

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RAP MUSIC AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL-BEING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

by

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my mother, Gloria D. Camp, and my father, Tony L. Camp, Sr. Thank you for your guidance and support during this extremely difficult journey. I could not have made it without the support of both of you. I am proud that the both of you are my parents. Thank you mom for all of your prayers and your tremendous help and support as I progressed through the dissertation stage of my program. I would also like to dedicate this to my second family who have provided me with words of encouragement and support during my time in the program.

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Abstract

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RAP MUSIC AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS

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George Mason University, 2017

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The attitudes and perceptions of adolescents about music have been investigated by researchers and educators for years, which has implications on how they view life circumstances. This qualitative study explored the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of fourteen African American adolescents. The research setting was in a mentoring program in a major metropolitan city in the Mid-Atlantic region. The research questions for the study included: (1) What relationship does rap music have to the psychological well-being of adolescents? (2) What are the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music? (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents? (4) What type of rap music songs promote psychological support for African American adolescents?

Chapter One: Introduction

Rap music has become a popular musical genre within and outside of the United States (Mathis, 2006). Rap music gained traction within the 1970s with the song by the Sugar Hill Gang called Rapper's Delight (Cadena, 2006; Rose, 1994). With rap music's popularity, it has also become a source of controversy since its ultimate beginning (Elliot, 2005). Since its origins, rap music has been seen as the good, the bad and the ugly due to receiving good and bad reviews from the general public, leaving a continuous debate about whether it is a positive musical genre. Critics who thought that rap music was just a fad and would fade away were wrong and although it may be hard for critics to admit rap music may be here to stay (Elliot). It seems as if the more rap music is criticized, the more attention it receives from youth by influencing their interest to see the cause for controversy. Currently, youth strive to emulate the actions and behavior of their favorite artists (Mathis). Rap music is a powerful tool in the lives of youth especially the ones between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age (Lightstone, 2012). Rap music is a genre with an emphasis of expression of ideas and thoughts (Douglas et al., 1997) sampling from earlier works of music.

With the controversy surrounding rap music, critics have failed to take note of the positives relating to this musical genre (Binder, 1993). Hicks-Harper et al. (2007) completed a qualitative study of adolescents about their views of rap music. The results

from her study suggested that adolescents who incorporate rap music into their lives may feel stronger after listening to the genre and feel they can face the world (Hicks-Harper et al.). Numerous rap stars such as KRS-One, MC Lyte, Stetasonic, Kool Moe Dee, D-Nice and Public Enemy worked together to create a song called Self Destruction, which emphasized the need to stop the violence. In addition, various rap stars from the west coast such as NWA, Hammer, and Digital Underground collaborated on a song called We're All in the Same Gang to denounce violence along the west coast (Elliot). Despite these efforts to place rap music in a positive light, controversy still exists regarding the benefits of rap music.

Some critics believe that the goals of rap music are to insult women and increase sexual behavior and violence among individuals (Cromie, 1998; Tropeano, 2006). Although there are songs within rap music that consist of themes of sexual behavior and violence, there are other genres within rap music that do not consist of those themes, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2. Some critics may also believe that rap music influences disruptive behavior of African American adolescents by encouraging them to repeat the behaviors they hear and see of their favorite rap artists (Alvarez, 2012). Pertaining to rap music, some African American adolescents may exhibit the viewpoint that the genre is beneficial by giving hope that he or she can succeed despite the odds (Alvarez). In addition, rap music may provide an avenue for African American adolescents to protest about the problems within their community and bring about a feeling of connectedness with individuals who live in the community (Allen, 2005; Chang, 2005).

Adolescence is a period of time for the individual where change is inevitable and adolescents search for an identity in the world (Hadley & Yancy, 2008). Adolescents in high school face a number of stressful situations such as substance abuse, school demands and social support, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2. In some instances, these issues can lead to making unhealthy decisions that can lead to trouble in life (Higgins, 2010). During this time, adolescents may be faced with adult responsibilities earlier than expected and not have knowledge about appropriate coping strategies (Hadley & Yancy). Therefore, the situation can lead to adolescents feeling depressed and with no place to turn (Hadley & Yancy). Some appropriate coping strategies that were used by some adolescents in the past to deal with depression or stressful situations included social support in the form of mentors (Chung et al., 2007; Rhodes, Ebert, & Fischer, 1992; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer & Notaro, 2002) through peers with a similar interest (Adderley et al., 2003); participation in church activities (Berg et al., 2009); school activities (Dotterer et al., 2007) or exercise (Baskin et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2011). Without social support or the inability to complete physical activity within their community, one potential coping strategy for adolescents may be the use of rap music as therapy to cope with depression or stressful situations (Elligan, 2004; Tyson, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Given the stressful nature of adolescence including the need to belong (Adderley et al., 2003), coping with loss and depression (Tyson, 2012) or engaging in violent behavior (Higgins, 2010; Ryan et al., 2013) , some adolescents may be at risk for

dropping out of school, not achieving goals, serious injury, possible jail time, mental impairment and possibly death (Wingood et al., 2003). Some of the risky behaviors such as dropping out of school, unprotected sexual activity, drug use and engaging in illegal activities can put adolescents at risk. The results of this behavior may include substance abuse, or sexually transmitted diseases if not careful. Some underlying reasons for engagement in this type of behavior by adolescents may be their need to receive attention, feel a sense of belongingness with a specific peer group or feel good (National Institute of Drug Abuse, 2014; Knight et al.). Adolescents who engage in risky behaviors may see these activities as not being a threat to their well-being or may not understand that these type of risky behaviors can possibly produce serious consequences for their lives (Knight et al., 2015). One strategy is to educate adolescents about the long-term consequences for continuing to engage in dangerous, risky behaviors (Kim-Spoon et al., 2015; Shorey et al., 2015). There is a continuous need to adapt counseling strategies to work with adolescents (Bittman et al., 2009; Daykin et al., 2012). Often, adolescents come to therapy with health and social problems stemming from trauma, physical abuse, sexual abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, rejection, poor living arrangements and bullying (Arnull et al., 2007; Daykin et al., 2008; DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003). Other times, they may avoid receiving counseling for these situations because they may feel that there is nothing wrong with them or have issues of mistrust about the procedure (Alvarez, 2012). Therefore, they may continue to have issues that affect their well-being at home and at school. Adolescents may be encouraged to engage in unhealthy behavior from listening to rap artists talk about this in their rap songs. Without appropriate guidance and support

from a trusted adult or guardian, adolescents may think it is appropriate to engage in dangerous risky behaviors that they hear their favorite rap artists discuss in the songs (Hadley & Yancy, 2008). They may not understand that things that they hear rap artists talk about in their songs are not meant to be repeated and may be emphasized for shock value and to sell records. They also may not understand that the behaviors can lead to dangerous outcomes in life (Wingood et al.).

In addition, adolescents may present with learning disabilities and poor grades in school (Anderson & Overy, 2010). Times may be so difficult that adolescents may feel that they have no knowledge of how to cope with circumstances, which may lead to depression and possibly suicide. Depression is a major health issue for adolescents of all races, and it is believed that 15%-30% of adolescents will experience some form of depression (Duncan et al., 2012), which may lead to suicide if it is not treated. For teenagers, this is a serious cause for concern because suicide is the third leading cause of death for African American adolescents between the ages of 14 and 24 (American Association of Suicidology, 2008). Individuals may not understand that they can bounce back from unfortunate situations and still succeed in life (Masten, 1994). Moreover, they may not know that there are appropriate coping strategies available such as physical activity (Kelly et al., 2011), social support (Rhodes, Ebert & Fischer, 1992), or participation in school activity (Dotterer et al., 2007). For some adolescents, rap music listening may be a coping strategy for dealing with stressful situations. Also, rap music listening may be a strategy to help adolescents not to be depressed and become energized.

This study will explore how and whether rap music is a coping strategy for depression for adolescents.

Through the period of adolescence, teenagers will have to tackle daily stressors such as the fear of not belonging to a group, academic achievement and parental and peer support (Clark et al., 2012). It can be especially be tough on African American adolescents who may experience the additional daily stressor of perceived racial discrimination (Irvin, 2012; Seaton et al., 2012; & Tynes et al., 2012). African American adolescents may begin to progress through life issues and look at rap artists from inner cities as their role models who have struggled if they do not have good social support from important figures in their lives (Williams, 2006). It is during this time that adolescents need an environment that encourages social support and appropriate coping strategies to deal with stressors (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2012).

Stressors within the life of adolescents such as struggling with peer relationships (Clark et al., 2012) or witnessing violence or being the victim of violence within their community (Higgins, 2010; Ryan et al., 2013) may form the basis of rap music lyrics or poetry for individuals. Rapper, Actor, Director and Producer, Ice Cube, former member of NWA, once reported that he “raps about things that he has witnessed or heard in his community” (Yo MTV Raps, 1991). Numerous rappers may agree with this statement because they are reporting that they are just informing others about situations in their life and the strategies they used to cope with them. Therefore, these situations helped them to be the individual that they are now. Also, Chuck D reported that “rap music is the CNN of the black community” because it reports top stories in the community (Douglas et al.,

1997). In the eyes of Chuck D and Ice Cube, rapping was an activity that can help them express their thoughts and emotions freely and appropriately without using inappropriate strategies such as violence. Rap music may be proactive in helping teenagers to cope with daily stressors and improve psychological well-being (Elligan, 2004; Tyson, 2002).

Background of the Study

The ecological systems theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) was used as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory is based on the idea that the children's environment can have a significant impact on their way of thinking and living. It considers that situations or events influence the behavior and actions of individuals whether the situations or events occur directly or indirectly. It could range from activities such as things your family has done, your friend or peer has said to you, or something you heard on the radio or television relating to your environment. The theory will be further explained in Chapter 2, Literature Review.

The ecological systems theory has great potential to explain how youth are influenced in their daily living. The environment of adolescents provides models in which situations and events influence actions and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Rap music was created as a form of music to express situations that take place within their environment (Elliot, 2005), but it is possible that the genre is controlling the teenager's mind more than the parents in the household (Mathis, 2006). The degree of influence of rap music on adolescent behavior is a controversial issue within the United States. It is controversial because critics believe that the genre of music is connected to adolescents' engagement in risky behavior such as substance abuse, increased sexual behavior which

possibly leads to unplanned pregnancies and violent behavior such as beating up another person for no reason, getting a gun to shoot someone for being disrespectful or talking to your significant other, or stealing to get money to purchase a popular brand (Ball, 2011; Cundiff, 2013; Wingood et al., 2003). In addition, critics believed that the genre places inappropriate thoughts in the mind of girls that it is okay to seek inappropriate attention from boys (Wingood et al.). With boys, critics believed it encourages them not to be intelligent to belong to a peer group or engage in bad behavior to be liked by girls (Cundiff). Adolescence is a period in life in which developmental and intellectual changes occur in the lives of children. Some predominant issues include the transition from childhood to adulthood, exploration, independence and intellectual growth (Hendricks & Bradley, 2005). These events may lead to poor self-esteem and irrational thinking and depression. Teenagers who may lack the social support necessary to move through life may “live vicariously through the words of their favorite rap artist” (Mathis, 2006, p. 2). Adolescents may deal with so much stressors that they are not able to perform well in school (Scott, 2011).

Although the musical genre has its critics, it also has some supporters as well especially among adolescents. Supporters of the rap music genre say that not all of rap music is a negative influence on adolescent behavior, but it is just the music they play on the radio (Ball, 2011). There are rap artists within the genre who do not use vulgar language, but radio stations fail to play their music (Ball). Artists hold honesty in high regard, so are they being honest about how life is and how to cope with life’s stressors (Rose, 2008). Moreover, supporters of rap music may feel that some songs express using

positive strategies to deal with difficulties (Shakur, 1995). One example of this is the song, Glory by Common and John Legend, which emphasized the use of nonviolent means to protest equality regardless of age (Lynn & Stephens, 2015). The song also did not consist of vulgar language, won numerous awards for Best Original Song and received frequent airplay on radio stations (Frydenlund, 2015; Rutherford, 2015). Pertaining to music being played on the radio stations, a more, strict examination is needed to determine the type of songs that can receive airplay on the radio (Ball).

The music currently heard on the radio is determined by an organization called the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and the role of the FCC is to monitor material displayed on television and radio. In this role, the FCC has failed miserably to make sure that the images of black individuals on the air are mostly positive (Ball). Pastor Delman L. Coates, Pastor of Mt. Ennon Baptist Church in Clinton, Maryland created the *Enough is Enough Campaign* to address the need for companies and organizations to promote more positive black images and stop promoting negative images and material of African American individuals through nonviolent protests (Rose). The primary purpose was to show that current African American images on television and material heard on the radio can influence and promote inappropriate behavior (Rose). Youth are the primary audience of rap and hip-hop and always influenced by the media (Ball, 2011; Elkouby, 2013).

Adolescents are influenced through numerous avenues such as music, television, peer, family and friends on a daily basis (Teen Pressure, 2004; Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Committee on the Science of Adolescence, 2011) and the

ecological systems theory stated that individuals are influenced within the environment in direct and indirect ways (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Some behaviors that adolescents may emulate may cause them to get hurt (Crosby et al., 2012; Myers, 2012) or possibly arrested (Higgins, 2010). Rap music can play a direct or indirect role in teenagers' lives. Adolescents listen to an average of 10,000 hours of rap music in a year (The Cleveland Report, 2006). In school, many adolescents can recite the lyrics of their favorite rap artists, but may not perform well academically in school (George, 1998). During the period of adolescence, professionals and adults should become proactive to what teenagers listen to and their reasons. (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2012). The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. It is important that counselors and other human service professionals recognize that adolescents listen to some form of music on a daily basis. Rap music could open doors for counselors and other human service professionals to enter the world of today's youth. Why rap music? Rap music is considered to be a useful tool to communicate thoughts about issues taking place within the world (Kitwana, 2002). Porter (2006) reported that children who often listen to negative themes on the radio or see negative images on television on a daily basis will engage in destructive behaviors. Numerous rap songs that are being played on the radio and viewed on television have detrimental impacts to African American youth (Porter). On the other hand, youth who receive praise and listen to music with positive themes are likely to engage in positive and healthy behavior (Porter).

What is unclear is the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. Research focuses on adolescents of diverse backgrounds, but not simply African American adolescents (Elliot, 2005; Lightstone, 2012; Porter, 2006; Tropeano, 2006). What purpose does rap serve in the lives of African American adolescents in the study and what types of rap music do they listen to and enjoy listening to? The goals of this study were to address the following questions:

- (1) What is the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents?
- (2) What are the attitudes and perceptions of African American adolescents about rap music?
- (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents?
- (4) Which type of rap music songs promote psychological support for African American adolescents?

Operational Definition of Terms

The present study frequently used terms and these were the following definition of the terms.

Rap Music- A musical genre that became popular in the 1970s in New York City with individuals talking while the beat is going.

New School Rap Music- The type of rap music that focuses heavily on beats with inappropriate themes.

Old School Rap Music- The type of rap music that arrived on the scene before 2000 with little inappropriate themes.

Psychological Well-Being- The way that individuals make judgment about their lives, whether they feel at peace with self or if they think they handled a situation appropriately. For example, do they feel at peace with self? Do they feel proud about how they handled the situation or how the situation turned out?

Adolescence- Participants between the ages of 14 and 17.

African American- A person who is mainly or partially of African descent who lives or is born in the United States of America.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This review of literature encompasses the theoretical framework for the study, existing literature related to the use of rap music as an approach to work with adolescents and its effects on the psychological well-being of adolescents. Literature was identified using African American adolescents and well-being, and rap music and adolescent behavior. A review of the counseling literature produced research about the therapeutic uses of rap music. This literature review includes research about the numerous coping strategies used to manage stress and its effects on the lives of African American adolescents.

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the first chapter, the behavior and actions of children are influenced by direct and indirect factors in their environment. The model that Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed consists of circles of situations, individuals and contacts that may play a role in the development of children. The first circle of influence is known as the microsystem, which represents the environment in which the individual lives (Pomerantz, Grolnick & Price, 2005). This environment includes the individual's family, peers, school and neighborhood. The second circle of influence is known as the mesosystem, which referred to the connections between experiences and events. This environment involves the connection between family relations and school relations;

school relations to church relations and family relations to peer relations (Pomerantz, Grolnick & Price). The third circle of influence is known as the exosystem, which consisted of settings that do not directly have anything to do with your life. It may include the parents' perceptions of the way their day at work went, which could influence their behavior at home. The next circle of influence is known as the macrosystem, which is the culture surrounded by the individual (Pomerantz, Grolnick & Price, 2005). It could be a low-income, middle-income or high-income neighborhood. Moreover, the chronosystem is the circle of influence that helps individuals deal with transition. A transition could mean moving from one neighborhood to another and going from one school to another school. With students moving to new environment, it is essential that human service professionals are mindful about who students are, their strengths and their likes and dislikes. "Most professionals who work in the school system are able to identify the types of music that they listened to when they were children and can identify how the music influenced who they are and how they see the world" (Lum, 2008, p. 140). These factors may help to explain the reasons that individuals act or behave in the manner that they do.

With the research relating to the impacts of the environment on individual actions and behavior, there is an increase need for youth to identify and use appropriate coping mechanism when there is an unfortunate situation due to issues affecting their ability to function appropriately inside and outside of the classroom. If situations are too serious, there may be a need for individuals to seek counseling. It has been found that "forty-seven percent of youth report a background of physical and sexual abuse" (Delivering

Healthcare to the Homeless, 2003). One of the goals for youth is for them to begin to open up and trust the therapeutic process (Koffman et al., 2009). When youth engage in inappropriate behavior in school, they are placed in either in-school or out-of-school suspension for a period of time (Anyon et al., 2014; Hannon, DeFina, & Bruch, 2013; McElderry & Cheng, 2014). For suspensions and expulsions, African American youth comprise over 30% of school suspensions in 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2000; McElderry & Cheng, 2014). African American youth are suspended from school at a higher rate when compared to white youth (Anyon et al., 2014; Belgrave & Brevard, 2015; McElderry & Cheng). When the suspension is over, the youth may continue to engage in the particular inappropriate behavior, which can possibly lead to expulsion, have to repeat a grade based on the number of times suspended from school, and possibly lead to involvement in the juvenile justice system for repeated offenses (Hannon, DeFina, & Bruch, 2013; Skiba et al., 2002). In contrast, youth also may not understand the reason for engaging in the behavior and possess low self-esteem and lack the knowledge of resources available for emotional and behavioral support (Koffman et al.; Reyes et al., 2013). If youth continue to engage in disruptive behavior inside and outside of school, they can run the risk of possibly getting into serious trouble and suffering serious consequences (McCormick et al., 2013). Youth who may engage in traditional approaches to therapy such as Reality Therapy or Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy may be opposed to the process because the idea of simply talking to someone they do not know may be an issue or the idea that someone is giving them advice about something that they never experienced in their lifetime (Wells & Heilbron, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the

stage of adolescence is a tough period for individuals who are slowly transitioning from childhood to adulthood.

Adolescence is a time period that could possibly be marked with depression and suicidal ideation (Pisani et al., 2012) and the use of numerous coping strategies to overcome life's obstacles. Adolescence can be a time of mixed emotions because adolescents want to be accepted by others and may end up engaging in behaviors that they see others engaging in with the end goal of being liked (Elligan, 2004). Also, it is a time where they want to be successful in spite of the consequences (Koffman et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important to understand the coping mechanisms that they use with the goal of being successful inside and outside of school (Koffman et al.). The belief that he or she is not successful and happy inside or outside of school can lead to feelings of hopelessness, poor view of self, inability to think rationally and may lead to having suicidal thoughts (Greger et al., 2015). A common method used by adolescents to deal with displeasure in their lives is committing suicide (American Association of Suicidology, 2014; Cui et al., 2010; Pisani et al., 2012), which is often discussed by professionals in the mental health field. One of the strategies that could be used by adolescents who are depressed and possess suicidal ideation is communicating with adults they trust or a mental health professional (Pisani et al.). For mental health services, the possibility exists that adolescents have irrational thoughts and beliefs about the usefulness of mental health professional services and have an unwillingness to seek the resources (Santiago & Wadsworth, 2009). Therefore, adolescents who may be "seriously depressed or possess mortal thoughts may seek solace in the form of drugs and

alcohol (Pisani et al.) or seek support from individuals (Voisin et al., 2011). In spite of the circumstances that take place in the stage of adolescence, it is important for them to know that when “they fall down, they can get back up again” (McClurkin, 2000).

Resiliency and Youth

In daily life, it is important for adolescents to learn that they can bounce back from negative outcomes in their lives. Resiliency is the ability for individuals to handle stress and possess the ability to recover rapidly from stressors (Masten, 1994; Ungar, 2004). The foundation of the resiliency theory was created through research of children raised by mothers who were diagnosed with schizophrenia (Masten et al., 1990). The study showed that even though children were raised by mothers who were diagnosed as schizophrenic, they were able to be successful in school and in life similar to those children who were raised by parents not diagnosed as schizophrenic (Masten et al.). In spite of the obstacles that children may have to endure in life, some children may not show any overt signs of problematic behavior connected to the diagnosis (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Two models were described by Zimmerman et al. that highlighted the success of mentors through resiliency theory. The first model is the compensatory model of resiliency, which highlighted that positive and healthy things within an adolescent’s life may compensate for chances of being diagnosed with the disorder. The model clarified that the adolescent may interact with individuals who use drugs and alcohol, but he or she may not use drugs or alcohol due to participation in numerous healthy leisure activities. The second model was known as the protective factor model, which theorized that some external influences may change the dynamics

between the possibility of diagnosis of a disorder and the final result. Through the creation of the model, it was discovered that high parental support eased the influence of adolescents' friends to engage in dangerous and unhealthy behaviors. Peers can serve as a positive or negative influence on adolescent behavior (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998), which is the foundation for another theory known as the socialization theory. According to Zimmerman et al. (2002), the socialization theory hypothesized that peer pressure can encourage adolescents to engage in dangerous and unhealthy behavior. In one study, the communication between peers about the benefits of drinking alcohol influenced others to drink alcohol because they wanted to be associated with them (Ennett & Bauman, 1991). Zimmerman et al. explored the role of mentors in the lives of urban adolescents and discovered that the adolescents who had a mentor in their lives reported they did not engage in inappropriate behavior outside of school, were likely not to abuse drugs or experience depression. It was recommended that parents should develop good relationships with their children with the goal that they do not engage in dangerous and unhealthy behavior (Hurt et al., 2013) regardless of the cultural background.

Family and Social Issues Related to African American Adolescents and Psychological Well-Being

In the African American culture, it is often instilled into youth that the things that take place at home stays in the home (Roberts et al., 2005). Therefore, youth may feel that they have to hide their emotions. Parental influence and mentoring programs have received attention with the goal of reducing problematic behavior of adolescents. Supportive parenting had a degree of influence in the lives of African American

adolescents in increasing academic achievement and competence (Prelow et al., 2007; Bryant & Zimmerman, 2003). Adolescents who felt a sense of belongingness at school and at home were likely to feel competent and do well in their environment (Prelow et al., 2007).

The Struggles of African Americans

Some historical events that may have led to the unfortunate situations of African Americans include slavery, segregation and discrimination (Hine et al., 2000). Although this may create disagreement among historians, one result of slavery was the fragmented family structure of African Americans. Once slavery was abolished, members of the family may have been missing or separated from original family. With slavery abolished, individuals believed that things would turn around and the races would happily co-exist, but this turned out to be incorrect and possibly made matters worse. In order to address this situation, politicians came up with the idea of segregation where things were to be separate but equal, but African Americans were “forced to attend schools that were not in great condition, have books that were in poor condition and outdated and slowed down any success that they can have in life” (Winfrey, 2013, p. 1). Then, a period known as the Great Migration emerged.

The Great Migration took place and some African Americans moved from the South to areas in the North and West in the United States with very little job prospects and separation from the majority culture. Some of these problems faced by African Americans today may be caused by the results of slavery and segregation. Some issues may be high school dropout rates, mis-education and the need to take care of family so

they can survive (Gibbs et al., 2013). There are some alarming rates among African Americans when it comes to education. Nationally, African American males have over 40% chance of dropping out of high school and in some cities; the statistic may be higher than 40% (Winfrey). In addition, African Americans account for over 30% of school suspensions and expulsions when they only make up about 20% of the school population (Winfrey). Furthermore, African Americans are placed in special education at a higher rate than white adolescents and have a lower rate of being in honors classes (Winfrey). With low job prospects, some African Americans may feel the need to earn money by any means necessary even if it means breaking the law. This event leads to about 66% of African American males appearing in criminal justice system (Gibbs et al., 2013), African American males going to prison, not going to college, and being away from family for long periods of time (Winfrey, 2013).

Scott (2012) stated that “the biggest enemy of poor and oppressed communities is a conservative political ideology that has been around for a long time, but beginning to be championed by one specific political party” (p. 3). Scott continued by emphasizing that this party is headed by individuals who spend the day telling negative jokes about African Americans. The motto for this party is to “do whatever they can to keep the power and remain in power” (p. 3). This motto continues to be in play and affects minorities today (Scott). In order to address the injustice taking place to minorities, rappers started to voice their thoughts and concerns within their rap songs beginning in the early 1980s.

Linkage Between Rap Music and the Struggles of African Americans

Rap music started to clash with politics beginning in the 1980s when rappers such as Melle Mel, Public Enemy and NWA criticized numerous political figures for trying to keep the balance of power for wealthy individuals (Scott). New York rapper, Sista Souljah (1992) made clear that racism was present, but people thought she lost her mind when she pointed it out to them in the song, Final Solution. This statement was made clear when Conservative commentator, Bill Bennett, who is a big opponent of rap music, specified in the 2000s that “you could abort every black baby in this country and your crime rate would go down” (Faler, 2005, p. 1). Chicago rapper, Kanye West (2013) would go on to echo the same response of Sister Souljah in his song, New Slaves, that racism exists within society and the recording industry with rappers who do not understand their recording contract, but offered luxury items to encourage them to sign to their label.

The comparison of rap music to slavery is a reference that is used to highlight the state of the rap music industry. Meadows-Ingram (1999) reported that southern rappers, Eightball and MJG made a video in 1999 that showed how rap artists were being taken advantage of by record executives with money. In an interview at New York University’s Institute for African American Affairs, Tricia Rose, author of *Black Noise* and *Hip Hop Wars*, emphasized that slavery was about “the control and exchange of black bodies in a capitalist system and although the physical impact of slavery on African-Americans no longer exists, it is still being felt psychologically and financially from members of the dominant culture (Meadows-Ingram). The process of the music

industry is the “distributor profits from all sales free from any real risk and artists who were not successful in selling their music must still pay money to their label when they begin recording new material for an upcoming album” (p. 2). Some of the money that must be repaid includes money for production and promotion of music. Thus, rap artists and members of their family are impacted psychologically and financially when their records do not perform well (Meadows-Ingram).

Another connection to slavery from rap music is the use of literary language in the lyrics of artists. The uses of metaphors in the songs are used to emphasize things that are taken place within the environment (The Round Table of Hip Hop, 2009). During slavery, slaves would sing and create songs that appeared not to pose problems on the surface with owners, but consisted of hidden meanings or messages in the songs such as instructions on how to become free (The Round Table of Hip Hop). Today, rap artists use metaphors in their songs to talk about things such as how the government may be taken advantage of the poor, drug use, violence or crimes committed by individuals.

Then, there is the topic of snitching among rap artists. Snitching is the form of telling a person of authority or peer about illegal or unhealthy behavior that occurs (Schorn, 2009). In the past, “when slaves snitched on other slaves, the worst case scenario of the slaves who told about bad behavior was loneliness and isolation from other slaves” (p. 3). However, slaves who informed others about bad behavior of the master may receive a beating (The Round Table of Hip-Hop). Individuals who are caught snitching can risk physical or psychological harm to themselves and possibly family members.

African American Family as a Cultural Phenomenon

Family environment is another obstacle for African American youth. Problem behaviors are associated with marijuana use and delinquency for males, but psychological distress for females includes anxiety and depression (Salem et al.). African Americans have had to deal with significant circumstances to survive and succeed within their environment and this trend continues today.

When the Great Migration emerged, economic growth in the North created a population boom of African American families in northern cities of the United States (Wilson, 2003). The thought behind this phenomenon was that cities provided a better opportunity for them to succeed and make a better living for themselves (Wilson). Better living included being able to attend schools, churches and create businesses and organizations led by minority individuals (Wilson). Also, minority groups felt that living together in urban areas would reduce the issue of racism (Wilson). In later years, a recession took place and created unemployment which severely impacted African American households.

A theory behind the poverty in urban areas were technological advances and employment shifts (Wilson). The increases in unemployment and single-parent households within the urban areas were alleged to have created poor urban neighborhoods (Wilson). Other causes in the rise of poor urban neighborhoods were the migration of middle and upper class residents into other locales and decrease in interaction with individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds. One bright spot was the fact

that African Americans were working, but working in low-paying jobs that made it a struggle to support the needs of their family.

The 1990s was marked with struggle within African American urban communities and family members were unable to support the needs of their family (Wilson).

Joblessness within the urban areas during the 1990s was worse because family members were without work while African Americans were poor but worked between the 1950s and 1970s (Wilson). The result of joblessness helped to create issues within the African American urban community such as crime, welfare and mental health services (Wilson). Living in urban areas can present problems with depression for African American adolescents (Ball et al., 2003; Forehand et al., 2000) with findings that adolescent girls were more susceptible to experiencing mental health issues than adolescent boys (Peterson, Sarigiani & Kennedy, 1991). To address some of these issues, Saulsberry et al. (2013) created a program known as the Chicago Urban Resiliency Building (CURB) that addressed the effects that depression may play on the behavior of adolescents and examined the influence that peers and family play in the life of the African American adolescent. Results were not reported about the benefits of the program, but a strength that was noted was the program's effectiveness, which will make it easier for the clinician to intervene in a crisis situation when adolescents are going through a state of depression.

The lack of parental involvement and family connection are two situations that may lead to gang affiliation of African American adolescents. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) created a theory of juvenile delinquency, which stated that the lack of impulse

control due to parental failures to adequately raise their children leads to juvenile delinquency. Delinquency was also related to increased stress. Schmeelk-Cone et al. (2003) sampled 421 African American adolescents in a longitudinal study of school dropout and drug use and found that early delinquency was connected to higher levels of psychological distress. They also found that parental support decreased the levels of stress among African American adolescents. With parental monitoring, African American parents reported that they tended to closely supervise and create more rules with girls as compared to boys (Pettit et al., 2001) and created more rules as well with girls (Varner & Mandara, 2013). Another study examined differences between African American parents living in an urban and a rural community and found parents living in the urban community closely monitored their children more than parents living in a rural community (Armistead et al., 2002). Yet, the study found that parental supervision and support were found to protect African American teenagers from engaging in dangerous and unhealthy behavior.

When experiencing disagreements with teenagers, African American middle class parents stated that the disagreement with boys were about the completion of school projects and homework (Smetana & Gaines, 1999), while they tended to disagree with their daughters about who they can date or have a relationship (Cauce et al., 1996). Punishment was used more with boys than girls (Smetana & Gaines). Both boys and girls reported receiving the same levels maternal support (Cauce et al.).

It is not uncommon for African American single parents to have support from others in raising their children. For parental support, the majority of African American

mothers who are single may seek support from their significant other with whom they share the child rearing responsibilities (Parent et al., 2013). Some may consider the child's biological fathers and others may consider close friends or relatives (Parent et al.). When parents or close relatives are not available to raise their children, the older siblings may be asked to take an active role in supervising children and not realize that if they engage in unhealthy behavior, the younger siblings will likely follow the same behavior (Dyson, 2001; Hopps et al., 2009; Pomery et al., 2005). This theory was based on Bandura's (1979) social learning theory which emphasized that individuals learn through watching and imitating behaviors of others.

Family plays a role in adolescents engaging in unhealthy sexual behavior (Oster, 2008). Beh and Diamond (2006) reported that almost all of adolescents have engaged in some form of sexual activity within their lives and may not be educated about protecting themselves from sexually transmitted diseases or pregnancy. Therefore, family members should take the time to educate them about the dangers of unprotected sexual activity.

Teenage Pregnancy

Moreover, teenage pregnancy among African American adolescents is higher when compared to other ethnic backgrounds (CDCP, 2015). Nationally, the majority of the teen pregnancies in the United States alone were considered unplanned pregnancies (Weiss, 2013). Unplanned pregnancies were considered to be engaging in sexual behavior without protection and without the expectation of bringing a child into the world (Afable-Munsuz et al., 2006). Afable-Munsuz did a study that looked at African American women (including adolescents) from New Orleans at a prenatal clinic, which

provided free prenatal care service. The study found that participants perceived pregnancy as an opportunity to be loved by someone and to establish goals of what they want to do with their lives.

Crosby et al. (2002) explored African American adolescent females' perception of condom use to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Adolescents were randomly placed into one of two groups, a 16 hour program with the theme of the importance of engaging in safe sexual methods and health awareness and the other group was a 4 hour group on three Saturdays in a row to also discuss safe sex and health awareness (Crosby et al.). The results showed that African American female adolescents who were pregnant were not likely to use condoms in comparison to non-pregnant females, and over 20% of participants in the study were diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (Crosby et al.). Abstinence from sexual activity was found to be the safest approach to prevent an unplanned pregnancy (Umar, 2004).

The goal of programs that support abstinence from sex until marriage is to encourage adolescents to work on achieving their objectives and promoting health awareness. A program called Recapturing the Vision is a program that encourages youth to possess confidence in their decision to wait until marriage to engage in sexual behavior (Umar). Another program based in Arizona known as the Pima Youth Partnership emphasized the importance of abstinence to adolescents (Umar). The programs emphasize the importance of achieving one's goals to prevent unwanted pregnancy and the derailment of planned goals. Having a child can create stress especially on a teenager if he or she is not properly prepared and able to tackle the stressors that come along with

this situation (Umar). Some rap songs played on urban radio stations expose listeners to degrading sexual lyrics and can lead adolescents to engage in unprotected sexual behavior and possibly lead to female pregnancy if not careful (Primack et al., 2008).

Substance Abuse

With some of the rap songs being played on the radio, adolescents may hear about some drug and alcohol references and may not understand the consequences of using of certain types of drugs. Clark et al. (2008) theorized that the abuse of substances is more detrimental for African Americans in comparison to other ethnic groups. Myers (2013) conducted a study to explore the risk factors for substance abuse among African Americans in rural communities, collecting data from a rural county in Georgia. Some of the risk factors for rural African American adolescent substance abuse included having relationships with individuals who don't make good choices relating to drugs and alcohol and reaching the middle and late stage of adolescence and having plans not to continue education after high school (Myers). In contrast, the protective factors for not engaging in substance abuse included constant supervision by trusted adults and understanding the consequences of substance abuse (Myers).

Substance abuse is a common occurrence with adolescents in rural communities (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). A prevention program was created to address problems related to substance abuse and HIV with rural adolescents (Brown & Wells, 2006). The study took place in Florida with mentors and twenty-one adolescents participating in the study. Participants reported that the program was useful in identifying resources available in the area for substance abuse and HIV and how peers

can discourage engagement in dangerous and unhealthy behavior that is oftentimes done (Brown & Wells, 2006). In addition, adolescents reported that their main reason for engaging in dangerous and unhealthy behavior was to feel a sense of belonging (Brown & Wells). A shortcoming in this study was that the study consisted of students of diverse ethnic backgrounds, but the results can apply for African American adolescents as well.

Hurt et al. (2013) organized a follow-up study that collected data from adolescents who participated in the Strong African American Families Program. In order for youth to participate, adolescents had to attend at least four educational sessions and achieve a score of 50 or higher on a scale that targeted alcohol use and parenting behavior. Parents who participated in the program took part in the study. Parents reported that they regretted not paying close attention to their children who were experimenting with dangerous substances. In contrast, adolescents who engaged in substance abuse reported that dangerous substances were easily accessible in their neighborhood through neighbors or a close family member. It was recommended that parents should develop good relationships with their children with the goal that they do not engage in substance abuse and make sure that they have good social support.

Social Support and Well-Being

Relationships play a huge role in the development of adolescents (Adderley et al., 2003; Erikson, 1968). Adderley et al.'s study found that adolescents joined the school band to be a part of a group and make friends with similar interests (Adderley et al.). The band also helped to increase confidence and self-esteem of adolescents (Adderley et al.). Participation in a school band can possibly provide an avenue for adolescents to do

something that takes their mind away from the stressors and redirecting their energy onto something positive and socially stimulating.

Researchers have found that mentors can be helpful in the lives of adolescents (Miranda-Chan et al., 2016; Liang et al., 2013; Schwartz et al., 2013; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). Adolescents have reported that they had to thank their mentors for helping them to get through the struggles of adolescence. (Schwartz et al.). Some examples of mentors have included teachers, counselors from the Boys and Girls Club, counselors from school, neighbors or church leaders who influences the mentee to achieve positive goals and move in the right direction in life (Miranda-Chan et al.). In a study, African American mothers reported that their children experienced less stress and heartache as a result of having a mentor in their lives in comparison to children who did not have a mentor (Rhodes et al., 1992). Twenty-three emerging adults participated in a qualitative study to share role models and mentors instilled positive motivation within the youth population (Bowers et al., 2016). Teaching and sharing of personal experiences were the two approaches commonly used by mentors to guide and motivate them (Bowers et al.; Liang et al.; Miranda-Chan et al.). A wealth of knowledge and support were also noted as essential features of a good mentoring relationship (Chung et al., 2007). In Steen and Bemak's (2008) study with at-risk adolescents, it was found that at-risk adolescents desired the ability to be heard and be able to express thoughts and concerns freely.

When individuals do not possess social support, adolescents may turn to the internet as an alternative (Mesch & Talmud, 2010; Dolev-Cohen & Barak, 2012).

Through the internet, adolescents may connect with others through Skype or Facebook (Rainie, Purcell, & Smith, 2011). Instant messaging is becoming a common approach for adolescents with the goal of seeking assistance for their emotional needs (Dolev-Cohen & Barak; 2012). The benefits of instant messaging include not having to give personal information, but enhancing the individuals' writing skills. The use of instant messaging with adolescents who were and were not in distressed was examined and the results showed that it produced a positive change in well-being and reduced feeling of loneliness (Dolev-Cohen & Barak). Pea et al. (2012) created an online survey to explore the connection between social well-being and the daily usage of social media by girls that included music listening and video viewing and social well-being was social success and feelings of acceptance. A total of 3,461 girls between the ages of eight and twelve years of age completed the online survey. When exploring the relationship between the two variables, the results indicated that negative social well-being was positively associated with uses of media without the emphasis of social connection with others. Another alternative was the use of individual counseling (Kolbert, Crothers & Field, 2013). Through counseling, family counselors can use the Bowen family systems approach, which shows the adolescent how their behavior is being influenced by relationship with immediate family members (Bowen, 1978).

Church and School Activities and Well-Being

Research has shown that religion and participation in church activities was related to lower rates of engagement in substance abuse and stress (Billy et al., 1994; Donahue & Benson, 1995; Evans et al., 1995; Williams, 2006). Ball et al. (2003) sought to examine

the relationship between religion and adjustment among African American female urban adolescents in a study consisting of 492 African American female adolescents.

Participants were requested to complete scales in self-esteem, religion and well-being (Ball et al.). The study showed that adolescent females who attended church on a weekly basis engaged in low levels of sexual activity and exhibited high self-esteem (Ball et al.). Berg et al. (2009) also discovered that adolescents who did not attend church were likely to engage in smoking and have poor work habits in school. The results were obtained from an urban adolescent center in the mid-west (Berg et al.) also finding that adolescents were likely to smoke if parents disapproved of the activity and exhibit depressive symptoms.

Finn (1989) created a model called the participation-identification model, which theorized that graduation from high school is connected to the amount of time adolescents spend on daily constructive activities at school. Dotterer et al. (2007) explored the connection through research on African American middle and high school students. Phone interviews took place between the researchers, parents and their children. The study not only looked at academic extracurricular activities, but also sports activities in which the adolescents were engaged in on a daily basis. At the end of the study, the results showed how important it was for adolescents to participate in after-school activities due to its relationship to positive self-esteem in school when compared to adolescents who attended school and did not participate in after-school activities. Participation in after-school activities also led to the development of friendships with

other adolescents. When individuals are not involved in extracurricular activities in their leisure time, they can engage in a form of physical activity.

Physical Activity and Well-Being

Physical activity is an important activity among adolescents who have a goal to live a healthy life into adulthood (Kelly et al., 2011). Statistics showed that over 23 million children and adolescents in the United States struggle with obesity (Baskin et al., 2013). Moreover, the lack of exercise among adolescents has been linked to poor mental health and well-being (Kelly et al., 2011). With the goal of knowledge about services for physical health, Talleyrand (2010) recommended the creation of health workshops that targeted the African American population.

Adolescents who had a body mass index over the 95th percentile were eligible to participate in a study to measure the relationship between physical activity and psychosocial functioning (Kelly et al., 2011). Participants were between 11 and 18 years of age. Physical activities took place on the campus of a university in the southeastern portion of the United States. Well-being was measured using a depression inventory. Kelly et al.'s (2011) research study showed that engaging in high physical activity was associated with an increase in social interaction and positive view of self. This study looked at both White and African American adolescents and consisted of predominantly females.

Baskin et al.'s (2013) study looked at African American adolescents who lived in the southern portion of the United States with 116 individuals between the ages of 12 and 16. This study found that adolescents did not engage in physical activity if they thought

the neighborhood was not safe, and most of the physical activities were completed during the week. Consistent with Kelly et al.'s (2011) study, physical activity was connected to increase in social functioning and a positive view of self (Baskin et al.). Both studies explored the importance of physical activity.

The goal of Gamble et al.'s (2009) study was to explore factors that affected the relationship between physical activity and obesity among adolescents. The study investigated the importance of consistent family values regarding physical activity and effectiveness in physical activity when eating healthier foods. The researchers found that the individuals' belief in the importance of healthy eating and physical activity were predictors of success in weight loss and highlighted the importance of family support when it comes to exercise and healthy eating.

Findings from Duncan et al. (2012) study indicated the importance of physical activity to reduce depressive symptoms. Data were collected from 371 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 in the North-Western portion of the United States. For youth with elevated depressive symptoms, gender and strong social support was linked to the increase in physical activity. With the numerous coping mechanisms available, individuals were found to have a particular coping style when faced with unfortunate circumstances.

Coping Styles of Adolescents

Numerous studies examined the coping styles of adolescents when faced with negative circumstances. In one study, Rudolph and Hammen (1999) discovered that adolescent females experience more stress connected to problems with other people in

comparison to boys, but adolescent males experience more stress if they engage in delinquent behavior. In contrast, Connor-Smith (2000) reported that there are two coping styles, voluntary and involuntary coping styles based on the Responses to Stress Model. A voluntary coping style is when an individual takes on the stressor. Some examples may include effective decision-making and expressing thoughts or feelings about the situation (Connor-Smith). In contrast, an involuntary coping style is when the individual avoids or denies the stressor. The use of coping strategies such as social support and changing irrational thoughts had a positive impact in reducing depression symptoms among adolescents (Sandler et al., 2000). Rogers and Holmbeck's (1997) discovered that social support had a negative impact on depression among adolescents dealing with conflict with parents. Avoidance of conflict as a coping strategy has been reported to worsen results for adolescents coping with life stressors (Wadsworth, 2015), but some research has shown that avoiding conflict is helpful when the conflict is with a family member (O'Brien et al., 1995).

A stressor for some adolescents who live in an urban area may be exposure to violence (Council of Children & Families, 2010). The experience of witnessing violent behavior can lead to some disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (Osofsky, Wewers, Hann & Fick, 1993), inappropriate, disruptive behavior at school or in the neighborhood (Tolan & Gorman-Smith, 2003), or abuse of drugs (Dorsman, 1998). Rudolph and Hammen (1999) discovered that adolescent females experience more stress connected to problems with other people in comparison to boys, but adolescent males experience more stress if they engage in delinquent behavior. In recent years, the use of

drama has been used as a therapeutic approach to educate adolescents about issues that can potentially impair their development (Gilk, Nowak, Valente, Sapsis & Martin, 2002). Allen and Solomon (2012) used educational entertainment to help adolescents process their experience with witnessing violence in their neighborhood. A play was used to educate adolescents about the negative impact that drugs have on the body (Stephenson & Iannone, 2006). Results showed that the use of approaches familiar to adolescents allows them to learn skills and showed that drama was an effective approach for adolescents to learn about health issues. Moreover, previous findings on the influence of music demonstrated that music helps adolescents to relax, instill cognitive empathy and cope with daily stressors (Lozon & Bensimon, 2014; McFerran & Saarikallio, 2014), which may indicate the possibility of rap music helping African American adolescents to cope with daily stressors in their lives.

Bullying and Criminal Behavior on Well-Being

Bullying is an act by individuals who use intimidation or other forms of aggressive behavior against someone who may lack power or ability to defend themselves (Olweus, 1993). Although the degree of bullying may decrease once adolescents enter high school, bullying via Facebook may arise (Bradshaw et al., 2007). The effects of bullying can lead to deadly violence. Statistics show that over 20% of youth have been victims of bullying and almost 6% reported possessing a deadly weapon during the previous year (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System of 2011, 2012). A study that looked at African American youth showed that experiencing bullying behavior led them to be more aggressive and engage in criminal behavior (Higgins, 2010), but

further studies are needed to see if it leads to joining gangs for protection purposes (Bradshaw et al.). The lack of educational goals in high school and beyond, high suspension rates from school and engaging in criminal behavior may play roles in adolescents making the decision to join gangs (Hill et al., 2012). However, research shows that it was possible for youth who engage in the act of bullying to join gangs (Fletcher et al., 2004), and engage in substance abuse to ward off feelings of neglect or depression (O'Brennan et al., 2009). Bradshaw et al. conducted a study at fifty-two high schools in the state of Maryland to uncover the role that students play in bullying and its connection to unhealthy and dangerous behavior. Over 16,000 students participated in the study consisting of African American and Caucasian students finding that there was a positive relationship between bullying and illegal behavior among African American males. It was also found that adolescents who are victims or perpetrators of bullying have difficulty expressing emotions in an appropriate manner.

Ryan et al. (2013) analyzed whether adolescents who were victims of child abuse and neglect were likely to engage in repeated criminal behavior in spite of the consequences faced in Washington State. Records such as child welfare records, arrest records and delinquency records were obtained via a data sharing agreement. The data sharing agreement suspended the issue of confidentiality of youth records in the State of Washington between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2009. The study consisted of over 250,000 adolescents with an ethnic background of African American, Hispanic, White, Asian, and American Indian (Ryan et al.). The goal of the study was to examine family relationships to see if it played a role in repeated criminal behavior by adolescents.

The results showed that adolescents who were involved in gangs and abused substances had a higher likelihood of committing a crime in comparison to adolescents who were heavily supervised by a trusted adult (Ryan et al.). “Open neglect cases at the time of arrest were at an increased risk of repeated criminal behavior and closed neglect cases with child welfare were at no greater risk of repeated criminal behavior compared with juvenile offenders without a history of neglect” (p. 460). So, is it possible that there is a connection between music listening and criminal behavior?

Impact of Music

Music and Well-Being

There is no doubt that music has an important role in the lives of adolescents (Wells & Hakanen, 1991). A teenager’s preference for a certain genre of music may be associated with certain levels of behavior, but researchers continue to study the association between music and violent behavior (Council of Communications and Youth, 2009). What is clear is that adolescents use music to gain control of their emotions (Council of Communications and Youth). Female adolescents are more likely to listen to music for emotional support than male adolescents (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Saarikallio, 2006). In contrast, male adolescents are more likely to seek music as support to gain energy or express themselves in a positive manner and not resort to violence (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009). Adolescents have learned to use music to regulate anger, but it is unclear whether they use it to modify mood (American Academy of Pediatrics). In contrast, the results of the study showed that adolescents’ start to use numerous coping strategies beginning at the age of fifteen and continue to use

the strategies that are effective in their way of living (Saarikallio). In this process, music can be an effective therapeutic activity. The results were also similar with youth between the ages of 11 and 16 who were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Rickson, 2006) finding that adolescents who received music therapy treatment experienced improvements in restless behavior and hyperactivity upon completion of treatment.

North and Hargreaves (2000) explored the impact of music on pro-social behavior in a health club and discovered that members of the health club were likely to engage in helping behavior if the music being played was positive and uplifting. Greitemeyer (2009) conducted four studies to answer the question of whether pro-social songs increased helping behavior and task completion among first-year college students in the United Kingdom, Germany and Sussex. Participants who listened to pro-social music were able to remain focused on completing tasks and engaged in helping behavior.

Similarly, researchers have explored the effects of music on memory. Martin and Metha (1997) organized a study that explored the effects of music on helping individuals remember childhood activities. Music influenced the number of happy memories that individuals recalled from their life. Bouhuys et al. (1995) reported that participants in his study who heard a sad song recalled situations when they were depressed or felt rejected.

Music therapy has been viewed as an effective approach to increase self-empowerment (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003). The music can be therapeutic for individuals by helping them to relax and be calm (Schafer et al., 2013). Hadley and Yancy (2008) reported that music is the type of approach that can be used to express self

when words are not enough or does not convey the actual meaning. A study conducted by Gooding and Mori-Inoue (2011) consisted of fifty-one music therapy students from a university who listened to or watched the Rascal Flats, What Hurts the Most with the goal to address the topic of grieving the loss of a loved one. There were no significant differences between the audio and visual group with regards to how they felt about the song and members of both groups identified the song as an appropriate song to address the loss of a loved one (Gooding & Mori-Inoue). Thomas (2011) added that it is not unusual for children to use music and writing to express themselves when they may feel uncomfortable sharing thoughts or information with parents. Dalton and Krout (2006) conducted a pilot study on using song creation to help adolescents through the process of grieving the loss of a loved one. Pre-test and a post-test analyses were used with the use of the Grief Processing Scale to measure any differences before and after the music therapy intervention. Participants were between the ages of 12 and 18 and chosen based on the recent loss of a loved one. It was requested that students create songs that expressed their thoughts about the person they missed. Scores on the Grief Processing Scale improved at the time of therapy termination and enjoyed the process of creating songs about their loved one. The use of music as a therapeutic approach can create dialogue between the adolescent and the adult about the song. It can serve as a therapeutic alternative when interacting with children when talking simply is not enough.

Rap Music

Rap Music Adolescent Listeners

Although rap music listeners vary based on ethnic background, African American adolescents have stated that they connect to the genre of music (Iwamoto et al., 2007). Ross (1994) stated that rap music has been considered as the first form of African American music to push the envelope of what is considered appropriate or controversial. Consequently, African American adolescent rap listeners connect their way of thinking and living by listening to rap music and being a part of the hip hop culture (Elligan, 2004). Numerous studies support the connection that African Americans feel when listening to rap music and how it gives them a sense of belonging or feeling as if they are understood (Brown, 2006; DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Dyson, 2001; Hakvoort, 2015; Kitwana, 2002; Tyson, 2002). DeCarlo and Hockman reported that formation of identity and increases in self-esteem play a major role in development among African American adolescents.

Certain questions arise with critics of rap music (Kircheimer, 2003). One question is “what is the reason for the listening of secular rap music?” Some findings from previous research suggested that the genre of rap music gives adolescent listeners a feeling of belonging while rap artists feel that they have an open outlet to express themselves about the conditions of where they come from (Dyson, 2001; Rose, 2008). In the world of rap music, an artist who has been a victim of violence, witness violence, possess a criminal record and possess a rags to riches story is popular with adolescents (Hadley & Yancy, 2012; Laiho, 2004; North & Hargreaves, 2000). When listening to

popular mainstream rap artists, the African American adolescent may discover that he or she is not alone in experiencing similar conditions as the artist (Hadley & Yancy; Kobin & Tyson, 2007).

Often, African American adolescent rap listeners understand the language being used by rap artists in the songs (Alim & Pennycook, 2007; Dyson, 2001). Terms such as “chopper,” “hot boys,” or “Magnolia” tend to be familiar to residents of New Orleans and surrounding communities and represent the fact that different cities in the United States create their own terms or sayings (Alim & Pennycook).

During adolescence, African American teenagers want to feel as if they are a part of something. In contrast, rap music plays a significant role in the lives of African American adolescents, but differently (Dyson, 2001; Elligan, 2004). The factors that may determine how much of a role may be determined by how much of a role that the parents play in their lives, whether they are from a rural or urban community and school (Brown, 2006; Sue, 2006). So, how did we arrive to this point with rap music?

Brief History of Rap Music

Rap music started to gain momentum in the late 1960s and early 1970s in New York City (Elligan). The Last Poets were making rap music in the late 1960s with an emphasis of educating black individuals, but was not popular among fans (Hadley & Yancy, 2008). One of the founding members of The Last Poets, Jalal Nuriddin, also known as Lightnin’ Rod, released an album called “Hustlers’ Convention” and was popular with spoken word fans (Wiggs, 2007). The Last Poets were one of the first rap groups who used spoken word with instrumental music and paved the way for artists such

as Gang Starr, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul and others to combine spoken word with jazz (Wiggs). The Last Poets are considered to be one of the “godfathers of hip hop” (Assembler, 2011). At this time, disco music started to lose its flavor and individuals were looking for strategies to “get the party going” (Hadley & Yancy). As a result, DJ Kool Herc and DJ Hollywood came up with an idea to “get the party going” by taking records out and spinning them on a turntable at clubs and parties (George, 1998). Some rap historians have considered DJ Kool Herc and DJ Hollywood as the creators of rap music (George, 1998; Rose, 2008). In 1979, producer Sylvia Robinson would produce what is known as the first platinum rap song called “Rapper’s Delight” by the Sugar Hill Gang (Rhodes, 1993; Rose). The song was rapped over a beat from the song, “Good Times” by Chic (Rose). In addition, there was an artist named Afrika Bambaata, who was a former gang member, who was known mostly as a DJ who would spin records on the turntable (Hager, 1984). Bambaata’s ultimate goal was to bring diverse cultures together through his music and this could be heard in his records during this era (Rhodes). These three events were responsible for helping rap music gain traction.

In the 1980s, rap music was not only used to “get the party going,” but it was also used to report on issues that took place in urban areas (Chang, 2005). This “Message” was made clear by Grandmaster Flash whose goal with this song was to report to listeners about what was taking place in the urban areas (Elligan, 2004). Another song produced by Sylvia Robinson was a hit called Whites Lines (Don’t Do It) by Grandmaster Flash and Melle Mel (Rhodes). The goal of the song was to discourage individuals from using drugs (Elligan; Hadley & Yancy, 2012). These songs helped to pave the way for artists

such as N.W.A, Ice-T, Public Enemy, and others who expressed what was happening in these areas (Rose). In the mid-1980s, Run DMC became popular with the song, “Walk This Way,” which combined elements of pop, rock, and rap (George, 1998). With rap music becoming popular, MTV created the idea of having a show that played nothing but rap music called “Yo, MTV Raps.” This show helped known rappers and up and coming rappers to receive attention for their music (Rose). This was also the time that gangsta rap started gaining momentum in the world with its violent and profanity-laced lyrics. Gangsta rap became controversial for its themes and content, but boosted record sales of rap music because of the curiosity of individuals (Rose). Another portion of rap that became popular was a technique called sampling (Hager, 1984). Sampling was a technique in which artists would take the beat from another individual’s song and create a rap song (Hager; Elligan; Rose). This situation led to the creation of copyright laws to ease the use of taking another artist’s beat without the permission of its owner (Rose).

An ongoing myth about rap music is that only African-Americans can rap. This is further from the truth because Bob Dylan (1965) rapped on his song called “Subterranean Homesick Blues”. In addition, Henry and Stein (1981) rapped on a song called “Rapture.” Pomeroy (1982) wrote a song for the Beastie Boys with their first rap album entitled “Cooky Puss.” Currently, Detroit rapper, Eminem is considered one of the most known non-African American rap artist to be in the rap music genre (Elligan).

Moreover, it was also a myth that females could not rap. In the mid-1980s, Salt-N-Pepa was the first female rap band and released the song, “The Show Stoppa,” which

was a major success (Elligan). The success of Salt-N-Pepa paved the way for other female artists such as Queen Latifah, Monie Love, Lil' Kim, and Foxy Brown (Elligan).

One major trend in the 2000s changed the rap game. The arrival of Hispanic-Americans expanded the genre to consist of Latino influences, which increased the popularity of reggaeton music (Ilich, 2017). This genre consisted of artists such as Daddy Yankee and N.O.R.E (Ilich). Another important development was the emergence of Conscious Rap, which consisted of artists such as Common, Talib Kweli, B.O.B and Lupe Fiasco (Elligan). Rap music has come a long way from being a simple form of expression in the 1970s to currently being a multi-billion dollar industry (Elligan). It also has changed from being music with a theme of partying to themes of empowerment, violence, coping with death, sex, and establishing peace. From the 1970s to the 1990s, rap songs were heard only intermittently on the radio and seen on television to being played on the radio and seen on television heavily on a daily basis (George, 1998; Rhodes, 1993; Rose, 2008). Rap music is now the most popular form of music to be heard on the radio and seen on television (Elligan; Hadley & Yancy, 2012). With rap music's popularity and diverse styles, it became necessary to separate the numerous genres of rap music into categories (Elligan, 2004).

The Categories of Rap Music

There are 6 types of rap music. With the 6 types of rap music, it can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint the type of genre that the artist is rapping in because it can change from time to time. At one moment, Nas can create a positive rap song and then make a gangsta rap song in another moment. At the same time, the average individual can not

compare the type of rap that LeCrae makes to what Kevin Gates makes, it is different and that is the essence of rap music. It is about embracing the differences and identifying those differences via categories. The first category within rap music, which can arguably be the most commonly heard rap music on the radio today is sexual rap.

Sexual Rap

Mathis (2005) reported about rap music genre known as sexual rap. Sexual rap is a rap music genre with an emphasis of sexual behavior. Some rap artists that engage in this genre include Lil' Wayne, Drake, French Montana, Nicki Minaj, Lil' Kim, Plies, Ty Dolla Sign, YG and Rick Ross. Often, the message in sexual rap is to boast about the sexual escapades of the particular artist. Most of these artists fail to mention the importance of using protection before engaging in this behavior (Miranda & Claes, 2004) when it is important to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

Positive Rap

The purpose of positive rap is to promote positive messages within the rap songs (Elligan). Positive rap could promote family values, healthy eating, keeping it real, being creative, or falling in love. Artists who engage in positive rap include A Tribe Called Quest, Will Smith, Lauryn Hill, The Roots, Bahamadia, Dignable Planets, Hammer, Black Eyed Peas and Childish Gambino. Positive rap does not receive as much attention as gangsta rap and materialistic rap, which will be discussed below (Elligan). Some songs in this genre include Cool Like That by Dignable Planets in 1992, and Just the Two of Us by Will Smith in 1998 (Elligan).

Political Rap

Similar to positive rap, there is political rap which is about promoting positive messages, but taking a political stance on issues. Elligan wrote that political rap was “created from the music of Gil Scott Heron and the Last Poets in the late 1970s and early 1980s” (p. 39). The popularity of political rap came in the 1980s with KRS’s Stop the Violence Movement group in 1986, Public Enemy’s message to Fight the Power in 1989, and Sister Souljah’s message to blacks that we are at war in 1989. Elligan wrote that political rap highlights the importance of rap music being educational by rapping about topics that have never been explored. Some rappers have mentioned that the rap game is not what it used to be because it only focuses on obtaining wealth and being a gangsta (Kubrin, 2005). Yes, most political rappers speak out about issues affecting today’s culture and are known for their political views within their songs. Common discussed this situation on the song, “I Used to Love Her” off the CD, Can I Borrow a Dollar (1992).

Spiritual Rap

Then, there is spiritual rap that highlights the importance of religion and spirituality. Spiritual rap combines elements of rap music with gospel music to attract youth listeners (Elligan, 2004). An artist who has managed to incorporate gospel music with rap music is Kirk Franklin. Pastor and artist Kirk Franklin made headlines in the late 1990s when he had a song called “Stomp” and “it featured Salt of Salt N’ Pepa” (1996). Joseph Simmons, who is better known as Run/Rev. Run, left Run DMC to devote time to God, but put out a spiritual rap CD entitled Distortion in 2005 (Rose,

2008). Some rappers created songs in the spiritual rap genre such as DMX, Common, Bone Thugs N' Harmony and P. Diddy (Elligan).

The most common forms of rap that are being heard on the radio include gangsta rap, materialistic rap and sexual rap.

Gangsta Rap

Gangsta rap is rap music that discusses topics such as violence, and crime (George, 1998). Some of the artists that engage in this genre include NWA, Snoop Dogg, Meek Mill, Young Jeezy, YG, Rick Ross and 50 Cent. Gangsta rap was created in low-income communities that are affected by higher rates of violence, death, poverty, low self-esteem and lack of access to resources in comparison to high-income communities (George). Elligan (2004) reported that gangsta rap received widespread attention in the 1990s with some events such as the Rodney King beating by Los Angeles police, the release of Ice T's song Cop Killer, the rise and the fall of Suge Knight's Death Row Record Company, the introduction of the Parental Advisory Explicit Lyrics label and the death of 2 Pac and the Notorious BIG.

Materialistic Rap

Elligan explained that there is rap that focuses on materials and wealth called materialistic rap. Rappers known in the genre include Nicki Minaj, Kanye West, Lil' Wayne, Rick Ross, 2 Chainz, Kirko Bangz, Cashin' Out and Jay-Z. Most rappers engage in materialistic rap to express the items they possess and how they currently live. Some people claim that materialistic rap is much easier to listen to than gangsta rap because it is not glorifying violence (Elligan). With rap music emphasizing the goal of becoming rich

by whatever means necessary, it conveys to children that you will not be hip if you don't wear the best clothes or speak the language and possibly lower self-esteem in some children (Berry, 1990). Most of these artists who engage in materialistic rap fail to mention that they obtain the wealth through hard work (Elligan).

With the numerous genres within rap music, it is difficult for critics to say that every genre in rap music possesses themes of sex and violence within music. Critics would be correct if they mentioned that gangsta rap, materialistic rap and sexual rap are the only forms of rap they hear on the radio and it consisted of inappropriate themes for children (Council on Communications and Media, 2009), but not all of rap music. Rap music is a diverse genre of music and adolescents of diverse backgrounds listen to the genre (Binder, 1993; Mathis, 2006; Elligan; Lightstone, 2012; Hicks-Harper et al.). It remains a question of how rap music affects the well-being of African American adolescents and the kind of purpose it serves in the lives of teenagers. Although rap music is being heard on the radio and seen on television, what role is it playing regarding the well-being of individuals?

Rap Music and Well-Being

Rap music has been around for over 40 years and it has positive and negative features that must be explored. Robertson (2002) wrote a book entitled *Natural Prozac* where he emphasized that music can alter the brain and influence music selection choices when progressing through troubling situations in life. Rap music appears to be an effective form of expression.

Therapy using rap music is beginning to receive attention. DeCarlo and Hockman (2003) organized a study to compare the effectiveness of rap therapy with cognitive-behavioral therapy with 21 adolescents in a mid-western city. The results of the study showed that participants view rap therapy favorably when topics of anger management and impulse control were being discussed in sessions. Tyson (2002) conducted a qualitative pilot study that examined the advantages of using rap music when counseling youth. Members approved of the use of rap music in group counseling sessions to process emotions and feelings of youth (Tyson).

Evans (2010) completed a case study of a 13-year old boy diagnosed with conduct disorder and rap music was used as an approach to build a relationship with the client and to examine behavioral difficulties. The client was referred for treatment because of his disruptive behavior in the classroom and at home. In a follow-up, the client's mother reported that the client was getting better by improving academically and not being as disruptive at school prior to treatment. The client's mother also reported that the client found the sessions to be useful to express his anger.

Anger and anxiety were two issues explored using rap therapy in a juvenile detention center with ten adolescents (Ierardi & Jenkins, 2012). When rap therapy was used as the approach, adolescents had feelings of confidence and a reduction of vulnerability because they were able to express their thoughts and emotions in a song and in a safe environment. Furthermore, rap music was shown to help adolescents express emotions relating to the loss of a friend or members of their family (Ahmadi & Oosthuizen, 2008). Within the group session, some of the activities included listening to

rap songs, learning how to play instruments and the creation of rap songs. Following the therapy sessions, the group members shared that they were able to discuss freely issues that impacted their lives and the sense of anger and sadness felt because their loved ones let them down through the avenue of rap music.

In order to measure the relationship between hip hop exposure and perceptions and school outcomes, 351 African American and Latino adolescents were recruited for a study (Tyson et al., 2012). The participants were primarily female students. School outcomes were measured by obtaining school records of the students' previous year final GPA and the number of times they were suspended from school. Students were also requested to complete the RAP scale and questions relating to the amount of time they spent listening to rap music. The results of the study showed that there was no relationship between grades and listening to misogynistic lyrics, but there was a relationship between high scores on the RAP empowerment scale and school attendance.

Despite the limited research on the effectiveness of rap music, some artists in the genre have produced content that is not about sex and violence, and have not received positive attention for this act. One of the strategies used by the media is to play only songs that emphasize the misogynistic and violent nature of rap music (Douglas et al., 1997). Dyson (2001) has praised the musical genre for its form of expression about the issues surrounding the African American community and society. Positive lyrics and themes can be found in rap music that is performed by artists that individuals enjoy, but may go unrecognized by critics (Tyson, 2002). Rap artists discussed the importance that the mother played in their life (Oware, 2011). Kanye West rapped on "Hey Mama" that

he was proud of his mother and strived to protect her from harm. The song comes from Kanye's CD, *Late Registration* (West & Leace, 2005). Miami rapper, Rick Ross wrote a song called "I'm Only Human", which described that his mother worked three jobs to make sure he was taken care of as a child. *I'm Only Human* was taken from Rick Ross' CD, *Trilla* (Ross, 2008). On the CD, *The Carter III*, New Orleans rapper, Lil' Wayne talked about confronting the individual who mistreated his mother on the song "Playing With Fire." Tupac also paid tribute to his mother on the song, *Dear Mama* off of his CD, *Me Against the World* (Dyson, 2001).

Moreover, rappers emphasized that they are about taking care of their children. Atlanta based rapper Young Jeezy wrote that he was not proud of his children wanting expensive items, but does what he can to see to it that they have the finer things in life on "My President" from the *Recession* (2008) CD. St. Louis rapper, Nelly rapped that my children know that I love them on "Die for You" from the *Suit* (2004) CD.

Owens (2011) discovered that some rap artists expressed positive views about marriage. Compton rapper, The Game expressed appreciation of his wife for coming to visit him while he was in prison on the song, *Don't Worry*, which was taken from *The Documentary* (2005) CD. Another rapper that expressed positive views about marriage was Nas. Nas released the song, *Getting Married*, which comes off his *Street Disciple* (2004) CD visualizes getting married. The song was close to Nas' heart because he got married at the time that the CD was recorded, but now he and his wife are divorced. Rappers emphasized the importance of being a good father to their children and adored their mothers for the hardships they had to face raising them on their own.

Although the use of rap music has been viewed to be an effective approach to working with adolescents (Tyson, 2002), rap music is also being viewed as music that has destroyed the values of what is right and wrong that influence pro-social behavior (Brown, 2006). Research supports the claim that rap influences youth behavior (Kirchheimer, 2003). Wingood et al. (2003) conducted a study on African American female teenagers of their degree of exposure to rap videos and whether it influenced unhealthy behavior. They found that African American female teenagers who were heavily exposed to rap videos were likely to engage in unhealthy behavior such as use of alcohol, drugs and unprotected sexual behavior. Litman (1997) also found that adolescent males who listened to violent themes in rap music engaged in aggressive behavior while playing table hockey. Gender differences were noted when the effects of sexual rap music was explored related to adolescent behavior finding that males were not influenced to behave in an inappropriate sexual manner when listening to the music, while females were offended by the lyrics and felt influenced to engage in inappropriate sexual behavior (McLean, 1997). Some artists emphasize that they are just “keeping it real” about what is going on in today’s society (Ogbar, 2010). It is not questionable that rap music has created a buzz among adolescents and programs have been created to capitalize on its success among adolescents to help them improve in life.

Programs and Organizations That Promote Knowledge Using Rap Music

Numerous programs have been created with the goal of educating youth through rap music. In order to educate youth about HIV and substance abuse, an after-school program known as H2P was created outside Washington DC (Hicks-Harper et al., 2007)

and individuals were trained as H2P instructors. Another program based out of San Francisco used rap music to prevent youth from engaging in a life of crime (Clay, 2006). Moreover, Haaken, Wallin-Ruschman and Patange (2011) organized a hip-hop program called Moving to the Beat (M2B) where youth learned about topics of poverty and AIDS and were able to express their views through writing and music. Cella et al. (1992) organized a smoking prevention program that used rap music as an approach to teach elementary school children about the health risks associated with smoking. During evaluation, students reported that they enjoyed the sessions because of its use of rap music to talk about the hazardous effects of smoking. Gordon (2011) reported that Flocabulary, a rap duo that creates academic CDs using rap music, organized a program in the early 2000s entitled The Word Up Project with the assistance of the Educational Research Institute of America. Students were accepted into this program based on grades and previous results on practice reading tests. In one of the studies, over 1,200 middle school students from schools in the mid-west participated in this project where rap music was used to educate students on vocabulary words and the development of reading comprehension skills. Numerous examinations were given to students twice a month to measure progress of students. Furthermore, students were required to take state tests after completion of the program to help build vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. The results of the study showed that students who used the program improved their vocabulary skills and performed better on the state reading tests (Gordon). A gap in these programs is that qualitative interviews were not available to show the effectiveness

and benefits of these programs. Surprisingly, some programs and foundations have been created or led by rap artists who may be known for inappropriate themes in their music.

Rap Artists Who Use Fame to Promote Society and Community Needs

A positive aspect of rap music is that the rappers are able to give back to the community and educate others about the importance of succeeding in life. Some rap artists have used their business knowledge, along with the enormous possibilities of rap music to advocate and support community causes (Bozza, 2001). One example is that Dr. Dre donated \$1 million to the World Trade Center Relief Fund (Rose, 2008). Also, Jermaine Dupri helped to create Hip Hop for Humanity, which was a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families who lost loved ones in the September 11th attacks (Rose). Another instance of the good that rap artists do for their community is when St. Louis rapper, Chingy created the Chingy for Change whose goal is to send students to college who don't have enough money (Rose). He also takes the time to visit schools to rap to the children that there is a way to succeed and not engage in a life of crime. Moreover, Atlanta rapper Ludacris created the Ludacris Foundation with the goal to encourage children to never forget about the individuals who helped them to succeed beyond their wildest dreams (Rose). The act of giving back is a powerful activity within the black community and can be traced back to times of segregation where members raised money with the goal of improving conditions within their neighborhood (Rose). The reason for the highly publicized activity with the African American community was to make it known that there was a lack of equality to access resources available that support and promote employment, financial aid and food assistance (Rose).

Conclusion

African American adolescents learn how to survive through activities that take place in the home and their surrounding community. The environment can consist of violence, healthy relationships with family and neighbors, or substance abuse. Whatever the case, these incidents help to form the identities of African American adolescents. In addition, they may help to explain the function of rap music in the lives of African American adolescents and the possible need for using the genre as a coping mechanism.

Listeners of rap music may see themselves as having obstacles to overcome to succeed in life. When listening to rap music, individuals may feel empowered, a part of the popular crowd and intelligent because they are learning from someone who has been through what they have and how to survive in the struggle. Also, rap music may help African American adolescents to feel energized or be entertained. The present study seeks to add to the literature about the relationship between rap music on the well-being of adolescents specifically its role in the lives of African American adolescents. Some gaps in the literature is the very few research studies available on the relationship between rap music on African American adolescents and their well-being, and qualitative or quantitative results about their perceptions of rap music. The studies also focus on urban African American adolescents. Few studies were available that focused on the type of rap music that they listen to if they frequently listen to the musical genre. Therefore, the present study seeks to explore the perception of African American adolescents about rap music and the following chapter will expound upon the methodology used to obtain the results.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Questions

This study asked four questions concerning rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. For the quantitative portion of the study, there were two research questions: (1) What relationship does rap music have to the well-being of adolescents? and (2) What is the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music? The qualitative approach consisted of two additional research questions: (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents in this study; and (4) What type of rap music songs promote psychological support for African American adolescents?

Method

Participants

The total number of participants in the study was 14 individuals. The participants in the study ranged in age from 14 to 17. The age group was chosen because the variances of opinions concerning rap music among adolescents may be smaller due to their age, but large enough to possibly form a significant relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of adolescents. Two participants were excluded from the study for not meeting the appropriate age requirements. The study consisted of African American male and female students from an urban area in the Mid-Atlantic

region(8 females and 6 males). Participants who identified themselves as African on the demographic questionnaire were eligible to participate in the study. The study took place during a fourteen month period and individual interview sessions lasted between one to two hours. Pseudonyms were used in place of real names to protect participants' identities. The participants' pseudonyms were Chris, Nelson, Tamar, Sadie, Erica, Tim, Jamilah, Kevin, Shannon, Mariah, Tika, Shomari, Tanya and Khamani.

Sampling Procedure

Purposeful sampling was used in this study. Purposeful sampling is the type of sampling used when the sample possesses important information and it can be useful to explain a phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling also consists of a specific population to be studied (Patton). In this study, the phenomenon that was studied was rap music and the specific population was African American adolescents. In addition, snowball sampling was used in which the Program Director suggested students within the program who may be eligible and willing to participate in the study.

Setting

The study took place at a non-profit; community-based mentoring organization within a major metropolitan city in the Mid-Atlantic region. The goal of the program was to keep youth engaged in school and out of trouble. The program was created in 2004 with ten students in an after-school program devoted to acting and theater. The program consisted of forty-five high school students. Through the program, individuals developed leadership skills, advocacy and life skills through mentoring and peer relationships to prepare for life after high school. Over eighty percent of students in this program have

graduated from high school with a diploma in four years in comparison to the city-wide average of 63% and the average graduation rate of 45% at their schools (Unchained Talent Fact Sheet, 2014). Eighty percent of teenagers who were in this program and did not graduate from high school made the choice to work and earn a GED, or return to high school to earn a diploma (Unchained Talent Fact Sheet). Students in the program met for three hours Monday through Friday in a safe environment where they freely expressed themselves and their passions. The program taught students to express themselves through art but also taught discipline and literacy.

Measures

The following three instruments were employed in the study for the purpose of finding out the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents.

Perceptions and Attitudes About Rap Music

The Rap Music Attitudes and Perceptions (RAP) Scale (Tyson, 2007) was “an 18-item self-report instrument that measures the attitudes and perceptions of youth about rap music, with each items presented in a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree)” (Tyson, 2007, p. 215). The RAP Scale yielded responses in these areas: seven items measuring empowerment (“Some rap music can uplift and empower people”), seven items related to violent-misogynistic content (“Most rap music suggests that women are just for male sexual satisfaction”), and four items about artistic-esthetic content (“Most rappers have creative intelligence, reflected in their ability to rap”). When the RAP scale was used for a previous study, the

internal consistency was .90. The internal consistency reliability was conducted using a convenient sample of 605 young college students. A score between 0 and 22 on the scales meant that the individual has an unfavorable view of rap music, a score between 23 and 44 means the individual does not exactly like or dislike rap music, and a score between 45 and 68 meant the individual has positive beliefs about rap music. A copy of the scale is available in the Appendices (see Appendix C).

Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale

The Well-Being Manifestation Measure (WBMMS) Scale (Masse et al., 1998) was “a 25-item self-report instrument that measured psychological well-being. Masse et al. found an overall Cronbach’s alpha of .93 for the questionnaire and the subscales ranged in reliability between .71 and .85. The scale originally was tailored to the elderly population, but the scaled was shortened by the creators to be suited to the adolescent population and to reduce completion time of the scale. The scale consisted of five items pertaining to happiness (“I felt that others loved me and appreciated me”), five items concerned self-esteem (“I had self-confidence”), five items were about mental balance (“I felt emotionally balanced”), five items dealt with sociability (“I got along well with everyone around me”), five items were about social involvement (“I was curious and interested in all sorts of things), and five questions measured sense of control of self and events (“I was able to face difficult situations in a positive way). A copy of the scale is available in the Appendices (see Appendix D).

Interview Protocol

The interview questions were partially derived from Tyson's (2007) Rap Music Attitudes and Perceptions Scale and modified by the lead researcher in this study (see Appendix D) based on the desire to know the detailed reasons that they listened to rap music and its benefits in their lives. Also, the interviews were semi-structured and the purpose was to explore the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. The interview process was guided by open-ended questions that led to the thoughts of adolescents about rap music. Participants' responses about rap music was probed by the interviewer with the goal of encouraging detailed responses of adolescents on their perception and meaning of rap music. The kinds of question asked included (e.g. "What are your personal feelings about rap music" and "Can you think about a time when rap music has been helpful or not helpful for you?") (see Appendix D). There were questions about demographics (see Appendix B). Prior to completion of the interview, the researcher read from a script to recruit participants for the study (see Appendix E).

Procedure

Various methods were used to recruit participants in the mentoring program. This program meets with students once a week for two hours after school in which the Program Director and staff of the program meet and work with the teenagers throughout the school year. The mentoring program sessions took place at the organization which is based within the community of the major metropolitan city in the Mid-Atlantic. The researcher met with the Program Director and was allowed to make a presentation to the

group of students in the mentoring program (see Appendix F). The mentoring sessions took place one day out of the week at the organization.

During the speech to the parents and students at the organization, they were informed that the teenagers were required to complete a scale on their thoughts of rap music and a scale that measured their sense of happiness and social skills. In addition, the researcher explained that the two interview sessions would last for 1-2 hours sessions and the researcher asked participants a series of questions about their thoughts of rap music. Following the speech about the study, parents and students were given assent and consent forms to be taken home for them to complete and return prior to their teenager participating in study on rap music. It was explained that individuals who were not between the ages of 14 and 17 and did not identify themselves as African American were not eligible for this study because the study was about African American adolescents between the ages of 14 and 17. Furthermore, the researcher informed the students that the interviews were going to be taped and they can withdraw from the study or discontinue their participation in the study at any time without any penalty. Participant information and their responses were kept confidential. Casual letters about the study were distributed to the students. Participants received a \$10 gift card for their participation in the study.

Prior to the start of each interview session, the researcher explained to participants that the sessions were going to be taped. The information discussed in sessions were kept confidential. The researcher gave participants blank name plates and markers for them to write their first name or name they would like to be called during the sessions and the

name they placed on scales. Next, the participants were given a demographics questionnaire designed by the researcher, the Rap Music Attitudes and Perceptions Scale and the Well-Being Manifestation Scale. Once the questionnaires were completed, they were placed in a brown envelope. The interviews were recorded via the Sony digital recorder and the recorder was also placed in the brown envelope. The brown envelope was placed in my book bag, which were zipped up and placed in the front of me during the interview where I was the only one to have access to it. Following the interviews for the day, the book bag was taken home and the brown envelope with the completed surveys and the digital recorder was placed in a file cabinet in my room with a combination to open, which was only opened by the researcher.

After the participants completed the paperwork, the participants were asked a series of questions concerning rap music which included: (1) What are your personal feelings about rap music? (2) What has rap music taught you about life? (3) What is it about rap music that draws your attention and interest? Interviews took place at the organization site of the mentoring program.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis. The first research question was: (1) What is the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents? In order to analyze the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents, the results from the RAP Scale and the Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale were analyzed using the Pearson's Correlation to determine the relationship between rap music and psychological

well-being. The second research question was: (2) What is the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music? The attitudes and perceptions of rap music was measured using the Chi-Square by analyzing the percentage and number of participants who had a negative view of rap music, an average view of rap music or a positive view of rap music based on responses from the RAP Scale.

Qualitative analysis. For the qualitative portion of the study, semi-structured interviews were performed to answer the research questions concerning: (1) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents? (2) What kinds of rap music songs promote psychological support among African American adolescents? In addition, numerous questions within the interview were asked concerning the participants' attitudes and perceptions about rap music. The interview questions were partially derived from Tyson's (2007) Rap Music Attitudes and Perceptions Scale and modified by the lead researcher in this study (see Appendix D) based on the desire to know the detailed reasons that they listen to rap music and its benefits in their lives. The interview tapes were transcribed by the researcher. Analysis of the interviews consisted of studying the complete interview transcripts and of organizing them into groups by rap music's influence on well-being and attitudes and perceptions about rap music (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Prior to analysis, a copy of the transcript was given to participants for review of correct words (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). Secondly, the answers pertaining to each focus issue were grouped together and the answers being synthesized (open coding). Next, axial coding was used

to explore how the categories related to the open coded words, texts and statements (Corbin & Strauss; Denzin & Lincoln).

The Research Team

There were three members of the research team, all members were doctoral students, who were pursuing their degrees in counseling, educational psychology and business and had knowledge about coding response procedure and rap music were used to determine the reliability of the coding of the qualitative results. The peer reviewers have completed courses in qualitative research through their doctoral programs and were trained by the researcher to analyze the interviews and determine the themes and content present within the interviews. Inter-coder reliability was used and the themes and codes were completed by the researcher. In addition, there was a review of literature by the researcher and peer reviewers on things surrounding rap music. The analyses examined the interview protocol and participant responses to the interview questions.

Multiple reviews of the transcribed data took place between the researcher and the peer reviewers to obtain the exact perception of participants about rap music. Open coding was used to simplify the statements of the participant interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Axial coding was also used to explore how the themes and categories created connected to the open-coded texts and statements by participants (Denzin & Lincoln). During the review of the transcribed data, action words such as “relax”, or “calm” were highlighted, underlined, written as a side note or given a score as it was pertaining to the function of rap music in the lives of participants. In addition, action words such as “encouraging the degrading of women”, “encouraging the engagement of

violence”, “increasing sexual behavior”, or “encouraging me to get into a relationship were highlighted, underlined, written as a side note or given a score as it was pertaining to behaviors from listening to rap music. As the data was being reviewed, the data started to reveal themes and categories addressed in the literature review section. The reviewers reviewed the data independently and then we had multiple meetings and telephone conferences about the reviews to discuss themes generated individually from the data. Afterwards, the reviewers and the researcher deliberated until agreement was reached about the themes. Through multiple meetings and telephone conferences, six major thematic categories emerged from the data. When calculating inter-rater reliability (percent agreement) between the three reviewers, the results showed a 84% rate of agreement, which is considered to be good for qualitative methodology and valid for other research studies pertaining to the topic of rap music.

Six major thematic categories were created from the participants’ interview responses: (1) Providing Emotional Support; (2) Influencing Good and Bad Behavior Within Society; (3) Influencing Attitudes and Perceptions; (4) Promoting What Appears to Be Cool and Authentic to the Listener; (5) Promoting Diverse Styles Within the Rap Music Genre; and (6) Promoting Support Among Music.

Providing Emotional Support Category comprised of how rap music functioned in the lives of participants. Influencing Behavior Category included how rap music degrades women and can change the perspective on how they think of anything. Promoting What Appears to be Cool and Authentic Category meant that some artists are not being truthful about what they have in life or what they have done in their live.

Promoting Diverse Styles within the Rap Music Genre Category was considered to be individuals who may prefer old school rap music or new school rap music. An example of coded data concerning the categories of rap music, quotes and participant responses is presented in Table 7 in Chapter 4 of the Results Section. The data codes are also provided in the Appendix section (see Appendix H).

Research Hypotheses

Pertaining to the quantitative portion of the study, two hypotheses were developed about the final results of the study concerning the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents: (1) There will be a significant positive relationship between rap music and the well-being of adolescents. (2) African American adolescents in the study will have the attitude and perception that rap music is positive but the songs with themes of sex, drugs and violence are not good themes to hear in the songs.

Chapter Four: Results

This study consisted of four research questions that comprised of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative analyses and findings were presented first. The first question was: (1) What is the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents? This question was analyzed using the participants' scores from the Rap Music Attitudes and Perception Scale and the Well-Being Manifestation Measures Scale using the Pearson's Correlation. The second research question was: (2) What is the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music? The second research question was examined via the quantitative approach using Chi-Square via participants' completion of the Rap Music Attitudes and Perception Scale. The qualitative analyses and findings, which consisted of two additional research questions and data was gathered via interview responses: (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents; and (4) What kind of rap music promotes psychological support among African American adolescents is presented following the quantitative analysis.

For this study, fourteen ($N=14$) African American adolescents shared their perceptions about rap music. The data collected from the participants concerned their thoughts about the current and past trends of rap music. Moreover, subjects concerning controversial themes contained in rap music were asked to the participants and their

thoughts about the particular topics were coded and analyzed based on their responses to subjects pertaining to rap music. This chapter provided detailed analyses of the data collected from the fourteen participants about subjects connected to rap music and its influence on their lives.

Quantitative Hypotheses and Analysis

Prior to analyzing whether there was a relationship between rap music and the well-being of African American adolescents, descriptive statistics were used to determine the number of participants in this study, their gender and age. Then, the mean and standard deviation of the Rap Music Attitudes and Perception Scale (RAPS) and the Well-Being Manifestation Measures Scale (WBMMS) were analyzed. In order to evaluate the relationship between rap music and the well-being of African American adolescents for the first research question, a Pearson's Correlation Procedure was performed to determine if there was a significant relationship between the subscales of the RAPS and the WBMMS. Moreover, a Pearson's Correlation Test was performed to examine the participants' scores on the RAPS with psychological well-being. Afterwards, a Chi-Square Test was used in the study to examine the attitude and perception of participants concerning rap music using results from the RAPS to answer the second research question.

Quantitative Findings and Analyses

Descriptive statistics. Of the fourteen participants, 8 were females and 6 were males. Two participants were 14 years of age, three participants were 15 years of age, three were 16 years of age, and six were 17 years of age (Table 1).

Table 1

Description of the Participants by Age and Gender

Age	Male <i>f</i>(%)	Female <i>f</i>(%)	Total <i>f</i>(%)	<i>M</i>
14 years	1 (7)	1 (7)	2 (14)	2.93
15 years	2 (11)	1 (11)	3 (22)	
16 years	2 (11)	1 (11)	3 (22)	
17 years	1 (21)	5 (21)	6 (42)	
Total	6 (50)	8 (50)	14 (100)	

Frequencies and Percentages

Note. The total frequencies and percentages of age and gender of participants in the study.

Rap Music and Psychological Well-Being

The mean and standard deviation for the RAP Scale is presented in Table 2 and WBMMS is presented in Table 3:

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation for Rap Music for Subscale Measures

Instrument Scales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Empowerment	26.2	6.11	14
Violent- Misogynistic	27.7	7.48	14
Artistic-Esthetic	12.57	3.29	14

Note. The instrument subscales of empowerment, violent-misogynistic and artistic-esthetic are subscales for the Rap Music Attitudes and Perceptions Scale (RAP).

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation for Psychological Well-Being for Subscale Measures

Instrument Subscales	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Self-Esteem	16.4	3.87	14
Happiness	16.0	4.34	14
Sociability	15.5	4.57	14
Social Involvement	17.0	3.12	14
Control of Self and Events	14.8	3.92	14
Mental Balance	16.0	3.49	14

Note. The instrument subscales of self-esteem, happiness, sociability, social involvement, control of self and events and mental balance are subscales of the Well-Being Manifestation Measure Scale (WBMMS).

Using Pearson’s Correlation to analyze relationship. In order to determine the degree of the relationship, if any, between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents for the first research question, a Pearson’s Correlation Test was performed between the subscales of the RAPS and the WBMMS. The subscales of the RAPS served as the independent variable while the subscales of the psychological well-being scale (WBMMS) served as the dependent variable. The study showed that there was no significant relationship between the subscales of rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents using the RAPS and the WBMMS. Thus, the first hypothesis was not supported. The results are presented in Table 4 for the subscales of the RAPS and the WBMMS:

Table 4

Pearson's Correlation for Rap Music Subscales and Psychological Well-Being Subscales

RAP Music Subscales Measures	Psychological Well-Being Measures					
	Self-Esteem	Happiness	Sociability	Social Involvement	Control of Self and Events	Mental Balance
Violent-Misogynistic	.14 .09	.22 .09	.12 .09	.14 .09	.22 .09	.16 .09
Artistic-Esthetic	.10 .09	.08 .09	.13 .09	.16 .09	.17 .09	.19 .09
Empowerment	.07 .09	.07 .09	.15 .09	.09 .09	.10 .09	.08 .09

Note. A Pearson's Correlation for the subscales of rap music and psychological well-being among African American adolescents was performed and no relationship was found between the subscales of rap music and psychological well-being; $p > .05$. $N=14$ for all analyses.

Using the overall scores of participants on the RAPS and the WBMMS, a Pearson's Correlation for rap music was also performed with psychological well-being. The data almost produced a significant relationship between rap music and psychological well-being, but did not reach the level to be considered a significant relationship. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Pearson's Correlation for Scores on Rap Music Scale and Psychological Well-Being

Psychological Well-Being Attitude and Perception of Rap Music	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>
	.305	.095	14

Note. There was no significant relationship between the participants' scores on the RAPS and psychological well-being; $r(14) = .305$, $p > .05$.

Using Chi-Square to examine the attitudes and perceptions of adolescents concerning rap music by age. In order to determine the attitudes and perceptions of adolescents about rap music by age for Hypothesis 2, Chi-Square was performed based on the participants' responses from the RAP Scale, which are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Chi-Square for Adolescents by Age, Attitude and Perception of Rap Music

Perception of Rap Music	Age of Adolescent Participants				χ^2	Φ
	<i>f</i> (%)					
	14 years <i>f</i> (%)	15 years <i>f</i> (%)	16 years <i>f</i> (%)	17 years <i>f</i> (%)		
Negative Perception of Rap Music	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	6	.26
Do not Like or Dislike Rap Music	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)		
Positive Perception of Rap Music	2 (14%)	3 (21%)	2 (14%)	5 (36%)		

Total **2 (14%)** **3 (21%)** **3 (21%)** **6 (43%)**

Note. The percentage of adolescents by age concerning their attitude and perception of rap music showed no significant difference; $\chi^2(6, N = 14) = .26, p > .05$. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not supported.

Qualitative Analysis

Content analysis is a research approach used to decipher content of communication of participants and places responses to items on an instrument into categories (Patton, 2002). Qualitative content analysis focuses on the themes within an interview to explain a particular phenomenon taking place (Patton). Through qualitative content analysis, the qualitative portion of the study examined two additional research questions: (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents? (4) What rap music songs promote psychological support for African American adolescents? The words from the participants were classified based upon present themes within rap music: emotional support; behavior; authenticity; attitudes and perception; diverse styles and psychological support.

Description of Coding Strategies

The content analysis yielded six themes. The themes were labeled as follows: Theme 1: Providing Emotional Support consisted of statements such as “it helps me to relax,” “it helps me to get through tough times”, “it helps to keep me calm”, “listen to it depending on my mood”, “some music helps me to calm down”, or “it pumps me up”. Theme 2: Influencing Behavior Within Society contained statements such as “sometimes it degrades women”, or “sometimes it promotes violence.” Theme 3: Influencing

Attitudes and Perception consisted of statements such as being “rich to be happy”, or “being a rapper is not much hard work”. Theme 4: Promoting What Appears To Be Cool and Authentic consisted of statements such as “be real about what you say”, “don’t talk about something that you have not experienced in life, keep it real”, or “you don’t have to have a lot of money to be successful in life.” Theme 5: Promoting Diverse Styles Within the Rap Music Genre contained statements such as “listening to songs with a good beat” or “liking and listening to mostly old school or new school rap music.” Theme 6: Promoting Support Among Rap Music included statements such as “Nas’ song, I Know I Can”, “2 Pac’s song, Keep Your Head Up”, or Eminem’s song, Survival”. Thematic analyses and statements were presented in Table 7.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings yielded six themes within rap music: providing emotional support, influencing behavior; influencing attitudes and perception; promoting what appears to be cool and authentic; promoting diverse styles within the rap music genre; and promoting psychological support among rap music. Participants ($N=14$) expressed their thoughts and concerns about the genre of rap music through the interview portion of the study. Also, participants ($N=14$) expressed their thoughts about the possibility of a relationship between rap music and behavior. Some examples of participants’ quotes are presented in Table 7.

Theme 1: Providing Emotional Support

The third research question was: (3) What function does rap music serve in the lives of African American adolescents? This question analyzed the participants’ view

concerning the function of rap music in their lives and was answered via interview. The majority of the participants ($N=12$, 86%) talked about rap music as a source of emotional support. Therefore, these results were categorized as Theme 1: Providing Emotional Support. In Theme 1, when asked about the purpose of rap music in life, one female participant had this to say:

The purpose of rap music for me would be to get me through my hard times when I go through them. It also keeps me motivated. Helps me to exercise, with sports, just to be just up and going (Jamilah, age 14).

Thus, this participant shared that the function of rap music was to allow her to cope with stress in her life (Jamilah, age 14). A similar sentiment was shared by another female participant by saying:

I mean rap music is very effective because it helps me to keep very calm and realize that life is not all about a guy. I mean you may be in a relationship, break up with a guy but there is always a next guy (Erica, age 17).

Chris elaborated on rap music in his life in this manner:

Certain rap songs give me a good vibe and place me in a happy place. For instance, Nappy Roots got a song called Good Day. It goes "I am going to have a good day and nobody else is going to die today." The song is an entertaining song to me. You listen to it when you are having a bad day and you say to yourself I got to change my day around. You know you don't want to have a bad day, but your day can be worse. Listening to some rappers can make your day worse because it may influence you to do some things that rappers rap about but don't do. (Chris, age 17)

These statements from the participants suggest that adolescents listen to rap music for entertainment and to help cope with life's challenges.

Theme 2: Influencing Behavior Within Society

Another theme that emerged from the data was rap music influencing behavior within society ($N=14$; 100%), which was categorized as Theme 2: Influencing Behavior Within Society. The majority of participants talked about how rap music influenced behavior. For example, a participant mentioned:

Rap music can change somebody's perspective on anything they think of like it could change their actions quickly. (Khamani, age 15)

Khamani's statement about rap music was an example of how participants felt concerning its influence on people's behavior. The majority of the participants (100%) expressed that rap music did not influence their behavior, but expressed that they were in contact with individuals who allowed rap music to influence their behavior.

Another female expressed how rap music can influence women to want to be like the models they see in the rap videos:

Women see the rap music videos of women who are considered to be pretty. They see women with the nice hips, the big boobs, the big butt and are small. I know girls who say that I want to look just like her and when I get a job, I am going to get work done to look just like her. I am going to do what I can to get men to want me just like the artist do in videos. In my opinion, they are only doing it to promote sexual behavior. (Shannon, age 17).

Additionally, Sadie shared a real life experience on how rap music may influence individual behavior:

This particular brother likes rap music and it is a big influence on him. So, that is probably the reason why he is the way that he is. He has kids and he is also a drug dealer. He threatened his baby's mother. I don't know why but whenever we were always in the car, he listened to Jay-Z in particular. That is his favorite rap artist. I am sorry it is not Jay-Z, but Young Jeezy. I think he is known as The Snowman because he used to cook and sell drugs. (Sadie, age 17)

Moreover, one of the male participants stated in an interview that some individuals think it is okay to use vulgar language because most artists do it in their songs. He emphasized:

My mother raised me not to curse anyone out just for the fun of it or to never curse because I am angry. People at my school think it is good to recite lyrics in the songs with use of the curse words. They also think it is cool to curse around other people. If I listen to songs with curse words or say the curse words that the artists say in the songs, I would be in a lot of trouble at home. I don't do that and other people should not do that just because their favorite artist does this. (Kevin, age 15)

With how rap music influences some youth behavior, one participant recommended this particular action:

Music executives and DJs should not allow certain songs to be played on the radio during the day because youth are listening to it and thinking that some of the things they hear in rap songs are okay to do out in the community. It is just so outrageous that they think it is okay to do what they hear in particular rap songs. (Tika, age 14)

Therefore, mostly participants ($N=14$; 100%) felt that rap music does not influence their behavior, but knew of individuals who allowed rap music to influence their behavior.

Examples of how rap music influences behavior are presented in Table 7.

Theme 3: Influencing Attitudes and Perception

The question concerning the attitudes and perceptions of rap music was answered in the previous section via quantitative analysis, but this theme also appeared via qualitative analysis in this section through the participants' ($N=14$; 100%) interviews when discussing the function of rap music in African American adolescents' lives. As a result, the theme was categorized as Theme 3: Influencing Attitudes and Perception.

In mainstream rap, artists share how wealthy they are, what they have done with their money and how they are successful in what they do. Participants ($N=14$) in this study shared their perspective on hearing rap artists talk about how successful they are within the mainstream rap songs and what it really meant to them to be successful within the qualitative results. Chris put it this way when it comes to being successful:

You don't need to be rich to be happy. Some people do, but no, you don't have to be rich to be happy. I am not rich and I am happy. I am always happy. I am happy almost 99% of the time. You can ask any of my friends if they have ever seen me upset or mad, they would be like "no," they have not seen me mad. Depending on how long they knew me, they may say the last time they saw me mad was elementary school. You know I am about to head off to college. So, it's like I am always happy. You don't need to be rich to be happy. My mother, she is happy, she works two jobs and struggles to make ends meet. Last winter, we didn't have heat in the house. You know she was still happy. At the end of the day, she knew that she had a house to go home to, she had a family that was going to be there. Some of the rappers are rich and not happy, they just convey that to you because that is what they needed to be happy. They needed to be rich. Like I said, when you influence the youth, they will think they need to be rich to be happy. They will think they need to disrespect women to be happy. They think they need to have sex to be happy. That is not what it truly is. You don't need that stuff to be happy. (Chris, age 17)

A female participant discussed what the meaning of success and happiness is for her:

Being successful I mean is working where you work. I mean success is working to get to the top and not just being given the top. I want to work to be at the top, I don't want to simply just ride on the escalator and bam be at the top. I want to come and step to myself. That is what success is to me. I want to take the steps myself, go through the obstacles to get there. I can be successful without all the cash and what not. I mean as long as I have my people in my corner behind me and backing me up when I need them. For success, I don't necessarily need all the cash to be successful. Cash means nothing to me and rappers are lying when they say otherwise. (Sadie, age 17)

On the other hand, a male participant viewed success and money as:

Now, I understand money means everything. It is like you really can't have anything without money. So when many people are talking about that, it just gets me like...this is true. Like when I hear them talking about money, it is true. You

need money to do this and that. With the rappers, it is just that they have more money now to do things, you know to buy more expensive things. You see some things I might not understand, I am not into it. I didn't understand because I am down here and they are up there. It is a real big difference, you know I can't compare, thinking of what rappers are talking about in songs. (Khamani, age 15)

A reference was made from a female participant referring to what Christopher Wallace, better known as the Notorious B.I.G. (1998) stated in his song, "The more money you make, the more problems you get" (Erica, age 17). She continued with saying:

Recent rap music, you know, I just don't like it. It is based around nothing but money, women, drugs and drinking. It just makes no sense anymore. (Erica, age 17)

Upon hearing participants discuss how much they are turned off by how much rap artists talk about how happy and successful they are from completing their occupation, it was interesting to hear the reasons they like the genre in the first place. One of the things they liked about the genre was its beats. A female participant shared this statement concerning its beats:

Although the lyrics are inappropriate, you can really dance along to the beat of the songs. I love to dance and I dance to all kinds of beats. It is good for dancing purposes. (Tamar, age 17)

The majority of the participants ($N=12$; 86%) reported that the beat to the song is the one that draws their attention to a song and then it is the lyrics. A male participant explained that: "The new school rap music may have inappropriate themes and lyrics, but the beats crank in the songs" (Tim, age 16).

Based on the qualitative results concerning the attitudes and perceptions of rap music, the majority of the participants ($N=14$; 100%) believed rap music did not

influence their perception of wealth and expressed that it was the beat that caused them to like a particular song. Some of the attitudes and perceptions of participants about rap music are presented in Table 7.

Theme 4: Promoting What Appears to Be Cool and Authentic

One of the most important dynamics present within rap music is the “keeping it real” phenomenon (Ogbar, 2010). Rap artists often attempt to separate themselves with others by emphasizing that they speak the truth about their life. The majority of the participants ($N=11$; 79%) in this study stated that they could not listen to an artist who does not speak the truth about his or her life. Thus, these results were categorized as Theme 4: Promoting What Appears to be Cool and Authentic. In Theme 4, one participant noted that “if you cannot be truthful about where you represent, how do you expect me to listen to what you have to say? I cannot do it” (Tika, age 14). Another participant gave the example of the rap artist, Rick Ross, who took his name from a drug dealer and raps about his drug deals and the amount of money he received from them.

I am like come on, man, if you engaged in drug deals you talk about in your songs, you would not live to talk about it. It is crazy. This is the reason I do not like Rick Ross. (Chris, age 17)

In contrast, four (29%) participants stated that it did not matter if rap artists were not honest in their songs. Often, the rap artists may not have done what they have stated that they have done, but may have witnessed or heard it being done by someone else. A female participant placed it in this perspective:

Rap music is all about telling a story and if the story can or will help you, what is wrong with that” explained Shannon. The sad reality about today’s rap music is that “the artist only cares about making money and will say or do anything to make this possible.” Shannon continued with “half of rap artists don’t do what

they say in their songs, it is just entertainment. Anybody who imitates what the artists do is not using common sense. (Shannon, age 17)

Two participants (14%) in the study criticized the rap music genre for promoting inappropriate behavior such as disrespect towards women, violence, teenage sexual behavior and disrespectful behavior. An example was how a female participant explained:

Her parents instilled in her that she should not listen to everything a rappers says. A rappers says that he killed these many people, what are you going to do, kill as many people as the rapper? Young people want to live the lifestyle of the rappers so bad, they don't realize that it is a dead end and sometimes they are not being truthful about the life they lived. (Mariah, age 16)

When participants ($N=14$) were questioned about where the fault lies in allowing youth to be influenced by rap music, Tamar had this to say:

It is the individual's fault for letting the music control them. As a person, he or she makes his or her own decision. You are your own person, your own human being, your own mind, and no outside influences help nudge you the way to go. It is your body and not their body. (Tamar, age 17)

Participants were questioned about possible changes that they think the rap music genre needs. The majority of the participants ($N=14$; 100%) reported that the messages within mainstream rap needs to change. An example of this was when a male participant reported:

The fact that musicians are too bound to their contract and bound to the media to do what they came to do, you know and I would have to take that third wheel or middle man out because that right there is a hindrance on its own to what artists can be honest or not honest about in songs. You know people like Drake, Nas and Lil' Wayne and people like that. I believe that what they are doing, they are good at but how they are doing it and how they are saying it is what needs to be fixed. The music industry really taints and waters music down. (Nelson, age 17)

With rap music, the majority of the participants ($N=14$; 100%) wanted artists to be real about what they are going through in their lives. Some examples of participants' quotes are provided in Table 7.

Theme 5: Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music

In the book, *Rap Therapy*, Elligan (2004) stated that there were five categories to describe rap music. None of the categories stated by Elligan emerged from this set of participants' data, but the majority of the participants ($N=11$; 79%) used the terms old school and new school rap music to differentiate the numerous forms of rap music. Thus, the results were categorized as Theme 5: Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music. In Theme 5, a male participant explained:

Old school rap music is “rap music that does not rely heavily on the drums and mostly does not talk too much about making money, having women or doing drugs. New school rap music was defined as the heavy use of the drums with themes in rap songs about using or distribution of drugs, having sex and using violence to deal with anger of others. (Tim, age 16)

The participants within the current study listened to both old school and new school rap music. When listening to new school rap music, the majority of the participants ($N=12$; 86%) listened to the genre for its beats within the songs and expressed some complaints about the reasons for not listening to much new school rap music. A female participant had this to say about new school rap music artists:

Please talk about something new and separate yourself from your peers. This is the reason I listen to mostly old school rap music because they rap about something. (Erica, age 17)

In an interview with one of the male participants, he had this complaint about new school music:

What I don't like about new school rap music is that some people copy and put words together and think it is going to be the next biggest song, you know the next biggest rap song. (Khamani, age 15)

A male participant stated that “rap music most of the new mainstream stuff per say, I can't really get with due to its violent and sexual content” (Nelson, age 17). While the majority of the participants ($N=12$; 86%) expressed some complaints within the qualitative interviews about the new school rap music genre, the results turned out that participants like and listen to some new school rap music by stating that they listen to artists such as Childish Gambino, Common, Drake, Shy Glizzy and LeCrae and Lil' Wayne, who are considered to be both old school and new school rap artists. When participants were questioned about the reasons for listening to new school rap music with its violent and sexual content, a male participant had this explanation about the reason for listening to new school rap music:

Most of the time it is for the beat, the beats crank, it makes you move your head and dance. Sometimes the lyrics are not too bad. (Khamani, age 15)

A female participant shared that sometimes the lyrics are meaningful within new school rap music by saying:

Some new school rap music is good depending on the message. There are good rappers and there are bad rappers. The rappers like Common, J. Cole and Wale are good rappers with some meaningful lyrics within their songs. (Sadie, age 17)

A female participant shared an example of a song that came out earlier in the year that was a positive new school rap song:

The song Common did with John Legend from the movie, Selma, I thought that was a nice song and it really went good with the movie. (Tika, age 14)

Pertaining to the fourth hypothesis, participants enjoyed listening to both old school and new school rap music. With new school rap music, it is about the beats, but some of the rap artists within the genre have meaningful songs that they can listen to and enjoy without the themes of sex, violence and drugs. With old school rap music, it is about the messages within the rap songs that causes them to like the rap songs.

Participants' quotes about the different types of rap music are presented in Table 7.

Theme 6: Promoting Support Among Rap Music

Furthermore, participants ($N=13$; 93%) explained how there were specific rap songs that provided support when dealing with difficulties. As a result, Theme 6: Promoting Support Among Rap Music emerged from the data and was created based on the qualitative analysis. Within the study, 13 out of the 14 participants (93%) believed there were certain rap songs by rap artists that promoted support for when they were dealing with difficulties in life. A male participant had this to say about rap music in helping to deal with life:

Some of the rap songs I listen to when dealing with stress is listening to new school gospel rap music. Gospel rap music talks about going to God and talking to Him about the situation. One of the artists I turn to is LeCrae, who is a Gospel Rap Artist, and talks about going to God to deal with your situations. I try to take it to God. I don't think drugs or alcohol are good ways to cope with stress in life as mentioned in secular rap songs, so I mostly don't listen to new school secular rap. (Kevin, age 15)

When faced with adversity, a male participant discussed:

When listening to TI, I hear about the struggles he is going through especially on the Paper Trail CD. I would actually say that he is my favorite rapper out of everybody in the game. I say that because he is one of the only rappers that I myself can relate to. His friend died at a fight, he got shot. When I was younger, I had a friend who got shot too and he also died, just like TI. In a couple of his songs, he mentions his friend and how if he had never done that, he would still be

alive. When I lose someone I know, I listen to the Paper Trail CD to cope with loss. TI to me is one of the only rappers that try to convey a message. Sometimes, some rappers stray away from conveying a message (a positive message). Yeah, he would have to be my favorite new/old school rapper. (Chris, age 17)

Moreover, a male participant during the interview expressed:

I mostly listen to old school rap music. His favorite old school artist to listen to is 2 Pac. 2 Pac raps on some of my favorite songs. I like “Keep Your Head Up” because it tells me to never give up. I also like the song, Dear Mama because he spoke about the things that he and his mother used to do. It makes me think about the relationship that I have with my own mother. When my mother is not feeling well or I did something to make her angry, I listen to that song. I listen to some new school artists to be entertained by the beats of the song such as Montana 300, Lil’ Bootsie and Lil’ Snup. These artists make me feel good when I am having a bad day, but again I listen mostly to old school rap music. (Tim, age 16)

One category that was not a major theme in the study, but could be of importance is how the genre influences individual preferences. Four of the participants (29%) expressed how peers, friends, media and siblings can encourage individual preferences in rap music. The participants expressed how peer and media influences can play a role in whether they liked a particular song. They also expressed that they would not like particular rap songs had it not been for peer and media influences. One participant (7%) expressed that he would not have listened to rap music again if his cousins did not force him to hear it in the car.

With rap music, nine participants (68%) found the genre to be useful for emotional support. Despite participants’ views of rap music and its lyrics being both positive and negative, they felt the genre was an effective source of support in their lives. The fourteen participants (100%) in the study reported that the music does not control their behavior, but knew individuals who allowed the music to control their behavior by

going out and engaging in the behaviors that they hear their favorite artists explain in their songs. They also expressed the need for rap artists to speak truthfully within their rap songs and make it appear that things are perfect within their lives since they are living comfortably. The themes and quotes from participants about rap music are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Themes and Quotes from Participants About Rap Music

Theme	Participant Total Agreement/Total Number of Participants	Thematic Influence on Development (Reviewers)	Description of Themes	Links to Past Models	Examples from the Open Ended Responses
Providing Emotional Support	9/14 (68%)	Difficult Times (Emotional Influence)	Emotional Support, Coping Mechanism, Energy Booster, Stress Reliever	Elligan, 2003 “rap therapy”; Hadley & Yancy, 2008 “therapeutic uses of rap”, DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003	“hyped up for a game”, “calms me down, “helps me to relax”, “helps me to dance”, “helps me to study”, “connect to the artist”
Influencing Behavior	14/14 (100%)	Social Influence	Influences Individuals to Curse, Promotes Violence, Degrades Women, Perform Specific Actions	Wingood et al., 2003 “sexual behavior”; Cundiff, 2013; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009; Kirchheimer,	“degrades women”, “encourages sexual behavior”, “encourages you to purchase something”, “be in a

Influencing Attitudes and Perceptions	14/14 (100%)	Internal (Cognitive) Influence	Influences Views on Certain Topics About Rap Music and Elements Within Rap Music	2003 “rap put teens at risk”; Brown, 2006 “behaving and feeling Tyson 2003	relationship”, “curse someone out”, “influences decision-making”. “influence you that being rich makes you happy”, “poor and happy” “tells a story”, “some is good and bad”, “too much vulgar language”, “no positive message”, “like genre for its beats”
Influencing What is Cool and Authentic	14/14 (100%)	Internal (Cognitive) Influence	Influencing beliefs that the artists are cool and honest within songs	Ogbar, 2010 “keeping it real phenomenon”	“be real”, “be honest”, “keep it 100”, “hate liars”, “rap is not work”, “rap is fun”, “live the lifestyle”
Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music	11/14 (79%)	Social Influence	Promoting Different Styles Among Rap Music.	Elligan, 2003 “rap therapy”, Hadley & Yancy, 2008, Rose, 2008 “hip hop wars”	“old school rap”, “new school rap” “different beats”, “styles”, “new school music talks about drugs,

Promoting Support Among Rap Music	13/14 (93%)	Difficult Times (Emotional Influence)	Songs or Artists Who Participants Listen to for Support.	Rose, 2008 “hip hop wars”; Elligan, 2003 “rap therapy	sex and violence”, “old school music is mostly not about having messages of sex, violence “2 Pac”, “TI”, “Childish Gambino”, “Common”, “Nas”, “Omarion”
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Chapter Five: Discussion

This study explored the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. For the quantitative portion of the study, the two research questions were: (1) What relationship does rap music have to the well-being of adolescents? and (2) What are the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music? Based on the quantitative results concerning the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents, no significant relationship was found between the two variables, which did not support the first hypothesis. For rap music, African American adolescents had positive perceptions and attitudes of rap music, which supported the second hypothesis that African American adolescents would have a positive perception of rap music. In addition, participants showed that they had positive psychological well-being when participating in the study and was able to successfully cope when stressful situations occurred in their daily living. Rap music was viewed mostly positively by the participants in the quantitative portion of the study in spite of the small sample size.

The qualitative results of the study yield six themes: (1) Providing Emotional Support; (2) Influencing Behavior Within Society; (3) Influencing Attitudes and Perceptions; (4) Promoting What Appears to Be Cool and Authentic to the Listener; (5) Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music; and (6) Promoting Support Among Music. The

qualitative results of the study suggested that the main function of rap music in the lives of African American adolescents was to serve as an effective coping mechanism as found in Theme 1, Providing Emotional Support (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2005; Tyson, 2002), and answered the third research question within the study. Theme 1 described how participants processed how rap music helped them to relax and cope with negative circumstances. Rap music songs with uplifting messages and very little vulgar language was mostly viewed favorably as a coping strategy to use for psychological support (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; DeCarlo, 2015; Elligan, 2004; Hadley & Yancy, 2008; Tyson, 2002), which was supported with Theme 6: Promoting Support Among Rap Music. On the other hand, rap music songs that consisted of themes of sex, drugs, and violence appeared not to be an effective coping strategy for adolescents to help with psychological support due to its possible influence to engage in inappropriate behavior and create even more stress (Cundiff, 2013; Hadley & Yancy, 2008; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009), which answered the fourth research question. Therefore, some rap songs can serve as a form of psychological support for African American adolescents, but can also influence inappropriate behaviors such as degrading others or engaging in violence (Hadley & Yancy) based on Theme 2: Influencing Attitudes and Perception. Rap music is a broad genre and not all of rap music is bad, whether it is considered to be old school or new school rap music (Rose, 2008) as described with Theme 5, Promoting Diversity Among Rap Rap Music. Elligan described the different forms of rap music in his book, *Rap Therapy*, but participants did not use the categories mentioned in the current study. There is the possibility that participants were not familiar with the different categories

stated within the book and made the decision to call it old school rap music and new school rap music in order to effectively explain the difference between rap music with appropriate themes and messages and rap music with good beats and inappropriate themes and messages. Additionally, there is the possibility that this is the current approach taken by radio personalities and music executives to describe the different forms of rap music being played on the radio.

When listening to a rap song, the researcher asked the fourteen participants about what makes them like the song. The results from the study suggested that the beat of the song catches their attention first and not the lyrics which was noted in Theme 5: Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music. This is a common phenomenon in today's society where the beat is the driving force of whether the individual will like a song (Porter, 2006). The lyrics was the second thing that received attention from participants within rap songs.

Based on the qualitative results of the study, there was a desire from participants for rap artists to be honest within their songs (Ogbar, 2010), which was noted in Theme 3: Influencing What is Real and True. Thus, it was perceived that rap artists lie to their listeners in order to sell records and blamed the music executives for this behavior, which was supported in previous books about the state of rap music (Ball, 2011; Guzman, 2013; Rose, 2008). Moreover, they blamed the music executives and corporations for promotion of having to be rich to be happy and felt that this was another form of dishonesty from the rap artists. A contribution from this study was for artists to be honest within their rap songs (Ogbar).

Pertaining to Theme 2: Influencing Behavior Within Society, this study supported previous research surrounding this area of controversy within rap music (Cundiff, 2013; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009; Wingood et al., 2003). Rap songs may encourage individuals to complete appropriate activities such as purchase new shoes, have a relationship with someone, or accomplish goals in life, but the genre can also encourage individuals to complete inappropriate activities such as commit a violent act, degrade women, engage in a sexual relationship, or sell drugs. Thus, critics of rap music could possibly argue with supporters of rap music that it can encourage sex and violence within society if the adolescent was unable to differentiate between right and wrong and what is appropriate and inappropriate (Weitzer & Kubrin; Ball). If individuals were not able to differentiate between right and wrong within the rap songs and take every word that rap artists say as true, then there may be some serious consequences for their lives (Wingood et al., 2003).

Furthermore, the current study supported previous literature concerning its numerous forms within the genre (Elligan, 2004) based on Theme 5: Promoting Diversity Among Rap Music. While the numerous forms of rap music were not defined in categories mentioned by Elligan, it was clear to the participants that there was a difference in the types of rap music being played and heard on the radio. The differences were linked to the content of the songs and the year the artist and song came on the rap music scene. New school music was considered to be the dominant form of rap being played on the radio continuously (Ball, 2011) and they were bored with it. New school rap music was liked by adolescents for its beats. Rap music could help adolescents who

are resistant to counseling or it may produce the opposite effect by encouraging them to seek help from a human service professional.

Moreover, the results of the study supported Bronfenbrenner's theory by suggesting that internal and external factors within the environment can influence individuals' actions and behavior. Listening to rap music may help some adolescents to relax or influence them to engage in behavior that may be appropriate or inappropriate. Rap music can also influence listeners to think something is real or cool when in reality it may not be cool or appropriate in daily living. There were some individuals in the interview section of the study who expressed that peers and media influenced whether they liked a particular song, which could also support Bronfenbrenner's theory of how peers and media influence the individual within the environment. The researcher did not place this information in a major category due to the low number of participants who expressed this particular view in the current study. The listening of rap music by adolescents can have implications within the counseling field in multiple ways.

Counseling Implications

The results obtained from the study could offer an alternative to human service professionals counseling adolescents. With resistance from some adolescents about the possible need and effectiveness of counseling (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Tyson, 2002, 2012), counseling interventions must be tailored to the population if success is to be achieved. One of the counseling interventions that can possibly help adolescents to process issues influencing their psychological well-being and promote healing in their lives is listening to rap music (Elligan, 2004; Travis, Jr., 2013; Tyson, 2002).

Based on the findings from this study, rap music played a critical role in the lives of adolescents. Rap music has seemed to be a dominant force in how adolescents see the world in that they recite the lyrics of their favorite rap songs by artists, listen to rap songs during leisure time and may sometimes do or say what artists rap in the songs (Elligan, 2004). It was also noted how rap music provided an emotional release for adolescents (Lightstone, 2012) to satisfy the need for connection and belongingness (Brown, 2006; DeCarlo & Hockman; Dolev-Cohen & Barak, 2013; Kitwana, 2002; Mesch & Talmud, 2010; Tyson). Moreover, rap music served as an approach to provide entertainment and an energy stimulator (Alim & Pennycook, 2007). Thus, rap music can be used to improve anger, build healthy relationship, deal with stress, cope with loss and overall promote positive psychological well-being (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Elligan, 2004; Hakvoort, 2015; Travis, Jr., 2013; Tyson, 2002).

If human service professionals make the decision to use rap artists that the adolescents like within the counseling session, the approach can provide positive outcomes in counseling and the adolescents' life. More specifically, if human service professionals agree to hear a sample of rap songs that adolescents like and engage in lyric analysis, the adolescents' love for rap music can be used to facilitate therapy and understand possibly the reasons for the adolescents' inappropriate behavior. Some studies have shown that rap music can be an effective approach for counseling adolescents (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Ellison, Hadley & Yancy; Tyson, 2002). Another approach to incorporating rap music within the counseling session is granting permission for adolescents to create their own rap songs. This approach will allow

adolescents to express their feelings about issues or difficulties interfering with their psychological well-being and can provide an avenue for human service professionals to treat adolescents. Moreover, human service professionals may consider using rap music group therapy. With rap music group therapy, human service professionals can understand the impact that rap music has in the lives of adolescents and can possibly successfully help a group of adolescents who may be struggling in life. An adolescent in treatment may benefit from peers participating in rap music group therapy because it would allow them to hear another peer's perspective about dealing with situations in life whether it is expressed openly in the therapy session through writing their own rap song or sharing a rap song written by another individual. In order to achieve success with counseling African American adolescents, it is highly recommended that human service professionals try to incorporate rap music as a counseling approach in their toolkit.

The majority of participants (100%) in the study believed that rap music did not influence their own behavior, but it appeared that it encouraged them to think about things or purchase items mentioned in the rap songs based on participant responses within the qualitative interviews. Counselors who use rap music as the therapeutic approach with clients may want to encourage clients to see the contradiction of what they say about rap music's influence on their own behavior and the things that they are doing in response to hearing some of the rap songs. Not only did the current study on the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents show support of Bronfenbrenner's theory, but it also showed how important counselors can be to adolescents because it would give them someone to talk to about

things that may be taking place at home or school. The possibility exists that adolescents may not have appropriate mentors or role models in their lives. Also, adolescents may not know when to use or what to use as a coping strategy in their lives. Without appropriate role models or assistance from counselors to identify the difference between right and wrong, there is the possibility that adolescents may imitate behaviors they hear in rap songs and be in denial that the songs may possibly be influencing their behavior. Thus, it is important for parents to have discussions with their children about the reasons for liking the music and if there is anything that they would like to talk about since they are listening to the music when the themes of the song may be clearly inappropriate. With human service professionals who work with teenagers on a daily basis, rap music can be used as a teaching and a counseling tool.

Limitations

After completion of the study on the relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents, some limitations were found within the study. This study used a purposeful sample design from a mentoring program with fourteen African American teenagers between the ages of 14 and 17, and as a result, this was a small sample size study and these findings cannot be generalized to the African American population at large. At the same time, the study took place over a one year span where some students decided to participate in the study instantly, while others took some time to think about whether they wanted to participate in the study. Some of the reasons could have been because they thought the researcher would judge them based on the sharing of their thoughts about rap music or tell their parents about their responses if

they supported rap music with themes of sex, drugs and violence. It also may have taken time for students to participate in the study because they had to discuss the study with their parents and the parents may have wanted to think about whether it was a good idea for them to participate in a study about rap music. In addition, the study consisted of more participation from females than males. It might have supported the notion that females were more open with talking to another individual about a current issue and expressing their thoughts when compared to males who may not be into expressing their thoughts regardless of the issue. Moreover, this study did not consist of observations of participants' behavior when certain rap songs are played, which could have possibly determined the actual behavior of participants when rap songs with misogynistic and sexual themes were being played. With a study of a small sample size, it was difficult to generalize the results to a large population of African American adolescents, but the study provided support for additional research in the use of rap music to communicate with adolescents. If there was a bigger sample, a significant relationship may have been found between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. Therefore, a study that used simply a quantitative approach with a sample size of at least 150 participants with an equal portion of males and females may have yielded a significant relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. Similarly, a qualitative approach that simply analyzed the attitudes and perceptions of African American adolescents about today's rap music may have generated positive results.

Another limitation in the study was the psychological well-being assessment in the study. On the assessment, the participant is requested to identify if he or she has been experiencing some scenarios over the past week. The participants may have experienced the scenarios a month ago, but not within a week. Therefore, participants may have believed that their psychological well-being was positive during that time. When participants were asked questions about how they see life via the interview, some of the participants elaborated on how music supported or did not support their psychological well-being.

Future Research

The findings in this study suggest that rap music could potentially have a positive influence on the psychological well-being of African-American teenagers. The test used in the study was Pearson's Correlation, which is the test to use to examine the relationship between two variables with a large sample size. Future research may explore the use of the Spearman's Correlation test to examine whether there would be a significant relationship between rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents with a small sample size, which may produce a significant relationship between the two variables. In addition, the findings suggested that rap music could potentially have a positive influence on the psychological well-being of African American teenagers by serving as an educational and entertaining influence on them. Although further research is needed in the area of the influence of rap music on today's teens, this study suggests that with possible conversations between adolescents and trusted authority figures, the influence of rap music may not be as detrimental as

predicted by critics of the musical genre. Future studies can include taking popular rap songs and having a focus group discussion of what the lyrics of the songs mean to them and how could they apply the songs to real life situations. Further research is needed to see the efficacy of using rap music when working with this population and seeing if rap artists are influences on their lives.

A finding in this study was the emphasis that respondents like rap artists who keep it real by telling the truth about how they lived their lives and their birthplace. Future research should study the reasons that rap artists fail to be honest in their rap songs about their life which would help inform listeners about who is in control of the music industry and the reality of the life of the rap artist. Another future study could explore African American adolescents' meaning of keeping it real within rap songs and their boundaries of like or dislike for rap artists who are not keeping it real. The ultimate goal of this study would be participants and listeners informing the record companies and radio stations that they will not tolerate listening to artists who are not being honest about what they are going through in life.

An additional gap in the research literature was exploring what would happen if rap artists started rapping about positive themes without the degree of vulgar language that is present among the rap music genre today. Would adolescents continue to listen to the music? Would they listen to the music for its beat or lyrics? Would the music be played on radio stations today? Research has not explored whether the lack of vulgar language within a song by a popular rap artists would be played on the radio and if it would change how individuals view life and cope with stress. The findings from this

study showed that adolescents are bored with hearing the same themes present within rap music of sex, drugs and violence so that a study of vulgarity in rap music may help better understand adolescents' behavior and preferences.

Research has shown that mentoring has benefits in the lives of teenagers personally and professionally (Bowers et al., 2016; Schwartz et al., 2013; Liang et al., 2013; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer & Notaro, 2002). The results of the study came from a mentoring program in the mid-Atlantic part of the United States. Is it possible that the results from the study will be the same with adolescents who are not a part of a mentoring program? What if adolescents did not have a good support system if they listened to rap music on a daily basis? Is it possible that adolescents who did not have someone to look up to, talk to when they are feeling stressed or have a healthy outlet be heavily influenced by rap music and do the things that the rap artists discuss in their songs? For this study, there were no direct questions pertaining to the mentoring program to measure its association to adolescents' thoughts about rap music, but future research could compare adolescents who are part of a mentoring program with those who are not in a mentoring program to see if there is a significant difference on how and if they are heavily influenced by rap music. The research pertaining to rap music has not examined the influence of mentoring with the attitude and perception of African American adolescents about rap music.

Furthermore, the study did not consist of a pre-test and post-test. The study relied on the participants' thoughts of rap music using an interview and the two scales. In order to measure the effectiveness of an approach such as rap music to connect with

adolescents, rap music songs would have to be used during the study to demonstrate its effectiveness which possibly explains the lack of data to support the use of rap music. Future research is needed to examine the use and support of rap music to counsel adolescents. There are connections between rap music and adolescents, but the articles focused on the negative impacts of rap music (Wingood et al., 2003; Elliot, 2005; Litman, 1997; McLean, 1997). Due to the lack of empirical articles, more research is needed to support the idea that rap music can be used as a counseling approach for the adolescent population.

Some behaviors that adolescents may emulate may cause them to suffer serious consequences such as possibly being arrested (Higgins et al., 2012), or get hurt (Crosby et al., 2012). Previous research has yet to explore the relationship between bullying behavior and hearing rap songs with violent lyrics among teens. The effects of bullying can lead to deadly violence. Through rap music, teens may possibly feel pumped, energized and powerful, but feeling pumped, powerful and energized may lead to destroying things or other individuals if teens are not careful or able to differentiate between right and wrong (DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Elligan, 2004). Research is needed to explore whether there is a relationship between bullying and listening to rap songs with violent themes among teens.

Conclusion

Music entertains us, whether it makes you want to sing, dance, laugh or take action (Hadley & Yancy, 2008). From the lyrics in the song, its tempo, or its beat, music influences some form of behavior (Travis, Jr., 2013; Tyson, 2012). Music can bring

about numerous emotions depending on where the adolescent is in his or her life (Brown, 2006). Some messages in the music communicate harmful and destructive behavior or handling conflicts in an appropriate manner when heard by adolescents who are susceptible to vulnerability (Higgins, 2010; Wingood et al., 2003). With some teenagers in this study, music was a source of entertainment and therapeutic, but for others music was a source of healing, which can possibly lead to punishment or consequences. Some parents of the participants in the study may need to be mindful and aware of the type of music they are listening to and the reasons behind their decision to listen to it. An open dialogue between the parent and teenager may be beneficial. With an effective social support system, adolescents may not fall prey into the negative and destructive influences of rap music. Whether you are a huge supporter or a critic of rap music, it seems that rap music will be here to stay for a long time. It is still up for debate as for whether or not the content of rap music will change anytime soon. The majority of the participants (100%) in the study agreed that the themes of sex, drugs, violence and how successful you are becomes redundant and things need to be changed.

The majority of the research questions supported the researcher's hypotheses. Rap music served as a form of entertainment, an energy booster and a coping mechanism in the lives of African American adolescents. The participants in the study gave positive reviews to rap music for its beats and messages, but were troubled by some of the themes present within rap music by artists such as themes of sex, violence and drugs because of how the genre can influence inappropriate behavior. They were troubled by this phenomenon by asking if life was all about how many individuals you can sleep with,

making money by selling drugs, using drugs, using vulgar language to dominate others and resorting to violence when you don't have your way. Life is about more than that, it is about being happy regardless of the amount of money in your possession and realizing that other individuals have problems, but don't use violence to solve the issues. With rap music, participants listened to both old school and new school rap music, but participants shared how they are turned off by some new school rap music due to its explicit content. Overall, the results of the study showed a positive relationship between participants who listened to rap music and viewed their own lives in a positive manner such as accomplishing their goals and knowing right from wrong from the qualitative portion of the study, but not the quantitative portion of the study.

Pertaining to the theoretical framework for the study, the results were somewhat consistent with the Bronfenbrenner theory. Bronfenbrenner's theory explained that there were direct and indirect factors in the environment that play a role in an individual's behavior. Although individual tastes in rap music was not a major thematic category for this study, four participants (29%) in the study shared that friends and family members influenced them to listen to particular forms of music and whether to like or dislike a song. On the other hand, parents can play an influential role on what the teenagers listen to in their leisure time by not allowing them to listen to certain forms of rap music in the home. Therefore, individuals and media may influence the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of others whether individuals want to believe it or not within our environment.

The results of the study supported the phenomenon that individuals make choices about the things to do based on events that occur within their environment.

It is still quite unclear of the degree that rap music influences inappropriate adolescent behavior, but it is clear that rap music can influence individuals in a positive and a negative manner. It can influence individuals to respond appropriately or inappropriately to circumstances occurring in their lives.

Appendix A



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: March 27, 2014

TO: Fred Bemak, Ph.D
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [537262-1] The Relationship Between Rap Music and the Psychological Well-Being of African American Adolescents

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: March 27, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE: March 26, 2015
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited review category #7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The George Mason University IRB has APPROVED your submission. This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by the IRB prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to the Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA). Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed (if applicable).

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the ORIA.

The anniversary date of this study is March 26, 2015. This project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. You may not collect data beyond this date without prior IRB approval. A continuing review form must be completed and submitted to the ORIA at least 30 days prior to the

anniversary date or upon completion of this project. Prior to the anniversary date, the ORIA will send you a reminder regarding continuing review procedures.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years, or as described in your submission, after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Bess Dieffenbach at 703-993-4121 or edieffen@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

Appendix B

Demographics Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

- A) Boy
- B) Girl

2. What is your age?

- A) 14
- B) 15
- C) 16
- D) 17

3. In what city did you grow up or spend most of your life?

4. Were you born in the United States?

- A) Yes
- B) No

4a If no, how long have you lived in the United States? _____

5. What is your race (How do you identify yourself)?

6. What grade are you currently in?

- A) 9th grade
- B) 10th grade
- C) 11th grade

7. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- A) 1
- B) 2
- C) More than 2

8. What school do you go to? _____

Appendix C

RAP Scale

Circle the best answer that applies to the way you feel about rap music.

1. Some rap music can uplift and empower people.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
2. Many youth can relate to rap music because it is about reality.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
3. Some rap music is a form of resistance to oppressive conditions.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
4. Sexual references in rap music can cause males to be sexual with females.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
5. Violent rap music videos can lead males to be more violent.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
6. There are very important messages in most rap music.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
7. Most rap music suggests that women are just for male sexual satisfaction.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
8. I like rap music for its beats and use of sounds.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
9. Rap music is not a real form of music, its just talking over sounds.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
10. Rappers are not as talented as other musical artists.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
11. Most rappers have creative intelligence, reflected in their ability to rap.

- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
12. Most rap music projects macho attitudes.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
13. Most rap music helps youth cope with their reality.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
14. Some rap music encourages ethnic group pride.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
15. Rap music is a healthy resistance against the system.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
16. Violence in rap videos can lead to violent behaviors.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
17. Sexism in rap videos can lead to sexist behavior.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
18. Most rap music glorifies drugs and violence.
- A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

Appendix D

Well-Being Manifestation Scale

Circle the best answer that applies to the way you have felt in the past month.

1. During the past month, you felt self-confident.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
2. During the past month, you felt satisfied with what you were able to accomplish, you felt proud of yourself.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
3. During the past month, you were a “go-getter”, you took on lots of projects.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
4. (During the past month,) you felt emotionally balanced.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
5. (During the past month,) you felt loved and appreciated.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
6. During the past month,) you had goals and ambitions.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
7. (During the past month,) you felt like having fun, participating in sports and all your favourite activities and hobbies.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
8. During the past month, you felt useful.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
9. (During the past month,) you smiled easily.
A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree
10. (During the past month,) you were true to yourself, being natural at all times.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

11. (During the past month,) you did a good job of listening to your friends.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

12. (During the past month,) you were curious and interested in all sorts of things.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

13. (During the past month,) you were able to clearly sort things out when faced with complicated situations.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

14. (During the past month,) you found life exciting and enjoyed every moment of it.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

15. (During the past month,) your life was well-balanced participating in personal and professional activities.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

16. During the past month,) you were quite calm and level-headed.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

17. (During the past month,) you were able to easily find solutions to problems.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

18. During the past month, you got along well with everyone.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

19. (During the past month,) you lived at a normal pace, not excessively.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

20. (During the past month,) you had the impression of really enjoying life.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

21. (During the past month,) you had a good sense of humor and made your friends laugh.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

22. (During the past month,) you felt good and at peace with yourself.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

23. (During the past month,) you felt healthy and in a good space.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

24. (During the past month,) you were able to face difficult situations in a positive way.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

25. (During the past month,) your morale was good.

A) Strongly Disagree B) Disagree C) Not Sure D) Agree E) Strongly Agree

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. Do you listen to rap music? If not, what type of music do you listen to?
2. What is your opinion of rap music? A) What do you like about it? B) What do you dislike about rap music? What purpose does rap music serve in your life?
3. Who are your favorite artists (What type of rap music do you listen to?)
4. What kind of involvement does your family have in the music you listen to?
5. What kind of involvement do your friends/peers have in the music you listen to?
6. Does rap music relate to how you view life?
7. Does rap music relate to how you view the future?
8. Does rap music relate to how you deal with stress?
9. What is your opinion of how women are talked about in rap songs?
10. What is your opinion of how sex is talked about in rap songs?
11. What is your opinion of how drugs are talked about in rap songs?
12. What is your opinion of how violence is talked about in rap songs?
13. What is your opinion on the theme in rap music with emphasis on being rich to be successful?
14. Tell me what would you or would not change about rap music?

Appendix F

Researcher's Script to Recruit Participants

Researcher says: Good day, I am Tony Camp, a doctoral student in the Counseling Program at George Mason University. How many of you all like Rick Ross? Lil' Wayne? Drake? Nicki Minaj? Macklemore? How many of you all want to go to college and graduate school? This is great because I am conducting a study to find out the reasons that African American adolescents love rap music and particular rap artists. The name of the study is: "The Relationship between Rap music and the psychological well-being of African American adolescents. The study will be a two part study which will consist of filling out two scales (one on rap music and the other on well-being) and completing an interview about your thoughts on rap music. The benefits of the study include adults discovering the reason that their teenager loves rap music and will educate teenagers and parents about the work requirements in college in order to obtain a degree. Would you be interested in participating in this study about rap music? Here is a consent form that the parent or guardian must sign and here is an assent form that you must sign before participating since you are under the age of 18. You/the teenager cannot participate in the study unless both forms are returned to me prior to participating in study. If you have any questions about any of the procedures, please feel free to ask me. Also, here is my information if you would like to contact me if you can think of any questions that you would like to ask me.

- **If the participant answers yes, the following questions will be asked:** (1) What is your age? (2) In what city did you grow up in or spend most of your life? (3) Were you born in the United States? (4) How do you identify yourself? (5) What grade are you in? (6) How many brothers and sisters do you have? (7) What school do you go to?
- **If the potential participant answers that he or she is part African/African American/Black or is between the ages of 14 and 17:** The person qualifies to take part in the study. The person will be given two scales to complete before completion of the interview process of the study on rap music. The researcher will make arrangements with the parent and teenager for a time that the teenager can meet with the researcher for the interview portion of the study.

- **If the potential participant answers that he or she is not part African/African American/Black or is between the ages of 14 and 17.** The Researcher/Recruiter will say: “Thank You for your time, but you do not meet all of the criteria for the study. This study is looking for a self-identified African American/African/Black teenager between the ages of 14 and 17.

Appendix G

Informed Consent

The Effects of Rap Music on the Psychological Well-Being of African American Adolescents.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This research is being conducted to explore the effects of rap music on the well-being of adolescents. If you agree for your child to participate, your child will be asked to complete the Demographic Questionnaire, the well-being scale and the rap music scale. Next, your child will be asked questions relating to rap music through an interview. The survey and interview will take an hour to complete. The sessions will be audio-recorded with permission.

RISKS

The foreseeable risks or discomforts include your child sharing thoughts and being recorded.

BENEFITS

Individuals who participate in the study will receive a \$10.00 gift card from Chick-Fil-A.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The data in this study will be confidential. Confidentiality will be maintained by creating an alias for every participant and no identifying information will be connected to their data. Once the surveys are completed, they will be placed in a brown envelope. Once the observations have taken place, the names of students will not be revealed in the report.

PARTICIPATION

Your child's participation is voluntary, and your child may withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no penalty for your child not participating. There are no costs to you or any other party.

CONTACT

This research is being conducted by Tony Camp and the Department of Education and Human Development at George Mason University (GMU). He may be reached at (301)-219-5904 for questions. You can also call my Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Fred Bemak, a Counseling Professor at this phone number 703-993-3941.

You may contact the GMU Office of Research Subject Protections at 703-993-4121 if you have any questions or comments.

This research has been reviewed according to GMU procedures.

CONSENT

I have read this form and agree that my child can participate in this study.

_____ I agree to audio taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio taping.

Name

Date

Appendix H

Assent Form

The Relationship Between Rap Music and the Psychological Well-Being of

Adolescents.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The reason for this research is to explore the effects of rap music on the well-being of adolescents. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete two scales, demographic questionnaire, and complete a semi-structured interview about the reason you feel the way you feel about rap music. The survey and interview will take an hour.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

You will not lose any of your rights by being in the study. However, some people may feel a little bit nervous talking about things relating to rap music. If you participate in this study, you will receive a \$10.00 gift card from Chick-Fil-A restaurant.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be on the short survey that you fill out. I will be taping our talk together, but I will be keeping that tape in a very safe place. Everything that we all say on the tape will be written out on paper. I may use some of your words when I write my report, but I will never tell anyone your name. Your name on the observations will not be revealed on report.

PARTICIPATION

You do not have to talk to me if you do not want to. If you change your mind after we start talking and want to stop that is OK. I will not get mad and nothing will happen to you.

CONTACT

My name is Tony Camp, and I am studying to get a PhD in Counseling at George Mason University. You can call me at this phone number (301-219-5904) if you have any questions about this study. You can also call my Dissertation Advisor, Dr. Fred Bemak, a Counseling Professor at George Mason University, at this phone number 703-993-3941.

The George Mason University Office of Research Subject Protections knows all about my research and said it was OK for me to do it. You can call them at 703-993-4121 if you have any questions about being a part of this research.

CONSENT

I have read this form and I agree to be part of this study.

_____ I agree to audio taping.

_____ I do not agree to audio taping.

Name

Date

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Biography

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