

IDENTITY-SALIENT LANGUAGE: CONCEPTUALIZING THE CONTENT INFLUENCE
OF ENTREPRENEURS

by

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ABSTRACT

KIMBERLY M. HARRIS. Identity-Salient Language: Conceptualizing the Content Influence of
Entrepreneurs
(Under the direction of DR. JUSTIN W. WEBB)

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of identity-salient language on rapper performance. Social identity theory literature acknowledges that there is an in-group favoritism effect when entrepreneurs form a connective identity with their followers. However, little research has addressed how the salient identity themes of an entrepreneur their followers connect with them. This research suggests that identity-salient language stimulates follower reactions. This study examines how the content of song lyrics can influence the salient portions of individuals social identity in identifying with entrepreneurs. This study consists of data collected from 81 rappers. This study brings 3 main contributions to literature. First, this dissertation expands the contexts in which communication is studied in social identity theory, impression management, and signaling research. Second, this dissertation extends our understanding of how social groups respond to entrepreneurs they relate to. And third, this dissertation extends our understanding of how entrepreneurs can leverage their social identities to communicate with their audiences.

DEDICATION

My dissertation is dedicated to those who have contributed to the advancement of Black Americans' and Women's educational opportunities through their activism. Let's not take access to education for granted. I also dedicate this work to the people who have been pivotal in creating rap and hip-hop music, allowing people to be in control of their lives while transforming others through self-knowledge and self-representation. I am honored to complete my work during the 50th anniversary of hip-hop.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, entrepreneurs have leveraged various media and communication spaces to grow commercially. And, with the growing interest in social identity research (Sieger et al., 2016; Manago et al., 2020), it's worthy to understand how an entrepreneur's commercial success is interconnected with the social affiliations' others have associated through them. Previous literature has argued that entrepreneurs within informal spaces become more alert to opportunities that can be exploited by way of the collective identities they share with those of similar identity and/or their shared disidentification with formalized institutional practices (Webb et al., 2009). Given this, the in-group favoritism effect of social identity theory (SIT) suggests that when entrepreneurs form a connective identity with their followers, they develop a collection of supporters who will be more likely to commit to and support someone they view as their own (Stets & Burke, 2000; Oo et al., 2019). When communicating through media with the in-group, the entrepreneur benefits when conveying language in a way that stimulates the attention of its members to react in a favorable way. In literature, this would be considered "salient communication", in which a salient social identity functions psychologically to increase one's influence with the group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Grounded in social identity theory (SIT) framework, literature suggests that individuals with in-group identities: (a) tend to choose activities and support institutions that are congruent with salient aspects of their identities, (b) conduct themselves according to the in-group stereotypes and norms, (c) are more likely to commit to and participate in the group's culture, and (d) are more likely to support user innovators (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg et al., 1995; Oo et al., 2019; Stets & Burke, 2000), which in turn accentuates the basis of the specified social identity. In an online fanship study, Laffan (2021) summarized increased psychosocial benefits

(happiness, self-esteem and social connectedness) when fans personally self-categorized with their fan interests. When fans are exposed to media that display pride towards in-group solidarity (such as patriotism), individuals gain identity by discussing brands, increasing their intent to follow (Kashif et al., 2019). In a similar notion, while celebrities are viewed as fellow users of Twitter, celebrities are simultaneously perceived as more credible, trustworthy, attractive, and competent than ordinary users (Jin & Phua, 2014). In relation to the extent of self-categorization, the frequency of fans' psychological investment into their fan interests may suggest higher fanship levels beyond the length of time individuals have identified as fans (Laffan, 2021). In environments where uncertainty is high and intergroup comparisons are pronounced, people interpret cues from their leaders as guiding principles to model their own group behaviors (Shin et al., 2022).

Indeed, SIT literature suggests that a portion of user entrepreneurs' crowdfunding success is attributed to shared social group support, in that people evaluate their own groups more positively, and leveraging the need for similarities between themselves, funders, and community-specific problems (Oo et al., 2019). However, differing forms of communication have served as an avenue of operating outside of formal institutional boundaries for some entrepreneurs (particularly for the burgeoning ones). Thus, in such informal environments, entrepreneurs are prone to navigating these environments, without the structure of the more formal paths. Thereby, entrepreneurs have relied on cooperative groups as substitutes for formal channels and markets (Webb et al., 2009). When navigating such social environments, the question of social expectations arises. And, it's been found that communication channels matter to the narratives conveyed (Fischer & Reuber, 2014). Hence, the channels chosen (to convey communication) shape what the audiences expect to see or hear from the entrepreneurs (Fischer & Reuber, 2014).

A large amount of what we understand about the language entrepreneurs use to communicate comes from crowd-funding literature. In the crowdfunding context, entrepreneurs use language to convey their competence, to excite potential funders, and to essentially engender confidence that the entrepreneurs can deliver upon their intentions (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Scheaf et al., 2018; Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019). However, rap artist entrepreneurs use language that is different from the language entrepreneurs typically use, and the vernacular may be abnormal to audiences unfamiliar with the slang & street language, colloquialisms, plays on words (such as metaphors and double entendres), and explicit language that may be employed to express thoughts or to convey messages. Additionally, rap lyrics may also challenge the perspective of the societal values and norms that typically attract investors to the more conventional entrepreneurs. Hence, current literature is not relevant to how rappers speak in their music. Therefore, I take an exploratory approach to identify salient identity themes within rap lyrics, as well as other identity enhancing languages – that may differ in accordance to their circumstance. Drawing on SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), this study will look to identify social identity defining attributes from the prototypes that followers define and evaluate themselves by. As such, the following research questions will be addressed: 1) Does identity-salient language stimulate follower reactions? 2) Does identity-enhancing language strengthen the amount of follower reactions?

To accomplish this objective, I will deploy a topic modeling technique called Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to extract salient themes within the rap lyrics from a target sampling of 1,000 randomly select songs of 100 rapper-identified accounts to illustrate salient identity. Topic modeling has become a standard approach for uncovering the hidden structure of texts (Cendrero et al., 2022). A topic is defined as a probability distribution over words in a

vocabulary (Cendrero et al., 2022), which in this paper will be applied to a vocabulary of lyrics, that can be modeled over a reduced number of topics (each representing an underlying semantic theme) (Cendrero et al., 2022). LDA is a supervised learning algorithm for text analysis, used for extracting underlying (latent) topics from large amounts of unstructured text (Guo et al., 2017). Through this machine learning algorithm (Blei et al., 2003), I can quickly identify topics from large amounts of documents based on their lyrical characteristics to determine the heterogeneity and relative importance of dimensions (Guo et al., 2017). The salient theme categories identified through the LDA will be used as variables in a series of regression models to examine variable interactions.

Previous research has discussed the use of language towards impression management and facilitating crowdfunding and support. Within impression management literature, one communicates language in a way to manage the impressions an audience has of them (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). This can be achieved by the self-promotion of abilities or accomplishments (Bolino & Turnley, 1999), communicating legitimacy enhancing characteristics (Bozzolan et al., 2015), and/or exhibiting positive experiences (or displaying feelings of positivity) (Cialdini et al., 1976). As well, there is a difference in the way ventures are financed based on the style of their rhetoric. Literature shows that the tone and content of materials influence the positivity of impressions made on potential investors (Parhankangas & Ehrlich, 2004). For instance, entrepreneurs who convey concrete and precise styles help backers understand the campaign better (Parhankangas & Renko, 2017). Rhetoric exhibiting autonomy, competitive aggressiveness, and risk taking are more likely to be awarded (Moss et al., 2015). And rhetoric associated with blame and present concern have increased funding speed (Allison et al., 2013). Ultimately, consumer-centric rhetoric gives entrepreneurs the ability to speak the language of

consumers and fit into consumers' worlds. Thus, entrepreneurs are selecting their audiences carefully and presenting persuasive arguments as to why the audience should support them.

With this dissertation, I extend this research based in social identity theory, impression management, and signaling research literature by expanding the contexts in which communication is studied, focusing on identity-salient language as a means of influencing follower behavior (e.g. consumer and purchaser behaviors). The approach that I am taking is different from the existing literature in that it examines a corpus of rap lyrics – which serves a variety of purposes, such as stimulating the crowd, declaring affections and sexual desires, bringing awareness to social issues, recounting lifestyles, discussing materialism, and/or spreading theology – as opposed to corporate (and more formal or standard) pitches and documents. As well, a rapper might use a mixture of complex vocabulary, regional and foreign jargon, pre-defined words and phrases, or neosemanticism, all while being accompanied by a melody, instruments, and/or beats, which is unlike the domains examined in traditional entrepreneur literature.

Another difference in my approach is that the audiences being examined in my research for salient identities decide who they want to support (instead of the entrepreneur selecting them). This is important to extend our understanding of how social groups respond to entrepreneurs they relate to, as well as understanding the characteristics that attract said social groups to such entrepreneurs. Additionally, this research will extend our understanding of how entrepreneurs can leverage their social identities to communicate with their audiences.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of the Literature Review

The proposed theoretical model indicates a relationship between identity-salient language, in-group interactions, and rapper performance. Considering the hypothesized relationships, identity-salient language will be defined and examined in current literature. Then, a review on current research regarding identity-salient language's relationship to in-group reactions and rapper performance.

2.2 Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) provides a theoretical framework towards understanding the emergence of norms within group identities on social media. According to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), social identity refers to the emotional and value-related significance associated with membership in a social group, which is central to an individual's self-concept. The literature also suggests that each person's collective identity is based on their membership in a group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), leading to self-categorization.

2.2.1 Group Identification

A social group is created when more than two members share the same understanding, definition, and evaluation of themselves (Hogg et al., 2004). For every group a person belongs to, there is an opposing group that does not identify in a similar way. And social group members compete with and distinguish themselves from non-members (Hogg et al., 2004). Thus, people define themselves in relation to individuals in other categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For instance, being dichotomously categorized as wealthy is only meaningful when measured against

those in poverty. In Jane Elliott's renowned Blue Eyes and Brown Eyes experiment, the arbitrary classification of groups based on eye color pair with fictitious descriptions of each group resulted in aggressive, mean, discriminatory, and physically violent behavior towards the out-group when either group was appointed the inferior position (Elliott, 1970). Moreover, it's been found that group categorization leads to favoritism and discrimination against members of different groups even in the absence of competition (Tajfel, 1972). In minimal-group studies, Tajfel found group membership to have such power, that dividing people into meaningless groups was sufficient for them to think of themselves in terms of the group they were assigned to (1972). Thus, the act of simply assigning people a shared group membership can generate attraction between them (Turner, 1985). Interdependence and attraction are not necessary for group formation (Turner, 1985). In a 2003 study, children's relative attitudes towards experimentally engineered or "naturally occurring" groupings were assessed (Nesdale et al., 2003). In this three-phased study, the majority group (white) of "children were led to believe that they were assigned to a team (in-group) that had superior drawing ability than the rival team (out-group) and "the team members were shown to be of the same (Anglo-Australian) or a different ethnicity (Pacific Islander)" (Nesdale et al., 2003; Lam, 2011). The findings indicated that ethnicity did not impact children's tendency to support their own team, as in-group members held higher status, than the rival group; "but, liking for the rival team was reduced when its members were of a different ethnicity." (Nesdale et al., 2003). Extending from the Nesdale study, researchers performed an adaptation of the minimal group experiment study to test the predictions from social identity development theory supporting the notion of in-group support despite arbitrary team assignments (in comparison to rival groups) on a sample of 148 British Bengali children (i.e. ethnic minority children) in East London (Lam, 2011). The outcome showed similar results to the original study,

in that “minority groups are as aware and responsive to the minimal groups’ relative statuses, and are motivated to identify with and prefer the in-group (their own drawing team) to the extent that the teams’ ethnic group membership does not influence this process” (Lam, 2011). However, “contrary to the pattern found for ethnic majority children in the original study, British Bengali children's outgroup attitudes (liking towards the rival team members) were also not affected by the groups' ethnicity” (Lam, 2011).

As seen through the literature, shared associations influence individuals’ self-perceptions, behavior towards others, and interactions with people they relate more closely with. As such, I would expect a similar experience to individuals’ relationships with rap artists. In other words, if people make shared associations with rappers whose lyrical content they relate to, they are more likely to support those rappers. In the context of this research, the support would reflect in the forms of a “follow”, as well as likes, comments, and reposts.

2.2.2 Cognitive Classification

In order for people to internalize their alliances (e.g. sharing category membership with others), evaluating others as “us” or “them” (i.e. “in-group” and “out-group”), there has to be an awareness of other groups. Thus, identification is likely to be associated with the salience of the out-group(s). Classification involves three aspects of the mind: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

As a psychological process, social categorization shapes the perceptions and behaviors towards other members in a social group (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Prati et al., 2021). In social categorization, behavior norms are referenced and established. Generally, a person’s social category dictates more about who they are than their personal and

individual characteristics. It is often the case that social categorization emphasizes the similarities and differences between the members of different groups. Said differently, the process of social categorization can cause stereotypical perceptions of non-group members and discriminatory behavior between groups (Lauring, 2008). For instance, in a study of 43 entrepreneurs, comparative prototype fit, linguistics manifestations of stereotyped behavior, and norm talk enabled entrepreneurs to manage their social identities (Hajek, 2021). Using group labeling and biased language abstraction, the majority of participants (in the aforementioned study) enacted linguistic self- and other stereotyping to distinguish themselves from non-entrepreneurs (Hajek, 2021). In a health-related example, an individual is more likely to identify as an asthmatic (sharing category membership with other asthmatics) if he or she understands the differences in symptomatology between asthmatics and non-asthmatics and has prior knowledge about the condition (Adams et al., 1997; Levine & Reicher, 1996; St Claire et al., 2008; Haslam et al., 2009). And although people may belong to a variety of social categories, a person's social circumstances will make one become more significant than the other. For instance, researchers have shown that people in virtual environments will tend to emphasize the few meaningful characteristics to signal their membership in a group, such as their geographical location (Spears et al., 2001, Polzer et al., 2006; Klitmøller et al., 2015). Research has also found that social categorization depends in part on crowd perception, which reveals collective emotion (Lamer et al., 2018). As stated in Lamer et al.'s research, "crowds include allegiances that may be distinguished by visual cues to shared behavior and mental states...". Accordingly, in the undergraduate study on emotional segregation in crowds, emotion expressions signaled group membership to the extent that participants were more likely to perceive racial boundaries and race essentialism in emotional segregated crowds rather than unsegregated (interracial) crowds

(Lamer et al., 2018). Essentially, as individuals begin to recognize which language, behaviors, and/or visual cues (including emotions) distinguish them from others socially, they begin to establish boundaries with non-similar groups. This forms familiarity with the group they would prefer to be associated with. In relation to rap artist association, obtaining social categorization would enable listeners to overlay meaningful characteristics of the music with their identities resulting in the portrayal of behavior aligned to what they believe is acceptable to the rapper (or fan groups of the rapper). This leads to social identification.

In social identification, group identity is adopted. Specifically, when people identify with a particular group, they become more likely to behave as they believe fellow members of that group should behave. Having a shared sense of belonging to a group motivates individuals to reach agreement and work together in pursuit of activities that relate to the identity (Haslam et al., 2009). Thus, by nesting themselves in a larger identity, prosocial behaviors can emerge. In an experimental trust game experiment, South African high school students were recruited to explore prosocial behavior towards racial identity. In the study, participants were asked to propose monetary offers to in-group and outgroup members (based on shared racial identity) and record how much they expected their partner to return to them – to examine “the associations between racial diversity in schools and interracial trust” (Burns, 2012). In the results, proposers offered a significantly lower amount of money to Black participants, as they expected Black respondents to remit less. However, Black responders – who were on average significantly poorer than the other groups – did not conform to that expectation, and instead exhibited “similar levels of prosocial behavior in the responses as members of other race groups”. In addition, the study found that “non-Black proposers were significantly less likely to engage in an exchange at all, while Black partners engage but at significantly lower levels than when paired with non-

Black partners” (Burns, 2012). Thus, proposers that participated were “able to acquire important information that allows them to update their expectations and stereotypes concerning the prosocial traits of Black partners” (Burns, 2012). All and all, the results demonstrated that “racial identity remains a salient cue for prosocial decision making in a strategic setting characterized by limited information” (Burns, 2012). Thus, social support requests increased significantly when students identified strongly with community group peers (Burns, 2012). Collective evidence suggests that in-group members are more likely to help each other out of concern for their reputation in the group (Romano et al., 2022). Likewise, gossip has also been shown to influence reputations and prosocial behavior (Romano et al., 2022) due to indirect reciprocity or partner selection (Nieper et al., 2022). Gossip can decrease prosocial behavior when it is actually experienced and can increase prosocial behavior when people fear becoming the target of gossip (Nieper et al., 2022). In relation to this paper, I envision that rappers would expect prosocial behaviors from listeners who share their group’s identity, particularly if rappers verbalize their expectations of listeners to support something they are promoting (including the expression of disappointment with non-supportive behaviors).

And in the final cognitive stage, social comparison, in-group bias (or favoritism) forms. When a person compares their own group with other groups, they look for greater prestige and social standing for their own group. Thus, people may be motivated to behave in ways that express and support a social identity that they share at work when they are motivated to do so (Tyler, 2002; Ellemers et al., 2004). For instance, a study suggests that many teachers of urban students construct their teacher identities and roles by acting upon inaccurate narratives about their students (who do not identify in the same way as them) provided by their colleagues (Whitaker, 2020). And as a way of maintaining their status and prestige, the teachers may punish

the ways their urban students' identities intersect with school functioning (Whitaker, 2020). For instance, Whitaker (2020) describes how teachers may resort to explicit forms of subjugation (such as detention, suspension, and expulsion) when "urban" students resist acculturation. In essence, the process of constructing one's identity through a shared social identity enables one to develop a deeper sense of personal connection with the in-group, which leads to preferential behaviors towards them.

Psychological groups are made up of people who share the same social identifications. Interestingly though, the concept of favoritism does not require prior perceptions of similarity or liking between individuals (Turner, 1984). Favoritism occurs even when there is no interaction within or between groups, when group membership is anonymous, and when self-interest is unrelated to group responses (Turner, 1984). Thus, members of the same social categories (i.e. psychological groups) do not require members to interact with or like one another, or to accept each other as friends (Turner, 1984). Given the context of followers on social media platforms, this would infer that those with the same social identification may or may not follow and interact with each other – though they are part of the same in-group. This suggests that the in-group doesn't have to know each other to support one another. And, although the in-group does not know each other, they will conjointly treasure and/or promote their leader (i.e. the rapper).

2.2.3 Collective & Relational Identities

Both collective identity and relational identity are important to forming one's social identity. In the context of a social movement, collective identity refers to the way people act together in a way that is useful for each other (Milan, 2015). For example, the Asperger's syndrome community found success in addressing issues that affected them collectively (e.g.

promoting awareness, disseminating information, lobbying for funding, challenging stigma) by identifying as a shared group (e.g. “we Asperger’s sufferers”) (Baron-Cohen & Klin, 2006; Clare, Rowlands, & Quin, 2008; Haslam et al., 2009). The development of social identity is strongly influenced by interactions between individual members, according to research in social network science (Heere et al., 2011; Tamburrini et al., 2015). For example, sports bring people together through a sense of excitement of connection (Kashif et al., 2019) with the object (Rocha and Fink, 2015), sometimes invoking emotions such as patriotism and other consumer related emotions. Research within cultural and religiously diverse communities found that newly defined in-groups surface in conditions that promote interpersonal dialogue and exchange (such as inter-community sports events), as a strong sense of identity can be created when individuals are able to develop new emotional bonds with members of out-groups (Schulenkorf, 2010). Within Schelenkorf’s study, “one-on-one training activities provided an opportunity for continuous interpersonal contact, which resulted in the development of new friendships between sportspeople and the breaking down of socio-psychological barriers” (2010). Likewise, in an extension of patriotic advertising research, researchers found that “consumers’ patriotism has a positive influence on social identity” (Kim et al., 2013). In Kim et al.’s study, individuals formed identities based on how they demonstrate their appreciation and love for their country in social situations where advertising appears (Kim et al., 2013). As well, a longitudinal study demonstrated that different forms of social support foster social identification, during the early stage of transition of exchange students (Matschke, 2022). Collective identity does not assume unity or coherence, but rather it is always evolving (Milan, 2015). In a study regarding peer-to-peer social support within virtual communities of challenge – “in which participants interact to share experiences and provide support to each other on battling various types of illnesses” – data

from 270 regular participants in healthcare virtual communities demonstrated that emotional support does generate skepticism and conflict toward out-groups or sub-groups, unless the virtual community is corporate owned (as opposed to owned by charities, not-for-profits and individuals) – then this effect is reversed (Johnson & Lowe, 2015). Johnson & Lowe's (2015) research extends existing virtual community literature that has demonstrated that “consumers are motivated to engage by social identity and in the process of sharing and experiencing reciprocated benefits become motivated to engage in citizenship behaviors toward the brand and employees”. Activating social issues, feeling connected, and developing emotional bonds are all factors that contribute to creating one's social identity, which is also achieved through listening to the lyrics of rap music.

Relational identity moves beyond the categorizations of in-groups and out-groups (e.g. “us” and “them”) (Shapiro, 2010). The notion of relational identity describes how people relate to each other in various roles, such as manager-subordinate or coworker-coworker (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007), as they perceive their relationship with another individual or group (Shapiro, 2010). These relationships are dynamic, and at any point may feel close or distant, open or closed, comfortable or distressed (Shapiro, 2010). Considering relational situations, in a questionnaire study of 408 participants from 17 large-sized organizations (“spanning across manufacturing, construction, education, media, and property, etc.”), socially responsible organizations became a favorable social identity to their employees (Lau & Yin Yee, 2012) – supporting the notion that individuals' personal reputations are influenced by working in corporate organizations with perceived social responsibility. The concept of relational identity makes reference to affiliation – the degree of emotional connection between each party – and autonomy – defined by the degree and value of each side's independence from the other

(Shapiro, 2010). Thus, individuals can develop particularized relational identities, if they reference the norms and expectations with a role relationship to a specific individual; or individuals can develop generalized relational identities if they identify generically with their role relationship (Methot et al., 2018). In essence, autonomy enables individuals to think, feel, or behave how they choose without being influenced by others (Shapiro, 2005; Shapiro, 2010). Autonomy and affiliation serve to enhance the psychological relationship between individuals or groups (Shapiro, 2010). In absence of a fan group or knowing that other supporters exist, music listeners can develop a parasocial (psychological) relationship with rappers. Through this one-sided relationship, listeners (and viewers) are expected to absorb rapper's media through radio, podcasts and streaming services, concerts, videos, movies, tv shows, commercials and other forms of entertainment (including social media).

2.2.4 Prototypes

Prototypes represent a group's characteristics, including beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Shin et al., 2022). And, as prototypes emerge from communication and social interaction, they guide members' collective behavior as they reflect a collective understanding of reality (Shin et al., 2022). To leverage group-serving behaviors, unity around a prototypical identity is typically established. This prototypical identity can be characterized as the "entrepreneur of identity", described more clearly as the leader who provides context-specific information about group norms (Shin et al., 2022). Typically, prototypical members are trusted to act in the group's best interests (Hogg et al., 2004).

The selection of a group leader depends on the perceived characteristics of the outgroup the ingroup is competing with. For example, when the leader of an outgroup excelled in terms of

intelligence, ingroup members tended to endorse an ingroup leader who was unintelligent (but considerate) (Haslam et al., 1999; Turner & Haslam, 2001; Ellemers et al., 2004). Additional research demonstrated that a leader who favored ingroup members that opposed the outgroup generally received more support and was better able to mobilize individual efforts than a leader who treated all ingroup members equally (Haslam & Platow, 2001; Platow et al., 1997; Ellemers et al., 2004). Leaders' perception as either ingroup or outgroup members affects their ability to mobilize followers. Ingroup leader loyalty generally persists despite undesirable leadership behaviors; obedience to an outgroup leader is dependent on whether that leader treated subordinate's positively in the past and how rewarding the exchange relationship is (Ellemers et al., 1998; Ellemers et al., 2004). In situations where other groups are present and the ingroup differs from those outgroups, ingroup members can come to perceive different properties as being prototypical for their group and desirable to the leader (Turner & Haslam, 2001; Ellemers et al., 2004). As it applies to this research, leaders (or rappers) that maintain emotional contact with their supporters (and their supporters' behaviors towards inclusiveness) are likely to maintain group cooperation. Thus, it's beneficial for such leaders to synchronize with their supporters' expected thoughts and behaviors, to be perceived as more relatable and similar to their supporters.

Prototypes are polarized away from out-group features and describe ideal, often hypothetical, in-group members (Hogg et al., 2004). Accordingly, research indicates that categorization produces group-distinctive stereotyping, perceptions, and actions when social identities are salient (Hoggs et al., 1995). Thus, even subtle stimuli may activate self-categorization based on the relative intergroup context.

2.2.5 Distinctiveness

Entrepreneurial distinctiveness refers to the extent the content of a story deviates from the standard entrepreneurial story (i.e. conveying its novelty apart from the common topics) of the category (Taeuscher, 2021). In asking “what leads the formation of a new entrepreneurial identity?”, researchers found that prior work-related identities affect how well individuals establish new identity features (Burcharth et al., 2022). In an interview study examining how individuals engage in identity formation (within the entrepreneurial transition process), results found that the development of salient entrepreneurial identities of recently laid off employees who transitioned into an 18-month entrepreneurship track program were influenced by prior work experiences (as a baseline of identities) and displaced events (i.e. job loss) (Burcharth et al., 2022). Thus, entrepreneurs need to communicate their novelty to gain legitimacy from among novelty-expecting audiences (Taeuscher, 2021). According to SIT literature, distinctiveness increases the tendency to form identity with groups. The distinctiveness of the group’s collective values, practices, and behaviors allows the group to express its unique identity differently from that of comparable groups (Oakes & Turner, 1986; Tolman, 1943), thereby creating a sense of belonging. For instance, ICO-funded (initial coin offering) research investigating the economic and behavioral factors to fund startup operations (an ideological movement), researchers suggest that the strong attachment to blockchain mission and underlying values contributed to the “Us vs Them” bias, as the blockchain community felt distinctively separated from mainstream entrepreneurship and capital market’s cryptocurrencies (Schückes & Gutmann, 2021). This would imply that a novelty identity is essential for rappers to gain legitimacy. Setting themselves apart from other rappers (i.e. diffusing their identity) would

facilitate the introduction of an audience to them and help their audience relate to them on a deeper level.

2.2.6 Stereotype

Social identity's resulting group membership affects how people are treated, how they gain access to power, and how they interact (Rudel et al., 2021). Perceptual processes lead to stereotypes and prejudices, as it is common for perceivers to use categorical representations to simplify their understanding of others (Macrae & Bodenhausen, 2001). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that everyone has their own stereotypes, which are more than just labels. From a certain perspective, stereotypes can be a starting point for understanding someone better. Cognitively, stereotypes make comparisons easier, more predictable, and easier to comprehend because they assign generalized assumptions about broad characteristics of a group or individual. Related to SIT, stereotyping aids individuals in maintaining positive self-images by associating negative traits to groups beyond their own (Tajfel, 1985). Using stereotypes, people remain connected to their socially identified groups (as represented by the rapper's identity), maintaining positive self-perceptions.

2.3 Tribes

Tribes are networks of heterogeneous people united by their passions or emotions, giving them a sense of belonging and community (Cova & Cova, 2002). In marketing campaigns, entrepreneur success is dependent on tribe characteristics (such as preferences, aptitudes, behaviors, needs) (Holzweber et al., 2015; Goulding et al. 2013; Kozinets, 1999). Tribes can emerge whenever individuals share a common identity.

Tribes members see themselves as like-kindred (group members identify themselves as part of a common identity group), kinlike (group members base their connection and shared characteristics, such as a physical trait, ideology, language, geographic “home”, mission, or conviction), and emotionally invested in their group’s enhancement (Shapiro, 2010). People in tribes are emotionally driven and more willing to sacrifice for those who are closer to them (Shapiro, 2010). For instance, in an exploratory study and five experiments, using three different social identities, emotions, and emotion manipulations (music, ad copy, and film clips), researchers found that emotional stimuli that aligns with consumers’ salient social identities assist them in performing relevant tasks, making product choices, and making consumption decisions to enhance their experiences (Coleman & Williams, 2013).

Loyalty is promoted in tribal norms, as disloyalty can cause shame, humiliation, ostracism, and ostracism (Shapiro, 2010). As inferred earlier, a threat to one’s tribe can be seen as a threat to one’s self, prompting powerful responses in defense of one’s group. Likewise, threatened groups can quickly transform into tribes the moment its members feel connected by a common lineage and destiny – transitioning from loose associations into tightly defined units whose members are willing to defend their tribe’s physical and psychological existence (Shapiro, 2010). When a tribe is threatened, its salience and value increase (causing members to validate each other’s worth) (Shapiro, 2010).

2.4 Metadiscourse

The philosophy of language describes metadiscourse as the way writers and speakers interact with readers and listeners through language use (Hyland, 2017). Every word in a language has a symbolic meaning, allowing people to communicate and share information in

accordance with the social rules. On social media, metadiscourse is produced through the use of symbols or punctuation (Williams, 2021). The current most popularly used forms are hashtags (#) and social tagging (@). In common use, hashtags capture user-defined keywords in association with any content (Nam & Kannan, 2014). Briefly described, hashtags are continuous text strings used to build connections with other users. These strings may not contain space or punctuation. More elaborately, hashtags indicate clickable hyperlinks that link to a page that aggregates posts with the same hashtag in real-time. This signals that the tagged text is metadata (Williams, 2021). Zappavigna notes that the placement of a hashtag allows for tweets to signal information (2018). Essentially, the placement of a hashtag in front of the text signals metadata. Social tagging is a related function, used to acknowledge or gain the attention of other user accounts. This term is sometimes used interchangeably with hashtags, and is also termed “mentions”.

2.4.1 Vernacular writing

A vernacular practice, or any writing based on a set of customs, is often viewed as unimportant – especially when it is associated with popular culture (Barton & Lee, 2012). Vernacular writing is an interactive writing that expresses everyday experiences (Barton & Lee, 2012). Created by people themselves, such vernacular practices can provide a voice for the ordinary citizen, lending itself to originality and creativity (Barton & Lee, 2012). This study will examine rap lyrics as accessible forms of vernacular writing.

2.4.2 Creative Language

Creative language can be an avenue for empowerment, building community identity and personal power. When individuals use creative language, they are in control of their view of

themselves rather than allowing others to make assumptions about them. The practice of reclaiming words by oppressed groups is a good example of how creative language cultivates entrustment for individuals and communities alike. In their use of creative language, Jenkins et al. specified creative language as a socially creative way to increase positive views of a marginalized community (e.g. the queer community) in response to the threat of their in-group identities, following a significant event perceived to negatively target their community (2019). Thus, people can redirect understanding through the use of their words, rewriting narratives and redistributing power.

2.5 Entrepreneurs' Communications to Garner Support

How entrepreneurs communicate to garner funding and other resources has been well studied. Two key perspectives on entrepreneur communications are impression management theory and signaling theory. In contrast, herein, the focus of this proposal is on the language used by entrepreneurs to engender social identification with their audience that can allow them to garner resources. Next, I briefly review impression management and signaling theory to establish similarities and differences with my own focus on social identification language, which will follow thereon.

Research has found that venture capitalists will evaluate venture teams with similar profiles more favorably (Sieger et al., 2016). When an entrepreneur wants to acquire support from a funder, it is imperative that the investor has a clear understanding of the value proposition. Therefore, the entrepreneur typically formulates clear and concise pitches and gauges when to send that information to the investor. Additionally, funders pay close attention to

the legitimacy of entrepreneurs (Gerber & Hui, 2013), as a part of value proposition. Funders will look for evidence or indications of how entrepreneurs are openly regarded.

Scholars have broadly studied how entrepreneurs communicate in terms of impression management, signaling, language use, and more. As one's performance in front of others will reflect the qualified values of society more than their behavior overall (Goffman, 1959), human performance in social settings is influenced by impression management theory. In relation to this study, tweeting indicates that individuals are trying to influence and manage the perceptions others have of them through their self-presentation. In this way, the intent is to make a psychological impression that will cause others to act voluntarily and in accordance with the original communicator's (e.g. the tweeter's) own intentions (Goffman, 1959).

2.5.1 Impression Tactics

There are many ways people are able to manage the impressions others have of them in order to achieve a particular goal. One such way is through impression management. The concept of impression management refers to how individuals manage the way others perceive them. Depending on the task at hand and the psychological goals of the individual, people may try to create different impressions on different audiences (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). As such, behavioral patterns can be observed in a broad range of expressions, including verbal statements and non-verbal interactions. (Ellis et al., 2002; Goffman, 1959).

For entrepreneurs seeking angel funding, both direct – involving “techniques presenting information about one's own traits, abilities and accomplishments” -- and indirect – which are undertaken to “enhance or protect one's image by managing information about the people and things with which one is associated” -- impression management tactics are relevant (Cialdini,

1989; Parhankangas & Ehrlich, 2014). As well, the likelihood of entrepreneurs using defensive impression methods in their funding application materials is limited, since these methods are designed primarily for proactive image construction and not for repairing damaged reputations (Mohamed et al., 1999; Schlenker, 1980; Stevens and Kristof, 1995).

Entrepreneurs need to be able to disclose information about their skills and abilities to succeed in business. In self-promotion, typically individuals make claims about their own abilities or accomplishments in order to gain the attention of others (so they can be perceived as capable) (Bolino & Turnley, 1999). For example, women in Thompson-Whiteside et al.'s study saw little distinction between their personal and professional lives (Shepherd, 2005), so they self-promoted to market their business (2018). As well, companies seek to communicate legitimacy enhancing characteristics to the most important relevant publics, particularly when faced with a legitimacy threat (Bozzolan et al., 2015). For instance, in a financial market study, researchers found that stakeholder importance drove the use of impression management towards narrative disclosure tones of the corporation to affect the sentiment in financial markets rather than to fully reflect corporate performance (in line with the efforts to enhance stakeholder value (Bozzolan et al., 2015). When people believe that their public image and behavior affects their ability to accomplish desired goals, they are more motivated to control how others view them (Leary, 2001; Bolino et al., 2016). Furthermore, individuals are prone to exhibit their positive experiences in hopes of being perceived positively (Cialdini et al., 1976).

Similarly, in online communities, users tend to publish positive material about themselves as a means of boosting collective identity (Jung et al., 2012). To the notion of public image, entrepreneurs may also convey information regarding their personal traits or characteristics to further guide other's perceptions (Cialdini and De Nicholas, 1989). Research

found that people who are capable of influencing others' opinions about their cyber-identity are more likely to be perceived as popular and attractive (Hong et al., 2012). For instance, a study examining 104 college students demonstrated that observers perceive profiles as more popular and attractive when there were more social cues in their profile pictures; however, the effects of congruence override social cues when other-generated comments are inconsistent to the profiler's self-presentation (Hong et al., 2012). In such performances, entrepreneurs will need their audiences to support and validate the actions they are presenting.

In forms of indirect impression management, research has found that individuals adopt the success of others towards their own self-image. For instance, sports fans wear their winning teams' apparel and collect memorabilia as a mechanism to associate themselves with the successful victories of those being celebrated (Mudrick et al., 2016). Literature also suggests that individuals often transform their attitudes, preferences, and speech patterns to reflect the prototypical behavior of a group (Giles & Robinson, 2001; Burke and Stets, 1999).

Finally, individuals use assertive methods when they view a situation as an opportunity to boost their image, whereas defensive methods are used to minimize or repair damage to one's image following an embarrassing event, like a scandal (Mohamed et al., 1999; Schlenker, 1980; Wayne and Liden, 1995). For instance, studies show that the use of humor can enhance perceptions of competence and warmth when a target discloses negative information because it signals a shift in motive and decreases perceived veracity (Bitterly & Schweitzer, 2019).

Overall, impression management refers to how individuals communicate to manage the impressions that an audience has of them. Individuals can communicate in ways to engender a more positive image or overcome a negative image/stigma. As noted, impression management

tactics include stylistic aspects and ways of emphasizing certain aspects of communication, such as highlighting one's success, how the audience is drawn in or not in the conversation (i.e., "I" vs "we"), being more assertive or defensive (depending on the situation), and otherwise. By creating these positive impressions, individuals can garner resources, support, and engagement. This paper does not aim to investigate how rappers present favorable (or socially desirable) images through various platforms (to enhance their image), but rather examines how people develop their identities (even unconsciously) through social connections.

2.5.2 Signaling

"Signals are costly and observable information about underlying quality (e.g., patents, media coverage, education, etc.)" (Certo, 2003; Scheaf et al., 2018). With respect to social interactions, generally a person's social signals convey a connection to what is unique about them, the value proposition of their product, or their intellectual property. When transmitting information, the signal is displayed through "cues", which are traits or actions that benefit the receiver. Essentially, the receiver is trying to determine whether the sender is credible and possesses the desired characteristics for further interaction (Gambetta, 2009). Typically, receivers are outsiders who would like to gain the transmitted information (Connelly et al., 2011). And, if successful, the receiver will behave in the way the sender originally hoped for. The observability of signals depends on the ease with which outsiders are able to recognize them. If outsiders are not easily able to detect insider actions, it will be difficult to communicate with the sender (Connelly et al., 2011).

Signaling is implied within the notions of influence and self-promotion. When two parties (e.g. the signaler and the receiver) have access to different information (i.e. asymmetry),

signaling theory describes how these parties behave. To reduce information asymmetry, entrepreneurs transmit costly signals that are readily observable and expensive such that low-quality actors cannot benefit from false signals (Spence, 1973; Plummer et al., 2016; Certo, 2003). Furthermore, entrepreneur's ability to deliver value promised in the exchange is also influenced by whether the information embedded in the signal engenders confidence (Scheaf et al., 2018). In a 2018 study, researchers found that associating visual cues (e.g. high-quality video pitches) with costly signals lead potential funders to form positive impressions of the entrepreneurs' ventures (Scheaf et al., 2018).

Impression management and signaling are similar in that both techniques reveal some sort of information, with an aim of receiving their desired response. However, it is important to distinguish a signal from impression management in that more generally, a signal costs the signaler money, time, etc. to effectively convey information that is difficult to duplicate without comparable investments. While signaling may acquire attention from unintended audiences, by the nature of impression management, entrepreneurs select the audiences they seek support from and present persuasive arguments as to why the audience should support them. Thus, an entrepreneur can signal the authenticity of their shared identity by using language and symbols as their impression towards their audience.

Overall, scholars have predominantly examined impression management and signaling in the context of entrepreneurs' communication. This paper extends the discussion by offering a different perspective of entrepreneur communication through social identity theory. I use SIT to examine how the identity-salient language of entrepreneurs communications influences individuals behavior, as opposed to how entrepreneurs communicate information about themselves.

2.5.3 Language towards funding & support

To receive investor funding, entrepreneurs must help investors overcome doubts about both the entrepreneurs' legitimacy and earnings potential by establishing viable information about their ventures (Connelly et al., 2011). Research reveals that the linguistic styles entrepreneurs use matter in crowdfunding campaigns. For instance, in social entrepreneurship, using concrete and precise linguistic styles that build a personal connection with the crowd are more important because it helps backers better understand the campaign (Parhankangas & Renko, 2017). To briefly elaborate, concrete language represents context-specific, detailed representation of objects, and allows for quicker and easier retrieval of information (Ter Doest et al., 2002). And, precise language is more transparent and less associated with manipulation, as too much vocabulary can raise cautionary reactions and suspicions of deception in the minds of the target audience (Knapp et al., 1974; Geppert and Lawrence, 2008; Parhankangas & Renko, 2017). In microfinancing, funding is more likely to be awarded to entrepreneur ventures whose rhetoric (e.g. entrepreneurial language in CEOs letters to shareholders) exhibit autonomy, competitive aggressiveness, and risk-taking, than ventures that emphasize trust and ethical values (Moss et al., 2015). As well, in an analysis of narratives from entrepreneurs in developing countries, researchers found that rhetorical variety and narratives associated with accomplishment reduced the rate in which individual investors fund microloans – whereas rhetoric associated with blame and present concern increased funding speed (Allison et al., 2013). It is suggested that entrepreneurs should exercise caution when blasting their competitors, as it may make them appear to be less likeable and render them less fundable to investors (Parhankangas & Ehrlich, 2014).

Parhankangas & Ehrlich examine more closely the role of language in entrepreneurs' ability to utilize impression management strategies to secure funding and found that the tone and content of materials submitted to potential investors makes a difference in creating positive impressions (2014). Additionally, Parhankangas & Ehrlich concluded that it may prove counterproductive to overuse language with innovative connotations (in promotion strategy), since prospective investors may interpret it as an indication that product development, commercialization, and the acquisition of customers may be challenging (2014). This research also suggested that entrepreneurs who are comfortable expressing societal values seem to be more likely to attract investors (Parhankangas & Ehrlich, 2014). Literature has also found that crowdfunding investors factor in multiple characteristics of entrepreneurs' individual characteristics and adherence to prevailing social roles simultaneously when reacting to their rhetoric (Anglin et al., 2018). For instance, moderate displays of narcissism enhance crowdfunding performance (Anglin et al., 2018). However, the addition of race, sexual orientation, and sex may influence its interpretation, dependent on the combination of factors (Anglin et al., 2018).

To explain how language affects audiences, Aristotle identified three types of rhetorical appeals: 1) a pathos appeal – appealing to emotion (e.g. stimulating the receiver's emotions and attracting their attention), 2) a logos appeal – appealing to reason (e.g. conveying a focal economic activity used to reduce activity-related information asymmetry), and 3) an ethos appeal – bolstering the credibility of the sender (e.g. aiming to reduce firm-related information asymmetry) (Aristotle, 1991; Burton, 2007; Steigenberger & Wilhelm, 2018). Rhetoric, i.e. consciously using language for persuasion, relies on style (rather than content) to allow one to become an adept communicator capable of winning the cooperation of an audience (Burke, 1969;

McQuarrie & Phillips, 2008; Hartelius & Browning, 2008; Ge & Gretzel, 2018). In situations where multiple signals are sent simultaneously, pathos provides empirical evidence that signal visibility matters in high-noise environments (Steigenberger & Wilhelm, 2018). Steigenberger & Wilhelm (2018) found that logos and ethos rhetoric has been shown to contribute to the understanding of causes and consequences of events (Gephart et al. 2010), an appreciation of the reasons for organizational change initiatives (Vaara and Monin 2010), and the reconciliation of individuals with societal expectations and norms (Harmon et al. 2015). By understanding consumer-centric rhetoric, entrepreneurs are able to speak the language of consumers and fit inside consumers' communities (i.e. creating and sharing common ground) (Hartelius & Browning, 2008; Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Further, research found that influencers persuaded social media users to engage with them (or their posts) by using multiple rhetorical appeals in their moves (e.g. speech that serves a particular communicative purpose) (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). As well, supplication – the act of revealing one's weaknesses – might assist budding entrepreneurs in their search for funding.

Men and women are rewarded differently when it comes to communicating the quality of their ventures due to stereotypical ascriptions (Alsos & Ljunggren, 2017). In an environment where entrepreneurship continues to be a male-dominated field, women must communicate their legitimacy in order to overcome inherent gender bias signal interpretation (Alsos & Ljunggren, 2017). This assessment seems to be influenced by the entrepreneur's gender and gendered image (Alsos & Ljunggren, 2017). In another study, successful crowdfunding campaigns for women were linked to counterintuitive mechanisms from the traditional venture funding settings (Wesemann & Wincent, 2021). For example, in male-dominated sectors, highlighting their gender, using more female-centric language, using less promotion language, and setting higher

campaign goals enhanced more balance in obtaining venture funding (Wesemann & Wincent, 2021). Additionally, literature shows that gender plays a role in the interpretation of project proposals (Wan et al., 2021). For instance, it's advised that the language style of a proposal should be either female or male for the founder to attract pledges from the crowd (Wan et al., 2021). This may be due to the notion that crowds can identify a project founder's gender by their language style (Wan et al., 2021). As well, research finds that the degree of success or failure of a crowdfunding campaign is driven by the perceived fit right between an entrepreneur's gender and the project category's gender norms, as well as the level of pitch assertiveness (i.e., communication style (McSweeney et al., 2022).

Likewise, in reading proposals, women donors tend to consider language style of the proposal's creator more than men (Wan et al., 2021). As well, previous studies demonstrated women are more likely to donate to altruistic projects more often than men, who are more likely to fund projects to obtain a "reward" offered by the project founder (Gorbatai & Nelson, 2015; Wan et al., 2021). While there is no specific focus on gender in my study, this research highlights how different people have different responses to pitches in male-dominated fields (such as the rap industry), and therefore gender is included as a control in the methods section.

2.5.4 Identity-Enhancing Language

A person's social identity affects the way in which they use language (either implicitly or explicitly) (Tamburrini et al., 2015). However, people adapt their language usage and language characteristics according to the social identity of their conversation-partner and the degree of isolation their group is from the others in the network (Tamburrini et al., 2015). Every mediated conversation carries an audience, whether on a blog, instant messenger, or something

other (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a). For instance, “professional writers’ sense of ‘audience awareness’ factors greatly into their writing, in terms of goals, vocabulary, technique, and subject matter” (Berkenkotter, 1981; Marwick & Boyd, 2011a). Thus, individuals present themselves differently depending on who the audience is and where the conversation takes place (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a). In a 2011 study, researchers surveyed 181 Twitter users directly to elicit their perspectives on how their (the users) imagined audience impacts how they tweet (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a). “People with few followers, who use the site for reasons other than self-promotion, generally see Twitter as a personal space where spam, advertising, and marketing are unwelcome” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a). To manage authenticity, the authors observed that people either “refrain altogether from discussing certain topics on Twitter” or “balance strategically targeted tweets with personal information” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011a).

The availability of technologies for content creation has popularized techniques for “micro-celebrities”, where audience members are viewed as fans, popularity is maintained through ongoing fan management, and self-presentation is carefully constructed for consumption by others (Marwick & Boyd, 2011b). However, the relationships between fans and micro-celebrities go beyond “the illusion of a ‘real’, face-to-face friendship” – formed “through watching TV or listening to music. It is likely that many of the things audiences read, see, or hear are considered the language of the micro-celebrity. And, determining whether the audience are experiencing an “authentic” individual or a performed persona could influence how responsive the audience acts on what they read, see, or hear. Thus, the shared sense of identity individuals feel as members of social groups (or “we-ness”) leads to developing a consensus within the same group (Shin et al., 2022). Within this study, I want to understand the relationship language has in enhancing identification generated by the salient stimuli (i.e. the salient themes). Said differently,

I want to examine how certain language strengthens the social connections to other individuals. As such, I am introducing the concept of identity-enhancing language. To my knowledge, this has not been studied before. Thus, I'm defining identity-enhancing language as language themes that complement identity-salient language and are relevant to social identities without being core to those identity-salient language themes.

2.6 Identity-Salient Language

In social interaction, salient identity is a concept making sense of how a person responds (e.g. changes identity) to different situations. Serpe and Stryker describe identity salience through the dimensions of identity commitment (e.g. interactional and affective) (Serpe, 1987; Stryker, 1980). Interactional commitment associates the number of social relationships with a given role or identity (Serpe, 1987). For example, in a longitudinal empirical study, researchers assessed 760 entrepreneurial digital identities through their text and language (via Twitter messages) before and after the closure of their businesses (Fisch & Block, 2021). Accordingly, the study found that the consequences of failure reflected in the financial, social, and psychological language entrepreneurs use (Fisch & Block, 2021). According to a 2005 study, researchers proposed a linear explanation for social identity formation, in linking corporate language to culture, knowledge, and power in multinational corporations (Vaara et al., 2005). Thus, in examining how language policies are defined in an emerging multinational corporation, the analysis showed how the choice of an official corporate language: became empowering and disempowering resources in communication, connected language to interpretations and (re)constructions of professional competence, and became the basis of the establishment of networks of communication and interaction (Vaara et al., 2005).

Affective commitment depends on how important an individual feels to others through a given position (Stryker, 1980). In an empirical analysis examining the interaction processes between Danish expatriates and local employees (where a number of Danish expatriates were posted in the English subsidiary to improve the financial situation), research demonstrated how language may affect the formation of social identity in organizations when members speak different languages (Lauring, 2008). The results found that identity was constructed as a result of competition for resources and recognition, and not as a priori categories (Lauring, 2008). In the process of identity making, language use was employed as a means of expressing ethnicity (Lauring, 2008). Thereby, the author argues that language can be strategically used in identity making when groups collide (Lauring, 2008).

To approach identity commitment from a different lens, I'm introducing the concept of identity-salient language. Identity-salient language makes sense of how prominent aspects of social identity are conveyed in different situations. Said differently, in identity-salient language a person or culture is described, and the topic of discussion is associated with that. Identity-salient language can be defined as an individual's use of identity-committing language to build rapport. In this case, identity-salient language is the use of particular content (often vernacular) within lyrics, allowing rappers to build a rapport with their followers. For instance, popular rappers Nicki Minaj and Cardi B use group-labeling language such as Barbz and BardiGang to identify their fans. Additionally, rappers use song lyrics in a variety of ways to convey information about themselves, such as distinguishing which social status(es) they belong to, expressing their sexual orientations, speaking about their families, etc. As an example, in Cardi B's 2017 hit "Bodak Yellow", her lyrics *"You in the club just to party, I'm there, I get paid a fee" ... "They see pictures, the say, "Goals," bitch, I'm who they tryna be"... "I'm the hottest in the street, know*

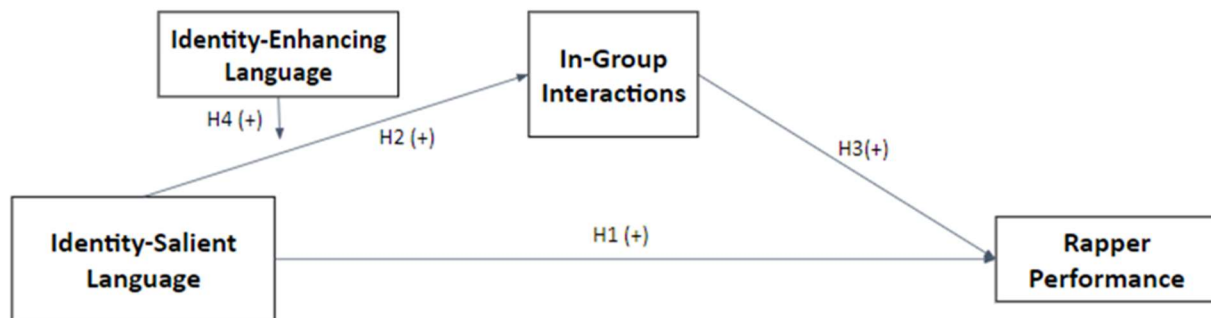
you prolly heard of me”... indicates that she has achieved a level of prestige that sets her apart from the person(s) she is comparing herself to. In terms of sexual preferences, Cardi goes on to say “I might just chill with your boo, I might just feel on your babe”, indicating that she is bisexual – experiences that she has openly discussed on social media, in interviews, and on tv shows. In Cardi’s 2018 song “Money”, she makes references to her daughter named “Kulture, “I got a baby, I need some money, yeah I need cheese for my egg”... ”But nothing in this world that I like more than Kulture”

Similarly, some rappers also have unique spoken language terms that are affiliated with their persona (whether they are the original creators of the term or not). Continuing with our example, Cardi B had become widely known for using the slang “Okurr” when conversing with others. And, while the origin of that term has been debated (initially said to be associated with Drag Queens’ slang), it’s more synonymous with Cardi B in popular culture. When you get many people using these labels simultaneously, tribes form. And leaders in the tribe can draw on its emotional significance (Shapiro, 2010). For this dissertation, I examine how rapper entrepreneurs create social identification with listeners (i.e. potential followers) by using identity-salient language, which can increase their social media follower volume, as a key indicator of rapper performance. To my knowledge, identity-salient language has not been studied before.

CHAPTER III: HYPOTHESES

As mentioned earlier, this study has two goals: 1) Understand the relationship identity-salient language has towards stimulating follower reactions; 2) Understand the relationship identity-enhancing language has towards strengthening the amount of follower reactions. In this

chapter, I seek to accomplish these goals by offering a model and hypothesis specifying how identity-salient language influences rapper performance (i.e. follower reactions and Billboard listing).



As discussed, social identification refers to the emotional and value-related significance associated with membership in a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Social identification is a key component of an individual's self-concept and can be engendered through individuals' excitement about being connected to something, interpersonal dialogue and exchange, displays of appreciation and love for something, forms of social support, perceptions of other individuals or groups, and group labeling and biased language abstraction. As such, social identification leads to various positive outcomes, which include productive social interaction between people, group cohesion and motivation, increased psychosocial benefits, and redistribution of power.

People present their identities in different ways based on context in social media environments, where fans, celebrities, and intermediaries (e.g. gossip columnists) coexist (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Herein, I expect rappers to enhance their performance by leveraging their identity-salient language. Simply put, identity-salient language is hypothesized to be associated with rapper performance. As with any musical artist, rappers are essentially entrepreneurs trying to create a more attractive opportunity. Rappers typically begin as unknown

figures who need to build a following (i.e. a potential market). In order to achieve this following, rappers usually need to go beyond their creative writing and rhyming abilities to communicate themselves to others often before (or even after) signing with a record label. Therefore, the ability of rappers to build followings through identity-salient language may be particularly important towards promoting social recognition.

There are certain norms, values, and beliefs that are more salient in the rap industry. The words we use to describe our environment determine what others will see and understand. For instance, “street cred” (also known as “street credibility”) is a commonly used term in the rap and hip-hop industry. Street cred implies a level of trustworthiness and expertise based on experience in or knowledge of issues typically affecting inner-city environments – rather than empty posturing, boasting or superficial bragging. A 2005 description on urbandictionary.com states street cred as something observable, suchlike “*Brooklyn bred, handle born in the streets, just the right inflection in his speech, the can't-F-with-me strut. The little things.*” In a 2022 song titled “Street Cred” by Dj Drama and Jeezy, the first verse states

“Came from in the mix with 36, pockets full with dirty kicks

Weighing up them ounces and I swear we had like 30 sticks

Diamond in the rough, yeah you see that boy done glowed up

They say you lost your street cred you tell them pussies so what” ...

followed by the chorus stating

“I ain't get these mansions with street cred

Get that Rolls Royce with no street cred

Rari with the horse with no street cred

911 Porsche with no street cred

Can't pay my family bills with no street cred

Can't feed my family meals with no street cred

Spend summers in Negril with no street cred

Close million dollar deals with no street cred”.

Social identity is strengthened even further through anthems when individuals internalize their alliances (e.g. putting others into categories as “us” vs “them”). For instance, Snoop Dogg & C-Murder’s 1999 single “Down 4 My N’s” is a popular hit that has been sampled and/or referenced by numerous industry artists, leveraged in professional sports leagues entrances and marching band competitions, and placed on multiple Billboard Charts. The significance of this song is making the opposition aware that the label mates (of No Limit Records) are going to support one another, which in turn transferred these values onto the listeners and fans of the song. To illustrate, the song begins with the chorus

“ Fuck them other niggas 'cause I'm down for my niggas

Fuck them other niggas 'cause I'm down for my niggas

Fuck them other niggas 'cause I ride for my niggas

I die for my niggas (What), fuck them other niggas, nigga”

followed by versus from three of the label mates, describing how they would support the cause and protect each other.

(C-Murder)

“Bitch, I'm down with No Limit, I'll ride for the cause

I'm the nigga on the tank with the big fucking balls

And if anybody fuck with Snoop Doggy Dogg

I'ma make these niggas put his name on the wall

And everywhere I go, I got Mr. Magic here

Because I know that nigga don't care” ...

(Mr. Magic)

“What, you ain't heard, boy? I ride with these niggas

I die with these niggas

Did a drive by with my .45 cause I'm down with these niggas

Snoop Dogg and Bossalinie

Don't shoot, nah, nigga, just call me when you need me” ...

(Snoop Dogg)

“What niggas? Them niggas? Yeah, dawg, you with it?

Fuck 'em, let's get 'em, do 'em, I did 'em

We getting nutty in this motherfucker

I got my buddy in this motherfucker

Leave a nigga bloody in this motherfucker” ...

In another example, rapper Kendrick Lamar’s 2015 popular single “Alright” became associated with the Black Lives Matter movement after several youth-led protests chanted the chorus during protests against police violence (against Black people).

(Intro)

“Alls my life, I has to fight, nigga

Alls my life, I—

Hard times like, "Yah!"

Bad trips like, "Yah!"

Nazareth

I'm fucked up, homie, you fucked up

But if God got us, then we gon' be alright”

(Chorus)

“Nigga, we gon' be alright

Nigga, we gon' be alright

We gon' be alright

Do you hear me, do you feel me? We gon' be alright" ...

In an artistic industry, norms, values, and beliefs surrounding creativity and innovation are also important. A rapper's creativity typically includes lyrical wordplay in the form of bars (lines or lyrical sentences in a song) and freestyles (spontaneous raps), as well as metaphors, similes, double entendres, and punchlines. The words "bar" or "bars" typically refers to when a line is spoken in a clever way. For example, Drake's 2013 single "Started from the Bottom" is symbolic for the well-known and often beloved underdog narrative expressed within many movies, industries, and towards successful entrepreneurs such as *Harry Potter* author J.K. Rowling, TV host Oprah Winfrey, fashion designer Ralph Lauren, playwright & filmmaker Tyler Perry, and rapper & founder of *No Limit Records* Percy "Master P" Miller.

(Drake)

"Started from the bottom, now we're here

Started from the bottom, now my whole team fuckin' here" ...

Popular metaphors, suchlike the bar "*These expensive, these is red bottoms, these is bloody shoes*" from Cardi B's hit single "Bodak Yellow" – a reference to the signature red soles on the elite Christian Louboutin brand heels, serve as symbolisms for listeners to identify with her social status. Even the titles of the songs can be creative aspects for the rappers. For instance, rapper Young M.A.'s 2016 single "OOOUUU" turned a commonly expressed sound sentiment

for excitement into a popular lyric echoed throughout mainstream media, from audiences who may not have used that terminology prior to the popularity of the song.

Therefore, I expect rappers to be able to enhance their performance by using “identity-salient language” that captures street cred, us vs. them, and creativity. In using language that engenders common values, norms, and beliefs, rappers connect themselves to the things that matter to potential followers and appeal to the core values followers hold (that are associated with followers’ identity). Making it then possible for the followers to be attracted to rappers who share the same values, norms, and beliefs – which are made salient by the language used – and in turn, will buy the rappers’ music, support their project, and spread the word about these rappers on social media. Thus, funders (such as advertiser agencies, sponsors, etc.) typically use the information conveyed by the public opinion of fans to determine their investment decisions (Harrison, et al. 2022). In a sense, funders are looking for audience validation about the rappers’ “performances”. In short, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: Identity-Salient Language will be positively associated with Rap Performance

The concept of social categorization serves as the foundation for group identification, as well as generating intergroup relationships (Hogg, 2014). Groups make comparisons to other groups in their environments to avoid uncertainty (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). And while people can belong to a variety of social groups, crowd perception (Lamer et al., 2018) can have an impact on one’s social circumstances – putting one category above the others. For example, one of the most notorious social categorizations in rap is the East Coast—West Coast rivalry that emerged in the mid-1990s. This well-known dispute centered around New York (East Coast) rapper Christopher “Notorious B.I.G.” Wallace with label owner Puff Daddy of Bad Boy

Records and California-based rapper (West Coast) Tupac Shakur with label owner Suge Knight of Death Row Records. While there are conflicting stories about how the feud began (and continued), the involvement of two iconic rappers and the competition between two of the largest rap labels (at that time) captured media attention, and divided fan loyalty (nationally and internationally). For years and decades following, the question remains “Tupac or Biggie?”.

As social categorization has traditionally been associated with visual characteristics, language differences are increasingly becoming recognized as important markers of group identity (Piekkari, 2006; Born & Peltokorpi, 2010; Klitmøller et al., 2015). Observers have argued that language plays a strong role in determining social identity, as it poses both functional and psychological barriers to social interaction (Klitmøller et al., 2015). For instance, studies have demonstrated that linguistic self-stereotyping and norm talk enabled entrepreneurs to manage their social identities (Hajek, 2021). As well, research has found that in-group members are willing to share category membership with others when there’s an understanding of the self-identifying lingo used (Haslam et al., 2009). For example, in 2019, popular phrases like “Hot Girl Summer” and “City Girl Summer” emerged with solo rapper Megan Thee Stallion (a “Hot Girl”) and duo rappers Yung Miami & JT of the City Girls. Such terminology left fans to wonder and debate online “Am I a ‘Hot Girl’ or a ‘City Girl’”, and who categorizes as those. After constant debate, listeners used the artists’ lyrics to identify characteristics for each grouping. People generally concluded that “Hot Girls” are attractive, fun, remorseless women who live confidently, have career goals, land multiple men, and do not scam. While “City Girls” are women who seek out wealthy men to finance their desired lifestyles, only exchange their bodies exclusively to men who qualify, and are sometimes scammers. Thus, regardless of category, the primary concern is to acquire money. In the use of these terms “Hot Girl” or “City Girl”, men

have also adopted use of these social categories – sometimes modifying “Girl” to “Boy” – to manage their membership within these groupings (e.g. making associations to these categories regardless of the men’s heterosexual, homosexual, or other sexual orientation). That said, behavior is usually dictated by the established and referenced norms of a person’s social category.

An individual’s social identity influences their relationships with other people because of their enactment of their role toward them (e.g. a specific-role or broad-role relationship). In an example of a relationship to an activity, “I’m a trapper” is a common lyric in rap songs. The term “trapper” gained popularity among younger rappers since the early 2000s to describe someone selling illegal drugs and hustling in a “traphouse” (an area or house that is occupied by drug dealers and drug users). People also affiliated themselves in terms of location. For instance, from the 1990s to the 2000s, many people described themselves as an “ATLien” – a term made popular by the Atlanta-bred rap duo Outkast to describe someone who is from or native to Atlanta, Georgia. Atlanta is historically known as a center for Black wealth, higher education, political power, and cultural excellence. Many celebrities have grown up in Atlanta, while others migrated there to progress their careers. As such, there is a sense of pride in saying you’re “from Atlanta”. Similarly, people also associated themselves in relation to cultures. For example, “hip-hop heads” are people who are fans of rap & hip-hop music and culture.

For people to understand their own identity as group members and how they evaluate others, context-specific information about the norms, characteristics and uniqueness of the group is needed (Kim et al. 2017; Shin et al., 2022). Appropriately, prototypes play an essential role in helping people understand their identity as group members (Kim et al. 2017). Thus, the prototypical identity guides collective behavior (Shin et al., 2022). For example, in the mid-

2000s, the “Dougie” dance craze was started by millennial rappers in tribute to the 1980’s dance performed by Doug E. Fresh – a popular and respected pioneer in Hip Hop culture as the “Original Human Beatbox”. As a result of Cali Swag District’s “Teach Me How to Dougie” and Lil Wil’s “My Dougie”, two of the most famous Dougie songs, many celebrities, athletes, and the general population commonly shared videos of themselves doing this dance. In a different example, popularly known lyrical rappers have expressed their disdain with “mumble rappers” for deviating from the blueprint of expression established by rap predecessors. Several lyrical rappers feel that mumble rappers are lazy artists that have cheapened the craft of rap in exchange for ephemeral popularity. Mumble rap describes rappers whose lyrics are unclear, hard to understand, and/or composed in an adlib fashion, with little focus on lyricism. Common topics in the rap style include drugs, sex, money, parties, jewelry, and designer clothing. Characteristics of this rap style include the adlibs like “aye”, “yeah”, and “uh” to start and end lines, as well as dramatic emotions and an emphasis on repetitive lyrics and melodies (more so than lyricism).

There is an association between what followers perceive leaders as, and their ability to mobilize followers (Ellemers et al., 2004). Follower loyalty to in-group leaders usually persists despite poor leadership behaviors (Ellemers et al., 2004). For instance, murdered rapper XXXTentacion was a controversial figure due to his widely publicized legal troubles. In addition to facing battery charges (before his death), he also faced many other cruel accusations. However, the challenges he faced did not deter his listeners and devout followers because they resonated closely with his lyrical expressions of rassing with mental illness. For example, the lyrics in his 2018 song “SAD!” recounts his pain, uncertainty, insecurity, heartbreak, and threats of suicide in his confusion of loving someone he no longer has a relationship with. Thus, XXXTentacion has become praised for his musical versatility since he was a flawed individual

like many of his fans who suffer from depression, suicidal ideation, and related mental health issues. In his posthumous state, his followers bolster his status as a misunderstood prophet.

Rappers offer a voice that is distinct from traditional forms of language, as they tend to relate their everyday experiences through the lyrical expression of their social identity. Thus, vernacular writing offers an opportunity for the rapper to connect their identity with the identity of the common person (Barton & Lee, 2012). Said differently, rappers speaking in certain ways create a sense of identity that will engender a greater number of in-group interactions among individuals with similar interests, based on the same values, beliefs, and norms communicated. And while people's social identities affect the way they use language, their language characteristics are influenced by their conversation partners' social identities. This leads to the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Identity-Salient Language will be positively associated with In-Group Interactions

People define and differentiate themselves in relation to other individuals (Hogg et al., 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) to establish their identities. In situations in which people identify with a group, sharing the same understanding, definition, and evaluation of themselves (Hogg et al., 2004), they are more likely to behave in accordance with the group's expectations. A sense of belonging motivates individuals to work together and reach agreements in pursuit of identity-related activities (Haslam et al., 2009). In context of a social movement, the removal of access to a rapper can compel in-group members (those who identify as fans) to act on their assumed social identities, unite, and collectively interact with little to no planning. For instance, one week after rapper Meek Mill was sentenced to prison in 2017 for violating probation in a 2008 case involving guns and drugs, hundreds of fans, celebrities, and fellow rappers stood together for

Meek Mill (both on social media and in person by rallying at the Criminal Justice Center in Philadelphia) because they believed his sentence was unfair, unreasonable, and cruel. Rally-goers shouted the entire lyrics of Meek's "Dreams and Nightmares (Intro)" song (like they do in clubs and concerts) to show their solidarity to the rapper, held signs reading "#RALLY4MEEK", "#JUSTICEFORMEEK", "WE SUPPORT YOU MEEK", "FREEMEEKMILL, #FREEMEEK, and walked through the streets chanting "Free Meek Mill" to bring attention to their criticisms against mass incarceration and the criminal-court system's treatment of people of color and those in poverty.

Similarly, when London-born rapper 21 Savage was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and faced deportation in 2019, fans, activists, and fellow Atlanta artists rallied on his behalf. Supporters wore black and white #Free21Savage t-shirts, stood in the rain with the rapper's image on "Black Lives Matter" signs, and tried to deliver a 450,000-signature petition in support of 21 Savage to court officials. Many in Atlanta consider 21 Savage as one of their own since he is a "Dreamer" (an immigrant brought to the United States as a child and now considers it home), collaborates musically with local artists, and regularly hosts charitable events in the community, such as school drives, youth literacy initiatives, free health screenings, and more. In these two examples, in-group members responded to the symbols of injustice with their assumed social identities. The hashtags the in-groups displayed were means of communicating to their fellow supporters (via media coverage), presumably inviting other supporters to show their support on social media, as well as distinguishing their standing from outgroup members. As individuals interact with other members of a social movement, their collective identity influences the way the group acts in beneficial ways towards each other, fostering prosocial behavior. Thus, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between Identity-Salient Language and Rapper Performance will be positively mediated by the In-Group Interactions

Rappers are known for making claims about their own abilities or accomplishments to gain attention from viewers and listeners and use social media as a form of communication, expressing personal information to create intimacy, acknowledging their fans in public, and using cultural references to create an affiliation with their followers (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Through social media, rappers can gain closer ties with their audiences through comments, likes, and shares. Marwick & Boyd (2011b) imply that as a means of publicly connecting with fans, rappers provide audiences with intimate glimpses into their lives and common interests using language, words, cultural symbols, and conventions. Subsequent research found that influencers are attractive to consumers because of the authentic persona they are consciously creating (Jung et al., 2022). As highlighted by Marwick & Boyd (2011b), Soulja Boy used language that was similar to his audience (during his rise) – primarily young hip-hop fans: “That song me & Lola did is Bumpin in the whip my speakers goin ham!”. Similarly, P Diddy uses inspirations and inclusive language to relate to his followers: “Let’s stay focused to day people! Today can be the start of a positive change in our lives. Claim it and do it!!!!Just do it!!!”.

Does the audience become more responsive when they hear emphasis on information being conveyed from the rapper? We can presume that audiences react differently when emphasis is conveyed within certain language use. Leading to the final hypothesis, I will leverage the concepts of identity-enhancing language (i.e., language as language themes that complement identity-salient language and are relevant to social identities without being core to those identity-salient language themes) and identity-salient language (i.e., the use of identity-committing language to build a rapport with supporters).

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between Identity-Salient Language and the In-Group Interactions will be strengthened when moderated by the Identity-Enhancing Language.

CHAPTER IV: METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology used to test the relationships between identity-salient language, in-group interactions, rapper performance, and identity-enhancing language. It will provide an overview of the data gathering process, timeline, and materialization of the data.

4.1 Data Collection & Preparation

4.1.1 Identifying Rapper Profiles

Rapper profiles were collected via a snowballing method. As a starting point, the first set of rappers were identified according to 2015 references: “*10 rappers to watch in 2015*” and “*The Top 25 Independent Hip-Hop Artists In The Game Right Now*”. Next, since Twitter has proven to be a valuable advertising platform for reaching current and potential customers, advertising products, and receiving relevant marketing information (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2015; Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Jansen et al., 2009; Singh et al., 2017; Thomases, 2009), I found the Twitter accounts for those rappers, and examined who they were following to find more rappers (with public accounts). In order to categorize Twitter accounts as rappers, profile characteristics were taken into account: A recognizable name, the volume of followers, the presence of a pinned video or music account, imagery of the rapper containing tattoos and/or smoking, bio descriptions containing a self-description of “rapper”, “hip hop”, “recording artist”, or descriptions containing “for bookings” or “business” or “booking” or “management” or “out now” or “get the album”. Using this approach, 518 rapper accounts were identified.

4.1.2 SoundCloud Profile Collection

To find the appropriate SoundCloud user account, the Twitter username was entered into the SoundCloud search field. Then, user accounts with blue checkmarks were collected. In cases where a blue checkmark was not present, the Twitter account linked on the SoundCloud page was compared to the collected Twitter profile name. In some cases, rap artists may have changed their Twitter username at some point in time. In cases where the SoundCloud page is linked to the rapper's former Twitter username (that may no longer exist or be active), first, I reviewed their Twitter summary to see if there was a link to their SoundCloud account. If their SoundCloud link was not posted in their Twitter bio summary, then I performed a google search of the rapper's name along with the word "SoundCloud" to identify their SoundCloud account. If the second method failed, then I searched the rapper's name into SoundCloud directly and examined the account with the most followers. From there, I examined the additional social media accounts listed on the profile (such as Website, Instagram, Facebook, etc.) to determine if those linked to their official page accounts for those platforms. This process was conducted for the first 103 accounts collected from Twitter. Ultimately, 100 accounts were manually collected from SoundCloud. Once the proper rapper profile was identified, metadata was manually collected for their: followers, overall track listings, and individual track details (such as song title, likes, reposts, plays, and comments).

SoundCloud is one of the largest online music streaming services in the world, enabling users to upload, promote, and share audio and music through its website. It is a very easy way for unknown, burgeoning, and popular recording artists alike to post music without the aid of a 3rd party (suchlike a record label) and become discovered from a wide audience of listeners. Many of the latest rappers made it into the industry via SoundCloud, and have been labeled

“SoundCloud rappers”. For example, artists like Chance The Rapper, Travis Scott, Lil Uzi Vert, and XXXTentacion are some of the rappers who have become superstars after leveraging this platform (High, 2022). In 2009, SoundCloud rolled out its Twitter integration, allowing SoundCloud users to automatically post a Tweet upon the upload of a new track or set (SoundCloud, 2009). Then in 2012, SoundCloud became a partner for Twitter’s “expanded tweets” feature (Dredge, 2014). As of November 2021, the service consisted of 76+ million active monthly users (Smith, 2016). Today, it is commonplace for common users and recording artists to promote their music (and music interests) between both platforms, as both can be used via the web and/or many mobile devices. In this study, I will measure rapper performance by the number of their SoundCloud followers.

4.1.3 Song Selection

Following, a target of 10 songs were randomly selected from each rappers’ song listings. In cases where rappers had less than 10 criteria-fitting songs listed, then at least 50% of their song listings were used towards the training set. Randomizing the selection of songs reduces the possibility of selecting songs where patterns exist between song assignment and song characteristics. To identify the primary version of the songs, titles that list “remix”, “skit”, “instr”, “instrumental”, or “instrumental” were added to the filter tool to exclude these away from the sample. Next, collaborations were identified by titles containing “feat”, “ft.”, “&”, “,” or “x” within the listed artists’ names, and then extracted out of the sample (as collaborations may obscure or bias the quality of the identified rappers’ lyrics). And, non-traditional track listings (such as skits, intros, and outros) were identified by titles containing “intro”, “outro”, or “interlude” were also extracted from the data. After collecting the randomized samples for each account, 81 accounts (totaling 780 songs) qualified for my research.

4.1.4 Lyric Collection

Next, the SoundCloud song titles were used to find song lyrics on genius.com. The lyrics were manually collected (copied and pasted) and added into a spreadsheet for each song. If similar song titles populated, then the audio SoundCloud lyrics were compared to the written genius.com lyrics to select the correct song. If the song title was unlisted on genius.com or listed with unavailable lyrics, I moved to the next song in the sample. After collecting data for the initial sample, I replaced the skipped song titles with other (non-identical) randomly selected SoundCloud song listings (if available) and would repeat the lyric collection process. Additionally, each song's release date was captured from its lyric page on genius.com. If the release date was not listed, then a google search was used to find the earliest date available (from page 1 of the search).

Founded in 2009, Rap Genius (re-launched as Genius in 2014) became ubiquitous for finding song lyrics and allowing hip hop fans and site-verified artists to share their own transcriptions and interpretations of rap songs (Kehrer, 2016). As quoted by one of its founders “Rap Genius has crowd-sourced annotations that give context to all the lyrics line by line, and tens of thousands of verified annotations directly from writers and performers.” (Pham, 2013). For instance, annotators (e.g. commenters) have dug into possible meanings behind phrases found in Beyonce's Formation song, such as “albino alligator” (perhaps “a sign of flyness” or “a veiled jab at white/racist haters”) and “I got hot sauce in my bag, swag” (“a must have for a southerner in need of spice at any given time”) (Kehrer, 2016). By 2013, Rap Genius had over 25 million monthly visitors, and quickly evolved into a social network (Pham, 2013).

4.1.5 Wayback Profile Collection

The Wayback website, <https://archive.org/web/>, was used to collect a snapshot of each rapper's SoundCloud profile at the songs' release dates. Created in 1996, the "Wayback Machine" preserves digitally archived versions of web pages across time. The snapshot data will be used to identify the growth of each rapper's followers over time. To find the rapper's account on Wayback, each rapper's SoundCloud profile url was entered into the Wayback browse history search bar. Next, the "song release date" collected from [genius.com](https://www.genius.com) was used to select the calendar date on Wayback. If that exact date did not populate, then the next populated date (after the song release date) was chosen to ensure the rapper's snapshot data would account for the song. And, lastly, the number of followers shown for that archived date was collected. In instances where no data was present, "no data available" was noted.

4.2 Research Design and Measures

4.2.1 Exploratory analysis

Thornton and Ocasio refer to institutional logics as shared meanings based on specific norms, values, and beliefs (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). These norms, values, and beliefs in society derive from different domains: family, religion/church, the state, education, the community, and otherwise. Identities are also salient in terms of broader demographic categories, that are readily visible means of distinguishing across people that shape status, expectations, etc. Based on these considerations, the Natural Language Processing package and text mining library was deployed in R to explore for what I believe are key identity-salient themes in the rap lyrics, leveraging the songs in their entirety (including the intro, pre-chorus, chorus, bridge, post-chorus, verses, outro, and other song structure components), unedited (non-radio versions, as intended to be expressed to the audience), original versions (non-remixes) to identify the words

most used across the songs of each rapper. Next, lyrics were cleaned and processed by applying the following R functions towards the corpora: `removePunctuation`, `removeNumbers`, `stripwhitespace`, `content_transform` (to lower), `removeWords`, and stop words (“english”).

Since I define identity-salient language as an individual's use of identity committing language to build rapport, the themes associated with this language are dimensions associated with the identity commitment of the choice in the language associated with social relationships and emotional attachments. As such, I found key identity-salient themes in terms of family, religion, street credibility, race, location, explicit lyrics, and identity (Table 1). In this case, I am looking to understand how the rapper explains themselves in relation to broader identities. Next, each theme was given a deductive word list using a portion of the development process outlined by Short (Short et al., 2010; McKenny et al., 2013), which uses a synonym finder or thesaurus to generate the initial word lists. In this case, relatedwords.org and reversedictionary.org were queried to identify seed words within these themes. Each dictionary was constructed to avoid overlapping terms among each theme. Importantly, education is not emphasized to a great extent in rap lyrics.

I also explored for other language more broadly. The lyrics from the different artists were first read to identify certain topics of emphasis, which in turn revealed the specific themes of social justice, personal struggle, love & relationship, success & ambition, hip-hop culture, and government (i.e., fighting against the law). In considering these themes, I view them as potential types of language to enhance identification with the salient themes previously noted. More specifically, I refer to these themes as identity-enhancing language (Table 2), and define these as language themes that complement identity-salient language and are relevant to social identities

without being core to those identity-salient language themes (i.e. language that is used to strengthen or more strongly connect an audience to a core identity).

Table 1: Seed Words for Key Identity-Salient Language Themes

| Seed Words for Key Identity-Salient Language Themes | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Theme 1 | Family | ("family", "father", "mother", "sister", "brother", "son", "daughter", "marriage", "household", "lineage", "house", "child", "parent", "couples", "name", "relative", "wife", "descent", "inheritance", "pedigree", "mates", "people", "friend", "relationships", "ancestors", "spouse", "wedding", "divorce", "mafia", "home folks", "deceased", "companion", "death", "foster", "parenthood", "folks", "broken home", "foster home", "partner", "girlfriend", "buddy", "tribe") |
| Theme 2 | Religion | ("god", "jesus", "lord", "heaven", "sin", "bless", "pray", "faith", "faith", "deity", "worship", "church", "theology", "islam", "christianity", "spirituality", "praying", "sermon", "bible", "beliefs", "cult", "buddhism", "ritual", "devil", "doctrine", "funeral", "philosophy", "cleric", "believers", "preach", "muslim", "evangelism", "confession", "deen", "atheists", "christ", "minister", "jew", "mosque", "judge", "deem") |
| Theme 3 | Street Credibility | ("gang", "thug", "hood", "trap", "shoot", "gun", "beef", "ride", "jail", "street savvy", "legitimacy", "authenticity", "peer review", "snitch", "parole", "streetwise", "gangsta", "streetscape", "cross-in", "weed", "curfew", "money", "drugs", "hip-hop", "street offense", "jaywalk", "court", "high street", "credibility", "gangster", "hip hop") |
| Theme 4 | Race | ("black", "white", "race", "ethnicity", "slavery", "prejudice", "discriminate", "racist", "racism", "species", "ethnic", "breeds", "segregation", "protest", "age", "activists", "human", "racialism", "nation", "birthsign", "minority", "riots", "immigration", "country", "birth sign", "birth") |
| Theme 5 | Location | ("city", "town", "state", "neighborhood", "block", "hood", "place", "area", "destination", "earth", "geographical", "orientation", "direction", "zone", "north", "south", "west", "east", "northwest", "northeast", "southwest", "southsouth", "line", "workplace", "location", "entrance", "headquarters", "venue", "viewing", "london", "africa", "village", "latitude", "longitude", "building", "school", "environment", "room", "nationality", "demographic", "pharmacy", "hotel", "franchise", "restaurant", "market", |

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|--|
| | | "warehouse", "timezone", "latitude", "pharmacy", "time zone") |
| Theme 6 | Explicit Lyrics | ("fuck", "shit", "bitch", "nigga", "niggas", "ass", "pussy", "dick", "sin", "sex", "pagan", "excretion", "fornication", "defamation", "hatred", "misconduct", "bully", "bullying", "harassment", "blasphemy", "heist", "asshole", "blowjob", "shtup", "vulgarism", "curse", "swearing", "grotty", "jab", "fool", "patois", "vernacular", "shut up", "gritty") |
| Theme 7 | Identity | ("recognition", "personality", "name", "image", "origin", "individual", "oneness", "status", "passport", "background", "sense", "self", "relation", "heritage", "secrets", "genuine", "continuity", "resemblance", "authentication", "loyalty", "privacy", "legitimate", "fraud", "lie", "ego", "ideology", "representation", "consistency", "myself", "purity") |

Table 2: Seed Words Identity-Enhancing Language Themes

| Seed Words Identity-Enhancing Language Themes | | |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Theme 1 | Social Justice | ("right", "tribunal", "justice", "unjust", "injustice", "nemesis", "court", "equity", "judge", "wrong", "magistrate", "administer", "high court", "unfair", "righteous", "record", "dishonesty", "conscience", "fugitive", "misconduct", "outlaw", "unjustice", "mercy", "impartiality", "chancellor", "libra", "karma", "arrest", "peace", "verdict", "lord", "legalism", "ministry", "sheriff", "torture", "lawful", "anger", "revenge", "abuse", "freedom", "slavery", "violence", "injustice", "sheriff") |
| Theme 2 | Personal Struggle | ("pain", "struggle", "sorrow", "depression", "anxiety", "trauma", "hurt", "suffering", "lonely", "dark", "fight", "war", "battle", "effort", "endeavor", "challenge", "strife", "push", "rebellion", "trouble", "defend", "fear", "chaos", "endure", "enemies", "movement", "allies", "difficult", "violence", "quarrel", "suppression", "depression", "experience", "hardship") |
| Theme 3 | Love Relationships | ("love", "relationship", "heart", "passion", "lust", "romance", "trust", "loyalty", "commitment", "devotion", "emotion", "affection", "compassion", "marriage", "fertility", "sexual", "lovemaking", "affair", "honey", "attraction", "adore", "cherish", "lovers", "valentine", "kiss", "babe", "feelings", "sex", "engagement", "friendship", "union", "breakup", "crush", "seduction", "courtship", "flirty") |

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| Theme 4 | Success Ambition | ("success", "money", "ambition", "hustle", "dreams", "wealth", "power", "status", "achievement", "victory", "triumph", "great", "performance", "luck", "progress", "talent", "experience", "accomplishment", "opportunity", "strength", "fruitful", "positive", "satisfactory", "enthusiasm", "excellence", "trophy", "award", "confidence", "advantages") |
| Theme 5 | Hip Hop Culture | ("hip-hop", "rap", "flow", "beat", "lyrics", "rhyme", "culture", "mc", "dj", "graffiti", "party", "nigga", "niggas", "streets", "rapping", "gangsta rap", "disco", "rhyme", "jazz", "blues", "gang", "breakbeat", "ghetto", "disc jockey", "nunk", "billboard", "freestyle rap", "jay z", "police", "fbi", "r&b", "fuck tha police", "cop kiler", "battle rap", "raggae", "battle rap", "raggae", "killer", "reggae", "fuck the police") |
| Theme 6 | Government | ("state", "regime", "federal", "governemnt", "office", "republican", "bureau", "administration", "aristocracy", "misrule", "stratocracy", "democracy", "gerontocracy", "oligrarchy", "federalism", "dictatorship", "tyranny", "municipal", "revenue", "agency", "ministry", "politics", "minister", "agency", "consulate", "bureaucracy", "political", "authority", "technocracy", "summit", "power", "aristocrat", "rebellious", "county", "civics", "sovereignty", "dynasty", "legislation", "courthouse", "insurrection", "insurgent", "tax", "officer", "affairs of state", "taxation", "governor", "tariff", "govern", "security", "town hall", "decree", "dictator", "customs", "levy", "cabinet system", "policy", "attorney general", "allegiance", "local authority", "revolution", "councilor", "audit office", "township", "post office", "cabinet", "navy", "terrorism", "federal tax", "oppression", "government", "oligarchy") |

Next, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (a supervised learning algorithm) topic modeling was performed for each rapper to improve lyric categorization for the key identity-salient themes. Then, in contrast to word-count alone, the document-term matrix was applied to mathematical describe the top 20 semantically meaningful words most associated with each rapper's identity-salient and identity-enhancing themes. Table 3 and Table 4 display a combination of the top 20 words from each rapper's corpus per theme. The numeric values within the angle brackets

characters are how the R program reads apostrophes. Additionally, Figure 1 shows the distribution of rappers to identity-salient topic themes. Figure 2 shows the distribution of rappers to identity-enhancing topic themes.

Table 3: Top Words in Each Topic (Identity-Salient Topic Themes)

| Top Words in Each Topic | | |
|-------------------------|--------|--|
| Theme 1 | Family | l, <92>d, <92>m, <92>s, <96>, absoul, aggressive, ahahahahah, ain<92>t, aint, ali, another, around, ass, away, ayo, ayy, baby, back, bad, bada, bag, bellakiviris, best, bet, better, bien, big, birds, bitch, bitches, black, block, boat, body, boom, boomboom, boss, bought, bounce, bout, boy, brand, breakin, broke, burr, bussdown, cadena, cah, caliber, call, came, can, cant, cardi, cash, cause, center, chacha, chance, change, chapo, check, checkin, cheese, chopper, chorus, christmas, city, clientele, club, cold, come, con, contigo, cool, copped, coro, crazy, cuz, damn, dance, dat, dawg, day, days, dexter, dick, die, different, doin, dollars, dolph, done, dont, doo, dootdootdoot, dope, drop, dropped, drugs, eat, elp, even, every, everythin, everything, expensive, extra<fl>o, extras, face, fat, feel, feelin, finally, find, first, five, flavor, forth, freddie, free, fresh, fuck, fucked, fuckin, fue, gang, gangsta, garden, get, gettin, getting, ghost, gibbs, gimme, girl, git, give, glock, go<85>, god, goin, going, gon, gone, good, got, gotta, ground, guap, gucci, gunn, hands, hard, havin, head, hear, heart, help, hey, high, hit, hmmhmm, hoe, hoes, hold, home, homie, hood, hook, hope, hot, house, huh, hundred, hurt, hustla, iggy, ill, ima, imma, ive, jay, jealous, jeremih, jesus, jewels, joey, johnny, juicy, just, keep, keys, kid, kill, killer, kinda, knew, knockknock, know, kodak, lala, last, lean, left, less, let, let<92>s, lets, license, life, like, likes, lil, lilililililive, little, live, locked, long, look, lookin, lord, los, lot, lotta, love, lyft, mac, macklemore, mad, made, mafia, make, man, manman, many, mar, married, masters, maxo, mean, memorial, might, mike, mil, million, mind, mine, minutes, missing, money, much, murda, murs, name, nawf, neck, need, never, new, news, nigga, niggas, night, nne, nothing, now, nuh, offset, ohoh, ohohohoh, old, one, ones, ooh, outside, outsmart, pain, panda, party, passed, pastor, pay, philthy, phone, pick, picture, pistol, play, plug, pop, poppop, popular, proolly, protagonista, |

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| | | <p>pull, punchanella, pushin, pushing, pussy, put, quavo, que, quiero, quill, racks, ralo, rapper, rat, ready, real, really, red, remember, reminiscing, represent, reup, ride, ridin, right, rock, roll, rotation, rules, run, runnin, running, said, say, saying, schoolboy, seconds, see, set, shake, shark, shit, shmone, short, show, sidewalk, siempre, skrrt, skyzoo, slacker, slatt, slauson, slide, slo, smoke, snow, somethin, sounds, squad, squeeze, stars, started, stay, still, stop, straight, street, swag, swagger, swaggerswagger, swear, tab, tahn, take, takeoff, talk, tell, thang, thats, theyll, theyre, thick, thing, think, thinkin, thousand, thumbin, til, time, todo, together, tomorrow, top, trapper, tried, troy, trust, try, trying, tryna, turn, twerk, uber, ugh, unknown, uzi, verse, vida, wait, wake, wanna, want, water, wave, way, webbie, weed, weezy, weight, well, westside, wet, wha, whats, white, whoa, whole, wildin, will, winnin, wish, wit, woah, wont, woo, working, world, yall, yea, yeah, year, yellow, yep, young, youre, yung</p> |
| Theme 2 | Religion | <p><92>m,<92>re,<92>s,<92>ve,aggressive,ain<92>t,aint,al one,alright,always,another,around,ask,ass,away,ayo,ayy,b aby,back,backbackyard,backyard,bad,bada,bag,bands,ban gbang,beef,bellakiviris,bench,best,better,bien,big,bill,bird s,bitch,bitches,black,block,boat,body,boom,boomboom,bo oty,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,brand,bread,bring,broke, brr,buss,bussdown,buyin,cabrona,cah,call,came,can,cant,c arter,cash,catch,caught,cause,center,chacha,champion,cha nce,change,chi,chopper,choppers,chopping,chorus,christm as,circulate,city,clean,cliente,club,coast,cold,come,con,c oro,cuz,damn,dance,day,dexter,dick,diddy,dollars,dolph,d on<92>t,done,dont,doot,double,dream,drop,drugs,eat,eigh t,elp,ever,every,everybody,everythin,extras,fake,famous,f at,feel,feelin,feelings,find,finger,five,flavor,forever,forreal ,freaked,freddie,free,fresh,friends,fuck,fucking,funny,furn ace,gal,gal<e1>n,game,gang,gangsta,gangstagangsta,gard en,get,gettin,getting,ghost,gibbs,gimme,girl,give,glock,go <85>,goat,god,goin,gon,gon<92>,gone,gonna,good,got,go tta,green,gucci,guess,hah,happenin,happens,hard,hate,hate r,heads,hear,held,help,hey,heyhey,high,history,hit,hoe,hoe s,hold,holding,home,homie,hood,hook,hop,hope,hot,huh,i ce,iggy,ill,ima,imma,ive,jaws,jealous,jesus,joey,johnny,jui cy,jump,jumping,just,keep,kill,killer,knew,knockknock,kn ow,knows,kream,lalalalalala,lamar,lead,lean,leanin,let,lev eled,license,life,light,lights,like,lil,listen,little,live,long,loo k,lookin,looking,loot,lot,lotta,love,lowfi,loyal,macklemor e,made,make,mal,man,mane,manman,many,maxo,mean,</p> |

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| | | <p>memorial,messiah,might,mind,mine,minutes,miss,missing,mmmhmm,money,move,much,murda,murs,must,nah,nawf,neck,need,never,new,nigga,niggas,night,nipsey,now,nuh,okay,okey,old,one,ooh,opp,opps,pablo,pain,party,pastor,pay,people,phillipe,philthy,pick,pistol,play,plug,pockets,po pos,popping,popular,prayers,prices,protagonista,pull,pussy,put,quavo,que,racks,ralo,raw,ray,ready,real,really,reason,red,remember,reminiscing,rich,ride,right,roc,roles,rollie,rule,rules,run,runnin,running,rush,said,savage,say,sean,seconds,see,shake,shine,shit,shoot,show,sin,slacker,slauson,smilin,smoking,snow,somethin,soul,special,spent,spot,squeeze,started,stay,still,stopping,straight,street,stretch,stuck,style,suffering,supreme,swagger,swaggerswagger,syrup,tab,tahm,take,talk,talkin,tamos,tech,tell,ten,thats,theres,theyre,thicker,things,think,thought,thousand,thumbin,tiimmy,time,todo,together,told,tonight,tony,took,top,trap,trapper,trapping,tried,tryna,turn,twerk,twizzy,uber,ugh,unknown,used,venus,verse,wait,walkin,wanna,want,wanted,war,wasnt,wassup,watch,water,wave,way,weezy,weight,welcome,westside,wet,whats,whoa,whole,whoop,will,win,winnin,wit,wizzy,woah,woo,word,work,wraith,wrist,yachty,yak,yall,yeah,year,yep,young,youre,yung</p> |
| Theme 3 | Street Credibility | <p><92>m,<92>re,<92>s,<92>ve,<96>,act,ahora,ain<92>t,aint,animal,answered,around,ass,away,ayo,ayy,baby,back,bad,bada,bag,bando,bangbang,bankroll,becoming,bellakiviris,best,bet,better,biatch,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,blatt,block,blow,boat,boom,booty,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,boys,brand,bread,bring,broke,brother,bussdown,cah,caliber,call,came,can,cant,carter,catch,cause,change,chat,check,checkin,childish,chopper,choppers,chopping,chorus,circulate,clean,cliente,cole,come,cool,corner,crack,crown,damn,dance,dat,dawg,day,dealing,dick,dirty,dis,doin,dolph,don<92>t,done,dont,doot,dot,drake,drop,dropped,drugs,eat,ella,elp,even,ever,every,everybody,fat,feel,feelin,find,finer,first,five,flow,foreign,forever,freaked,free,fuck,fucked,fuckin,fucking,funny,game,gang,gangsta,garden,get,gettin,ghost,gibbs,girl,git,give,god,goin,going,gon,gone,got,gotta,gotti,green,guap,gucci,gunn,hah,half,hands,happenin,happens,hard,hate,head,heads,help,hes,hey,high,history,hit,hoes,hold,holding,homie,honey,hood,hook,hop,hope,hot,house,houstatlantavegas,huh,hundred,hurt,iggy,ill,ima,imma,intro,ive,jay,jeezy,jeremih,jesus,jewels,jewels<97>,joey,johnny,juce,juicy,junglepussy,jus,just,keep,kendrick,kensli,kid,kill,killer,knew,know,kodak,kream,lado,lala,lalalalalala,laws,lead,leanin,left,let,lets,letting,life,like,likes,lil,little,li</p> |

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| | | <p>ve, loafers, long, look, looked, lookin, looking, loot, lord, los, lot, loud, love, lowfi, loyal, macklemore, mad, made, make, man, mane, many, mar, married, maxo, mean, memorial, met, might, mike, mil, mind, miss, missing, mix, money, monster, morning, much, nah, name, need, never, new, nigga, niggas, night, nipsey, nne, nota, nothin, now, nowhere, nuh, ohoh, ohohohoh, okay, okey, old, one, ooh, oohooohooohoooh, opps, outside, pain, panda, papers, party, pastor, pay, people, phillipe, philthy, phone, pistol, play, played, playin, please, pockets, popping, popular, prices, pull, pushing, pussy, put, quavo, que, quiero, radio, rather, real, really, reason, remember, reminiscing, retreat, rich, richer, ride, right, roof, row, run, runnin, running, rush, s<ed>, said, say, school, schoolboy, season, second, see, seen, shark, shawty, shine, shit, shmoney, shoot, show, sidewalk, siempre, size, skinny, skrrt, slatt, slide, slo, smoke, somethin, soul, southside, special, spent, squeeze, stay, still, stop, stopping, straight, streets, swag, swagger, swear, switch, t<fa>, take, takeoff, talkin, tamos, tech, tell, tellin, ten, thang, thats, theyre, things, think, thumbin, timmy, til, time, told, tomorrow, tony, top, trap, trapper, tree, tried, trust, try, tryna, turn, twerk, two, type, uzi, venus, verse, wait, walkin, wanna, want, war, watch, water, wave, way, weed, weedy, weight, wet, wha, whats, white, whole, whoop, will, win, wish, wit, woah, wont, woo, working, world, wraith, yachty, yall, yea, yeah, years, yellow, yep, young, youre, yung</p> |
| Theme 4 | Race | <p><92>m, <92>s, <96>, act, aggressive, ahora, ain<92>t, aint, alright, always, animal, around, ask, ass, away, aye, ayo, ayy, baby, back, bad, bag, bando, bang, bangbang, basic, beat, bellakiviris, best, bet, biatch, bien, big, bitch, bitches, black, block, boat, boom, boomboom, booty, boss, bought, bounce, bout, boy, bread, breakin, bricks, brr, burr, buyin, cah, caliber, call, came, can, cant, care, cash, catch, caught, cause, center, chacha, chapo, chat, checkin, cheese, chi, childish, chopper, choppers, chopping, chorus, circulate, city, clientele, closed, cole, come, con, coro, count, crazy, crown, cry, cuando, cuanto, d<ed>, damn, dance, dat, dawg, day, days, dexter, dick, diddy, different, dis, doin, don<92>t, done, dont, doot, dootdootdoot, double, drake, drop, drugs, eat, editorial, eight, elp, even, ever, everybody, everyday, face, fall, family, famous, fat, feel, five, flav, flexin, floor, flowers, forget, freddie, free, fresh, friends, front, fuck, fucked, fucking, furnace, game, gang, gangsta, gangstas, garden, gave, get, gettin, gibs, girl, give, god, goin, going, gon, gone, good, got, gotta, guap, gucci, guess, hace, hah, happenin, happens, hard, hate, hell, help, hes, hey, high, hit, hmmhmm, hoe, hold, home, homie, hood, hoodrich, hook, hope, hot, houstatlantavegas, hundred, hurt, iggy, ill, ima, jaws, jeremih, jewels, joey, johnny, jump, jumping, ju</p> |

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| | | <p>s,just,keep,killer,knew,know,knowns,kodak,lalalalalala,large,last,laws,lead,leave,let,let<92>s,lets,life,light,lights,like,likes,lil,lilililililive,listen,little,live,living,loafers,long,look,lookin,looking,lotta,love,lowfi,lyft,macklemore,mad,made,make,mal,man,married,mean,memorial,might,mike,millions,mind,mine,minutes,miss,money,move,much,murs,nah,name,need,never,new,news,niehaus,nigga,niggas,night,none,nothin,now,ohohohoh,old,one,ooh,oohooohooohoooh,opps,options,pain,panda,partner,party,pastor,pay,people,phillipe,phone,play,plug,pockets,pop,popos,popping,prices,problems,pull,punchanella,purple,pussy,put,que,quiero,quill,racks,radio,ralo,rat,ready,real,really,red,remember,represent,reup,rich,ride,right,roddy,roles,roll,rollie,rule,run,rush,said,say,school,scott,see,sellin,ser,shake,shes,shit,shoot,show,shut,sin,sing,size,skinny,skrrt,skyzoo,slacker,slatt,slauson,slide,slime,slow,smilin,smokin,smoking,southside,special,squad,stay,still,stop,stoppping,straight,streets,strings,suffering,swag,swagger,switches,t<fa>,tab,tahm,take,talked,talkin,talking,tamos,tell,tellin,ten,thats,theyll,theyre,thing,think,thinkin,thought,thousand,thumbin,ticketron,ties,tiimmy,til,time,together,told,tomorrow,trap,trapper,troy,trust,trying,tryna,turn,twerk,uber,uzi,venus,verse,vida,walkin,wanna,want,wanted,wasnt,wassup,watch,water,way,weed,weight,westside,wet,whatever,whats,white,whoa,whole,win,wish,wit,wizzy,wont,woo,word,work,working,yak,yall,yeah,year,youre,yung</p> |
| Theme 5 | Location | <p>l,<92>m,<92>s,absoul,aggressive,ahora,ain<92>t,aint,alright,another,around,ask,ass,away,aye,ayo,ayy,baby,back,bad,bada,bag,bangbang,bankroll,basic,bellakiviris,bet,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,boat,boo,boom,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,brand,bricks,bring,bro,broke,bunch,burr,caliber,call,came,can,cant,cash,catch,cause,cent,center,chacha,champion,change,check,chi,childhood,choppers,chopping,chorus,christmas,city,closed,cole,come,comes,cost,count,crazy,crown,cuz,damn,dawg,day,days,dej,dexter,dick,diddy,die,different,doctur,dolph,don<92>t,done,dont,doot,dootdootdoot,double,drake,dream,drop,dropped,drugs,eat,elp,even,ever,every,everybody,everythin,everything,expensive,faded,fake,falling,fat,feel,feelin,find,five,flowers,foes,foreign,forget,forreal,freddie,free,friends,front,fuck,fucked,fuckin,fucking,fue,funny,gal,gambino,game,gang,gangsta,garden,get,gettin,gibbs,gimme,girl,give,goat,god,goin,gon,gone,good,got,gotta,green,ground,guap,gucci,guess,hah,hands,happenin,hard,head,held,help,hey,heyhey,high,hit,hmmhmm,hoes,hold,home,homie,hood,hoodrich,hook,hope,hot,</p> |

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| | | <p>huh,hurt,hustla,ice,iggy,ill,ima,innocent,intro,ive,jeezy,jeremih,jewels,joey,juicy,just,keep,kinda,knew,know,lala,lamar,large,lean,leanin,let,lets,lie,life,like,likes,lil,lililililive,little,live,living,long,look,looking,lord,los,lot,lotta,loud,llove,loyal,lucci,lyft,made,make,mal,man,mane,many,married,masters,maxo,mean,might,mike,mil,mind,mine,missing,money,monster,move,much,name,nawf,neck,need,never,new,news,nigga,niggas,night,nights,nne,nothin,now,nowhere,offset,ohoh,ohohohoh,okay,old,one,ooh,opp,opps,options,ouch,outro,pain,paper,party,pastor,people,petty,phone,play,playin,please,poppop,popular,pour,prices,problems,puedo,pull,purple,pussy,put,que,quiero,racks,radio,ralo,rapper,rapsody,ready,real,really,reason,red,refrain,remember,rich,ride,right,roc,rock,roles,roof,run,runnin,running,rush,said,say,saying,school,scott,season,seconds,see,send,set,shark,shes,shit,show,shut,side,sidewalk,skyzoo,slacker,slatt,slide,smoke,snow,somethin,soul,special,spin,spot,squad,squeeze,start,stay,still,stopping,street,streets,swagger,swaggerswagger,swear,tahm,take,talk,talkin,tamos,tech,tell,thang,thats,things,think,thinkin,thumbin,till,time,toes,together,told,tonight,took,trademark,trap,trapping,travis,troy,trust,try,trying,tryna,turn,twerk,two,type,uber,used,venus,verse,vida,wait,waited,wake,wanna,want,wasnt,watch,water,wave,way,wed,weezy,weight,went,westside,wha,whats,white,whole,whos,will,win,winnin,wish,wit,without,woah,won<92>t,wont,woo,word,work,world,wow,wraith,yachty,yak,yall,yeah,young,youre</p> |
| Theme 6 | Explicit Lyrics | <p><92>m,absoul,act,activated,ahora,ain<92>t,aint,alright,andedrew,another,around,ask,ass,away,ayo,ayy,baby,back,backyard,bad,bag,bankroll,beat,beef,believe,bet,better,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,boat,boo,boom,booty,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,boys,brand,bread,break,bro,broke,burr,bussdown,buyin,cah,call,came,can,cant,cardi,caught,cause,center,chat,childhood,chill,chopper,chorus,christmas,city,clientele,cole,come,comes,con,cool,corner,cost,crack,damn,dance,dad,dawg,day,dick,die,don<92>t,done,dont,doot,dope,double,drake,dream,drop,drugs,eat,ella,elp,even,ever,every,everybody,everyday,everythin,everything,expensive,eye,face,fake,fat,feel,feelings,finally,find,first,five,flexin,floor,foes,forget,forth,free,fuck,fucked,fuckin,fue,gal,gang,gangsta,gangstas,get,gettin,girl,git,give,god,goin,gon,gone,gonna,good,got,gotta,gotti,green,ground,guap,gucci,hace,hah,happenin,happens,hard,hate,hater,heard,heart,hell,help,hey,history,hit,hmmhmm,hoes,hold,homie,hood,hoodrich,hook,hot,huh,hundred,hurt,hustla,ice,iggy,ill,ima,intro,ive,</p> |

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| | | <p>jeremih,jewels,joey,johnny,jump,just,keep,kendrick,kid,kids,kill,knew,know,kodak,lamar,large,lead,leanin,leave,let,lets,letter,license,life,like,lil,little,live,living,loaf,locked,long,look,lookin,looking,loot,lord,lose,lot,lotta,love,lowfi,mac,macklemore,made,make,man,manman,many,masters,mean,memorial,might,mike,mil,million,minutes,missing,money,much,nah,name,neck,need,never,new,news,nigga,niggas,night,nota,nothin,nothing,now,nuh,offset,ohohohoh,okay,okey,one,ooh,ooohooohooohoo,opps,owoh,pack,pain,panda,party,pastor,pay,people,phantom,pick,pistol,play,plug,pockets,popping,poppop,popular,prayers,pull,pushin,pussy,put,quavo,que,quill,racing,radio,ralo,rari,ready,real,really,regular,remember,rich,ride,right,rob,roc,rock,roddy,roll,rotation,rules,run,running,s<ed>,said,say,school,schoolboy,scott,second,seconds,see,shark,shit,show,side,sidewalk,siempre,skrrt,skyzoo,slatt,slauson,slide,slow,smoke,sneak,snow,sole,somethin,southside,special,spin,started,stay,still,stop,straight,streets,stretch,suffering,swag,swaggerswagger,swear,tahm,take,talk,talkin,tamos,tech,tell,thang,thats,thicker,thing,think,thumbin,time,today,told,tonight,tony,trap,trapping,travis,trigger,troy,trust,trying,tryna,turn,turner,two,uber,uhuh,used,venus,verse,wait,waited,wake,wanna,want,wanted,wasnt,wassup,wave,way,wed,welcome,well,wha,whatever,whats,whole,whoop,whos,will,win,winnin,wish,wit,wizzy,woah,wont,woo,working,world,wow,wraith,wrist,yachty,yall,yea,yeah,yellow,yep,young,youre</p> |
| Theme 7 | Identity | <p><92>m,<92>s,ain<92>t,aint,alright,animal,another,around,ass,away,aye,ayo,ayy,baby,back,bad,bada,bag,bands,becoming,bellakiviris,best,bet,better,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,blatt,block,blow,boat,body,boo,boom,boomboom,bounce,bout,boy,brand,bridge,bro,bruh,bussdown,buyin,cah,call,came,can,cant,cash,cause,center,chacha,champion,chance,change,check,cheese,chopper,chorus,christmas,city,clean,clientele,cole,come,con,cool,corner,coro,count,couple,crack,crazy,cuz,damn,dawg,day,dexter,dick,die,different,dis,dog,doin,dolph,done,dont,doo,doot,dootdootdoot,double,drake,dream,drink,drop,drugs,eat,eight,enough,even,ever,every,everythin,expensive,eye,fake,famous,fat,feel,feelin,feelings,find,finger,first,five,flowers,forever,freaked,freddie,free,friends,fuck,fucked,fucking,fue,funny,furnace,gal,gal<el>n,gambino,game,gang,gangsta,garden,get,gettin,ghost,gibbs,gimme,girl,give,god,goin,going,gon,gone,gonna,good,got,gotta,green,grown,gucci,guess,gun,gunn,hace,hah,half,hard,hate,hater,head,heard,heart,help,hes,hey,heyhey,high,hit,hoes,hold,homie,hood,hook,hop,hope,hot,houstatl</p> |

antavegas,huh,hundred,hurt,ice,iggy,ill,ima,innocent,ive,j
aws,jeezy,jesus,jewels,juice,juicy,jump,just,keep,kids,kill,
killer,know,kodak,kream,lala,lalalalalala,large,lead,lean,le
ave,let,lets,leveled,license,life,lights,like,likes,lil,lilililili
ve,live,living,loafers,loca,long,look,lookin,lord,los,lose,lot
,lotta,loud,love,lowfi,lucci,lyft,mac,mad,made,make,mal,
man,mane,many,mar,maxo,memorial,might,milli,mind,mi
ne,missing,mmmmhmm,money,monster,motherfuckin,mov
e,murda,nah,name,nawf,need,never,new,news,nigga,nigga
s,nne,nobody,now,nuh,ohoh,ohohohoh,okay,one,ooh,ooho
ohohohohoh,open,opps,ouch,owoh,pain,panda,party,pass
ed,pastor,pay,phillipe,philthy,phone,picture,pistol,please,p
lug,pockets,popos,poppop,popular,prayers,presents,prices,
probably,problems,pull,purple,pushin,pussy,put,quavo,qu
e,racks,radio,rapper,rat,ready,real,reason,remember,remini
scing,rich,ride,right,rock,roof,rotation,round,run,running,r
ush,s<ed>,said,say,saying,scale,school,schoolboy,scott,se
conds,see,shabazz,shake,shine,shit,shmoney,show,sidewal
k,skrrt,skyzoo,slatt,slauson,slide,slime,smoke,snow,soul,s
pin,squad,started,stay,still,stop,stopped,straight,streets,stre
tch,suffering,swag,swagger,swear,tabs,tahm,take,talk,talki
n,tech,tell,tellin,thang,thats,thicker,thing,think,thinkin,tho
usand,thumbin,ticketron,tiimmy,til,time,todo,told,tomorro
w,tonight,took,top,trap,trapper,travis,treat,tried,trigger,tro
y,trust,try,trying,tryna,turn,twerk,unknown,uzi,venus,vers
e,vida,wait,waited,walkin,wanna,want,wasnt,watch,water,
wave,way,wed,weezy,weight,wet,wha,whats,white,whoa,
whole,will,win,wish,woah,wont,woo,working,world,wort
h,yak,yall,yeah,young,youre,yung

Table 4: Top Words in Each Topic (Identity-Enhancing Topic Themes)

| Top Words in Each Topic | | |
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| Theme 1 | Social Justice | <92>d, <92>m, <92>s, <96>, act, aggressive, ahora, ain<92>t, aint, always, another, around, ask, ass, away, aye, ayo, ayy, baby, back, backbackyard, bad, bag, ball, bands, basic, bench, best, bet, bien, big, bill, bitch, bitches, black, block, body, boo, boom, boomboom, booty, boss, bounce, bout, boy, boys, brand, bricks, bro, broke, bussdown, cah, caliber, call, came, can, cant, case, cash, cause, center, chacha, check, chi, childish, choppers, chopping, chorus, christmas, city, clean, clientele, cold, cole, come, con, count, cousin, |

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| | | <p>crazy, crime, damn, dawg, day, days, dexter, dick, die, diss, dog, dolph, done, dont, doot, dootdootdoot, dot, double, drop, drugs, eat, eight, elp, even, ever, every, extra<fl>o, eye, famous, fat, feel, find, finicky, first, five, foes, forreal, found, free, fuck, fue, gang, gangsta, gangstagangsta, garden, get, gettin, gibbs, girl, give, god, goin, going, gon, gone, got, gotta, greatness, green, ground, gucci, hace, hah, happenin, hard, head, heart, held, help, hey, hit, hmmhmm, hoes, hold, holding, home, homie, hood, hoodrich, hook, hop, hot, house, huh, hundred, hurt, iggy, ill, ima, imma, innocent, jaws, jeezy, jet, johnny, juicy, jump, jumping, jus, just, keep, kendrick, kill, killer, know, kodak, kream, large, lead, leave, let, lets, license, life, like, likes, lil, lililililive, little, live, long, look, lookin, looking, lord, los, lot, loud, love, macklemore, made, make, mal, man, mar, masters, maxo, mean, memorial, might, million, mind, mine, minutes, missing, money, much, nah, name, nawf, need, never, new, news, nigga, niggas, night, nothin, nothing, now, nowhere, nuh, ohoh, ohohohoh, okay, one, ooh, opps, ouch, panda, party, pastor, pay, people, petty, phillipe, philthy, phone, pick, pistol, play, played, pockets, popping, poppop, popular, prices, probably, protagonista, pull, punchanella, purple, pussy, put, que, racks, rap, rapsody, rari, ready, real, really, red, remember, reminiscing, represent, ride, right, road, rock, run, runnin, running, rush, said, say, schoolboy, scott, sean, second, seconds, see, sell, set, shark, shine, shit, shmoney, show, shut, side, sidewalk, siempre, sin, sinner, size, skrrt, skyzoo, slatt, slide, slime, smash, smoke, sole, special, spot, squeeze, still, stop, straight, street, streets, stretch, suffering, swag, swagger, swaggerswagger, swear, tahm, take, talkin, tell, tellem, tellin, thang, thats, theres, theyre, thing, think, thinkin, thought, thumbin, til, time, todo, told, tomorrow, top, trap, trapper, trapping, tried, troy, trust, trying, turn, twerk, two, uber, ugh, uzi, venus, verse, verso, wait, wake, wanna, want, wasnt, watch, water, wave, way, wednesday, weezy, welcome, wet, whats, white, whoa, whole, will, winnin, wit, without, woah, wont, woo, word, world, wraith, yall, yea, yeah, youre</p> |
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| Theme 2 | Personal Struggle | <p><92>m,<92>s,absoul,ain<92>t,aint,ali,alright,animal,ar ound,ask,ass,away,ayy,baby,back,backbackyard,bad,ba g,bangbang,basic,bellakiviris,best,bet,betray,better,bien ,big,bitch,bitches,black,block,blow,boat,body,boo,boo m,boomboom,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,boyfriend, boys,bread,break,bring,bro,broke,bussdown,caliber,call ,came,can,cant,cash,cause,center,chacha,change,check, cheese,chopper,chopping,chorus,christmas,circulate,cit y,club,cold,cole,come,corner,coro,crazy,d<ed>,dance,d at,dawg,day,dej,dexter,dick,diddy,die,dis,dolph,don<92 >t,done,dont,doot,dootdootdoot,dope,double,drake,drip pin,drop,drugs,eat,ella,even,ever,every,everybody,ever ythn,everything,expensive,extras,eye,faded,family,fat,f eel,finally,find,finer,first,five,floor,forever,forget,forrea l,freaked,fresh,friends,fuck,fuckin,fucking,funny,gal,ga mbino,gang,gangsta,gangstagangsta,garden,get,gettin,g host,gibbs,gimme,girl,give,go<85>,god,goin,going,gon ,gone,gonna,good,got,gotta,greatness,green,guap,gucci, guess,gun,gunn,hace,hah,hang,happenin,happens,hard, hate,help,hes,hey,high,hit,hmm,hmmhmm,ho,hoes,hol d,holding,home,homie,hood,hoodrich,hook,hope,hot,ho use,huh,hundred,ice,iggy,ill,ima,imma,innocent,ive,jee zy,jeremih,jesus,jewels,joey,johnny,just,keep,kendrick, kill,knew,know,known,kodak,kream,lala,lamar,lead,lea nin,leave,let,life,lights,like,likes,lil,listen,little,live,loaf ers,look,lookin,lord,lot,loud,love,loyal,luna,macklemor e,made,make,mama,man,mane,masters,memorial,might ,mike,mil,million,mind,mine,minutes,money,monster, moron,much,murda,nadie,nah,name,nawf,need,never,n ew,news,nigga,niggas,night,nne,nota,now,nowhere,nuh ,ohohohoh,okay,old,one,ooh,opps,outro,pablo,pain,pan da,part,party,pass,pay,philthy,pistol,play,playin,plug,po ckets,pop,popping,popular,prices,problems,prolly,pull, punchanella,purple,pushin,pussy,put,que,quiero,racks,r adio,rapper,rat,rather,ready,real,really,reason,red,reme mber,remiscing,reup,rich,ride,right,rob,rock,rollie,rot ation,row,rules,run,runnin,running,said,say,school,scho olboy,sean,see,ser,set,shabazz,shark,shit,shoot,show,sid ewalk,siempre,sin,skrrt,slacker,slide,slow,smilin,smoke ,smokin,smoking,snow,somethin,soul,southside,special ,spin,squad,started,stay,still,stop,stopped,stopping,strai ght,streets,stretch,style,suffering,swag,swaggerswagger ,swear,tab,tahm,take,talk,tamos,tech,tell,tellin,thats,the yre,thing,think,thinkin,though,thumbin,ties,tiimmy,tim e,times,together,told,tomorrow,top,trap,trappin,travis,tr oy,trust,try,tryna,turn,twerk,two,uber,ugh,uzi,venus,ver</p> |
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| | | se,visit,wake,wanna,want,wanted,wasnt,wassup,watch,water,wave,way,weezy,weight,westside,wet,wha,whats,white,whoa,whole,will,win,wit,wizzy,woah,woo,working,world,wraith,wrist,yachty,yak,yall,yeah,year,years,yellow,yep,young |
| Theme 3 | Love Relationships | <92>m,<92>s,absoul,act,aggressive,ahora,ain<92>t,aint,alright,always,animal,around,ass,away,aye,ayo,ayy,baby,back,backyard,bad,bag,bangbang,bankroll,beef,bellakiviris,bench,best,bet,better,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,block,blow,boat,body,boom,boomboom,booty,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,brand,brick,broke,buss,bussdown,caliber,call,calling,came,can,cant,cardi,carter,case,caught,cause,chacha,chance,change,chat,check,childish,chopper,chopping,chorus,circles,city,clientele,club,come,con,cool,corner,crack,crazy,cuz,d<ed>,damn,dance,dat,day,days,dick,different,dolph,don<92>t,done,dont,doo,doot,double,drugs,eat,eight,ella,elp,even,ever,everybody,everything,expensive,eye,faded,feel,find,fire,fit,five,flor,focused,forget,freddie,fuck,fucked,fuckin,game,gang,gangsta,gangstas,garden,get,gettin,getting,gibbs,gimme,girl,girls,give,god,going,gon,gone,gonna,good,got,gotta,greatest,green,ground,guap,gucci,happenin,happens,hard,head,heard,heart,held,help,hey,heyhey,high,hit,hmmhmm,hoes,hold,holding,home,homie,hood,hook,hop,hope,hot,houstatlantavegas,huh,hurt,iggy,ill,ima,industry,intro,jaws,jealous,jeremih,jewels,juan,juicy,just,keep,kill,killer,knockknock,know,kodak,lala,lalalalalala,lughin,lead,leanin,let,license,life,light,like,likes,lil,little,live,look,lookin,looking,lord,lose,lotta,love,lover,loyal,lyft,macklemore,made,make,mal,mama,man,mane,many,mar,mean,memorial,mike,million,mind,mine,miss,missing,money,move,much,nah,nasty,need,never,new,niehaus,nigga,niggas,night,nothin,now,nuh,ohoh,okay,old,one,ooh,oohooohooohoooh,opp,opps,options,ouch,outside,pablo,pain,panda,party,pastor,pay,phillipe,philly,piano,please,pop,popos,popping,poppop,popular,problems,prolly,protagonista,pull,pushin,pussy,put,que,quero,ralo,rapper,rat,ready,real,really,reason,red,remain,remember,rich,richard,richer,ride,right,rollie,rotation,rules,run,running,rush,s<ed>,said,say,school,seconds,see,set,shake,shawty,shine,shit,show,shut,sidewalk,sin,size,sky,skyzoo,smoke,smokin,snow,somethin,southside,spin,started,stay,still,stop,straight,streets,stretch,suffering,survive,swag,swagger,swear,t<fa>,tahm,take,talk,talkin,tech,tell,ten,thang,thats,theyre,thicker,think,thinkin,tho |

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| | | usand,throw,thumbin,tiimmy,til,time,tina,told,tonight,tony,took,top,trap,travis,treat,tree,tried,trust,try,tryna,tur n,twerk,uber,unknown,venus,verse,vida,wait,waited,wa itin,wake,walkin,wanna,want,war,wasnt,wassup,watch, water,wave,way,weezy,weight,welcome,wet,whats,wh ole,whoo,will,win,wish,wit,woah,woo,word,work,work ing,world,y<92>,yak,yall,yea,yeah,yellow,yep,young,y oure,yung |
| Theme 4 | Success Ambition | <92>d,<92>m,<92>s,aggressive,ahahahahah,ahora,aint ,alright,animal,another,around,ass,ayy,baby,back,bad,b ada,baddest,bag,bang,bangbang,beat,beef,bellakiviris,b est,bet,better,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,block,boat,bo dy,boo,boom,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,brand,bread ,bring,broke,burr,cah,caliber,call,came,can,cant,carter,c ash,caught,cause,center,chacha,chance,change,check,ch eckin,chi,chorus,city,clientele,cole,come,coro,crack,cra zy,cuando,cuanto,dance,dat,day,dexter,diamonds,die,di g,dirty,dis,dollars,dolph,done,dont,doo,doot,dope,drake ,drink,drop,drugs,eat,eight,elp,even,ever,every,everybo dy,everythin,everything,expensive,faded,famous,far,fat ,feds,feel,final,find,five,flav,flexin,flowers,forever,forr eal,forth,four,freaked,freddie,free,fresh,front,fuck,fucki ng,fue,gal,gambino,gangsta,garden,get,gettin,ghost,gia nt,gimme,girl,git,give,god,goin,going,gon,got,gotta,got ti,grab,gucci,gunn,happenin,hard,hate,heads,heard,hear t,hell,hey,heyhey,high,hit,hmmhmm,hoes,hold,holding, home,homerton,hook,hope,hot,house,huh,hundred,hurt, ice,iggy,ill,ima,ive,jaws,jeremih,jewels,johnny,juan,jui cy,jump,jumping,jus,just,keep,keys,kid,kill,killer,know ,kream,lala,lalalalalala,large,last,lead,lean,leanin,leave,l et,letting,lie,life,lights,like,lil,live,loaf,long,look,lookin, looking,lord,los,lot,love,loyal,macklemore,made,make, man,many,married,masters,maxo,may,mean,memorial, might,mil,mind,miss,missing,money,much,murda,nah, need,never,new,nigga,niggas,night,nne,nota,nothin,not hing,now,nuh,ohoh,ohohohoh,okay,old,one,ooh,option s,outside,packs,panda,paper,party,passed,pastor,pay,pe ople,phillipe,philthy,phone,pink,play,playin,plug,pocke ts,pop,popping,poppop,popular,prices,problems,pull,pu nchanella,pushin,pussy,put,que,ralo,rari,rather,ready,re al,remember,reup,rich,ride,right,rob,roc,rock,rotation,r ound,rule,run,runnin,running,s<ed>,said,say,saying,sch ool,schoolboy,scott,season,second,seconds,see,seen,set, shabazz,shake,shark,shawty,shine,shit,short,show,side, sidewalk,skrrt,skyzoo,slacker,slatt,slide,slow,smoke,sm |

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| | | oking,snow,soul,special,spend,spent,squeeze,started,still,stop,straight,street,streets,stretch,suffering,swag,swagger,swaggerswagger,swear,tahm,take,talk,talked,talkin,tell,thats,theyre,thing,think,thinkin,thousand,tiimmy,till,time,together,told,tomorrow,tonight,took,trap,trapper,trapping,tried,troy,trust,trying,tryna,turn,twerk,twice,two,una,unknown,venus,verse,verso,wait,wake,walkin,wanna,want,war,wasnt,wassup,watch,water,wave,way,wednesday,weed,weight,welcome,went,westside,wha,what,s,whoa,whole,whoo,will,win,winnin,wish,wit,woah,woo,word,work,world,wraith,y<92>,yall,yawk,yeah,year,young,youre,yung |
| Theme 5 | Hip Hop Culture | <92>m,<92>s,<92>ve,act,aggressive,ahora,ain<92>t,aint,alright,always,animal,around,ass,away,ayo,ayy,baby,back,backdoor,backyard,bad,bada,bag,bally,bankroll,basic,becoming,beef,bellakiviris,best,bet,better,biatch,bien,big,bitch,bitches,black,block,blow,body,boo,boom,boty,bounce,bout,boy,brand,brazy,bring,bro,broke,brown,burr,bussdown,cah,call,came,can,cant,cash,cause,cent,center,chacha,champion,chance,change,check,chopper,choppers,chopping,chorus,christmas,circulate,city,clea n,clientele,cole,come,comes,coming,contagious,cool,coro,coupe,crazy,cuanto,cuz,dance,dat,dawg,day,days,dexter,dick,dirty,dis,don<92>t,done,dont,doot,dootdootdoot,dope,drake,drop,dropped,drugs,eat,elp,even,ever,every,everybody,expect,fake,famous,fat,feel,feeling,fetti,finally,find,finer,finicky,fit,five,flav,flowers,foes,foreign,forget,four,free,friends,front,fuck,fucked,fuckin g,funny,furnace,gal,gambino,game,gang,gave,gelato,get,getting,gimme,girl,girls,give,go<85>,god,goin,going,gon,gone,gonna,good,got,gotta,gucci,hah,half,hands,happenin,hard,hawk,head,heart,held,hey,high,hit,ho,hoes,hold,home,homie,hood,hoodrich,hook,hot,houstatlanta vegas,huh,hundred,hurt,ice,iggy,ill,ima,imma,innocent,jeezy,jesus,joey,johnny,juicy,jump,jumping,just,keep,key,kid,kill,killer,know,kodak,lala,lalalalalala,lean,let,lets,life,lights,like,likes,lil,lililililive,little,live,locked,long,look,lookin,lord,lose,lot,lotta,loud,love,lucci,lyft,mac klemore,mad,made,make,mal,man,mane,manman,many,mar,married,masters,maxo,memorial,might,mike,mil,million,mind,mine,minutes,miss,missing,money,move,much,murda,nah,name,need,never,new,niehaus,nigga,niggas,night,nne,nota,nothin,nothing,now,ohohohoh,okay,old,one,ones,ooh,oohooohooohoooh,owoh,pain,panda,paper,party,passed,pastor,people,philthy,phone,pick,p |

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| | | istol,play,played,pockets,popping,poppop,popular,prolly,protagonista,pull,pussy,put,que,quiero,racing,racks,radio,ralo,rapsody,ray,real,red,remember,ride,right,rock,roles,rotation,rule,run,running,rush,s<ed>,said,say,schoolboy,season,seconds,see,shabazz,shake,shark,shawty,shit,shoe,short,show,shut,sidewalk,sin,since,skrrt,skyzo,slacker,slide,slo,snow,somebody,somethin,soul,special,started,stay,still,stop,stopping,straight,street,strings,stuck,suffering,swag,swagger,swaggerswagger,swear,tahm,take,talk,talkin,tamos,tech,tell,tellin,thang,thats,thicker,thing,think,thinkin,though,thought,thumbin,timmy,til,time,today,told,tomorrow,tonight,took,top,trap,trapper,tree,trigger,troy,trying,tryna,turn,twerk,two,uzi,verse,vida,wake,walkin,wanna,want,war,wasnt,watch,water,wave,way,weed,weight,welcome,well,westside,wet,wha,whats,white,whoa,whole,whos,will,win,winnin,wish,wit,without,woah,won<92>t,woo,work,working,wraith,yachty,yall,yeah,year,young,youre |
| Theme 6 | Government | 1,<92>m,<92>s,<96>,aap,ain<92>t,aint,alright,around,ask,ass,away,ayo,ayy,baby,back,bad,bada,bag,bangbang,beat,bellakiviris,best,bet,better,bien,big,bill,bitch,bitches,black,boom,boomboom,booty,boss,bought,bounce,bout,boy,brand,bread,bring,bro,brr,bullshit,buss,bussdown,bust,call,came,can,can<92>t,cant,caught,cause,center,champion,chance,change,check,checkin,cheese,childish,chopper,chorus,christmas,circulate,city,club,cole,come,con,cookie,cool,corner,coro,crown,cuando,damn,dance,dad,dawg,die,dig,dis,dog,don<92>t,done,dont,don't,doo,doot,dot,drop,dropped,dust,eat,eight,elp,even,ever,every,everybody,expect,face,fake,fall,family,fat,feel,find,five,floor,foreign,forever,forget,freaked,free,fresh,friends,fuck,fucked,fuckin,fucking,funny,gal,game,gang,gangstas,get,gettin,gimme,girl,girls,git,give,go<85>,god,goin,going,gon,got,gotta,green,grown,guap,gucci,guess,gun,hah,half,happenin,hard,hate,hater,head,heard,hell,hey,high,hit,hmmhmm,hoes,hold,home,homie,hood,hook,hot,huh,iggy,ill,ima,intro,jealous,jeezy,jet,jewels,juice,juicy,just,keep,kid,kids,kill,killer,know,knowns,kodak,kream,lalalalalala,lamar,large,lead,lean,let,lets,life,light,like,likes,lil,lilililililive,listen,little,live,livin,look,lookin,looking,lot,loud,love,loyal,lyft,mac,mad,main,make,mal,man,mane,manman,many,maxo,mean,memorial,messiah,might,mind,mine,minutes,missing,money,motherfucking,move,much,nah,name,nawf,need,never,new,news,nigga,niggas,night,nne,nobody,nota,now,nuh,num |

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|--|--|---|

Figure 1: Rapper Distribution for Identity-Salient Language Themes

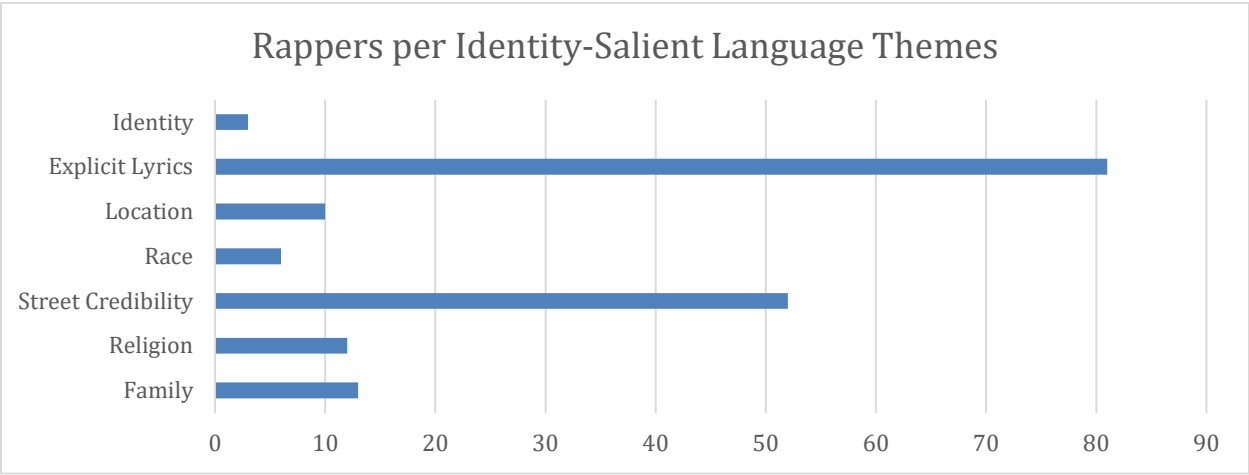
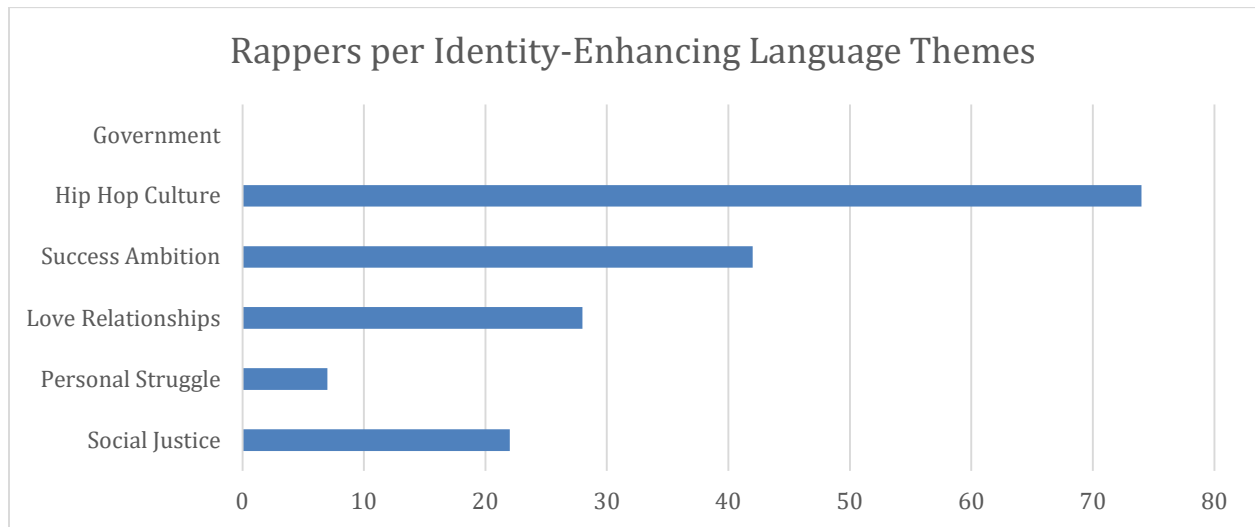


Figure 2: Rapper Distribution for Identity-Enhancing Language Themes



4.3 Statistical Methods

Going forward, I take a more confirmatory approach to test the hypotheses by conducting a series of linear regression analyses to examine the relationships between identity-salient language and rapper performance, as well as the moderating role of identity-enhancing language, the mediating role of in-group interactions, and multiple control variables. I am conducting linear regression models because the dependent variable is continuous, and linear regression can be used to examine relationships and associations between continuous and categorical variables (Yang et al., 2019).

4.3.1 Independent Variable

Identity-Salient Language was identified by comparing the lyrical corpus of all the rappers in the sample to the seed words within the data dictionaries for the family, religion, street credibility, race, location, explicit lyrics, and identity topic themes. A function was applied to verify if any keyword from a theme was present in the lyrics. Then the top 20 words most associated with the rappers' salient-identity, as identified by the document-term matrix, were

counted by their aggregated presence within the lyrics for each theme and fed into the regression models as interval data.

4.3.2 Mediator Variable

In-group interactions was captured using Soundcloud metadata and is inclusive of the likes, reposts (listeners sharing the track or playlist to their profile), and comments (responses to the track or playlist) from SoundCloud users' responses to rappers' singles. Individually, these variables are on different scales, were positively skewed, and not normally distributed. However, to make the variables comparable, I standardized and transformed each of them into one common score (i.e. "in-group interactions") by combining the Z-scores (Hair et al., 2019) of each sub-variable in order to compare their effects to the dependent variable. The distribution of this construct was positively skewed way above acceptable skewness levels with a 3.47 skew and 13.21 kurtosis. Such non-normality can result in heteroskedasticity, which may increase false positives (i.e. type-1 error rates) and reduce the power of the analysis (Feingold, 2002; Pain et al., 2018). As well, heteroskedasticity can invalidate the results of a regression analysis, as this test assumes that the residuals come from a population of homoscedasticity, an assumption that ensures validity and accuracy of the estimates, prediction limits, confidence intervals, and p-values (Tamhane, 2009). So, next, the Log10 transformation was applied to the sum of the original values to reduce the skewness of this variable, resulting in an acceptable skewness value at -0.17 skew and -0.54 kurtosis. The Log10 values were then applied into the regression models as numeric values.

4.3.3 Moderator Variable

Identity-Enhancing Language was identified by comparing the lyrical corpus of all the rappers in the sample to the seed words within the data dictionaries for the social justice,

personal struggle, love relationships, success ambition, hip hop culture, and government topic themes. A function was applied to verify if any keyword from a theme was present in the lyrics. Then the top 20 words most associated with the rappers' salient-identity, as identified by the document-term matrix, were counted by their aggregated presence within the lyrics for each theme and fed into the regression models as interval data.

4.3.4 Dependent Variable

Rapper performance was examined by the number of their SoundCloud followers at the date of data collection. The output from the volume of SoundCloud followers at a rapper level presented a non-normal distribution with a 4.64 skew and 27.45 kurtosis. As such, a log transformation was applied to the variable to normalize the dataset. Normalizing data should improve the validity of the results (Mullineaux et al., 2006), as many statistical tests rely on the assumption that the residuals of a model are normally distributed (Berry, 1993). The natural logarithm values were then applied into the regression models as numeric values.

4.3.5 Control Variables

I controlled four variables – average number of words per rapper, number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud), number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud), and gender. To compare at a rapper-level (instead of a song level), the average number of words per rapper and the number of songs by rapper are being held constant. In order to account for the time the rapper has been around, the number of years since the first song was released is held constant. And, gender was collected based on the dichotomous forms of cisgender – pronouns (“she”, “her”, “he”, “him”) or stated gender identifications (such as “female”, “male”) – in each rapper's artist bio on genius.com. Gender is a nominal level variable, coded as 1=Male and 0 = Female, to measure the sex of each respondent.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

This study consisted of 73 male rap artists (90.1%) and 8 female rap artists (9.88%). Rappers averaged 531 words ($SD = 110.925$) per artist (of the songs sampled). The study averaged 11.3 ($SD = 5.642$) years since the first song was released on the SoundCloud site, with an average of 267 ($SD = 345.387$) songs listed on SoundCloud. Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for all the variables in this study. A significant correlation exists between the relationship of hip hop culture and average number of words per rapper (Pearson Correlation = 0.242). This could be related to repetitive choruses and ad libs within lyrics, as well as the inherent culture of freestyling (or improvising lyrics when performing) within this genre.

A significant inverse correlation exists between the relationship of identity and average number of words per rapper (Pearson Correlation = -0.249). This could be reflective of the selection of words included in the identity theme's current dictionary. A significant, moderate relationship exists in the relationship between the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) and the number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) (Pearson Correlation = 0.450). With SoundCloud being a streaming service, I would expect rappers to upload and share a great deal of their music regularly in the course of their time on the platform. A significant, moderate inverse relationship exists between in-group interactions (Log 10) and the number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) (Pearson Correlation = -0.425). While it's not clear what may be attributed to this counter relationship, the user functionality of the SoundCloud features and functions may have morphed overtime. As well, a rapper's style, sound, and promotional techniques may have evolved since the upload of their first song to the platform.

A significant moderate relationship exists between street credibility and success ambition (Pearson Correlation = 0.656). This relationship could be a symptom of the expression of tangible accomplishments or bragging often communicated in rap lyrics. The relationship between street credibility and the number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) is both significant and inversely correlated (Pearson Correlation = -0.229). This hints at examining the relationship of when the upload occurred versus when the song was published outside of SoundCloud, as the SoundCloud platform launched after the start of some rapper's careers. The correlations between in-group interactions (Log 10) and social justice (Pearson Correlation = 0.234), in-group interactions (Log 10) and success ambition (Pearson Correlation = 0.252), and in-group interactions (Log 10) and street credibility (Pearson Correlation = 0.260) were all significant. This may be an early indicator that in-group interactions may be a significant predictor towards rapper performance.

When examining rapper performance (Natural Log), positive, significant correlations exist between its relationship with in-group interactions (Log 10) (Pearson Correlation = 0.728) and success ambition (Pearson Correlation = 0.227). However, a significant, inverse correlation exists between rapper performance (Natural Log) and personal struggle (Pearson Correlation = -0.286). This may be an indicator of the significance of the in-group interactions and success ambition variables towards rapper performance based on the content of the lyrical corpus sample fed into the models, signifying that lyrics with success and ambition related terms may activate (or attract) users' responses more than lyrics that express personal struggles. A significant, moderate relationship exists between explicit lyrics and hip-hop culture (Pearson Correlation = 0.682), while a significant inverse relationship exists between explicit lyrics and social justice (Pearson Correlation = -0.269). This is not surprising since vulgar and/or obscene language

appears to have become more dominant within rap music's evolution over the decades. While a significantly, positive relationship exists between family and location (Pearson Correlation = 0.268) and family and identity (Pearson Correlation = 0.317), a significant, inverse correlation exists between family and explicit lyrics (Pearson Correlation = -0.2421). This suggests that perhaps boundaries exist in expressions towards family within rap music. Lastly, the relationship between race and location is significant (Pearson Correlation = 0.290). This may imply the attractiveness of social connections and references within the lyrics.

Table 5: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

| | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 ^a | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|---|--------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|--------|---------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----|----|
| Average No. of Words Per Rap | 531.0 | 110.9 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No. Years Since the First Song was Released (on SoundCloud) | 11.3 | 5.6 | 0.08 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| No. Overall Songs by Rap | 267.2 | 345.2 | 0.04 | 0.45** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | 0.9 | 0.3 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.18 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In-Group Interactions (Log10) | 4.7 | 0.9 | 0.20 | -0.42** | -0.16 | 0.02 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rapper Performance (Natural Log) | 11.9 | 2.0 | 0.11 | -0.07 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.73** | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice | 58.7 | 106.3 | -0.13 | -0.16 | -0.20 | -0.07 | 0.23* | 0.14 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle | 17.1 | 61.2 | -0.02 | 0.17 | 0.07 | 0.09 | -0.20 | -0.29** | -0.16 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships | 64.5 | 108.6 | 0.13 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.05 | -0.05 | -0.05 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition | 96.0 | 115.5 | 0.07 | -0.20 | 0.13 | -0.13 | 0.25* | 0.23* | -0.07 | -0.10 | -0.04 | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture | 367.4 | 204.8 | 0.24* | -0.11 | 0.07 | 0.21 | 0.08 | -0.06 | -0.20 | 0.06 | 0.13 | -0.03 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Government | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Family | 19.0 | 53.9 | 0.04 | -0.02 | 0.02 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 0.09 | -0.06 | 0.06 | -0.14 | | 1 | | | | | | |
| Religion | 27.3 | 80.8 | -0.03 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 0.11 | 0.09 | 0.14 | -0.06 | -0.08 | -0.10 | -0.04 | 0.02 | -0.05 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Street Credibility | 207.2 | 214.7 | -0.05 | -0.23* | 0.06 | -0.01 | 0.26* | 0.20 | -0.04 | -0.16 | -0.01 | 0.66** | 0.11 | -0.07 | -0.16 | 1 | | | | | |
| Race | 16.8 | 71.2 | 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.00 | -0.13 | -0.15 | -0.02 | 0.12 | -0.07 | 0.03 | 0.18 | 0.07 | -0.08 | -0.08 | 0.07 | 1 | | | | |
| Location | 29.5 | 91.1 | 0.06 | -0.06 | -0.03 | 0.11 | 0.04 | 0.12 | 0.04 | -0.09 | -0.16 | 0.12 | 0.09 | 0.27* | -0.04 | 0.19 | 0.29* | 1 | | | |
| Explicit Lyrics | 1189.1 | 540.1 | 0.04 | -0.13 | 0.02 | -0.06 | 0.05 | -0.07 | -0.27* | -0.07 | -0.02 | 0.11 | 0.68** | -0.24* | -0.01 | 0.21 | -0.09 | 0.04 | 1 | | |
| Identity | 3.8 | 21.7 | -0.25* | -0.06 | 0.01 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 0.06 | -0.10 | -0.05 | 0.14 | -0.04 | -0.07 | 0.32* | -0.04 | -0.02 | -0.04 | -0.06 | -0.14 | 1 | |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

a. Gender was coded 1 for male and 0 for female

b. Government cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant

5.2 Test of Hypotheses

Linear regression was used in SPSS to test each hypothesis. Each variable was tested for multicollinearity. The variance inflation factors (for each variable) were between 1 and 3, but none of the variables exceeded the highest threshold. This implies that there is low variance inflation between a given predictor variable and other predictor variables in the models. The software removed the government variable automatically from the analysis because of its missing correlations. Tables 6a and 6b illustrate the regressions models tested. Tables 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d list the hierarchical linear regression results.

Prior to testing each hypothesis, I first examined the effect of the control variables (average number of words per rapper, number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud), number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud), and gender) on rapper performance to gain a foundational understanding of the model before the independent, mediator and moderator variables are introduced. The output of model 1 has an adjusted R^2 approximately 2%. However, none of the control variables showed significance, implying that this model has no explanatory power. Hypothesis 1 proposes that the use of identity-salient language is positively associated with the likelihood of followers being attracted to rappers through their lyrics. In model 2, the adjusted R^2 explains approximately 3% of the model's variability. Of the seven identity-salient themes, street credibility is the only significant theme towards rapper performance with a p-value $<.10$ ($p = .090$). And, since the model shows no significance, the findings do not offer support hypothesis 1.

Prior to testing hypothesis 2, I examined the effect of the control variables on in-group interactions. The adjusted R^2 of model 3 approximates for nearly 20% of the model's variability. The control variables average number of words per rapper and number of years since the first

song was released (on SoundCloud) were both significant towards the prediction on in-group interactions, with $p = .028$ and $p = <.001$ respectively. The model also shows significance ($p = <.001$). Hypothesis 2 proposes that the use of identity-salient language is positively associated with in-group interactions of individuals with similar interests (i.e. individuals who relate to the rappers' social identities). Model 4 accounts for approximately 21% of the model's variability, according to its adjusted R^2 once the identity-salient language themes are introduced into the model. The control variables average number of words per rapper and number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) continue to demonstrate significance towards the prediction on in-group interactions, with $p = .016$ and $p = .001$ respectively. And street credibility is the only significant identity-salient language theme towards in-group interactions with a p -value $<.05$ ($p = .035$). Since the model shows significance ($p = .003$), I conclude the findings offer support for hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 proposes that the relationship between identity-salient language and rapper performance will be positively mediated by in-group interactions in interest of individuals (i.e. supporters) assumed social identities. In model 7, the adjusted R^2 explains about 62% of the model's variability, with years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) displaying significance of $p < .05$ ($p = .018$) and the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) displaying significance of $p < .05$ ($p = .016$). As well, the in-group interactions variable displays a significance of $p < .001$ ($p = <.001$), implying that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is strengthened when mediated by in-group interactions. Additionally, the model shows significance ($p = <.001$). Thus, the findings offer support for hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 proposes that the relationship between identity-salient language and the in-group interactions will be strengthened when moderated by the identity-enhancing language.

Model 5 shows significance ($p = .004$), with an adjusted R^2 accounting for approximately 24% of the model's variability once identity-enhancing language themes are added into model 4. While street credibility continues to show significance ($p = .035$) in model 4, social justice merges as a significant predictor ($p = .017$) once the identity-enhancing language themes are added for model 5. Model 6 expands the design of model 5, examining interactions between identity-salient language and identity-enhancing language as predictors of in-group interactions. Each moderating block of models was significant. The control variables average number of words per rapper and number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) was significant in each model's moderation block.

Of the identity-salient themes, religion was significant in models 6b ($p = .073$), 6c ($p = .028$), 6d ($p = .027$), and 6e ($p = .072$). Race showed significance in model 6b ($p = .093$). Identity showed significance in models 6c ($p = .015$), 6d ($p = .009$), and 6e ($p = .012$). The identity-enhancing theme social justice was significant in the majority of the interaction blocks. In model 6a, Beta was not significant with a value of .384. However, model 6a demonstrated significance of $p = .045$. In model 6b, social justice demonstrated significance at $p < 0.05$ ($p = .024$). However, its variance inflation factor (VIF) increased to 9.661 (Beta .384). In model 6c, social justice demonstrated significance at $p < .01$ ($p = .009$), with an acceptable VIF of 1.384 (Beta = .302). In models 6d and 6e social justice showed significance at $p < .05$ ($p = .012$), and $p < .05$ ($p = .017$) in model 6f, both with acceptable VIF values between 1 and 3. In model 6c, the love relationships x identity interaction was significant (Beta = $-.881^*$). In model 6d, the success ambition x identity interaction was significant (Beta = $-.880$). And, in model 6e, the interaction between hip hop culture & identity was significant (Beta = $-.876^*$). It's important to mention that the VIF for identity and each of its significant interactions had VIF values above 10.

In model 6a, the algorithm auto deleted the government and social justice x identity variables because these were either missing correlations or had constants. In model 6b, the same occurred for the variables: government, personal struggle x race, personal struggle x location, and personal struggle x identity. In models 6c, 6d, and 6e, the government variable was removed. And, in model 6f, all variables involving a government interaction, along with the government variable were removed. Resultantly, the findings of these models offer support for hypothesis 4.

Next, I conducted a similar process to examine the moderation of the statistical powers of each moderation block, plus each variable towards the dependent variable (rapper performance). In model 8a, the algorithm auto deleted the government and social justice x identity variables because these were either missing correlations or had constants. In model 8b, the same occurred for the variables: government, personal struggle x race, personal struggle x location, and personal struggle x identity. In models 8c, 8d, and 8e, the government variable was removed. And, in model 8f, all variables involving a government interaction, along with the government variable were removed. Each moderating block of models showed significance of $p < .001$.

In model 8a, the control variables average number of words per rapper and number of years since the first song was released demonstrated significance at $p < .10$, while the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) variable showed significance at $p < .05$. The identity-enhancing theme of personal struggle displayed significance at $p = .010$. And the interaction of social justice x religion was significant at $p = .006$. Overall, the adjusted R^2 accounted for approximately 67% of the model's variability.

In model 8b, the control variable number of years since the first song was released demonstrated significance at $p < .05$ ($p = .025$) and the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) variable showed significance at $p < .10$ ($p = .051$). Overall, the adjusted R^2 of

model 8b accounted for approximately 63% of the model's variability. In model 8c, the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) was the only significant control variable ($p = .013$). And, the identity-enhancing theme personal struggle showed significance at $p = .038$. Model 8c accounted for approximately 61% of the model's variability, according to the adjusted R^2 . In model 8d, the control variable number of years since the first song was released demonstrated significance at $p < .10$ ($p = .065$) and the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) control variable was significant at $p < .05$ ($p = .048$). The identity-enhancing theme personal struggle showed significance at $p = .045$. In model 8d, the adjusted R^2 decreased to accounting for approximately 59% of the model's variability. In model 8e, the control variable number of years since the first song was released continued to demonstrated significance at $p < .10$ ($p = .065$) and the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) control variable was significant at $p < .05$ ($p = .036$). The identity-enhancing theme personal struggle showed significance at $p = .023$. In model 8e, the adjusted R^2 remained at approximately 59% of the model's variability. In model 8f, the control variable number of years since the first song was released continued to demonstrated significance at $p < .05$ ($p = .039$) and the number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) control variable was significant at $p < .05$ ($p = .017$). The identity-enhancing theme personal struggle showed significance at $p = .025$. Thus, in this model, the adjusted R^2 increased to approximately 63% of the model's variability. The in-group interactions variable displayed significance in each moderation block, with $p = < .001$.

And, lastly, I examined the mediation effect of all the variables in the model (moderations included) as direct effects on rapper performance. Respectively, in model 9, the average number of words per rapper control variable displayed significance at $p = .049$ and the number of years since the first song was released control variable demonstrated significance at p

= .072. The in-group interactions variable displayed significance with $p = < .001$. In the interaction of social justice and religion was significant at $p = .002$ (Beta = .409). It's important to note the VIF values for the social justice and religion variables were above 10. The algorithm auto deleted the government, social justice x identity, personal struggle x race, personal struggle x identity variables, and all variables involving a government interaction, along with the government because these were either missing correlations or had constants. Additionally, the identity-salient theme race was auto excluded by the model as a candidate predictor variable.

Table 6a: List of Linear Regression Models

| List of Linear Regression Models | |
|---|--|
| Model 1: Control variables on rapper performance | Rapper Performance ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender |
| Model 2: Control variables + 7 identity-salient language on rapper performance | Rapper Performance ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity |
| Model 3: Control variables on in-group interactions | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender |
| Model 4: Control variables + 7 Identity-Salient Language on In-group interactions | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity |
| Model 5: Control variables + 7 Identity-Salient Language + 6 Identity-Enhancing Language on In-group interactions | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government |
| Model 6: Control variables + 7 Identity-Salient Language + 6 Identity-Enhancing Language + (7 Identity-Themes x 6 Identity-Enhancing Language) on In-group interactions | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Love_relationships:Religion + Love_relationships:Street_Credibility + Social_justice:Race + Social_justice:Location + Social_justice:Explicit_Lyrics + Social_justice:Identity |
| | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Personal_struggle:Family + Personal_struggle:Religion + Personal_struggle:Street_Credibility + Personal_struggle:Race + Personal_struggle:Location + Personal_struggle:Explicit_Lyrics + Personal_struggle:Identity |
| | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Love_relationships:Family + Love_relationships:Religion + Love_relationships:Street_Credibility + Love_relationships:Race + Love_relationships:Location + Love_relationships:Explicit_Lyrics + Love_relationships:Identity |
| | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Success_ambition:Family + Success_ambition:Religion + Success_ambition:Street_Credibility + Success_ambition:Race + Success_ambition:Location + Success_ambition:Explicit_Lyrics + Success_ambition:Identity |
| | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Hip_hop_culture:Family + Hip_hop_culture:Religion + Hip_hop_culture:Street_Credibility + Hip_hop_culture:Race + Hip_hop_culture:Location + Hip_hop_culture:Explicit_Lyrics + Hip_hop_culture:Identity |
| | In-group interactions ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender + Family + Religion + Street_Credibility + Race + Location + Explicit_Lyrics + Identity + Social_justice + Personal_struggle + Love_relationships + Success_ambition + Hip_hop_culture + Government + Government:Family + Government:Religion + Government:Street_Credibility + Government:Race + Government:Location + Government:Explicit_Lyrics + Government:Identity |
| | Rapper Performance ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Model 7: Control variables + In-group interactions on rapper performance | Rapper Performance ~ Average_Words_Per_Rapper + Years_Since_Song_Release_Date + Overall_songs_by_rapper + Gender |

Table 6b: List of Linear Regression Models

[illegible]

Table 7a: Hierarchical Linear Regression Results

| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | | Model 4 | | | Model 5 | | | Model 6a | | |
|---|---------|------|------|---------|------|-------|----------|------|------|-----------|------|-------|-----------|------|-------|----------|------|------|
| | B | SE B | p | B | SE B | p | B | SE B | p | B | SE B | p | B | SE B | p | B | SE B | p |
| Rapper Performance (Natural Log) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Average number of words per rapper | .002 | .002 | .999 | .002 | .002 | .131 | .002 | .001 | .228 | .002 | .001 | .261 | .002 | .001 | .271 | .002 | .001 | .285 |
| Number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) | -.068 | .044 | .191 | -.052 | .047 | -.147 | -.076 | .018 | .462 | -.064 | .019 | .391 | -.052 | .020 | .321 | -.053 | .022 | .326 |
| Number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender | .001 | .001 | .218 | .001 | .001 | .195 | 1.864E-5 | .000 | .039 | -2.699E-5 | .000 | -.010 | -5.245E-6 | .000 | -.002 | 1.683E-5 | .000 | .006 |
| Age | .003 | .003 | .757 | .003 | .003 | .230 | .784 | .035 | .114 | -.039 | .325 | -.013 | .008 | .342 | .002 | .001 | .359 | .000 |
| Religion | | | | .003 | .003 | .005 | .005 | .005 | .099 | .001 | .002 | .002 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .000 | .003 | .007 |
| Street Credibility | | | | .002 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .002 | .188 | .001 | .001 | .165 | .002 | .001 | .165 | .002 | .001 | .185 |
| Success | | | | .002 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .002 | .209 | .001 | .001 | .236 | .001 | .001 | .159 | .001 | .001 | .214 |
| Explicit Lyrics | | | | .002 | .001 | .002 | .001 | .003 | .032 | .002 | .001 | .131 | -.002 | .002 | -.189 | -.002 | .002 | .188 |
| Identity | | | | .002 | .003 | .069 | | | | -5.591E-5 | .001 | .006 | .000 | .001 | .011 | .000 | .002 | .043 |
| in-group interactions (Log 10) | | | | .000 | .000 | -.116 | | | | -9.399E-5 | .000 | -.054 | 3.89E-5 | .000 | .011 | 3.246E-5 | .000 | .048 |
| Social Justice | | | | .008 | .011 | .053 | | | | .002 | .005 | .040 | .003 | .005 | .078 | .004 | .005 | .098 |
| Social Justice x Family | | | | | | | | | | .002 | .001 | .271 | .002 | .001 | .271 | .003 | .003 | .384 |
| Social Justice x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2.673E-6 | .000 | .023 |
| Social Justice x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.069E-6 | .000 | .031 |
| Social Justice x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.233E-6 | .000 | .114 |
| Social Justice x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 2.608E-6 | .000 | .026 |
| Social Justice x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.121E-6 | .000 | .079 |
| Social Justice x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 3.644E-7 | .000 | .044 |
| Personal Struggle | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adjusted R ² | .069 | | | .160 | | | .237 | | | .318 | | | .391 | | | .400 | | |
| F | .020 | | | .026 | | | .196 | | | .209 | | | .238 | | | .172 | | |
| p | .1409 | | | 1.192 | | | 5.889 | | | 2.920 | | | 2.564 | | | 1.758 | | |
| df | 4 | | | 11 | | | 4 | | | 11 | | | 16 | | | 22 | | |

Significance Levels

* p < .10

** p < .05

*** p < .01

**** p < .001

Table 7b: Hierarchical Linear Regression Results

| | Model 6b | | | Model 6c | | | Model 6d | | | Model 6e | | | Model 6f | | | Model 7 | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β | B | SE B | β |
| Rapper Performance (Natural Log) | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .291 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .275 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .275 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .285 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .271 ⁺ | -.002 | .001 | -.008 |
| Average number of words per rapper | -.002 ⁺ | .021 ⁺ | -.317 ⁺ | -.047 ⁺ | .021 ⁺ | -.289 ⁺ | -.043 ⁺ | .020 ⁺ | -.265 ⁺ | -.051 ⁺ | .021 ⁺ | -.309 ⁺ | -.052 ⁺ | .020 ⁺ | -.321 ⁺ | .074 ⁺ | .031 ⁺ | .209 ⁺ |
| Number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) | 3.533E-5 | .000 | -.013 | -3.292E-5 | .000 | -.013 | -.000 | .000 | -.050 | 3.571E-5 | .000 | .013 | -5.245E-6 | .000 | -.002 | .001 ⁺ | .000 ⁺ | .193 ⁺ |
| Gender | -.007 ⁺ | .344 | .002 | -.248 | .355 | -.081 | -.012 | .342 | -.004 | -.182 | .354 | -.060 | .008 | .342 | .002 | -.390 | .474 | .059 |
| Family | .000 | .002 | .021 | .001 | .002 | .064 | .001 | .004 | .085 | .003 | .005 | .204 | .001 | .002 | .035 | | | |
| Religion | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .193 ⁺ | .003 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .264 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .262 ⁺ | .006 ⁺ | .007 ⁺ | .549 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .165 | | | |
| Street Credibility | .001 | .001 | .144 | .001 | .001 | .240 | .001 | .001 | .226 | .001 | .001 | .172 | .001 | .001 | .159 | | | |
| Race | -.003 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | -.203 ⁺ | -.001 | .002 | -.097 | -.003 | .003 | -.200 | -.005 | .003 | -.382 | -.002 | .002 | -.189 | | | |
| Location | .000 | .001 | .018 | .000 | .001 | -.012 | .002 | .002 | .160 | .000 | .003 | -.049 | .000 | .001 | .011 | | | |
| Explicit Lyrics | -5.566E-5 | .000 | -.033 | -7.703E-5 | .000 | -.045 | 9.111E-5 | .000 | .054 | .000 | .000 | .189 | 1.820E-5 | .000 | .011 | | | |
| Identity | .003 | .005 | .076 | .036 ⁺ | .014 ⁺ | .340 ⁺ | .039 ⁺ | .014 ⁺ | .913 ⁺ | .038 ⁺ | .015 ⁺ | .391 ⁺ | .003 | .005 | .078 | 1.880 ^{***} | .172 ^{***} | .865 ^{***} |
| In-group Interactions (Log 10) | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .248 ⁺ | .003 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .302 ⁺ | .003 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .399 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .387 ⁺ | .002 ⁺ | .001 ⁺ | .271 ⁺ | | | |
| Social Justice | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social Justice x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Love Relationships x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Success Ambition x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hip Hop Culture x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Family | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Street Credibility | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Race | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Location | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Explicit Lyrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Government x Identity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R ² | .424 | | | .400 | | | .402 | | | .488 | | | .401 | | | .441 | | |
| Adjusted R ² | .232 | | | .284 | | | .275 | | | .277 | | | .238 | | | .417 | | |
| F | 2.309 | | | 2.382 | | | 2.302 | | | 2.335 | | | 2.364 | | | 26.765 | | |
| DF | 20 | | | 23 | | | 23 | | | 23 | | | 16 | | | 5 | | |

Significance Levels
⁺ p < .10
^{*} p < .05
^{**} p < .01
^{***} p < .001

Table 7: Hierarchical Linear Regression Results

[illegible]

Table 7d: Hierarchical Linear Regression Results

| | Model 9 | | |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|
| | B | SE B | β |
| Rapper Performance (Natural Log) | | | |
| Average number of words per rapper | -.004* | .002* | -.219 |
| Number of years since the first song was released (on SoundCloud) | .080† | .043† | .224† |
| Number of overall songs by rapper (on SoundCloud) | .001 | .001 | .132 |
| Gender | .146 | .613 | .022 |
| Family | .010 | .049 | .278 |
| Religion | -.008 | .007 | -.306 |
| Street Credibility | .002 | .003 | .226 |
| Race | | | |
| Location | .004 | .016 | .160 |
| Explicit Lyrics | -.001 | .001 | -.167 |
| Identity | -.008 | .029 | -.091 |
| In-group Interactions (Log 10) | 1.924*** | .253*** | .886*** |
| Social Justice | -.005 | .005 | -.277 |
| Social Justice x Family | -9.057E-5 | .000 | -.352 |
| Social Justice x Religion | .000** | .000** | .409** |
| Social Justice x Street Credibility | -7.011E-7 | .000 | -.011 |
| Social Justice x Race | 5.672E-5 | .000 | .256 |
| Social Justice x Location | -1.625E-5 | .000 | -.097 |
| Social Justice x Explicit Lyrics | 7.632E-7 | .000 | .042 |
| Social Justice x Identity | | | |
| Personal Struggle | -.009 | 0.15 | -.284 |
| Personal Struggle x Family | 5.659E-5 | .000 | .158 |
| Personal Struggle x Religion | .000 | .000 | .115 |
| Personal Struggle x Street Credibility | 2.518E-5 | .000 | .133 |
| Personal Struggle x Race | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Location | | | |
| Personal Struggle x Explicit Lyrics | -1.909E-6 | .000 | -.066 |
| Personal Struggle x Identity | | | |
| Love Relationships | -.003 | .005 | -.162 |
| Love Relationships x Family | .000 | .000 | -.254 |
| Love Relationships x Religion | -8.891E-5 | .000 | -.217 |
| Love Relationships x Street Credibility | -9.798E-6 | .000 | -.155 |
| Love Relationships x Race | 2.903E-5 | .000 | .159 |
| Love Relationships x Location | 8.363E-5 | .000 | .091 |
| Love Relationships x Explicit Lyrics | 4.095E-6 | .000 | .322 |
| Love Relationships x Identity | | | |
| Success Ambition | .004 | .007 | .213 |
| Success Ambition x Family | 5.489E-5 | .000 | .216 |
| Success Ambition x Religion | 1.173E-7 | .000 | .001 |
| Success Ambition x Street Credibility | -1.261E-5 | .000 | -.345 |
| Success Ambition x Race | -4.795E-5 | .000 | -.342 |
| Success Ambition x Location | 1.966E-5 | .000 | .145 |
| Success Ambition x Explicit Lyrics | -3.347E-7 | .000 | -.027 |
| Success Ambition x Identity | .002 | .003 | 2.001 |
| Hip Hop Culture | .003 | .003 | .296 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Family | -3.070E-5 | .000 | -.259 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Religion | 1.716E-5 | .000 | .278 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Street Credibility | -1.780E-6 | .000 | -.089 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Race | 1.010E-5 | .000 | .170 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Location | -5.425E-6 | .000 | -.116 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Explicit Lyrics | -1.678E-6 | .000 | -.341 |
| Hip Hop Culture x Identity | .000 | .001 | -1.761 |
| Government | | | |
| Government x Family | | | |
| Government x Religion | | | |
| Government x Street Credibility | | | |
| Government x Race | | | |
| Government x Location | | | |
| Government x Explicit Lyrics | | | |
| Government x Identity | | | |
| R ² | | .835 | |
| Adjusted R ² | | .612 | |
| F | | 3.744 | |
| DF | | 46 | |
| Significance Levels | | | |
| † p < .10 | | | |
| * p < .05 | | | |
| ** p < .01 | | | |
| *** p < .001 | | | |

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

6.1 Interpretation of Findings

Existing research has shown the relationships between the language entrepreneurs use towards the audiences they target for in-group support to attain success in their endeavors (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Parhankangas & Ehrlich, 2004; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Bozzolan et al., 2015; Oo et al., 2019). This body of work suggests that entrepreneurs are carefully selecting their audiences to make persuasive arguments about why the audience should support them. In addition, studies have neglected to examine communication from the perspective of identifying social identity-defining attributes that audiences look to entrepreneurs in defining and evaluating themselves. As such, this study took an exploratory approach to identify identity-salient language as a means of influencing audience behavior (in terms of consumer and purchaser behaviors).

Research has shown that social movements have been found to have collective identities that reflect how people behave in support of each other (Milan, 2015). The data from this study does not suggest that identity-salient language is positively associated with rapper performance (H_1), revealing that one from the seven themes was strongly associated with rapper performance. This is inconsistent with the prediction of hypothesis 1. Specifically, street credibility was more strongly associated with rapper performance than the other identity-salient language themes. I reason this may be due a homogeneousness sampling of the rappers, spanning from the sampling bias that's associated with the snowballing method and the manual collection of the first 100 accounts selected. Randomization for rapper inclusion might lead to different results. I believe rappers who possess street credibility have a sense of social connection with peers who appreciate their authentic perspectives and experiences. I am not surprised that the identity-

salient theme of explicit lyrics was not significant towards rapper performance, since profanity was identified in all the rappers' lyrics within this study's sample. Thus, it may be a common expectancy of this genre. I did expect for family, religion, street credibility, race, and location to be more strongly associated with rapper performance because the social connections that are typically associated to those themes provide a sense of belonging and community – all of which connect with prominent aspects of social identity. For the identity theme, I think some of the terms with its data dictionary were too general for the corpus' genre.

I found the rotation of certain identity-enhancing themes particularly interesting. Social justice and personal struggle seemed to be quite prominent in the moderation models. I suspect this is related to how the included sample of rappers were selected, paired with the current events of the past decade. Rappers tend to include content that's relevant of their surroundings. And in the past few years, United States citizens have experienced events that some may describe as inconceivable (like the historic elections of President Barack Obama, the Black Lives Matter Movement, school and mass shootings, the COVID-19 global pandemic, the loss of favorite rappers, etc.).

Gender did not appear to matter within the models towards rapper performance or in-group interactions. This could be due to the expectations of the rap industry, where the language style used (Wan et al., 2021) or the perceived fit of men (McSweeney et al., 2022) are expected in a male-dominated industry.

Another interesting observation is the performance of the linear regression models when in-group interactions was introduced as both a dependent variable (in examining it as a mediator) and an independent variable towards rapper performance. As discussed earlier, the correlations between in-group interactions (Log 10) and social justice, success ambition, and street credibility

were all significant – serving as an early indicator of the significance in-group interactions would have towards the models. I reason this to be that the in-group interactions serve as the validation of the core values associated with the individuals' identities when associated with rapper performance. Said differently, in-group interactions allow listeners to express reactions to music directly. For instance, listeners can use the SoundCloud comment function to express their responses to songs in specific moments of the song (i.e. comments timestamped to sections of the song). Generally, people respond to lyrics that resonate with them, which as implied by Hubbles & Lee, can satisfy a more fundamental human desire to associate their existence with the rapper (2017). Thereby, the analysis supported H₃, in that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables were strengthened by the mediation of in-group interactions.

When in-group interactions is the dependent variable, identity-salient language is positively associated with in-group interactions (H₂). This may be due to social connection features built into the SoundCloud platform that allow users to express their responses to the music (Hubbles & Lee, 2017). Further, this study showed support for H₄ when identity-enhancing language moderates the relationship between identity-salient language and in-group interactions. Since listeners can comment in-line with the lyrics on songs (Hubbles & Lee, 2017), I presume they may respond to the sections of the songs that connect to their core identities.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study brings 3 main contributions to literature. First, this dissertation expands the contexts in which communication is studied in social identity theory, impression management, and signaling research. While identity-salient language was not as significant as expected, I think modifications to this study's sample inclusion criteria and dictionary refinement could lead

future research to expand the context of identity-salient language towards communications with employers and their brand attractiveness (Kissel and Büttgen, 2015; Younis and Hammad, 2021). Second, this dissertation extends our understanding of how social groups respond to entrepreneurs they relate to. Future research can expand the identity-salient language categories that were identified within this study. And third, this dissertation extends our understanding of how entrepreneurs can leverage in-group behaviors to assemble support from their audiences. Future research can examine what varieties of identity-salient languages are relevant in other entrepreneur contexts.

6.3 Study Limitations

The following limitations offer additional opportunities for future research. Since the Twitter sample began with the snowballing method, there is an increased risk of sampling bias occurring within the collected target population. The sample collected from SoundCloud contained some inaccuracies in the listed song (track) titles and/or artists names. Because of this, some of the SoundCloud track listings were not an exact match to the genius.com song title listings. Due to these inaccuracies, some collaborations, non-original versions, and other filtered criteria made it into the sampling. The SoundCloud title inaccuracies and listing duplications also impacted the initial random sampling. In collecting the song data, some rap artists had singles listed on more than one album (such as Cardi B's "Bronx Season"). Duplicate song listings were collected as individual singles and metadata for these were not merged or combined. After conducting 2 random samples (for artists that needed to meet the criteria), if an artist's final listing contained less than 50% of inclusion listing criteria, then those rappers were removed from the final sample.

On genius.com, some songs did not have lyrics listed on the site. It was either one of two cases: 1.) The song was not logged on genius.com or 2.) the song was logged; however, the lyrics were not posted. In the latter case, the song's page displayed the message *"Lyrics for this song have yet to be released. Please check back once the song has been released."* In such cases, alternative lyric sites were visited (such as Shazam and Lyrics.com). However, the songs were either not listed on those sites or had inaccurate lyrics. So ultimately, genius.com had the most accurate representation of the lyrics, and was used for the entire lyric collection. In cases where the SoundCloud track title varied slightly from the genius.com song title, I listened to the lyrics of the SoundCloud song paired with reading the lyrics on genius.com to identify that it was the same song.

The majority of the song release dates were captured from the song's bio on genius.com. Some date formats offered month and year, and others offered month, date, and year. If the song release date was not listed on genius.com, then an internet search of the earliest month & year (or month, date, and year where available) was included. In such instances, many of those substitute dates were collected from the earliest YouTube video date or the earliest SoundCloud listing date for the song.

For the archived released dates and accounts captured through the Wayback site, there were instances where a snapshot was not available for the exact release date (or any subsequent date in the same song release year). In those instances, the next available date was captured (for follower data). Additionally, I noticed that many of the "pro unlimited" level accounts and accounts for the years 2020 and above did not display followers. I was also unable to locate snapshots accounts for rap artists that may have changed or deleted their SoundCloud accounts overtime. Due to these discrepancies, I opted to use the SoundCloud followers at the date of data

collection, instead of the SoundCloud followers associated with (or closer to) the songs' release dates. It is important to note that a paired t-test was conducted to compare the SoundCloud followers captured from Wayback (at or near the release date) to SoundCloud followers at the time of data collection. A paired t-test was used to compare the same population at different periods in time. The results showed that there was no difference in the mean, in this partially paired data (Grabchak, 2023).

The data dictionaries did not include all variations of a word or phrase. While leveraging a portion of Short et al.'s deductive word list approach to building data dictionaries, my research did not leverage relevant words from previously validated scales (Short et al., 2010). Given the limitations of this dissertation, I made a call to abridge this process where necessary. Also, given that the dominant themes were quantified by how often a lyric appeared in the dictionaries (in accordance with the document-term matrix), if different songs and/or rappers are added to the study in the future, the rappers' dominant themes may fit (i.e. classify) differently.

Awards data was removed as a control variable because many rappers had less than 10% of RIAA awards (The Recording Industry Association of America) associated with the songs listed in the random sampling. This is because 1.) not every song wins an award, and 2.) some albums win awards, but not necessarily each single on the album. For song awards, only sales, streams (both downloads and on-demand music streams), and official label/company videos (that are authorized by and reported to the record labels) occurring in the United States are counted towards the thresholds required for certification for RIAA (RIAA, 2023).

6.4 Practical Implications

Understanding the relationship identity-salient language has towards stimulating follower reactions can be a game changer in how entrepreneurs in the music industry garner support for

commercial projects. The ability of rappers to build followings through identity-salient language may be particularly important towards promoting social recognition, as research shows that social recognition is a significant determinant of entrepreneurship (Fischer et al., 1993; Block and Landgraf, 2016). Further, with claims of record labels “socially engineering” rap lyrics with teams of writers and committees (as opposed to the artists themselves) (Breakfast Club Power 105.1 FM, 2023), music industry decision makers may be interested in further exploring methods that attract supporters and/or prosocial behaviors to capitalize from rap imagery and personas. Lyrics that demonstrate social connections can attract listeners to identify with rappers.

6.5 Directions for Future Research

Future research could examine the rap artists beyond cisgender to better align with their preferred identity. For instance, Lil Uzi Vert (included in this current study) changed cisgender pronouns to they/their in July 2022 (Fitzgerald, 2022). Also, the groups captured in the sample were not mix-gender (such as Migos and Run The Jewels). Thus, future studies could expand the examination of key identity-salient language themes towards the inclusion of mix-gender rap groups.

As well, future research should assess the validity of the data dictionaries content for the underspecified entries to cover more content domain of the construct (McKenny et al., 2013). Furthermore, future research could also incorporate McKenny et al.’s (2013) construct-validating dictionary development process to use an iterative approach to generating the initial deductive list, combined with judges’ interpretations to evaluate word inclusiveness (including colloquial uses) for focal construct association of the inductive and combined word lists for each final dictionary. In Short et al.’s entrepreneurial orientation research (2010), they supplemented their deductive analysis with frequently used words present in CEO letters to shareholders. The same

can be done for lyrical content. According to McKenny and colleagues (2013), a word list that is underspecified due to omitted synonyms may indicate suboptimal content validity if they are not found or suggested during the inductive word list development process. An example of suboptimal content validity within my current study is the omission of the unique spoken language terms affiliated with the rappers' persona within the data dictionaries, like Cardi B's "Okurrr" (a term that's become synonymous with her in popular culture). The inclusion of such creative and unique language may have impacted the significance of the identity-salient language themes within the regression models. In the same regard, caution should be taken on developing word lists that are too inclusive, as that may result in words being used out of context (McKenny et al., 2018). Taken towards the context of lyrics, lyrical content poses the threat of having outdated vernacular. So, caution should also be considered in deciphering whether the lyrical language is intentionally archaic, amongst other evolutions that might impact interpretation. That said, the year of use (for certain terminology and words) could also be considered, along with supporting documents of interest, amongst the framework of future work.

Lastly, there is potential for this research to be expanded into a longitudinal study to examine the growth in rappers' followers overtime (by examining the changes in followers over time). Because of the snapshot limitations of the Wayback data and the time constraints associated with this dissertation, I decided to conduct this study in the present format.

6.6 Conclusion

The growing interest in social identity research makes it worthy to understand how entrepreneurs' commercial success is interconnected with the social affiliations' others have associated through them. For entrepreneurs operating within informal spaces, the in-group favoritism effect of social identity theory suggests that entrepreneurs develop a collection of

supporters when they form a connective identity with their followers. Ultimately, this study is a fundamental contribution to developing a new understanding of “salient communication”. This study reveals that lyrics with themes of street credibility, social justice, and personal struggle are strongly associated with rapper performance. As well, in-group interactions was a significant variable throughout many of the models. Continuing to examine the use of identity-salient language can help strengthen entrepreneur communication research.

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