

MATERIALISM, CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND AMERICAN HIP-HOP SUBCULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing survey data from over 1,000 American consumers, located in the northeastern part of the United States, we found through the use of multiple regression techniques, that those who prefer to listen to hip-hop score higher on all three aspects of the Richins and Dawson materialism scales than those who don't. African Americans scored higher than other Americans only in the happiness and centrality factors. Additionally we found that hip-hop listeners scored higher in conspicuous consumption compared to those who claimed not to be listeners of the genre.

Our results present significant implications, especially relating to the understanding of the African American consumer and the presumed relationships between hip-hop, consumer dispositions and the prevailing conventional wisdom that links materialism with the African American community and the hip-hop subculture (Dyson 2007, Kitwana 2002). Data in our study indicate that materialistic tendencies more closely correlate with listeners of hip-hop *independent* of their race. In this respect, we believe our research acts as a launching point to open up a further discussion of perceptions on race and presumed consumer dispositions. This has significant implications moving beyond the understanding of consumption and moving into issues related to marketing managers.

Additionally, our study yields implications for the exploration of the relationship between the African American community and the greater American society as our research, when coupled with results from more recent examinations of African American consumers (Podoshen 2008) demonstrate that differences in consumption behavior among Americans along racial lines is diminishing.

References Available on Request.