

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Shauna Ferrese for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on July 17, 2023.

Title: Examining Sexuality and Gender in Academic and Popular Discourses: Corpus-Based Analyses

Abstract Approved:

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Counseling as a profession has been on a journey of self-examination as CACREP approaches the release of its revised standards and the world recovers from the tumultuous few years under the shadow of the pandemic. Cultural shifts in perspective have prompted new conversations around concepts related to sexuality, racial identity, and sociocultural inequities. The two manuscripts within this dissertation take a multifaceted look at issues relevant to how the counseling field perceives sex and sexuality in academic discourse and how the profession can become more attuned and better versed in the cultural commentary and popular discourse contained within Hip Hop music. Utilizing corpus linguistic methodology, the first study examined the keywords and verbal relationships associated with counseling research on sex and sexuality compared to analogous mental health professions. Results indicate that the counseling literature has a greater propensity for associating sex and sexuality with terms that have a negative sentiment and a limited vocabulary associated with sexual identity. The second manuscript used machine learning technology to explore the topical structure of Hip Hop music and compared lyrical similarities and differences between male and female artists within the

genre. The findings of this study reveal varied perspectives of male and female emcees on priorities, roles, aspirations, and experiences within the Hip Hop cultural movement. Considering the findings, the researcher hopes to highlight the ways that counseling, research, and social justice advocacy efforts can better understand and address the needs of populations that have been marginalized due to sexual, gender, social, economic, and racial inequities.

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Examining Sexuality and Gender in Academic and Popular Discourses: Corpus-Based Analyses

by
Shauna Ferrese

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become a permanent part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Shauna Ferrese, Author

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CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

Cass Dykeman assisted with the methodology and design of this study, in addition to refining the manuscript's narrative.

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Chapter 1: A General Introduction

To the people at home or in the crowd
It keeps coming up anyhow
Don't be coy, avoid, or make void the topic
Cuz that ain't gonna stop it
Now we talk about sex on the radio and video shows
Many will know anything goes
... Let's tell it how it is, and how it could be
How it was, and of course, how it should be
Those who think it's dirty, have a choice
Pick up the needle, press pause, or turn the radio off
Will that stop us, Pep? I doubt it.

Salt-N-Pepa (Let's Talk About Sex)

One of Salt-N-Pepa's biggest hits, "Let's Talk About Sex," was considered groundbreaking for its unabashed discussion of female sexuality and empowerment in an era when women were only beginning to break ground in a genre that had been dominated by their male counterparts since its inception. *Blacks' Magic* was Salt-N-Pepa's third studio album released in 1990, a time when the world was enveloped by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and people were having to engage in conversations that had previously been considered taboo. Salt-N-Pepa doubled down on their sexual social commentary when they released "Let's Talk About AIDS" in a public service announcement promoting safe sex in 1991 (Phillips et al., 2005). This is just one example of the impact that Hip Hop culture and lyricism can have on modern society and the way that it discusses challenging and complex topics such as sex and human sexuality.

At first glance, the two manuscripts contained in this dissertation may seem unrelated or tangential at best, but in the process of writing and doing the research it became so much clearer how topics relevant to psychology, counseling, and language (i.e., sexuality and culture) manifest in a myriad of ways within academic discourse. To illustrate, I decided to do a quick search within Google Scholar just using the search term “let’s talk about sex.” The search yielded 324,000 results with articles discussing muscle metabolism and atrophy (Rosa-Caldwell & Greene, 2019), the online sex lives of people living in senior communities (Berdychevsky & Nimrod, 2015), cell biomaterial interactions (James et al., 2021), and legislation and education regarding affirmative consent (Humphrey, 2016). What do all these scholarly articles have in common? They all address some aspect of sex, sexuality, and/or sexual biology, and they all reference a well-known Hip Hop song by a 1990’s female rap group in their article titles. While momentarily disappointed by the unoriginality of one of my manuscript titles, I very quickly became reassured of the value that this research brings to the field of counseling as evidenced by the diversity of research referencing the very same song. By exploring the sociocultural and academic discourse on topics such as human sexuality and Hip Hop lyricism, I hope to continue to make more meaningful connections between the ways we use language to capture and deepen our understanding of the human experience.

Rationale

In formulating a rationale for these two manuscripts, the researcher highlighted two primary considerations: gap spotting and the potential to disrupt current practice. Gap spotting is examining areas of the research within a given field to identify topics, themes, and directions that have yet to be explored. Human sexuality in the context of research and counselor training has long been neglected within counselor education, and the profession has only scratched the

surface of the cultural implications of the Hip Hop movement within the scholarly discourse (Levy 2020; Sanabria & Murray, 2018). In terms of practice, gaining a better understanding of the role of research in human sexuality within the field of counseling can help future counselors and counselor educators better meet the needs of the growing population seeking services and support in this area of their lives. In addition, having a greater knowledge of the lexicon, topical structure, and cultural impacts of Hip Hop and the growing number of female lyricists will enable clinicians and educators to broaden their multicultural literacy and provide greater depth in their work with marginalized populations (Levy, 2020).

Counseling as a profession has evolved drastically since its inception (Mann, 1950), and like many fields within medicine and mental health, it has experienced some growing pains. What is encouraging, however, is that professionals within this field are persistent in their pursuit of new knowledge and are active in researching areas of the field that could benefit from further exploration and expansion. Two such areas include human sexuality and cultural competence, both of which can take many forms in terms of training, pedagogy, and clinical application. Human sexuality is clearly an important and relevant developmental topic within counseling, and yet it is not a required course for counselors-in-training or a commonly researched area of the field outside of the literature that specifically targets sex therapists (Sanabria & Murray, 2018). To better understand the counseling academic discourse on sex and sexuality, it is prudent to draw on the knowledge and research accumulated in adjacent psychological fields (such as marriage and family therapy and social work) to elucidate how counseling approaches and discusses these complex topics (Hargons et al., 2017).

In contrast, multicultural counseling and diversity issues have been increasingly (and justifiably) in the spotlight in terms of the research and ethics within the field of counseling.

There are a variety of perspectives on what is or should be included in the larger discussion of culture and gender and their impact on marginalized populations and society. Hip Hop, for example, has grown far beyond a musical genre and has left an indelible mark on individuals and communities on a global scale. Counselors endeavor to elevate the voices of the voiceless and advocate for social justice causes affecting the wellbeing of clients. In many ways, this noble calling mirrors the foundational societal intention of Hip Hop culture, and the counseling profession could greatly benefit from further exploration into the topical and thematic trajectory of Hip Hop music and the artists that have given it life.

Researcher Lens

To contextualize these manuscripts, I want to acknowledge my positionality and provide some insight into what drew me as the researcher to these aspects of the field and offer some perspective on how my worldview has shaped the research lens.

I am a cisgender, heterosexual, Caucasian female who grew up in Brooklyn, NY, a borough of one of the most diverse cities in the world and a short subway ride away from the birthplace of modern Hip Hop music. Growing up in New York City had its challenges, such as living in a one-bedroom apartment that I shared with my mom and making sure I caught the train in time to get to school, but I always felt at home in my community and enjoyed the opportunities I had to interact with people from innumerable walks of life on a daily basis. It wasn't until I moved to South Carolina right before middle school that I really appreciated the worldview that I had developed in the Big Apple. Living in Charleston meant better weather and a cheaper cost of living, but it also meant a loss of diversity and becoming acquainted with the long-term impact of slavery, segregation, and other forms of historical trauma. For some reason, the weight of history and oppression felt heavier amidst the quaint but fraught reminders of the

Antebellum era Charlestonian life. People in the South were different, and I was often looked at as an outsider, a “damn Yankee.” As I grew into adulthood, I was able to acclimate socially by learning more about my community and the aspects of its history and heritage that were worth celebrating. I also had to come to terms with my own personal privilege as a young, White, middle-class female—something that I may not have had to confront in quite the same way had I spent these formative years in Brooklyn.

Still, I believed that the experiences and stories of marginalized members of the community were not being told and/or appreciated in the way that they deserved. I once heard the saying that “history is written by the victors,” and I wanted to find more effective ways to create discourse and meaning from the unwritten accounts of history. Ultimately, I believe that this is what led me to the field of counseling. Having a greater understanding of my privilege and social positionality, I wanted to take my knowledge and passion and use them to elevate and honor the voices of the voiceless, which ultimately begins with listening to those voices. My novice (or one might say naïve) perspective on wanting to save the world through therapy became more realistic over time, but I never lost the drive to explore how the profession can harness the power of language to engender more authentic conversations about diversity and multiculturalism. Research, specifically the study of language, is now the vehicle through which I hope to stimulate these conversations, and these manuscripts are intended to examine the dialogue that our society and our profession are currently using (with sex and sexuality) or the dialogue that they need to have (examining the culture of Hip Hop) to be more effective educators and clinicians.

The paradigm that is foundational to my approach to research is social constructivism, or interpretivism, because its major premise is that reality is co-constructed based on the lived

experiences and interactions of the individuals or population(s) under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the case of these manuscripts, the population under study is the written word, whether found in academic publications or in the lyrics printed on the inside of one's favorite Hip Hop album. Regardless of where they might have originated, words are the building blocks by which we as a species construct and communicate our understanding of the world around us, and the interactions between them create a tapestry of depth and imagery that can have significant impacts on one's development.

I have long appreciated the power that words have, but it has not been until the latter part of my graduate career that I have acquired the tools and the knowledge necessary to deepen my personal understanding of their potency. Utilizing a variety of approaches, I have chosen to explore areas of the field that I believed were neglected in my graduate training and that could potentially open new doors of understanding to future clinicians such as myself. As a researcher, I hope these manuscripts create new opportunities to really examine how words can shape an entire discourse on topics like human sexuality or how through lyricism they can empower marginalized and oppressed populations in times when it is easy to feel hopeless. To bring the research full circle, I challenge and encourage the reader to take these words and translate them into meaningful action within the profession and the communities in which we live and work.

Overview of the Scientific Knowledge

In a review of the literature on gender, sexuality, and their discourse in counseling and the cultural movement of Hip Hop, four primary themes emerged. These topics were: (a) sex and human sexuality are prominent concepts in both counseling and Hip Hop, (b) the verbiage used to describe gender and sexuality has a significant impact on how the reader/listener perceives these topics, (c) corpus linguistics and machine learning technology are powerful tools for

gaining a better understanding of the language related to sex and sexuality in the academic discourse as well as the Hip Hop catalog, and (d) gender and sex as a construct have evolved over time in both academic discourse and the Hip Hop lexicon.

Perhaps the most widely known and often referenced psychological theory was introduced by Sigmund Freud in the form of psychoanalytic theory (Lewis, 1981). The major premises of this theory were built upon the foundation of what was termed the psychosexual stages of development, which introduced concepts such as libido and the Oedipus complex (Cherry, 2020). Since that time, psychology and ultimately the counseling profession have had to acknowledge the role that sex and sexuality play in people's lives and personal development. During the crucial adolescent period of development, much of what young people learn about sex and sexuality comes from the media and pop culture, and Hip Hop has had a major impact on the discourse regarding sexuality (Herd, 2015). While misogynistic lyrical and visual depictions of women in Hip Hop abound, female artists in Hip Hop are starting to change the game and are rewriting the script on female sexuality. From an ethical and cultural standpoint, counselors and counselor educators would benefit from a better understanding of the cultural dialogue surrounding sex and sexuality.

Obviously, counselors and emcees are going to approach the topic of sex and sexuality using very different verbiage, so it is important to highlight the impact that word choice has on the discourse about topics as complex as fetishism, male-female gender roles, and power dynamics in the bedroom. Baker (2018) wrote that it is not uncommon for generally neutral or innocuous words to take on a more negative tone based on the context in which they are presented. On the flip side, words that would generally be frowned upon if used in a counseling session (e.g., bitch) might take on an entirely new and more positive meaning in a more cultural

context (bad/boss/queen bitch). As such, corpus linguistics and methodologies such as Latent Dirichlet Allocation could prove to be powerful assets in gaining a better understanding of how language (the primary means of communication within counseling) can be used to address, describe, and give meaning to the experiences of the populations and individuals that historically have had trouble being heard and understood.

Human sexuality and cultural phenomena such as Hip Hop are not completely alien to the world of counselor research, but often topics such as these are explored more qualitatively and fail to provide more tangible insights in terms of language use and the overall academic discourse in these areas (Hargons et al., 2017). Corpus linguistics and machine learning technology are capable of discerning more nuanced aspects of research publications, such as sentiment, collocation, and topical structure. This type of data would provide a valuable accompaniment to similar qualitative studies and could potentially elucidate new directions for research (Baker, 2018). From a multicultural perspective, counselors are trained to be very intentional and cognizant in their word choices in clinical (and other) settings, and these methodologies allow the profession to apply the same concept to the broader academic discourse. Language is important, and sexually marginalized (LGBTQ+) communities as well as BIPOC communities have long suffered the weight of verbiage used as a means of oppression. Using tools such as corpus linguistics and machine learning technology, counselor educators and clinicians can harness the power of language, use it as an instrument for social justice, and deepen understanding of marginalized populations.

While there are a variety of complex social and psychological constructs that researchers have attempted to quantify and better understand over the years, perhaps none have been as polarizing and nuanced as human sexuality. From a historical and cultural perspective, the way

that literature and music portray sex, gender, and sexuality inevitably have an impact on how society views them. Academic literature has echoed history in many ways when it comes to sexuality. American sexual culture especially has been rooted in shame and repression, and much of the early psychological research has focused more on the negative aspects of human sexuality (e.g., sexual trauma, sexual deviance, fetishism; Arakawa et al., 2012). Within Hip Hop, the way that artists address gender and sexuality has also undergone an evolution. Lyrical depictions that once objectified women and glorified hyper masculine traits and stereotypes have developed into a more diverse and inclusive lyrical landscape, much of which is due to the proliferation and growing popularity of female emcees (Herd, 2014).

Description of Manuscript 1

Rationale Manuscript 1

Manuscript 1 addresses gaps in the research by examining the academic discourse on sex and human sexuality in counseling and draws comparisons between how researchers discuss these crucial developmental topics in the counseling field versus the discourse in other mental health professions. While there are journals that explicitly address sex and sexuality within the realm of counseling literature, this manuscript focuses on the journals published and promulgated by the primary professional organization in the field, the American Counseling Association (ACA), and compares them to the research published by the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). When reviewing the ACA flagship journals and perusing their scopes, the mention of sex and/or sexuality is egregiously absent, further justifying the need for research in this area. If sex and sexuality are notably absent in these publications, then counselors need to remain cognizant of where it might be absent in

their training programs and clinical settings. In addition, manuscript 1 seeks to disrupt current practice by shining a spotlight on an integral area of the field that has long been neglected utilizing a methodology that is only beginning to realize its potential within counselor research (Baker, 2010).

Target Journal

The target journal for manuscript 1 is *Adulthoodspan*, a journal that focuses on issues related to human development throughout the lifespan. This journal was selected for potential publication because of the developmental importance of sex and human sexuality and its relevance in clinical practice and counselor education. *Adulthoodspan* also has a diverse catalog of articles related to sex and sexuality, including “The Relationship of Sexual Values and Emotional Awareness to Sexual Activity in Young Adulthood” (Balkin et al., 2009), “Areas of Marital Dissatisfaction Among Long-Term Couples” (Duba, et al., 2012), Sexuality in Older Adults: A Deconstructionist Perspective” (Huffstetler, 2011), and “Sexuality and Perimenopause: What Counselors Need to Know” (Daire & Fairall, 2011). *Adulthoodspan* had a journal citation Index of 0.24 in 2021 and .19 in 2020. This manuscript is also preregistered with the Open Science Foundation (<https://osf.io/9ngxb/>).

Research Questions

Based on a review of the literature pertaining to sex and human sexuality in counseling, four research questions were formulated to guide the study’s design:

RQ1: Compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, what words are used with a greater frequency in counseling journals?

RQ2: Compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, what words are used with a lesser frequency in counseling journals?

RQ3: What words are most associated with the word stem “sex” in counseling journals?

RQ4: What words are most associated with the word stem “sex” in APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus?

Preregistration of these research questions can be found at <https://osf.io/9ngxb/>.

Methodology

Manuscript 1 utilized a corpus linguistic design that provided a measure of how the topics of sex and human sexuality are presented in the academic discourse within counseling and related fields in psychology (Weisser, 2016). Web of Science was used to compile the abstracts related to sex and sexuality within the ACA flagship journals, as well as the publications published by other professional organizations within psychology (APA, AAMFT, and NASW). The abstracts were converted to a .txt file and sorted into one of two Excel spreadsheets for analysis and comparison. One spreadsheet contained the abstracts for the study corpus (the ACA abstracts), and one contained the abstracts from the reference corpus (the abstracts from other professional publications related to psychotherapy).

Data Analyses

The abstracts were then analyzed using two software programs commonly utilized in the field of corpus linguistics: *AntConc* 4.2 and *R*. *AntConc* 4.2 measures the keywords that occur in a body of text by analyzing their frequency compared to a reference body of text (Anthony, 2022). The strength of these keywords is a measure known as *keyness* (Brezina, 2018). *R* is a statistical software that analyzes and depicts data and can provide a visual representation of collocation or the strength of association between node words (in this case, words with the word stem “sex”) and the words that surround them in a body of text (Brezina, 2018; R Core Team, 2013).

Description of Manuscript 2

Rationale for Manuscript 2

Manuscript 2 took a deep dive into the topical structure of Hip Hop music and explored the thematic and narrative differences between male and female lyricists within the genre. As feminist perspectives have enriched the discourse within the field of counseling, the emergent female voices in Hip Hop offer varying perspectives on important sociocultural topics such as status, gender, and sexuality. This manuscript examined gaps in the literature regarding these and other topics and themes that are predominant in both Hip Hop music and Hip Hop culture and that deepen understanding of the role that gender plays in the shaping of this cultural phenomenon. In addition, manuscript 2 utilized machine learning methodology to dispel genre and gender stereotypes within Hip Hop and elucidate the ways in which the culture has become more inclusive and diverse as it has evolved.

Target Journal

The target journal for manuscript two is the *Psychology of Music* journal, which is published by the Society for Research in Psychology of Music and Music Education. The *Psychology of Music* focuses on research pertaining to the scientific and psychological aspects of music and how it can be applied in sociocultural, developmental, and therapeutic contexts. The *Psychology of Music* was selected as the target journal for this manuscript because it publishes diverse articles utilizing a wide range of sophisticated and cutting-edge methodologies. One of its core values also includes the open and prolific exchange of ideas and findings relevant to the world of music and psychology. Hip Hop as a genre is a fantastic subject for gaining a better understanding of how music can shape culture and society's conceptualization of topics as complex as human sexuality. The *Psychology of Music* has an impact factor of 1.904 and a 5-

year impact factor of 2.384. Some of the articles published in the *Psychology of Music* include “Music Genre as Cognitive Schema: Extramusical Associations With Country and Hip-Hop Music” (Shevy, 2008), and “Easy Listening? An Analysis of Infidelity in Top Pop, Hip-Hop, and Country Song Lyrics over 25 Years” (Alexopoulos & Taylor, 2020). This manuscript is also preregistered with the Open Science Foundation (<https://osf.io/harvj/>).

Research Questions

Based on a review of the literature pertaining to Hip Hop music and the growing number of female artists within the genre, three research questions were formulated to guide the study’s design:

RQ1: What is the topical structure of the Hip Hop register produced by male artists?

RQ2: What is the topical structure of the Hip Hop register produced by female artists?

RQ3: Does the topical structure of the Hip Hop register differ by gender?

Methodology

The methodology used in this manuscript is a form of machine learning known as Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). LDA uses an approach called “bag of words,” meaning that the words from each text will be processed independently regardless of where they are located within the text (as if all the words were thrown randomly into a bag; Wei & Croft, 2006). The texts, or Hip Hop lyrics, were sorted into two separate corpora, one comprised of lyrics performed by male artists and the other by female artists. Utilizing Bayesian probabilities, LDA analyzed the corpora, allowing the topics to emerge organically from the texts and sorting them into their respective categories (e.g., “Bentley” may be sorted into the “vehicle” topic category; Singh, 2017). Gensim is the preferred program in R Studio that is used to implement LDA (Prabhakaran, 2018).

Data Analysis

For RQs 1–2, each corpus (male and female) were analyzed utilizing LDA to identify the latent topics in each corpus. Once all the words in each corpus were assigned to their respective topics, they were each assigned a coherence score, indicating their relevance to each topic category (Tang, 2019). The relative strength or coherence in each corpus was visually depicted using a heatmap. For RQ3, the difference in strength levels for each subcorpus was determined using a log likelihood test (G^2).

Glossary of Specialized Terms

Corpus linguistics: a quantitative methodology that analyzes large bodies of text to help researchers identify linguistic patterns that might provide insights into a number of psychological, social, historical, or cultural aspects of the language therein (Baker, 2018).

Hip Hop: a musical genre and cultural movement born out of Bronx, NY, in the late 1970s that scholars identify as having six primary components: DJ-ing, emceeing (or rapping), break dancing, writing/lyricism, and knowledge of self (McCollum, 2019). Hip Hop has historically provided a voice to marginalized and oppressed populations and has evolved into a multibillion dollar business and global phenomenon.

Hip Hop feminism: a sociopolitical discourse spawned from the experiences of Black women in Hip Hop that arose as a countermovement to the predominantly male dominated genre. The movement is generationally specific and provides exegesis and critical insights into the uniquely feminist perspective on Hip Hop culture (Durham et al., 2013).

Keyness: an analysis within corpus linguistics that provides keywords that appear with more frequency within a given text (or corpus) compared to a reference corpus (Brezina, 2018).

Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA): a form of machine learning that uses probabilistic modeling to determine prominent themes in large bodies of text (Blei et al., 2003).

Sex: primarily refers to the biological, physiological, and gender aspects of human sexuality.

Sex positivity: “An ideology that promotes, with respect to gender and sexuality, being open-minded, non-judgmental, and respectful of personal autonomy, given that there is consent” (Ivanski & Kohut, 2017, p. 223).

Sexuality: encompasses the sociocultural, behavioral, and philosophical components of human sexuality; includes values, attitudes, ideologies, and sexual identities that impact an individual’s mental, emotional, and interpersonal experiences regarding sex (Hargons et al., 2017).

Thematic Links

Both manuscripts utilize a language processing methodology and explore issues related to gender and sexuality. Corpus linguistics and machine learning provide a unique vantage point from which one can identify important patterns and latent variables that are relevant to the field of counseling and guide counselors in creating more effective discourses in academia and within the clinical realm. Diversity issues related to gender and/or human sexuality are omnipresent in the work that professional counselors do, and both manuscripts examine the impact that these complicated constructs have on counseling training/research methods as well as inform understanding of culturally significant movements such as Hip Hop.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into four chapters, with Chapter 1 providing an overview of the rationale, research questions, target journals, methodology, and data analysis processes for

each study. Chapter 1 also includes a glossary of specialized terms and a discussion of the thematic links between the two manuscripts. Chapter 2 is the first study manuscript, which analyzed the academic discourse on sex and human sexuality in the two preeminent counselor education journals. Chapter 3 is the second study manuscript, which utilized machine learning technology to glean and compare prominent topics and patterns from male and female Hip Hop artists' lyrical catalogs. Finally, Chapter 4 provides a summary of the major findings from each study and offers commentary on the contributions that these findings may offer the extant literature and the counseling profession.

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Chapter 2: Manuscript 1

Let's Talk About Sex: The Academic Discourse on Sex in Counseling Journals

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Abstract

As CACREP is considering moving forward with incorporating the topics of sex and sexuality into its 2024 revised standards, the need to examine how counseling has addressed human sexuality in its academic discourse becomes even more pressing. The present study explored how the counseling research literature discusses sex and sexuality compared to research literature from other related mental health fields. Using corpus linguistic methodology, this study focused on keyword analysis and collocation to provide a closer look at the use of the word stem sex* in the literature and the concepts/verbiage most closely related to sex and sexuality. Keyness results indicated that there is a greater proliferation of keywords associated with counselors and the counseling profession within the counseling literature, and collocation results demonstrated an overall tendency toward more sex-negative terminology compared to research from the noncounseling professional literature. These findings indicate an overall more negative sentiment in the counseling research related to sex and sexuality versus the academic discourse in allied professions. Reasons for these findings along with implications for clinical practice and future research will also be discussed.

Keywords: sex, counselor education, corpus linguistics, academic discourse, keyness, collocation

Let's Talk About Sex: The Academic Discourse on Sex in Counseling Journals

When things don't work well in the bedroom, they don't work well in the living room either.

- William Masters (1984)

Sex and sexuality can make people clam up whenever they come up in casual conversation and it can be difficult, even in the most intimate and confidential settings, to have an open dialogue about sexual preferences and behaviors. Of all the people with whom one should be comfortable discussing intimate topics such as sex and sexuality, one would think that a trusted professional who knows your deepest and darkest secrets and who is legally bound to keep client information confidential should be at the top of the trust hierarchy. But what if that trusted professional has little education or exposure to research on these touchy topics? As the quote by William Masters suggests, being able to discuss the intimate areas of people's lives is crucial in addressing interactions in the not-so-intimate contexts of people's lives. Considering this perspective, it is difficult to understand why sex and human sexuality, natural and healthy domains of human development, remain neglected in counseling and counselor training.

There were two primary objectives of the present study. First, the study sought to highlight the gaps in the existing literature by answering research questions in an important developmental area of the field that has long gone unexplored (Farooq, 2017). Studies using corpus linguistics have allowed researchers to analyze large bodies of text, or corpora, in a wide variety of contexts including literature, historical documents, online chat rooms, and academic writing (Pennebaker, 2011). In psychotherapy, corpus linguistic techniques such as language processing and word count-based programs have been used to study important topics within the field, including the therapeutic alliance and emotion processing (Tanana et al., 2020). Using these computational programs and methods has simplified tedious and labor-intensive processes

traditionally used in the field, such as transcription or outside observation (Tanana et al., 2020). Regarding language and sexuality, Baker (2018) pointed out that it was rare to find studies about human sexuality using corpus linguistics until around the mid-2000s. Research about sex and sexuality within the realm of counseling is already scant, but there are no studies that have utilized corpus linguistics to gain a better understanding of how sexuality is addressed within the field's flagship publications (Sanabria & Murray, 2018). Second, this study aimed to expand the knowledge base within counseling and counselor education by disrupting current practice (Tadejewski & Hewer, 2011). Between 30% and 50% of couples in the United States report experiencing some form of sexual dysfunction, and sexual problems affect multiple genders and multiple populations and manifest in a variety of different ways (Flynn et al., 2015; Hipp & Carlson, 2019). The present study sought to gain a better understanding of the academic discourse on sex and sexuality within the field of counseling so that preservice counselors and counselor educators can become more informed on whether and how the profession attempts to address these challenging and prevalent issues. Furthermore, the present study will highlight future directions for research within an area of the field that has been long neglected.

In a review of academic discourse in the counseling journals published by the American Counseling Association (ACA), six key topics emerged. These topics were: (a) accreditation and training standards, (b) professional ethics and practice standards, (c) a lack of research on sexuality and sexuality education in counseling, (d) sex as a dual construct, (e) sex positive and sex negative discourse in sex research, and (f) the preponderance of quantitative methodologies used to study sex and sexuality. After these six topics are explored, the research questions that guided this study are delineated.

The 2014 ACA code of ethics is clear in regard to competency and the counselor's responsibility to their clients. Section C.2.a states that "Counselors must only practice within the boundaries of their competence based on their education, training, supervised experience, state and national professional credentials, and appropriate professional experience" (ACA, 2014, p. 8). While this is a logical and important mandate, it is impractical when it comes to working with clients on issues related to sex and sexuality due to the lack of training and education in this area within counselor education programs. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) sets the standards for educating future counselors but requires coursework only in human sexuality for counselors who specialize in marriage and family therapy or rehabilitation counseling (Hipp & Carlson, 2019). Even the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) lacks clear guidance on the type and frequency of training that counselors should obtain to become nationally certified (Sanabria & Murray, 2018). Though some counseling programs do have coursework on human sexuality, the guidelines as to what should be covered are ambiguous at best (Sanabria & Murray, 2018). Consequently, it is no surprise that published research related to sex and sexuality is scant in the flagship academic journals in the field of counseling.

In their content analysis study of sex research in counseling psychology, Hargons et al. (2017) conducted a simple academic database search of the term "sex research" to better understand how psychology has measured up in terms of research in this area. They found that other fields—including medicine (166,944), biomedical sciences (82,859), social sciences (41,839), and life sciences (76,949)—have focused more attention on researching human sexuality than the entirety of psychology as a field (40,399; Hargons et al., 2017). The research that has been conducted within the mental health professions points to a significant deficit in

training, practitioner ability, and confidence in discussing issues related to sex and sexuality with clients (Wilson, 2019). Counseling as a profession is relatively new within the field of mental health and psychology, and it is evident that there is a clear paucity of research on sex, human sexuality, and sexuality education within the counseling literature. Wilson pointed out that updated information and additional data on the specifics of counselor training and curricula in sexuality are desperately needed.

To gain a better understanding of this area of research within counseling, it is important to also gain a better understanding of sex as a dual construct and the language that is used to discuss topics related to sex and sexuality. The World Health Organization (WHO) makes an important distinction between sex and sexuality in terms of how they are discussed in research and the health sciences: *Sex* refers to the biological/genetic and gender component of this construct, while *sexuality* encompasses a wide range of more abstract concepts with a variety of sociocultural, sociopolitical, and behavioral implications (World Health Organization, 1975). Hargons et al. (2017) included attitudes, values, sexual identities, and a variety of subtopics such as eroticism, fetishism, reproduction, and desire within the confines of this construct.

In many ways, the WHO's bifurcated definitions have set the research agenda on sex. As a result, the literature has also historically separated the study of this dual construct into two separate contexts: the sociocultural and the biological. Tolman and Diamond (2001), writing about desegregating sexuality research, stated that:

Researchers that take both of these contexts into account will be best able to pose and answer complex questions about the nature of human sexual experience and the extent to which it is differentiated by gender, age, cultural background, historical epoch, and so on.
(p. 34)

At this point in time, little is known about the influence of this complex duality on counseling and counselor education research.

Previous research on biases and positive versus negative discourse on sexuality in the social sciences has found that a disproportionate amount of research has been focused on negative aspects of sex and sexuality, such as abuse, deviant behaviors, and sexual trauma (Arakawa et al., 2012; Hargons et al., 2017). Hargons et al. discussed the concept of sex positivity, or a theoretical framework that embraces three core values: pleasure, freedom, and diversity. These values and the concept of sex positivity are multidimensional and complex, but they emphasize in numerous ways the important relationship between sex and language and how mental health professionals communicate about this topic, especially in the research literature. Baker (2018) argued that corpus linguistics as an analytical methodology for the study of language is uniquely capable of examining the human sexuality discourses from large bodies of text. Such an examination represents a powerful tool for analyzing the research on sex and sexuality within the field of counseling, especially when considering the breadth of research in this topic area amongst other professional publications within psychology.

Most of the research done in this area up to this point has been quantitative in nature, and some scholars argue that quantitative methodologies fail to appropriately capture the complicated nature of experiences with sex and sexuality in counseling and counselor education (Hargons et al., 2017; Wilson, 2019). Corpus linguistics is indeed quantitative and computational in nature, but unlike other forms of linguistic analysis, it allows the researcher to dig deeper into the nuances of language by considering things such as grammatical agency, figurative language, and context (Baker, 2018). Utilizing corpus linguistic methodologies to examine social phenomena in literature provides a foundation upon which the researcher can begin to synthesize and analyze

important patterns within the appropriate social, historical, or cultural contexts (Baker, 2018). Sex and sexuality are very contextually dependent constructs that can be better understood through the utilization of both computational and human elements. Corpus linguistic analytical tools are essential for gaining a better understanding of how these constructs are addressed in the academic discourse within the field of counseling compared to other professions and professional organizations within the field of psychology, namely the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the National Association of Social Work (NASW).

Given the aforementioned, four research questions were designed to guide the present study. These were:

RQ1: Compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, what words are used with a greater frequency in counseling journals?

RQ2: Compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, what words are used with a lesser frequency in counseling journals?

RQ3: What words are most associated with the word stem “sex” in counseling journals?

RQ4: What words are most associated with the word stem “sex” in APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus?

Preregistration of these research questions can be found at <https://osf.io/9ngxb/>.

Method

Design

This study utilized a corpus linguistic design (Weisser, 2016). The variables identified for this study were: (a) keyness topic, (b) collocation, (c) profession sponsoring journal (counseling/not counseling [MFT/social work/psychology]), (d) article topic (sex/not sex), and

(e) word stem sex* (yes/no). In terms of the level of measure, keyness and collocation were continuous, and the others were binominal. The unit of analysis in this study was tokens (i.e., words).

The a priori power analysis χ^2 test to determine the needed sample size was accomplished via G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2009). The effect size for the χ^2 test is Cohen's w (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2003). The effect size inputted for the power analysis was the average of the Cohen's w reported by Harned (2004). The following input parameters were employed: (a) test family = χ^2 tests; (b) statistical test = goodness-of-fit tests: contingency tables; (c) power analysis = compute required sample size, given α , power, and effect size; (d) effect size $w = 0.18$; (e) α error probability = .05; (f) power (1- β error probability) = 0.80; and (g) degrees of freedom = 1. The G*Power 3.1 output parameters were: (a) total sample size = 527 and (b) actual power = 0.80.

Study Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was academic writing, and the subregister was ACA peer-reviewed counseling journals. The scope was abstracts from peer reviewed articles in journals sponsored by the ACA that were published between 2016 and 2022 where the word stem sex* appeared anywhere in the title, abstract, and/or keywords. A complete list of these journals can be obtained on this research project's Open Science Foundation (OSF) webpage (<https://osf.io/9ngxb/>).

The files for this corpus were obtained through a Web of Science reference search. When conducting the search, the sources were limited to articles printed in the journals published by the ACA that contain the word stem sex* as the topic (in the title, abstract, and keywords).

Preprocessing

The selected articles and abstracts were extracted directly from Web of Science and saved in an Excel spreadsheet (designated specifically for ACA journals) that contained identifying components for each article (including journal, author, year published, abstract). Then, the abstracts for each article were converted into a .txt file removing all non-ASCII characters and stopwords. Stopwords are frequently used but generally contentless words found in a corpus, such as “a” and “the” (Schofield et al., 2017).

Reference Corpus

Register, Scope, and Sources

The register was academic writing, and the subregister was peer-reviewed journals within the fields of psychology, social work, and marriage and family therapy. The scope was abstracts from peer-reviewed articles in journals sponsored by the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), and the National Association of Social Work (NASW) that were published between 2016 and 2022 where the word stem *sex** appears anywhere in the title, abstract, and/or keywords. A complete list of these journals can be obtained on this research project’s OSF webpage (<https://osf.io/9ngxb/>).

The files for this corpus were obtained through a Web of Science reference search. When conducting the search, the sources were limited to articles printed in the professional journals published by the aforementioned professional associations within psychology that contain the word stem *sex** as the topic (in the title, abstract, and keywords).

Preprocessing

The selected articles and abstracts were extracted directly from Web of Science and saved in an Excel spreadsheet (designated specifically for APA, NASW, and AAMFT journals)

that contained identifying components for each article (including journal, author, year published, abstract). Then, the abstracts for each article were converted into a .txt file removing all non-ASCII characters and stopwords. Stopwords are frequently used but generally contentless words found in a corpus, such as “a” and “the” (Schofield et al., 2017).

Measures

Keywords/Keyness

When analyzing a corpus (or body of text), there are several ways to describe the linguistic patterns that emerge in context. One important measure used in corpus linguistics is known as keyness. *Keyness* is a measure that identifies certain keywords that are used more frequently in the corpus of interest compared to a reference corpus (Golparvar & Barabadi, 2020). Brezina (2018) stated that “keywords are important when identifying key concepts in discourses” (p. 66). As such, these words can help identify certain vocabulary that is more commonly found in specific genres or bodies of literature, including academic writing.

Positive Keyness

Words that have positive keyness occur more often than would be expected by chance in the text, indicating that the keywords are related to the text’s “aboutness” (Scott, 2020).

Negative Keyness

Words that have negative keyness occur less often than would be expected by chance in the text compared with a reference corpus (Scott, 2020).

Node Word

Node words are best defined as the words of interest in a corpus (Brezina, 2018). Node words are the target variables used in linguistic analysis and can provide useful information about the corpus of interest (Brezina, 2018). By analyzing the context in which node words are

used, patterns emerge that allow the researcher to quantify meaningful arrangements within the text.

Collocation

Collocation is a measure that identifies the strength of association between node words and the words surrounding them in a corpus (Brezina, 2018). The words that co-occur with statistical significance in relation to the node words are known as *collocates* (Brezina, 2018). Collocation provides information on the frequency and exclusivity of commonly co-occurring words in the corpus of interest, providing helpful insight as to the nature of the relationship between the two words.

Apparatus

AntConc 4.2

AntConc 4.2 is free online software used to do data-driven language processing in corpus linguistics research (Anthony, 2022). The software compares the corpus of interest with a reference corpus to identify the keywords that occur with outstanding frequency. The program then lists the words in order of strength of frequency, or keyness.

R

R is an open-source statistical language that is commonly used for statistical data analysis and graphing (R Team, 2013). The tidyverse package was used for data manipulation and the ggraph and ggplot libraries to produce the collocation plots. Other supplementary libraries were used for minor functions and adjustments, including widyr, SnowballC, readxl, stringr, tidytext, igraph, ggplot2, wordcloud, and tidygraph. All packages were available on The Comprehensive R Archive Network (CRAN). Within the collocation graphs, the highest-ranking words are closest to the stem word *sex** while the further words rank the lowest. The size of the

node is indicative of the raw word frequency in the associated corpus. The larger the size of the node the higher the word frequency, and the smaller the size the lower the word frequency in the corpus.

Data Analysis

RQs 1–2 involved a study of word keyness. The inferential statistical analysis used was the log-likelihood ratio test (G^2) with the effect size employed being mutual information (MI). The alpha is $p < .001$. All analyses were completed using Antconc 4.2.4 (Anthony, 2022). RQs 3–4 contain a study of word collocations. The collocation parameters for RQs 3–4 were as follows: statistic name = MI, statistic cut-off value = 3, left and right span = 5, minimum collocate frequency (C) = 5, minimum collocation frequency (NC) = 1, and filter(s) = none. All analyses occurred via the tidyverse package in the Comprehensive R Archive Network (R Team, 2013).

Results

In terms of RQ1, compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, the following top three words used with a greater frequency (positive keyness) in counseling journals were “counseling,” “counselors,” and “career.” A list of the top 10 identified keywords (positive and negative) can be found in Table 2.1 with a complete listing available on the project’s website: <https://osf.io/9ngxb/>. Regarding RQ2, compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, the top three words used with a lesser frequency (negative keyness) in counseling journals were “risk,” “behavior,” and “associated.” A complete listing available on the project’s website can be found at <https://osf.io/9ngxb/>.

For RQ3, a collocation graph of the words most associated with the node word “sex” in the counseling abstract corpus is represented in in Figure 2.1. The collocates of the six most used

words containing the word stem *sex** are depicted in Figure 2.2 with their associated node words. The strongest collocate was “orientation.” Concerning RQ4, a collocation graph of the words most associated with the node word “sex” in the APA, MFT, and NASW abstract corpus is represented in in Figure 2.3. The collocates of the 20 most used words containing the word stem *sex** are depicted in Figure 2.4 with their associated node words. As in the counseling abstract corpus, the strongest collocate was “orientation.”

Discussion

This study examined the academic discourse on sex and sexuality within the field of counseling compared to other fields with a psychotherapy focus. Using corpus linguistic methodologies, the RQ1 examined which words were used more frequently in counseling journal abstracts with a focus on human sexuality compared to articles with the same focus in professional journals published by the APA, AAMFT, and the NASW. RQ2 explored which words were used with less frequency in the counseling journal abstracts compared with the abstracts published by the same aforementioned professional organizations. RQ3 examined which words are most associated with the word stem *sex** in the counseling journal abstracts, and RQ4 explored this same association within the other professional journal abstracts published by APA, AAMFT, and NASW.

As one examines the results from RQ1, two constellations of words emerge. The first constellation contains words specific to counseling (e.g., counselors). There are two potential reasons for this result. First, the subject matter in the counseling corpus is targeted at counselors and counselor educators, so naturally this corpus would use terms related to counseling and counselors statistically more often than the corpus compiled from the APA, NASW, and AAMFT journal abstracts. An alternative reason has to do with differences regarding the concept

of professional identity between the former and the latter. The counseling profession has spent many years attempting to define itself more clearly, and the ACA has recognized that verbiage is an important aspect of that definition (Kaplan & Gladding, 2014). As a result, it is no surprise to see these “guild preferences” reflected in the terminology utilized within journals published by ACA.

The second constellation contains words specific to gender identity/sexual orientation (e.g., lgb*). This constellation can be examined using two different lenses. From a diversity standpoint, the field of counseling recognizes the unique needs of marginalized populations such as the LGBTQ+ community, and the multicultural and social justice competencies are commonly utilized as a framework for ethical practice with diverse populations (Ratts et al., 2016). Arguably, the best way to enhance clinicians’ self-awareness, knowledge, and skills is through research, which might account for the statistically higher frequency of terms such as “lgb,” “gay,” and “lesbian,” though these terms are a narrow representation of the complex concept that is sexual identity/orientation. The second lens has to do with professional research prioritization. Though the journal abstracts in both corpuses all contained the stem word sex*, this second constellation indicates that the research in the psychotherapy corpus (the reference corpus) was much less focused on sex in terms of gender and orientation and more on the complex and nuanced construct that is sexuality (Hargons et al., 2017). One of the interesting outliers was the term “ldr” which stands for “long distance relationship”; this token indicates that perhaps the counseling profession conceptualizes sex and gender identity in terms of interpersonal relationships or patterns/circumstances that might impact those relationships.

RQ2 used a negative keyness approach to look at which words were used with statistically less frequency in the counseling corpus versus the reference corpus, and these

findings suggest a more neutral, scientific, or clinical discourse around sex and human sexuality. The terms with the greatest negative keyness are ones that would be found in most scientific publications that do any kind of human research, such as “control,” “function,” “associated,” and “n” for number of subjects. To be clear, the proportion of abstracts from the reference corpus leaned heavily toward articles published by APA, and psychologists have historically done more and published more research than the other three professional organizations.

Perhaps the more compelling aspect of these findings relates to the collocates identified in the counseling abstract corpus—namely, the overall negative connotation of a majority of the words most closely associated with the node word “sex.” While words such as “identity” and “orientation” have a more neutral sentiment, it is clear that terms such as “abuse,” “offenders,” “assault,” “unwanted,” and “victimization” convey a very disturbing and even violent association with the concept of sex and sexuality. In their discussion of sex positivity in counseling psychology research, Cruz et al. (2017) highlighted the belief that societies can be characterized as sex negative or sex positive based on how they conceptualize and discuss concepts and topics related to human sexuality (Bullough, 1976). While it is more accurate to describe the discourse on sex as being more on a spectrum than simply positive or negative, it stands to reason that like societies, professions could also be characterized somewhere on the spectrum in terms of how they conceptualize sex and sexuality. Based on the findings from the collocation analysis, it is certainly reasonable to surmise that counseling could be characterized as residing somewhere toward the negative end of this spectrum. Contextualizing sex and sexuality in this fashion is contrary to the values touted by the counseling profession and detracts from the healthier discourse that draws attention to the more positive, healthy, and integral role that sex plays in people’s lives (Cruz et al., 2017).

That being said, clients who are seeking services for issues related to sex are most likely not speaking to their counselors about how healthy and fulfilling their sex lives are. Individuals who struggle with any mental health concern are more likely than the general population to also experience issues related to their sex lives, so if sex or sexuality is broached in the therapeutic setting than it would make sense to prioritize experiences with the greatest psychological impact such as sexual assault (Blalock & Wood, 2015). The alarming reality is that despite how often these topics come up, counselors still endorse a lack of ability, confidence, competence, and comfort with addressing most issues regarding sex (Wilson, 2019). The findings from this analysis suggest that changing our dialogue and expanding our vocabulary regarding sex and human sexuality in the counseling research might be a good place to start.

As in RQ2, the collocation results for RQ4 imply an overall more clinical discourse in terms of the verbiage most closely associated with the word stem sex* within the noncounseling journals (“orientation,” “minority,” “function,” “dysfunction”). It is important to note, however, that within this corpus, more positive terms such as “satisfaction” and “desire” were more highly collocated with the wordstem sex* than the tokens “abuse” and “assault” as in the counseling corpus. Most of the journals where these collocates occur (“satisfaction” and “desire”) were from the APA and AAMFT journals geared specifically toward topics related to sex and sexuality, such as the *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* (AAMFT) and the *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity* journal (APA). This finding could indicate that because of their sex-oriented focus, these journals may have a more consistent sex positive discourse. Arakawa et al. (2013) noted in their analysis of sex positivity in academic literature that researchers in human sexuality are most likely more socially and politically liberal than

physicians, for example, and may be less wedded to the disease model that leans more sex-negative in terms of research.

When one takes the results of RQs 3–4 together, one may ask why the overall negative sentiment is present in the counseling literature compared to the APA, NASW, and AAMFT literature. To answer this, it is important to acknowledge the relative “youth” of our profession and explore the origins of counseling from a historical perspective. It was not until 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association removed the “diagnosis of homosexuality,” and the American Psychological Association did not make meaningful changes in terms of language pertaining to sexuality until the publication of its 6th and 7th editions of the *APA Publication Manual* (Noble, et al., 2021). ACA quickly followed suit, but there is a clear history of mental health professions building on the research and clinical experience of their predecessors and even contemporaries.

Sigmund Freud is often credited with integrating human sexuality into the practice of psychotherapy, beginning with his theory of psychosexual development in the early 20th century (Southern & Cade, 2011). The popularity of psychoanalysis and Freud’s theories ultimately expanded the field of psychiatry and resulted in a proliferation of new mental health professions, including psychology, counseling, social work, and family therapy. Counseling, however, has a unique origin story that began with the vocational work of Frank Parsons in the first three decades of the 20th century. Though he was a contemporary of Freud, Parsons was much less sensational in his philosophies and perspectives, and his writings were rife with more conservative Christian principles (Mann, 1950). Parsons never married, and his work focused more on social reform and vocational guidance than the intricacies of relationships and the human psyche (Mann, 1950).

Carl Rogers' person-centered approach to therapy and human relationships marked a significant turning point in the evolution of counseling, but even Rogers was encapsulated in traditional Christian ideology early in his life. Initially seeking to be a minister, Rogers attended Union Theological Seminary as a young man before obtaining a PhD in psychology (Rogers, 1967). Rogers later became more radical both personally and professionally and paved the way for future research on the nature of human relationships, intimacy, and human sexuality. Masters and Johnson's famous book, *Masters and Johnson on Sex and Human Loving*, even utilized some of Rogers' research. In his own book *Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives* on the topics of love, sex, and relationships, Rogers eschewed traditional relationship norms and sex roles (Biles, 2016; Schott, 1986). Discussing the need to reapproach humanistic ideology, Biles asserted that the culture of counseling as a whole has "given up interrogating the structures, conventions, and ideologies which so much condition our lives" (p. 334), and that "practitioners in a tradition founded on openness, trust and truth, while continuing to proclaim such values, seem no longer to be connected to their revolutionary force" (p. 334). As early as 1979, Wrenn encouraged counselors to try to change their perspective on what is most significant in their profession and in their lives and highlighted counselors' natural preference for the conventional in how they approached their clinical work. Regarding human sexuality, the findings in this study affirm the profession's latent preference for conventionality and the need for the profession to, as Wrenn (1979) put it, "see things differently" (p. 83).

There are two limitations to be mindful of when interpreting these results. First, only journals published by the primary professional organizations within four psychotherapy-oriented fields were included (ACA, APA, AAMFT, and NASW). We acknowledge that there are many valuable publications within these fields that are not promulgated by their respective professional

organizations. Second, research from certain specialties within mental health and medicine (e.g., sex therapy and psychiatry) were not included in the analysis but might have offered a fuller, more nuanced understanding of these findings.

When considered together, these findings suggest that the profession of counseling could benefit from a more balanced and holistic discourse in the research related to sex and human sexuality, and there is evidence for the value of a more interdisciplinary approach to research overall (Noble, et al., 2021). Sex is much more than gender, a type of abuse, or source of trauma; it is an integral part of being human and a fundamental aspect of counseling clinical competency. In sociology, there is a theory known as symbolic interactionism, which postulates that people create meaning from social interactions, and the meaning constructed from these interactions determine the manner in which they interact with the world and those around them (Rosenbaum, 2009). In many ways, these interactions with research in academia are how clinicians formulate understanding of the field, and the academic discourse is painting a very tainted picture. As Hargons et al. (2000) pointed out in their content analysis of sex in counseling psychology research, “sex positivity and social justice are inextricably linked” (p. 532). If counseling intends to wholly embrace the concept of social justice, then counseling research needs a paradigm shift in terms of how it discusses and depicts human sexuality, and counselor educators need to be mindful of the impact this kind of messaging may have on counselors-in-training. Furthermore, counseling programs should reflect upon incorporating more curriculum that addresses personal values toward sex, sexual ethics, and training future counselors to utilize more sex positive interventions (Wilson, 2019).

In terms of potential for further research, a more granular analysis of the counseling research versus other professional research could provide a better understanding of how

counseling linguistic patterns in publications differ when focusing on complex topics such as sex and sexuality. In addition, further exploration using sentiment analyses to provide contextual insights could be extremely useful, especially when one considers how the written word can shape the reader's understanding and perception of multifaceted and developmentally crucial concepts such as gender and sexuality.

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Table 2.1*Keyness Results (RQs 1–2)*

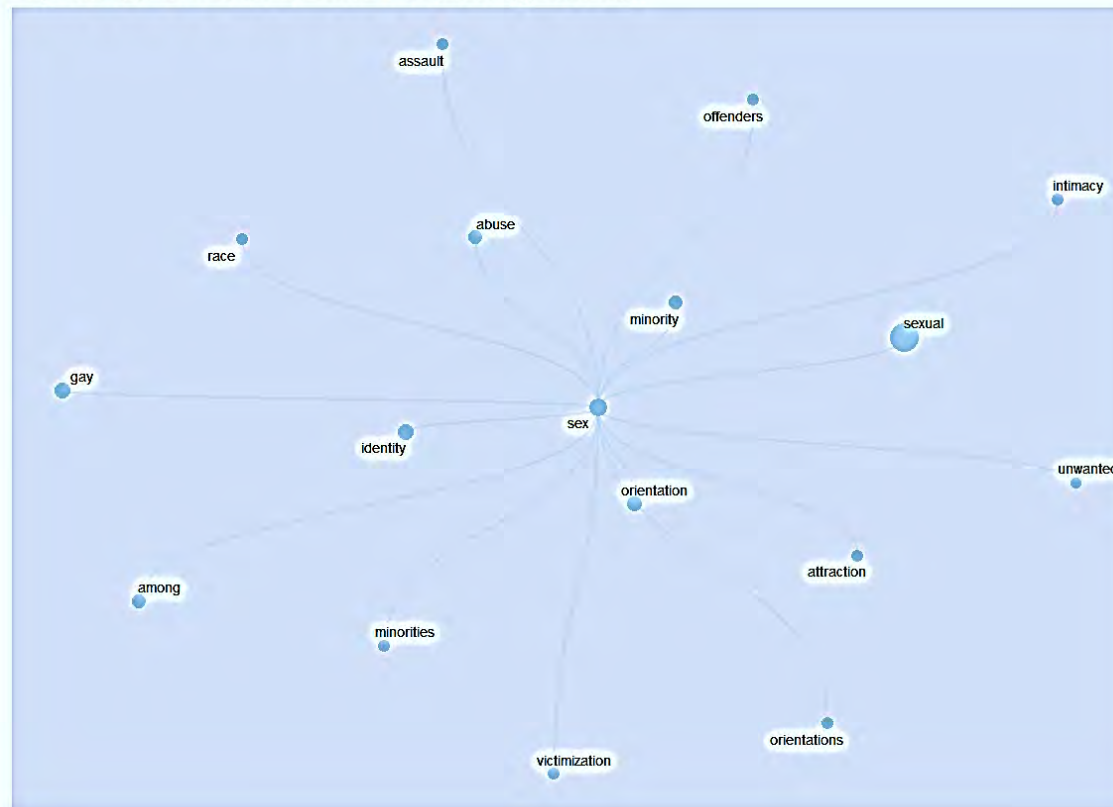
Direction	Rank	Type	Raw Count		Normalized Count		G^2	MI
			Study	Ref.	Study	Ref.		
Positive	1	counseling	320	245	6462.17	244.40	3398.5	3.59
	2	counselors	223	67	4503.32	66.84	3370.0	4.03
	3	career	131	63	2645.45	62.85	1707.0	3.84
	4	counselor	115	43	2322.34	42.89	1632.7	3.95
	5	clients	136	452	2746.42	450.89	445.11	2.30
	6	students	173	773	3493.61	771.10	389.29	1.96
	7	lgb	79	201	1595.35	200.51	345.02	2.58
	8	identity	172	840	3473.41	837.94	341.03	1.85
	9	lesbian	140	602	2827.20	600.52	331.94	2.00
	10	ldr ^a	16	0	323.11	0.00	323.91	4.41
Negative	1	risk	48	2882	969.33	2876.25	61.75	-1.52
	2	behavior	33	2323	666.41	2318.36	57.60	-1.75
	3	associated	38	2219	767.32	2214.57	46.14	-1.48
	4	function	5	786	100.97	784.43	29.32	-2.90
	5	studies	31	1565	626.02	1561.88	27.27	-1.28
	6	memory	1	564	20.19	562.87	25.88	-4.73
	6	age	55	2189	1110.69	2184.63	25.56	-0.94
	8	n	43	1855	868.35	1851.30	25.30	-1.06
	9	control	12	925	242.33	923.15	24.57	-1.88
	10	female	50	1978	1009.71	1974.05	22.80	-0.93

Note. The critical value for G^2 significance at $p < 0.05$ is 3.84. Study corpus $n = 512$; reference corpus $n = 5,869$.

^a Acronym for long distance relationship.

Figure 2.1*Collocation Results (RQ3)*

Top Collocation Words for 'Sex' in Counseling Abstracts



Chapter 3: Manuscript 2

**From Bone Thugs to the Queen Bitch: The Topical Crossroads Between Male and Female
Hip Hop Artists**

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Abstract

This study examined the topical structure of Hip Hop music and compared male and female Hip Hop lyricism using latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA), a machine learning methodology. Two corpora were constructed (one male and one female) using 103 songs that appeared on the U.S. Billboard charts between 1980 and today. LDA identified seven emergent topics in the male corpus (coherence score = 0.423) and six emergent topics in the female corpus (coherence score = 0.455) that present varying perspectives on Hip Hop culture, lifestyle, and male versus female experiences. Each set of topics is explored independently and then compared to identify similarities and differences. Findings indicated that the male topical structure utilized more active language to demonstrate a greater emphasis on agency, aspiration, and struggle. The female topical structure revealed a higher prevalence of object-oriented language that indicated a greater focus on goals, resources, and aesthetic pleasure. The keywords in the female artist corpus also contained more self-reflective terms that substantiate the idea that female artists endeavor to redefine womanhood in Hip Hop through lyrical prowess and challenging patriarchal norms within the genre. Implications for practice and recommendations for further research are also discussed.

Keywords: Hip Hop, Latent Dirichlet Allocation, topical structure, gender, sexuality, probabilistic modeling

From Bone Thugs to the Queen Bitch: The Topical Crossroads between Male and Female Hip Hop Artists

It's a she thing, and it's all in me/ I could be anything that I want to be/ Don't
consider me a minority/ Open up your eyes and maybe you'll see.

Salt-N-Pepa, "Ain't Nuthin' But A She Thang" (1995)

Modern popular music is a rapidly changing landscape, and perhaps no genre has undergone more of a transformation than Hip Hop, which has had quite the makeover over the last decade or so. Female artists have dominated the charts consistently with artists such as Cardi B, Nicki Minaj, and Doja Cat claiming the top spots and getting airplay on stations spanning multiple genres. Music executives, record labels and pop culture analysts alike have pondered about what has brought female artists in Hip Hop to the forefront, postulating everything from the need for powerful feminist voices in Hip Hop culture, to the unabashed allure of modern female sexuality embodied in the lyrics of today's hottest female emcees. Male artists have long dominated the world of Hip Hop, but it is hard to really pinpoint the "secret sauce" that has led to the emergence of more mainstream female artists. One way to gain a better understanding of the gender differences and evolution of Hip Hop music is to look at the various topics addressed in male versus female lyricism. These topical insights have the potential to shed light on what the future of the genre may hold. As Salt-N-Pepa prognosticated in 1995, the hour is at hand where women may no longer be considered a minority in the world of Hip Hop.

There were two primary goals for the present study. First, the study examined gaps in the literature regarding the topical themes within the Hip Hop music genre and more specifically, how these topical themes differ by gender. Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is a form of

machine learning that utilizes a generative process and probabilistic modeling to extract latent topics from a large corpus, or in this case, lyrics from some of the most prolific male and female artists within the world of Hip Hop (Blei et al., 2003). Though numerous studies have been done to analyze linguistic factors within songs (Alim et al., 2018; Karsdorp & Kestemont, 2019; Price & Wilson, 2019), LDA has yet to be used to analyze the predominant themes within the Hip Hop discourse or to compare these themes based on artist gender. Second, this study sought to challenge assumptions related to genre and gender stereotypes and expand understanding of the cultural phenomenon known as Hip Hop.

The field of counseling places particular emphasis on multicultural competencies, and having a broader knowledge and insight into the world of Hip Hop will allow clinicians to better relate to urban youth and other underserved populations (Levy, 2020). Utilizing Hip Hop discourse, understanding the history of the genre opens doors to more authentic interactions with clients. Levy pointed out that within the discourse, this important concept encompasses the idea of “real recognizes real.” In sum, by better understanding Hip Hop discourse from both the male and female perspectives and identifying recurrent themes and narratives within the genre, one can begin to gain valuable insights into the multisystemic impacts that it has had on society and the way that society views gender and sexuality (Werner, 2019). In a review of the literature on topic modeling and Hip Hop music, five themes emerged: (a) the influence of Hip Hop culture, (b) Hip Hop narratives and counter-narratives, (c) the dominance of male artists in the genre, (d) the emergence of the female voice in Hip Hop, and (e) the gender and sexuality discourse in Hip Hop (gender-biased language). After a review of the literature, the research questions for this study are addressed.

Hip Hop originated in West African culture and artfully combined bardic storytelling with other elements of day-to-day life, such as the repetitive interweaving and layering of tribal tapestries (Karvelis, 2018). From necessary mundane tasks within a tribal community thousands of years ago, to the economic depression of the Bronx in the 1970s, to the struggles of racism in East L.A. in the early 1990s, Hip Hop has given a voice to people who were not otherwise being heard. Though it has undergone numerous iterations as a genre, it still holds to one basic tenet: Hip Hop is an artful expression of one's lived experiences, offering unique perspectives on what it is to be human. Often deemed as a cultural movement, Hip Hop has elevated the impact of the written word, and many artists have used their lyrical talents to bring awareness to their struggles, triumphs, and everything in between (Karvelis, 2018).

While there are many subgenres that fall under the umbrella of Hip Hop, there are a few narrative topics that emerge regularly throughout the genre. Born out of a marginalized community, it is no wonder that narrative themes such as racism, oppression, discrimination, and power dynamics are among those most encountered on the Hip Hop charts since its inception (Karvelis, 2018). Artists such as NWA, A Tribe Called Quest, and Public Enemy are well known for their incendiary societal critiques that were conceived based on personal experiences within their own communities. One commonly chronicled experience within Hip Hop includes incarceration, an unfortunate occurrence that disproportionately affects men and women of color. Akon, Tupac, DMX, and Maino shared their experiences in songs such as "Locked Up" and "All of the Above," detailing the harsh realities of life behind bars and the long-term impact that incarceration has had on their lives (Sule & Inkster, 2020).

On the flip side, Hip Hop is also well known for the narrative of success, or "making it." These narratives often describe wealth, spending habits, women, partying, and other symbols of

success. One of Drake's most well-known lyrics is, "Started from the bottom now we're here," encapsulating a modern-day hip-hop version of the rags-to-riches narrative (Graham et al., 2012). Critics of this success narrative often point out the potential negative influence that it has on African American youth but fail to consider the societal pressures that significantly impact artists within this genre (Karvelis, 2018). One of the more unique attributes of Hip Hop that sets it apart from many other genres is the competitive and often antagonistic styles that often pit artists against one another. It is no wonder, then, that there is a general sense of one-upmanship that further proliferates the dialogue of wealth and influence characteristic to the success narrative.

Though Hip Hop as a genre covers several unique and compelling cultural narratives, one component has remained relatively consistent: the dominant male (and primarily heterosexual male) voice. As in Hip Hop, the field of counseling has undergone its own feminist evolution over the past 40 years, and feminist theory has effectively changed the way that clinicians approach the practice of therapy (Evans et al., 2005). Born out of the sociopolitical movements of the 1960s, feminist theory aims to address the unique psychological issues facing women and places particular emphasis on the constructs of gender and sexuality (Evans et al., 2005). Unfortunately, the early iterations of feminist theory in many ways neglected or outright omitted the voice and influence of women of color. Representation of the female voice in Hip Hop has had similar challenges, and in many ways the genre has had to undergo its own evolution in regard to empowering female artistry.

Writing about hidden Hip Hop narratives, LaBennett (2009) pointed out that even the genre's creation narrative omits the pivotal roles that women played early in its inception. Music scholars often fail to mention how many of the parties hosted in the Bronx, the birthplace of

modern Hip Hop, took place in the apartment of a Bronx woman named Cindy Campbell, who is credited with laying the foundations of what would eventually become Hip Hop culture (LaBennett, 2009). Other scholars who have examined the role of women in the birth and evolution of Hip Hop have noted the marginalization and often outright exclusion of Black women in most historical accounts (Lane, 2011).

Despite being pushed to the periphery of the genre, women have continued to make their mark on Hip Hop culture, and many of the current chart-topping hip-hop artists are women. Sha Rock, who emerged from the streets of New York City in the 1970s, has often been cited as one of the earliest female rappers of the funk/Hip Hop genre and went on to inspire later generations of female artists including Queen Latifah, Sat-N-Pepa, Da Brat, Cardi B, and Missy Elliot (Hobson & Bartlow, 2008). As a result, women in Hip Hop have gained a firmer footing within the genre and have engendered the emergence of what some scholars call “Hip Hop feminism” (Halliday & Payne, 2020; Horsley, 2020). Hip Hop feminism grew as a countermovement to the previously male-dominated genre, but in reality, it encompasses many important aspects of the Black woman’s experience in society. Put more eloquently, Durham et al. (2013) defined Hip Hop feminism as:

A generationally specific articulation of feminist consciousness, epistemology, and politics rooted in the pioneering work of multiple generations of black feminists based in the United States and elsewhere in the diaspora but focused on questions and issues that grow out of the aesthetic and political prerogatives of hip-hop culture. (p. 722)

It is important to understand the origins and ideas associated with the Hip Hop feminist movement because they have changed the landscape of the genre and have given female artists a voice to express the issues that more specifically impact women of color. It has also signified a

clear divergence in the narrative of oppression, marginalization, sexuality, and power along gender lines and thus has given rise to a new dialogue about what Hip Hop is and/or what it should be. It is important to note, however, that Hip Hop has continued to evolve in terms of gender and sexuality, and the genre has begun to see the emergence of narratives from nonbinary artists and other gender identities. The newer voices/narratives in Hip Hop are beyond the scope of what are addressed in the present paper but are addressed in the implications section of the discussion.

The emergence of the female voice in Hip Hop has also sparked a closer examination of how topics such as gender and sexuality manifest in the artists' lyrics and how these perspectives within the lyrics have evolved over time. Terms such as "bitch" and "ho" are prominent in the lyrics of both male and female artists and have for many years had a very derogatory tone that objectifies and marginalizes women (Lane, 2011). More recently, however, things have changed. Artists such as Cardi B and Lil Kim have reclaimed many of the terms previously intended to shame women and their sexuality; instead, they now glorify their sexual prowess and use it as a means of empowerment. Cardi B's song "WAP" featuring Megan Thee Stallion provides plenty of lyrical examples of sexual assertiveness and male objectification: "Not a garter snake, I need a king cobra," "If it don't hang, then he can't bang," and "Put him on his knees, give him something to believe in" (Cephus et al., 2020).

The dawn of the music video also served to advance the female discourse in Hip Hop with more provocative imagery and at times has even depicted violence against men. Rihanna's video for "Bitch Better Have My Money" is one example. In the video, Rihanna is the powerful protagonist who objectifies female strippers and eventually murders her male antagonist (Cliff, 2019). Male artists such as Lil Nas X are also changing the visual and lyrical landscape of Hip

Hop with videos depicting the glistening bare chests of his male backup dancers in his video for “Industry Baby,” accompanied by lyrics including “I don’t fuck bitches, I’m queer” (Hill et al., 2021). Hip Hop will continue to evolve as a musical genre as well as a cultural phenomenon, but it is important to examine in a more tangible fashion the topical growing pains that it has endured to get to where it is today. As in the field of counseling, feminist voices in Hip Hop have opened a new world of alternative perspectives and experiences for listeners but have added a greater depth to the discourse through empowering women of color in a way that counseling in many respects has failed to do.

To guide the present study, three research questions were formulated. These research questions were:

RQ1: What is the topical structure of the Hip Hop register produced by male artists?

RQ2: What is the topical structure of the Hip Hop register produced by female artists?

RQ3: Does the topical structure of the Hip Hop register differ by gender?

Preregistration of these research questions can be found at <https://osf.io/harvj/>.

Method

Design

This study employed LDA, a machine learning research design. Utilizing LDA analysis, the variables identified for this study were: (a) the number of words in a document, (b) the number of documents contained within the register, (c) the number of emergent topics, (d) the Dirichlet distribution of topics, (e) the Dirichlet distribution of words, (f) the multinomial distribution of topics, (g) the multinomial distribution of words, and (h) the word topic assignment (Biel et al., 2012). In terms of the level of measure, all variables were latent except for the observed variable, word topic assignment. The unit of analysis was words; LDA processes these units utilizing a “bag of words” approach.

Corpus

Register, Sources, and Scope

The register for this study was music lyrics. The subregister (and genre of focus) was Hip Hop lyrics. The source for the corpus was AZlyrics.com and included Billboard top 100 hits from 1980 to the present. RQ1 utilized a subcorpus comprised of Hip Hop lyrics from 103 songs by male artists. RQ2 used a subcorpus comprised of Hip Hop lyrics from 103 songs by female artists. RQ3 utilized both. The token count (i.e., word count) was 70,090 for the male corpus and 56,301 for the female corpus, and the type count was 272,355 for the male corpus and 209,065 for the female corpus.

Preprocessing

The selected songs were obtained from AZlyrics.com and converted into a .txt file removing all non-ASCII characters. To prepare the text for analysis with LDA, each subcorpus was subject to the following preprocessing steps: normalization, tokenization, stopword removal, lemmatization, and stemming (Chen, 2020). Normalization involves converting the uppercase letters to lowercase and removing all punctuation and numeric symbols (Chen, 2020). Tokenization means converting the corpora into more digestible pieces known as tokens (words; Chen, 2020). Stopwords are frequently used but generally contentless words found in a corpus, such as “a” and “the”; removing these commonly used words facilitates the process of topic modeling using LDA (Schofield, et al., 2017). Lemmatization and stemming are the final steps in preprocessing that group together inflected word forms so that they could be analyzed as single items (Chen, 2020).

Measures

Bag of Words

LDA processes documents as a “bag of words,” meaning that the order of the words in each document or corpus is irrelevant. The words are assumed to occur independently, allowing the topics to emerge organically from the text (Wei & Croft, 2006). A set of texts' fundamental subjects are discovered using topic modeling, which also provides quantitative measurements that identify and characterize the topics of specific texts among a set of texts and enables thematic comparisons both inside and between texts.

Latent Variable

The latent variables obtained from the use of LDA are the emergent topics present in the documents under analysis. LDA views the documents as a mixture of different topics comprised of a mixture of different words (Kulshrestha, 2019). Using Bayesian probabilities, LDA identifies the probability that a word belongs to a topic and assigns it accordingly (e.g., rap and opera would be sorted into the topic music; Singh, 2017).

Coherence

Coherence (in the context of LDA) describes the similarity between words within a given topic area (Tang, 2019). Each latent variable was assigned a corresponding coherence score that indicated the extent of relatedness between that variable and the others identified within the same topic. The higher the coherence score, the more closely related the words. For example, rap and Hip Hop would have a higher coherence score than rap and country within the topic of music.

Apparatus

R Studio is a data processing program that allows researchers to analyze a large amount of data using code execution (Shinde et al., 2017). A topic modeling algorithm entered in R

Studio identifies the emergent topics in the data set; these algorithms are unsupervised, meaning there is no human input in the data processing. The LDA R package employed for this study was Gensim. This package is known for its fast, efficient implementation of LDA by examining statistical co-occurrence patterns within the corpora (Prabhakaran, 2018; Rehurek, 2022). TidyText was used for preprocessing and generating the “bag of words” (Silge & Robinson, 2017). To build LDA on the data set, the unigram, bigram, and trigram features were extracted from the text. Phrases model of gensim library has the capability to extract only relevant bigrams and trigrams features that repeat most in the data set and avoid all unnecessary details.

Data Analysis

For RQs 1–2, the respective corpora (male artists = D_M , female artists = D_F) consisting of M documents (103 for each corpus) were analyzed to determine K , or number of topics. To generate the best results using LDA, topic model hyper parameter tuning was performed. In the tuning process, the alpha (document parameter), beta (topic parameter), and number of topics values were optimized, and the number of topics tested ranged from two to 20. For the alpha parameter, four different values were evaluated: 0.01, 0.31, 0.61, and “symmetric.” Furthermore, for the beta parameter, three values were evaluated: 0.01, 0.31, and 0.6. To evaluate model’s performance, we used the coherence evaluation metric, where the highest score determines the best number of topics (Syed & Spruit, 2017). Topic interpretation was focused on the 10 most salient terms in each subcorpus. Difference in strength levels between the subcorpuses were assessed via a log likelihood ratio test (G^2). All analyses were conducted using R Studio.

Results

Regarding RQ1 (male corpus), a seven-topic solution ($k = 7$) provided the highest coherence score of 0.426 having alpha and beta values of 0.01 and 0.01, respectively (see Table

3.1). A list of the top 10 keywords for each topic can be found in Table 3.2 along with the topic interpretation. Following standard LDA practices, topic titles were chosen based on domain knowledge and subject matter familiarity and were guided by the most robust terms in each topic grouping in order to provide an overarching thematic conceptualization (Crossvalidated, 2014). A word cloud depicting the most frequent keywords in the male corpus can be inspected in Figure 3.1.

For RQ2 (female corpus), a six-topic solution ($k = 6$) provided the highest coherence score of 0.455 having alpha and beta values of 0.31 and 0.31, respectively (see Table 3.3). A list of the top 10 keywords for each topic can be found in Table 3.4 along with the topic interpretation; topic titles were chosen using the same approach as RQ1. A word cloud depicting the most frequent keywords in the male corpus can be inspected in Figure 3.2.

The results for RQ3 are based on the keywords and topics generated using LDA. It is clear that each corpus has differing topic structure. Though some of the keywords might appear in both corpora, the male topics contain more verbs than nouns compared to the female corpus. In addition, the female corpus contains more words related to sex and sexuality, whereas the male corpus contains more words related to conflict and struggle.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the topical structure of Hip Hop lyrics from both male and female artists. Using LDA, RQ1 examined what emergent topics were most prominent in the male artist corpus, which included 103 songs by 52 different lyricists (as the lead artist). RQ2 explored which topics were most prominent in the female artist corpus, which included 103 songs by 42 different lyricists (as the lead artist). RQ3 examined the similarities and differences between the topical structures for the male and female corpora.

When examining the male corpus topical structure, there is a high prevalence of active verbs including “hurt,” “hit,” and “say,” and verbs that indicate desire (“gonna,” “wanna,” and “gimme”). These verbs and the associated topics (desire, interactions, hustle) imply a sense of urgency, need, and determination that underlie the inequalities that exist within the Hip Hop community (Morgan, 2001). In addition, money and women (and various terms referring to women) were present in five of the seven male topics identified using LDA. Money and the accumulation of wealth are commonly associated with two paradoxical concepts within the world of Hip Hop (Engh, 2013). On one hand, money creates a sense of freedom and empowerment that enables an artist or crew to become the architects of their own destiny, but there is a cost associated with such freedoms. Authenticity is considered the most valuable currency within the Hip Hop community, and accumulating wealth obtained from oppressive corporate systems (i.e., record companies) could be viewed as “selling out” (Morgan, 2001; Peterson, 2006). Until more recently, Hip Hop has been a male-dominated art form that has commonly engendered a lyrical commodification and objectification of women (Eberhardt, 2016). The terms referring to women in the male topical structure reveal a similar conceptual juxtaposition seen in the discussion of money. The terms “bitch,” “baby girl,” “butt,” and “good girl” present varying perspectives on the role of women in Hip Hop culture and demonstrate underlying complex themes associated with gender roles and sexuality (Engh, 2013; Karvelis, 2018).

One of the other major themes that emerged from the male corpus results can be encapsulated in one over-arching term, aspiration. When considered together, the topic categories (which will be underlined) could be compiled to formulate a sentence such as the following: If one desires a certain lifestyle, they must be prepared to hustle, play a number of

different roles, engage in a variety of interpersonal interactions, and contend with the ever-present struggle between life and death. The literature has highlighted the concept of Hip Hop lyricism as a modern-day form of cultural oral tradition, and the emergent topics from the male corpus clearly tells a narrative describing the necessary tenacity that is required to overcome persistent social and economic barriers within urban communities and populations (Karvelis, 2018).

The emergent topics from the female corpus provide an alternative topical perspective and hone in on the lived experiences of women within the Hip Hop community. Morgan (2005) stated that one of the primary goals of female MC's is to use their lyrical prowess to illustrate and confront what it means to be a Black woman in the United States (and the world). Using this lens will help guide the interpretation of the emergent topics from this corpus and can provide some important lyrical context from the uniquely female perspective. First, the higher prevalence of nouns ("help," "people," and "love") in the female topical structure suggests a greater focus on resources/tools and priorities rather than action and interpersonal conflict. There is also a greater sense of positionality amongst the keywords in the female corpus topics, illustrated by terms such as "middle," "sitting," "waiting," and "wit" (with). Within the context of authenticity, positionality or a sense of place is crucial in terms of establishing a perspective of "realness," as urban environments are considered the cultural incubators of the Hip Hop genre (Engh, 2013). The female corpus contains a more nuanced sense of lyrical positionality that paints a clearer picture of the female vantage point within these urban communities.

Lastly, the emergent topics from the female corpus align with the concept of hip hop feminism and have a self-reflective quality that includes a wider diversity of terms previously used to describe and sometimes objectify women (Durham et al., 2013). Morgan (2022) pointed

out that African American women “have helped construct and maintain a communication system which has reflected two opposed and separate realities: that of a helpless and hopeless slave and ex-slave, and that of a thoughtful and responsible human being” (p. 422). Terms such as “pussy,” “hoes,” and “bitches” appear in numerous forms in varying topic categories and suggest a reclamation and even inoculation of these terms; rather than being used against women, female emcees use these terms to mock male generated stereotypes and empower women. Taken together, the emergent topics from the female corpus could be used to construct a sentence such as: The female experience of attaining status requires an understanding of their unique positionality, an assertive character, and a willingness to hustle to obtain certain resources and tangibles. From a narrative perspective, the female oral tradition within Hip Hop is still evolving, but clearly harnesses the talent, sexuality, and resourcefulness of the women within this cultural community.

When comparing the topical structure of these two corpora, there are some important similarities to note. First, there are common emergent themes such as money, status, and the emphasis on “the hustle.” Hip Hop is constructivist in its approach to language, and the choice of lyrics and terminology is a way of representing the artists themselves, the message they hope to send, and providing insight to where they came from or what they have been through (Morgan, 2001). There is intentionality in lyricism, and it is no surprise that concepts such as money and status are prevalent in narratives originating in communities where both are scarce. Emcees commonly engage in lyrical battles to display prowess and negotiate respect and status; like emcees, men and women in underserved and/or marginalized communities are forced to do battle and hustle in order to garner respect and have basic needs met (Engh, 2013).

Another similarity worth noting is the choice of words that both corpora have in common. The most used noun in both the male and female lyrics was “nigga,” and the most used verbs were “got” and “know.” While the complex origins and use of the term “nigga” is beyond the scope of this study, there are two primary schools of thought in terms of its usage: (a) it can be viewed as a form of internalized racism and oppression that has developed over centuries or (b) it is used as a reappropriated term that is emblematic of the evolving, adaptable, urban Black identity in the United States (Cabrera & Hill-Zuganelli, 2021). Regarding the most used verbs, “know” suggests an overall understanding of who the lyricist is (authenticity) as well as what they and their community are up against (discrimination, oppression, marginalization). “Got” is a verb that has two primary functions; it can be used to describe what one has already “got,” or it can be used to indicate what someone has “got” to do. Both usages are significant in that they imply a focus on what one has accumulated (status, lifestyle) and what it takes to achieve/accumulate more (hustle, struggle).

In terms of the differences, this manuscript has highlighted the higher prevalence of verbs identified as keywords in the topical structure of the male corpus and the higher prevalence of nouns in the topical structure of the female corpus. In Eberhardt’s (2016) study of linguistics in the lyricism of female Hip Hop artists, the author utilized a transitivity analysis that focused on two primary linguistic components: agency and goal. When comparing the male and female corpus, the prevalence of verbs versus nouns implies a greater sense of “agency” (verbs) in the male corpus and a greater focus on “goals” (nouns) in the female corpus. Men and women typically utilize language that is more individualistic and socially motivated, respectively, according to Hossain and Amin (2022). The two cautioned against drawing conclusions about gender-based linguistic patterns from the aforementioned studies, pointing out that other research

emphasizing the importance of context in terms of speech components does not support them. Parts of speech can provide some information regarding gender-based linguistic profiles, and the literature has indicated a male tendency toward prepositions that imply more “formality” and an overall reporting-style in written language; the female profile, on the other hand, shows the use of more pronouns and interjections, which align with the findings in this study and imply a greater emphasis on rapport and contextualization (perspective or positionality) (Litvinova et al., 2017).

In addition, the overall topical structure of the female corpus is more self-reflective, as female emcees use more terms referring to women and women’s bodies (“bitch,” “hoes,” “pretty face,” and “pussy”) versus the male emcees, who more often refer to women rather than themselves (“gangsta,” and “killer”). This trend substantiates the notion that female emcees are using language and lyricism to redefine female blackness and shred archaic notions of what a woman is or should be, while still preserving the values and oral traditions established by influential female artists and activists (Morgan, 2005). Some of those traditional values and perspectives are exemplified in the terms that pertain to family/community (“people,” “help,” and “give”) and a more conventional take on femininity (“feeling,” “pretty face,” and “love”).

Finally, the topical structure of the male corpus contains a broader vocabulary related to danger, struggle, and life and death (“cops,” “killer,” “hurt,” “breaks,” and “alive”). These concepts again speak to the value of “realness” or authenticity in Hip Hop culture and emphasize how lyricism can be used as a form of personal, social, and political rebellion (Engh, 2013; Levy, 2020). The nature of Hip Hop is inherently anti-establishment and was born as a counter-narrative to the political ideology of the Reagan-Bush era (Morgan, 2001). Rebellion has its costs, however, and male lyricists are clear about the dangers of daring to break the mold and

aspire to a different lifestyle. Female emcees appear to be less attuned to this aspect of “the come-up” and divert linguistic attention to more personally and aesthetically pleasing elements of the Hip Hop lifestyle (“style,” “love,” “feelings,” and “pretty face”).

Hip Hop is more than a musical genre, it is a cultural movement, and this study represents just a start of what there is to learn from researching Hip Hop lyricism. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the limitations (keepin’ it real) of this manuscript and the methodologies described herein. First, this study examined only male and female lyricists and excluded the growing number of transgender and nonbinary artists in the world of Hip Hop. This will most definitely be an area for further research exploration as the genre evolves into a less heteronormative creative space. Second, there are a few considerations pertaining to the data: (a) there are a lower number of female artists included in the data set due to the lower number of singles on the Billboard charts by female Hip Hop artists, and (b) the scope of this study encompasses only singles by American artists who have ranked in the top 100 U.S. Billboard charts and neglects the incredible diversity and growth that Hip Hop is experiencing around the world. Finally, due to the collaborative nature of Hip Hop, it is necessary to point out that some of the songs utilized in this study have artist gender crossover; that is, there are some songs where male artists are featured on female singles, and vice versa. This collaborative facet of Hip Hop is one of the many reasons why it is fascinating to study, but it can be challenging to interpret from a data purity perspective.

In terms of implications, it is challenging to verbalize the social and cultural impact that Hip Hop has had and will continue to have on modern society, including counseling. Levy (2020) emphasized how the traditionally Westernized approach to counseling has alienated several marginalized populations, but more specifically black and brown youth. Researchers and

clinicians have already begun to utilize more culturally sensitive interventions that harness the power and influence of Hip Hop, even going so far as to develop an entirely new approach to therapy in the form of Hip Hop Spoken Word Therapy (Levy, 2020). This study aimed to highlight only a tiny shred of how linguistic research can be used to help researchers and clinicians better understand the experiences and perspectives of those living and dying in urban communities. Hip Hop music is a lyrical representation of the zeitgeist of the time in which it was written, and the spoken word is a crucial means of communicating what is contextually relevant to those who are consistently oppressed and entrenched in the daily struggle of urban life. Continued research on the development of topical structure and lyricism over time (especially with female, nonbinary, and transgender artists) could provide extremely valuable insights into the evolution of this continuously diversifying cultural phenomenon.

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Table 3.1*Male Topic Numbers, Alpha Scores, Beta Scores, and Coherence Scores*

Topic Number	Alpha Scores	Beta Scores	Coherence Scores
8	0.01	0.01	0.4262
7	0.01	0.01	0.4230
4	0.01	0.01	0.4129
3	<i>symmetric</i>	0.31	0.4117
3	0.31	0.31	0.4058

Table 3.2*Topic Number, Topic Title, and Topic Keywords for the Male Corpus*

Topic	Topic Title	Top 10 words of topic
1	Lifestyle	pop_like, money_money, gangsta, uh_huh, okay, faded, killer, outside, em_love, dr_dre
2	Hustle	breaks, baby_got, living, minute, uh_uh, nigga_wanna, got_money, hurt, called, nothin
3	Interactions	yeah, man, day, em, always, hit, good, high, love, shake
4	Desire	still, right, gonna, gon, new, tell, wanna, things, gimme, beat
5	Struggle	nigga, bitch, said, never, come, yo, way, time, say, us
6	Roles	baby_girl, late_night, mon, suckers, def, thang, grown, good_girl, step, let_go
7	Life and Death	tha, ha_ha_ha_ha, aye, alive, butt, wit, though, cops, dough, girls_girls

Table 3.3*Female Topic Numbers, Alpha Scores, Beta Scores, and Coherence Scores*

Topic Number	Alpha Scores	Beta Scores	Coherence Scores
6	0.31	0.31	0.4553
12	0.01	0.01	0.4549
10	0.01	0.31	0.4463
10	<i>symmetric</i>	0.01	0.4426
7	0.01	0.01	0.4399

Table 3.4*Topic Number, Topic Title, and Topic Keywords for the Female Corpus*

Topic	Topic Title	Top 10 words of topic
1	Status	oh_oh, money, got_big, act_like, call, sha_rock, funky, help, pretty_face, broke_nigga
2	Hustle	oh_oh, pussy_like, crack_dawn, everything_everything, people, money_money, beg, yes, come, next
3	Perspective	tha, ha_ha, popping, feelings, know_bout, waiting, love, lil_mama, sitting, middle
4	Tangibles	beep_beep, men, uh_huh, style, rain, ones, window, kid, car, wit
5	Female Experience	nigga, bitch, shit, baby, fuck, yeah, ya, pussy, hoes, bitches
6	Assertive	da, missy, cuz, let_take, da_brat, good, keep, give, boy, want

Chapter 4: A General Conclusion

In this final chapter, the following items are covered: (a) a summary of findings, limitations, discussions, and recommendations resulting from manuscript 1; (b) a summary of findings, limitations, discussions, and recommendations resulting from manuscript 2; (c) linkages between the two manuscripts; (d) implications of collective manuscripts; and (e) recommendations for future research agenda.

Manuscript 1

Summary of Findings

Manuscript 1 examined the academic discourse on sex and sexuality within the field of counseling compared to other fields with a psychotherapy focus. Using corpus linguistic methodologies, RQ1 examined what words were used more frequently in counseling journal abstracts with a focus on human sexuality compared to articles with the same focus in professional journals published by the APA, AAMFT, and the NASW. RQ2 explored which words were used with less frequency in the counseling journal abstracts compared with the abstracts published by the same aforementioned professional organizations. RQ3 examined which words are most associated with the word stem sex* in the counseling journal abstracts, and RQ4 explored this same association within the other professional journal abstracts published by APA, AAMFT, and NASW.

In terms of RQ1, compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, the top three words used with a greater frequency (positive keyness) in counseling journals were “counseling,” “counselors,” and “career.” Regarding RQ2, compared to APA, MFT, and NASW journals with a psychotherapy focus, the top three words used with a lesser frequency (negative keyness) in counseling journals were “risk,” “behavior,” and “associated.” For RQ3, the strongest collocate of the word stem sex* was “orientation,” followed by terms

such as “abuse,” “offenders,” and “assault.” Concerning RQ4, as in the counseling abstract corpus, the strongest collocate of the word stem sex* was also “orientation.” Unlike the counseling corpus, however, the alternative corpus had more neutral or positive collocates such as “desire” and “satisfaction.”

Limitations

There are two limitations to be mindful of when interpreting the results of manuscript 1. First, only journals published by the primary professional organizations within four psychotherapy-oriented fields were included (ACA, APA, AAMFT, and NASW). There are many valuable publications within these fields that are not promulgated by their respective professional organizations. Second, research from certain specialties within mental health and medicine (i.e., sex therapy and psychiatry) were not included in the analysis and might have offered a fuller, more nuanced understanding of these findings.

Discussion

When looking at the results, counseling appears to have a more conventional discourse on sex and sexuality as evidenced by the findings in this manuscript. The keywords identified in the counseling research abstracts were primarily focused on counseling as a profession and the concept of sex as it relates to gender and sexual orientation compared to the psychotherapy corpus. The word with the highest negative keyness was “risk,” which is telling in terms of how risk averse the counseling research and profession are, at least in terms of sex and sexuality. The other terms with negative keyness pertain mostly to scientific method—e.g., “control,” “studies,” and “n.”

The collocation results were more compelling in terms of what words were most closely associated with the word stem sex* in the counseling corpus compared to the psychotherapy

corpus. The primary collocate in both corpora was “orientation,” but the counseling corpus had more collocates with an overall negative connotation, such as “abuse,” “assault,” and “offenders.” While there was some overlap in terminology between the two corpora, the psychotherapy corpus had more instances of collocates with a more positive connotation (e.g., “desire” and “satisfaction”), illustrating a greater sense of sex positivity in the research promulgated by APA, AAMFT, and NASW. Considered together, the results of the keyness and collocation analyses demonstrate the need for counseling research to examine its discourse and shift toward a more sex positive professional culture.

Implications and Recommendations

The implications of this study are significant, especially considering CACREP’s decision to include sex and sexuality as a topic in the new 2024 standards. Just as the counseling profession emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusivity in clinical practice, the academic discourse on sex and sexuality could benefit from a much more diverse and inclusive perspective (ACA, 2014). Counseling research literature should focus more on sex positive topics, such as sexual fulfillment, sexual satisfaction, and healthy sexual practices. In addition, counseling publications could take a cue from our mental health counterparts and include a more diverse discussion of sexual identity and sexual orientation beyond “lesbian,” “gay,” and “lgb.” The abstracts from the APA, AAMFT, and NASW publications included more modern and encompassing terminology, such as “cybersex,” “pansexual,” “bisexual,” and “transgender,” demonstrating a more inclusive perspective on the complex topic of sex and sexuality in the research. Just as counselors are expected to be mindful of the language that is used in clinical treatment settings, our research publications need to be held to the same standard.

Manuscript 2

Summary of Findings

Manuscript 2 examined the topical structure of Hip Hop lyrics from both male and female artists. Using LDA, RQ1 examined what emergent topics were most prominent in the male artist corpus, which included 103 songs from the Billboard Top 100 Hip Hop Charts. RQ2 explored which topics were most prominent in the female artist corpus, which included 103 songs that were also ranked on the Billboard Hip Hop Charts. RQ3 examined the similarities and differences between the topical structures for the male and female corpora.

Using hyper parameter tuning, the LDA analysis yielded seven topics from the male corpus with a coherence score of 0.426. Each topic category included the top 10 keywords and encapsulated topic areas pertaining to lifestyle, struggle, and desire. The male corpus generated a higher number of verbs as keywords, including “hurt,” “say,” and “gimme.” The analysis of the female corpus topical structure yielded six topics with a coherence score of 0.455. The topic categories in the female corpus contained more nouns than the male corpus and utilized a wider variety of terms referring to women or women’s bodies, including “bitch,” “pussy,” “hoes,” and “butt.” Both corpora contain some common themes, including money, status, and an emphasis on the importance of “the hustle.” They also share the same most used noun (“nigga”) and the most used verbs (“got” and “know”). In terms of differences, the topical structures vary in their use of specific linguistic components (i.e., prevalence of verbs versus nouns) and thematic emphasis (agency versus goals).

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study pertain to the data. The male corpus contained a wider variety of artists (52 male versus 42 female) due to the dominance of male artists on the

Hip Hop charts. There is also some artist crossover in terms of lyricism; due to the collaborative nature of Hip Hop, it is common for there to be some female artists featured on male artist tracks and vice versa, so each corpus is not strictly comprised of lyrics written by each gender. It is also important to note that the songs for each corpus were chosen and obtained from the U.S.

Billboard charts, which neglects some of the differences (or similarities) that may have emerged from sampling the global music charts. The binary nature of this analysis is limiting as well, as there are a limited number of Hip Hop artists that identify as nonbinary or transgender, though this number has been growing in the past 10 years. From a positionality standpoint, this study was also conducted and written by someone who does not claim to be a member of the Hip Hop community, just an avid admirer of the culture.

Discussion

The higher prevalence of action verbs in the male corpus topics implied a greater sense of agency, aspiration, and struggle, illustrating how taking action (“makin’ moves”) is necessary to attain status and combat societal and interpersonal adversity. The language used by male emcees also reveals a greater attunement to the dangers associated with “the come up,” including oppressive forces (“cops”) and competing adversaries (“killer” and “gangsta”).

The topical structure of the female corpus, by contrast, had a higher number of nouns, such as “kid,” “people,” and “help,” which imply a greater focus on resources and goals rather than the choices or moves that one needs to make in order to obtain these resources/goals (more emphasis on the ends rather than the means; Eberhardt, 2016). The female topical structure surprisingly contained more terminology related to women and women’s bodies than the male topical structure, revealing a more self-reflective tone and a greater mastery of language and lyricism as a means to redefine what it means to be a woman in Hip Hop culture (Morgan, 2005).

Overall, the topical structure in both corpora embody two forms of lyrical authenticity but provide meaningful glimpses into the world of Hip Hop culture from two very different vantage points (Engh, 2013). The vocabulary and language choices coupled with the unique lyrical prowess of each artist create a more tangible sense of what is valued and what is experienced by the men and women who have shaped this genre.

Implications and Recommendations

Music is an important instrument of cultural storytelling, and Hip Hop offers a complex and ever-evolving lyrical tapestry depicting life in urban communities. Ratts et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of understanding client worldview in order to be a multiculturally competent clinician and advocate for social justice, so what better way to learn about a community's worldview than to listen to that community's greatest storytellers? Undeniably, the lens through which life is experienced matters, so examining the nuanced differences in how male and female emcees address topics related to sexuality, value systems, and life and death can help guide future clinicians and researchers in understanding, supporting, and addressing the needs of marginalized and oppressed populations.

Manuscripts 1 and 2: Similarities and Differences

At first glance, these two manuscripts may look as if they couldn't be further apart in terms of focus and thematic links, but there is important crossover when it comes to methodology and sociocultural implications. Both manuscripts utilized a corpus-based methodology—that is, the analyses were each focused on two deliberately and meticulously compiled bodies of texts pertaining to their respective areas of inquiry. The data analyses differed, but both studies utilized language and words to elucidate important patterns and

meaning in the data. In addition, both manuscripts examined topics related to culture and diversity, with a particular focus on issues and concepts related to gender and sexuality.

The biggest differences between these two manuscripts parallel their similarities in that they differ primarily in terms of instrumentation (methodology) and discourse of interest (sociocultural implications). Manuscript 1 utilized two commonly used analytical approaches within corpus linguistics: keyness and collocation. Keyness helps researchers identify what stands out or is most pertinent in a specific body of text compared to another corpus, while collocation provides insights into the relationships between certain words within the corpus of interest (Brezina, 2018). Manuscript 2, on the other hand, used LDA to examine linguistic patterns and determine topical structure in a body of text. This methodological approach is more hands off and requires the researcher to trust the analytical integrity of the algorithms responsible for identifying the emergent topics (Chen, 2020).

The other difference of note is related to the nature of the data under analysis and to what (or whom) the data are speaking. The first manuscript was an investigation of counseling research literature focused on sex and human sexuality, and this body of text was chosen to provide a better understanding of the academic discourse on such a complex topic and what it means for the profession of counseling. The second manuscript drew from a very different set of data—lyrics from chart-topping Hip-Hop singles by male and female emcees and explored the more universally spoken language of music. The topical structure inherent in these corpora provide valuable insights into the popular discourse related to sex, sexuality, gender, and the experiences of diverse populations, versus the more erudite “ivory tower” perspective often inherent in academia.

The dichotomy of these two approaches and discourses is in many ways analogous to the dichotomy that exists in me. On one hand, I am a studious intellectual who loves to pore over research pertaining to a field that I am very passionate about; on the other, I am also a rowdy kid from Brooklyn that can't help but vibe to a good Hip Hop jam. It was important to me to attempt to bring these two aspects of myself into the work that I have been doing over the past three years as part of this PhD program, in large part so that I could prove that these diverse passions could co-exist harmoniously within one person but also to highlight how they play into each other. One of the greatest gifts of being a counselor is the privilege of working with people from all different walks of life, with a myriad of lived experiences, and an ever-changing concept of what it is to be human. My hope is that this research helps other clinicians, scholars, ballers, and shout-callers to learn a little more about each other and come to the realization that we may have more in common after all.

Research Imperatives and Research Agenda

While writing these manuscripts, I was struck by how much the counseling profession could learn from using tools such as corpus linguistics and natural language processing. I want to continue to utilize these methodologies to expand understanding of complex topics such as sex and sexuality and to explore uncharted territory in the role of cultural movements on human development and popular discourse. Manuscript 1 just scratches the surface in terms of what the counseling profession needs to do to better address and understand the topic of human sexuality. Future research directions might expand this methodology to counselor education. One research question could focus on how sex and sexuality are discussed in graduate textbooks, which may help educators select more appropriate texts and more sex positive research articles for use in their courses. From a more clinical perspective, I would love to use keyness and collocation to

examine the verbiage used by clinicians seeing clients for concerns related to sex and sexuality so that counselors might gain more insight as to what the client experience might be in these contexts.

The idea of using artificial intelligence technology in my research was unfathomable at the outset of this program, but the remarkable power of this methodology has really inspired me to explore the application of natural language processing in other areas of the field and beyond. Doing a deep dive into the world of Hip Hop lyricism has also prompted me to contemplate doing some follow up research involving sentiment analysis and potential diachronic studies to explore how lyricism has evolved over time. In addition, the emergent topics in manuscript 2 have piqued my curiosity regarding the specific lyrical evolution of women's sexuality in Hip Hop, and I hope to further investigate the way that language has chronicled this journey within the culture. To me, music is a form of historical and social commentary that can be examined in a more modern and intentional fashion to aid clinicians (and humans) in better understanding and advocating for the communities and populations that have continued to struggle in an oppressive system.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Humans Subjects Review Statement

Given the public and published nature of the data used for this dissertation (academic articles and lyrics), no human subjects review was required.

Appendix B: Biographical Statement

Shauna Ferrese graduated from Louisiana State University in Shreveport (LSUS) with her Master's degree in Counseling Psychology. Following graduation, she worked as a case manager for a Veterans Transitional Living Program in Shreveport, Louisiana where she worked with homeless veterans with co-occurring disorders. Shauna returned to her home in South Carolina in 2016 where she worked as the Drug Court Counselor for Dorchester County, and the Intensive Outpatient Program Clinical Counselor with the Dorchester Alcohol and Drug Commission. Shauna currently runs a weekly relapse prevention group and sees individuals with a variety of mental health issues at Barrier Islands Psychiatry in Charleston. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Addiction Counselor, Nationally Certified Counselor, as well as a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional. Shauna is also a Ph.D. candidate for Oregon State University's Counselor Education Program. She specializes in treatment related to substance abuse, trauma, depression, anxiety, stress management, and relationship issues.