Preparing Future Counselors to Work with BIPOC Identified Males: The Integration of Hip Hop in Counselor Education

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Abstract

This study used a narrative inquiry to examine how BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrated Hip Hop in their counseling practices and teaching to promote healing. The results of the study suggest Hip Hop offers *modes of expression* and *modes of connection* useful in counseling practice and in the training of future counselors. Practical implications for the use of Hip Hop in counselor education classrooms and counseling sessions are explored.

Keywords

Author's Notes

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In 2020, the American Counseling Association (ACA) responded to increased social unrest and anti-black rhetoric by acknowledging and denouncing White supremacy and racism of all kinds along, and urging them to develop antiracist competencies (ACA, 2020). This public statement by the leading counseling organization follows a history within the counseling profession of remaining silent on the issues of racism and White supremacy (Washington & Henfield, 2019). So, while the decision for counselor educators to proactively integrate anti-racist pedagogy has been stated, guidelines and practices for counselor educators themselves are limited (Washington & Henfield, 2019). This article aims to offer counselor educators anti-racist pedagogy through the lens of Hip Hop. Hip Hop culture's introduction into the professional counseling world came through a mode of cultural expression that proved to have value from a therapeutic and educational standpoint (Washington, 2018). Yet, Hip Hop culture provides a level of vulnerability for counselors and graduate students to connect with the BIPOC-identified clients they engage with (Levy & Keum, 2022; Washington, 2021). Hip Hop offers individuals the opportunity to raise their voice against oppressive practices and share cultural experiences and knowledge of self.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrate Hip Hop into their counseling practice and teaching to promote healing. This study was the first of its kind to examine how Hip Hop creates emotional healing, meaning, and understanding for BIPOC-identified males. Other research around helping BIPOC-identified males express their emotional experiences through writing, recording, performing rap music, or addressing social justice issues has been conducted (Levy, 2019; Washington, 2018). The evidence regarding the use of Hip Hop in counseling practice, as well as the identified need for creativity,

cultural competence, social justice in counseling encouraged the researchers to interview counselor educators about the potential of Hip Hop practices in the preparation of counseling professionals.

Multiculturalism and Social Justice Curriculum

The continued development of the multicultural counseling competencies (Ratts et al., 2015; Sue et al., 1992) has been critical for counselors tackling the clinical challenges of historically marginalized and culturally diverse individuals, groups, and communities. The skillful work with the intersections of racial, ethnic, sexual, socioeconomic, age, religious, spiritual, and disability contributes to mental health outcomes and disparities (Conron et al., 2010; Hankivsky et al., 2010; Institute of Medicine, 2011). Counselor educators are responsible for developing these competencies in counselors-in-training. To uphold the CACREP Standards, the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) established "developmental layers that lead to multicultural and social justice competence: (1) counselor self-awareness, (2) client worldview, (3) counseling relationship, and (4) counseling and advocacy interventions" (Ratts et al., 2015, p. 3). These competence areas provide developmental stages of attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, skills, and action so they are explored and developed (Brooks & Babel, 2022; Ratts, et al., 2015). Moreover, when counselor educators integrate the MSJCCs into their teaching, it helps and encourages counselor-in-training to engage in this process of continual learning and developing cultural humility (Hook et al., 2013).

Although the multicultural and social justice perspective has positively contributed to the counseling profession, more work is needed to address the nuanced needs among minority groups at their core. The struggles and experiences of minority groups differ vastly in this country, which makes any universal approach limiting. To uphold these standards, counselor educators must

incorporate the multicultural counseling competencies in creative ways to work through issues of race, equity, and social justice in their teaching.

Creativity, Hip Hop and Counselor Education

One possible pathway to teach multicultural competencies is through creativity in counseling and counselor education. The fostering of creativity in clients is one of the best ways to nurture their self-actualization (Maslow, 1962; Ventegodt et al., 2003). Thus, engagement in creative activities benefits the mood and psychological functioning of clients (Forgeard et al., 2014), offering avenues for "happiness, emotional intelligence, self-identity, altruism, and self-discovery" (Kaufman, 2018, p. 735). Creative art therapies improve emotional control, interpersonal relationships, and positive body image (Johnson & Lahad, 2009) and reduce symptoms when individuals struggle with depression, trauma, anxiety, sleep problems, and dissociation (Foa et al., 2008). Specifically, the use of creativity through music in counseling is evidenced as supporting clients physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing (Jung, 1964; McCaffrey & Locsin, 2002; Prensner et al., 2001; Samuels, 2004). Creativity through the process of making and listening to music sharpens the awareness and increases the experience of joy (Lane, 2005).

As an arts-based approach built on a culture of creativity and healing, music therapy in the form of Hip Hop offers counselors a unique framework when working with Black clients. Hip Hop culture started in the South Bronx in New York City in the late 1960s (Chang, 2005) to draw attention to the principles, values, thoughts, and ways of being in African and Latino ancestry throughout the African diaspora (Washington, 2018). Hip Hop culture can provide the counseling profession insights into the Black struggle, but music therapy can explain how counselors can incorporate Hip Hop into their practice. Given the value of creative arts in the counseling process, the principles of improvisation have been used by counselor educators to respond to others

authentically and with acceptance (Bayne et al., 2021). Counselor educators have begun integrating storytelling and visual arts to work with diverse populations (Croft, 1999; Katz, 1994; Malley, 1999). The MSJCCs (Ratts et al., 2015) are the lens through which counselor educators work with diverse populations, and require self-awareness, relationship building, and advocacy attributes which creative arts exercises are well positioned to support. Creative arts provide an opportunity for counselor educators to transcend culture and gain multicultural insight and understanding (Hoshino, 2003), using symbolic and nonverbal communication as an alternative to Western culture (Ziff & Beamish, 2004).

Counselors have an obligation and responsibility to provide insight into the ways urban culture and language can improve the social-emotional development of BIPOC individuals. Levy and Keum (2014) suggested that Hip Hop is an avenue that could help men of color discuss their emotional experiences and challenge gender norms that communicate the idea that men do not express their emotions. Specifically, Hip Hop can function as emotional writing, which is evidenced as a culturally and socially acceptable avenue for bolstering emotional self-awareness (Levy & Keum, 2014; 2019). Washington (2018) noted how Hip Hop culture addresses social justice issues in counseling Black males. For example, in the Washington (2018) study, a Black male client was offered Hip Hop lyrics about policing to process their own experience being racially profiled by campus safety. The ability to reflect on this experience through Hip Hop lyrics enabled the client to process a systemic issue around policing. Ratts et al. (2016) charge counseling professionals with not only offering culturally responsive interventions (i.e., the inclusion of Hip Hop lyrics around a client's lived experience) but also in challenging systemic issues that produced the emotional stressor (navigating future encounters with campus police). Given that most approaches to counseling are rooted in White Eurocentric ways of knowing and being (Singh et

al., 2020), Levy and Travis (2020) frames Hip Hop and counseling interventions as a culturally responsive alternative.

Hip Hop in the counseling profession connects to the MSJCC (Ratts et al., 2015) because it provides multiple ways to capture individuals' lived experiences, and it facilitates a culturally responsive counseling process (Levy et al., 2018). Hip Hop is an expressive and experiential way to live the MSJCC when training counselors or working with clients. For example, Hip Hop lyrics or mixtape making (the creation of multiple songs around a shared emotion) offer pathways for authentic storytelling (Levy and Travis, 2020b). Additionally, DJing and electronic music production can support sharing stories and improving client's wellbeing (Travis et al., 2021). Adjapong and Levy (2021) discussed how clients can engage in graffiti association - or the drawing and coloring of emotional words in a hip hop aesthetic to share emotions. Therefore, this study examines the integration of Hip Hop by BIPOC-identified male counselor educators in their teaching and practice.

Purpose of the Study

This study is a narrative inquiry to examine how BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrated Hip Hop in their counseling practices and teaching to promote healing. While researchers have explored the use of Hip Hop interventions with clients, scholars have not engaged in direct conversation with counselor educators about the potential of Hip Hop. Thus, the researchers' interviews with counselor educators sought to answer one research question: *How do BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrate hip-hop into their counseling practice and teaching to promote healing?*

Methods

Participants

This study's sample consisted of six BIPOC-identified male counselor educators from the United States. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 40 years. The pseudonym names for the participants to protect their identities are Dave East, B Dot the God, Big K.R.I.T., Kendrick Lamar, Dom Kennedy, and Nipsey Hussle. The selected pseudonym names are Hip Hop artists who have been influential within Hip Hop culture and were chosen to represent the influence each counselor educator is making on the field. Inclusion criteria for study participants include holding a doctoral degree in counselor education, identifying as a male who is BIPOC, and having experience integrating Hip Hop into counselor education and practice or having published on Hip Hop in the counseling profession.

Procedure

After IRB approval for this study was gained, purposive sampling was used because it facilitated "identification and selections of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest" (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2). Once inclusion/exclusion criteria for this study were confirmed, the PI located participants through researching counselor education programs for BIPOC-identified males who integrate Hip Hop into their practices. This recruitment was done primarily through snowball sampling by asking interested participants to identify other qualified individuals to participate in this study (Handcock & Gile, 2011). The six participants each engaged in 60–75-minute individual interviews with the researcher, the content of which was used in subsequent data analysis.

Data Collection

The data collection sources for this study were interviews, autobiographical writings, and Hip Hop artifacts. When using narrative inquiry, the data collection process is not linear or procedural but fluid due to the relational aspect of the method and the participants' stories that direct the research data collection process (Clandinin, 2013). The focus of this study was on BIPOC-identified male counselor educators telling, retelling, and reliving their stories of experiences in integrating Hip Hop in their practice and teaching. Additional foci were the potential of Hip Hop as emotional healing and making meaning for BIPOC males, which required multiple methods (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) to expand the researcher's understanding of the participants (Sheperis et al., 2017).

Interviews

Narrative inquiry uses interviews as a starting point to tell stories (Clandinin & Caine, 2013). In this study, the PI led 60–75-minute semi-structured interviews with BIPOC-identified male counselor educators addressing the integration of Hip Hop into counseling and counselor education, as well as its contribution to emotional healing for BIPOC-identified males.

Autobiographical Writing

Narrative inquiry uses autobiographical writing, which captures "a story or part of it that refers in one way or another to one's life history" (Brockmeier, 2001, p. 247). During this study, the participants independently engaged in autobiographical writing about their initial connection with Hip Hop and their journey of realizing the impact Hip Hop had on forming their identity and practice as a counselor educator and clinician.

Hip Hop Artifact

Embedded in the narratives are artifacts which create meaning and value to the human experience and can shape and provide value to human stories (Venkataraman et al., 2013). During the study, participants were asked to submit one Hip Hop artifact (e.g., syllabus, hip-hop content, videos) used in their practice as an educator or counselor that offered insight into the application of Hip Hop in their own work, its value to the profession and/or the healing nature of Hip Hop.

Data Analysis: Narrative Inquiry/Thematic Analysis

After all data sources were collected (i.e., interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts), the interview data was transcribed from audio and video Zoom recordings. To support a narrative inquiry, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis was performed on all data sources: familiarizing oneself with the data, generating initial codes, and searching for the themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report of the findings. Thematic analysis identifies patterns of meaning throughout the data to formalize into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). Additionally, the scrutiny technique was used to identify similarities and differences among participant experiences (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Scrutiny technique focuses on constantly comparing the similarities and differences throughout the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The use of this technique brought forth the themes in the stories, which are essential to the counseling profession because they provide value of the importance of integrating hip-hop in education or counseling practices and its contribution to healing for BIPOC-identified males.

Finally, the analytical tools of broadening, burrowing, storying, and restorying were used to integrate stories among participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Broadening is a process to highlight generalized perspectives of the data from a historical and empirical lens and find gaps in

the literature to provide significance to the study findings. Burrowing focuses on the event described in the participants' data (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The storying and restorying process allowed the participants to visit and revisit their past and present, along with imagining and reimagining their futures (Kim, 2016). These three concepts told the larger story of the study results and answered the research questions.

Research Team

The authors of this paper are two assistant professors of counselor educators, specializing in clinical mental health and school counseling respectively. I (first author) identify as a Black, cisgender and heterosexual, man who constantly grapples with my privilege as a researcher. I have been working as a professional counselor for over 6 years. I pulled from prior scholarship and practice to show how pedagogical practices that integrate Hip Hop can create healing for BIPOC identified males in the counseling profession. The second author identifies as a White, cisgender and heterosexual, man who constantly grapples with his privilege as a researcher. He has been working as a professional counselor for 10 years. He holds a range of prior experience as an assistant professor, school counselor and emcee, specializing in the use of Hip Hop and counseling practices to support clients and graduate students. When the second author joined the team for data analysis and report writing, he was careful not to overdetermined his interpretations based on his requisite knowledge.

Reflexivity & Trustworthiness

In this study, the researchers ensured trustworthiness (Guba, 1981) through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Shenton, 2004). The study promoted credibility through triangulation and member checking. Triangulation involved using multiple and different data collection sources (i.e., interviews, autobiographical writings, and hip hop

artifacts) to provide corroborating evidence to highlight themes or perspectives (Creswell, 2013).

Member checking occurred through the researchers checking in with the participants to ensure

the data reflects their intended meaning after collecting and analyzing data (Lincoln & Guba,

1985). Transferability occurred through purposeful sampling, which considers the participants'

characteristics to connect to the research questions (Devault, 2019). Dependability and

confirmability were maintained through an audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018) which in this

study was through written notes that demonstrated the process and decisions throughout the

analysis. Lastly, researchers reflected and processed their own bias and relationship to the culture

and effects of Hip Hop culture to ensure the participants' voices were true to their experience and

not that of the researchers.

Results

The findings of this study are organized by general dimensions and first-order themes in

accordance with thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To elaborate on the first-order themes

and general dimension, the authors include quotes of exemplary moments from transcripts that

reflect BIPOC-identified male counselor educators' integration of Hip Hop in their teaching. The

first general dimension was *modes of expression* with the first-order themes being

storytelling/language and emotional experience. Each of these first-order themes were represented

with all data sources (interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts) and speak to how BIPOC-

identified males use Hip Hop in their practice. The second general dimension was *modes of*

connection with the first-order themes being *relate, recognition, and vulnerabili*ty.

Modes of Expression

The findings revealed that modes of expression were an overarching theme for BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrating Hip Hop into their practice. In modes of expression, there were three themes: a) *Storytelling,* b) *Language*, and c) *Emotional Expression.*

Storytelling

One first-order theme from the larger dimension of modes of expression, was *storytelling.* Storytelling revealed that BIPOC-identified males could express their experiences through stories, as Hip Hop is a form of storytelling. Analysis of interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts from participants revealed Hip Hop as a medium to share narratives. For example, B Dot the God submitted an article they had written as their artifact which described storytelling in the following way:

> "Rap and Hip Hop are connected to the Black community, opening access to share their experiences with the entire world. Hip-Hop highlights a breakdown of Black (and Brown) vernacular, styles, dress, political/social views, economic struggles, and successes".

In his interview, Big K.R.I.T. spoke about Hip Hop to tell a story was true for him personally and professionally:

> "Narratives, there is a lot of storytelling and the ability for them to relate and experience and understand that. Whether it is growing up impoverished. Growing up in a dysfunctional household. Growing up in an environment that wasn't maybe conducive to the most uplifting or the ability to get outside of that, even, you know, relationships, and you know, image, you know that masculinity piece of it constantly being challenged and how to deal with the challenging aspect of overcoming What does masculinity looks like for me".

Dom Kennedy submitted an autobiographical writing describe through the lyrics of Hip Hop help in formulate and make sense of his own story:

> "It's my connection to Hip Hop culture when a family member gave me an LL Cool J cassette tape with the 1987 track called "I Need Love." I must have been 6 or 7 years old— had no idea what the lyrics meant. Just to have that reference point, to be able to connect with each other in that way, that's been done countless times, you know, countless times in sessions".

Language

The second first-order theme in *modes of expression* was *language*. Language provided insight on how Hip Hop offered BIPOC-identified males a language to express their experiences. Analysis found commentary on Hip Hop as language across interviews, autobiographical writings, and artifacts. Nipsey Hussle submitted an article they had written as their artifact which stated: "The vibrancy and youthful exuberance of Hip Hop has been crucial in articulating a future where the anti-Black violence enacted by the state and rogue vigilantes ceases to exist." Big K.R.I.T. noted in his interview that Hip Hop provides "uplifting types of lyrical content, things that speak of hardships and overcoming those hardships." Lastly, in his autobiographical writing B Dot the God shared that, "Hip-Hop language, and nuances (dress) connected me to them. I also recognize that it is my duty to model to my students what congruence can look like for Black counselor educators".

Emotional Experience

The third and final *mode of expression* was *emotional experience. Emotional expression* describes how Hip Hop helps BIPOC-identified males process trauma, cope with stress, and begin healing. Analysis of the three data sources revealed various emotional experiences can be

unearthed through Hip Hop (i.e., trauma, stress, healing, struggles, relaxation, stability, survival). One participant, Kendrick Lamar, described in his interview:

> A creative way is kind of like guided meditation, you know where we'll put on a song, you know, three-and-a-half-minute song whatever that song maybe, and just kind of not saying anything, right, but breathe, the whole time and do some active belly breathing you know regular mind mindfulness stuff and then process, how the song relates.

Dave East shared lyrics from one of the Hip Hop albums (College Dropout) submitted as an artifact to connect to his emotional experience,

> Good dude, bad night, right place, wrong time
>
> In the blink of an eye, his whole life changed
>
> If you could feel how my face felt, you would
>
> know how Mase felt. Thank God I ain't too cool
>
> for the safe belt! (College Dropout-West, 2003)

In his autobiographical writing, BIG K.R.I.T shared how Hip Hop helped him navigate various emotional experiences, stating: "Break-ups, death, losing a job, failing a test, or just having a bad day could all be helped and made better with the right song."

Modes of Connection

The findings revealed a second overarching theme, *modes of connection*, that described how BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrated Hip Hop into their teaching. In modes of connection, there were three themes: a) *relatability,* b) *recognition*, and c) *vulnerability.* When counselor educators incorporate Hip Hop in their teaching, it creates an opportunity to relate and recognize, which allows vulnerability to be expressed.

Relatability

Within *modes of connection*, was a first-order theme of *relatability*. Analysis of interviews, autobiographical writing, and artifacts helped define relatability as the way counselor educators imagine Hip Hop counselor educators assess student's learning. For example, Dave East stated in his interview, "Sometimes when we're analyzing the lyrics of the context of a particular song. It gives me a good idea in terms of how this person processes information, but also gives me an idea of what they can relate to." Big K.R.I. T. shared in his autobiographical that Hip Hop helped him understand student's development in his classroom, stating: "I also ask students for feedback to make sure there is relatability between my intentions with the Hip Hop direction and their ability to synthesize and connect it to the lectures." Nipsey Hussle shared in his Hip Hop artifact that, "Rap and hip-hop are connected to the Black community, opening access to share their experiences with the entire world. Hip Hop highlights a breakdown of Black (and Brown) vernacular, styles, dress, political/social views, economic struggles and successes." What Nipsey Hussle is alluding to in the quote above is that Hip Hop provides insights that will allow future counselors to better understand the Black and Brown communities and experiences.

Recognition

Recognition is the second first-order theme within modes of connection. Across data sources, participants suggested that Hip Hop offers counselor educators a teaching tool to bolster student's recognition of BIPOC-clients' cultural worldviews, experiences, thoughts and feelings. For example, Big K.R.I. T. stated in the interview:

"We always talk about this cultural competency, right? We want to be culturally competent clinicians. Well, there you go. You want to use something that speaks to a specific culture."

Nipsey Hussle stated in his autobiographical writing: "Inside counselor education I relied heavily on Courtland Lee's early work (1998) wherein he discussed the relevance of rap music to Black boy's educational outcomes." Nipsey Hussle's quote is speaking to how rap music can help Black males navigate school text and contexts that are oppressive and stigmatizing (Hook, 2004). This is important for counselor educators when training future counselors. B Dot the God shared in his Hip Hop artifact, "Hip Hop is recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worth-while."

Vulnerability

The third of the first-order themes of modes of connection was *vulnerability*. Vulnerability is defined as statements from participants illustrating how Hip Hop can support open and authentic discussions, professional identity development in counselor education programs. Reflecting on classroom dialogues, Dave East stated his interview:

> I think it opened up conversations for people to be able to sort of mourn, and not necessarily lose their manliness. What we really ended up doing, was kind of thinking about what people were saying and reframing the violence we're talking about in terms of trauma reactions, and being able to help appreciate what these people were going through. What do we think that they may benefit from, and why have they chosen this particular medium?

B Dot the God shared in his autobiographical writing that Hip Hop helped him "recognize that it is duty to model to my student's what congruency can look like for Black Counselor Educator." Big K.R.I.T provided some lyrics from his Hip Hop artifact that provide the vulnerability and openness to the conditions of BIPOC communities in society:

> They got me trapped, can barely walk tha city streets/
>
> Without a cop harassing me, searching me, then asking my identity/

Hands up, throw me up against the wall, didn't do a thing at all/

I'm tellen you one day these suckers gotta fall/

Cuffed up throw me on tha concrete, coppers try to kill me.

The lyrics Big K.R.I.T. shared above represents his lived experience and the challenges of being a Black man in our society. Furthermore, it provides counselor educators insights on how they can use rap lyrics or lyric writing to help counselors in training integrate Hip Hop in the practice to understand the lived experiences of Black men.

Discussion

This study sought to explore the experiences of the integration of Hip Hop into counseling and counselor education among BIPOC-identified male counselor educators. Specifically, the research question was, How do BIPOC-identified male counselor educators integrate hip-hop into their counseling practice and teaching to promote healing? Two themes answered this research question: modes of expression (containing first-order themes of storytelling, language, and emotional experiences) and modes of connections (containing first-order themes of relate, recognition, and vulnerability). The modes of expression and connection through Hip Hop promoted healing when integrated by BIPOC-identified male counselor educators.

Modes of expression illustrated the potential for Hip Hop to be used with BIPOC-identified male clients. Specifically, *storytelling* demonstrated that Hip Hop offers BIPOC-identified males a pathway to talk about their lived experience. This finding supports prior literature that found hip-hop helpful in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression for BIPOC individuals (Levy & Travis, 2020). The second first-order theme *language* demonstrated that BIPOC-identified males used the words of Hip Hop to share and discuss their lived experience. For example, a counselor educator could use experiential learning activities, such as Hip Hop mixtape (written, recording,

performing), to share their experiences linguistically that resonate with their lived experience (Washington, 2018). The third first-order theme *emotional experience* demonstrated that BIPOC-identified male can share their lived experiences through Hip Hop. For example, counselor educators can integrate Hip Hop to develop a sense of connection with BIPOC-identified males, to support them in moving to a place of vulnerability and openness in sharing emotional experience (Washington, 2021).

Modes of connection described how counselor educators might use Hip Hop in their classrooms. The results revealed that Hip Hop provides a pathway for counselor educators' *relatability* to BIPOC-identified males when teaching. The MSJCCs (Ratts et al., 2015) stress that building relationships through a culture relevance lens is necessary when developing counselors-in-training. Hip Hop provides a culturally relevant approach to create relatability (Tyson, 2002). The second first-order theme *recognition* revealed Hip Hop offers counselor educators a teaching tool to bolster student's recognition of BIPOC-clients cultural worldviews, experiences, thoughts and feelings. Creative arts provide an opportunity for counselor educators to transcend culture and gain multicultural insight and understanding (Hoshino, 2003). Therefore, Hip Hop provides counselor educators to recognize BIPOC-identified males' lived-experience as well as understanding them beyond their identified culture. The third first-order theme *vulnerability* illustrated how Hip Hop can support open and authentic discussions, professional identity development in counselor education programs. Counselor educators can use improvisation in their pedagogical practices to create spontaneity, sensitivity, responsiveness to words and actions of others in the here and now (Bayne et al., 2021). Improvisation is a form of Hip Hop which would create a space for openness and vulnerability in their teaching for counselor-in-training.

Implications for the Profession

Multiculturalism and multicultural counseling competencies have been a foundation for addressing and integrating diversity issues in counseling when working with racial and ethnic minority clients (Arredondo, 1999; Sue et al., 1992). Multicultural counseling competencies offer the counseling profession an approach to address cultural consideration from a holistic perspective (Ratts et al., 2015). Although multiculturalism and multicultural counseling competencies have been the means to deal with race issues, they have fallen short of addressing the specific needs of members of BIPOC communities. Mental health disparities in BIPOC communities continue to increase despite this holistic approach the counseling profession prescribes when dealing with cultural issues. This study offers knowledge and relevant implications for filling the gap that multiculturalism has not addressed.

Black Studies, Afro-Pessimism, and Hip-Hop

Black studies research specifically addresses the issues of anti-Blackness in the systems in our society, which includes the counseling profession. Anti-Blackness in our society suggests that there is no precise moment when slavery and acknowledgment of Black citizenship and humanness occurred (Dumas, 2016). Anti-Blackness directly impacts how Blackness is viewed and welcomed in counseling and counselor education programs. Afro-pessimists stress that one must consider Blacks as (still) unable to ask for civil or human rights, which does not deny the legacy of Black racial struggle but makes it impossible for Blacks to imagine themselves as real citizens of this country (Dumas, 2016). Therefore, Afro-pessimism literature can provide a window for the counseling profession and counselor education program to see the operations of systems, structures, and institutions that impact Black communities and ways to address them (Sexton, 2016). The counseling profession must recognize that the absence of slavery does not mean that

Black flesh and the embodiment of Black people as enslaved people (Dumas, 2016) are removed from our society's fabric, which multiculturalism fails to acknowledge. To adequately serve and educate BIPOC individuals in the counseling profession, we must provide a larger narrative of how the country's historical legacy impacts their education and what best practices are established.

Hip-hop emerged from Black studies and the Black radical tradition. There is no hip-hop without the Black struggle. Washington (2018) explained that hip-hop culture draws attention to the principles, values, thoughts, and ways of being regarding African and Latino ancestry throughout the African diaspora. The use of hip-hop in educational or counseling practices requires an interdisciplinary approach due to hip-hop's connection to Black studies. Hip-hop culture has been the voice of the injustices experienced in the Black community; therefore, educators and clinical professionals have incorporated it into their practice (Washington, 2018). Thus, this study used hip-hop to create healing, understanding, and meaning for BIPOC-identified males regarding their social-emotional experience. Furthermore, it considered how the historical legacy of oppression and marginalization has impacted their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The historical legacy of oppression and marginalization is critical when considering the implication of this study to the counseling profession because hip-hop provides a pathway for educators or counselors to engage with BIPOC-identified males in a profoundly connected way that multiculturalism was unable to.

Limitations

There are a few notable limitations for this study. It was challenging to find six BIPOC-identified male counselors who had produced scholarship around Hip Hop or used it in their counseling practice. Due to the limited number of BIPOC counselor educators and a smaller number of them using Hip Hop in their scholarship or counseling practices, the researcher took a

significant amount of time to find participants in the counseling profession to participate in the study. Still, the researcher didn't need to broaden his demographic because enough BIPOC-identified male counselors in the counseling profession were found.

Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

Although there has been growing research around the integration of Hip Hop into the counseling profession to create emotional expression, bring voice to social justice issues, and use Hip Hop with conventional theories in BIPOC communities (Elligan, 2000; Levy, 2019; Rose, 2008; Tyson, 2002; Washington, 2018), more research is needed examine the use of Hip Hop practices in counselor education classrooms. More quantitative studies, such as randomized-controlled trials, would be beneficial to evaluate the outcomes of the integration of Hip Hop in counseling for BIPOC-identified clients as compared to other creative modalities. Additionally, more research is needed to understand how creative modalities, such as Hip Hop, can support BIPOC-identified males in their educational journeys to counselors and counselor educators.

Conclusion

There are many ways that counselor educators can create culturally relevant and anti-racist environments for counselors-in-training, but we must expand our pedagogical practice beyond the MSJCC. The counseling profession needs to continue to develop creative ways to educate and develop BIPOC-identified male counselors-in-training and Hip Hop offers a solution. The MSJCC is a starting point to create a safe environment for BIPOC-identified males. The integration of Hop Hip is one way to deviate from the Eurocentric framework that dominates how counselors-in-training are educated and developed.

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