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SPILL THE TEA SIS': MISOGYNOIR'S PROBLEM AND BLACK WOMEN'S SUPPORT,
NARRATIVES AND IDENTITIES FOUND IN LOVE & HIP-HOP'S REALITY TV
FRANCHISE

by

ADEERYA JOHNSON

Under the Direction of Sarita K. Davis, PhD

ABSTRACT

Love & Hip-Hop (LHH) is known to be the highest rated reality TV show, producing more than 400,000 viewers on the season premiere of *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami* and continues to be one of the most talked about cable series across Facebook and Twitter (Etkin, 2018). Considering the demographic that LHH speaks to, 74% of women between the ages of 18-49 tune into LHH weekly and 81% of viewers are Black with an average media age viewership of 36 (Etkin, 2018). Additionally, this study explores the ways in which misogynoir is fluid in the performances of the characters on VH1's *Love & Hip-Hop (LHH)* and how the characters and viewers claim agency and space through their involvement in the Hip-Hop industry and social

media. This study will investigate the new phenomena of emerging hip-hop reality tv culture and its nuance in Black women's involvement in Hip-Hop that defies respectability politics.

INDEX WORDS: Hip-Hop feminism, Black Feminism, Black Woman, Hip-Hop Studies, Black studies, Love and Hip-Hop, Pop Culture

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ADEERYA JOHNSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2019

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2019

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May 2019

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all of the Black women who continue to tell their stories through Hip-Hop, no matter who tries to tell them their stories aren't real.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge all of the Black Women who helped me with this project. The ones who are lifting me as they climb.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	XI
PROLOGUE.....	XIII
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Overview	1
<i>1.1.1 Background.....</i>	<i>3</i>
1.2 Problem Statement.....	4
1.3 Purpose.....	6
1.4 Significance of Study.....	8
1.5 Nature of Study	9
1.6 Theories and Concepts	11
1.7 Assumptions and Approach.....	15
1.8 Scope and Limitations	16
1.9 Summary.....	18
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	21
2.1 <i>Hip-Hop Feminism</i>	22
2.2 <i>Misogynoir and the Black Woman in Hip-Hop Culture</i>	29
2.3 <i>Body, Beauty and The Black Woman’s Appearance.....</i>	34
2.4 <i>Sexual Stereotypes of Black Women in Hip-Hop Reality TV</i>	37

2.5	<i>Conclusion</i>	45
3	METHODOLOGY	49
3.1	<i>Introduction</i>	49
3.2	<i>Design Appropriateness</i>	49
3.3	<i>Black Twitter and Twitter Methods</i>	51
3.4	<i>Setting</i>	53
3.5	<i>Sample</i>	54
3.6	<i>Procedure</i>	55
3.7	<i>Coding Analysis</i>	58
3.7.1	<i>First Cycle Coding</i>	60
3.7.2	<i>Second Cycle Coding</i>	60
3.7.3	<i>Reliability and Validity</i>	61
3.8	<i>Limitations</i>	63
3.9	<i>Summary</i>	64
4	RESULTS	65
4.1	<i>Introduction</i>	65
4.2	<i>Demographics</i>	67
4.2.1	<i>Twitter Survey Sample</i>	67
4.2.2	<i>Interview Sample</i>	68
4.3	<i>Quantitative Results</i>	69

4.3.1	<i>Viewership Responses</i>	70
4.3.2	<i>Misogynoir and Agency Responses</i>	72
4.4	Qualitative Results	76
4.5	Themes and Categories	77
4.5.1	<i>Why do Black female viewers utilize Twitter to discuss LHHMIA highlights?</i>	78
4.5.2	<i>How do Black female viewers respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?</i>	80
4.5.3	<i>Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?</i>	85
4.6	Summary of Findings	86
5	CONCLUSION	89
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	General Conclusions	90
5.2.1	<i>Conclusion 1</i>	91
5.2.2	<i>Conclusion 2</i>	92
5.2.3	<i>Conclusion 3</i>	92
5.3	Discussion	94
5.4	<i>For Future Research</i>	95
5.5	<i>Limitations</i>	96
5.6	<i>Summary</i>	98

REFERENCES.....	101
APPENDICES.....	108
Appendix A- Informed Consent.....	109
Appendix B- Survey Items.....	112
Appendix C- Interview Guide	115
Appendix D - Demographics	116
<i>Appendix D.1.....</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>Appendix D.2.....</i>	<i>116</i>
<i>Appendix D.3.....</i>	<i>117</i>
Appendix E - Viewership	117
<i>Appendix E.1.....</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Appendix E.2.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Appendix E.3.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Appendix E.4.....</i>	<i>119</i>
<i>Appendix E.5.....</i>	<i>119</i>
Appendix F- Misogynoir and Agency	120
<i>Appendix F.1.....</i>	<i>120</i>
<i>Appendix F.2.....</i>	<i>120</i>
<i>Appendix F.3.....</i>	<i>121</i>
<i>Appendix F.4.....</i>	<i>121</i>

Appendix F.5..... 122

Appendix F.6..... 122

Appendix F.7..... 123

Appendix F.8..... 123

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LHH- LOVE AND HIP HOP

LHHMIA- LOVE AND HIP HOP: MIAMI

LHHNY- LOVE AND HIP HOP: NEW YORK

RT- RETWEET

PROLOGUE

Hip-Hop has always been a part of my childhood. My father introduced me to the Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest, Outkast, and Digable Planets. Overtime, I found my own connections to Hip-Hop that defined my Black girlhood. I instantly became a fan of TLC, Missy Elliot, Lauryn Hill, and Lil' Kim. These women were my early influences of Hip-Hop. They showed me that Black women who look like me also have a story to tell in the world of Hip-Hop. I was first introduced to the many intersections of being a Black woman and the meaning of Black feminist thought while a student at Spelman College (Atlanta, GA). I learned how systems of sexism, racism and misogyny function simultaneously in my oppression as a Black woman. More importantly, I felt stuck between my new Black feminist identity and my love for Hip-Hop. I knew at the time the images of artist like Nicki Minaj, Lil Kim, Eve and Missy Elliot had lyrics and the persona that did not fit in the notion of respectability, but I also love how those women made me feel about who I was and how I wanted to take control of my sexuality and identity as a woman who loves Hip-Hop.

It was not until I read Joan Morgan's *When Chickenheads Come to Roost* that I realized I could love them both. I could love Hip-Hop and all of its critiques towards Black women's identity and still be conscious of Black women's oppression and presentation of controlling images. There is a space and place for Black women to define themselves in Hip-Hop where I can enjoy the music, the art, and the identity that fits who I want to be and who I understand myself to be. Therefore, this study not only captures the range and nuance in Black women's presence in Hip-Hop, but also highlights the impact of misogynoir that influences how Black women interpret entertainment, representation, and identity in the Hip-Hop industry.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Hip-Hop has been around since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Originating in the South Bronx, Hip-Hop's beginnings have been credited to DJ Kool Herc for being the originator for scratching funk and disco records on the breakdown for listeners and partygoers. Herc's sister Cindy Campbell asked him to DJ at parties in the South Bronx to compensate for the lack of money she received from the Neighborhood Youth Corp. The parties that Cindy hosted represented a social and cultural collective where Black Americans and Puerto Ricans came together from the poverty stricken South Bronx and became a part of the beginning of Hip-Hop musical and artistic creation. To this day, Cindy Campbell—a Black woman—has been credited with being the Mother of Hip-Hop, which speaks to the reality of Black women's involvement in the genre as creators, entertainers, and influencers.

Over the last 30 years, Hip-Hop has transcended into an art form that has been used as a source of expression for Black people, nationally and globally. Hip-Hop has been used to speak about the particular circumstances that involve the lives of Black and Latino people living in poverty, political unrest, gang violence, and other racist and sexist happenings in urban communities. Hip-Hop shapes Black popular culture that impacts the way Black people critically think about race, gender and sexuality through rap lyrics, music videos, MCs, dancing, and fashion. In the past fifteen years, Hip-Hop has expanded its business into reality television. Reality shows like VH1's *Flavor of Love*, *T.I. & Tiny: The Family Hustle*, *The Salt-N-Pepa Show* and MTV's *Run's House* have taken viewers into the personal lives of Hip-Hop artists to show their connection to their music, Hip-Hop identity, and experience in the Hip-Hop industry. However, new Hip-Hop centered reality shows are criticized by Black studies scholars as

misogynistic due to the shows exposure of physical violence amongst female characters and emotional abuse in many of the on-screen relationships by the Black men on the show.

While new images of Hip-Hop may show controversial and sexist images of Black womanhood in the Hip-Hop community, these shows present an alternative perspective of Black women who claim their agency by defining their sexuality, identity, and social connections in the Hip-Hop industry. Through the trajectory of Hip-Hop's cultural influence in Black popular culture, it is important to investigate Black women's connection to Hip-Hop by examining the evolving genre of reality television. This perspective defines new narratives of Black womanhood, racial identity, and normative behavior found amongst women in Hip-Hop. More specifically, this study aims to explore and continue to expand the literature in the ways that Hip-Hop culture manifests and has a history of misogynoir but also the impact of Black women's influence in Hip-Hop culture. In this study, I explore the ways that Hip-Hop has revolutionized reality television and how Black women identify and define their womanhood through misogynoir performances found in *Love & Hip-Hop*. In this chapter, I discuss my research questions, elaborate on my research methods, and examine the overall nature of this study. Furthermore, this chapter explores the historical accounts of how Black women have been represented negatively, through instances of aggression, hypersexuality, and as victims of abuse. This chapter also explores how these same women create a way to find agency in Hip-Hop culture, specifically addressing the way Hip-Hop Feminism provides a nuanced way in understanding how Black women's choose to connect to Hip-Hop music and how their connections help develop their Black identity by exploring and conceptualizing their contradictions with misogynoir in Hip-Hop culture.

1.1.1 Background

Debuting in 2011 on VH1, *Love & Hip-Hop* has become VH1's highest viewed show in the past eight years with shows like *Love & Hip-Hop: Atlanta* (LHHATL), pulling in 5.6 million viewers for their season 3 premiere (Black, 2014). At the same time, LHHATL was the most social show producing 33 twitter trends with 1.66 million tweets from over 250,000 twitter users, making Twitter the source for fan commentary on LHH related information, promotions and dialogue (Black, 2014). The LHH series has been a prime show that encourages fans to follow the show on social media and to participate in social interactions that include live tweets from the cast, the opportunity for their tweets/questions to appear on the reunion, or their picture to be featured on the show. This tactic is used to intensify the fan experience by their consistent demand for their audience to be engaged in the show (Cheers, 2017). LHH is known to be the highest rated reality TV show. Producing more than 400,000 viewers on the season premiere of LHHMIA, LHH continues to be one of the most talked about cable series across Facebook and Twitter (Etkin, 2018). The LHH demographic consists of the following : 74% of women between the ages of 18-49 tune into LHH weekly and 81% of viewers are Black with an average media age viewership of 36 (Etkin, 2018). LHH has a social reach of 78 million based on their cast and VH1's LHH twitter accounts. LHH follows behind the legendary show *Scandal*, which was known as "the show that twitter built" producing 2,200 tweets a minute, five worldwide trending topics and 713,000 tweets reaching 3.1 million people during their season three debut (Cheers, 2017; Etkin, 2018). Due the viewer power of Black Americans, the statistics support the rate in which the numbers are consistently high during the premiere of shows like *Scandal* and LHH.

The foundation of this study underlines the impact of misogynoir on the women of LHH, and how Black women are able to identify misogynoir but also claim their agency in

misogynistic spaces where they can deny acts of patriarchy, sexism, and racism. There needs to be an understanding of how misogynoir is applied and explored in this study. While misogyny is understood as the overall hatred and mistreatment of women, misogynoir specifically identifies hatred towards Black women (Trudy, 2018). Coined by Black feminist scholar Moya Bailey, misogynoir is defined as anti-Black misogyny where white women exercise their racism and internalized sexism and Black men project their sexism and internalized racism (Trudy & Bailey, 2013). What is significant to understand about misogynoir is that Black women can practice misogynoir through learned behaviors of self-hatred and the position of respectability politics (Trudy & Bailey, 2013). Misogynoir is relevant in this study because of its position found in Hip-Hop culture in the ways that privilege and power have been used as tools to oppress Black women in various Hip-Hop entertainment spaces, music, and videos (Bailey, 2010; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012; Trudy & Bailey, 2013). In addition, knowing that Hip-Hop is a male-dominated space, Black women have been victims and active participants of misogynoir that have transcended into new representations and perceptions where they reject hypersexuality, sexual deviancy, and objectification through the production of Hip-Hop related media— *Love & Hip-Hop* (Edwards, 2016; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012; Trudy & Bailey, 2013).

1.2 Problem Statement

The current conflict of Hip-Hop's misogynistic legacy towards Black women has an important connection to the ways that Hip-Hop's misogyny has found a new home in the Hip-Hop-centered reality TV show *Love & Hip-Hop*. The show's franchise has grown to extend to locations in various cities: *Love & Hip-Hop: Atlanta (LHHATL)*, *Love & Hip-Hop: New York*

(*LHHNY*), *Love & Hip-Hop: Hollywood* (*LHHH*), and *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami* (*LHHMIA*).

LHH is considered a docuseries that centers around the lives of famous artists, entertainers, socialites and producers in the Hip-Hop industry. LHH highlights the everyday lives of its celebrity cast members and how they balance love, family, and relationships and navigate the highs and lows of the music business. Mona Scott-Young, a distinguished Hip-Hop manager for artists such as Missy Elliot, LL Cool J, and Busta Rhymes, is known for creating, promoting, and producing the LHH franchise (Mitchell, 2016). With its Hip-Hop roots from the creator Mona Scott-Young to Hip-Hop's most celebrated cast such as Jim Jones, Waka Flocka, Safaree, Cardi B, Remy Ma, Stevie J, Trina and Trick Daddy, it is no coincidence that LHH continues to establish and maintain a culture that promotes male entitlement, sexism, toxic Black masculinity and hypersexuality of its characters (Allison, 2016; Chepp, 2015; Hood, 2017).

LHH operates as a series that projects racialized stereotypes and sexual scripts that continue to provide entertainment and insight to the viewer's understanding of Blackness in the world of Hip-Hop in the music industry. The literature supports the consistent problem and theme found in the LHH franchise for the past eight years. LHH has presented viewers with a nuanced perspective in the ways that Black women are experiencing sexism, emotional abuse, as well as hypersexualized and aggressive behaviors (Allison, 2016; Cheers, 2017; Edwards, 2016; Mitchell, 2016). With fifty-eight percent of African American characters in reality TV shows between 2005-2008 performing one of the new emerging stereotypes of African Americans (e.g. Chickenhead, Angry Black Woman, Hoochie, etc.) (Tyree, 2011), addressing the historical impact of racial and gendered stereotypes highlights the consistent problem in which reality TV continues to portray negative images of Black women. Furthermore, LHH has created new ways to project old stereotypes of Black women such as the Sapphire and the Jezebel in many of their

main characters, while contributing to new narratives and personas such as the Gold Digger, the Video Girl, Baby Mamma and Mistress (Allison, 2016; Coleman, Butler, Long, & Fisher, 2016; Edwards, 2016; Goldman & Waymer, 2015; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). While addressing Hip-Hop's historical influence of misogynoir, the issues of gendered-racism and sexism continue to operate under the control of male Hip-Hop entertainers who perpetuate gender norms, patriarchy and sexism, which reemerge in the characters and behaviors of the men in the LHH franchise.

1.3 Purpose

The social and cultural phenomenon of misogynoir in Hip-Hop based reality TV must be explored to highlight the issue that misogynoir remains a consistent factor to maintain and operate a culturally relevant Hip-Hop franchise. This study observes cultural and societal influences in contemporary Hip-Hop reality TV culture that perpetuate occurrences of misogynoir on VH1's franchise *Love & Hip-Hop* (LHH). Additionally, this study utilizes Twitter and one-on-one interviews as a methodological tool to highlight how Black women interpret misogynoir performances that define, support, and speak on Black womanhood through the behaviors and interactions from the characters on the show.

Additionally, this study informs readers about the consistent problem in which Black women are continually objectified at the expense of maintaining a patriarchal, sexist, and capitalistic culture repeatedly found in various spaces in Hip-Hop. Furthermore, utilizing a transcendental phenomenological approach, I highlight and identify the phenomenon of Black womanhood and their reasons to why they continue to watch and support LHH. Utilizing a qualitative study that is grounded in ontological assumptions takes into account the multiple realities of Black women who discuss the actions of LHH female characters in real time as the

show premieres (Creswell, 2012). The ontological assumptions in this study consider multiple realities based on the participants' understanding of how they critically think about Black womanhood in Hip-Hop through their tweets and information provided in the interviews. This opens the dialogue about various ways LHH impacts how Black women interpret sexuality, race and identity throughout Hip-Hop culture found in reality TV.

Applying an ontological assumption and a phenomenological approach best addresses the research questions and underlying social phenomenon in LHH. This approach is best because it presents the various ways that Black women accept or reject misogynoir performances and conceptualize their understanding of how Black womanhood is projected on LHH by collecting the subjective attitudes Black women have about the presence of misogynoir in LHH. Furthermore, the use of Twitter and semi-structured phone interviews as qualitative methods helps report multiple realities based on the tweeter's understanding of character traits, behaviors, and interactions supporting the method centering this study and the phenomenon of why Twitter is used as a supportive source of entertainment to the LHH viewer experience. Moreover, the general population of this study is Black women in the US who utilize Twitter as a platform to socially engage in debates and commentaries about the drama, conflicts, and interactions amongst the cast members of LHH as active viewers. Additionally, utilizing quotes and themes from the interviews serve as the variables that provide evidence of the ways that Black women understand cast members on the show and other fans of the LHH franchise based on the behaviors and exchanges of the cast members of the show.

1.4 Significance of Study

There is a lack of empirical research on misogynoir that includes reality TV and its connection to the Hip-Hop industry and Black feminist perspectives. While the literature has explored Hip-Hop culture in the 1990s and early 2000s, this study explores the developments in contemporary Hip-Hop found in reality TV. This study contributes to literature that centers on how Black women are represented in television and Hip-Hop by examining the impact of misogynoir on Hip-Hop centered reality TV and providing a contradictory site of entertainment for Black women who are supporters of *Love & Hip-Hop*. This study is significant because it provides insight to why Black women continue to support a show that uses misogynoir to capitalize on the experiences of Black women involved with men and women in the Hip-Hop industry in the current era of reality TV and digital and social media. This study also explores the way Black women internalize misogynoir images in the way they choose to accept or reject the sexist and racist images based on their personal experiences speaks to the field of African American Studies. By gathering the voices of Black women and their perspective and understanding of Black identity, Black womanhood, and Black popular culture, this study investigates Black life based on psycho-social implications. The contribution of this research potentially further extends the knowledge of social media interactions in Black popular culture by identifying what, how, and why components of sexist and misogynistic reality television serve as a means of entertainment for Black women between the ages of 18-40.

This study is unique in its approach to understanding the extent to which Hip-Hop feminism and Black women's experiences can be applied to social media and are being used in unique ways to recognize how Black women interact and engage in contemporary social engagements of Black popular culture and Hip-Hop. Additionally, it is essential to explore the

similarities found in rap music, music videos, the sexual scripts found amongst Black women and how Hip-Hop centered reality TV resembles and portrays the same sexual scripts and misogyny found in Hip-Hop music. Utilizing a combined Hip-Hop feminist and Black feminist thought framework help to cultivate an understanding of how Black women accept or reject contemporary misogynoir performances found in LHH. This perspective is based on the ways Black women are defining and clarifying their understanding of Black womanhood, sexuality and identity.

1.5 Nature of Study

It is imperative to better understand the ways that Black women discuss why they find entertainment in LHH and if misogynoir performances are considered and thought about through conversations amongst themselves and other Black women. The study utilizes a mixed-method approach with the use of a survey, phone interview, and content analysis through tweets from Twitter. The use of a mixed-methods approach to this study addresses the major research questions about misogynoir performances and why Black women potentially find entertainment in the LHH series. Furthermore, a mixed-methods study is best used here to recognize the ways that social media is a tool to identify a population of Black women that can talk about Black womanhood, identity and representation on reality TV. Additionally, a mixed-methods study provides the reader with a more complex and multifaceted understanding of the impact of LHH on nuanced perceptions of Black popular culture and new representations of Black women. Due to the fact that LHH is a show that gains its viewership through social media interactions, utilizing Twitter as a way to collect data is significant to gain a thorough perspective about the conversations found on LHH's characters through the show's most interactive viewers. Lastly, a mixed-methods approach supports the theoretical framework of Black feminist thought and Hip-

Hop feminism by identifying the spaces where Hip-Hop culture, Black womanhood, and agency meet to support new representations of Black women that grows in social media spaces.

We know little about why Black women find LHH a source of entertainment and take to Twitter and other social media platforms to discuss the lives of Black women on the show. Potentially, the show's range in diversity of the cast and characters explains why LHHATL is the most watched show amongst Black women. Black women prefer shows that have Black women as major cast members due to fact that 74% of its viewers are women (Abrams, 2012; Cheers, 2017; Etkin, 2018). Due to *Love & Hip-Hop* promoting social engagement through their twitter handle and hashtag, viewers of the show have the opportunity to gain additional followers, engagements, and even express their creativity (Etkin, 2018). Additionally, there is limited qualitative research that studies Black women and explores their reasoning for watching and supporting various seasons of LHH. I choose to study Black women who are fans and audience participants of LHH from a population of Black women who actively tweet on Twitter. While it is not clear that the participants are Black women from the Twitter analysis, which presents a limitation, however, the survey responses determine Black women who use Twitter and help form a generalization for Black women who also utilize Twitter for LHH live tweeting. The setting and participants are appropriate for this study because Twitter is a social media space that captures a large demographic of Black women from various locations nationwide. Furthermore, the show is centered around Black women, who also comprise the main supporters and viewers of the show and actively tweet about LHH. Including tweets from Black women who are viewers of the show provides a realist pheomenogical approach for the research. By taking an pheomenogical approach, this study aims to understand Black women who actively engage in contradictory aspects of Hip-Hop, by exploring their reasoning for supporting a reality TV show

that showcases misogynoir, hypersexuality, and abuse (Berberick, 2010; Creswell, 2012; Edwards, 2016). The findings in this study are validated through a phenomenological approach where objective data from personal opinion that is subjective and discussed to analyze the ways Black women reflect on assorted behaviors of Black women found on *Love & Hip-Hop*.

Research Questions

This method of studying Black women and why they continue to support a show that has been identified as sexist, homophobic and misogynistic to Black women is relevant to highlight a different perspective of Black women who support the show's meaning. The methods I use provide the data I need to answer the research questions:

1. Why do Black female viewers utilize Twitter to discuss LHHMIA highlights?
2. How do Black female viewers of LHHMIA respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?
3. Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?

1.6 Theories and Concepts

Black feminist theoretical frameworks and scholarship aims to identify and explore Black experiences amongst Black women and how their gender and race produce a different lived experience from Black women (Chepp, 2015). Black feminist thought is the foundation for this study due to its dedication to expressing, conceptualizing, understanding and theorizing Black women's experiences in America (Collins, 2000). The work of Patricia Hill Collins specifically contributes to this study based on the concept that Black feminist thought is a social theory that highlights the everyday experiences of Black women (Trudy, 2018). Furthermore, Black feminist

thought addresses the experiences of working-class women and Black women found outside of academic spaces to open the dialogue about what Black women talk about in more informal spaces (Collins, 2000). Additionally, Black feminist literature looks beyond western logic in research and provides different representations of Black female sexuality (Chepp, 2015). Rap music is influential to the Black community as it forms a cultural expression that affects the standpoint of Black women and their gendered and racial perceptions in Hip-Hop music (Chepp, 2015; Gordon, 2008).

Black feminism's construct is grounded in the context of intersectionality, which looks at how race, gender, sexuality, and class impact Black women's experiences. Black feminism looks at a specific type of oppression that is aimed at the disadvantages Black women face in various political, cultural and social spaces that are racist, sexist, homophobic, and classist (Collins, 2000; Jones & Guy-Sheftall, 2015; Taylor, 1998). In relation to how this study positions both LHH and Black feminist thought, I utilize the work of Patricia Hill Collins and her discussion of controlling images to identify and support the sexist ways LHH disables its female characters. Although the literature shows that Black women and girls are not affected by the controlling images found on LHH and find the show more as a means of entertainment, there is still a concern in the ways that LHH continues to portray Black women as stereotypical characters such as the jezebel and the sapphire. Discussing the ways that Collins addresses controlling images in the media is necessary to identify how Black feminist thought recognizes the extension of oppressive images of Black women as jezebels that permeates through Black popular culture.

The jezebel has been historically recognized as the Black women who is sexually aggressive; they gave approval for white slave owners to rape and sexually assault Black slave women. Presently, the jezebel has found its way into Hip-Hop culture where she is known as the

“Hoochie,” “Freak,” “Sexualized Bitch,” and “Video Vixen” (Collins, 2000; B. H. French, 2013; Goldman & Waymer, 2015; D. Stephens & Few, 2007; Wallace, Townsend, Glasgow, & Ojie, 2011). These nuanced images of the jezebel still reflect its original characteristics: a Black woman who is hypersexual, sexually aggressive and deviant. However, the problem lies in the ways that Black Americans continue to accept these images, refuse to challenge such images, and hold the appropriate person accountable (Collins, 2000). Looking at the ratings of LHHATL, and the overall franchise of LHH, Black feminist thought addresses the problem that LHH has a history of projecting the jezebel image to the extent where its characters are shown as being hypersexual, which leads the characters to conflicts such as fighting, infidelity and emotional abuse. This also speaks to the ways that the women on the show are dressed, how the camera angles are positioned, and the heavily concentrated amount of patriarchal heteronormativity (Edwards, 2016). Addressing the sexist problem and negative portrayal of Black women on LHH contributes to the ever-growing influence television and Hip-Hop culture has on constructing misogynistic images of Black women on television. Black feminist thought finds these controlling images problematic because shows with Black women leads, similar to LHH, position them as “the other” and continue to justify gender, race, and class oppression. Furthermore, Black feminist thought is a concept that supports women creating alternative realities outside of sexist and racist stereotypes that affect Black culture, but the overarching issue is that there is a reality that is being supported by Black women who watch LHH. While Black feminist thought addresses the problem of the controlling images and misogynistic behaviors of many of the female cast members, Hip-Hop feminism is the theoretical framework that not only asks for Black women who watch and are characters on the show to take on some form of accountability, but allows space for other voices to depict their Hip-Hop realities where

Black women online can engage in the show without the lens of respectability (Collins, 2000; Pough, 2015; Warner, 2015).

Hip-Hop Feminism

Hip-Hop music has an important connection to Black popular culture. Hip-Hop has been one of the largest forms of expression in music for Blacks in America for the past thirty years (Blanchard, 1999). However, for some rap artists, their music has sexist and misogynistic undertones that degrade Black women. While this has been a central issue in Hip-Hop music, Joan Morgan proposes the ideology of Hip-Hop feminism, which contains problematic aspects of Hip-Hop that Black woman and girls appreciate and do not necessary consider an issue (Cooper et al., 2017; Morgan, 1999). Moreover, Morgan's concept of Hip-Hop feminism is grounded in accountability, responsibility, acceptance, and agency in the world of Hip-Hop, where Black women who are fans of Hip-Hop can appreciate, live, and survive (Morgan, 1999). Additionally, Hip-Hop feminism seeks to support Black women who demand and claim agency over their sexuality, see past machoism, and sometimes engage in oppressive behaviors such as supporting sexist Hip-Hop artists or performing as video girls in rap music videos (Morgan, 1999).

This research utilizes Hip-Hop feminism because of its focus on Black women and how they define themselves through the politics of Hip-Hop and social media. This study provides a voice for Black women who choose to engage in misogynistic and politically problematic aspects of Hip-Hop that significant and more traditional Black feminists may reject (Cooper, Morris, & Boylorn, 2017; Duthely, 2017; Morgan, 1999; Pough, 2015). While this study highlights the way that Black women revolutionize social media interactions, Hip-Hop feminism

serves as a relevant concept that supports the ways in which Black women continue to use the internet to communicate and exchange information in this digital media era (Duthely, 2017).

Black feminist thought and Hip-Hop feminism, the foundation to approach this study, advocates and highlights the various narratives of Black womanhood through LHH and how viewers internalize the behaviors and characters of the show. This study found Twitter users who are representative of a diverse population of Black women who acknowledge the various realities of Black womanhood through *Love & Hip-Hop* and uncover a particular demographic of women who choose to watch LHH regularly. This is important considering the research design to utilize a qualitative methodology that captures the opinions and perceptions of Black women through the use of tweets, surveys, and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. While Black feminist thought seeks to address the racist and sexist problems found in Hip-Hop culture, Hip-Hop feminism pushes the narrative that Black women may not necessarily be affected by the sexist and racist stereotypes. Rather they accept Hip-Hop for what it is and assert the reality that Black women have their own stories in Hip-Hop that present new cultural representations of Black sexuality that go beyond historical implications of the jezebel (Chepp, 2015; Gupta-Carlson, 2010; Warner, 2015). Additionally, these theories address the misogynoir that the characters perform, but also open the opportunity to present a study that looks at why Black women continue to engage and support *Love & Hip-Hop* and how this show speaks to Black womanhood and their identity.

1.7 Assumptions and Approach

An ethnographic approach examines how people in a cultural group interact about certain values, behaviors, and languages (Creswell, 2012). The main goal of an ethnographic approach aims to understand and analyze how culture-sharing groups seek concepts grounded in

socialization that observe people interacting in ordinary settings (Creswell, 2012). For this study, ontological assumptions are made to inquire about the multiple realities and perceptions that Black women make when commentating on LHH. The assumptions that are identified in this study are grounded in Black women's preference in specific LHH cities and characters that they relate to or find most entertaining, which is supported in the literature. Furthermore, it is assumed that Black women engage in social engagements on Twitter about how Black women on LHH choose to engage with various problems in their lives that affect their intimate relationships, friendships, and methods of accumulating fame and fortune in the Hip-Hop industry. Assumptions amongst the conversations that Black women have on social media include their personal feelings and emotions about how certain characters respond to infidelity, gossip, and violence amongst the cast members. The assumptions position the literature to infer how LHH is an extension of Hip-Hop feminism through representations of Black womanhood found in reality TV and Twitter. Using various quotes and themes from the tweets, surveys, and interviews provides relevant information about Black womanhood, identity, and sexuality in the field of Black feminist studies and Black studies. If the assumptions do not support the results of the study and the design, future research shall be done to strengthen the validity of the study with alternative qualitative methods that best support the perceptions of the population studied.

1.8 Scope and Limitations

The potential limitations of this study are the access to the demographics of the Black women behind the tweets. While some Twitter profiles have pictures of themselves, some profiles use images that do not show their actual face. For example, some profiles may have inanimate objects, their favorite celebrities, memes, or cartoon characters. It would be difficult to reach out

to each account to validate their identity; therefore, the profiles that have images of Black women are assumptions that they are the race that their default photo reflects. Another limitation is age and location. Similar to the conflict with pictures, some Twitter users do not provide their true age or location (city/state) on their profiles. However, this information is not attached to their tweets. Additionally, for location, there is a geo-tag which is where users choose to have their location connected to their tweets, but that does not necessarily justify where certain Twitter users live, but simply where they are located when they tweet.

Furthermore, using a conceptual content analysis as a research method has its own limitations. First, a conceptual analysis and an ethnography is time consuming when analyzing, coding and deciphering themes from the text (Carol et al., n.d.; Creswell, 2012). To account for the limitations of participants from Twitter, information would have to be validated and considered based on the demographic information found at the beginning of the survey. Therefore, the survey is used to account for limitations regarding age, sex, location, and gender of the participants. Second, a conceptual analysis can be reductive, especially when textual or complex, which can potentially be an issue when coding for themes with certain tweets that have many abbreviations and slang or Ebonics is used (Carol et al., n.d.). Furthermore, utilizing Twitter as a data tool has its own limitations grounded in the type of tweets that may fall into the LHH hashtags. There is a high probability that certain spam tweets will surface or tweets that utilize the similar hashtag but have different meanings for their abbreviations will populate (McCormick, Lee, Cesare, Shojaie, & Spiro, 2017). These tweets are eliminated based on the content that is reported by the Twitter user. Lastly, it is essential to note that, with any social science research, the population sample is not representative of the large demographic that is

being studied, although the scope of this study looks to address the population of Black women who watch LHH for entertainment purposes.

1.9 Summary

The Hip-Hop industry has always been a male-dominated enterprise with Black woman having limited control of how they are represented. However, famous Hip-Hop artists like Roxane Shante, Lil' Kim, Missy Elliot, and Lauryn Hill found a place in Hip-Hop where they have been celebrated based on their impact to the Hip-Hop culture. It is also significant to explore other narratives and experiences of Black women in Hip-Hop that deserve consideration and reflection. This consideration positions the problem of addressing misogyny in *Love & Hip-Hop* and how and why Black women accept the patriarchal and sexist portrayals of Black women in reality TV. Hip-Hop has been one of the largest forms of expression in music for Blacks in America for the past 30 years (Blanchard, 1999). For some rap artists, their music has sexist and misogynistic undertones that degrade Black women. Considering the extent of sexually suggestive and hypersexual music lyrics, Black women are the center of rap artists self-expression where Black women are shamed, sexually objectified, pimped and victims of violence. Black women generally view images in the media that pertain to Black culture and the Black experience (Zhang, Dixon, & Conrad, 2009).

Additionally, this research contributes to the literature by examining a new ways in which Black women engage in Hip-Hop through social media by using Twitter as a social space where they discuss the behaviors and characteristics of cast members on VH1's *Love & Hip-Hop*. The purpose of this study is to understand how Black women identify and define Black womanhood based on how they are portrayed in *Love & Hip-Hop*. Specifically, this study ventures to Twitter

to highlight the ways Black women tweet about *Love & Hip-Hop* in real time as the show premieres weekly while searching for themes and topics that predict an understanding of how twitter users discuss Black womanhood through the misogynistic images of reality TV.

This study offers another perspective to the field of African American Studies and Black feminist thought. Specifically, this study examines issues in the Black community that involve the evolution of Hip-Hop, social media, and its generational effect on Black women's identity and agency. Furthermore, this study exposes the sexist and misogynist ways that LHH potentially impact the types of conversations Black women and fans who engage in the LHH franchise. The process of conceptualizing the ways that Black women discuss Black womanhood is grounded in exploring innovative ways in which social media, reality TV, and Black feminism have evolved to expand new ways scholars can understand how everyday Black women discuss their lives through social media networks. The next chapter discusses existing Black feminist research and Black studies research that explore how scholars have explored and navigated Black womanhood through Hip-Hop. Additionally, the next chapter addresses misogyny found in Hip-Hop culture and reality TV that can be similarly connected to the ways misogyny still exist on LHH.

The next chapter explores the literature on Hip-Hop feminism, media stereotypes of Black women, and how misogynoir is present in the Hip-Hop sphere. The objective of the literature review is to situate the history of Hip-Hop, the female artists who come from it, and how it has portrayed Black women. Additionally, the literature provides relevant information that discusses the connection between Hip-Hop feminism and Black women who have claimed agency in the Hip-Hop industry. Furthermore, the literature explicitly breaks down various spaces where Black women have been victims of sexism, racism, and colorism. However, I explore cases where

Black women have been positioned as victims of misogynoir in Hip-Hop culture. I highlight the ways in which resilience and racial identity protect various aspects of Black womanhood.

Additionally, how do implications of sexuality, misogynoir, race, class and identity found in Hip-Hop imagery affect the ways Black women perceive themselves? The next chapter answers these questions and positions the study with supporting evidence to explore the ways Hip-Hop imagery, misogynoir, and stereotypes impact the lives of Black women.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Hip-Hop music has evolved culturally and politically through the years as a pillar of Black expression. Hip-Hop artists use their community and experiences to artistically depict their lives growing up in low-income communities, struggling with poverty, and racial tension. Originating in the South Bronx, Hip-Hop grew out of a community of low-income Black and Puerto Ricans in a period where the poverty, drugs, and crime were rising, while a new culture shift was beginning. Black women who found their place in the early era of Hip-Hop belonged to all four pillars of Hip-Hop: DJ'ing MC'ing, dancing, and graffiti. However, despite Hip-Hop being a male-dominated genre and industry, Black female artists have situated themselves in a manner within the industry where they continue to tell their own stories and narratives, through music or cultural associations, such as reality TV. The conflict that is presented is the contradiction that positions who tells the narrative of Black women in Hip-Hop and whether these narratives are adequate representations of the Black women's experience in the Hip-Hop community? Additionally, how do implications of hypersexuality, beauty standards and colorism perpetuated in Hip-Hop imagery affect the ways Black women perceive themselves? This chapter answers those questions and positions the study with supporting evidence to explore the ways Hip-Hop imagery, misogynoir, and stereotypes impact the lives of Black women. Specifically, in this chapter, misogynoir is clearly defined, the history of misogynoir found in Hip-Hop culture and reality TV is investigated, and the implications of Black women's racial and sexual stereotypes found in mainstream media are examined. In this chapter, Black feminism is clearly defined and the position of womanism found in Hip-Hop culture and reality TV is investigated. Also, Hip-Hop feminism and Black girlhood in this study explores the way Black female artist and Black women who are a part of a Hip-Hop generation where they seek agency in the Hip-Hop sphere.

2.1 *Hip-Hop Feminism*

Hip-Hop feminism incorporates intersectionality in the ways Black women use music and Hip-Hop to tell their own stories that reflect race, gender, class, and sexuality. When exploring the components of Black female Hip-Hop artists' contributions to Hip-Hop music and culture, it is relevant to explore the Black feminist theoretical frameworks that supports Black women's narratives, identities, and perspectives found in Hip-Hop spaces. Crenshaw (1989) discusses privileged spaces that are sexist and racist which can be found in Hip-Hop culture when misogynoir is considered in Hip-Hop music, lyrics, and videos. Additionally, due to Hip-Hop being a privileged space for Black men and masculinity, the narratives found in Hip-Hop music create a biased analysis of racism and sexism that limits the narratives of Black women in Hip-Hop culture. Crenshaw (1989) argues that in order for feminist theory and antiracist policy dialogue to be inclusive of the experiences and concerns of Black women, it must be "rethought and recast." Therefore, Hip-Hop feminism and Womanism support Crenshaw's aim to rethink and acknowledge Black women's contemporary issues that are told through Black women's reflective experiences with sex, race, class, and gender found in Hip-Hop music.

Importantly, while Hip-Hop feminism is the most appropriate framework for this study, Alice Walker's Womanism explores and highlights Black women's everydayness that reflect Black womanhood and girlhood (Phillips, 2006; Walker, 2003). Additionally, Layli Phillips (2006) further extends this notion of Womanism by stating that Womanism is "resonant for many people who were searching for an alternative to "feminist" as an identity or praxis..." (pg. xix). Specifically, Black adolescents listen to Hip-Hop music daily and studies prove that Hip-Hop is a vital part of their everyday lives (Gourdine & Lemmons, 2011; D. Stephens, 2003; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). The various components of Womanism highlight the various identities

and narratives that are found amongst Black women in Hip-Hop. The representations of Black woman's everyday interactions, her ties to her community, character, and resilience as the matriarch is evident in Walker's definition where she highlights the ways Black women appreciate women's culture, loves both men and women sexually and non-sexually, and values a woman's strength and weaknesses (Walker, 2003). Phillips supports Walker's definition by identifying how spirituality, work, struggle, activism, and intersectionality represent the social, cultural, and historical experiences of Black women (Phillips, 2006). Furthermore, Hip-Hop feminism acknowledges Black women who are a part of Hip-Hop whether they are listeners or contributors.

Hip-Hop feminism argues that there is more to Black women's understanding of Hip-Hop than simply discussing misogynoir, sexism, race, class, and gender (Morgan, 1999). Hip-Hop feminist ideology addresses the gray areas in Hip-Hop where women can find a middle ground in their love for Hip-Hop and Black feminism (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013; Morgan, 1999). Morgan (1999) stretches the discussion and discourse in the ways that Black women can eliminate the notion of being seen as victims in Hip-Hop culture and assert their experiences and allegiance to Hip-Hop as a significant part of their lives. Hip-Hop feminism is significant to this study because it presents new inquiries about Black women's representation and their experiences based on their engagement in the culture whether it is music, dance, fashion, or art (Durham et al., 2013). Hip-Hop feminism can be critiqued as being a part of second-wave Black feminisms. This theoretical framework operates where there are contradictions found in Hip-Hop and speaks to the various artistic avenues where Black women are presented in the current Hip-Hop generation and girl-centered spaces are affirmed (Brown, 2013; Cooper, Morris, & Boylorn, 2017; Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013).

One of the newer personas that has emerged from the current Hip-Hop generation, known to be a self-identified feminist and left a significant mark on the *Love & Hip-Hop: New York (LHHNY)* series, is the Bronx's own Cardi B. Belcalis Almanzar (Cardi B) is an Afro-Latina woman who started her entertainment career as a stripper. With her Bronx style, energetic, tell-all personality, Cardi B became a cast member of season six of LHHNY in 2015. She embodies a contemporary persona of Black girlhood where she collides with respectability politics due to her language usage and projection on reality TV and social media (Brown, 2013). Because she was the breakout star of the show, Cardi B was a featured cast member and brought back on season seven of LHHNY and was able to speak her truth. At the end of season seven, Cardi B chose to focus on her rap career and, eventually, was able to get two Grammy nominations for her single "Bodak Yellow," which is six-time certified Platinum and peaked at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 charts in 2017 (Billboard, 2017; RIAA, 2018; S. Williams, 2017).

As an emerging new Hip-Hop artist, Cardi B has made an impact through her social media presence on Instagram. Cardi B has spoken out on politics that have had an impact on her community and speaks on feminism and feminist issues (Weber, 2018; S. Williams, 2017). Although her feminism is not considered respectable or perfect, Cardi B's outspoken political views on women reflect Joan Morgan's idea of a Hip-Hop feminism. Reflecting on Black girlhood, Cardi B similarly "...affirms how differently sounding bodies make different knowledges possible" (Brown, 2013, pg.214). Cardi B has verbally and proudly discussed who she is and her place of origin. She speaks openly about her sexuality, claims agency on her social media spaces, fights against sexism in the Hip-Hop industry, and is willing to challenge patriarchal relationships, which can be seen on her appearances of LHHNY (Williams, 2017). While Joan Morgan speaks to a feminism that "fucks with the grays," she speaks to a population

of women that grew up within the Hip-Hop generation and support Black women that participate in non-traditional ideas of respectability in Hip-Hop culture (Collins, 2018). Additionally, Morgan argues that Black women's pleasure narratives have been misleading, misrepresented, and misunderstood in her "Politics of Pleasure" (Crosley & Morgan, 2013). Morgan creates a space and a process to rethink how to accept, address, and support the narratives of Black women's sexual and erotic pleasures. The foundation of her politics of pleasure comes from a "Post-Hip-Hop," Hip-Hop feminist, and Black feminist framework. Significantly, there is a direct connection in the importance of recognizing the identities of Black women in male-dominated spaces like sex and the music industry.

Morgan (2013) presents her argument as a "feminist priority" for Black women. This is an action that has been taken on by artist such as Cardi B, Lil' Kim and Trina who have utilized their sexual narratives and Hip-Hop persona to extend Womanist positions that disrupt Black women's pleasure narratives that have been overshadowed by misogynoir and patriarchy found in Hip-Hop culture. Morgan's Hip-Hop feminism is creating a space and a process to rethink how personalities and artists like Cardi B highlight a group of Black women who have made a presence on LHH and in the Hip-Hop industry. These Hip-Hop artists speak to a demographic of women who have found a place in Hip-Hop where they can own and develop various sexual identities that help understand various narratives of Black womanhood. James (2002) discusses various ways that Black feminist movements are revolutionized and reshaped to support the changing climate to address sexism, patriarchy, classism, and racism. Furthermore, Cardi B is considerably a woman who has reshaped and radicalized Black feminism through her music and social media presence. Additionally, Cardi B and other women in Hip-Hop take on the various binaries of Black girlhood that acknowledges Black girl's connection to Hip-Hop as a creative

process and innovators of music (Brown, 2013). Therefore, highlighting Black women in the current Hip-Hop generation, specifically in the reality TV era, will provide a perspective of Black women who support sexual agency, Black identity, public and social entertainment, and will expand the literature on Hip-Hop feminism and Black popular culture.

Hip-Hop feminist scholars request that Hip-Hop feminist studies observes present-day experiences in the way Black women continue to think about notions of Hip-Hop culture and new understandings of misogynistic popular culture (Collins, 2000; Cooper et al., 2017; Durham et al., 2013). Additionally, with the growth of social and digital platforms as new forms of communication for grassroots activism, a content analysis from tweets expand Hip-Hop feminist work and Black feminist thought (Durham et al., 2013; A. Williams & Gonlin, 2017). The women of the Crunk Feminist Collective further support the notion of Hip-Hop feminism by demanding that Black women own the contradictory parts of Black womanhood, live life on their own terms, and embrace the “ratchetness” that comes with being involved in Hip-Hop culture and low-income communities (Cooper et al., 2017). Giving Black women the space to define their Black womanhood and share their experiences on LHH can be seen as a similar opportunity that many female rappers such as Lil’ Kim, Foxy Brown, and Cardi B used to claim their own form of sexual agency and identity in the world of Hip-Hop (Chepp, 2015; Morgan, 1999; S. Williams, 2017). While Black women have positioned themselves as creators in the Hip-Hop industry through modes of music, fashion and art, due to the controlling images found in Hip-Hop media, stereotypes of Black womanhood have led the sexist narrative through cases of misogynoir. This exploration of misogynoir found in Hip-Hop culture positions the contradiction of how Black women are perceived based on masculine discourses found in the music industry versus the actuality of how Black women have agency when discuss their diverse experiences in

Hip-Hop culture. This is where the literature fails Black women and continues the binary of respect versus the ratchet.

The reference and exploration of Hip-Hop feminism and its connection to Black women's narratives in contemporary Hip-Hop media spaces speak to the method of radicalizing feminisms. Hip-Hop feminism and its connection to Womanism positions Black women in Hip-Hop while adding nuance to Black feminisms that radicalize and disrupt perceptions of Black women's sexuality, behaviors, and identities. The ways that Black women have been portrayed in music videos has transcended into sexual scripts and identities that have reflected historical images of the Sapphire and the Jezebel. Through the trajectory of Hip-Hop's history, it is evident that Black life found in the media and specifically Black television creates a shared and validated space for Black perspectives (Brown, 2013; Rose, 1994). Future literature should explore the language and identity through music where Black women have become the story tellers. This is explored further in reality TV and social media where Black women who are a part of the contemporary Hip-Hop generation have a platform to share their collective experiences. James (2002) states that, "...Revolutionary black feminism transgresses corporate culture by focusing on female independence; community building/caretaking; and resistance to state dominance..." (pg. 91). This notion further supports the literature and instances of contradicting conservative Black feminisms while revolutionizing and radicalizing new Black feminism in Hip-Hop culture, which is a male dominated space.

However, Hip-Hop feminism potentially rejects respectability similarly in ways radical feminist accept changes in Black commercial culture and political ideologies (James, 2002). Hip-Hop feminism helps to explain revolutionary politics found in radical feminisms and challenging patriarchal powers (James, 2002). With shows like *Love & Hip-Hop*, there is a possibility that

the Black women who watch the show speak to Black women in the Hip-Hop generation and navigate a male-dominated space to break into public spheres. This study willingly supports the position of Black women's expressive behaviors similar to Ruth Brown's "The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood." This alternative narrative explores how Black womanhood is perceived and experienced differently amongst supporters of Hip-Hop-based reality TV that provides nuanced representations of Black women's cultural agency. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to expand Hip-Hop feminist literature with qualitative data about Black women who are a part of the social media era and still a part of the new Hip-Hop generation that finds contradictions in their love for Hip-Hop culture and why they remain connected. Hopefully, this takes away from the victimization found in other studies and critiques where Black women can have control of their own representation in Hip-Hop culture.

Brown's (2013) notion of Black girls creativity dismantles the binary of the sassy and silent Black girl. This is a step towards equal representation of Black girlhood and the creativity that goes into the music produced by Black girls supports their creative potential and becomes a site for identity, behavior, and Hip-Hop feminist practice. The music that is created by Black girls is further extended by Black women that reflects expressiveness and everydayness that is similarly found in Womanism and Hip-Hop feminism. The creative sound of Black girlhood is seen as musical in nature where the everyday lives of Black girl sound such as their "Black girl musical games" and social interactions are cultural sites of production (Brown, 2013).

Furthermore, recognizing the creativity that is established amongst Black girlhood centralizes Blackness, gender, and performance (Brown, 2013). This can be considered when addressing Black women who are a part of the Hip-Hop generation that may find a connection with stereotypes that considerably represent their womanhood and Black experience. Ultimately,

disrupting this binary focuses on the concept of Black women as active participants of Hip-Hop culture producing style, language, and entertainment (Brown, 2013; Rose, 1994).

2.2 *Misogynoir and the Black Woman in Hip-Hop Culture*

Misogynoir is a term described as the “brand of hatred directed at black women in American visual and popular culture” (Bailey, 2010). Misogyny glorifies the sexualized violence of Black women’s bodies. Rap music has profited off of sexually objectifying many Black women, which led to negative portrayals of Black women in the Hip-Hop industry. In a Hip-Hop music video analysis, it was discovered that rap videos contained repetitive themes of misogyny in 48% of the videos (Zhang, Dixon, & Conrad, 2009). The rate at which misogyny is a central theme in Hip-Hop culture could be a factor in the ways music can be sexually explicit to its viewers. This is a concern and an issue in the relationship of Hip-Hop viewers and how the viewers internalize and perceive those misogynistic images. In the same study, it was observed that women who viewed more misogynistic videos were more accepting of sexualized violence (Zhang et al., 2009). However, these same women see sexualized violence and misogyny as degrading to women, but due to conscious viewing the images do not affect their self-perceptions due to high ethnic identity (Zhang et al., 2009). Recurring images such as the Gold Digger, Video Girl, Freak, Dyke, and Baby Mama are some of the many sexual scripts that are prevalent in Hip-Hop culture (Ross & Coleman, 2011; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). These sexual scripts serve as the foundation to the images that should be explored in reality TV shows and the identities that need to be assessed when reviewing misogynoir performances.

Reality TV has been defined as a genre that places various people in dramatic situations such as competitive games like *Survivor*, dating opportunities like *Flavor of Love*, and the

Bachelor, and placing strangers in a home to live together in efforts to overcome personal struggles like the *Bad Girls Club* and the *Real World* (Tsay-Vogel & Krakowiak, 2017). The new subgenre of reality TV allows viewers to watch celebrities or non-actors an inside look into their everyday lives. This involves cameras following various celebrities to explore their day-to-day schedule of events, traveling, and how they spend time with their family, which is known as the surveillance subgenre (Riddle & De Simone, 2013). Some of the most popular shows that cater to this subgenre are *The Real Housewives*, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, and *Love & Hip-Hop*.

Looking at the history of Black cast members in reality television, it is consistent for the cast members to have, in some form, performed a historical stereotype or a new emerging stereotype, while finding a way to entertain its viewers. Tyree (2001) discovered that within 10 different reality TV shows, there was at least one Black cast member that performed the characteristics of old and new racial stereotypes. She found on average that 58% of the African American cast members on the show that were observed fit into one of the racial stereotypes where there was a predominately white cast (Tyree, 2011). Out of the 10 shows that were analyzed the Angry Black Woman stereotype was found in six of the ten shows, which highlighted and deprecated the Black women as aggressive through her non-verbal cues and physical disagreements (Tyree, 2011). This was similarly discovered when Smith (2003) did a comparison study and explored how African Americans were portrayed on the popular BET reality TV show *College Hill*. Similarly, *College Hill* portrayed Black women negatively on the show due to their verbal aggression and attitude towards other cast members (Smith, 2013). A focus group gathered opinions about *Love and Hip-Hop NY* and how they internalize the show. Participants addressed the physical aggression found amongst cast members on *Love & Hip-Hop*

NY and how the show promotes violence and poor social conflict skills (Edwards, 2016).

Furthermore, the literature on the performances of Black women on reality TV are consistently aggressive, whether it is verbal or physical.

Similar to the ways that Hip-Hop music has a history of sexually objectifying and being misogynistic towards Black women in artist lyrics and music videos, these characteristics and behaviors are similarly found in reality TV shows. When viewers watch reality TV shows that sexually objectify women and show explicit media of women, there is a greater acceptance of the objectification of women that contributes to rape and myth acceptance (Seabrook, Ward, & Giaccardi, 2018). This is further supported in the ways that Black women are dressed on Black-oriented TV shows that cater to sexual scripts found in Hip-Hop culture (Coleman et al., 2016). It was discovered that the popular images of the “Freak” and “Gold Digger” were the most popular images found in Black-oriented TV, based on participants’ interpretations of how Black women were portrayed on TV, in their wardrobe style, how male cast members objectify the women, and how female characters have materialistic preferences in a partner preference (Coleman et al., 2016).

Additionally, identifying the sexual scripts that are present in Hip-Hop culture, how do the images correlate with listening habits of Black women? Gordon (2008) found that youths who viewed more misogynistic images in Hip-Hop music were younger than the youths that listened to less Hip-Hop music. Results showed that youths who frequently listened to misogynistic music suggested that women should do something about how Hip-Hop music makes them look (Gordon, 2008; Ross & Coleman, 2011; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). This implies that women should not accept how they are perceived in Hip-Hop culture, yet it also suggests that women are to blame for their treatment, not the men in the Hip-Hop industry.

There is a limited research that explores the misogyny in reality TV and its effect on Black women's perceptions of how they are portrayed. The literature has explicitly looked at how Black college students and adolescents internalize controlling images of the overall production of Blackness on television and mass media. However, there needs to be an understanding of the ways in which Hip-Hop misogyny has manifested in the culture and brand of *Love & Hip-Hop* franchise. Weitzer and Kubrin (2009) analyzed 403 Hip-Hop songs and found that 20% of those songs contained misogynistic lyrics. Of those songs, they identified five consistent misogynistic themes: derogatory naming and shaming of women, the sexual objectification of women, the distrust of women, legitimation of violence against women, and the celebration of prostitution and pimping (Adams & Fuller, 2006; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). The finding of this study suggest that the five themes highlight social gender relations, pressures in the music industry and conditions in some lower income communities (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). The nature of the themes in Hip-Hop music subject women to objects and as "Other" and focus on a woman's physical anatomy and sexuality in the lyrics, which are portrayed in music videos (Adams & Fuller, 2006; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009).

The ways that Black women have been portrayed in music videos has transcended into sexual scripts and identities that have reflected historical images of Sapphire and Jezebel. The study of sexual scripts in Hip-Hop culture highlight the ways that Black women have been objectified through music lyrics in the way they focus on the woman's body. However, the impact relies on the frequency in which African Americans listen to misogynistic music and internalize, accept, and understand the sexual scripts found in the lyrics and music videos. Furthermore, Hip-Hop culture is widely accepted by African Americans. Specifically, Black adolescents listen to Hip-Hop music daily and studies prove that Hip-Hop is a vital part of their

everyday lives (Gourdine & Lemmons, 2011; D. Stephens, 2003; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). However, the literature continues to explain the impact that Hip-Hop culture has on African American girls, and how they do not subscribe to the sexual scripts but they frequently use the terms in social spaces (D. Stephens, 2003; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). Therefore, at a young age, Black adolescent girls and boys are familiar with the labels because of their frequent listening and viewing habits. Although studies have identified the rate in which Black adolescents indulge in Hip-Hop culture, Black girls do not think the scripts define them. However, they identify friends or classmates who subscribe to the scripts. Additionally, Black adolescent boys look at these scripts and relate to them and apply it to their dating and sexual preferences (D. Stephens, 2003). This manifests in the ways that college men contribute and accept the sexual objectification of women based on the rate they watch Hip-Hop music videos (Kistler & Lee, 2009).

It is important to note that the literature on adolescent boys states that Black adolescent boys are more affected by the sexually objectifying culture found in Hip-Hop and closely let the lyrics and music influence their perceptions of women. Similarly, this is supported in the literature that explores how reality TV, sports programming, and pornography are linked to the sexual objectification of women based on the rate in which men view sexually objectified media (Seabrook et al., 2018). However, the literature lacks in addressing how these perceptions affect how it impacts the way Black adolescent girls think of themselves based on the teenage dating preferences. Furthermore, although Black women are protected by the images and do not let the sexual scripts and other forms of misogyny in Hip-Hop culture define them, there is no causation or correlation to understand how men socially construct and promote gender and sexuality norms at an early age. Findings in the literature suggest that long-term exposure to sexually objectifying

images can promote and reinforce certain gender attitudes and distorted sexual norms (Kistler & Lee, 2009). Additionally, this is a gap in reality TV literature and how Black men treat Black women in Black reality TV shows such as *Love & Hip-Hop*. However, how does this translate in the ways that the media constructs images of Black women.

2.3 *Body, Beauty and The Black Woman's Appearance*

In Hip-Hop music videos, the women that are frequently shown or presented in Hip-Hop lyrics tend to be light-skinned women. Additionally, the Black women that are projected in Hip-Hop have general and consistent features that are not representative of all Black women (Gordon, 2008; Patton, 2006; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2012). Lighter skinned Black women with long straight hair and large butts are the norm in rap videos. This type of woman has been identified as one of the sexual scripts in Hip-Hop known as the Diva and seen as an acceptable sexual script amongst Black adolescent girls and boys due to their attractive appearance (D. Stephens, 2003). These women become the standard of beauty in Hip-Hop. The rate at which this standard is perpetuated throughout Hip-Hop mildly affects the ways Black women think of themselves (Stephens, 2003).

The consistent images of light-skinned Black women in mainstream media and in Hip-Hop music influence internalized racism and self-degradation of Black women who have low self-esteem (Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams, & Belgrave, 2015). Unfortunately, there is limited research that focuses on the issues of colorism that explores skin tone and the greater implications of how Black women feel and perceive themselves when there is a lack of representation when it comes to skin tone. This issue relates to scholarship on hair texture in Black communities and how Black women prefer to wear their hair based on the culture of their

community. Maxwell, Brevard, Abrams, & Belgrave (2015) concluded that when it comes to skin color, darker skinned women had higher private self-perceptions than lighter skinned women for skin preference, but amongst both color groups, there were no differences in skin color satisfactions.

While the literature suggests that it is impossible for younger Black girls to avoid recurring images in Hip-Hop culture, they are also protected by the Black community to negate the norms of hypersexuality and colorism in the Hip-Hop community (Gourdine & Lemmons, 2011; Patton, 2006). Based on a study regarding adolescents' perceptions of Hip-Hop music, adolescents were more likely to internalize the behaviors of the artist and shape those behaviors and ideologies into their social communities (Clay, 2003; Emerson, 2002; Gordon, 2008; Maxwell et al., 2015; Mischner, Schie, Wigboldus, Baaren, & Engels, 2013; Patton, 2006). Gordon (2008) discovered that appearance is important to adolescents and that because Hip-Hop music is so pervasive in the Black community it is Black music that ultimately shapes Black culture. This conclusion further supports the literature that Black women are less likely to associate with white images of beauty because they better associate with their own racialized experience in their own community (Gordon, 2008; Patton, 2006; Zhang et al., 2009).

However, when exploring Black Beauty standards, skin color, hair, and body type are important factors when highlighting how mass media creates images of Black women's beauty on television. Importantly, these three standards should be considered in understanding the impact of how this reflects on the self-esteem of Black women. The literature suggests that light skinned Black women are negatively influenced by idolized images of Black women who are light skinned and have long hair (Capodilupo, 2015). Shows like *College Hill* and *Love & Hip-*

Hop maintain this image by having women characters who are significantly lighter than their male cast members along with having significantly longer hair (Smith, 2013).

Gordon (2008) also concluded that while among Black adolescents there is a significant importance of appearance, the importance of appearance and desirability by their peers are perceptions that come from adolescents internalized images in Hip-Hop because of the rate in which they view Hip-Hop music and images. This is significant as reality TV shows are selective of Black women in their casting process and continue to represent one type of Black woman to be shown on TV. In particular, the literature highlights that there is a significance in the way that Black women understand skin color satisfaction based on internalized racism (Maxwell et al., 2015).

The literature suggests that interactions with the images in music and reality do not shape the experiences or perspectives of the women who view the shows or listen to the music (Edwards, 2016; Gordon, 2008). However, with literature highlighting differences in standards of beauty amongst Black women and the notion that high racial identity protects them from low self-esteem (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, & Kotzin, 2014; Hesse-Biber, Livingstone, Ramirez, Barko, & Johnson, 2010), the literature does not address low self-esteem or different socio-economic backgrounds and, specifically, what contributing factors in Black popular culture have the ability to shape self-esteem in low-income communities, where women may not benefit from the same buffers that middle class participants have in past studies. To explore how misogynoir is prevalent in *Love & Hip-Hop*, it is necessary to explore the literature and the history of misogynistic images and portrayals of Black women. It is also important to explore the types of stereotypical images found in reality TV shows and how they are used to generate a narrative about the lives of Black women.

2.4 *Sexual Stereotypes of Black Women in Hip-Hop Reality TV*

Historically, Black women have been at the center of racial stereotypes. The earlier stereotypes such as the mammy, jezebel, and sapphire were the original characters that falsely depicted the identity and characteristics of Black women in the early 20th century. Interestingly, these racial stereotypes of Black women have found their way into mainstream television and have evolved into new forms of gendered and racial stereotypes. Today, many popular reality TV shows feature the lives of Black women who are the wives, girlfriends, ex-wives, or ex-girlfriends of celebrity professional ball players, rappers, and entertainers. The reality shows capture the everyday lives of upper class Black women as viewers watch how they go about their daily lives attending sporting events, Hip-Hop showcases, or supporting their friends at their new boutique or make-up launch. While these reality shows do not show Black life in low-income neighborhoods, they present a contemporary image of jezebels, sapphires and hypersexual lives where they battle toxic relationships with friends and their intimate partners (Lundy, 2018).

New representations of Black womanhood adopt and maintain the original historical implications of the jezebel and sapphire and combine them with the original sexual scripts of how Black women have been culturally portrayed in Hip-Hop music, such as the gold-digger, freak, and diva. Also, there is a production of new racial stereotypes that are adopted amongst Black women on shows that project Black women as inherently aggressive and irate. The literature recounts the ways that Black women in reality TV have been casted to portray a lifestyle that adapts historical racial stereotypes while presenting a luxurious lifestyle where they are dedicated to the entertainment community by engaging in the social scene found in the scripted lives of Hip-Hop entertainers and producers, NBA players, or businessmen whom they

date or interact with. Furthermore, the connection to the representations of Black women in reality TV and the audience serves an understanding of the ways Black women who watch the show think about how Black women are being represented and how that impacts the way that they think about themselves. The sapphire and jezebel have found its way by emerging in reality TV in such characters as “New York” know from VH1’s *Flavor of Love* and Joseline Hernandez from *VH1’s Love & Hip-Hop: Atlanta*. While these are only two of the most popular characters found in Hip-Hop centered reality TV, these women represent a larger population in the ways that reality TV has a history of projecting problematic and negative stereotypes of Black women.

The sapphire stereotype emerged in the in the media in the early 1940s on the popular “Amos and Andy” radio show. She was presented as a brown or dark-skinned woman whose main role was to emasculate Black men with her ability to verbally assault them with her aggressive behaviors. The sapphire was a loud, angry Black woman of very large stature who was seen as nagging her husband. Furthermore, this stereotype has transformed into a more explicit and defined stereotype known as the “Angry Black woman.” The angry Black woman is synonymous with the racial stereotype of the sapphire, due to the notion that she is similarly a Black woman who is hostile, aggressive, and bitter (Ashley, 2014).

The angry Black woman has been found to be a consistent stereotype and representation of Black women found in media and, more specifically, reality TV. The writers, producers, and production crew have played a role in the way that they commit to defining false narratives and behaviors of Black women on reality television that keep the consistent historical identity and characteristics that have been enhanced through scripted writing and they ways the camera focuses on Black women. A study identified African American stereotypes found in reality TV shows by explicitly observing gestures, movements, actions, linguistics and dialogues amongst

the cast members. Out of the 10 reality shows that were selected by the researchers, the stereotype of the angry Black woman was found amongst the Black women in the show (Tyree, 2011). This was identified in the way the camera crew directs the camera to Black women's body language in verbal disagreements by capturing harsh facial expressions and head shaking (Tyree, 2011). This was extended in the way the women projected various forms of aggression and anger in the way the women would threaten other cast members, provoking confrontation and arguments, and highlighted instances on the show where the Black women became physically violent (Edwards, 2016; Tyree, 2011).

The negative attitude of the combination of the sapphire and angry Black woman was frequent in the way that New York's mother "Sister Patterson" behaved on her daughter's reality TV show, *I Love New York*. Sister Patterson is a dark-skinned woman who was dominant, sarcastic, and sharp-tongued in the way that she talked to the bachelors on the show (Campbell, Giannino, China, & Harris, 2008). Further extending the notion of aggressive behaviors of the angry Black woman and stereotype, Sister Patterson plays on the physical cues of eye rolling, scowling, and, in one particular occasion, blowing cigarette smoke in a contestant's face (Campbell et al., 2008). The producers of the show would play on the perceived behaviors and characteristics of Sister Patterson by playing certain music when she enters a room or special effects that included fire or horns when contestants on the show referenced her attitude. Notably, *Love & Hip-Hop* has the similar issue of projecting angry Black women who are violent and deviant. They are often seen arguing and fighting other Black women on the show (Edwards, 2016). These actions from the show may suggest to viewers the innate aggressive behaviors of Black women and that anything makes them angry.

Although the literature highlights the behaviors of the performances of the angry Black woman, there is limited information about the physical characteristics of the angry Black woman. This would help assess if the physical characteristics also equally resemble the physical characteristics of the sapphire but placing a physical trait as a brown or dark-skinned woman as angry compared to light-skinned women. This further supports the notion that along with the aggressive and angry behavior of Black women, they are seen as unattractive and unlovable, further projecting less feminine ideals of womanhood amongst Black women. This is also seen in the way that the producers of the show get rid of and replace characters from the show if they are not consistent with keeping up the dramatic imagery and aggressive nature of the show (Edwards, 2016).

Identifying the ways that Black women are portrayed as aggressive, angry, and violent in nature is necessary to explore the ways that the literature highlights its impact on Black women's perception of themselves and how the ways they think about how the media and reality TV shows choose to portray the lives of Black womanhood. This was observed in the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale (Thomas, Witherspoon, & Speight, 2004), which measures the perceptions and racial stereotypes of Black women by exploring the mammy, jezebel, sapphire and superwoman stereotype and its ability to predict self-esteem levels amongst Black women. Amongst the Black women that were studied, the results showed that there was a negative correlation. The sapphire and jezebel was negatively correlated to self-esteem, implying that Black women who internalize those stereotypes affect how they choose to express their anger and sexuality (Ashley, 2014; Thomas et al., 2004). This understanding pushes the conflict that Black women are misunderstood and limits their range of emotions, which may lead to how they internalize their emotions and behaviors (Ashley, 2014).

Historically, Black women's sexual behaviors have been characterized as hypersexual and immoral (B. H. French, 2013; West, 1995). The jezebel is considered to be one of the early stereotypes of Black women's sexuality emerging during slavery where white slave owners would rape and sexually objectify the bodies of Black women who resembled white standards of beauty (Brown et al., 2013; B. French, 2013; West, 1995). The jezebel, who was a light-skinned or mixed-raced woman who had long hair and a small nose, was seen as the physical alternate of the mammy. She was sexually promiscuous, deviant, and engaged in sexual activity with multiple partners (West, 1995). The importance of exploring Black women's sexual stereotypes helps understand the connection of misogyny found in reality TV. The way that Hip-Hop culture has sexually objectified Black women in their music videos and lyrics proves that artists and Hip-Hop labels support the objectification and hypersexualizing of Black women in the ways they exploit the Black female body. This notion serves a direct linkage in how Black women are portrayed, treated, and engage sexually with their cast members on Hip-Hop centered reality shows such as *Love & Hip-Hop*. It is essential to note the connections between the historical sexual stereotype of the Black and new sexual scripts of Black women found in Hip-Hop lyrics, music videos, and now reality TV.

The literature provides a significant amount of information of how Black women are portrayed as hypersexual beings in Hip-Hop culture. Researchers have placed a significant value in understanding how sexual scripts and the jezebel stereotype have an impact on the ways Black adolescents and Black college students think of themselves and other Black women. Due to high levels of racial identity and high sense of self-worth, Black girls are able to seek entertainment from stereotypical images of Black womanhood, but deny that those heightened sexual behaviors actually represent who they are (Brown et al., 2013; Edwards, 2016; Gourdine & Lemmons,

2011; Hall & Smith, 2012; D. Stephens & Few, 2007). However, the gaps in this literature fail to acknowledge what older Black women and women from low-income communities think about Black women's sexuality in the media.

Scholars utilized the Stereotypic Roles for Black Women Scale (Thomas et al., 2004), particularly using the Modern Jezebel subgenre, when examining the jezebel stereotype and Black women in the media. This subgenre identifies perceptions of Black women's sexuality exploring sexual behaviors that align with sexual objectification and hypersexuality with such items "Black women are often treated as sex objects" (Thomas et al., 2004). The items in this subsection further explore the ways in which Black women can understand and identify the ways in which their sexuality is perceived in social, cultural, and media spaces. Additionally, this subgenre also provides information about how Black women's sexuality can be quantified and possible correlations to self-esteem and behavior. Moreover, it is necessary to explore images of Black women's sexuality in reality TV and Hip-Hop culture to understand how Black women's sexual stereotypes and scripts continue to be similar and generate misconceptions about Black women's sexual behaviors. Lastly, this understanding can better highlight how stereotypical sexual behaviors of Black women serve as a foundation in the ways that Black men, producers, and entertainers on reality TV and in the Hip-Hop community perpetuate misogynistic behaviors towards Black women.

The overall assessment of the jezebel image in the media is explored in the ways television has a way of projecting Black women as hypersexual, deviant, and sexually aggressive in nature. The jezebel stereotype can be linked to images such as the "Freak," "Hoochie," or "Video Girl." Particularly, the sexual script Freak has been identified as a new modern sexual stereotype because of her sexual personality and sexual agenda where she has no sexual

inhibitions (Coleman et al., 2016; B. H. French, 2013; D. Stephens & Few, 2007; D. P. Stephens & Phillips, 2003). The Hoochie is another sexually promiscuous woman and found in early reality TV shows as the cast member that was open about her sexual preferences and needs. Found in the *Real World* and *College Hill*, two Black women were labeled by other cast members as promiscuous (Tyree, 2011). Moreover, the behavior of these characters included provocative dancing and openly flirting with other cast members (Tyree, 2011). Furthermore, the producers of *Real World* played on the notion of their Black female cast member by showing clips of her “stripping” to viewers of the show (Tyree, 2011). The Video Girl is another sexual script that is a new modern representation that reflects the characteristics of the jezebel. Although the Video Girl has been closely know to resemble the Gold Digger sexual script (Ross & Coleman, 2011), I argue that the way the Video Girl has been sexually exploited in Hip-Hop music videos perpetuates the hypersexuality and deviance of the jezebel. The Video Girl uses her body and sexuality to achieve success in the Hip-Hop community and puts in effort to invest in her appearance (Ross & Coleman, 2011). Known famous Video Girls are Amber Rose, Blac Chyna, and Erica Mena, who is also a cast member on *Love & Hip-Hop: Atlanta* and *Love & Hip-Hop: NY*.

The Freak, Hoochie, and Video Girl are equally important sexual scripts that have roots in the Hip-Hop industry in the ways that Black women are represented and discussed in the music. Rap lyrics and the images that follow in the music videos perpetuate a sexist, patriarchal misogynist environment where Black women are sexually exploited in the ways they define gender roles in the music (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009). However, although the majority of rap songs are not inherently misogynistic, there is not an equal representation of Black women that eliminates sexist and misogynistic behaviors and the ways men treat women in social spaces on

reality TV (Hall & Smith, 2012; Seabrook et al., 2018). This is similarly portrayed in the ways that Black men on Black-centered reality TV shows treat the Black female cast members due to the creation of the sexualized images by the writers and producers of the show.

The *Love & Hip-Hop* franchise along with other Hip-Hop centered reality shows such as *Flavor of Love* and *College Hill* perpetuate the similar images of the Freak, Hoochie, Video Girl as nuanced versions of the jezebel with a particular focus on the reality projected in the reality TV industry. Additionally, the connections to Hip-Hop artists and entertainers as their lovers, wives, and baby mothers in the reality shows highlight an important connection to understand how celebrity Hip-Hop entertainers live their personal lives outside of the music industry. *Love & Hip-Hop* perpetuates the normative behaviors that are found in rap music and videos and projects those behaviors of Black women in the way they behave sexually in the show, therefore pushing the narrative that Black women are hypersexual, erotic, and that they exploit their sexuality for monetary gain as a normal lifestyle that represents Black women in the Hip-Hop industry (Edwards, 2016).

The early identifiers of the modern jezebel are found in *Flavor of Love*, which aired in 2006. *Flavor of Love* was based on the popular Hip-Hop MC Flavor Flav in his pursuit for love. The show premiered on VH1 and was known as Black-chelor or the “Ghetto” Bachelor due to the shows predominate Black cast and Hip-Hop cultural influences on urban-life and slang found in the Black community. However, *Flavor of Love* deserves close attention due to its hypersexualization of some of the Black women on the show. A study that looked at how race and Black identity was performed in *Flavor of Love* highlighted the way the show portrays a sexual environment in the type of seductive music that plays when certain voluptuous Black woman appears on screen. This is visible in the ways the cameras focus on their physique with

close ups of their buttocks and breast (Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008). Similarly, *Love & Hip-Hop* creates the same angles as the camera pans to the women's breast and bottom when they come into the scene. The camera focuses on sexual aspects of the Black women on the show (Edwards, 2016). This projection of Black hypersexuality through the gaze of the camera impacts how the show portrays Black women. Furthermore, studies are limited in how they analyze the portrayal of individual characters of the show and how their overall personalities and behaviors highlight Black hypersexuality and reinforce the new sexual scripts through Hip-Hop centered reality TV. This notion of Black sexuality and sexual identities found in sexual scripts are not willingly performed by Black women, but a scripted creation of behaviors and characteristics that are based on the perspective and manipulation of Black male artists, producers, and writers of popular reality TV shows (Rose, 1994). However, the perspective of Black women are present in Hip-Hop but are silenced through respectability politics and critiques of the stereotypes found in Hip-Hop media and imagery (Pough, 2015).

2.5 Conclusion

This literature review examined the misogynoir is prevalent in Black reality TV shows and, specifically, Hip-Hop based reality TV shows. The literature discussed above is consistent in identifying cases of misogynoir found in Hip-Hop culture. Many of the sexual scripts that were identified in music videos are similar in the stereotypes and characteristics in reality TV. According to the literature, Black women's sexuality is formulated from a patriarchal notion of representation, which led to negative representations of Black women in reality TV similar to Hip-Hop lyrics and music videos (Edwards, 2016). The literature explains that because of high self-esteem Black girls and Black college women negate the misogynistic and stereotypical

images of Black women as individual representations of themselves (Barrie et al., 2016; Brown et al., 2013; Buckley & Carter, 2005; Oney, Cole, & Sellers, 2011; Patterson, 2004). Based on the literature, there is a connection to how Black women understand and engage in misogynistic Hip-Hop culture, but rather than internalize the sexualized images as representations of themselves, Black women formulate nuanced perceptions of Black womanhood, femininity, and sexuality (Clark et al., 2016; Edwards, 2016; B. French, 2013; Kistler & Lee, 2009; D. P. Stephens & Phillips, 2003; Thomas et al., 2004). Considering the ways that Black women are a part of Hip-Hop culture, there is a conflict of understanding in the ways Black women accept, reject, or ignore instances of sexism found in the production and consumption of Hip-Hop imagery.

Through the trajectory of Hip-Hop's history, it is evident that Black life found in the media and, specifically Black television, creates a shared and validated space for Black perspectives (Rose, 1994). The presentation of Black women as sexually deviant and erotic in various spaces in Hip-Hop culture eventually desensitizes Hip-Hop lovers and creates the notion that such behavior is normal (Clark, Glover, McClain, Steele, & Jemison, 2016; Edwards, 2016). However, such invalidated spaces position a binary for Black women where there can only be ho's and Black queens, which creates a dichotomy of the respectable versus the ratchet (Cooper et al., 2017; Pough, 2015). However, the literature fails to acknowledge Black women who are a part of the Hip-Hop generation that fall into multiple narratives of Hip-Hop, whether they are the Freak Hoe and Black Queen, or the Baby Mamma and the Video Vixen. Hip-Hop has been the site for "home grown, local, Black-Ghetto cultural phenomenon" where Black women's stories have been scrutinized to the extent that corporate powers have controlled the values and expressions of Black women's sexuality, agency and experiences (Rose, 2008). Therefore, the

counter action is respectability politics combat against sexism in the Hip-Hop industry, assuming that a change in Black behavior will fix the disrespect of Black women in Hip-Hop (Rose, 2008). This is where the literature leaves out the binary of respect versus the ratchet.

However, the literature finds that Black women's high racial identity is a moderator for high self-esteem where they do not internalize racial and gendered stereotypes. Moreover, the Black women on the reality show express their lack of concern and did not feel offended when they were addressed about their looks and behaviors, this implies that they are satisfied with themselves and who they are (Tyree, 2011). This can be considered when addressing Black women who are a part of the Hip-Hop generation that may find a connection with stereotypes that considerably represent their womanhood and Black experience. Disrupting this binary focuses on the concept of Black women as active participants of Hip-Hop culture producing style, language, and entertainment (Rose, 1994). The germinal literature fails to address or support Black women who perpetuate sexism and misogynoir in their narratives, by supporting respectability politics (Warner, 2015). On the contrary, Black women in Hip-Hop are invested in sexual politics where they create the space to define themselves in their social environments (Rose, 1994).

One of the major critiques of the literature is that it situates Black women as victims in Hip-Hop. While it is evident that Black men dominate the Hip-Hop industry, Black women have always been a part of Hip-Hop as musicians, artists, dancers, and scholars who provide younger Black women with a reflective space that is culturally relevant (Pough, 2007; Rose, 1994). With shows like *Love & Hip-Hop*, there is a possibility that the Black women who watch the show speak to Black women in the Hip-Hop generation and navigate a male dominated space to break into public spheres. This alternative narrative will explore how Black womanhood is perceived

and experienced differently amongst supporters of Hip-Hop based reality TV that provides nuanced representations of Black women's agency found in reality TV. Furthermore, the aim of this study is to expand Hip-Hop feminist literature with qualitative data about Black women who are a part of the social media era and the new Hip-Hop generation that find contradictions in their love for Hip-Hop culture and why they remain connected. Hopefully, this takes away from the victimization found in other studies and critiques where Black women can have control of their own representation.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 *Introduction*

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways Black women define their understanding of Black womanhood based on misogynoir performances found in VH1's reality TV show, *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami (LHHMIA)*. This study contributes to the literature about contemporary reflections of Black popular culture and the connection to Hip-Hop's cultural influences within Black identity, sexuality, and behavior amongst Black women. This study explores the ways Hip-Hop continues to reproduce misogynistic images that create stereotypes based on the jezebel and the sapphire archetypes of Black women, while highlighting aggressive, hypersexual and abusive relationships of Black women's behavior in the music industry. Additionally, this study investigates how Black women understand and define Black womanhood by exploring racial identity and sexuality through contemporary Hip-Hop social engagements in reality TV. Black Feminist Thought and Hip-Hop Feminism are the theoretical frameworks used in this study to emphasize the perspectives of Black women of the Hip-Hop generation. This chapter highlights the methodology used to execute the study design, sample, data collection, and analysis. Also, this chapter addresses the internal and external validity and reliability for the methods of this study.

3.2 *Design Appropriateness*

To collect multiple realities and perspectives, a mixed method study is best appropriate. This study utilizes tweets from Black women who watch LHHMIA, a 13-item survey and a 13-question phone interview to gather perspectives from a social media network and in-depth

personal conversations. Twitter is recognized as a social setting and social media space where various cultures interact and post short messages known as tweets in 280 characters or less (Rosen, 2017). Particularly, the use of Black women who have social engagements through Black Twitter serves as an important sight to social and digital media connections in Black popular culture. Black Twitter is popularly known as a social media culture in Black popular culture where Black Americans have built a growing community in a social media network. (Sharma, 2013; A. Williams & Gonlin, 2017). The use of a sample of Black women from Black Twitter benefits this study because it includes how Black women create their own culture-sharing group with conversations about Black womanhood, identity, and sexuality found in LHHMIA. Furthermore, a sample population of Black women who engage in LHHMIA places a significance on social media and reality TV's impact on perspectives of contemporary instances of Hip-Hop feminism. Additionally, the use of a qualitative online survey collects information about how and if viewers are able to recognize misogynoir through examples of abuse, hypersexuality and aggression towards Black women on LHHMIA. This information is further explored through in-depth interviews that allow participants to explain their reasoning for supporting misogynoir, Black women's sexuality, and Black women's connection to Hip-Hop found in LHHMIA.

The ethnographic approach is appropriate for this study because it seeks to look at shared patterns, behaviors, and attitudes found in a culture-sharing group, which, in this case, are Black women who exchange ideas and attitudes about drama, gossip and conflict appearing in LHHMIA. Creswell (2012) emphasizes that it is imperative that an ethnographic researcher describes how certain cultural groups work to explore the language and behaviors (such as misogynoir) found in LHHMIA. The ethnographic approach allows the exploration of the issue

of misogynoir in *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami* by “bracketing out” the experiences of Twitter users and participants in the survey and interviews by obtaining data that answers the research questions about the specific content in which LHHMIA keeps viewers entertained. Furthermore, the way that viewers discuss Black women’s issues found in LHHMIA and Black womanhood through structural descriptions through social media is an alternative analysis to explore LHHMIA conversations in real time the moment the show airs weekly. The lens of the use of Twitter are the Hashtags which serve as an important component when utilizing a content analysis when exploring tweets of users on Twitter. Hashtags are a useful tool to sort through important terms and phrases that help facilitate conversations where twitter users can engage in discussions and build a community and signify several models of identity based on a pop-culture phenomena (A. Williams & Gonlin, 2017).

3.3 *Black Twitter and Twitter Methods*

The use of a qualitative study and a content analysis is necessary due to the notion that many mainstream media outlets request their viewers to stay connected through social media sites, hashtags and group forums (Cheers, 2017; A. Williams & Gonlin, 2017). This study is unique in utilizing Twitter as a tool to explore viewer’s immediate expressions and reactions to performances, conflicts and confrontations found in LHHMIA. While a quantitative approach could have contributed to the literature in looking at statistical correlations in the way that Black women internalize negative media portrayals of Black women, the use of exploratory approaches gives the participants a voice to express their ideas, opinions and beliefs on a certain topic or concept. Social media is a place where people can come together and have formal to informal social interactions online. Content analysis, survey, and interview are used to observe, define,

and identify the ways Black women share their thoughts and opinions within a community found in a social media space and reality TV. Social media platforms such as Twitter allow users a space to connect with other women to discuss implications and misconceptions about the misogynoir and behaviors found in the reality TV show LHHMIA. Furthermore, a survey and interview method extends the literature in Black-oriented social media spaces and pop-culture phenomena about how Black women assess racialized and sexualized notions of Black womanhood found in contemporary media sources. Overall, the use of a quantitative study limits the range in which the researcher can explore how social media users thinking about LHHMIA and actively choose to engage in the discussion of misogyny and redefine how they see themselves on television through actively tweeting during the premiere of LHHMIA.

Furthermore, there needs to be a particular emphasis and consideration in my screening process. Therefore, when completing the initial demographic analysis of the participants, it is imperative that there are multiple screening processes to filter out tweets that are not relevant to the research question, have the same meaning as the hashtag, spam users and users who are not Black women with the use of NVivo and a critical assessment by the researcher.

The overall methodological scheme of this study uses a content analysis and open coding through the use of Twitter and LHHMIA hashtags. The ratings and social media impact that LHHMIA has on Twitter explains why utilizing Twitter is a significant approach to identify a population of Black women who actively watch the show and comment on the various behaviors of the characters on the show. It is important to consider that the literature has been extremely consistent in emphasizing the fact that Black women who watch LHHMIA or similar raunchy reality TV shows watch it for entertainment purposes (Abrams, 2012; Cheers, 2017; Edwards, 2016; Etkin, 2018; Goldman & Waymer, 2015; Hood, 2017; Mitchell, 2016; Okeowo, 2017).

Additionally, studies show that because Black women generally have higher levels of racial identity and self-esteem, they are able to negate negative portrayals of themselves in mainstream media (Barrie et al., 2016; Brown, White-Johnson, & Griffin-Fennell, 2013; Gourdine & Lemmons, 2011; Travis & Bowman, 2012).

The use of a social media space as a means of the methodological approach is to provide a nuanced way of understanding Black womanhood through social media. Furthermore, the literature is limited to utilizing focus groups to understand Black women and their perception of their Black experience. Analyzing Twitter in the data collection process explores the ways in which Black women communicate in real-time about LHHMIA and communicate amongst other people in the Black Twitter community. This social exchange on Twitter allows users to express, identify, discuss and debate about the behaviors and identity of Black women found on LHHMIA. This method is important in understanding the impact of social media spaces as an alternative way of learning about how Black women speak out about themselves and other Black women on their social media platform.

3.4 *Setting*

This setting of this study is based on various research methods. The first is based on geo-tags found on Twitter, where users on Twitter choose to provide their location on the bottom of their tweets. Additionally, when Twitter profiles are created, users are asked to provide their country; this centralizes the location of the users globally and potentially regionally based on geo-tags utilizing Twitter's API (Application Programming Interface). Furthermore, the setting varies based on where the participants are located when they take the survey. The second setting is based on the location of the users who complete the survey and complete the interview. This

information varies due to participants who complete the phone interview compared to the participants who are Georgia State students. The interviews with university students are completed on campus in the quiet study room in the library.

3.5 Sample

The first component of this study analyzes 100 tweets from Black women on Twitter to validate the population that were chosen for the survey and interviews. Additionally, this process highlights general conversations that occur in the culture of LHHMIA. Twitter's API allows me to conduct a detailed or advanced search for the appropriate tweets based on the current season of LHHMIA's hashtags #LHHMIA, #LHH, and #LHHMIAReunion. Additionally, Keyhole is a site that is used that takes hashtags and identifies the demographics of location and engagement of the users. While the Keyhole application was not able to verify ethnicity and age, this portion of the data collection process is used to examine the overall social demographics of the LHHMIA hashtag. The only signifier of the specific demographics is race based on a user's default picture, which still may not be accurate. Furthermore, Keyhole is used to see which characters from the show are discussed the most, location of Tweeters, the most used keywords, gender usage, and positive and negative Tweets. Ultimately, these sites help identify the proposed population of Black women who use Twitter nationally and globally.

The second component of the sample includes recruiting 120 African American women from Twitter and students from Georgia State University, a public university in Atlanta, Georgia. Additionally, when recruiting for participants in this study the demographics are representative of Black women who are ages 18-40 which represents the media age of viewers (Etkin, 2018). Self-identified Black women who identify as a African-American, Afro-Latina, Afro-European

and Afro-Caribbean are appropriate to continue to support a narrative of Black women who engage in social media engagements. Since this study observes the population of Black women that actively choose to watch and engage in LHHMIA, the sample is inclusive of Black women who are supporters of Hip-Hop.

3.6 Procedure

For this study, I collect data by using a mixed-methods design, which includes a short content analysis, a self-designed web survey, and an in-depth phone interview. These three means of collecting data for this study highlights the viewers of LHHMIA and the types of conversations that they have on Twitter; this was supported with demographic information about the population of Black women who actively tweet about LHHMIA. There is an overlap in the sample population due to the 120 participants that take the survey potentially, a portion of those women qualify to participate in the interview based on their responses from the survey. Furthermore, the first ten of those women were contacted to participate in the interview portion of the study. The web survey collects more specific demographic information about Black women who watch LHHMIA, their ability to identify conflicting representations of Black women on the show, and how long they have been viewers of the show. Lastly, the semi-structured interviews further explore Black women's understanding of how the Black women are treated on LHHMIA, specifically, what they find entertaining about the series and how its representations of Black women on the show influence their viewing experience.

Next, a web survey is used to collect demographic and qualitative information from Black women from Black Twitter who watch LHHMIA to participate in a Google Form survey that asks about their geographic location, viewing experience, and how they identify the various

ways Black women on LHHMIA are treated. The first round of collecting participants are gathered from Twitter. A link and flyer were posted on Twitter during the Monday of each new episode of LHHMIA to invite participants who may actively watch and tweet about *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami*. This is necessary to get a consistent range of Black women who are frequent viewers and supporters of *Love & Hip-Hop*. Once followers are instructed to click the link they used to take the Google Form survey, they are to read the consent form (see Appendix A) and sign off that they are aware any risk and benefits involved in the study. The second round of collecting participants are from undergraduate students at Georgia State University. Flyers are sent out via email from the Introduction to African American courses at Georgia State University. The email contains the flyer and a link for students to participate in the survey. The second round of gathering participants is to get a convenience sample of Black women who are frequent viewers and supporters of *Love & Hip-Hop*. Participants in the second-round click in the link on their desktop or their smartphones to complete the same Google Form survey that was posted on Twitter. Once they reach the survey, participants complete the consent form and the demographic portion, which then they complete the survey in its entirety. Once participants complete the survey, the first five participants from Georgia State University who meet the qualifications for the phone interview, were contacted to see if they are interested in completing the interview.

Once participants completed the survey, researchers contact the first ten participants from the surveys who meet the qualifications for the one-on-one interview are contacted to see if they are interested in completing a phone interview. The filter process includes selecting participants who answered the first three questions in the survey (see Appendix B). The process of reaching out includes emailing the participants from the email addresses they provided in the survey. And

confirming an appropriate time to conduct the interview. Once participants agree to participate in the interview, participants are asked a series of questions through a phone interview that lasts 60-90 minutes. Once all data was collected, information from the interviews were transcribed and coded for themes.

Initially, Keyhole is utilized to support tweets pulled and gathered information about the general demographic of Black women who tweet each specific LHHMIA hashtag. Then, to assess the tweets for this study, public tweets are pulled from NCapture, an internet plugin that sends tweets to a coding software called NVivo that capture tweets that contain the *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami's* hashtag that is promoted by the show #LHHMIA. Twitter users who choose to keep their profile public agree to Twitter's guidelines that their tweets are available for all internet users (McCormick et al., 2017). Additionally, 88% of Twitter users have public accounts that become public data which makes this a benefit to utilize tweets as a data tool where IRB approval is not necessary (McCormick et al., 2017). The hashtag is inserted in Twitter's API database individually and uploaded to NVivo. The API search includes all of LHHMIA's trending hashtags in the year of 2018 starting from January 2019 to March 2019 which capture the most recent tweets from the most recent season of LHHMIA for all four major cities and based on the time frame in which the season of *Love & Hip-Hop* runs within a year. Therefore, the top 25 tweets from the hashtags are pulled for coding through NVivo from January 2nd 2019 to March 19th 2019 to reflect the time period of LHHMIA Season 2. Next, with the use of NVivo's sort and filter function, tweets are analyzed for coding and for themes. To help answer the research question, the top 100 tweets are collected from all of the hashtags, conceptualize themes amongst the tweets which are hand coded for emerging themes to be processed for the coding process to identify the conversation and population of people who watch the current

season of *Love & Hip-Hop: Miami*. The tweets in the study comes from NViVo through the NCapture process. This process includes doing an advanced Twitter search from January 28th 2019 to March 28th utilizing the hashtags #LHH, #LHHMIA, and #LHHNY. The dates selected represent the time frame of the study and the period LHHMIA and LHHNY airs for the Spring season. Once the dates and hashtags are inserted, I select the tweets that align with the same themes found in the participants responses that relate to their connection to Twitter as a social media site that supports their attitudes and values towards community engagement, enhanced viewer experience, relatability and ease, and entertainment. This is done by looking at tweets from LHH's official twitter account and pulling tweets that as questions that address drama in the show, tweets from cast members of the show and tweets from fans of the show that make comments about various scenes on the show.

3.7 Coding Analysis

Ultimately through coding the tweets and interviews, the analysis is grounded in clarifying what aspects of Black women's behavior and identity on *Love & Hip-Hop* retain their support as viewers of the show. Specifically, the coding and analysis process looks for examples of identity association, relatable content based on characters social and intimate interactions and relationships, and participants ability to articulate sites of entertainment based on interpretations of drama, comedy and action. Additionally, the analysis includes how participants identify the show's importance in Black women's respect, work ethic, racial identity and intimate relationships. The scripted behaviors of the Black women, sexual behaviors and interactions, along with highlighting how Black men disrespect and disregard the agency of Black women is assessed. However, the participants perceptions on Twitter should express their interpretations of

the show and is further explored in the interview to explain how the show reflects on their own personal values and beliefs.

Holistic coding is the best coding option for the first cycle. Holistic coding is necessary considering that this coding process is best used to code for phrases and not by specific terms (Saldaña, 2012). During the decoding and encoding process, I find the core meaning of each interview and how participants discuss various topics that reflect association, commentary and interpretation of behaviors found in LHHMIA. Furthermore, coding by pulling specific comments and opinions from the interviews support the overarching theoretical framework of Hip-Hop feminism and Black women's contradictions by addressing the misogynoir performances in LHHMIA and highlights Black women's interest in the female characters of the show. Additionally, I am able to analyze how their perceptions of the show influence their continuous support for the show, which potentially allows the opportunity for more detailed coding in the first cycle (Saldaña, 2012). In the second cycle of the coding process, pattern coding establishes and identifies patterns of reasoning, representation, and emerging themes from the data (Saldaña, 2012). With pattern coding, I am able to compile consistent major themes from the holistic coding process. The pattern coding process seeks explanations and examines social connections and patterns in human relationships (Saldaña, 2012). Furthermore, the explanations in the data come from why Black women find a problematic show such as LHHMIA entertaining, pinpointing the connections and entertainment aspect found from Black Twitter users and patterns in the types of opinions where Black women see LHHMIA and Twitter as a site for entertainment. This positions the thematic elements that position the thoughts and opinions as a source that highlights nuanced Black popular culture found in reality TV that Black women contribute to.

3.7.1 First Cycle Coding

Saldana (2009) states that holistic coding is appropriate for beginning qualitative researchers to help them learn how to code and identify the bigger picture, which is why holistic coding was suitable for this study. In the first cycle of coding, holistic coding was the initial method selected to gather as many important comments, remarks and statements as possible. This process included selecting key phrases and statements where participants discuss their feelings, attitudes and beliefs when answering the interview questions. During the holistic coding process, I was able to collect 615 individual codes from the interviews. The codes ranged from discussions on entertainment values, abuse, misogynoir behaviors, perceptions of women in Hip-Hop as contributors and beauty standards. Because there were many codes during the holistic coding process, I felt the need to extend the coding process to add value coding to look at values, attitudes and beliefs held by the participants. After codifying the initial holistic codes, I came up with 16 values codes. Furthermore, the categories that were coded into larger categories led me to conceptualize the data into significant values. Therefore, I had to solidify my codes into concepts that highlighted more abstract constructs such as the participants personal feelings, the perceptions of men, perceptions of LHH and perceptions of LHH and opinions on sexuality and women in Hip-Hop.

3.7.2 Second Cycle Coding

In the second cycle of the coding process I used pattern coding to help me establish and identify patterns of attitudes and themes from the data. With pattern coding I was able to compile eight consistent major themes from the initial coding process. This analysis process also is where I incorporated my validity and reliability of my data where I had a colleague check over my

codes and ensure my interpretation of codes were a valid representation of the participants responses. The significant codes that were compiled and synthesized from the first coding cycle produced four major pattern codes; “Attitudes towards the treatment of women”, “Attitudes towards the behaviors of men”, Attitudes towards LHH, and “Twitter Usage”. Importantly, there was a significant collection of relevant themes that fell into the various categories that captured an overall understanding of participants attitudes towards various topics of the construction of LHH that impacts how their attitudes shape participants believes and values of the men, women and their engagement rituals for using Twitter. However, with pattern coding the participants main themes of their interpretation of the show was how they reflected on their own personal values and beliefs which was a consistent theme that answered the major research questions. The next section addresses the pattern codes and how they address the major themes and theories that support the foundation of the study.

3.7.3 Reliability and Validity

To ensure that this study has a strong validity, I follow the evaluation standards for ethnographic research. I ensure that this study articulates a clear and concise cultural social community which discusses presentation of conflict and misogynistic behaviors in VH1’s *Love & Hip-Hop* (Creswell, 2007). I also communicate in my discussion my thematic analysis of the tweets selected and common themes of the participants perspectives found in the interviews. This is done by generating rich detailed descriptions and incorporating member checking and seeking participant feedback, which allows me to get abundant and interconnected details (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, participant feedback allows me to get credibility of the findings and limit

misleading or incorrect twitter and user interpretations and clarity amongst the interviews (Creswell, 2007).

Keyhole serves as the validity process that double checks the authenticity and reliability of the hashtags by tracking the engagement of the top LHHMIA hashtagged tweets, key terms, sentiments and gendered demographics. In order to maintain an accurate amount of reliability for choosing the population sample, I ensure that a quality Twitter collection software such as NVivo established a reliable platform for coding and filtering inconsistent tweets (Creswell, 2007). This method is important in order to clearly document and annotate the data from the twitter analysis software Keyhole and share the results with members of my committee if necessary. Furthermore, this would lead me to develop an accurate codebook that can be shared and reused to inform further coding if I plan to expand on this study in the future. This helps me achieve a higher percentage of agreed codes amongst committee members and research assistants, which create a better reliability for this study.

For the interviews, participant feedback allowed me to get credibility of the findings and limit misleading or incorrect interpretations (Stephens, 2003). This was done by asking clarifying questions among my participants during the interview process. In order to maintain an accurate amount of reliability, I ensured that I utilized a quality recording device to establish a common platform for coding and transcribing (Creswell, 2007). These two methods were important in order to clearly document and annotate the data from the interview and share the results to members of my committee when necessary. Furthermore, this led me to developing an accurate codebook that can be shared and reused to inform further coding if I plan to expand on this study in the future. This helped me achieve a higher percentage of agreed codes amongst committee members and research assistants, which create a better reliability for this study.

3.8 *Limitations*

There are many limitations to qualitative research, including researcher bias. However, it is understood that researcher bias is incorporated in this study due to the womanist lens that serves as the aim for this study. One of the major limitations of this methodology is with the use of a content analysis, I interpret the tweets without knowing the true nature of the users tweets and apply them to my own definitions based on the literature. Additionally, I understand the language and use of Ebonics used are coded and documented to be clearly explained in the analysis of the data. Lastly, the extensive number of tweets that are utilized is a significant limitation.

Another limitation is participant size. Due to the time constraints of this study, I am limited to the range of my sample size and the perceptions of other Black women. This affects the age range, classification, class, and educational exposure. Additionally, with a larger sample size I could have received more feedback from women who may find LHHMIA as a source of entertainment that reflects a lifestyle they similarly resemble. The sample in my study is skewed via my personal social media network due to my followers being Black scholars. Therefore, there are a lack of followers that potentially do not support LHH and did skew the range of participants that could have provided additional perspectives that were not captured in the survey and phone interviews. Additionally, with the limitations of reach with my social media network did limit the generalizability of Black women's perceptions of LHH and their understanding of misogynoir.

3.9 Summary

The use of Black women who actively use Twitter as a source and a site for discussion is a necessary population to highlight the demographic group that supports and frequently watches *Love & Hip-Hop*. The use of mixed methods and gathering participants from Twitter and Georgia State University should provide a variety of perspectives and angles that describe the connection, association and support for LHHMIA. The use of the survey for quantitative method provides statistical evidence that highlights the perceptions of how Black women view LHHMIA, while the one-on-one interviews further extends the perceptions from the survey by gathering detailed, in-depth support based on the themes in the survey. During data collection, misogynoir is discussed and explored in the interviews to understand the contradictions found between misogynoir, representation, entertainment, and relatability. The use of holistic coding highlights consistent themes found in the interviews that positions an innovative understanding of Black women's connection to contemporary Hip-Hop based reality TV and how their understanding of womanhood, sexuality, and identity is projected through social media as an overall viewing experience.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Throughout this study, there is a centering and critical exploration of misogynoir, representation, and entertainment as contradictions in popular culture. This study is used as a starting point to explore a new perspective and analysis of Hip-Hop feminism through social media and reality TV. The literature on Hip-Hop feminism has limited information on the impact and connection social media has on Black women's identity, personal connections and influences in the Hip-Hop industry post 2010. Furthermore, this study is used to explore the millennial generation and how Black women from this generation think about Hip-Hop and further explore how they express themselves and identify sites of representation through the new digital media era of social media and reality TV. Additionally, this study explores the intersections of race, gender and sexuality in Hip-Hop culture and how Hip-Hop feminism can be used as a theory to look various identities of Black womanhood that have not been studied or addressed before.

The *Love & Hip-Hop* (LHH) franchise is known for its drama between famous Hip-Hop and R&B stars while maintaining relationships and a career in the Hip-Hop industry. However, researchers and scholars identify LHH as a show that presents misogynoir in the form of sexist behaviors, hypersexuality, abuse, homophobia and hyper-aggression of its characters (Allison, 2016; Chepp, 2015; Hood, 2017). While considering the historical stereotypes of Black women as jezebels and sapphires and its modern-day evolution to video vixens, the angry Black woman and the Hoochie—LHH's projection of Black womanhood supports and utilizes these stereotypes as sites of entertainment and exploitation. Furthermore, the conflict is evident in the possibility that the Black women who participate as cast members reflect a deviation of respectability and showcase alternative experiences in Black womanhood that they experience in

the Hip-Hop industry. This chapter explores those findings and analyzes the data found from the survey responses of 120 Black women in the US within this study and ten one-on-one interviews from Black women.

The aim of this study is to understand why Black women watch VH1's *Love & Hip-Hop?* This study utilizes a Hip-Hop feminist framework to explore the grey areas and contradictory spaces of entertainment and misogynoir found in VH1's Hip-Hop reality TV franchise and its viewers. Ultimately, the study explores how Black women find entertainment and value in the presentation of Black woman's experiences in intimate relationships, as Hip-Hop artists and influencers. Additionally, this study highlights Black women's sexuality and identity through Hip-Hop reality TV. A mixed-method approach was used to investigate the research questions to assess the rate at which Black women watch LHHMIA, their ability to identify the improper treatment of Black women and their reasoning for supporting the show. Furthermore, this study utilized one-on-one interviews to gather thorough and detailed perspectives of reasoning why Black women watch LHH. Additionally, the interviews allowed for discussion of misogynoir, agency and representation.

The research questions explore the attitudes, beliefs, and values as to why Black women watch LHHMIA and connecting the social connections that foster community and social engagements on Twitter while highlighting a demographic of viewers who come from Black Twitter. The first research question used a Twitter survey to identify and query 120 black women about their viewership of LHHMIA. The second research question used interviews to target a subset of the Twitter survey to delve deeper into the reasons why they watch show. The interviews also explored issues such as misogynoir, agency, and representation.

1. What topics do Black female viewers of LHHMIA discuss on Twitter?

2. How do Black female viewers of LHHMIA engage and respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?
3. Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?

With these research questions, this study identifies 120 Black women from Twitter who state their support and opinions about LHHMIA, their ability to highlight aspects of misogynoir behaviors, and how LHHMIA is a site of representation and relatability. Specifically, the quantitative methods of this study include a 17-item survey. In the qualitative portion of this study, a one-on-one phone interview explores the reasons for Black women's support for LHHMIA and their opinions on the behaviors of the show's cast members. The interview process is a follow up to explore concepts of misogynoir, entertainment, representation and social connections to Twitter beyond the survey. The interview portion uses a Black feminist lens to highlight and identify Black women's experiences as consumers of Hip-Hop. To support the demographic population selected for this study, Black Twitter users are utilized to highlight the population of Black women who are the show's biggest supporters and use Twitter to extend their social engagements and viewership experiences of LHHMIA. This process explores participants usage of Twitter and tweets from users and the LHH franchise that foster social engagement and entertainment.

4.2 Demographics

4.2.1 Twitter Survey Sample

At the end of the data collection, there were a total of 120 Black women who completed the survey and nine Black women who completed the phone interview. Etkin (2018) identifies that 81% of viewers of LHH are Black with an average media age viewership of 36 and 74% of

women who watch the show fall between the ages of 18-49. The results show that 55% (N=67) of women in the study identify as Black, 34% (N=41) identify as African American, 7% (N=9) identify as Caribbean American and 2% (N=3) identify as Afro-Latina. For age, 58% (N=70) range from 18-25 years old, 28% (N=34) range from 26-32 years old, 7% (N=9) range from 33-40 years old and 6% (N=7) range from ages 41 and up. For gender, 98% (N= 118) of participants identify as female and only 2% (N= 2) identify as Non-binary/gender confirming. Furthermore, the demographic information supports the literature that highlights the diversity and identities of Black women who are self-identifying while encompassing equal representation of Black women who watch LHH.

4.2.2 Interview Sample

The participants in the interview were pulled from the Twitter Survey sample. Participants in the interview consisted of ten Black women with college backgrounds or some form of higher education. The majority of interview participants have watched LHH since the beginning and have been consistent viewers since then. Through the interview process, participants shared minor details about their personal life and how often they watched LHH:

- Alice describes herself as an advocate for black women and watches LHH twice a week.
- Janet is a sophomore in college and watches about six hours of LHH a month.
- Nicole is a dancer and watches LHH every time it comes on to be informed about the entertainment industry.
- Tisha is a mother, a Hip-Hop fan and watches LHH every Monday and Wednesday.
- Jazmin is a graduate student studying sociology and watches LHH weekly but sometimes monthly if she is too busy with school.

- Summer watches LHH every week and has watched LHH since the beginning. Summer said that if she could she would change LHH's name to "Fix my life Hip-Hop."
- Zion watches LHH every week and any post-show extras on social media or on VH1. She started watching because she was a Cardi B fan.
- Bianca is a longtime fan and anticipates watching new LHH episodes weekly.
- Janae used to watch LHH every week but is trying to limit watching the show as much as she used to.
- Candace is undergraduate college student and watches LHH every week and supports the ratchet identity of many of the characters.

4.3 Quantitative Results

To gather quantitative results, this study utilizes Google Forms to obtain participants demographic information and perceptions of LHHMIA. The survey contains a total of 17-items (4-demographic questions and 13-items on their perceptions of LHHMIA). With Google Forms, the usage of the survey tool allows participants to provide responses with ease and gives the researcher real-time responses updates and data. The study flyer was posted on the researcher's Twitter page, and Instagram page. The flyer was posted with hashtags (#LHH, #LHHMIA, #LHHNY, #LoveandHipHop, #LHHMiami, and #LHHNewYork) to extend and gather the reach of LHH viewers. The selected hashtags are representative of the show's most current seasons which are season two of Love & Hip-Hop: Miami which premiering January 2nd, 2019 and season 9 of Love & Hip-Hop: New York premiering November 26th, 2018. The flyer was shared across multiple social media platforms on a daily basis, but more frequently on Twitter. The post contained a flyer with a link to the on-line survey. The process of data collection took

approximately six weeks.

4.3.1 Viewership Responses

To identify potential participants for the interview, questions were formulated to value frequency and regularity. The significance of the frequency and regularity of how much viewers watch LHH provides a more nuanced representation of women who are consistent fans and viewers of LHH. Additionally, Black women who are frequent viewers of LHH are assumed to better assess components of the show such as character traits, behaviors of the cast members, plot developments, and critiques of the franchise's legacy. Thus, this gives the researcher more in-depth information and perspectives that guide the questions for the one-on-one interviews.

The first three items of the survey sort out viewers who have the highest rate of engagement and viewer history of LHH. Since its emergence in 2011, VH1 has premiered 24 seasons of LHH which include the lives of over 150 cast members from cities such as New York, Atlanta, Miami and Hollywood. This perspective did add value and depth to their perspectives of the show and how the show portrays their characters and the cast members' legacy and history on the show. For seasons watched, 64% (N=77) of Black women watched an average 7 or more seasons of LHH (see Appendix E.1). The significant percentage of participants that watched more than 7 seasons of LHH is significant and synonymous with the interview participants who also verbalized they watched LHH since its premiere in 2011 and are still avid viewers and supporters till today.

One of the most significant aspects of the LHH franchise is its ability to connect to its viewers through social media. This connection keeps their viewers tuned in and heightens their viewers engagement and interactions with the show. Being classified as the most social show,

LHH has a social reach of 78 million based on their cast and VH1's LHH twitter accounts and hashtags (Cheers, 2017; Etkin, 2018). Moreover, this study classified social engagements as any communication or discussion of LHH amongst social media sites and the rate Black women discuss and comment on the show with friends and/or family. The data shows that 36% (N=44) of participants engage in an average of 2-4 hours of LHH monthly (see Appendix E.2).

The amount of engagement represents the possibility that participants engage in the amount of time the show airs on VH1 and potentially a few hours after the show premiers. Additionally, for the current seasons of LHH they both aired in the same week which potentially could extend their time of engagement across social media accounts. Also, VH1's website contains additional clips, footage and commentaries to further engage their viewers as episodes air. Lastly, there is the reality that viewers have limited access to social media or additional content and simply watch the show and engage solely with friends and family.

To support the literature that LHH is a social show, the results show that 57% (N=69) of participants identify that they use Twitter as their main source of social media that enhances their viewer experience of LHH (see Appendix E.4). Participants selection of Twitter over Instagram supports the literature in the ways that prove that LHH posts live tweets as the show airs. This further enhances participants interactions with the show, cast members and other fans of the show compared to Instagram and Facebook. As LHH tweets and post their own personal hashtags during the show, fans receive the benefit of commenting on specific clips of the show, tweeting their opinions and attitudes with other tweeters and the creativity to add personalized memes, videos and pictures that reflect their feelings and moods towards significant instances and scenes of the show. The significance of the frequency, rate of engagement and viewer history assist in providing significant details for participants response as to why they watch

LHH, if they are supporters of the female artist of the show and a better critique of misogynoir and the behaviors of the characters.

4.3.2 Misogynoir and Agency Responses

The politics of Hip-Hop feminism are grounded in accountability, responsibility, acceptance and agency in the world of Hip-Hop for Black women who are supporters of Hip-Hop (Morgan, 1999). The major reason for the exploration of misogynoir and agency in this study is to highlight a nuanced perspective of Hip-Hop feminism found in Black women's viewer experiences. The three major reasons for exploring these elements and the findings are discussed. First, one of the major reasons for conducting this study is to specifically identify why Black women watch LHH. The results show that Black women's reasons for watching LHH range from aspects of drama, celebrity behavior, representations of Black women, entertainment, interest in lifestyle and recognitions and interest in the life of celebrities from their childhood. The significant results for the reasons why Black women watch LHH is for a source of entertainment (52%, N=62), drama (31%, N= 37) and representations of Black women (5%, N= 6). Furthermore, the results show that 47% (N=57) of participants said "sometimes", 28% (N=34) said "yes" and 24% (N=29) responded with "no", in support for the music of female artist on the show. While LHH does highlight the lives of celebrities, participants may not find all of the artist on the show's music to be worth listening to or relatable. Also, there is the significance that few of the female Hip-Hop artists of the show have established a career such as Cardi B, Trina, Remy Ma and Amara LaNegra that viewers are more than willing to support.

The second reason for conducting this study is to highlight Black women's ability to identify misogynoir in the show's major plots, themes and cast behaviors. The responses for this portion of the survey is the most important section due to its means to detect if participants

recognize aspects of misogynoir in the show. For this study, misogynoir is defined as the behaviors and attitudes in the ways the men negatively treat the Black women on LHH. The behaviors selected are based on forms of abuse that are taken from the perspectives of viewers and participants of the survey. Additionally, considering how the literature critiques the treatment and exploitation of Black women on LHH by the Black men on the show the following themes of abuse and sexuality were explored. The results show that 91% (N=110) of participants “agree” that the men on the show perpetuate behaviors of emotional abuse, 2% (N=2) “disagree” and 6% (N=8) are “not sure.” For sexual abuse, 49% (N=59) of participants “agree” that the men on the show perpetuate sexual abuse, 27% (N=33) of participants “disagree” that the men on the show perpetuate sexual abuse and 23% (N=28) are “not sure”. For sexist behaviors the results show that 86% (N=104) of participants “agree” that the men on the show perpetuate behaviors that are sexist, 7% (N=9) of participants “disagree” that the men on the show perpetuate behaviors that are sexist and 5% (N=7) are “not sure”. The results show a high percentage of recognition of sexual and emotional abuse is perceived. The ability to detect abuse may come from the participants own perceptions and opinions of what abuse looks like from their own personal experiences or basic terminology or jargon of what sexual and emotion abuse looks like. What is important is that there is a percentage of women who watch LHH and do not define the negative treatment of Black women on LHH as abuse because they may consider the behaviors to be simulated and scripted by the producers. There is also the reality that participants classify more extreme cases of sexist behaviors as abuse and that they do not see these behaviors reflected in LHH. The results show that participants believe multiple cast members take fault in the disrespect of Black women and the possibility that the women on the show add to their own mistreatment. The results show that 70% (N=85) of participants believe that the men

(Boyfriends, Husbands, Friends, Baby Daddies, etc.), women (Girlfriends, Friends, Mothers, Baby Mammamas, etc.), the individual women, producers and writers collectively participate in some form of disrespect of the Black women on the show. However, 14% (N=17) of participants solely believe that the men are the ones who disrespect Black women the most, while only 7% (N=8) believe that other women on the show disrespect Black women, 5% (N=6) believe that the Black women disrespect themselves and only 3% (N=4) believe that the producers and writers disrespect the Black women on the show. The responses represent the participants beliefs toward who is at fault for the disrespect and mistreatment of the show. Additionally, the responses for this item could be further explored to identify any correlations about how participant attitudes and beliefs reflect the presence and rate of abuse and which group of characters and contributors of the show aid in the most frequent amount of abuse on the show. This information could potentially further the understanding of how misogynoir is constructed on the series.

Furthermore, participants had split attitudes towards the way sexuality is projected on the show. The findings show that 49% (N=59) of participants are bothered by the sexual behaviors of the women on the show, but only 38% (N=46) of participants are not bothered by their behaviors. However, 64% (N=77) of Black women are bothered by the sexual behaviors of the men of the show which is higher than the 30% (N=35) of Black women who are not bothered. This division of results potentially reflects participants respectability politics in the ways that participants may not like how the women wear certain outfits or the manner they carry themselves around their partners. Still, the results showed that there is a higher percentage of participants who dislike the way the men treat the women due to their sexist behaviors. These questions were an extension but also to reformulate how participants are able to express their opinions and attitudes of sexist behavior characterized by the show's male cast members.

Importantly, this study seeks to highlight all aspects and perpetrators of misogyny, including Black women, in the way female cast members perpetuate violence amongst other women on the show. The results show a high response in which 98% (N=118) of participants felt that women do perpetuate acts of violence and aggression amongst each other. The collective response is representative of the amount of physical altercations that take place on the show. LHH is famous for the many fights that go on amongst the women on the show, therefore the participants responses are relevant to the prevalence of female cast members' fighting on the show. This response also speaks to the notion that the show is consistent with projecting images of Black women fighting amongst each other.

Lastly, the survey identifies participants attitudes, beliefs and feelings towards the treatment of Black women on LHHMIA through sights of agency and autonomy within the show. However, to identify female cast member's agency, participants were asked if cast members have control over their behaviors and are the Black women on LHHMIA are conscious of the decisions that they are making. The findings show that 61% (N=74) of participants believe that the women on LHHMIA do have control over their behaviors and are making conscious decisions, while 23% (N=28) of participants believe that the women on LHHMIA do not have control over their behaviors and do not make conscious decisions. The responses highlight that to a high degree, participants believe that the women on LHHMIA are making their own decisions when it comes to their actions, however, their responses do not speak to the participants perspective that they agree with the behaviors or consider it agency. The responses that address the lack of control may speak to the way viewers consider the show to be scripted. Therefore, participants may see the lack of control of cast member's behaviors as a response to the scripts that they are given to perform certain acts to heighten viewers and ratings for the show.

However, there is a perspective that possibly understands that some of the women's behavior speaks to some form of agency due to the notion that the women continue to be cast members of the show and have control over their decision and choices that aren't manipulated or controlled by producers or writers of the show.

After reviewing the findings of the survey, the responses to the items in the survey highlight a significant perspective from participants that do recognize occurrences of abusive, violent, and sexist behavior. Additionally, participants identify potential sites of agency, but there is an uncertainty that the participants correlate their responses to connect if LHHMIA is misogynistic or if Black women on the show have agency. However, the significance and aim of this survey does seek participants ability to highlight negative treatment of Black women on LHHMIA and to measure the participants continuous support of LHHMIA while they continue to recognize LHHMIA as a site for entertainment and engage in social interactions across Twitter and other social media platforms. Moreover, this survey sets the standard and opens the dialogue for the Black women as viewers to reflect on the contradictory space where they reflect on the show's sexuality, see past misogynoir and mindlessly engage in oppressive behaviors such as supporting the LHH franchise as viewers. Furthermore, the next section explores the specifics of why Black women support LHHMIA as they discuss their commitment to the show as fans, discuss some of their favorite characters and they various critiques and attitudes they share on the treatment of Black women.

4.4 Qualitative Results

After participants completed the survey and qualifying participants met the interview requirements, the researcher reached out via email, then called participants based on their

availability. The general time frame for each interview lasted between 30-45min and participants were compensated \$15 via Cash app, Venmo or PayPal for their time. The interview questions include 13-items along additional questions that were asked for clarity purposes.

After the completion of the interviews, they were transcribed and coded for similar attitudes, values and beliefs. This process included two coding cycles, the first coding cycle was holistic and values coding while the second coding cycle was pattern coding. Through the coding process, this section narrows and centralizes the focus of misogynoir and entertainment. Throughout the interview process, there are periods of confidence and uncertainty as participants discuss a spectrum of opinions and understandings of LHH's history. What is significant is that the majority of the responses reflect the current season of LHHMIA and LHHNY that premiered this spring. Furthermore, the findings highlight many aspects and details of abuse, respect, and the overall perception of how both the men and women on LHH behave on show. Additionally, participants discuss their own contradictions and conflicts with the show while highlighting their favorite aspects and insights to why they will continue to support LHH even after the discussion through in the interview. Also, this section reports participants personal connection and use of Twitter as their social media source. This portion extends and supports the literature by identifying the reasons why participants see Twitter as the better social media source to enhance their LHH viewer experience.

4.5 Themes and Categories

The major themes of the study support the research question based on the codes that were codified in the second coding cycle. The collective codes that are categorized in the patterned codes subsequently support the major research questions that not only identify participants

ability to highlight misogynoir but their ability to have and discuss positive attitudes about LHH. Furthermore, as participants addresses their association as Twitter users, they discussed various components and features of LHH's usefulness of Twitter as it pertains to their social media experience. Based on the results of the coding process many of the participants discussed various aspects of Twitter that enhance their LHHMIA experience.

Research Questions	Categories, Themes and Properties
1. Why do Black female viewers utilize Twitter to discuss LHHMIA highlights?	ACCESSIBILITY & EASE COMMUNITY ENHANCED VIEWING EXPERIENCE ENTERTAINMENT
2. How do Black female viewers of LHHMIA respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?	BLACK WOMANHOOD RESPECT/RESPECTABILITY ABUSE MEN
3. Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?	DRAMA ENTERTAINMENT INFORMATIVE MUSIC

4.5.1 Why do Black female viewers utilize Twitter to discuss LHHMIA highlights?

The major themes that were discussed about Twitter referenced four major themes of that enhanced their discussions and topics found on Twitter. The four major themes were accessibility and ease, community, enhanced viewing experience and entertainment. The results show that participants utilize Twitter during the premiers of LHH because it's simple to use and provides an extra entertainment experience that adds to the entertainment they already engage in as the show airs. Additionally, Participants discuss that they go to Twitter to look at the Tweets and RT's of other followers and are less likely to tweet their own opinions and reactions because they value looking at other perspectives that inserting their own. However, their social engagements are grounded in the aspect of a LHH Twitter community. Participants stated that

they consider other LHH Twitter users to be a family where they can come together and discuss their opinions and attitudes about certain characters and incidents on the show.

And then sometimes like you become friends with people that watch the show to on Twitter because they see what you're saying and they're like, girl, I feel you on that. Um, so then you gain more followers and things like that. But I think it's cool how it creates a little bit of a community with Twitter. – Candace

The quote represents the extent that participants who use Twitter to talk about LHH build a connection with other Twitter users, but they also gain more followers which adds to their overall social media following. With more followers, Twitter users gain more connections to discuss scenes and conflicts from the show. Specifically, the topics and discussions that arise are reactions and responses to the show. The responses are significant in building minor connections with other women who are viewers of the show which adds to the community connection on social media which ultimately helps aid in their viewing experiences.

In addition, participants discuss that they value when cast members add to the discussion of the show, where they tweet commentaries about their own actions while LHHMIA tweets discussion questions for their followers. Many of the participants also discussed that they like when the LHH Twitter account posts because they ask the audience questions to keep the dialogue and discussion going about cast conflicts and drama.

*What was your favorite @loveandhiphop Miami Reunion moments?
Worst moments too! Click link to comment about it and speak your mind.
#LHHMIA - @loveandhiphop*

Twitter post from the LHH accounts and cast member's Twitter page cultivates additional commentary and entertainment for Twitter users that add to the participants use for seeking Twitter as a valid social media platform.

Overall, the results show that through Twitter, participants identify various components of Twitter through LHH hashtags that foster a community which they recognize as Black Twitter. Additionally, Twitter community engagement aids in social interactions by engaging in extra content about the show that provides entertainment. Importantly, the access and ease that Twitter provides gives participants the latest news and updates about the drama between cast members of the show. Participants think of Black Twitter during the premier of LHH as a definitive space for Black women to come together and have collective agreements about the aspects of the fights between cast members, their outfits and various drama that arises. Lastly, being synonymous with their reasoning for watching LHHMIA, participants see tweeting along with the show as a form of entertainment where they can exchange emotions of laughter and creatives through tweets.

4.5.2 How do Black female viewers respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?

To address the second research question, many of the topics discussed notions of “Black womanhood”, “Respect”, “Respectability”, “Abuse”, and “Men” these major themes addressed the treatment of Black women on LHH and participants attitudes and feelings about why the Black women on the show were being treated in various situations. For “Black womanhood”, categories were selected based on participants perceptions of the Black women on the show, their personal opinions about how the women carry themselves on the show and how the women on LHH have added the perspective and representation of their identity into Hip-Hop. More

importantly, these themes highlight participants connections of themselves and their identity as Black women where they see sights of representation and relatability through many of the female cast members. This code encompassed many of the reasons why participants watch LHH and ultimately where there were discussions of identity and their opinions about how they use situations and stories from LHH to define Black womanhood and how they chose to deal with similar situations in their lives.

Many themes of “Respect” were selected based on how participants discussed the overall treatment of the women on the show, and their actual usage of the term “respect” came up in their responses. Additionally, these themes reflected how Black women are respected in Hip-Hop and how participants understand what respect looks like in the ways Black women are given credit in the music industry. Furthermore, “Respectability” themes highlighted various aspects of respectability politics. This code was a more critical analysis in the ways participants discussed which women on the show deserved respect and who did not. This was broken down into opinions about how the women dressed, the way many of the women accept and deserve attention from certain male characters and the overall opinions of how Black women should appear on TV and publically carry themselves.

No man ever disrespects Trina you know? But a man will disrespect a girl like Eric Mena. You know... like the way they carry themselves. It's a way to treat a woman. If she shows you I don't need to be treated like this because I'm not this standard. But some of the men they don't do it because they know the woman doesn't need to be respected. They don't act like they need to be respected...— Nicole

The participants usage of respect and how it was implied provided the basis for how they interpret how and why some cast members dealt with misogynoir and abuse. Many of their opinions were grounded in respectability politics and notions of self-worth. However, there were participants who went against notions of “Respectability” and contributed alternative themes that speak to how some cast members defy respectability and showcase agency in the way the Black women on the show come as they are. This was discussed in the ways women chose to be on the show and be authentic to who they are as a person and have the confidence to pick and choose certain outfits and are unapologetic in the way they present themselves on LHHMIA and in their personal lives as a sight of resistance.

I just I admire and appreciate how deep how they circumvent that and they say no I'm going to come as I am. Whether you like it or not like you know. And so, for me it's like a rare form. I see them and I see like resistance. Like everyday resistance that I think it's important to make visible.— Jazmin

For some participants, their understanding of agency and cast members ability to be who they are and not change their personality or identity for any one on the show. This perspective towards the women on the show does highlight the alternative opinion from participants that believe that participants do not deserve mistreatment from the men on the show regardless of how appear or act on the show. Furthermore, exploring breaking down misogynoir and exploring the theme of abuse provides insight to participants understanding of what they consider abusive and how does that impact how they think of the Black women on the show.

Highlighting “Abuse” as one of the major themes in regard to the most frequent for of negative treatment of Black women on LHHMIA captured the way participants identified and

discussed instances when men on LHHMIA are perceived as sexist, and behaviors of physical, emotional and verbal abuse. Many of the participants discussed different moments in LHHMIA where male cast members manipulated many of the women on the show, got into physical altercations with the women and the verbal language the men used as an act of verbal aggression and threats. Tisha explains, "...but instead the cameras try to capture everything you know even when the woman are like breaking down and he's being abusive." This theme specifically, establishes multiple cases of misogynoir in the blatant disrespect and disregard of the women on the show. Furthermore, this category is where many of the participants discussed their perspectives of the mistreatment of the women and the long-standing history of the treatment and disregard for the women on LHH.

"Yeah like even in like other [LHH] franchises too. Rich Dollaz he would do that to like girls who used to work with. He's still a mess around with the girls and then be like oh I put you on and I can take you off."— Alice

When participants discussed many contributing factors about abuse, many male characters were listed. Additionally, through participants discussion of the men's misogynoir on LHHMIA, participants discussed how the same behaviors are fluid in their own personal interactions with men in their life. The categories that reflected "Men" were selected based on any discussion of men on LHHMIA. This theme is significant to compare values of what many of the participants think of the men on LHH and how those behaviors on the show reflect their daily interactions and understanding of Black men. The themes that fit also support many of their perceptions of Black love and demanding more respect and love from the men on the show.

“Men just be rude. You just don't have a rude if you don't treat the woman right. And they don't do anything for you to treat them wrong. So, men are stupid sometimes.”— Bianca

Furthermore, with the discussion men, many of the comments and opinions were synonymous in how the participants recognized that the men disrespected the women on the show the most but also how they personally think about the men from personal encounters with boyfriends and men in their life.

Participants were able to clearly identify the mistreatment of the women on LHHMIA through the value of respect. Respect is the main term and theme present in the findings for how they engage and identify with the characters. Many participants attitude towards the behaviors of the men and how they treated the women were based on how they seen the women valued themselves. The consideration of respect aids in the process in which participants think about the amount of misogynoir Black women on LHHMIA endure. Therefore, participants reported feelings of disconnect because they felt that they have a certain level of self-respect which keeps them disassociated from many of the infidelity and misogynistic conflicts on the show. The prevalence of the themes addressed for this research question were the frequent attitudes that linked to majority of the participants understanding of the relationships between cast members. This is seen in the ways participants discussed how them men treat the women and how the participants think about how the women carry themselves provides them with an understanding of respect. Ultimately these connections show minute amounts of projected misogynoir from the viewers who believe there is a certain level of self-respect that grants cast members immunity from experiencing abusive and misogynistic behaviors from male cast members. Furthermore, the rate in which misogynoir is addressed when it comes to the abuse of Black women on the

show majority of participants identified personal values of self-worth and respect to validate the negative treatment of Black women on LHH.

4.5.3 Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?

Through the coding process, I classified four major themes for their viewer experiences; Drama, Entertainment, Informative and Music. Additionally, codes such as participants attitudes towards their favorite characters supported their explanation to why LHHMIA is a show they continue to support through social media. The results show that participants watch LHHMIA and engage on Twitter for entertainment purposes. Janet states, “This is strictly for entertainment.” Similarly, other participants state that they only watch LHHMIA for the drama and comedic performances, which Summer explains, “Probably I call it my weekly dose of drama. Like it's entertaining for me. Probably because it's not my life.” The source of the entertainment is found in the drama between the cast members and their curiosity of character development and how certain situations will play out in the episodes. However, there were various contributions to why participants found LHHMIA to be a relevant show that extends the means of entertainment.

“I really appreciate the fact that this show, even when people were like, well why do you watch that show? But it's such a good way to kind of start conversations about how black people are being pursued or on media and how in ways, in some ways we should just stop being ashamed of who we really are. Right? Cause sometimes that's just who we are. And that's fine. Um, so I did, I appreciate about show for that reason.”

— Candace

LHH proves to some participants to be a show that highlights variations of Black life that rejects respectability politics and shows an alternative lifestyle that is not considered the best representation of Blackness. However, participants do understand that the experiences,

characteristics and identities on the show are just as important as other celebrated Black identities on television. Therefore, participants value nuanced Black identities and characters on the show and accept them for who they are and choose to validate their narratives on LHH.

Some participants found LHH to help them detach from the bigger societal issues that impact their lives that they can connect to more on intellectual or personal level. In addition, some participants feel that LHH does inform them of important issues such as mental health, sexual assault and colorism in the music industry. Their attitudes towards these nuanced topics on the show presents a different storyline that is not normative to the show's typical plot but adds more scenes of importance that provides depth and reality.

“Then going through her postpartum depression. But you feel you know. There are some things that are realistic. They have a new cast mate who is a pre-op transgender female and he just walked through the journey of being PR spin. How much money you need to do the surgery or stuff like that. It's interesting to watch.” – Tisha

The results show that the participants value LHH for entertainment purposes, whether it's the drama or seeing their favorite artist work on building their music career. Additionally, participants discussed that they liked seeing a more serious dialogue and plot within the show and they value narratives about mental health and other major issues in the Black community as a good informative aspect to the show. However, the results were representative of a variety of perspectives that see LHHMIA as a site for alternative representations of Black life and Black womanhood in the Hip-Hop industry.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The findings in the interview support the literature due to the various ways participants conceptualize and expand on the survey responses. Participants responses provide clarity and

detailed examples and opinions towards sites of representation, agency, respectability and social engagements found on Twitter. The findings show that the participants recognize problematic aspects of LHH but also recognize their connections to LHH as a viewer that may seek to enhance their viewer experience that extends to their engagements on Twitter. Additionally, the results show that their understanding of misogynoir is familiar based on their understanding of abuse, how the men treat the women on the show and how the women on the show carry themselves. This understanding also is supported by participants critiques and attitudes about their understanding of how men in general treat women and how their beliefs affect their perceptions of the men on the show. Participants discussed how men manipulate and disrespect the women on the show and verbalize that certain women deserve better. However, participants often felt that only women who carry themselves better and more as a “lady” deserve and will earn more respect from men. Many of the contradictions discovered in the findings also underline their inconsistencies and how participants conceptualize their balance of distaste in LHHMIA’s projection of its characters where they further chose to engage and contribute to the ratings and viewership of the show.

The results highlight a spectrum of perspectives in the ways Black women perceive and understand how Black womanhood is projected on LHHMIA and considered in the Hip-Hop industry. With participants highlighting the various ways LHHMIA lacks in the projection of Black women in Hip-Hop, participants identified the notion that many of the show’s main characters add to Hip-Hop as influencers of fashion or as established artist in the music industry who used LHHMIA as a platform to start their music career. Furthermore, considering the themes that were categorized Black women watch LHHMIA for entertainment purposes and do not consider the show to project positive representations of Black women. Participants also,

understand LHHMIA to be a show that highlights a nuanced perspective of Black womanhood and contributes rich perspectives of Black women's lives in the music industry. The spectrum of opinions in the results do present major themes that reflect a Hip-Hop feminist framework based on the participants ability to identify cases of misogynoir while appreciating and valuing other components of LHHMIA that reflect their interest in a reality TV drama series.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore why Black women watch LHHMIA in spite of its negative portrayal of Black women. Toward this end, this study attempted to identify the reasons why Black women watch the show and explore contradictions between what is considered ‘fictitious’ and ‘factual’ representations of the Black women on the show. This chapter also interprets the findings of the study in the context of the existing body of literature. Limitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research are also offered. Importantly, this chapter analyzes the influence of Hip-Hop feminism on the research topic as well as Hip-Hop studies. Lastly, this chapter highlights the significant connections to the literature and offers recommendations for research on this topic in the field of African American studies.

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to capture the various perspectives of Black women who view the show, LHHMIA. The study surveyed 120 Black women between the ages of 18-41 online and interviewed a subset of ten Black women through one-on-one phone interviews. The study also analyzed over 100 tweets of public/general viewers of the show that highlight the trending topics among viewers of the show.

The overarching research questions for this study were:

1. Why do Black female viewers utilize Twitter to discuss LHHMIA highlights?
2. How do Black female viewers of LHHMIA respond to the treatment of the Black women on the show?
3. Why do Black women continue to watch Love & Hip-Hop?

5.2 General Conclusions

The general findings of the survey show that participants are able to identify behaviors of misogynoir through instances of sexual and emotional abuse of the characters. Survey participants blame much of the negative treatment inflicted on the women in the show on several. Furthermore, the results of the survey show that participants see LHHMIA as a source for entertainment purposes due to their long-standing support as fans of the show. The findings in the one-on-one interview took a more in-depth approach and discovered that participants not only are long-time fans of the LHH franchise because of the entertainment, but also, they like to see how the lives and drama of the cast members work out. Interview participants expressed that they do not like the way the men treat the women on the show and feel that many of the women bring certain problems of disrespect onto themselves. Furthermore, the findings in the interview highlight that Twitter is the preferred social media site because “Black Twitter” makes participants feel like they are a LHH fan community and they can find additional commentaries and insights about the show. Based on the results and finding there were three interlinking conclusions for this study. The three conclusions are listed:

1. Study participants are able to identify misogynoir behaviors of the men on LHHMIA, it's not problematic enough to keep participants from watching the show each week.
2. Study participants who choose Twitter as their source for additional fan commentary do so because they want to engage in extra LHH insights and comments from other fans and cast members of the show that may further align with their own opinions and inquiries about the show's drama.

3. The majority of study participants don't see themselves in the show and will only align themselves with their favorite characters based on their understanding of which characters reflect their values of self-respect.

5.2.1 Conclusion 1

Morgan (1999) emphasizes that Hip-Hop feminism disputes that there is more to Black women's understanding of Hip-Hop than debating on misogynoir and the intersections of race, class and gender but addresses the gray areas in Hip-Hop where women can find a middle ground in their love for Hip-Hop and Black feminisms (Durham, Cooper, & Morris, 2013). This notion of Hip-Hop feminism is supported in the participants' ability to discuss topics and themes of misogynoir in LHH, but the middle ground in many of the responses does reflect how participants value drama in the Hip-Hop industry. Furthermore, this understanding speaks to participants' longevity as fans of LHH and their deep connection to the show with their extended engagement with the show on Twitter. Black women apart of Crunk Feminist Collective support this notion of Hip-Hop feminism by challenging that idea Black women own the contradictory parts of Black womanhood and comprises the "ratchetness" that comes with being involved in Hip-Hop culture (Cooper et al., 2017). Ultimately this speaks to the notion that ratchet behavior is a sight of entertainment and their continual support of drama speaks to the German term—*Schadenfreude*— which is the pleasure and joy people receive from witnessing the misfortune of others (Palus, 2014). While the actions and instances of abuse of the men on LHH is not significant enough to keep the participants from watching the show, their connection and pleasure that comes from the drama of many of the characters conflicts with infidelity, abuse and

quarrels support this concept of delight and inclination in other people's problems that's not their own and is potentially scripted.

5.2.2 Conclusion 2

Rosen (2017) deems Twitter a social setting where various cultures interact and post short messages known as tweets in 280 characters or less. The literature underlines Black Twitter as a well-known as a large social media culture found in Black popular culture where Black Americans continue to build and establish a growing social community in the Twitter social media network. (Sharma, 2013; A. Williams & Gonlin, 2017). The Black women in this study who engage in discussions on Twitter about a Black show such as LHH cater to an extension of Black Twitter where they connect with other fans of LHH, but also critique and dissect various elements of drama and commotion within the latest episodes. While there are potentially a variety of reasons why Black women pair their viewer experiences with Twitter, the participants in this study understand the combination of LHH's Twitter hashtags and the verified tweets aid in their absorption of additional content. Therefore, Twitter engagements are an extension of the digital connections and contradictions found in the ways participants desire additionally LHHMIA content while fostering a sense of community with other Twitter users who they may share the same attitudes, values and beliefs with.

5.2.3 Conclusion 3

Research shows that adolescent youth who listen to misogynistic Hip-Hop music, suggested that women who the artist are talking about should do something (speak out, protest, etc.) about how Hip-Hop music makes them look (Gordon, 2008; Ross & Coleman, 2011;

Stephens & Few, 2007). Based on the responses of the participants in this study, respectability politics impacts how they believe women on the show should be treated by their male counterparts. The notion of “Respectability” emerged in the late 1890s, an ideology incorporated by the Black bourgeois that challenged deviant stereotypes of behavior in the Black community to appeal to whiteness and racial equality (Harris, 2003). These deviant behaviors were seen as “uncouth,” and the Black bourgeois desired and advocated for standards that maintained values of modesty, sexual control, and a neat appearance in their attire “...to ensure access to jobs, housing and equal rights.” (Harris, 2003) It is important to note that the participants in this study ground their perspectives and attitudes on these bases of the respectability which appears as the critique of physical characteristics, attire and overall character and assumptions of self-worth and respect of the Black women on LHH. Their responses reflect how some Black women are also able to practice misogynoir through learned behaviors of shaming and positions of respectability politics (Trudy & Bailey, 2013). Moreover, James (2002), explains that Hip-Hop feminism rejects respectability and helps to extend the experiences with revolutionary Black feminist politics. The majority of the Black women in the study did favor respectability and used it as a catalyst for why they respect more cast members than others. This is emphasized in the descriptions of who are their favorite characters and why. Furthermore, certain characters were participants favorited based on the values of self-worth, modesty and discretion. Conversely, many invalidated spaces situate a binary for Black women where there can only be “...ho’s and Black queens...”, which creates an opposition of the respectable versus the ratchet (Cooper, Morris, & Boylorn, 2017; Pough, 2015). This conclusion is an extension of respectability in the ways participants understand self-respect and create a binary where Black women are seen as ratchet or business women. However, two participants who did reject respectability, support the

research and situate their perspectives on the ratchet character as revolutionary and nuanced forms of Black women's identity. Ultimately this speaks to Black women's ability to be flexible and consider other identities as legitimate and authentic to Black women's narratives in Hip-Hop which also supports Hip-Hop feminist and Black feminist ideologies. Furthermore, the alternative perspective of these two participants disrupt the binary and recognize LHHMIA as a show that produces multiple realities for Black women in reality TV.

5.3 Discussion

The significance of Hip-Hop in this study is its relevance in the ways it speaks to the individual and collective that center the lives of Black people living in urban communities. The legacy of Hip-Hop as a music genre has address many acts of social injustices by centering songs and experiences grounded in politics, local gang conflicts and the intersections of race and class in Black low-income communities. Hip-Hop maintain its legacy to highlight and shape Black popular culture that influences the way Black people critically think about race, gender and sexuality through the cultural connection Hip-Hop has in entertainment, social media, fashion and music industry. The findings in the study situates Hip-Hop's extension to reality TV, which captures the personal lives of Hip-Hop artist, producers, moguls and influencers with a critical assessment of Black women's involvement, voice and experiences who also take up those roles in Hip-Hop. Many of the participants discuss that their appreciation for LHH is noted in the show's ability to showcase Black women excelling and establishing themselves as business women, artist and creators in the industry. This notion is significant because it deviates from the patriarchal standard that Hip-Hop is solely male dominated, which in fact the producer of Vh1's most social show is produced by Black women. Furthermore, Black women do see LHH as a

show that notices and projects alternative lifestyles of Black women who establish themselves in the bigger scheme of Hip-Hop as business women and use LHH as a resource to promote their business and career goals.

While LHH does have story lines that show Black women's experiences with abuse and battles with manipulative partners, participants configure their own understand of male interactions and are supporters of the cast members mental and emotional health, in the position where they feel that they deserve better. In contrast many opinions grounded in respectability suggest that Black women who don't know their worth, respect themselves, or dress modestly, deserve the abuse or disrespect that is seen on the show. The ways that Hip-Hop has revolutionized reality TV, Black women identify and define their womanhood through misogynoir behaviors on the bases of respect which is a reoccurring theme in the findings of the study. Many of the Black women's opinions in the study support the literature and provide similar contradictions in the narrative and support for Hip-Hop reality TV that is discussed in Joan Morgan's Hip-Hop feminist framework. But there is a disconnect in the ways Black women are perceived versus what Black women on the show deserve. This position places many contradictions in the participants understanding of misogynoir, agency and respect. These contradictions present a new conflict about the extent to which respectability politics has a place in Hip-Hop feminism.

5.4 *For Future Research*

Within this study Hip-Hop feminism represents the emerging generation of Black women who find connections in Hip-Hop through the era of reality TV. The exploration of Hip-Hop feminism and the critical analysis of Black women and representation found in reality TV opens

the dialogue on misogynoir in a nuanced medias source. This study also extends the experiences and connections Black women have to social media and their association to social connections beyond their everyday social circles. Considering the confounds of this study, the aim was to highlight how Black women see representations and connections from the reality TV show *Love & Hip-Hop*. To consider the perspective of Black women in this generation and era of Hip-Hop is to extend the literature and add to the scholarly works of Hip-Hop feminism, Black feminism and African American studies. More specifically, this study explores the significant connection and relations Black women have to images of Black women in Hip-Hop and their lives projected through reality TV. While Hip-Hop feminism highlights the contradictions found in Hip-Hop music and culture, this study presents the contradictions found in Hip-Hop centered reality TV. In connection to the literature, the voices of Black women that were interviewed in this study identified sites of misogynoir in *Love & Hip-Hop* but also spoke on their personal connections to *Love & Hip-Hop* as a show that caters to their need for social entertainment that highlights the experiences of Black people in Hip-Hop. The perspective and voices captured within this study reflects engagement in Hip-Hop culture in reality TV as a site where Black women are creators and influences defying the patriarchal standpoint of Hip-Hop as being a male dominated industry. The Black women in this study, along with the Black women on LHH reflect spaces of visibility, agency and self-articulation while deciphering through moments of abuse and manipulation of Black women found on the show.

5.5 *Limitations*

The major limitations of this study are the limited and small sample size, the depth of the survey and interview questions and the analysis of alternative social media sources. The

limitations found in this study minimize the generalizability of the depth of the participants connections to LHHMIA. While the perspectives and opinions of the participants provide keen insight to their understanding of LHH and their contradictions as supporters of the show, the limited sample size and population minimized the relatability to other Black women who may have extended opinions and understanding in the way they perceive and relate to LHHMIA.

Another limitation to this study is the depth of the questions. Many of the questions were very general and could have been more in-depth to assess deeper meanings for many of the participants responses. For example, there could have been more probing questions that assessed the contradictory responses of the participants. For example:

1. Why do you continue to watch LHH if you've seen a history and pattern of abuse?
2. What type of behaviors or actions perpetuated by the main characters will prompt you to stop watching and supporting LHH?

Furthermore, I think that with the assessment of their contradictions and opinions of respect could have been explored more closely. This is also fluid in the limitation of their personal connection to sexuality and values of respect.

With consideration of the small population in this study, many limitations to the sample size reflects the lack of range in participants who have not earned college degrees or pursued higher education. Many of the women who participated in the study provided a voice and perspective for women who had college backgrounds, while the study lacked a more womanist perspective of Black women who don't have college degrees. The limited range of participants in the study also did not have an adequate representation of women in the music industry who potentially live similar lives as do the women on LHHMIA. Also, the possibility to interview women from LHHMIA or any other season on LHH would add a highly nuanced perspective to

the study. Thus, having Black women who can directly relate to the show or interviewing actual cast members would speak to the representation of the women who are involved in the Hip-Hop music industry. Furthermore, the small sample size affected the generalizability of the study. It's understood through a Black feminist framework that all Black women's narratives are valued and should be explored. Therefore, the limited sample size potentially excluded many women to participating in the study. The small sample size in the scope of Black women's experiences limits the range of LGBTQ inclusion and how non-binary/non- gender conforming consider representation and identity in the characters of LHH. This potentially could address queer and transgender theory and how it can be applied for Black women who don't identify as cis and critically asses more nuanced understandings of the impact of gender queer representation as extension to Black feminist perspectives. Lastly, with the use of Twitter and my own personal social networks the reach of potential or additional participants skew the generalizability of of responses for the study.

5.6 Summary

Hip-Hop has been a site of reference for Black and Latino/a lives since its emergence in the late 1970s. Hip-Hop music has also included and reflected the lives and experiences of Black girlhood through instances of fashion, dance, art and creativity. This study showed the refinery in Hip-Hop in reality TV and social media spaces. The collective experiences of Black women and Black girlhood in Hip-Hop feminism situates their experiences caters to the narratives of Black women's and girl's lives as a site for defiance and resistance (Lindsey, 2015). The significance of Hip-Hop feminism in particular reference to this study creates the difficult dialogue of discussing about components of race, gender, class and sexuality in the context of Hip-Hop

culture. This study adds to Hip-Hop feminism in the ways that the participants address misogynoir and the intersections of how race and sex impact the social and cultural experiences and narratives of Black women in Hip-Hop culture. But in contrast, the responses highlights and strengthens Black feminist theory by extending the identities and experiences of Black women who come from the Hip-Hop generation and see Hip-Hop music and culture as a reflection of their personal values and understanding of respect. Considering the limitation of the study, with a larger sample size and more in-depth questions that addressed respectability and more contradictions in participants viewer experience would enhance the generalizability, reliability and validity of the study.

Overall, this study identifies that study participants who watch LHH are not ignorant of the mistreatment of Black women on the show, but rather they find it entertaining. Formally known as “mindless entertainment”, is the exploration and repetitive consumption of entertainment that requires limited cognitive work and seeks sources of amusement and pleasure used to detach from reality and stress (Chadwick, 2015; Burkeman, 2017; Everson & Everson, 2005). While this is understood as a contradiction, survey participants recognize that the LHH franchise presents mindless entertainment that does not significantly misrepresent the lives of Black women in Hip-Hop, but rather how they make light of how the women on the show carry themselves because LHH is a career choice and is understood as scripted reality. For the participants their entertainment experience is further enhanced by their desire to engage in discussions and conversations about the drama found on Twitter through reading and watching LHH extras and behind the scene footage. This mindlessness potentially speaks to on participants reason for watching LHH and seeing the show as a way to detach from the real world. Moreover, this notion can potentially speak to other participants who are go to LHH as a form of

entertainment where it doesn't require a lot of mental work. Furthermore, the study does highlight where participants do associate and align themselves with certain artist, ideologies of professionalism and womanhood but still apply forms of respectability politics. Furthermore, Hip-Hop feminist scholar Joan Morgan address Hip-Hop feminism as a theory that's "fuckin with the greys" (Morgan, 1999) which deals with the many contractor aspects of Hip-Hop and where do Black women place themselves between instances of misogynoir, entertainment and identity. This study is to be use as a starting point to explore a new perspective and analysis of Hip-Hop feminism through social media and reality TV. The literature on Hip-Hop feminism has limited information on the impact and connection social media has on Black women's identity, personal connections and influences in the Hip-Hop industry post 2010. Furthermore, this study is to be used to explore the millennial generation and how Black women from this generation think about Hip-Hop and further explore how they express themselves and identify sites of representation through the new digital media era of social media and reality TV. Additionally, this study is to be used to explore the intersections of race, gender and sexuality in Hip-Hop culture and how Hip-Hop feminism can be used as a theory to look various identities of Black womanhood that have not been studied or addressed before. This study uncovered new grey areas in the way that Black women in this study understand respect as a response to misogynoir and representation, which makes the responses nuanced.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Informed Consent

Informed Consent
 Georgia State University
 Department of African American Studies
 Informed Consent

Georgia State University
 Informed Consent

Title: *Spill the Tea Sis': Misogynoir's problem and Black Women's support, narratives and identities found in Love & Hip-Hop's Reality TV Franchise.*

Principal Investigator: Sarita Davis

Student Principal Investigator: Adeerya Johnson

Purpose

You are being asked to take part in a research study. If you decide to take part, you will complete a survey and an interview. This study investigates the treatment and representation of Black women in VH1's Love & Hip-Hop. Furthermore, this study looks at the reasoning behind Black women's support for the show. You are invited to take part because you are a frequent viewer of Love & Hip-Hop and identify as an African American woman between the ages of 18-40. Based on the questions answered you will be selected to take part in a one-on-one interview. A total of 250 people will be invited to take part in this study.

Procedures

Participation in the survey will need 10 minutes of your time. For this study only 10 participants will take part in a 60-90 audio-recorded interview. Based on your answers from question 1-3 in the survey you have the choice to take part in a one-on-one interview. The interview will gather information about why you watch Love & Hip-Hop and what the show means to you. The first round of the study is a 13-question survey. You will answer survey questions about Black women's treatment in VH1's Love & Hip-Hop. Based on your answers, participants will take part in an interview part of the study. If selected, you will receive information to take part in a phone interview. The second round of the study is a 14-question audio-recorded interview. In the interview you will provide opinions of your viewing experience and the treatment of Black women on Love & Hip-Hop.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional consent from you.

Risk

Information about the treatment of Black women may be sensitive to you. In this study, you will not have risks than you would in a normal day of life.

Benefits:

Participation in this study may or may benefit you. This study informs the field of Black Studies about the image of Black women in Hip-Hop culture.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in this study.

Compensation

You will be paid \$15 dollars in a Visa Gift Card if you complete the survey AND complete the one on one interview. If you are recruited through GSU's African American Studies Department, you will receive 5pts extra credit for a homework assignment completing the survey and interview.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you choose to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your current or future relationship with Georgia State University. While you have the option to quit the interview at any time, you will still be compensated with extra credit if you are recruited through GSU's African American Studies Department.

Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- Sarita Davis and Adeerya Johnson
- GSU Institutional Review Board
- Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

We will use a code (BW1, BW2, etc.) rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored on a password-protected laptop owned by the researcher. Audio recordings will be kept private and stored on the main researcher's laptop and destroyed May 1st 2019. Be aware that data sent over the Internet may not be secure. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your name or other information that may identify you.

Contact Information

Contact Adeerya Johnson at 404-593-5793/ ajohnson238@student.gsu.edu or Sarita Davis saritadavis@gsu.edu 404-413-5134 if you have questions or concerns about this study. The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Please print or save a copy of this consent form for your records.

Consent

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please click continue below.

Appendix B- Survey Items

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Below, click on the questions that best reflect how you think about the show Love & Hip-Hop. There are no right or wrong answers for this survey. While you have an unlimited amount time to complete this survey, it would only take about 10-15min of your time.

PLEASE DO NOT USE ANY NAMES OR SHARE INFORMATION THAT CAN IDENTIFY YOURSELF OR OTHER PEOPLE.

Demographic Questions

1. Age
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-32
 - c. 33-40
 - d. 41-49
 - e. 50 & up
2. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Trans-Woman
 - c. Non-Binary
3. Location (State)
4. Nationality
 - a. Black
 - b. African America
 - c. Caribbean American
 - d. Afro-Latina

Survey Questions (Please Select One)

1. How many seasons of LHH have you watched?*
2. About how many hours of LHH do you engage (watching show, social media interactions, discuss show with friends/family) in monthly?*
3. Which social media app enhances your viewer experiences on LHH?*

- b. Facebook
 - c. Instagram
 - d. Tumblr
 - e. I don't use social media
4. Do you listen to any of the music of the female artist found on LHH?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
5. What keeps you as a viewer of LHH?
- a. Drama
 - b. Celebrity Behavior
 - c. Representation of Black women
 - d. Entertainment
 - e. Interest in Lifestyle
 - f. Other (explain) _____
6. I think women on LHH are most disrespected by?
- a. Men (Boyfriends, Husbands, Friends, Baby Daddies, etc.)
 - b. Women (Girlfriends, Friends, Mothers, Baby Mammams, etc.)
 - c. Themselves
 - d. Producers/Writers
 - e. All of the above
 - f. None of the above
7. I think the women have control over their behaviors and make their own conscious decisions.
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
8. Men perpetuate forms of mental/emotion abuse on LHH?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
9. Men perpetuate forms of sexual abuse on LHH?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
10. Men on the show tend to be sexist towards certain cast members?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
11. Women perpetuate violence and aggression amongst each other on LHH?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree

- c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
12. The sexual behaviors acted out by the women on the show don't bother me?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree
13. The sexual behaviors acted out by the men on the show don't bother me?
- a. Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Somewhat Disagree
 - d. Disagree

Appendix C- Interview Guide

Hello,

Thank you for completing the survey.

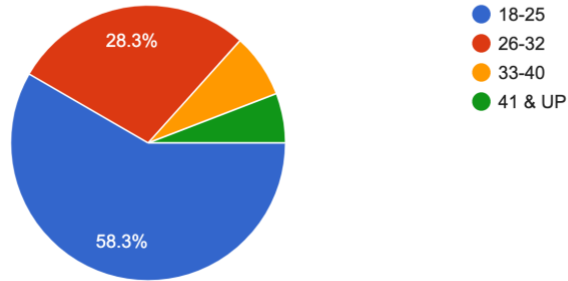
13 questions and about 60min of your time. Call will be recorded by google voice(ask permission) for this study no identifying information will be used. Compensated via cash app 15\$

1. How often do you watch LHH?
2. What specifically keeps you as a viewer?
3. What is your perception of the Black women on LHH?
4. Who is your favorite female character on LHH? Why?
5. In what ways do you think Black women's wellbeing are respected by the writers and producers of LHH?
6. What is your opinion about how the men treat the women on the show?
7. In what ways do you think Black women are respected by their peers (co-actors, friends, boyfriends) who work with them on LHH? – Trina Hip-Hop Royalty
8. How do you think Black women's sexuality is portrayed on LHH?
9. How much hip-hop influence from the women are seen in the show? Percentage
10. How do Black women on LHH influence Hip-Hop and Black culture?
11. Can you relate to any of the experiences of the Black women on LHH?
12. How accurately do you think LHH represents the lives of Black women who are involved in the Hip-Hop industry?
13. Which character on LHH do you most identify with? Why?
14. How does LHH impacts how you think of yourself and your experience as a Black woman?

Appendix D - Demographics

Age

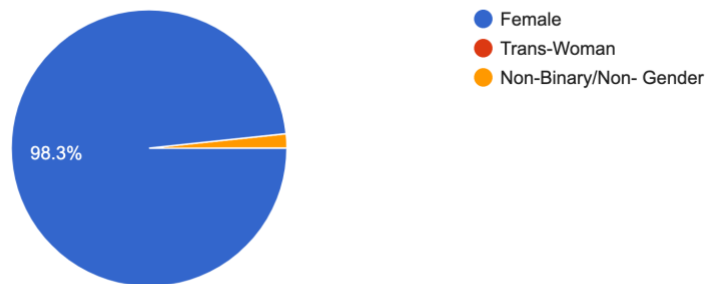
120 responses



Appendix D.1

Gender

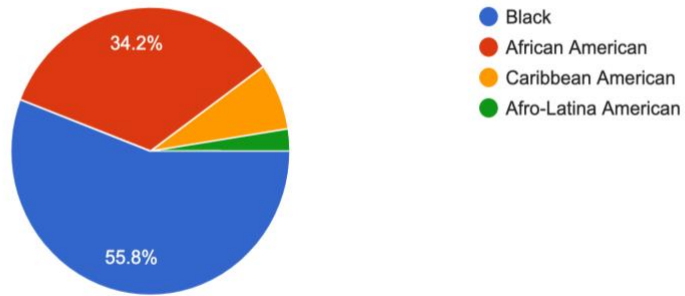
120 responses



Appendix D.2

Ethnicity

120 responses



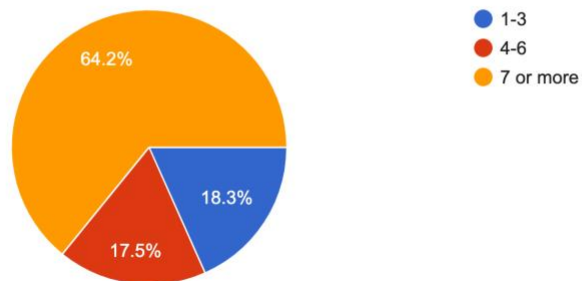
Appendix D.3

Appendix E - Viewership

Appendix E.1

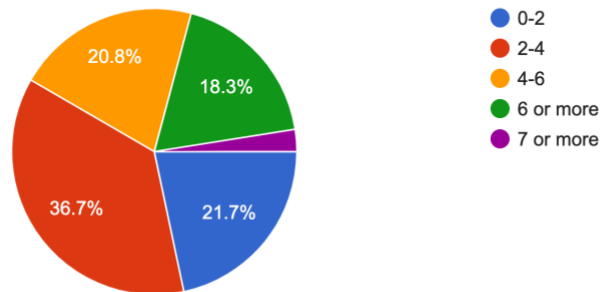
How many seasons of LHH have you watched?

120 responses



About how many hours of LHH do you engage (watching show, social media interactions, discuss show with friends/family) in a month?*

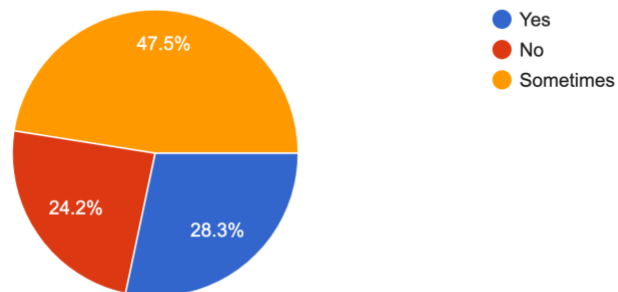
120 responses



Appendix E.2

Do you listen to any of the music of the female artist found on LHH?

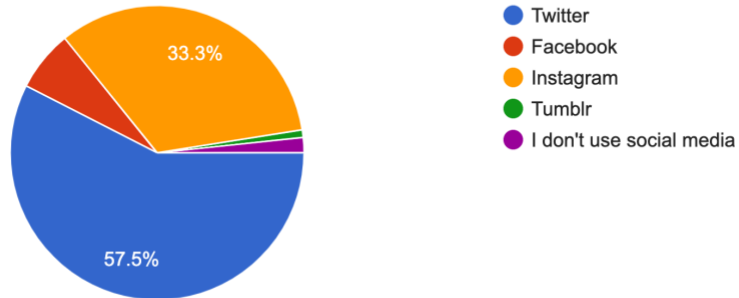
120 responses



Appendix E.3

Which social media app enhances your viewer experiences on LHH?*

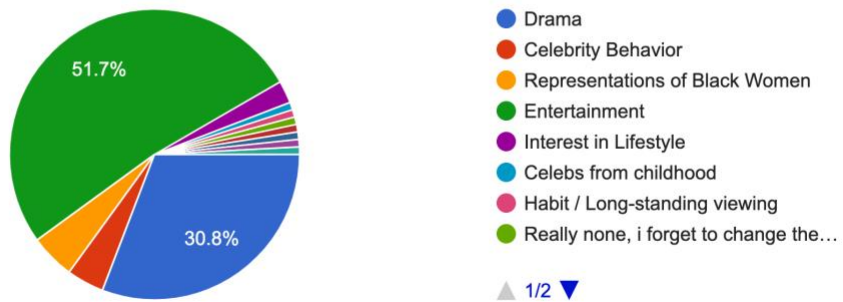
120 responses



Appendix E.4

What keeps you as a viewer of LHH?

120 responses

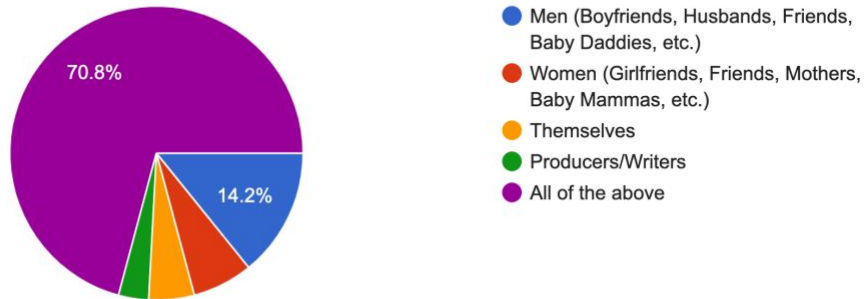


Appendix E.5

Appendix F- Misogynoir and Agency

I think women on LHH are most disrespected by...

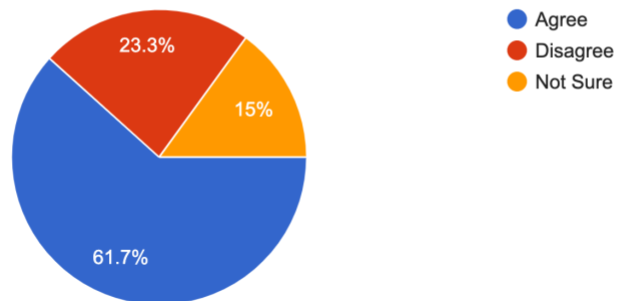
120 responses



Appendix F.1

I think the women have control over their behaviors and make their own conscious decisions.

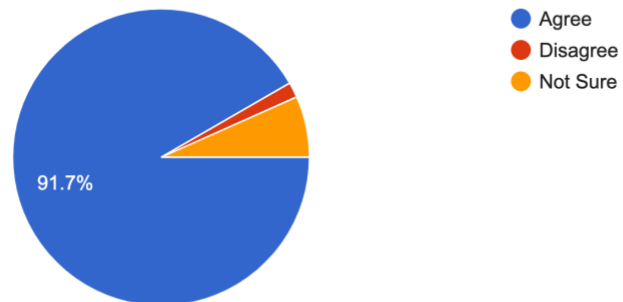
120 responses



Appendix F.2

Men perpetuate forms of emotional abuse on LHH.

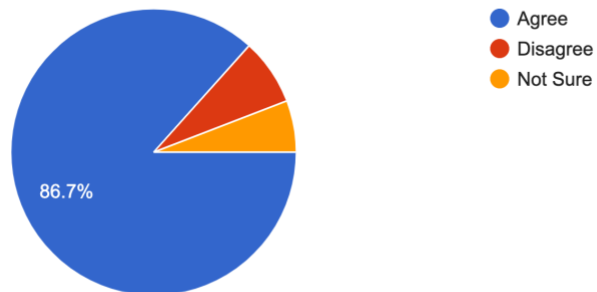
120 responses



Appendix F.3

Men on the show tend to be sexist towards certain cast members.

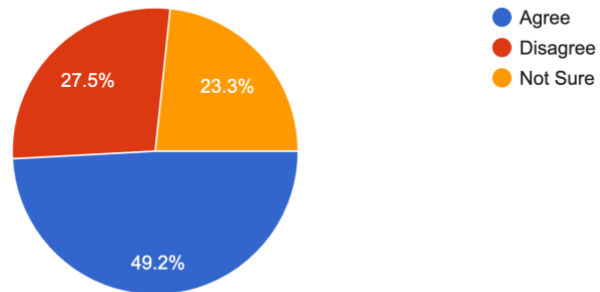
120 responses



Appendix F.4

Men perpetuate forms of sexual abuse on LHH.

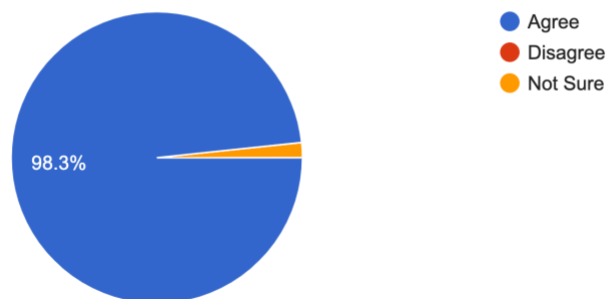
120 responses



Appendix F.5

Women perpetuate violence and aggression amongst each other on LHH.

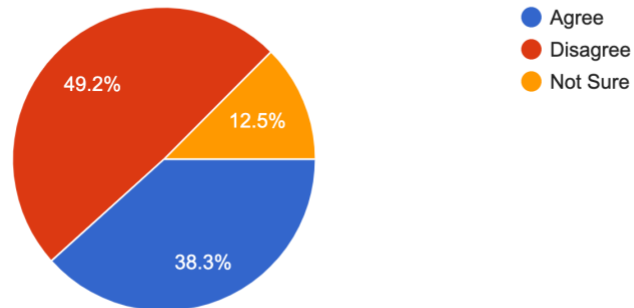
120 responses



Appendix F.6

The sexual behaviors acted out by the women on the show don't bother me.

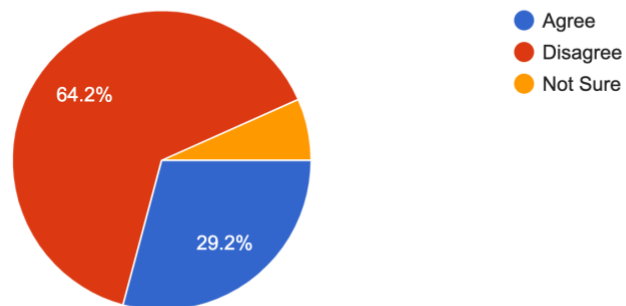
120 responses



Appendix F.7

The sexual behaviors acted out by the men on the show don't bother me.

120 responses



Appendix F.8