boys at a Midwest school earned a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale (Davis, 2005). Likewise, three-fourths of black boys in the same school
performed below average in every category. The abysmal failure of U.S. public schools to educate large numbers of black boys is unacceptable. While the scope of the research about black boys is narrow this study contributes to the body of knowledge that exists in a number of ways. First, it provides a roadmap for school and districts that have a vested interest in seeing black boys succeed in their schools. Secondly, it tackles the often controversial and misunderstood topic of hip-hop culture, and re-frames it as a useful teaching tool. Third, hip-hop culture will aid classroom teachers in understanding the psychological processes that influence the behavior of black boys in school. While much attention has been given to the negative influences hip-hop culture is believed to be heaping upon black male youth, there are some positive aspects of it that can be used to eradicate their repeated failure in school. Opponents of qualitative research of this type might argue that black boys are responsible for their own behavior in schools. However, this analysis argues that to say that black, Latina/o, or Caucasian children are ultimately responsible for their own behavior without considering the socioeconomic factors they are unfairly subjected to is inhumane.

In reality, black boys are both victims and participants in their educational plight (Davis, 2005). Some researchers argue that black students withdraw from learning out of fear of being shunned by their friends (Noguera, 2003). Once more, while the research on black males and school experience is growing, more studies are needed that factor in the emic perspectives of the test subjects. Qualitative research that considers the attitudes and opinions of black boys are central to the debate over school curriculum and policy reform in the U.S. While the number of studies about black males and their school
experiences continues to expand, many of them fail to include the voice of the subjects (Davis, 2005). Black males are vilified in the media and, therefore, subjected to the racial stereotypes of school personnel. As a result, researchers and practitioners are afraid to talk with them about their school experiences and the problems that exist there.

On the phone, cooking dope, at the same damn time

Selling white, selling mid, at the same damn time

 Fucking 2 bad bitches at the same damn time

At the same damn time, at the same damn time

At the same damn time, at the same damn time

I'm in Pluto I'm in Mars at the same damn time

On the sofa, poppin bottles at the same damn time

I'm in Fifs with the sack going crazy

Got some diamonds 'round my neck no fugazy

Bad bitches in the suite, trying to bathe me

Just a young hood nigga, streets raised me...

Lyrics by Atlanta-based rapper - FUTURE

What Does Hip-Hop Mean to Black Boys?

This investigation demonstrates how black boys use hip-hop culture to construct meaning and develop a sense of belonging in school. Rappers often portray themselves as social outcasts or misfits by referring to themselves as “young hood nigger,” “killers,” and “thugs” (Prier & Beachum, 2009; Rose, 2008). This scares some educators and researchers who are seeking to understand them (Irizarry, 2012). However, practitioners
must have the courage to confront what they do not understand. For the most part, much of what critics hear rappers rhyming about in song is only offensive to those who hear it. In a qualitative setting, black boys are open to debate and discuss topics that are important to them. Classroom teachers should include music by rap artists in their lesson plans alongside Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Emerson. Just as the works of these classic poets are important to teachers, the works of modern day rap artists are important to students. English/Language Arts teachers should engage black boys in the learning process by complimenting standard literary classics with modern hip-hop songs by well-known artists like Jay-Z, Kanye West, Li’l Wayne, and Drake (Irizarry, 2009; Prier & Beachum, 2008; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2000).

It is important to note that many of the studies in hip-hop educational research fail to investigate how hip-hop culture interacts with black boys’ attitude formation about learning and knowledge acquisition in U.S. public schools (Prier & Beachum, 2008; Dimitriadis, 2001). This investigation is unique in that it is concerned with how and why hip-hop culture impacts the thought process of school-age black males. This ethnographic study adds a different dimension to the body of work that exists among hip-hop educational research because it controls for race, gender, and immersion in the various aspects of hip-hop culture outside of school. Although race is constructed socially, it is a strong factor in determining group solidarity among black male youth (Prier & Beachum, 2008). In addition, hip-hop culture can be used to draw attention to the construction of masculinity among black boys during their formative years. To this end, analyzing the social and cultural issues that lead to identity formation of black male
youth can be used by school personnel in urban settings. Furthermore, hip-hop educational research provides administrators who work with black boys with a working knowledge of a cultural phenomenon that significantly influences their thoughts, deeds, and actions while in school. What is more, hip-hop culture serves as a bridge between the cultural dissonance that often exists between school personnel and black boys. This qualitative analysis re-imagines hip-hop culture as a powerful tool for exploration of the complex realities of black male youth and their school experiences that influence their attitude toward learning. Certainly, students learn best when we use what they know.

For many black boys, hip-hop culture is the way they make meaning out of the world around them (Emdin, 2010). More black male youth resort to the media influences of hip-hop culture to formulate their opinions about the value of public schooling. Studies in hip-hop culture are useful to schools and districts that encounter momentous challenges in educating black male youth who historically have underachieved on standardized tests and experience high drop-out rates in K-12 institutions. Furthermore, hip-hop based educational (HHBE) research helps teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel, who hold negative attitudes about hip-hop culture, understand black boys who ascribe to it. Understanding young black males’ fascination with hip-hop culture is important if school systems are going to meet their needs. More importantly, scholars and educators alike can gain valuable insight into youth and media culture that cause them to behave they way they do in school. In retrospect, the entire school community is impacted by the conclusions educational researchers discover in HHBE (Irby & Hall, 2011).
Studies in hip-hop culture are also useful for challenging stereotypes and assumptions about hip-hop culture and youth. While many African-American boys listen to rap music and experience many other facets of hip-hop culture, it does not mean that they will be lost to the streets. Undoubtedly, the images associated with hip-hop culture are often negative due to the media’s narrow depiction of it. Media outlets and record companies portray an extremely limited view of hip-hop culture that is often associated with misogynistic overtones, racial epithets, homophobic rants, sexually explicit lyrics, and violence (Davis, 2005). Nonetheless, careful review of the literature about hip-hop cultural research reveals that there is more to it than overblown music videos which advocate materialism, decadence, and hyper-masculine and -feminine images of black youth. These beliefs are associated with the marginalization of black boys within schools and systems that hold harmfully negative opinions about them because of their association with hip-hop. Therefore, it is imperative that educators and practitioners gain a thorough understanding of youth culture by examining hip-hop based educational research in its entirety. To that end, this critical ethnography re-situates hip-hop culture as a liberating tool and research praxis that benefits educators who are privileged to work with cadres of black boys in urban schools and centers throughout America. This study also presents an action plan for educational leaders to challenge their own assumptions about hip-hop culture and reframe it as a critical tool for inquiry aimed at improving the everyday experiences of black boys in U.S. public schools. Hip-hop scholarship is a way of ensuring social justice for black male youth who often feel trapped in urban schools that traditionally do not understand them (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum, 2008).
Therefore, as critical thinking change agents, today's urban school leaders must be strategic in their thinking about educating black boys today. While hip-hop culture has existed for more than four decades, it impacts the lives of students in more ways than it did in the early seventies. Indeed, hip-hop culture has become a way of life for black boys who are searching for role models and a way out of the urban plight in their respective communities. If scholars and researchers are going to help them escape serious inquiry into hip-hop culture is necessary and vital.

**Important Considerations for Educators**

Educators and school personnel who refuse to listen to the silent voices of marginalized black male youth located inside of American public schools compound the problems they encounter there. Teachers, administrators, and school superintendents who continue to ignore the culturally specific differences that are unique to black boys remain out of touch with them. They need to consider how critical race theory, research practices, youth and hip-hop culture intersect. There is a connection that holds valuable truths, which can enhance educational practice in urban schools and classrooms.

Furthermore, it is important for scholars who embark on investigative studies to understand that for black boys' hip-hop culture and the subgenre of rap music is a way of resisting mainstream values. This deliberate countercultural attempt to subvert the traditional school policies are cry for help. Black boys want their heritage and culture to be included among those of other students. However, schools often create policies and rules that ostracize and alienate black male youth from their peers. Therefore, they are forced to form their own peer group of "outcasts" (Emdin, 2010; Prier & Beachum,
These are the black boys who are frequently suspended, expelled, or otherwise placed out of school (Davis, 2005; Monroe, 2005). For them, hip-hop culture has become a way for them to “rock the mic” or be noticed at school. In other words, hip-hop culture gives black boys a voice to say to school personnel, “I’m out here. Is anybody paying attention to me?”

The future of hip-hop culture and public education has a symbiotic relationship. They have a steadfast grip on each other. Hip-hop culture, like black male youth, is often viewed through a racial lens. In addition, a significant amount of evidence suggests that teachers and other school personnel harbor varying prejudices about black boys who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Noguera, 2002a).

Summary

Critics of hip-hop culture also condemn black boys as being discipline problems in school and prone to criminal activity outside of it. Hip-hop culture, through the subgenre of rap music, allows black boys to openly resist the mainstream Eurocentric values that schools force upon them. For this marginalized group, hip-hop culture allows them freedom of expression. Furthermore, it empowers black boys to imagine themselves as successful young black men without the benefit of formal education. Certainly, this perspective is contrary to what most black boys are taught they should aim for in school. Hip-hop culture and its various components give black male youth a voice in school where they would otherwise be silent. Historically, public education in the United States has failed to meet the social, material, and cultural needs of black boys (Noguera, 2002b). Therefore, hip-hop culture fills the gap in their lives. While the value
of the message hip-hop culture transmits is debatable, it has a profound effect on the emotional and social development of black males in schools. What is troubling for many in the HHBE community is the absence black boys’ voices from the debate about hip-hop culture and its relevance to their ability to learn. Few researchers and critics of hip-hop fail to ask those most affected for their opinion. Although researchers continually make claims regarding hip-hop culture and its impact on people, few studies have been conducted that measure its impact in the affective domain of black boys’ minds. What is more, many of the inquiries of this type have focused only on rap music and not hip-hop culture as a whole. This investigation attempts to measure the impact of the seven domains of hip-hop culture: DJing, breakdancing, graffiti art, and rapping/MC/emceeing, fashion/style, way of talking, and behavior on the attitudes of black boys in school.

Therefore, classroom practitioners, educational researchers need to address the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitude toward learning and academic achievement. Examining hip-hop culture from a pedagogical standpoint is good way of creating critical consciousness in black boys who sometimes make poor choices during their formative years in school. Further, hip-hop culture often finds itself at odds with the social and cultural milieu of public schools. This clash of ideals represents a problem in the ability for schools and school systems to meet the needs of black male youth. This investigation fills a void in the existing research where most results are derived from studying the effects of exposure to one facet of hip-hop culture. Nonetheless, this study attempts to record the voices of the hip-hop generation in hopes of stimulating change in educational practices in teaching African-American males. In so doing, schools can more
adequately address the educational needs of black boys and other members of the hip-hop generation.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

Hip-Hop Pedagogy

Classroom teachers and educational theorists have addressed hip-hop culture’s growing influence among school age youth in a number of ways. For instance, Au (2005) asserts that educational researchers have studied the subgenre of rap music for its narrative conventions relative to pedagogy and the academic outcomes of white, African-American, and Latino/a students. Much of the research that has been conducted borders on two distinct themes: (a) using only the subgenre of rap music to make up for the cultural dissonance that exists between school and home, and (b) employing rap music strategies to develop critical thinking skills among students (Ginwright, 2004; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002). In addition, it is commonplace for teachers to use various rap songs in Language Arts classes to teach literary devices (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2000a, 2002b).

These attempts to incorporate hip-hop culture in learning, while well-intentioned, prove to be problematic. They only employ one aspect of hip-hop culture to produce positive student outcomes. The overuse of rap music potentially poses problems in identity development among some students. Au (2005) asks a serious question for consideration based upon current practice: Are we using rap music . . . to transform
education, or are we using it mainly to help hip-hop youth be “successful” according to status quo norm of educational discourse?

In support of Au’s (2005) concerns about current research practice and hip-hop pedagogy, Low (2010) cautions classroom practitioners and researchers that Rap music is one part of the larger body of hip-hop culture. Much of the scrutiny that hip-hop culture experiences is due to the explicit lyrics that many rappers use in their songs. Likewise, Low (2010) adds that rap music is considered “black” despite its culturally mixed beginnings. Moreover, given the racial stereotypes and prejudices that exist among society about African Americans, rap music stimulates fear and thus, its overuse in classroom practice may hinder the academic success of some students. Low further argues that differences between positive and harmful rap lyrics are also compromised by the overwhelmingly presence of homophobic and misogynistic overtones. Au (2005) concludes that “rap music poses a serious challenge to mainstream education.”

Many of the studies analyzing hip-hop culture tend to be qualitative and theoretical. However, these investigations failed to include multiracial samples and pose detailed questions about the attitudes of the subject’s themselves (Sullivan, 2003). A group of researchers studied the correlation between behavior and music preferences (Epstein, Pratto, & Skipper, 1990). They concluded that race demonstrated a strong correlation with heavy metal and rap music. In fact, 96% of heavy metal listeners were white, while 98% of those who preferred rap were black. However, they concluded that neither genre of music was associated with behavior problems.
Epstein (1994) conducted an inquiry that proved rap music contributes to the development of a sense of empowerment among low income African-American youth. The researcher discovered that this sense of empowerment aided the subjects in connecting with their cultural heritage and developing positive attitudes.

**Hip-Hop-Based Educational Research**

Moreover, Teenage Research Unlimited conducted a survey among 12- to 19-year olds. *American Demographics Magazine* published the reported findings. Results revealed that 58% of participants under the age of 18 years and 59% of those ranging in age from 18 to 20 years like or strongly liked rap. This investigation also revealed that fashions linked to hip-hop were considered to be “in” by 12- to 19-year olds. Likewise, 78% of teenagers said that baggy pants were in. In addition to that, 76% of participants said professional sports attire was popular. To that end, 69% concluded that hooded sweatshirts were favored among their demographic. The study concluded that hip-hop culture increased the revenue shares of designers such as Tommy Hilfiger and as a result of hip-hop culture was deemed as a bridge between white and black teenagers.

Kuwahara (1992) investigated the effect of hip-hop’s subgenre, rap music, on black college students who were still young enough to be considered teenagers. The findings reported that 13.3% of African-American students listed to rap music exclusively and 29.7% listened to it often. What is more, the research revealed that black males had a stronger preference for rap than black female subjects. In contrast, the same study demonstrated that 51.6% of white male participants and 68.9% white females rarely or never listened to rap. The study concluded that while whites and blacks showed little
disparity in their reasons for listening to rap music, white students demonstrated less knowledge of rap acts. Kuwahara claims, based upon the findings from his research, that rap music and the styles of dance associated with hip-hop culture represent resistance to the dominant culture.

Along the same lines, researchers were interested in studying middle school students perceptions and opinions of violence in relationship to their thoughts about rap music (Mahiri & Connor, 2003). Using focus groups and interviews, participants indicated a strong interest in rap music because it related to their personal lives. Interestingly, participants revealed during this qualitative analysis that they disapproved of the manner in which some rap music misinterpreted the experiences of black people in America. Likewise, the subjects railed against the misogynistic overtones and gratuitous violence in many music videos. In conclusion, the researcher's findings did not coincide with the media stereotypes perpetuated by popular culture (Sacco & Kennedy, 2002).

**Hip-Hop and Social Context**

In another study, Lena conducted in 2006 a relationship between the context of production and the content of rap music singles was discovered. More specifically, the researcher proved that when independent labels owned most of the charted singles, lyrics emphasized features from their respective communities and displayed opposition toward larger corporate companies. In contrast, when large conglomerates dominated the industry the music they produced was markedly different. Music produced by large music distributors contained lyrics that promoted racial stereotypes and images of "street hustlers" to boost the credibility and commercial success in the recordings. Lena's
research contributed to the study of market concentration and musical diversity and its connection to the attitudes of the artists themselves. Tables 1 and 2 vividly depict Lena’s findings. Lena used data from a renowned music journal, *Billboard Magazine*, which tabulates record sales across different genres of music. For the purposes of the researcher’s study, investigation data from Billboard’s archives were compiled between January 1, 1979, when rap music had first begun, through December 31, 1995 after rap music and hip-hop culture began to gain prominence in the recording industry. The data collected by *Billboard Magazine* is gathered through a variety of resources. The music periodical reviewed record sales, jukebox plays, and of course, radio station airplay. Billboard magazine has an established reputation in the music industry. Since 1958, the journal has been collecting data on the sale of music throughout the United States and internationally.

Table 1

*Content and Count of Rap Sub-Genres, 1979-1995*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Genres</th>
<th>Flow</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Rhythmic Style</th>
<th>Semantic Content</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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Table 1 (continued)

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Table 2

*Count of Rap Sub-Genres by Year: 1979-1995*

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The researcher decided upon four variables to be used to determine if Rhythm and Blues (R&B) songs were included in the rap category: chart designation, rap interludes, shelving designation, and expert opinion. Each rap single was labeled and coded to identify it with its distribution company. Then each song was divided into categories that reflect the musical interests of both producers and consumers of popular music. Lena’s (2006) research is considered groundbreaking because a minute amount of research has been conducted that measures the attitudes of consumers of rap music. Furthermore, Table 1 depicts that a significant number of hit rap songs were categorized as crossover hits including 1979s pioneering hit “Rapper’s Delight.” In comparison, the subgenre labeled dirty south rap contained the fewest chart-topping songs (Miller, 2004). Lena (2006) also found that, rap music had evolved between the years 1979 and 1995. Gone
were the old styles of music and replacing them were newer, edgier styles of music such as new jack swing, east and west coast rap, and booty music. Lena's research spans across the formative years of hip-hop culture. It is important to the field of research because it provides a statistical analysis of the market driven forces that influence the music industry.

**Hip-Hop and Its Influence on Youth**

Similarly, Tanner, Asbridge, and Wortley (2009) studied the different styles of rap music with criminal behavior and resistant attitudes of listeners. Using a relatively large sample of 3,393 students in Toronto, Canada who listened to rap music they investigated the subjects' passion for rap music and criminal involvement. Their investigation also measured the subjects' opinions about social injustice and inequity. For the purposes of this investigation the researchers referred to the subjects as "universes," urban music enthusiasts.

The study concluded that listeners of rap music have a strong correlation with delinquent behavior and feelings of social injustice and inequity. Interestingly, the nature of those feelings differs along racial lines. While black and white participants identified with themes of resistance to the dominant culture, Asians participants did not. However, white and Asian subjects did associate themselves with criminal activity and delinquency while African Americans did not.

In a similar study, Iwamoto, Creswell, and Caldwell (2007) studied the impact of rap music on ethnically diverse college students. The researchers formulated three key questions as the focus of their investigation:
1. What is the meaning ascribed to rap music by six ethnically and racially diverse Midwestern college students?

2. What is the context in which they experience rap music?

3. How can rap music be used to deal with everyday stressors, and how does it alter a person's mood? (p. 339)

The researchers challenged stereotypes and misconceptions about rap music with their phenomenological study. Iwamoto et al. (2007) argue that much of the existing research on the hip-hop's subgenre, rap music focuses on African Americans. Furthermore, they contend that current studies concentrate on the negative aspects of the subgenre. This study challenges traditional assumptions about rap music by positing that it has transformative qualities that can positively impact teenagers in a variety of ways. Moreover, the educational researchers argue the benefits of rap music for educational practitioners and other related professions.

To measure the psychological effects rap music has on listeners the scientists used a phenomenological approach. Their qualitative study was conducted at a Midwestern university. Using purposive sampling they identified and selected participants who were fans of hip-hop and rap music. The racial demographic of each participant was as follows: one white, two Asian Americans, two African Americans, and three Latinos. Four males and four females accounted for the gender dynamics of the study. Participants were also categorized as avid fans or casual listeners.

Each member of the representative sample was exposed to semistructured interviews based upon the following questions and were paid $10:
1. When did you first start listening to hip-hop/rap music?

2. What was the experience like and what does hip-hop mean to you (the impact it has made on you)?

3. Who were/are your favorite artists? Please describe.

4. What have you learned or gained from hip-hop?

5. What is negative about hip-hop, and how do you deal with the possible negativity of the music?

The following common themes also resulted from the Iwamoto, et al (2007) study:

- Identification
- Psychological Impact
- Education and Motivation
- Hip-Hop Culture
- Misunderstood Music Genre

Each with the participants who ranged in age from 19 to 26 lasted approximately 30 minutes to 90 minutes. The participants were transcribed, self-reviewed, and analyzed for significant themes and conclusions. Participants' shared the following responses during the data collection process:

**Identification**

1. It is not just a black thing anymore...

2. It is just intriguing to me...

3. We can identify what they were talking about.

4. I like listening to emotional, like empowering type of stuff...
Psychological Impact

1. It gets me pumped up...
2. It is an energizer...
3. Just a great form of venting and stress reliever.

Educational and Motivation

1. Wu-Tang Forever came out and that was one of the most intelligent things I ever heard
2. It inspires me to pick up a book...
3. It is encouraging to know that...if they can make it...
4. ...there are positive messages there...it just like going to school sometimes.

Hip-Hop Culture

1. At first it was an inner-city thing...
2. And it is art...
3. When you listen to hip-hop and rap, it a whole world that comes with it.
4. A lot of people view it as a negative culture...

Misunderstood Music Genre

1. Other people who don’t understand it...like white people...
2. It does negatively affect some of the youth...
3. It is easier to focus on the negative aspects...
4. A lot of people will just hear something and say that’s rap...A lot of it is very different.
Iwamoto, Creswell, and Caldwell's (2007) study was one of the first of its kind to investigate rap enthusiasts' psychological experience with the subgenre. The researchers concluded that rap, indeed, causes psychological effects and is used by listeners as a method of handling various stress factors in their lives. Likewise, listeners are aware of the negative messages but don't subscribe to them. The researchers also proved that rap is educational because it reveals how listeners cope with the difficulties of life. The results from this study also show that rap is energizing and inspiring to a diverse group of listeners.

Bryant (2008) launched an investigation to predict adversarial attitudes toward male-female relationships and explore the relationships between traditional agents of socialization and personal acceptance of negative images in rap videos by African-American adolescents. Subjects completed instruments that measured their cognitive responses, watched rap music videos, and then answered a questionnaire about the videos. The findings of study concluded that higher levels of adversarial attitudes toward male-female relationships and exposure to rap videos demonstrated a strong correlational value. According to the study, the subjects watch rap music videos because it was of particular interest to their peer group. As a result they did not develop negative attitudes toward male-female relationships as opposed to those that watched music videos just for fun. Results from the study also indicated that subjects who maintained strong religious beliefs and who came from affluent families viewed the images of women in rap music videos unfavorably.
Reyna, Brandt, and Viki (2009) studied the stereotypes associated with rap music and hip-hop culture in relationship to anti-black attitudes and reasons for discrimination. The study included a large sample population of Americans, and two other countries. Surprisingly, in all three settings negative stereotypes and attitudes toward black people were associated with racially indifferent treatment of blacks. The study proved that negative stereotypes associated with hip-hop culture have dangerous consequences and produce harmful effects on society.

Summary

Review of the research literature indicates an increase in hip-hop educational research. The cultural movement that has largely been ignored in pedagogical circles has gained prominence in the field of study. The change in thought and attitude toward hip-hop culture is much needed. The shift in paradigm will open new avenues of qualitative analysis that will ultimately increase the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of educational practitioners.

While hip-hop educational research is a relatively new field of study, it has the potential to increase the academic outcomes of black boys in public schools. The research has shown that a strong relationship exists between hip-hop culture and the attitudes of youth. Furthermore, the various aspects of hip-hop culture have a profound effect on the psychology of school age youth who ascribe to it. Lastly, hip-hop culture is a catalyst for transformation that extends beyond musical genres and into the consciousness of today’s generation of young people.
CHAPTER III
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Design

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3)

According to Creswell (2007), there are five types of qualitative analysis: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study. Each qualitative approach is designed to enable the researcher to study the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

A critical ethnographical approach was selected for this study in order to capture the voices of black boys and how they interpret, process, and experience hip-hop culture and its impact on their attitudes about school. This type of qualitative analysis is considered a rigorous and thorough scientific research method (Creswell, 2007). The
roots of ethnographical inquiry can be traced back to early 20th century anthropology. Researchers Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Mead (cited in Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994) pioneered the use of firsthand collection of data involving indogenous people. In addition, University of Chicago researchers, Park, Dewey, and Mead (cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) applied the principles of anthropology to studies involving cultural groups in America. In recent years researchers have begun to use ethnographic approaches to investigations about schools and other learning institutions.

Likewise, it is important to note the different types of ethnographical inquiries that researchers can use. For instance, realistic ethnography is often utilized by anthropologists. It represents a specific point of view taken by the scientist. The voice of the researcher is distant and unobstrusive using this ethnographic approach. More specifically, the investigator assumes a passive role and describes the participants response from a third-person viewpoint. On the contrary, the other type of ethnography, which this study will use, is critical ethnography. This format assumes a critical stance in advocating for the causes of marginalized groups. Since the lived experience of black boys' is pertinent to this investigation, a critical ethnographical approach was appropriate. This study utilized a critical ethnographic strategy to investigate the impact of hip-hop culture on black boys' attitude toward school.

**Definition of Variables**

The terms Hip-hop and hip-hop culture were used interchangeably in this study. **Hip-Hop** is the name applied to the cultural movement among African American youth that is expressed through certain black vernacular usage, fashion trends, and lifestyle
(Tanner et al., 2009). More specifically, Chang (2005), Rose (1994), and Sullivan (2003) depict the aesthetics of hip-hop culture as rapping/emceeing, break dancing, graffiti art, and DJing. Fashion, way of talking, and behavior have also been included because they broaden the scope of the study.

**Graffiti art** is the act of writing names, symbols, and images on public buildings or transportation modules such as railway cars, buses, subway cars, etc.

**Breakdancing** is a competitive acrobatic, and pantomimic dance with outrageous physical contortions, spins and backflips (Rose, 1994). Breakdancers would execute their moves during the breaks in a song while the DJ’s would spin records using turntables.

**Rapping/Emceeing** as defined by researchers Chang (2005) and Rose (1994) as a form of political commentary of the conditions of lower income African Americans. Its origins lie in the oral tradition of storytelling which is synonymous with African culture. Historically, the act of storytelling was accompanied by rhythms, beats, and vocals (Tanner et al., 2009). Rap music began in the 1970s and has reached enormous heights of critical acclaim throughout the world. As a musical genre rap continues to evolve as each generation changes.

**DJing** involves using various sound mechanisms in conjunction with words to produce hip-hop music. Moreover, DJs are responsible for layering sounds and lyrics on top of each other. Over the years, DJs have employed a number of technological strategies such as stratching which involves moving a record back and forth with the fingers using two turntables. One record is moved rhythmically; the other arhythmically producing an intriguing backdrop of musical interlude (Rose, 1994).
Fashion/Style is a distinctive style of dress originating with African American youth through the United States. Each geographical region has contributed various elements to the hip-hop fashion industry. Hip-hop fashion symbolizes the cultural expressions and attitudes of those who ascribe to it (Rose, 1994).

Language refers to the coded language rappers and hip-hop aficionados use in cultural sharing groups (Emdin, 2010).

Behavior is defined as empowering messages integrated into hip-hop that have the potential to inhibit or enhance youth development (Travis & Deepak, 2011).

Co-generative Dialogues are "collective goal-oriented conversations" about experiences that individuals share in particular social fields (Tobin & Roth 2005; Emdin, 2010). In this study, the setting or "field" is a group home and private residence. Furthermore, cogenitive dialogues are used to spark conversation among groups of participants. Moreover, they include continuous exchanges, equal turns and talk, and mutual respect.

Theory of Variables

Theoretical Model of the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture on Black Boys' Attitude in School

According to Creswell (2007), a theory is an interrelated set of constructs (or variables) formed into propositions, or hypotheses, that specify the relationship among variables. Likewise, independent variables are those that affect outcomes and dependent variables are those that depend on the independent variables. In other words, they are the outcomes or results of the influence of the independent variables. For the purposes of
this investigation the impact of hip-hop culture is the independent variable and black boys' attitude is the dependent variable. Figure 1 describes the influence of the independent variable(s) upon the dependent variable.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Influence of Hip-Hop Culture

The change in attitude of black boys' in school occurs within their various associations with hip-hop culture. Figure 2 illustrates this point using the Levels of Association Pyramid.
Black boys’ levels of association with hip-hop culture ranges from weak to moderate to strong. However, Figure 1 shows that their association intensifies when they identify with at least one of the seven elements of hip-hop culture: Rapping/emceeing, DJing, Graffiti, Breakdancing, Fashion/style, Language, and Behavior.

For black male youth, hip-hop culture is considered their own. They are engrossed in it everyday as they walk down school hallways listening to rap songs on their cell phones or MP3 players. They establish peer groups based upon their degree of fascination with hip-hop culture. Also, they exchange music through these devices. Therefore, hip-hop culture has a profound psychological effect on black boys. Due to the complex nature of hip-hop black boys find it intriguing. It exemplifies who they are and
validates their existence. Hip-Hop icons such as Jay-Z, Rick Ross, Future, and Li’l Wayne have become role models for millions of black male youth. For them, hip-hop culture is an educational tool that teaches them how to handle life’s difficult circumstances. To many black boys, hip-hop culture gives them energy and enthusiasm. Hip-Hop culture represents a place for cultural exchange among black male youth where they draw conclusions and make meaning out of life. Moreover, hip-hop is a “place” where black boys negotiate their sense of purpose and self-esteem (Prier & Beachum, 2008). Furthermore, hip-hop culture constitutes a large amount of what matters to black boys who attend public schools. This study challenges educational practitioners to seek greater understanding of the emerging themes that are representative of the black male experience. To that end, educators can better ascertain where their resistance to school culture eminates from (Prier & Beachum, 2008). Therefore, this critical ethnography re-situates hip-hop cultural as an investigative tool useful for creating a dialogue among education professionals who work with black male populations. Moreover, this analysis serves as a praxis for urban school leaders. Therefore, it is critical that educational researchers theorize about the impact of hip-hop culture on the attitudes of black boys toward school. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2002) support using hip-hop culture to establish a connection between school experience and the lives of black boys. Prier and Beachum (2008) also contribute, “When we understand our students better, then we can be better advocates and educators, connecting our ‘strategic plans’ to the city streets and other segregated segments of society” (p. 521).
Limitations of the Study

The validity of the current study is limited by the sampling procedure and small number of participants. Various ethnic groups and genders were not selected for participation in this study. Therefore, the study does not utilize a diversity of subjects. As previously discussed in this study, diversity is central to hip-hop culture. Therefore, it is important for researchers who are looking to replicate this research to include a diverse group of subjects.

This investigation contributes to the expanding body of research literature that explores the complex nature of the relationship between hip-hop culture and pedagogy. Future studies should investigate the impact of hip-hop culture on other ethnic and gender groups such as Asian Americans, Pacific-Islanders, Latina/o, and African-American girls. Research in this area is limited. Because hip-hop culture is ever changing and far-reaching the potential for future inquires are limitless. As long as youth of all ages continue to experience cultural phenomena, like the hip-hop culture cultural explosion, studies like this will continue to be relevant.

Summary

This study measured the influence of hip-hop culture on the black boys’ attitude toward school. More specifically, it investigated the input variables associated with hip-hop and their psychological effects on the attitudes of black male youth about learning. Furthermore, this approach focused on how knowledge of hip-hop culture functions as cultural capital among African-American male students in public schools in the United States. This investigation also provided a snapshot of the marginalized population’s
negative experiences as students in urban schools. Ultimately, qualitative analyses of this magnitude are designed to ameliorate black boys’ alienation within school systems in America. The systematic exclusion of black male students widens the achievement gap thus, creating a schism between them and the overall school culture. The theoretical framework presented here is intended to bring attention to the dynamics of hip-hop culture and how they interact with school age populations of black male youth. Furthermore, it firmly establishes that hip-hop culture constitutes more than a mere musical genre to black boys. For them, hip-hop culture is their way of connecting to the world.
CHAPTER IV
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Description of the Setting

This investigation was conducted in two different settings to analyze the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitude in school.

Setting 1: A Non-Profit Group Home

A non-profit group home located in the southeastern United States was selected as the first setting for this experiment. The public service agency was established in 1981 to serve abused and neglected youth in the metropolitan area. Initially, the group home started with three locations and has recently constructed a new campus. The agency is well established in the local community and enjoys a strong reputation for innovation and leading change. Furthermore, the group home’s mission is to heal children, strengthen families, and build community. The cornerstone of the group’s purpose is youth development using supportive structures aimed at helping them become successful in life. The program focuses on youth’s strengths and not their risk factors. The overall aim of the group home is to ensure that every child grows up to become contributing members of society.

Setting 2: Home-Based Approach

The researcher solicited members of small community located in the southeast region of the United States for permission to conduct this experiment among traditional
public school students using an home-based approach. Permission was granted by two families whom agreed to participate in the study. Therefore, the experiment was conducted in the home of one of the parents.

Rationale to Eliminate Bias

The researcher gained permission from the group home and parents before implementing the following protocols to be used in the study. A cursory examination of each participant's demographic background was conducted in reference to the following demographic variables: age, race, and gender. Furthermore, socioeconomic status is captured through indicators of parent and family situation, and includes measures of parental educational attainment (whether or not they have postsecondary education) and family circumstances (whether or not respondents live in two-parent household).

Sampling Procedures

Participants watched five music videos as part of an orientation session that contained the seven elements of hip-hop culture that are purposed in this study: DJing, Rapping/emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion/Style, Language, and Behavior.

Setting 1

The Influence of Hip-Hop Cultural Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS) is one of three primary methods of analysis. Group home personnel selected the participants for the study. Each participant was informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and must be preceded by written consent from them and group home officials. Nine black male students ranging in age from 14 through 17, and are considered to be "hip-
hop" heads were chosen to participate in the study. Each participant attended public secondary schools. A total of nine participants were administered the survey in paper and pen/pencil format: 2 freshman, 3 sophomores, 2 juniors, and 2 seniors. Each subject responded to the questionnaire by using a pen or pencil to mark their responses. Afterwards, the survey results were analyzed by the researcher.

Setting 2: Home-Based Approach

The researcher approached two middle income families from a local community situated in a large metropolitan area for participation in the study. After they were informed as to the purpose of the study they agreed to allow their children to participate. Subsequently, the parents and participants signed informed consent forms agreeing to participate in the study. More specifically, the three black boys' ages were 12, 13, and 14. The 12-year-old participant attended a public charter school in the area. The 13-year-old participant attended a public middle school in a large urban school district. The remaining fourteen year old participant attended a large comprehensive high school located in a suburban community.

Working with Human Subjects

Approval from the Clark Atlanta University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was requested and granted before any research was conducted. To ensure the safety of the research subjects the researcher received written approval from the group home and parent/guardians prior to conducting the study. Each participant was given a parent/guardian permission slip explaining, in detail, the rationale for the study. Parents were informed that their child's participation was voluntary. They were notified that a
signed parent/guardian permission letter must be filed with the researcher and the respective university before anyone can participate in the study. In addition, the names of the participant’s were not included in the study. Furthermore, the names of the site for the study and any personnel involved was not referenced in the study.

**Participants/Location of Research**

**Setting 1 Group Home**

The study was conducted in third floor conference room located on the campus of the group home. Each of the participants was administered the IHHCAS after watching five rap music videos, wrote an essay explaining, “What is Hip-Hop?” and participated in a co-generative dialogue in an effort to investigate the influence of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitude in school.

**Setting 2 Home-Based Approach**

This phase of the study was conducted at the home of one of the participants. Each participant was exposed to the IHHCAS after watching five rap music videos, wrote an essay, and participated in a co-generative dialogue. These participants were exposed to the same protocol as those in first setting.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection occurred over a three day period:

**DAY 1:** Group home subjects were shown three rap music videos and received an orientation to the purpose of the study. The videos were displayed on a whiteboard
located within the third floor conference room. Afterwards, the IHHCAS was administered in paper and pencil format to each participant.

**DAY 2:** Participants were asked to write an essay. The theme for the essay is "What is Hip-Hop?" Afterwards, the researcher conducted a document analysis of the collection of essays. The document analysis provided key information about the significance and importance of the essay. Also, it included a summary of preliminary themes that emerged from the student's writing sample. Important people, places, and events discussed in each essay were also documented. The researcher discussed in the findings of the study any conclusions that were drawn from the student's work. A copy of the document analysis for the collection of essays is included in the appendices in this study. Afterwards, the document analysis was analyzed for important themes using a data coding matrix.

Subjects participated in a co-generative dialogue in which they critiqued lyrics from rap songs by three hip-hop impresarios: Jay-Z, Kanye West, and Notorious B.I.G. (deceased). Each song contained important vignettes about school and the rappers' experiences there before they became famous. This exercise was designed to capture the emic perspectives of the participants by sharing the well-known rappers' viewpoint expressed in each rap song; likewise, this activity also stimulated each subject's thinking about their attitudes toward school. Afterwards, the critiques were analyzed using a data coding matrix.

**DAY 3:** Each data collection method was administered using the Home-Based Approach. The three selected participants watched five music videos using a laptop and
projector. Using the projector the videos were displayed on a wall located in the living room. Participants sat in a circular format located in the same area. The three participants watched the videos attentively. The researcher also provided a brief orientation about the purpose of the study. Afterwards, the three participants were asked to write an essay explaining, “What is Hip-Hop?” Finally, each of the three participants engaged in a co-generative dialogue critiquing rap lyrics from the three prominent artists. All three sources of data: IHHCAS, essay, and co-generative dialogues were analyzed using a data coding matrix.

Co-generative Dialogues

Co-generative dialogues, as previously discussed, are collective goal-oriented conversations about experiences individuals have in common (Tobin & Roth, 2005; Emdin, 2010). The conversations that take place in the co-generative dialogues will be guided by certain rules of communication which each participant must adhere to. The co-generative dialogues require continuous talk or discourse about hip-hop culture and its impact on the subjects attitude in school. Co-generative dialogues are useful because they resemble rap ciphers in which rappers gather in a circle to recite their rhymes (Emdin, 2010; Irizarry, 2009). Also, during the co-generative dialogues, participants were encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas about hip-hop culture and how it influences their opinions about school. The participants formed a circle using standard classroom desks. This method of arrangement was useful for encouraging continuous exchange and mutual concern among the participants. Each participant was encouraged
by the researcher to actively participate in the discussion. The exchanges that resulted from the co-generative dialogue allowed for mutual understanding among the subjects.

The dialogue that transpired in the co-generative conversation fostered the voluntary expression of matters that concerned the participants about hip-hop culture and schooling. Therefore, the relationship between hip-hop culture and their attitudes about school were apparent. Co-generative dialogues are important in hip-hop research because they capture the voice of the participants which is often absent from much of the current research literature.

Within the framework of the co-generative dialogue issues that are usually off limits in regular classrooms become important foci of conversation. Through the use of co-generative dialogues the participants were allowed to discuss hip-hop culture and its impact on teaching and learning in an honest, sincere way.

**Description of Data Analysis Method**

The co-generative dialogues were audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher used a handheld tape recorder to capture the voices of the black male participants as they critiqued the rap lyrics. Under no circumstances was the identity of the participants used in the study. Afterwards, document analysis of essays, IHHCAS results, and co-generative dialogues were analyzed for important themes using a data coding matrix. According to Wolcott (1994), this type of ethnographic research requires an aspect of data analysis known as interpretation of culture-sharing group. Furthermore, he contends that culture-sharing groups or co-generative dialogues are a good beginning point for crafting an ethnographic inquiry like this. Ethnographic interpretations of the co-
generative dialogues allow the researcher to extend the data analysis further to include questions, doubts, themes, and the voice of the participants. The researcher can make inferences from the findings to solidify their conclusions from the study. Creswell (2007) supports Wolcott claims using of an ethnographic template that includes codes that represent the theoretical lens, description of the culture, an analysis of themes, field issues, and interpretation. This format was used to code the data from this study. Creswell’s framework provides a valuable qualitative analysis tool that gives the researcher a portrait of black boys’ cultural sharing group and the impact of hip-hop culture has on it.

Validity

The validity of this study was strengthened with the use of multiple sources of data. Yin (2003) discusses the advantages of using multiple data sources. He refers to them as “converging lines of inquiry.” This study includes three types of data: (a) Document analysis of essays, (b) IHHCAS results, and (c) the co-generative dialogues featuring critique of rap lyrics.

Internal Validity

Merriam (1998) refers to internal validity as the credibility found in a qualitative analysis. Validity is a term used to describe how well the research study reflects real life (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Using three methods of internal validity: member checks, triangulation, and clarification of researcher’s bias, this study was conducted. Member checks are important to establishing the study’s credibility (Lincoln, Guba, & Guba, 1985). Each participant had the opportunity to review transcripts, document analyses,
and critiques to increase the internal validity of this study. Likewise, Merrian (1998) claims that triangulation decreases the opportunity for misconstruing the results of a qualitative analysis. Creswell (2007) defines triangulation as the seeking of several different viewpoints about the same topic. Merriam (1998) also warns that it is important to account for researcher bias to increase the credibility of a qualitative study. She claims that all researchers bring their biases into the topic of the study. The researcher’s bias will be discussed to account for the interference with the validity of this investigation.

**External Validity**

External validity refers to the generalizability of the study. More specifically, it means applying the study’s results using a sample population to a larger one (Merriam, 1998). To ensure the external validity of this study, vivid detailed descriptions of each participant are provided. In so doing, the reader was able to identify certain characteristics and values of the subjects that relate to the research questions. This study analyzed three data sources. This allowed the researcher to identify the similar themes and patterns that emerged from the data. Finally, the researcher utilized established methods of data collection that can be replicated by others.

**Reliability**

According to Golafshani (2003), reliability tests the quality of a qualitative inquiry. In qualitative analyses, reliability is concerned with the auditability of the study. Merriam (1998) suggests that this involves the consistency and dependability of
the investigation. Member checks, triangulation, and clarifying the researcher’s biases added to the reliability of this study.

The Researcher’s Position

The researcher sought to study the impact of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitudes in school. This inquiry allowed the researcher to analyze the lived-experiences of black boys and how those experiences are influenced by hip-hop and impact their attitudes about school. Moreover, this topic was of personal interest to the researcher.

Triangulation

The use of several different sources of data and types of analyses allowed for strict audibility of this study.

Auditability

Using an audit trail provided a complete detailed description of each method of analysis and will ensure the auditability of this study. Merriam (1998) recommends using an audit trail as an added measure of reliability. The three measures that will be used for this study have been previously discussed in detail.

Assumptions

It is believed by the researcher that the participants responded to each method of data collection: co-generative dialogues, essays, and survey questions sincerely. Each participant was informed that their responses would be strictly held in confidence. However, this may not completely guarantee complete honesty in the responses.
Although detailed directions were given to each participant they may have been unable to completely understand them.

**Summary**

Critical ethnographies are used to capture the voices of marginalized groups. The findings from qualitative analyses contain important clues about the values, opinions, and characteristics of cultural groups. Through the use of essays, IHHCAS, and co-generative dialogues the impact of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitudes toward school can be studied. Using a critical ethnographic approach is the best method of investigation for this type of study.

The ethnographical design of this study allowed for the analysis of the impact of the cultural phenomenon of hip-hop culture on the attitudes of black boys in school. The findings that result from this investigation were useful in reshaping and redefining the purpose of schooling for black male youth in urban schools and centers. Educational leaders and classroom teachers can use themes that emerge from these findings to better understand the behaviors and attitudes of black boys in school.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Results from the Influence of Hip-Hop Cultural Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS) reveal a strong association between hip-hop culture and black boys (Table 3). Analysis of survey item 1 indicates most respondents have a strong level of association with Hip-Hop culture. More specifically, participants view hip-hop culture as an important part of their identity. Furthermore, if black boys feel a close connection to Hip-Hop culture then public schools could use it to alleviate feelings of alienation they often experience there.

Survey item 2 showed that the respondents agreed that hip-hop culture has positive social aspects in school. As previously discussed, hip-hop culture provides black boys who attend public schools a "place" where they can socialize among their peers. According to the data, hip-hop culture gives black boys cultural capital that allows them to form strong bonds with one another. To the contrary, three of the respondents dis with survey item 2. Moreover, three others strongly dis with it. Therefore, results from this survey item are split. Basically, 50% of respondents believe hip-hop culture has a positive impact on the social atmosphere in school while the other fifty percent believe it does not.

Eight of the 12 participants agreed that hip-hop culture has the ability to make school more attractive. The results from item 3 indicate that black boys view hip-hop culture as a tool that will cause them to become more engaged in learning at school.
### Table 3

**Influence of Hip-Hop Culture Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagreed</th>
<th>Strongly Disagreed</th>
<th>Strongly Agreed</th>
<th>Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I have a strong association with hip-hop culture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hip-hop culture has positive social aspects in school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hip-hop culture makes school more attractive.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hip-hop culture can be used to make learning fun and engaging.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hip-hop is a part of the culture in my school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hip-hop culture has a positive influence on my academic work in school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Hip-hop culture has a negative influence on my work in school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hip-hop culture has a positive influence on my behavior in school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Hip-hop culture has a negative influence on my behavior in school.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Hip-hop culture has a positive influence on my attitude in school.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Hip-hop culture has a negative influence on my attitude in school.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have a strong association with all seven elements of hip-hop culture.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Strongly Disagreed</th>
<th>Strongly Disagreed</th>
<th>Strongly Agreed</th>
<th>Strongly Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. I do not have a strong association with all seven elements of hip-hop culture.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Elements of Hip-Hop                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                      | Admire A Lot | Admire Somewhat | Admire Only A Little | I Don't Know Much About It |
| DJing                               | 3           | 1                | 2               | 4               |
| Rapping                             | 5           | 4                | 0               | 1               |
| Graffiti Arts                       | 3           | 2                | 1               | 4               |
| Breakdancing                        | 4           | 2                | 3               | 1               |
| Hip-Hop Fashion/Clothes Style       | 5           | 3                | 0               | 2               |
| Hip-Hop Language                    | 4           | 2                | 1               | 3               |
| Hip-Hop Behavior                    | 2           | 4                | 1               | 3               |

Only three of the participants dis with this statement. In addition, only one respondent strongly dis with it. Likewise, item 4—**Hip-Hop culture can be used to make learning fun and engaging**—generated similar results. Seven out of 12 subjects agreed with this statement. The results from this item conclude that black boys feel that infusing hip-hop culture into school curricula can make learning fun and exciting. This realization is important for educational practitioners who are challenged with improving the academic outcomes of historically marginalized populations.
Item 5 shows in that hip-hop culture is prevalent within public school settings. Results from item 5 demonstrated that seven respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the presence of hip-hop culture exists within their school’s environment. On the other hand, only four out of twelve respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that hip-hop culture is a part of their school culture. The results from item 5 are promising. In fact, the data prove that hip-hop culture is becoming more prominent within public school settings.

Six out of 12 survey respondents or strongly that hip-hop culture has a positive influence on their school work as stated in item 6. However, five respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. One can conclude that the results vary from student to student. While some students feel hip-hop culture positively influences them to do well in school, others feel it has no bearing at all. The results from item 7 are consistent with those of item 6. One half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that hip-hop culture negatively influences their school work. Nonetheless, the other half, five out of 12, agreed or disagreed with this statement.

Item 8 results show that six of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that hip-hop culture positively influences their behavior in school. In addition to that, four respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this item. This means that the majority of respondents feel hip-hop culture cause them to behave properly in school. In contrast, item 9 shows that only three respondents agreed or strongly disagreed that hip-hop culture is a negative influence on their behavior while in school. What is more, eight
of 12 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The results from items 8 and 9 indicate strong support for hip-hop culture.

Items 10 and 11 ask the participants if hip-hop culture has a positive or negative influence on their attitude in school. Seven respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it positively influences their attitude in school. Likewise, eight of those surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that hip-hop negatively influences their attitude in school. Results from items 10 and 11 indicate that respondents have a deeply rooted connection to hip-hop culture and demonstrate an intense loyalty to it in their responses.

Items 11 and 12 prove that respondents identify with the seven elements of hip-hop introduced in this study. Nine out of 12 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are familiar with the seven elements of hip-hop culture proposed in this experiment: DJing, Rapping, Graffiti Art, Breakdancing, Hip-Hop Fashion, Hip-Hop Language, and Hip-Hop Behavior. Moreover, results from the Elements of Hip-Hop portion of the survey support previous assertions made in items 12 and 13. More specifically, four respondents reported that they know little about DJing. However, six respondents indicated they have a certain level of admiration for it. Nine out of 12 participants indicated that they admire or admire somewhat Rapping. One half of respondents, 6 out of 12 admired Graffiti Art. Eight and 9 of 12 participants admired Breakdancing and Hip-Hop Fashion respectively. Results from the Hip-Hop Language and Behavior items showed that 7 out of 12 respondents bear significant admiration for these 2 elements.
Co-generative Dialogue

Co-generative dialogues, as previously discussed, are goal-oriented conversations that the researcher engages participants in to discuss their experiences in certain settings. In this study, public school is the setting where the black male participants recount their experiences. Although continuous and spontaneous conversation was encouraged, participants were cautioned to be mindful of others who are speaking. Likewise, they were cautioned to wait for a break in the conversation to begin speaking. Co-generative dialogues are pertinent to this investigation because it allows the researcher to capture the voices of black boys as they discuss their experiences in public schools. On the other hand, hip-hop educational researchers find co-generative dialogues useful because they resemble an aspect of hip-hop culture known in rap music circles as the "cypher." Using the cypher rappers or emcees show off their lyrical prowess among their peers in hopes of gaining recognition. In a similar manner, a co-generative dialogue allows each participant to discuss their experiences in public school among their peers who share the same history. Furthermore, topics that are too controversial to debate in a regular classroom can be talked about in a co-generative dialogue. Rap music lyrics from three prominent hip-hop artists were used as material for the co-generative dialogues: “Juicy” from Notorious B.I.G., “So Ambitious” from Jay-Z, and “School Spirit” from Kanye West.

Capturing the Voices of Black Male Youth

Initially, the subjects from the group home were reluctant to respond. They needed some coaxing from the researcher. Perhaps this was due to the lack of exposure
to teaching strategies that provided them with the opportunity to talk about their school experiences. While the format is inviting to some students, there unwillingness to readily engage in conversation proves that black boys are given little opportunity to express themselves in public school classrooms.

The researcher asked for volunteers to begin reading the passages. After a few minutes had passed and no one volunteered the researcher began reading the first verse from “Juicy:”

Fuck all you hoes! Get a grip motherfucker!

Yeah!

This album is dedicated to all the teachers that told me, I’d never amount to nothin’!

(yeah, yeah!)

To all the people...

That live above the buildings that I was hustlin’ in front of that called the police on me when I was

Just tryna make some money to feed my daughters! (sooooo good, yeah!)

And all the niggaz in the struggle!

The artist’s anger and angst are captured within his lyrics. Like many black boys in public school classrooms he was stereotyped and marked for failure by his classroom teachers. More importantly, he was castigated by teachers who criticized him for being black, male, and misunderstood. Participant 1 relates to Notorious B.I.G. (Biggie) experience this way: “I feel like he was saying through all of his struggles he still had people knocking him because he was trying to ‘get up’ the best way he could.”
The participant empathizes with the artist in his response. Black boys are often subjected to the harsh realities of their environment. Participant 2 also offers: “Well, you have people in this society who don’t want to see a black man get to where he needs to be. So, he resorts to selling drugs [to] support his family.”

Like Biggie, many black boys growing in communities where drug dealing, while horrid, is an acceptable practice among others like them. In this verse, according to the participant’s purview, dope peddling is part of survival economics in many of the neighborhoods black boys reside in. Rap music, a subgenre of hip-hop culture, is useful for connecting black boys’ life experiences with the classroom.

The co-generative dialogue also revealed that teachers harbor negative and stereotypical views of black boys in school. Participant 3 shares: “Like, I’ll be in class and I’ll be doing something and the teacher would say, “Boy, you ain’t gon’ be nothin’ in life. You gon’ get locked up.” The participant relates his own experiences to that of the artist in the rap song. For many black boys who share similar experiences in public schools throughout the United States hip-hop culture is something they can draw on to express the feelings in the classroom. As a result, teachers and educators would gain valuable insight into the real-world experiences that influence the outcomes of black boys in school. Participant 1 adds:

Well, the way he came at him...I feel like he came with an attitude. That’s why the album is dedicated to teachers said he would never amount to nothing. It’s because like I said back in my essay. Things get very emotional
when you start rapping about your experiences. That was the only way he
could get respect . . . through his music.

Hip-hop culture has the power to persuade black boys to open up about their experiences
in school. The participants' responses during the co-generative dialogue prove that
teachers and other educational practitioners can learn valuable lessons from the cultural
backgrounds of black boys through Hip-Hop Based Educational Research.

The co-generative dialogue also revealed that black boys view rap artists and hip-
hop culture as a means of success. For many of them, rap superstardom is a viable career
choice. Participant 4 comments:

Okay (pause) he sayin' like okay, like the people he used to look up like he
ain't never think he could make it that far so when he got his chance he
showed people he could make it that far. That's what he means when he says
he's gon' blow up like the world trade.

Participants discussed the glorification of drug use in rap music. Biggie rhymes:

*Smokin' weed and bamboo, sippin' on private stock.* The participants admitted that the
glamorization of drug and alcohol use in hip-hop culture does have a negative influence
on the behavior of some black male youth.

Participants also demonstrated an awareness of Critical Race Theory in the
following statement he expressed during the co-generative dialogue by Participants 1
and 7:

Participant 7: A black person, a black male has a lot of stereotypes in court, in
school...”
Participant 1: We are stereotyped because white people don’t trust us. We always gon’ what they think of us. We always gon’ be looked at as (pause Participant loses his train of thought).

The participants demonstrated an awareness of many of the racial attitudes mainstream society harbors toward them. Therefore, co-generative dialogues in classrooms cause black boys to draw upon personal experiences that contribute to the richness of learning for all students.

Rap as Resistance

For many hip-hop artists rap music is a form of resistance against mainstream values. To this end, historically disenfranchised populations use certain mediums as sounding boards for their discontent with overall society. Therefore, black boys who experience alienation and ostracism from the mainstream school culture use rap music as a form of resistance. Rap music has become the mantra for many black boys who feel unwanted and unwelcome in public schools. Rappers echo these sentiments in their lyrics. That is why black male youth have such a strong association with rap music. Jay-Z words support these assertions:

I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,

Said I’d either be dead or a reefer head,

Now sure if that’s how adults should be speak ta kids,

Especially when the only thing I did was speak in class.

I teach his ass.
Participant D offers the following comment when asked about the similarities all three songs share: "They don’t care about school; they just care about rapping. They’ll just drop out of school." The assertions made by Participant D highlight the negative influence of hip-hop culture on the attitudes of black boys in school. While each rapper became hugely successful, they misconstrued the value of public school as something unnecessary. In stark contrast, the reality is that without a high school diploma the future of many black boys is bleak.

Participant Essays
The participant essays provided the least amount of data. While given ample opportunity to respond to the writing situation most participants wrote very little. This could be due, in part, to the inability to write constructively in a controlled setting. Historically, black boys struggle with writing and reading comprehension. Nonetheless, the essay responses yielded some pertinent information. The participants writing samples repeatedly discussed the global and cultural influence that hip-hop culture has. They also agreed that it has both positive and negative aspects particularly associated with the subgenre of rap music. Some responses that hip-hop culture has the power to influence the behavior of others. However, the respondents did not feel that hip-hop culture wields any power over them to influence their decisions or behavior.

Furthermore, the comments offered by the participants demonstrate a strong association with hip-hop culture. Hip-hop is important to them. Moreover, in many respects, hip-hop culture is the primary vehicle black boys use to express themselves.
Data Coding

The Salient Voices of Black Male Youth

A data coding matrix (Table 4) was created by the researcher to depict several themes that emerged from the data analysis. The table lists ten themes that were discovered during the data analysis:

1. Association with Hip-Hop
2. Behavioral Influences
3. Critical Race Theory
4. Success
5. Rap as Resistance
6. Racial Stereotypes
7. Cultural Influences
8. Hip-Hop and School Culture/Curricula
9. Attitude in School, and
10. Influence on School Work

Table 4

Data Coding Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Co-Generative Dialogues From Critique of Rap</th>
<th>Document Analysis</th>
<th>Results From IHHCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1. Association with Hip-Hop</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Behavioral Influences</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

(continued)
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Co-Generative Dialogues From Critique of Rap Lyrics</th>
<th>Document Analysis Essays</th>
<th>Results From IHHCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Critical Race Theory</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Success</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Rap as Resistance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Racial Stereotypes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Cultural Influences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hip-Hop and School Culture/Curricula</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Attitude in School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Influence on School Work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 1: Association with Hip-Hop**

Analysis of the three data sources indicated a strong association with hip-hop culture among the participants. The results provide clear evidence that black male youth identify with hip-hop culture. Furthermore, it allows black boys to carve out space in public schools that have historically ignored the cultural influences that are unique to them. Hip-Hop culture is rooted in alienation. To this end, black boys ascribe to it, largely through rap music, to defy social norms and stereotypes they are often confronted with in public schools.

**Theme 2: Behavioral Influences**

The majority of respondents disagreed during the co-generative dialogue and indicated on the IHHCAS that hip-hop culture does not influence their behavior.
However, in sharp contrast, it does have some bearing on the behavior of their peers. This is evident in the response from Participant M given during the co-generative dialogue: “They don’t care about school; they just care about rapping. They’ll just drop out of school.”

Participant M’s comments echo the same concerns critics of hip-hop culture have. As previously discussed, opponents of hip-hop culture see it as detrimental to the social and moral development of black males. Moreover, the misogynistic, sexually explicit, and violent lyrics that are associated with rap music, hip-hop’s subgenre, frighten many educators. Hence, their fear is often promulgated by the narrow depiction of hip-hop culture in the media. However, HHBE research counters these beliefs and assumptions by delving deeper into the origins of this powerful cultural movement.

Theme 3: Critical Race Theory

“A black male has a lot of stereotypes in court, in school . . .” Participant 3 demonstrates a keen awareness of the racial injustices that are prevalent in various social institutions. Furthermore, his comments prove that the participants are cognizant of the racial prejudice that many black male youth are exposed to in school. Therefore, hip-hop culture is used a means of confronting the hostility that black boys experience in public schools. Historically, hip-hop culture began as a result of racial residential oppression of ethnic minorities by the dominant class. This reality continues to be prevalent throughout hip-hop culture, particularly in the form of rap music. For instance:

“Considered a fool ‘cause I dropped out of high school!

Stereotypes of a black male misunderstood.”
These lyrics from Biggie Smalls (Notorious B.I.G.) confront the staunch racism black boys repeatedly in American public schools.

Theme 4: Success

Success is a theme that is consistently represented throughout the data. For example:

Participant 4: Okay (pause) he sayin’ like okay like the people he used to look up like he ain’t never think he could make it that far so when he got his chance he showed people he could make it that far. That’s what he means when he says he’s gon’ blow up like the world trade.

For black boys hip-hop culture is a means of success. Historically, black children were encouraged to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, etc. Now, hip-hop superstar has been, albeit controversially, added to the list of potential career choices for black male youth. Hip-Hop moguls such as Sean “P. Diddy” Combs, Jay-Z, Kanye West, Li’l Wayne and others have successfully parlayed their careers as rap artists into multimillion dollar empires. Certainly, the decision to become a rap superstar will raise the ire of many critics. However, for many black boys who ascribe to the tenets of hip-hop culture it is a viable option.

Theme 5: Rap as Resistance

Rap music is the most recognized element of hip-hop culture. In fact, it is so prevalent that it is often mistakenly used to judge all of hip-hop culture. However, the truth of the matter is it is only one aspect of a larger cultural phenomenon. The origins of rap music reveal strong anti-government themes. Rap music, in its early days, was
known as socially conscious music that conveyed messages about societal injustice. Today, its image has changed from socially responsible art form to that mired in parental advisory warnings about explicit lyrics. Nonetheless, rap music is still the primary vehicle by which black boys construct meaning and value from life. The data source which garnered the highest frequency rate in the co-generative dialogue is rap as resistance. Throughout this data collection method participants highlighted various ways in which rap is often used as a form of resistance against the mainstream. This is evident in the following passage from Jay-Z’s “So Ambitious:”

“I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,
said I’d either be dead or be a reefer head.
Now sure if that how adults should speak ta kids,
“Especially when the only thing I did was speak in class
I teach his ass”

The artist poignantly depicts his experiences in public school through the use of rap music. Many black boys find it is also useful for coping with the stereotypes aimed at them by classroom teachers. For example, it is a common practice in public schools for black boys to listen to music from cell phones and MP3 players while walking down the hallways at school. Rarely does a teacher ever stop to consider what their listening to and why. Although, most school rules do not allow this, students do it anyway. Listening to headsets, knowing they are not suppose to, is a black boys way of using rap music to resist the rules of school.
Theme 6: Racial Stereotypes

Participant M and D respond in unison: Teacher's downing him.

Participant M: . . . downing him because he was a thug in school.

Researcher: Do you think that their behavior had something to do with it or the color of their skin had something to do with the way his teachers felt about him. or, both.

Participant M and D respond: The color of his skin.

Researcher: Why? Why do you say that?

Participant M: At the time, people were like racist and prejudice against black people.

Analysis of the data also shows that many of the participants were subjected to or have knowledge of racial stereotypes in school. The preceding exchange between the researcher and participants M and D tell quite a story. The subjects are able to extract meaning from the rap lyrics and draw conclusions. Furthermore, the participants can also recognize similarities to their own experiences in school. One can conclude that hip-hop culture is a useful tool for teaching black boys how to make inferences between the classroom and real-world experiences.

Theme 7: Cultural Influences

Coding of the data indicated that hip-hop should be considered by educational practitioners as a strong cultural influence among black male populations. Each of the participants demonstrated through their responses during the data collection phase of this study that they have in-depth knowledge about hip-hop. As a result, the findings reveal
that HHBE is a useful tool for teaching black boys in public school who are often resistance to learning. Their resistance is due, in part, to the hegemonic rules and regulations that school personnel place upon them. The results of the data conclude that school personnel should consider the cultural influences of black boys before establishing policies and procedures.

**Theme 8: Hip-Hop and School Culture/Curricula**

Black male youth are captivated by hip-hop culture. Its influence can be seen in hairstyles, clothing, peer groups, and language. The close association with hip-hop culture so prevalent in black boys’ culture sharing groups should be included in the school curricula. As previously discussed, students perform better in school when aspects of their cultural heritage are deliberately included in the classroom content. In retrospect, hip-hop culture provides educators and other school leaders with important clues about urban youth and pedagogy.

**Theme 9: Attitude in School**

- **Participant M**: Black boys have a hard time making it in public school.
- **Participant L**: They wouldn’t make it in school because of the prejudice their.

Collectively, the three sources of data show hip-hop culture can influence the attitude of black boys in school both positively and negatively. In the passage above participants M and L comment on the themes that are presented in two of rap lyrics by Biggie Smalls and Jay-Z. They both conclude from the material presented that black male youth have a difficult time in public school. Their assumptions are consistent with current research and mimics the same concerns shared by professionals in the field.
Therefore, the lyrics have the ability to affect the black boys' attitude in school in two ways. On one hand, some black boys may read these lyrics and be inspired to overcome the obstacles they face in public school. On the other hand, others may conclude that school is, indeed, a waste of time and drop out.

**Theme 10: Influence on School Work**

Six out of 12 participants surveyed agreed hip-hop culture has a positive influence on their academic work. One can conclude based upon these findings that teachers should incorporate hip-hop pedagogy into their classroom lesson plans. The data clearly show that hip-hop culture is important to black boys. Therefore, if, in fact, hip-hop culture is meaningful to black boys as part of their culture; it should be used in the classroom. It is common practice in many schools now to adopt aspects of Jewish, Latina/o, Native American, Indian, and other heritages into school culture. The results from this study conclude that hip-hop culture influences the academic work of black boys who attend public schools.

**Summary**

The results from each of the three data sources indicate a strong association with hip-hop culture for most of the participants in the study. Furthermore, the majority of subjects believe hip-hop culture has positive social aspects in school. Moreover, respondents' survey results show that hip-hop culture makes school more attractive to black boys. To this end, those queried indicated that hip-hop culture could be used to make learning fun.
The data analysis also indicated that the hip-hop culture is a part of the academic and social milieu of the public schools participants attend. In fact, many concluded during the study that hip-hop culture has a positive influence on their school work. Likewise, participants concluded that hip-hop culture also positively affects their behavior and attitude in school. However, respondents did verbalize during the co-generative dialogue that hip-hop has the potential to negatively influence others in their peer group.

The influence of hip-hop culture cannot be disputed. Moreover, rap artists’ rhymes should be used in the classroom to examine important cultural stereotypes, beliefs, and assumptions many teachers harbor about black boys who attend public school. Furthermore, this study concludes that for black male youth traditional ideas of success contradict current trends. The road to success has been widened to include hip-hop culture as a sustainable income stream for black boys who aspire to be a part of it. The results from this study prove that hip-hop culture is the tool many black boys use to navigate through public school.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What Can Be Learned About Black Boys From Hip-Hop?

The findings from this study give attention to the following research questions:

RQ1: How do the seven elements of hip-hop culture—Djing, Rapping/ emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion/Style, Language, and Behavior—influence black boys’ attitude in school?

The findings from this study clearly demonstrate that the attitudes of black boys who have a strong, moderate, or weak association with hip-hop culture are not negatively affected by it. Furthermore, the research concludes that black male youth are connected to hip-hop through life experience.

RQ2: How many of the seven elements of hip-hop culture have a more significant influence on the attitude of black boys in school?

Black boys identify with the element of rap music more than the others. Rap music is the primary vehicle black male children use to express their attitudes and opinions about their experiences in public schools.

RQ3: How does the level of association with hip-hop culture differ among black boys’ in a secondary public school?

Black boys in secondary school have a strong association with hip-hop culture. Secondary public schools provide a broad avenue to discuss issues related to the real-life
experiences of black boys. The findings also show that levels of association with hip-hop culture among black boys vary at the secondary level. For black boys strong, weak, and moderate associations with hip-hop exist. One can conclude from the data that black boys have at least a cursory familiarity with hip-hop culture.

RQ4: Does hip-hop culture have a positive and/or negative influence on the social aspects of school for black boys?

Hip-Hop culture has a considerably positive influence on the social aspects of school for black boys based upon the findings of this study. It allows them to form friendships with one another. Hip-Hop is a culturally familiar aspect of the black experience that introduces black male youth to certain cultural norms such as dating, respect, sex role relationships, friendships, and various other rites of passage.

RQ5: Does hip-hop culture have a positive and/or negative influence on the academic work of black boys in school?

Black boys believe hip-hop culture has a significantly positive influence on their academic work. For them, hip-hop culture is extremely beneficial if infused into the classroom setting. The findings from this investigation conclude that black boys' staunch support of hip-hop culture gives teachers valuable insight into the cultural influences that can enhance their learning experiences in school.

RQ6: Can school be made a more fun and engaging experience for black boys through hip-hop culture?

The findings from this study also reveal that, as a part of the urban context, hip-hop culture provides a comfortable environment for black boys to engage in academic
pursuits. Classroom activities that involve exercises that allow black male youth to read and interpret rap lyrics allow both the teacher and student to challenge assumptions that exist in the music. Because black boys listen to rap music does not mean they ascribe to the message rappers convey. Studying rap music in class allows black boys to assess their personal attitudes and opinions about life. Indeed, learning can be made more fun and exciting for historically marginalized populations of black boys in public school.

RQ7: Do black boys see any positive aspects of hip-hop culture in school?

Hip-Hop culture has positive aspects that should be explored in the school setting. It allows for teachers and students to examine societal trends over periods of time. Schools should recognize hip-hop as a cultural norm that is important to black boys. To that end, black boys would gain full acceptance into the sometimes strange and unfamiliar environment of public school. Because hip-hop culture is important to black male youth it has positive aspects in the educational setting.

Conclusions

Hip-Hop as Cultural Capital

Black boys have taken ownership of hip-hop. Inherently, it is theirs. It represents the best and worst of youth culture. However, the latter should not outweigh the benefits of the former. When rappers rhyme about their experiences in public school black boys see a reflection of themselves in the music. Hip-Hop culture, through the subgenre of rap music, is one a few mediums in which black male youth candidly express their frustrations with public schools. Black boys are often met with racially stereotypical attitudes from teachers that inhibit their ability to learn. The hindrance of educational
opportunity for black males in public school settings leads to disengagement. Therefore, black students are more likely to drop out of school because of the alienation and ostracism they experience there. As a result, many black boys are left to fend for themselves in schools that ignore the cultural influences that impact their academic experience. This study proves that hip-hop culture has a significant influence in the lives of black boys. Moreover, hip-hop provides educators with a praxis for understanding the plight of black males in public schools. To this end, educational practitioners who seek to improve the academic outcomes of black males should incorporate Hip-Hop Based Educational research into the curricula. Furthermore, hip-hop culture lends cultural capital to black boys in public school settings. The cultural capital allows them to socialize with others in their peer group. More specifically, hip-hop culture represents a common bond among black male youth that allows them to interact with each other. Moreover, teachers who dare to include hip-hop pedagogy into their lesson plans capture the attention of black boys. As result, hip-hop culture has the ability to boost the passing percentage of black boys on formative and summative assessments.

Hip-Hop as a Form of Resistance

Black boys use rap music as a form of resistance to the rules and regulations of school. Those policies are often developed by the dominant social class and are rarely multicultural and offensive to black male youth. For instance, many schools have adopted policies against "sagging pants." Many educators would agree with this policy. However, it provides an avenue for the racial profiling of black males in school. Hip-Hop fashion dictates that this fashion trend is acceptable among black male populations.
Schools that fail to consider the influence of hip-hop culture on the clothing options for black boys are at risk for fostering racially biased attitudes among the faculty. If teachers are allowed to practice racially discriminatory practices which unfairly target black boys ultimately they will fail.

Hip-Hop as a Cultural Influence

Hip-Hop culture is learned. It contains shared patterns of human behavior that comprise the seven elements of hip-hop culture discussed in this study: DJing, Rapping/Emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion, Behavior, and Language. These elements are manifested within black male youth culture as social interactions. For black male youth hip-hop culture is a way of adapting to oppressive social conditions. Hip-Hop culture was formed as a result of great social, political, and economic upheaval. For them, hip-hop is a way of affirming their existence.

Black boys use hip-hop culture as a forum to discuss discursive and substantial matters that are prevalent in their communities. Furthermore, hip-hop provides black boys with a venue to dialogue with a world in which they have been pushed to the margins of society by incarceration, violence, drug abuse, social isolation, disease, and racial oppression. Hip-Hop is a worldwide cultural movement that significantly impacts the psyche of black male youth. In fact, it is the primary vehicle through which black Americans are judged.

Hip-Hop culture is useful for school system leaders who are charged with reducing the social and community issues that plague black communities. The populations of public schools are increasing dramatically. As a result, large numbers of
black youth have begun to appear in locales where schools are unprepared to deal with the influx. Moreover, black parents typically cannot afford to send their male children to private institutions. Ultimately, they will be confronted with the challenges that arise when black youth populations surge in schools that are unequipped to handle it.

Hip-Hop culture is important to educators because it provides them with an in-depth understanding of black boys without the use of stereotypes. Teachers who engage in hip-hop pedagogy have a distinct advantage over those who ignore its redeeming qualities. Contrary to popular belief, hip-hop is not the societal menace it has been made out to be. It is a truly unique cultural movement that has the power to transform lives. For educational professionals who are responsible for ensuring the academic success of black boys' explorations in hip-hop cultural are crucial. It allows educators to comprehend the actions, behaviors, and attitudes of black boys in school. Furthermore, hip-hop culture has the capacity to shift the educational paradigm regarding black boys. Understanding hip-hop culture leads to a greater appreciation of the differences among all children. Often times, the problems that exist between school systems and communities are cultural. Hip-Hop allows education professionals to develop a keen awareness of the cultural aspects of black boys that impact their ability to learn. Greater understanding of hip-hop culture lessens the tendency of educators to discriminately treat black male youth in school and centers throughout the Unites States.
Implications

Hip-Hop Research Promotes Social Justice

This study centers hip-hop culture as a method of confronting the negative stereotypes that black boys are confronted with in public schools that, in turn, cause them to have negative attitudes about learning. In part, the findings are also intended to promote social justice for marginalized youth who have difficulty navigating through the treacherous terrain of public education. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is two-fold. On the one hand, the researcher wants to add to the body of research that currently exists in an attempt to understand the plight of black male youth in learning institutions nationwide. On the other, it is important to note that understanding hip-hop culture requires us to engage in a debate about what is the best approach to teaching black boys.

Implications for Public K-12 Schools

Public schools are the entities that have the daunting task of educating American’s black boys. This study posits that it is the institution that must change and not black boys. Hip-Hop culture allows educational researchers to examine the responsibility of public education to educate black boys using Critical Race Theory as a lens. It advocates for black boys by measuring their experiences against the backdrop of those of the dominant social class.

Implications for Post-Secondary Schools and Institutions

Colleges and Universities responsible for training prospective teachers can learn from the findings in this study that more emphasis should be placed on improving the learning experiences of black male youth. This involves a shift from traditional course
programs and implementation of multilevel internships in urban schools and centers. Rigorous courses in Hip-Hop Based Educational Research should be added to the course of study for all future teachers as a requirement and not as an elective. Many teachers will ultimately be confronted with the challenges associated with diverse populations of students. Therefore, it is the responsibility of higher education institutions to equip teacher trainees with the capacity to stimulate meaningful student outcomes for all students regardless of their ethnic or socioeconomic status.

**Implications for Post-Secondary Faculty**

College professors should equip prospective teachers of black boys with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to be successful teachers in the hip-hop generation. Courses in hip-hop research and pedagogy should be added to degree programs that certify teachers in each state. Course descriptions must be altered to include various cultural influences that are associated with various ethnic groups. Many of the prospective teachers in teacher colleges throughout the America will be hired to work in urban schools. In their current state many college course programs are ill-equipped to prepare their students for the often harsh realities of working in urban schools. Invariably, urban students have a unique set of values, behaviors, and mannerisms that contradict what future teachers are exposed to during traditional internships. Therefore, college professors should provide a variety of educational training opportunities for their students that will empower them to succeed in any educational setting.
Implications for Urban Education

Certainly, teaching in urban schools is uniquely a different experience for the predominantly white, female, and homogenous population of future teachers in public schools throughout the nation. Likewise, it poses a problem for any prospective teacher who is unfamiliar with the cultural dynamics synonymous with students from inner city areas. Therefore, it would behoove department heads, deans, and professors at postsecondary institutions to increase the exposure of prospective teachers to the realities of careers in teaching. This experiment suggests that hip-hop culture is a way of life for black boys who are associated with it. In addition, it is a method of empowerment for black boys who are often powerless in public school and overall society. Studies in hip-hop culture are indeed worthwhile scholarly pursuits that provide the learner with a broad knowledge base. Researchers who seek to duplicate this study or others like it should think about ways to apply it to other populations of marginalized youth. While hip-hop culture theoretically has a "black face," it encompasses different cultures and ethnicities throughout the world. Furthermore, future researchers must bear in mind that investigations of this type are intended to be transformative. Moreover, these experiments should be approached with the intention to increase awareness of hip-hop culture and challenge traditional notions of what learning is or is not. Nonetheless, this study is intended to inspire and empower researchers to explore new fields of study that aim to improve educational practice.
Implications for School District Leadership

Public education in America is in the midst of a transition from the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to the Race To the Top (RTTP) initiative introduced by the Obama Administration under Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Under the latter 48 states have agreed to adopt national common core learning standards and a rigorous teacher evaluation system for K-12 schools and centers. The reward for doing so is a share in hundreds of millions of dollars in educational funding. While the RTTP reform act has many positive aspects, it is not without criticism.

The adoption of the common core standards provides a broader framework for teachers to use in the classroom. However, the standards do not contain any content specific material that is aimed at improving the academic outcomes of historically marginalized groups of black boys that occupy seats in classrooms throughout the United States. While RTTP may alleviate the strict requirements of NCLB it falls short of providing a remedy for teaching black boys how to read, write, and master mathematics. To bolster the impact of RTTP the findings in this study and others like it should be added to the common core standards to promote instructional methodologies that will enhance the learning experiences of the ever increasing numbers of African-American youth who attend public schools. Traditional school curricula must be rewritten to include the cultural influences pertinent to the lived-experiences of black males. Curriculum specialists must develop courses infused with hip-hop pedagogy that are aligned with the new common core standards.
Therefore, HHBE research must start at the district level. If district leaders stress the importance of hip-hop pedagogy teachers are more likely to adopt it as classroom practice. Furthermore, leadership at the state level should be made aware through universities and colleges of the importance of recognizing the cultural influences that influence the learning outcomes of historically underachieving populations.

Implications for School Leaders

In an effort to understand black boys defiance of school rules and resistance to authority principals and assistant principals should facilitate professional development among their respective faculty and focusing on HHBE. Hip-Hop educational research is not a way to trick students into learning. Rather, it is a way of knowing and doing that black boys use to make meaning out of their existence. The findings in this study prove that hip-hop culture is a valuable commodity of cultural exchange between black male adolescents. It provides site-based leaders with the cognitive skills that enable them to look beneath the surface of sagging pants, headphones plugged into MP3 players, and the hardened personas that many black boys project in school and see something different. Therefore, schools should examine their policies and procedures to ensure they are free from bias. Policies that unfairly target black boys causing racial profiling should be thoroughly examined and revised. Hip-Hop is one of the few mediums of self-expression available to black boys. Therefore, if school leaders are vested in reaching the black males on their campuses then they should explore the benefits of HHBE and its impact on the attitudes of black boys in school. Based upon the findings in this study urban schools should engage in systemwide professional development aimed at increasing teacher
effectiveness. Intensive training in hip-hop pedagogy will enhance the awareness of classroom teachers, and administrators of the cultural influences that impact the learning of black boys.

**Implications for Classroom Teachers**

Classroom teachers stand to gain the most from HHBE. The classroom setting is where learning takes place. Enhancing the quality of the daily exchange of ideas and knowledge between teachers and students is critical to the debate about what is the best method of teaching black boys in public school. Hip-Hop allows classroom teachers to invite black boys into the learning process without fear and trepidation. Black boys who are resistant to learning, may find solace in classrooms where teachers use hip-hop as a platform to teach common core standards and promote positive learning experiences among African-American males.

**Implications for School Counselors**

Among their many duties and responsibilities, school counselors are responsible for ensuring students earn the appropriate number credits toward graduation. The opportunity to participate in professional development aimed at understanding the psychological effects of hip-hop culture on black boys’ attitude about learning will give counselors valuable insight into what interests black boys. Often black boys are referred to the school counselor as an intervention before further disciplinary action. Understanding hip-hop culture and its influences on black boys can aid counselors in making important determinations about the student’s course pathways and post-secondary opportunities. A number of colleges and universities now offer courses in hip-
hop studies. If black boys are exposed to the possibility of studying hip-hop in college they might fair better in school. Exposure to career opportunities that are of interest to them could prove beneficial to keeping black males in school. As a result drop-out rates among black students would decrease exponentially.

Limitations of the Study

To increase the generalizability of this study, a broader sample should have been used. The relatively small sample size chosen for administration of the IHHCAS limited the results of the findings. Furthermore, the results of the study were impacted by the location and setting of the study. A group home and home-based approach were used for data collection. The results would have produced significantly greater results if conducted within a traditional secondary school among the student body. The method of selection for the participants was limited to the researchers and group home staff members. Access to the use of technology was limited by the setting. Paper and pencil surveys were administered to respondents instead of using desktop computers, laptops, or electronic tables that are usually available in a traditional school setting. Also, to improve the reliability of the results, a traditional public school setting would have been more suitable. Although the participants attended public schools in the area, to improve the study students from traditional homes should have been used.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the findings of the study, the researcher recommends replicating this experiment using a sample size of at least thirty for the administration of the IHHCAS.
Researchers who seek to replicate this study should do so in a large comprehensive high school to promote greater generalization of the results. Students in schools today are very familiar with the technological aspects of learning. Therefore, it is also recommended that participants should be administered the IHHCAS using a computer lab located within the school setting that can accommodate at least thirty students.

How Does This Research Apply to Other Marginalized Groups?

This study is also applicable to other marginalized groups of school age youth. This study is beneficial to researchers who are interested in studying the influence of hip-hop culture on the attitudes of black, Latino/a, or Asian girls. Due to circumstances beyond the researcher's control, a limited number of participants were selected for participation in this study. Similar studies should be conducted which allow classroom teachers and other faculty members to be involve in the selection of the participants using the community nomination method.

Summary

Hip-Hop culture is important to black boys. Through it they convey their feelings, attitudes, and opinions about their life experiences. In fact, hip-hop culture, through the medium of rap music, is the primary vehicle of expression for African-American male youth. While criticized for its violence, misogyny, profanity, explicit lyrics, and glorification of drug use hip-hop culture does not have a negative effect on black boys' attitude in school. For black male youth hip-hop culture serves as a means of empowerment through which they can express themselves.
Public schools have long used countercultural approaches to addressing the needs of black boys. Historically, these methods have had little success in producing meaningful outcomes for black male students. Understanding hip-hop culture gives teachers and school leaders' valuable insight into the cultural influences of black boys. These cultural influences are important to note because they hold important clues to the psychology of black male students. Educators are responsible for the academic and social development of youth. This task can only be accomplished by considering what factors are pertinent to the child's existence. Then, those elements can be factored into the learning environment. Teachers can no longer afford to ignore the power of the hip-hop movement. It has changed the consciousness of this generation of youth like nothing else has.

Explorations into hip-hop culture must be added to studies of effective teaching and learning of black boys. Failure to recognize the intrinsic value of hip-hop culture and its importance to schools and systems will ultimately widen the achievement gap. In conclusion, educators who truly believe in providing ALL students with a worthwhile education must begin to examine issues surrounding black boys and their welfare in public schools.
APPENDIX A

Co-Generative Dialogue Transcript: Session One

CRITIQUE OF RAP LYRICS

Researcher: The interesting thing about these three pieces is that they all make references to how life was before they made it big. Right? They all make references to what people thought of them as being young, black, and in school in America. That’s what we want to capture today. You may also be able to relate to those experiences. So, speak loudly so the recorder can hear you. Does anyone want to go first?

(Pause)

Researcher Note: The participants look sheepishly at one another. They are reluctant to respond. The researcher volunteers to read the first verse of the Notorious B.I.G. piece.

Researcher: [Notorious B.I.G.]

Fuck all you hoes! Get a grip motherfucker! [beat starts]
Yeah!
This album is dedicated... to all the teachers that told me, I'd never amount to nothin'!
(yeah, yeah!)
To all the people...
That lived above the buildings that I was hustlin' in front of that called the police on me when I was
Just tryna make some money to feed my daughters! (soooooo good, yeah!)
And all the niggaz in the struggle!

Participant 1: I feel like he was saying through all his struggles he still had people knocking him because he was trying to ‘get up’ the best way he could.

Researcher: What’s the best way he could?

Participant 1: Selling dope.
Appendix A (continued)

**Researcher:** Anyone care to expound on that?

**Participant 2:** Raises his hand and begins to speak.

Well, you have people in this society who don’t want to see a Black man get to where he needs to be. So, he resorts to selling drugs support his family.

**Researcher:** Okay. But, is that the only alternative though?

**Participant 2:** That’s the only alternative he knew growing up.

**Researcher:** That’s was the alternative for him. But, that’s not true for everybody right?

**Participant 2:** Right.

**Researcher:** Let’s look at this part right here.

“This album is dedicated... to all the teachers that told me, I'd never amount to nothin'!!”

Can anybody relate to that?

**Several participants respond:** Yeah!

**Researcher:** How so?

**Participant 3:** Like, I’ll be in class and I’ll be doing something and the teacher would say, “Boy, you ain’t gon’ be nothin’ in life. You gon’ get locked up.”

**Researcher:** How’d that make you feel?

**(Pause)**

**Participant 3:** He mumbles...it makes me feel different.

**Researcher:** It would make anybody feel different, right?

**(Participant 1 interrupts)**

**Participant 1:** Well, the way he came at him...I feel like he came with an attitude. That’s why the album is dedicated to teachers said he would never amount to nothing. It’s because like I said back in my essay. Things get
very emotional when you start rapping about your experiences. That was the only way he could get respect...through his music.

Researcher: Right. Music was his way of what? Escaping what.

Several participants respond: “The world.”

Researcher: Or, what...the ghetto, right? Let’s move on to verse 1.

You know what I’m sayin’? (yeeah!)  
Ha! (come on nigga!)  
It’s all good baby baybee!  
Uh!

[Verse 1: (Puff Daddy)]
It was all a dream! - I used to read "Word Up" magazine  
Salt’n’Pepa and Heavy D up in the limousine. (yeeah, yeeah!)  
Hangin' pictures on my wall  
Every Saturday Rap Attack, Mr. Magic Marley Marl! (uh!)  
I let my tape rock 'till my tape popped  
Way back - when I had the red and black lumberjack  
With the hat to match!  
Remember Rappin' Duke, duh-ha, duh-ha  
You never thought that Hip-Hop would take it this far!  
Now I'm in the limelight  
Cause I rhyme tight (yeeah!)  
Time to get paid,  
Blow up like the "World Trade"!  
Born sinner!

The opposite of a winner remember when I used to eat sardines for dinner! (yeeeah!)  
Peace to Ron G, Brucey B, Kid Capri  
Funkmaster Flex, Lovebug Starsky! (so good!)  
I'm blowin' up like you thought I would  
Call the crib, same number same hood. (that's right!) - It's all good! (it's all good!)

Participant 4: Okay (pause) he sayin’ like okay, like the people he used to look up like he ain’t never think he could make it that far so when he got his chance he showed people he could make it that far. That’s what he means when he says he’s gon’ blow up like the world trade.

Researcher: So, Biggie is trying to convey to the listener what? There’s one word for it. What do we call it when we make it. Success. Right? Everyone agree with that.
Appendix A (continued)

(Participants respond in unison: yeah.)

Participant 5: Like, when he says it was all a dream, I think we all at that point, before we made it to where we all trying to get to...and when he finally made it...he blew up.

Researcher: Exactly. Let’s look at another verse. Smokin' weed and bamboo, sippin' on private stock! What’s he talking about?

Participant 6: He smokes weed and drinks out of his own liquor.

Researcher: Sippin’ on private stock. Private stock is a beer that was very popular back in that day. It was a very strong form of beer. It was right along with Colt 45, Schlitz Malt Liquor and others. Let’s move on. Does anyone care to read?

(Silence)

Researcher’s note: Participants are reluctant to read aloud.

[Bridge:]
Uh! (yeah!) - And if you don’t know (uh-huh!)
Now you know, nigga. Uh! (it’s all good!)

[Chorus: Female sings (Puff Daddy)]
You know very well (yeah, uh-huh!) - who you are (ah, it's all good!)
Don’t let ’em hold you down, reach for the stars! (it’s all good!)
You had a go (it's all good, nigga!) - but not that manyyyy (yeah!)
’Cause you're the only one (yeah!) - I'll give you good and plenty. (iiiit's all good!)

[Verse 2: (Puff Daddy)]
I made the change from a common thief (uh!)
To up close and personal (yeah!) with Robin Leach. (c’mon!)
And I'm far from cheap, I smoke skunk with my peeps all day
Spread love (yeah!) it's the Brooklyn way (spread love!)
The Moet and Alize keep me pissy! - Girls used to diss me! (yeah!)
Now they write letters 'cause they miss me! (that's right!)
I never thought it could happen, this rappin' stuff (it's all good!)
I was too used to packin' Gats and stuff! (uhh!)
Now hontes play me close like butter played toast (yeah, uh-huh!)
From the Mississippi down to the EastCoast!
Condos in Queens - indo for weeks (uh-huh!)
Appendix A (continued)

Sold out seats to hear Biggie Smalls speak! (come on!)
Livin' life without fear (uh!)
Puttin' 5 karats in my baby girl's ears!
Lunches! - Brunches - interviews by the pool (uh, yeah!)
Considered a fool 'cause I dropped out of high school!

[Bridge:]
Uh! (and it's all good!) And if you don't know,
Now you know, nigga. Uh! (yeah

Participant 7: Well, he sayin' that he never thought he'd make it. He saying that he
didn't know he would blow up like that. He started out listening to
Heavy D and them. Now, he's rapping with them.

Researcher: Okay. What about this? What about this part? Stereotypes of a black
male misunderstood. And it's still all good!

Participant 3: A Black person, a black male has a lot of stereotypes in court, in
school...

Participant 1: We are stereotyped because white people don't trust us. We always
gon' what they think of us. We always gon' be looked at as (pause
Participant loses his train of thought).

Researcher: Let's look at this verse:

Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis
When I was dead broke, man I couldn't picture this. (uhhh!)
50" inch screen, money green leather sofa
Got two rides, a limousine with a chauffeur. (all good!)
Phone bill about two G's flat (so good!)
No need to worry, my accountant handles that. (hahaal)
And my whole crew is loungin'
Celebratin' every day, no more public housin'! (that's right!)
Thinkin' back on my one-room shack
Now my mom pimps a Ac' with minks on her back.
And she loves to show me off, of course
Smiles every time my face is up in 'The Source'! (yeah, yeah!)
We used to fuss when the landlord dissed us
No heat! - Wonder why Christmas missed us!
Birthdays was the worst days
Now we sip champagne when we thirst-ay! (come on, nigga! come on!)
Uh! - Damn right I like the life I live
'Cause I went from negative to positive. (that's right!) - And it's all... (it's aaaall good, nigga!) (It's all good.)

[Bridge:]
And if you don't know, now you know, nigga. Uh!

**Researcher:** Let's back up a little bit. The one I want to look at is, “No heat! - Wonder why Christmas missed us! Birthdays was the worst days.” He’s reflecting on what?

**Participants respond together:**
He didn’t have no job. He didn’t have no heat.

**Participant 1:** He ain’t have no money. Now, that he got a little money, he gon’ shine.

**Researcher:** So what does that say about hip-hop culture? This is one aspect of hip-hop culture--rap music. Are they making the case for hip-hop culture in schools?

**Participant 8:** They talking about how they went from nothing to something.

**Researcher:** Because of what? What was there way out? Hip-Hop. Right? So, what does that say about hip-hop?

**Participant 8:** It is a way out?

**Researcher:** Does this mean that rap music can be used as a means of success?

**Unidentified participant:** No

**Participant 9:** If that was the case I would have been a millionaire by now.

**Participant 1:** Why are we doing this research?

**Researcher:** I want to capture the voices of young black males so I can further explain what hip-hop culture is and how important it is in schools today. Hip-hop culture is a relatively new field of research but, it there is a lot of work already out there. My goal is to simply contribute to the body of research that exists. I want to make sure that Black an non-Black folks understand this. Let’s look at another piece.
Yeah 3 in the morning on the Westside highway, top down baby,

**Researcher**: What’s he talking about? What is he riding in?

**Participants**: A convertible.

(Researcher reads on)

*Fuck y'all*

*The motivation for me was them telling me what I couldn't be,*

**Researcher**: Whose is ‘them’ that he is referring to.

**Various participants respond:**

White folks, teachers, friends, anybody...

**Researcher**: Any one who is not on your side. Right? Very good.

**Researcher continues reading:**

*Oh well,*

*[Jay-Z:]*

*This a special dedication,*

*I wanna thank you for the fuel,*

*No really thank you,*

*I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,*

*Said I'd either be dead or be a reefer head,*

*Now sure if that's how adults should speak ta kids,*

*Especially when the only thing I did was speak in class,*

*I teach his ass,*

*Even betters what my uncle did,*

*I pop my demo tape in start to beat my head,*

*Peaked out my eye, see if he was beating his,*

*He might as well say beat it kid, he's on the list,*

**Researcher**: What list is that?

**Participant 1**: People who thought he couldn’t be. Right?

(Researcher reads on)
It's like I'm searching for kicks like a sneaker head,
He gon keep pushing me until I reach the ledge,
And when I reach the ledge I'll tell em all to eat a dick,
Take a leap of faith and let my eagle wings spread,
Spread spread.

Researcher: What is Jay-Z saying here? How does what Jay-Z is talking about relate to what Biggie Smalls is talking about?

Participant 3: They’re talking about the same thing.

Researcher: So what does it mean?

Participant 4: Most people...they won’t say nothing nice about you. And, when you get up there you have people trying to be nosy.

Researcher: Why were the teachers and other adults in their lives so against them?

Participant 2: They were trying to make a living.

Participant 1: They were probably bad in school.

Participant 5: They were class clowns.

Researcher: Maybe it’s because they were ‘bad asses’ in school. Let’s move to the next song by Kanye West: School Spirit.

[Intro]
School spirit motherfuckers

[Chorus]
Alpha, step. Omega, step
Kappa, step. Sigma, step

Researcher: What’s he talking about?

Participant 3: Fraternities and Sororities.

Researcher: Right.
Appendix A (continued)

\[Verse 1\]
I'ma get on this TV, momma
I'ma, I'ma break shit down
I'ma make sure these light skinned niggaz
Never ever never come back in style

(Researcher note: some participants respond, 'yeah' in direct agreement with the preceding verse about light skinned blacks)

Told 'em I finished school, and I started my own business
They say, 'Oh you graduated?'
No, I decided I was finished
Chasin' y'all dreams and what you've got planned
Now I spit it so hot you got tanned
Back to school and I hate it there, I hate it there
Everything I want I gotta wait a year, I wait a year
This nigga graduated at the top of my class..
I went to Cheesecake, he was a motherfucking waiter there

Researcher: What is Kanye trying to say?

(participants are chuckling at the verse)

Participant 2: He saying that education doesn't mean everything.

Researcher: That's one side of it. What's the other side?

Participant 3: Just because you graduated at the top of your class doesn't mean you'll be successful.

Researcher: Okay. But, does that mean he's not successful?

Participant 1: There are all types of success.

SESSION ONE ENDS
APPENDIX B

Co-Generative Dialogue Transcript: Session Two

CRITIQUE OF RAP LYRICS

Researcher: Let’s look at Jay-Z’s “So Ambitious”. (lyrics from the first verse are read aloud to participants.)

[Pharrell:]
Yeah 3 in the morning on the Westside highway, top down baby,
Fuck y’all
The motivation for me was them telling what I couldn’t be,
Oh well,

Researcher: Who’s he talking to? Who might he be talking to?

Participant D: People at school.

Researcher: People who?

Participant M: People who doubted him.

Researcher: Who are they?

Participant L: Teachers.

Researcher: Let me read some more:

[Jay-Z:]
This is a special dedication,
I wanna thank you for the fuel,
No really thank you,

I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,
Said I’d either be dead or be a reefer head,
Now sure if that’s how adults should speak to kids,
Especially when the only think I did was speak in class,
I teach his ass,
Appendix B (continued)

Participant D: He’s talking about people who downed him when he was in school.

Researcher: Yes, and he’s talking about who else?

(Researcher continues reading):

[Jay-Z:]
Even betters what my uncle did,
I pop my demo tape in start to beat my head,
Peaked out my eye, see if he was beating his,
He might as well say beat it kid, he’s on the list,
It’s like I’m searching for kicks like a sneaker head,
He gon keep pushing me until I reach the ledge,
And when I reach the ledge I’ll tell em all to eat a dick,
Take a leap of faith and let my eagle wings spread,
Spread spread.

Participant D: His uncle tried to tell him something.

Researcher: All the people who were downing him. It’s that who he’s talking about? Is he making a connection?

Researcher: Tell him what?

Participant D: That he wasn’t trying to hear him.

Researcher: Let’s read on:

[Pharrell:] Motivation for me was them telling me what I could not be, Oh well,
I’m so ambitious,
Hey I’m on a mission
No matter what the conditions,
Forget the personal issues
When you been what I been through,
Hey if you believe it,
Then you could conceive it.

Researcher: Let’s go back up and look at the first two lines. What is he saying? If you look at everything he’s said prior to this. What statement is he trying to make? What’s the association between this and the Notorious Big piece we’ve read. What are some similarities between the two pieces?
Participant M and D respond in unison: Teacher’s downing him.

Participant M: ...downing him because he was a thug in school.

Researcher: Do you think that their behavior had something to do with it or the color of their skin had something to do with the way his teachers felt about him. Or, both.

Participant M and D respond: “The color of his skin.”

Researcher: Why? Why do you say that?

Participant M: At the time, people were like racist and prejudice against Black people.

Researcher: Well, this was probably in the eighties when Jay-Z was in school.

Participant D: The first one was about rise.

Researcher: Yes. The first one was about the rise of rap. What do they both rap about in their songs.

Participant L: They’re saying that in the beginning no one thought they would be anything because they were black boys.

Researcher: What do we call that when teacher’s look down on students because of their skin?

(Pause)

Researcher: Racial stereotypes. Remember, they are reflecting back on a time when they were black boys attending public school. Right? This is what’s at the heart of this study.

Researcher: What can be said...what can be drawn from these two pieces about the experiences of black boys in school and hip-hop culture?

Participant M: That black boys have a hard time making it in school.

Participant L: They wouldn’t make it in school because of the prejudice their.

Researcher: Is it that black boys can’t make it in school and if they listen to that [rap] they’re viewed as thugs. We call that what...stereotyping, right? So, that causes their teachers to think what of them?
Appendix B (continued)

**Participant M:** Well, they would think negative.

**Participant D:** And, the way they dress...and stuff...

**Researcher:** And, they harbor what...What do we call it when people think negative things about others because of the color of their skin?

**Participant D:** Prejudices.

**Researcher:** Prejudices. Right. Or, prejudice. Okay, let’s look at the last piece Kanye West. This piece is from his critically acclaimed album *College Dropout* called “School Spirit”.

*(Researcher reads the chorus and first verse aloud)*

_School Spirit motherfuckers  
Alpha, ste. Omega, step  
Kappa, step. Sigma, step  
Gangstas walk, pimp gon’ talk  
Oooh hecky raw that boy is raw  
AKA, step. Delta, step  
SG Rho, step. Zeta, step  
Gangstas walk, pimps gon’ talk  
Oooh hecky raw that boy is raw._

_[Verse 1]  
I’m a get on this TV, momma  
I’m a, I’m a break shit down  
I’m make sure these light skinned niggaz  
Never ever never come back in style  
Told ‘em I finished school, and I started my own business  
They say, ‘Oh you graduated?’  
No, I decided I was finished_

**Researcher:** What is he saying here?

**Participants L, M, and D respond:** He dropped out.

**Researcher:** He dropped, right. And, the title of the album is...College Dropout. See the connection.
(Researcher reads on)

Chasin’ y’all dreams and what you’ve got planned
Now I spit i so hot you got tanned
Back to school and I hate it there, I hate it there
Everything I want I gotta wait a year, I wait a year
This nigga graduated at the top of my class.
I went to Cheesecake, he was a motherfucking waiter there

Researcher: What is he saying?

Participant M: He’s saying like (pause) just because you graduated doesn’t mean you are going to be successful.

Researcher: Right. Just because you graduated at the top of your class doesn’t mean you are going to be successful. What does he use as an analogy to explain that.

Participant D: The one who graduated

Participant M: The boy who graduated at the top of his class.

Participant D: He’s trying to compare that he was a rapper and the person who graduated was at the Cheesecake Factory working as a waiter. He’s saying that he was doing better than him.


(Researcher reads the chorus from Verse 2 aloud)

[Chorus]
I got a Jones like Norah for your sorror’
Bring more of them girls I’ve seen in the Aurora
Tammy, Becky, and Laura, or ‘a Shirley
I’m tryin’ to hit early, like I’m in a hurry
See, that’s how dude became the young poottie tang tippy tow
Rocafella chain, yeah that’s my Catholic style
Red and white One’s, yeah that’s my Kappa style
And I ain’t even pledge
Crack my head on the steering wheel and I ain’t even dead
If I could go through all that and still be breathing
Bitch bend over, I’m here for a reason

Researcher: This piece is filled with innuendos about college life and comparisons to his own experiences. While he idolizes some aspects of the collegiate
experience he minimizes it with sexual overtures and references to fraternities and sororities. (Researcher note:) This verse is explained to the participants because of its ambiguity in meaning. The subjects found this stanza difficult to interpret.) Let’s go back to the Notorious B.I.G. piece. Let’s talk about that a little bit.

Researcher: He talks about, “This album is dedicated...to all the teachers that told me, I’d never amount to nothin”? What is he saying here?

Participant D: Teachers thought he couldn’t do anything but he is successful now.

Researcher: Okay. But, why is he dedicating his album to them.

Participant L: Because how they doubted him when he was in school and now he’s successful.

(Researcher reads more)

[Notorious B.I.G.]
It was all a dream! - I used to read “Word Up” magazine.
Salt n’ Pepa and Heavy D up in the limousine.
Hangin’ pictures on my wall
Every Saturday Rap Attack, Mr. Magic Marley Marl (uh!)

Researcher: What’s he rhyming about?

Participant M: He’ talking about how he used to admire all the rappers and he never thought he would be that.

Researcher: What does it say about the power of hip-hop and it’s influence on him?

Participant M: It’s pretty strong.

(Researcher continues reading)

I let my tape rock ‘till my tape popped
Smokin’ weed and bamboo, sippin’ on private stock!
Way back - when I had the red and black lumberjack
With the hat to match
Remember Rappin’ Duke, duh-ha, duh-ha

Researcher: What is the association with hip-hop and drugs. Make the connection.
Participant M: That most rappers smoke weed.

Researcher: Or at least they glorify it in their music or at least we can make the connection that smoking weed and other drugs is synonymous with hip-hop culture.

Participant D: He's saying that when he smoke weed (pause)

Researcher: He's kinda glorifying it, isn't he?

(Researcher continues reading)

You never thought that Hip-Hop would take it this far!  
Now I'm in the limelight  
Cause I rhyme tight (yeeah!).  
Time to get paid,  
Blow up like the “World Trade”!

Researcher: What is BIG saying here.

Participant M: That he never thought he would make it but look at him now. He's on top and getting paid.

Researcher: Do you think that Black boys and some of your friends who listen to BIG and other rappers aspire to be like them? Because you guys have friends in school, right. You have friends in school that really want to be rappers or hip-hop mogul. What do you think about that. Do you think it's a realistic goal?

Participant M: Not really.

Researcher: Not really? Why?

Participant M: Because they may not be as good as other rappers.

Researcher: But, we see it all over the TV and videos, right? So what is this thing called hip-hop? We see it throughout the media, all over TV. Hip-hop culture is everywhere, right? What is it?

Participant M: Other people see them and want to be like them.
Researcher: Biggie, Jay-Z, and Kanye were inspired by hip-hop culture to become successful. So what do these pieces say about the influence of hip-hop culture on Black boys attitude in school?

Participant D: They don't care about school; they just care about rapping. They'll just drop out of school.

Participant M: Rap music makes them want to drop out of school and not finish school.

Researcher: But, why don’t they care about school.

Participant D: Because they want to be rappers and about ‘thug life’.

Researcher: So the association we can make is there is a close tie between hip-hop culture and Black boys attitude in school. Whether it be positive or negative it does exist? Do you think that Black boys interest in school be increased if teachers used hip-hop culture in the classroom?

Participant D: I think it would increase Black boys interest because most kids listen to rap music.

SESSION TWO ENDS
APPENDIX C

Essay: What is Hip-Hop?

You are an expert on hip-hop culture and have been invited to speak to the United States Congress. Many of the members of Congress are from an older generation and are not familiar with hip-hop culture. They are eager to know what it is about before they vote on an amendment that would increase funding for the Arts in public schools and colleges throughout the United States. It is up to you to make the case for hip-hop culture by explaining it to them.
APPENDIX D

Rap Lyrics: "So Ambitious" by Jay-Z

**JAY-Z - "So Ambitious" [feat, Pharrell]**

*[Pharrell:]*
Yeah 3 in the morning on the Westside highway, top down baby,
F*ck y'all
The motivation for me was them telling me what I couldn't be,
Oh well,

*[Jay-Z:]*
This a special dedication,
I wanna thank you for the fuel,
No really thank you,

I felt so inspired by what my teacher said,
Said I'd either be dead or be a reefer head,
Now sure if that's how adults should speak ta kids,
Especially when the only thing I did was speak in class,
I teach his ass,
   Even betters what my uncle did,
I pop my demo tape in start to beat my head,
Peaked out my eye, see if he was beating his,
He might as well say beat it kid, he's on the list,
It's like I'm searching for kicks like a sneaker head,
He gon keep pushing me until I reach the ledge,
And when I reach the ledge I'll tell em all to eat a dick,
Take a leap of faith and let my eagle wings spread,
Spread spread.

*[Chorus: Pharrell]*
Motivation for me was them telling me what I could not be,
Oh well,
I'm so ambitious,
I might hit two sisters,
Hey I'm on a mission
No matter what the conditions,
Forget the personal issues

125
Appendix D (continued)

When you been what I been through,
Hey if you believe it,
Then you could conceive it.

[Jay-Z:]
I had to lace up my boots even harder,
Father is too far away to father,
Further-more of the kids either smoke reefer,
Or either move white, there's few writers in my cipher,
So they made lighter, my type a dreams seem dumb
They said wise up, how many guys a you see making it from here,
The world don't like us, is that not clear, alright,
But I'm different, I can't base what I'm gonna be off a what everybody isn't, they don't listen, just
whispering
behind my back,
No vision, lack of ambition,
So wack!

[Chorus]

[Jay-Z:]
Had a couple of meetings no offers yet,
Maybe I ain't good enough for these offices,
Back to the drawing board ducking officers,
It's all good cause the streets is A&R'ing this,
So with or without any of your involvement,
Coming for all of this, respect my conglomerate,
I went from pauper to the President,
Every deal I ever made set precedent,
Niggas thought I'd fall without old buddy,
Oh buddy, what I do is make more money,
Dear Teacher, your probably somewhere near a speaker,
I'm balling outta control, can you hear my sneakers,
Fuck y'all,

[Chorus]

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APPENDIX E

Rap Lyrics: "Juicy" by The Notorious B.I.G.

[Intro: (Puff Daddy)]
F*ck all you hoes! Get a grip motherfucker! [beat starts]
Yeah!
This album is dedicated... to all the teachers that told me, I'd never amount to nothin'! (yeah, yeah!)
To all the people...
That lived above the buildings that I was hustlin' in front of that called the police on me when I was
Just tryna make some money to feed my daughters! (sooooo good, yeah!)
And all the niggaz in the struggle!
You know what I'm sayin'? (yeaah!)
Ha! (come on nigga!)
It's all good baby baybee!
Uh!

[Verse 1: (Puff Daddy)]
It was all a dream! - I used to read "Word Up" magazine
Salt'n'Pepa and Heavy D up in the limousine. (yeeah, yeeah!)
Hangin' pictures on my wall
Every Saturday Rap Attack, Mr. Magic Marley Marl! (uh!)
I let my tape rock 'till my tape popped
Smokin' weed and bamboo, sippin' on private stock!
Way back - when I had the red and black lumberjack
With the hat to match!
Remember Rappin' Duke, duh-ha, duh-ha
You never thought that Hip-Hop would take it this far!
Now I'm in the limelight
Cause I rhyme tight (yeaah!)
Time to get paid,
Blow up like the "World Trade"!
Born sinner!
The opposite of a winner remember when I used to eat sardines for dinner! (yeeeah!)
Peace to Ron G, Brucey B, Kid Capri
Funkmaster Flex, Lovebug Starsky! (so good!)
I'm blowin' up like you thought I would
Call the crib, same number same hood. (that's right!) - It's all good! (it's all good!)

[Bridge:]
Uh! (yeah!) - And if you don't know (uh-huh!)
Now you know, nigga. Uh! (it's all good!)

[Chorus: Female sings (Puff Daddy)]
You know very well (yeah, uh-huh!) - who you are (uh, it's all good!)
Don't let 'em hold you down, reach for the stars! (it's all good!)
Appendix E (continued)

You had a go (it's all good, nigga!) - but not that manyyyyy (yeah!) 'Cause you're the only one (yeah!) - I'll give you good and plenty. (iiiiit's all good!)

[Verse 2: (Puff Daddy)]
I made the change from a common thief (uh!)
To up close and personal (yeah!) with Robin Leach. (c'mon!)
And I'm far from cheap, I smoke skunk with my peeps all day
Spread love (yeah!) it's the Brooklyn way (spread love!)
The Moet and Alize keep me pissed! - Girls used to diss me' (yeah!)
Now they write letters 'cause they miss me! (that's right!)
I never thought it could happen, this rappin' stuff (it's all good!)
I was too used to packin' Gats and stuff! (uhh!)
Now honies play me close like butter played toast (yeah, uh-huh!)
From the Mississippi down to the East Coast!
Condos in Queens - indo for weeks (uh-huh!)
Sold out seats to hear Biggie Smalls speak! (come on!)
Livin' life without fear (uh!)
Puttin' 5 karats in my baby girl's ears!
Lunches! - Brunches - interviews by the pool (uh, yeah!)
Considered a fool 'cause I dropped out of high school!
Stereotypes of a black male misunderstood,
And it's still all good! (that's wight!)

[Bridge:]
Uh! (and it's all good!) And if you don't know,
Now you know, nigga. Uh! (yeah!)

[Chorus]

[Verse 3: (Puff Daddy)]
Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis
When I was dead broke, man I couldn't picture this. (uhhh!) 50" inch screen, money green leather sofa
Got two rides, a limousine with a chauffeur. (all goood!)
Phone bill about two G's flat (so good!)
No need to worry, my accountant handles that. (hahaa!)
And my whole crew is loungin'
Celebratin' every day, no more public housin'! (that's right!)
Thinkin' back on my one-room shack
Now my mom pimps a Ac with minks on her back.
And she loves to show me off, of course
Smiles every time my face is up in 'The Source'! (yeah, yeah!)
We used to fuss when the landlord dissed us
No heat! - Wonder why Christmas missed us!
Birthdays was the worst days
Now we sip champagne when we thirst-ay! (come on, nigga! come on!)
Uh! - Damn right I like the life I live
'Cause I went from negative to positive. (that's right!) - And it's all... (it's aaaall good, nigga!)
(It's all good.)

[Bridge:]
And if you don't know, now you know, nigga. Uh!
Appendix E (continued)

[Chorus: Bridge in the background x2]

[Outro:]
Representin' B-Town in the house!
Junior M.A.F.I.A.!
Mad Flavor!
Uh!
Uh!
Yeah!
Aight!

[Chorus]

[Outro: Puff Daddy]
Biggie Smalls!
It's all good, nigga!
Junior M.A.F.I.A.!
It's all good, nigga!
Bad Boy!
It's all good, nigga!
It's aaaall good!
That's right!
'94!
And on and on!
It's all good!

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APPENDIX F

Rap Lyrics: "School Spirit" by Kanye West

[Intro]
School spirit motherfuckers

[Chorus]
Alpha, step. Omega, step
Kappa, step. Sigma, step
Gangstas walk, pimps gon' talk
Oooh hecky naw that boy is raw
AKA, step. Delta, step
S G Rho, step. Zeta, step
Gangstas walk, pimps gon' talk
Oooh hecky naw that boy is raw

[Verse 1]
I'ma get on this TV, momma
I'ma, I'ma break shit down
I'ma make sure these light skinned niggaz
Never ever never come back in style
Told 'em I finished school, and I started my own business
They say, 'Oh you graduated?'
No, I decided I was finished
Chasin' y'all dreams and what you've got planned
Now I spit it so hot you got tanned
Back to school and I hate it there, I hate it there
Everything I want I gotta wait a year, I wait a year
This nigga graduated at the top of my class...
I went to Cheesecake, he was a motherfucking waiter there

[Chorus]

[Verse 2]
I got a Jones like Norah for your sorror'
Bring more of them girls I've seen in the Aurora
Tammy, Becky, and Laura, or'a Shirley
I'm tryin' to hit it early, like I'm in a hurry
See, that's how dude became the young poottie tang tippy tow
Rocafella chain, yeah that's my rapper style
Rosary piece, yeah that's my Catholic style
Red and white One's, yeah that's my Kappa style
And I ain't even pledge
Crack my head on the steering wheel and I ain't even dead
If I could go through all that and still be breathing
Bitch bend over, I'm here for a reason

130
Appendix F (continued)

[Chorus]

[Outro]
I feel a woo coming on, cuz. I feel a woo coming on, cuz
   WOO
   There it was
I feel some woos coming on, cuz. A couple woos coming on, cuz
   WOO, WOO
   There they was
I feel a woo coming on, cuz. I feel a woo coming on, cuz
   WOO
   There it was
A couple woos coming on, cuz. A couple woos coming on, cuz
   WOO, WOO
   There they was

All lyrics are property and copyright of their actual owners and provided for educational purposes and personal use only.
APPENDIX G

Informed Consent Letter and Form

Dear Parent/Guardian and Participant:

I am a graduate student at Clark Atlanta University, and I am conducting a study examining the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture on the Black boys’ Attitude in School. Hip-Hop culture is a new and exciting field of study, and there is little research that has examined the psychological effect it has on Black male youth. The results of this study will hopefully improve educational practice among school leaders and classroom teachers by exploring the cultural influences that effect learning outcomes for African American males. It is my understanding that you are an African American male between the ages of 14 and 19 and claim a weak, moderate, or strong association with hip-hop culture.

I am interested in measuring how the seven elements of hip-hop culture: DJing, Rapping/emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion/Style, Language, and Behavior influence your attitude in school. Before the survey is administered each participant will participate in an orientation session that explains the seven elements of hip-hop culture listed above. Afterwards, each participant will be asked to respond to a survey I have developed called the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS). The survey is a preliminary method of selection for participation in the broader study.

Aggregate and/or blind demographic data such as free/reduced lunch, median income level, education level of parent(s), and single or two parent household may be used in this study with the permission of the participating agency.

Initially, subjects will voluntary participate in an orientation session describing the purpose of the study then the IHHCAS will be administered. The survey asks you to respond to questions about your level of association with hip-hop culture and its influence on friendships, academic work, behavior, and attitude, etc. about learning in school. If you and your parent/guardian agree to participate in this study you will be one of twelve respondents. After the survey is completed each participant will be asked to participate in the primary phase of this study.

The primary phase of the study will occur over a three day period. During Day 1 of the study subjects will be asked to write a short 1-page essay using the topic: “What is Hip-Hop?” During Day 2 of the study participants will voluntarily critique rap lyrics from three prominent rap artists. Day 3 each respondent will voluntarily participate in co-generative dialogues as a culminating activity. Co-generative dialogues will be used to generate structured conversations about hip-hop culture and Day 1 and 2 activities. Participant responses will be audio recorded by the researcher, transcribed, and coded anonymously. No one will know the identity of the participants.
Appendix G (continued)

I want to stress that your participation in this study is voluntary and must be preceded by written permission from your parent/guardian. You and your parent/guardian’s signature will be required at the end of this form if you agree to participate. All efforts to protect your identity and keep the information confidential will be taken.

I have enclosed a consent form for your review. You and your parent/guardian should please read the form and feel free to contact if you have any questions about the study. If you and your parent/guardian agree to participate please sign, initial, and date the consent form and return it to me. I look forward to learning about the influence of hip-hop culture on your attitude in school. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Sanders, Jr.
Clark Atlanta University
223 James P. Brawley Drive
Atlanta, GA 30314
(404) 884-8658
Appendix G (continued)

Informed Consent Form

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the proposed procedures. It describes the procedures, benefits, risks and discomforts of the study. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. Your participation is completely voluntarily.

Purpose of Study

Hip-Hop Based Educational Research (HHBE) is a fairly new development. There is growing evidence that HHBE can benefit educational leaders and classroom teachers in helping stimulate positive student outcomes for Black male youth. However, there remains a need to understand how and why hip-hop culture is so important to attitudinal development in school age African American male youth. This study will examine the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture on Black boys' Attitude in School. More specifically, this study will focus on seven elements of hip-hop culture: DJing, Rapping/emceeing, Breakdancing, Graffiti Art, Fashion/Style, Language, and Behavior, and how the level of association with each impacts the attitudinal development of Black male youth in school.

Procedures Involved in the Study

The researcher will use the Influence of Hip-Hop Culture Attitudinal Survey (IHHCAS) as a preliminary method of selection. Afterwards, three students will be selected to participate in the broader investigation which will take place during a three day period.

Day 1: Participants will be asked to write an essay entitled: “What is Hip-Hop?”
Day 2: Participants will critique rap music lyrics from three prominent artists.
Day 3: Participants will participate in co-generative dialogues about Hip-Hop culture and Day 1 and 2 activities.

Confidentiality of Research Records

- Only the researcher has access to contact information and responses
- Your personal identifying information will only be used to contact you. The researcher will manually record all proceedings and all records will be destroyed after the study is completed. Responses will also be transcribed, coded and discussed in the study.
- After the study is completed or if you decline to participate the researcher will destroy all personal contact information by shredding it.
- Your personal responses will not be shared with anyone.
- During the study all data will be kept in a locked, secure, filing cabinet
- Your responses will be coded anonymously so no one can identify you.
Appendix G (continued)

Potential Risks and Discomforts

- No physical, social or economic risks are posed to participants
- Participating in the study will not affect your status in school

Potential Benefits

By participating in this study you will get an opportunity to provide information about how hip-hop culture can be beneficial in producing positive learning outcomes for Black male youth in public schools. This is the participant’s chance to give the research community and educational practitioners’ important feedback on matters that are important to Black boys in school. Unfortunately, the research community often overlooks the participants' perceptions and life experiences that influence their attitude. Informed Consent Form 1 in school. Your responses are highly valued and could possibly explain what makes hip-hop culture a valuable educational tool that is effective in helping increase student achievement among marginalized populations.

Voluntariness & Withdrawal from Study

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and will not affect your current status in school or result in adverse reactions from school or group home personnel. If you choose to participate in the study you may withdraw at any time.

My parent/guardian and I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand a copy of this form will be made available to me for the relevant information and phone numbers. I realize that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Participant’s Signature

Date

Parent’s Signature

Date
APPENDIX H
IRB Approval Letter

CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs

August 19, 2012

Mr. Douglas M. Sanders, Jr. <douglas.sanders@students.cau.edu>
Dept of Educational Leadership
School of Education
Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: The Influence of Hip-Hop Culture on Black boys' Attitude in School.
Principal Investigator(s): Douglas M. Sanders, Jr.
Human Subjects Code Number: HR2012-8-445-1

Dear Mr. Sanders:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your protocol and approved of it as exempt in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Your Protocol Approval Code is HR2012-8-445-1/A.

This permit will expire on August 19, 2013. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office. The CAU IRB acknowledges your timely completion of the CITI IRB Training in Protection of Human Subjects—“Social and Behavioral Sciences Track.” Your certification is valid for two years.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829.

Sincerely:

Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

cc. Office of Sponsored Programs, “Dr. Georgianna Bolden” <gbolden@cau.edu>

223 James P. Brawley Drive, S.W. * ATLANTA, GA 30314-4391 * (404) 880-8000

Formed in 1988 by consolidation of Atlanta University, 1865 and Clark College, 1869
REFERENCES


annual meeting of the American educational research association (New Orleans, LA).


