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# Shedding hair and baring soul : black men's talk at the barbershop.

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SHEDDING HAIR AND BARING SOUL: BLACK MEN'S TALK AT THE
BARBERSHOP

By

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B.A., University of Kentucky, 2010

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Communication
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2012

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A Thesis Approved on


April 18, 2012



By the following Thesis Committee



_____
Kandi Walker, Thesis Director


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J. Blaine Hudson


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Siobhan Smith

# DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all of the wonderful men in my life. In addition, to the men of Tight Skillz who have befriended me and treated me as if I was a part of the family.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my parents Sedrita and Willie Jones for reminding me why I first began this thesis process. I want to thank my brother, Kavonte who put everything in perspective for me. I did not think it was possible for little brothers to teach their big sisters, but you have taught me how to be kind, loving, and patient. It is because of my family that I am able to achieve anything. If it was not for them, I would not be the person I am today. Thank you to the men of Tight Skillz who gave me their time and shared their personal stories and experiences. This study would not have been a success nor had an impact without your participation. Your words and acts of encouragement did not go unnoticed. Lastly, I would like to thank my advisor and mentor Dr. Kandi Walker for believing in me and my research topic. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Siobhan Smith and Dean Blaine Hudson for providing me with the knowledge and support needed to complete my research study. Both of you have given your time and expertise and I am forever grateful.

ABSTRACT

SHEDDING HAIR AND BARING SOUL: BLACK MEN'S TALK AT THE
BARBERSHOP

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Labeled as a man's environment, the Black barbershop is a sacred location for

Black men. Yet, it is unclear how Black men communicate in the Black barbershop.

This research study examined the communicative process of Black men within the Black

barbershop. More specifically, the study examined how Black men communicate in the

Black barbershop. Using Owen's criteria for a thematic analysis, two themes emerged

from the study: Manhood versus Masculinity and Fluidity versus Rigidity. The results of

the study revealed that Black men displayed their manhood by talking about the roles and

responsibilities roles they fulfill and the impact of helping others in their community. It

is through discussions and reactions from others that men display their masculinity. In

addition, Black men revealed how the barbershop environment is a place to feely be

"Black men," but the barbershop, through unspoken rules restrained Black men to fit into

socially acceptable personas.

# INTRODUCTION

There is sparse literature on Black male communication, and Black males are greatly underrepresented within communication research (Jackson, 2002; Orbe, 1994). Within the limited research on Black male communication, a large proportion focuses on negative aspects of Black males' experiences (Orbe, 1994). One area of research that does highlight the positive aspects of Black male communication is research conducted about and within the Black barbershop. The Black barbershop is one of the few establishments where Black men are not viewed as endangered species or inferior (Black Males in Crisis, 2011; Boyd, 2007; Parham & McDavis, 1987). Facilitated by barbers, the Black barbershop provides a cultural institution where Black men are able to openly communicate (Alexander, 2003; Wright, 1998; Wright, 2001).

Building on the existing literature on African American communication, Black male communication, Black barbers, and Black barbershops, this study explored how Black men communicate in Black barbershops. More specifically, a thematic analysis was employed to better understand the communicative emergent themes found in Black barbershops. Along with participant observations and in-depth interviews, this study highlighted the unique communication and cultural influences occurring in a Black barbershop within a Black community. This study concluded with a consideration of limitations and a discussion of implications for future research

LITERATURE REVIEW

African American Communication

Existing African American communication research focuses on the comparison of African Americans and Whites. According to Jackson (2002), "African American intellectualism remains subordinated within the communication discipline, which institutionally refuses to acknowledge the importance of non-White ways of knowing" (p. 44). When African American communication literature focuses on the comparison of African Americans and Whites, it creates an unnecessary dichotomy. This dichotomous communication research gives the impression that White communication is the expected standard of measure or normative (Houston, 2002; Nakyama & Penaloza, 1993; Orbe, 1995). Allowing White communication research to be a key component within African American communication literature it sends the message that research that solely focuses on African American communication is not worthy of attention or publication (Houston, 2002). It also sends the message that African American communication is not nuanced and lacks complexity.

Because a large proportion of African American communication research is conducted outside of African American communities, most African American communication research tends to be highly Eurocentric (Orbe, 1995). This argument is not to say that White researchers conduct inaccurate research while African American researchers are able to conduct accurate research about African American communities;

but merely a plea for all researchers to highlight the diversity found within African American communities.

Within the communication field, African American communication research and African American theoretic paradigms get little to no recognition (Jackson, 2000; Jackson, 2002). In current communication literature, a sign that African American theory-building is unnoticeable and unvalued is the lack of visibility of the research in major textbooks or journals (Jackson, 2000). For example, McPhail's complicity theory or Asante's metatheory of Afrocentricity continues to be unrecognized within the communication discipline (Jackson, 2002). African American communication is subordinated within the discipline, creating a "universal iconography" (Aptheker, 1989), which suggests that all African Americans are alike despite cultural differences (Orbe, 1995). According to Orbe (1995), "Researchers who treat African Americans with no regard to intra-group and personal differences commit disservice to the human spirit of self-assertion and individuality" (p.67). When researchers fail to acknowledge the cultural differences within African Americans they negate the diverse experiences of a large population (Orbe, 1995).

One of the textbooks that does explore African American communication norms, patterns, and identities is *African American: Exploring Identity and Culture* (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). This textbook highlights theoretical paradigms within African American communication and is grounded in African American cultural identities (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). In their book, Hecht et al. (2003) argued that if more communication literature would address the cultural identities of African Americans, the

diverse experiences of African Americans and communal characteristics among African American communities would be better known (Hecht, Jackson, Ribeau, 2003).

Black Communication

Highlighting diverse experiences, backgrounds, and preferences, many African Americans promote their cultural identity by self-labeling a distinct cultural identity. Banks (1981) noted that four popular cultural identities of African Americans are: Black, Black American, Afro-American (which has later involved into African American), and Black Afro American (Banks, 1981; Hecht & Ribeau, 1987; Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003; Jaynes & Williams, 1989; Larkey, Hecht, & Martin 1993). For the purpose of the current research study, when labeling African American cultural identities, Black will be used. The label *Black* was selected because it is reflective of individuals' skin colors and does not ignore individuals of different ethnic descents. In addition, individuals who use the term Black embrace the growing emphasis on cultural pride and heritage (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2002; Larkey et., al, 1993).

Black heritage has affected Black communication and communities (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976). Research by Daniel and Smitherman (1976) provides an insight about communication dynamics within Black communities. Their study concluded that the foundation of Black communities is deeply structured with African traditions. For example, community participation is expected for individuals within Black communities. Community participation is also an important element of the African concept of time (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976). This concept of time navigates away from the idea of focusing on numerical points, but emphasizes community participation in an environment where events take place in cycles (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976). For this reason, it is not

4

important to be "on time" but to be "in time" (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976). Another

important African element that has been integrated within Black communities is call and

response. Call and response serves as a strategy used to unify the speaker and listener

through interaction especially in the Black church (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976). For

instance, call and response occurs when an individual interjects the preacher's sermon by

saying "amen" or "you better preach." Through call and response, Black communities

develop social exchanges that symbolize collectivism rather than individualism (Daniel &

Smitherman, 1976).

Black Male Communication

Although insight of Black communities is improving, there is still a lack of

understanding about gender specific Black communication. Few research studies have

solely focused on specific demographic characteristics of Black communication,

particularly that of Black males (Hopson & Orbe, 2007; Houston, 2002; Orbe, 1994).

Black males are one of the least studied of all groups within the United States (Blake &

Darling, 1994; Stables, 1982). In a study conducted by Houston (2002), based on

interpersonal communication articles published from 1975 to 2000 in international,

national, and regional communication journals, the researcher found only one study

focusing on Black males. A failure to publish research about specific demographic

characteristics, such as gender, creates an increase in overgeneralizations of Black

communication (Orbe, 1995). More communication research needs to focus on the

diversity within Black communication, especially Black male communication.

In order to understand Black male communication, understanding the research on

Black males is essential. Current research labels the Black man "being in crisis", "close

to extinction," and an as "endangered species" (Black Males in Crisis, 2011; Boyd, 2007; Parham & McDavis, 1987). According to Orbe (1994), Black men "are overrepresented in every major social ill and social problem condition in the country, including unemployment, mental disorders, poverty, cases of AIDS, illiteracy, violent crimes, and divorce" (p. 287; Kunjufo, 1991). Because of these conditions Black males face, they are more disconnected from mainstream society (Boyd, 2007; Parham & McDavis, 1987).

Even at a young age, Black boys face difficulties. For example, they struggle to achieve educational success yet perform lower than their peers in almost every academic indicator. They are more likely to drop out of high school, less likely to participate in academic clubs, more likely to be suspended from school, and more likely to be held back a grade (Black Males in Crisis, 2011). Furthermore, Black boys are more than likely to live in poverty because they live in a household where at least one parent does not have consistent or full-time work (Black Males in Crisis, 2011). To complicate matters further, Black boys are increasingly growing up in a household without their fathers (Boyd, 2007). Because Black boys grow up in a household without their father they struggle to understand the concept of being a father and also a man.

The negative conditions and situations of Black boys often suffered during childhood carry on into adulthood. Black men often fall victim to drugs and find themselves incarcerated due to lack of education and lucrative employment options (Boyd, 2007). If a Black man is not incarcerated, he may still face encounters with police officers and be a victim of police brutality and racial profiling (Boyd, 2007). Considering the conditions Black men face, it is easy to understand why a Black man's life

expectancy is more than six years shorter than a White man's (Boyd, 2007; Parham & McDavis, 1987).

The few communication studies that do focus on Black males rarely emphasize the positive aspects of male communication and reinforce existing stereotypes (Canary & Hause, 1993; Orbe, 1995). Research shows that Black men are viewed as being promiscuous (Evans, 2009), violent (Orbe, 1998), poor (Evans, 2009), and thuggish (Evans, 2009). For example, a study completed by Orbe (1998) analyzed Black masculinity on MTV's *The Real World*, focusing on three Black men from different seasons of the reality television show to illustrate how Black men are viewed as being "inherently angry, potentially violent, and sexually aggressive" (Orbe, 1998, p. 35). It is possible that failing to have positive Black male communication represented in the media conclude Black men to internalize these negative images and stereotypes (Blake & Darling, 1994). The internalization of these reoccurring negative images and stereotypes then convince Black males to maintain what they believe is the status quo (Blake & Darling, 1994).

Often, when Blacks males do not fit negative stereotypes they are excluded from the Black community (Fiske & Neuberg, 1990; Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau, 2002). By continuing the media's stereotypical communication images of Blacks, individuals who do not fit into these categories are viewed as a disruption to the group's homogeny (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2002; Wilder, 1986). Black males become alienated within their own communities because they do not fit the image of being a Black male. Creating positive Black male media representations would help decrease the existing destructive way of thinking which is often integrated within Black males (Blake & Darling, 1994).

In a landmark piece, Orbe (1994) interviewed thirty-five Black males to understand the communication patterns and issues of Black men. Using a phenomenological approach, six themes emerged as being central to Black male communication: the importance of communicating with other Black Americans, learning how to interact with non-Black Americans, playing the part, keeping a safe distance, testing the sincerity of non-Black Americans, and an intense social responsibility (Orbe, 1994). The first theme, the importance of communicating with other Black Americans, focuses on the crucial need to communicate with other Blacks to help build a social community (Orbe, 1994). The second theme, learning how to interact with non-Black Americans, Orbe (1994) found that participants stated they learned that Black Americans communicated differently from non-Black Americans due to directly talking with other Blacks about observed interaction and communicative trial and error. For Orbe's (1994) third theme, playing the part, the participants addressed that Black males develop unique communication strategies to survive in a White dominated environment. For example, within the theme of playing the part, Orbe (1994) noted,

> 'Playing the part' involves abandoning the communication styles of the African American community and adopting those associated with the dominant European American culture. This strategy was one that was well-learned from others, as African American men described times where they 'definitely talk white' in business settings, 'tend to straighten up' in meetings, are 'careful not to use any slang'; or as one African American put it, 'talk the part'. (p. 292)

The fourth theme, keeping a safe distance, focused on Black males making a deliberated effort to maintain distance between themselves and Whites because of Blacks' history of discrimination and oppression (Orbe, 1994). Orbe (1994) noted that his participants often found themselves testing the sincerity of non-Black Americans by

8

watching their actions and asking them questions that would reveal sensitivity towards issues important to Black communities (Orbe, 1994). The last theme, an intense social responsibility, focused on Black men feeling the need to encourage and aid other Blacks (Orbe, 1994).

It seems that Black men believe in order to survive in a White dominated culture, they must develop a double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) where they are able to successfully interact interchangeably between Black and White cultures. Black men use this double consciousness identity as a defense mechanism to avoid being labeled by negative racial stereotypes (Orbe, 1994). In essence, Black men are taught to not to be themselves (Orbe, 1994).

Among Black men, one of the most important aspects of Black male communication is male bonding (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). Despite common misconceptions, Black men are able to emotionally connect with other Black men (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2003). Male bonding helps Black men to emotionally connect with other Black men through interaction. It is through male bonding that Black boys learn how to become men and establish their "masculine positionality" (Hecht, Jackson, & Ribeau, 2002, p. 212).

According to Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau (2003), "African American boys continue to be preoccupied with masculinity than manhood" (p. 193). Black boys use their masculinity as self-understanding their strength, fortitude and common sense (Hecht, Jackson, and Ribeau, 2003). In addition, when discussing Black masculinity, heterosexuality seems to be linked to being masculine. Black men are taught that

9

homosexuality is not acceptable in Black culture and homosexuality is associated with

Whiteness. McCune, (2008) supported this argument when he stated:

> Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, during a time when white queer
> politics were pervasive and white queer images were dominant, the
> possibility of a black gay presence in popular culture seemed impossible,
> or at least invisible. Consequently, during my childhood and some of my
> adolescence, I believed that black gay men silenced themselves, or made
> little noise, and never experienced any form of sexual freedom. My black
> queer world consisted of a ravaged imagination with no playground to
> explore and/or to experiment with. This understanding of black gay men
> as invisible or ''quiet'' continued into my collegiate experiences, as the
> predominant gay presence once again was white gay men. (p. 300-301)

According to McCune, (2008), "Recently, however, we have seen the emergence of black

men who have discreet sex with other men, who engage in low-key queer activity and

describe themselves as being on the 'down low' (DL)" (p. 298-299).

Using an ethnographic approach McCune, (2008) examined a gay Black club, in

Chicago where Black down low men are able to negotiate their masculinity while

engaging in queer activities (McCune, 2008). McCune, (2008) argued that being on the

DL not only allows Black men to have sex with men and women, but allows them to

negotiate gender, class, sexuality, and race in a different, more complex way (McCune,

2008).

There could be, but there is not great breadth and depth of understanding and

uncovered in communication research about Black men's experiences. For example,

further research needs to focus on cultural spaces that allow Black men to act as

themselves—one such institution is the Black barbershop.

Black Barbershops

An enduring institution within the Black community is the Black barbershop

(Wright, 1998). The Black barbershop has served and continues to serves as one of the

10

most important social settings for Black men (Wright, 1998). The barbershop is often

viewed as a safe haven, for Black men. According to Wright and Calhoun (2001),

> What the barbershop provides is a most homogenous setting that permits
> men to engage in activities and conversations that could be viewed
> unfavorably by individuals unfamiliar with the patterns of social
> interaction that take place within its confines. Consequently, the absence
> of many women and European (white) Americans from the urban African
> American barbershop give the men who frequent these institutions the
> feeling that 'this place is theirs'. (p.270)

From the time a Black man enters the barbershop until he exits, he is given an

opportunity to receive more than a haircut. Providing interaction with other clients and

barbers, the Black barbershop gives Black men many opportunities to escape any outside

problems (Wright, 1998). In addition, Black men are able to seek guidance and advice

from barbers and other customers (Wood & Burnson, 2011). The barbershop is often a

learning environment where clients and barbers have open dialogue and are able to learn

from each other through lived experiences.

From an ethnographic perspective, Alexander (2003) discussed the barbershop as

an institution of social exchange where culture and community play an influential role.

The researcher (2003) characterized the barbershop as a cultural space that allows the

exchange of ideas and discussions among barbers and other customers. To better

understand the culture of Black barbershops, future studies should focus on the

communication exchanges that occur within the Black barbershop and what

communication occurs in the Black barbershop that makes the barbershop a cultural

institution.

Because Black barbershops provide access to large numbers of Black men in one

setting, recently, medical outreaches and health programs have been implemented in

Black barbershops (Victor et al., 2011; Yancy, 2010). Current research revealed barbershops have replaced churches as community partners for medical outreaches because Black males' attendance in church is decreasing (Victor et al, 2011). Health programs ranged from educating clients about blood pressure to prostate cancer (Cowart, Brown, & Biro, 2004; Magnus 2004a; Magnus, 2004b).

Black barbers have also served as peer educators, health promoters, and health advocates to their clients. Because of the long-term patronage and numerous visits Black barbershops possess, Black barbers are able to deliver intervention messages more repeatedly to their clients (Victor et al., 2011). The barbers also referred their clients to different medical professionals to receive additional health care attention (Victor et al., 2011). Barbers have even gone so far to take on the role of monitoring their clients' blood pressure in between giving haircuts (Victor et al., 2011).

Wright and Calhoun (2001) studied how Black barbershops allowed individuals to emerge as entrepreneurs. Specifically, Wright and Calhoun (2001) described the first type of entrepreneurial activity found in the Black barbershops as legal activity. Legal activity occurs when an individual is either self-employed or working for someone by selling products or services (Wright & Calhoun, 2001). For example, an individual who sells meat will stop in the barbershop to ask individuals if they would like to purchase any meat products. The second entrepreneurial activity that occurs in the barbershop is quasi-legal. In this category of activity, individuals sell products that cannot be identified as legitimate items or stolen items (Wright & Calhoun, 2001). For example, an individual may sell t-shirts to the men in the barbershop. It is difficult to determine if the t-shirt is stolen from a store or if the individual manufactured the shirt him/herself. The

third entrepreneurial activity is illegal activity. Illegal activity occurs when individuals sell items that are stolen or illegally acquired (Wright & Calhoun, 2001). For example, an individual may sell illegal versions of movies or CDs.

Although the majority of barbershop literature focuses on the positives aspects of the barbershop, Franklin (1985) argued that the barbershop is an institution that created and perpetuates sex-role socialization. Franklin (1985) stated that individuals learned the following lessons from the barbershop: violence toward women is acceptable, males should display their masculinity in the Black community, and underplay their masculinity in White dominated cultures. Franklin (1985) argued that the consistent contact with the barbershop can have damaging and destructive effects on "vulnerable minds" (p. 978).

No matter whether the findings of past research are positive or negative, when examining Black barbershops, one of the most consistent elements are the roles of Black barbers. Black barbers contribute to the success of Black barbershops (Wood & Brunson, 2011). To fully understand the significance of Black barbers, the next section outlines the roles they play within the barbershop.

Barber Roles within Commination

The extensive research has been completed on Black barbershops glosses over the important role of the Black barber (Wood & Brunson, 2010; Wright & Calhoun, 2001). To fulfill this research gap, Wood and Brunson (2011) noted the many aspects of Black barbers. Although Wood and Brunson (2011) focused on the historical and geographical location of barbershops in inner suburban St. Louis, Missouri, they discovered the barber's relationship with his clientele contributes to the barbershop's role in the community. For example, they found that Black barbers often serve as father figures for

young children, especially males who do not have a relationship with their father (Wood & Brunson, 2011). In addition, because of the Black barber's role in the community, they often are obligated to act as "community developers" where they promote and participate in the exchange of "antidotes for illnesses" within the barbershop (Wood & Brunson, 2011, p. 240). Therefore, Black barbers often emerged as being informal leaders within the community (Wood & Brunson, 2011). According to Wood and Brunson (2011), "barbers offered the longevity of their businesses and sustained relationships with clients as evidence of their unique contribution to the community" (p.240). Black barbers were even found to provide therapy to their clientele by giving advice to their clients' private issues (Wood & Brunson, 2011).

Summary

Given the important roles of Black barbers and Black barbershops in the Black community, more information about how Black men utilize the Black barbershop and barber is needed. Therefore, this study looks at Black barbers in a Black barbershop to examine the communication occurring in this Black cultural institution. Examining Black men while visiting a Black barbershop and their interactions, the purpose of this study is to examine how Black men communicate in this particular Black community. This purpose led me to ask the following research question:

RQ: How do Black men communicate in a Black barbershop?

METHOD

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design by using in-depth interviews, observations, and a thematic analysis to highlight the participants richly lived experiences within the barbershop. The qualitative research design allowed the themes of Black male communication within the Black barbershop to answer the research question. Below I provided information regarding the sample, data collection, and data analysis.

Study Sample

Recruitment. I employed a purposive sampling method to find several locations of Black barbershops within large metropolitan city in the mid-South. I used social networks and several contacts to help identify potential locations for the study.

Selection. After observing eight barbershops, only one barbershop met the criteria to be included in the study. These criteria included: the barbershop needed to cater to a predominantly Black male clientele, have consistent hours, owned by a Black individual(s), employ Black barbers, be a legal business for at least two years, and have a consistent clientele. After the barbershop was selected, a second set of observations were completed to confirm that the barbershop met the criteria listed here.

The snowball procedure was also employed as barbers and clients of the Black barbershop helped identify potential participants. Within the barbershop, Black men were initially selected based on my observations. A participant had to meet the following criterion to be eligible for the study: a participant needed to be a Black man, attend the

barbershop at least twice a month, patronized only one barber in the barbershop, and had to participate in the conversations held in the barbershop. If the participant agreed to volunteer for the study, a time to meet in the barbershop was determined.

Description. The original sample size consisted of 19 participants; however data from one participant was not included in the analysis. Although this participant was a barber in the Black barbershop, she identified herself as a female and was deemed to be an outlier in the data. Therefore, the female barber was not included in the final data analysis. Eighteen Black males remained in the study, with their ages ranging from 22 to 77 (M=40.83 years) (See Appendix A for participants demographics).

When reporting on how long an individual has been a patron of the barbershop, two participants stated that they attended the barbershop one year to three years, three participants stated they attended the barbershop three years to seven years, four participants stated they had visited the barbershop seven years to nine years, and two participants stated they had attended the barbershop 9 years or more. It is necessary to understand that the barbershop did have a small percentage of White males and Black females clientele, but they were not asked to participate in the study due to the study is focus on Black male communication (See Appendix B for summary of participant demographics).

Data Collection. After receiving Institutional Review Board approval, I acquired an informed consent for the participants before concluding each interview. Additionally, I debriefed each participant at the end of the interview to assure their responses would remain private and confidential. All interviews took place in the barbershop (n=18).

Including describing the study, obtaining informed consent, and debriefing the participant, each interview lasted between 25 to 60 minutes.

Interview Procedures. All in-depth interviews were audio recorded and consisted of open ended questions to capture the interviewees' lived experiences (Patton, 2002) in that the interviewees were able to construct how they understand their experiences and explain their experiences into their own words. These in-depth interviews reflected the interviewees' experiences of being in the Black barbershop and allowed for themes to emerge (Jackson, Drummond, & Camera, 2007). After the interviews were completed, all participants completed a demographic questionnaire. The demographics were incorporated in the study to show the cultural variance within the Black barbershop. The interviewees were asked to provide the following demographics: gender, age, highest level of education completed, marital status, income, and geographic location of residence (See Appendix C for demographic questions).

Participant observations were completed before and after individual interviews. I completed 117 hours of participant observations completed at different times of the day on weekdays and weekends. Participant observations were used to highlight the often overlooked, mundane communication that occurs in interpersonal settings (Patton, 2002). Through observations, the researcher discovered the unspoken rules of the barbershop and unspoken topics within the barbershop. Observations allowed the researcher to incorporate thick descriptions of the setting. Through these descriptions, a better understanding of how Black men communicate within the barbershop and the importance of the barbershop to the Black community were revealed.

Interview Guide. There were three sets of interview questions. The first set of interview questions consisted of 21 questions that were asked of everyone (See Appendix D for standard interview questions). These questions were designed to better understand Black male communication. The second set of interview questions consisted of 23 questions designed to better understand the Black barber's perspective of the barbershop and Black male communication (See Appendix E for set of barber interview questions). The third set of interview questions was tailored to the Black male clientele of the barbershop and consisted of 13 questions. These questions examined the client's perspective of the barbershop, barber, and Black male communication (See Appendix F for set of client interview questions). All sets of questions utilized a funnel-based approach, beginning with the participant being asked about the barbershop and moving to more specific questions regarding personal experiences, challenges, and communication in the barbershop.

The first interview set included questions such as: "How would you describe this barbershop?", "How did you start coming to this barbershop?", "What are some of the reasons you continue to come to this barbershop?", "Why do you come to this barbershop?", "What are some of the unspoken rules of the barbershop?", and "Do you feel that you can talk about anything in the barbershop? If so why or why not?"

The second interview set included questions such as: "How would you describe your relationship with your clients?", "Why did you decide to work at this barbershop?", "What does the barbershop mean to you?", "Why are you a barber?" "What are important features of being a barber?", "Why are barbershops important?", "Why are barbers

important?", and "Do you think you have an active role in the community because of the barbershop?"

The third interview set contained question such as: "If your barber left this barbershop to work for another barbershop, would you follow him or continue to come to this barbershop?", "How would you describe your relationship with your barber?", "What are some of the things you talked about with your barber?", "How does the barber meet or not meet the needs of his clientele?", "How do you think the barber is viewed?", and "Walk me through a typical appointment."

Data Analysis

All in-depth interviews were transcribed verbatim. No new themes emerged after the 15th interview; three additional interviews were conducted to assure theoretical saturation was reached.

Once the interviews were transcribed the interviews were coded for emergent themes. Using Owen's criteria for thematic analysis, the data was considered a theme when the following criteria were met: recurrence, repetition, and forcefulness (Owen, 1984). Recurrence occurred when similar meanings of "different discourse" occurred throughout the observations and in-depth interviews (Owen, 1984, p. 276). Repetition referred to repeated use of key words or phrases (Owen, 1984). Forcefulness implied emphasizing words and key phrases (Owen, 1984). The two themes captured in this analysis uncovered important elements of how Black men communicate. The themes that emerged not only met Owen's criteria but offered understanding to the research question that was presented.

Research Setting

The Black barbershop examined in the study is located in the southeast side of a large metropolitan city in the mid-South and will be referred to the pseudonym "Charlie's Barbershop". Charlie's Barbershop prides itself on being the first Black barbershop in the southeast part of the city and has been open for fourteen years.

Over the years, Charlie has employed a total of 11 barbers within the shop and only four have not maintained employment at the barbershop because they were not able to "fit into" the barbershop environment. The shop has eight barber seats. Charlie rents seven barber seats to his barbers and maintains the eighth seat for his own clientele. Each barber is responsible for paying Charlie a weekly fee for renting the barbers seat.

The clientele of Charlie's Barbershop represents a cross-section of the metropolitan city ranging from self-described "city officials" to "drug dealers." The majority of the barbershop's clientele would be identified as working-class individuals. Although the barbershop's clientele is majority males, it is important to note that some women come in to get their hair lined, eyebrows arched, or to bring their male children for a haircut. Also, Charlie's Barbershop appeals to a wide age-range of clients from young boys who are still in diapers to men in their early 80s.

The barbershop is open for walk-ins five days a week with the following hours: Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, the barbershop is opened on Monday for individuals who have scheduled appointments. Despite the barbershop having scheduled hours, each barber maintains his or her own schedule. Because each barber has a key to the Charlie's

20

Barbershop, he or she is flexible in seeing his or her clients. For instance, "Eric" often works Tuesday through Saturday and starts his shift at 1:30 p.m. while "Tim" only works on Friday and Saturday.

To understand the dynamics of Charlie's Barbershop, it is also important to note the layout of the barbershop. There is a large area that contains six barber seats with four areas of waiting seats. There is an extension to the building where two more barber seats are located with another waiting area. Because clients often sit in the waiting area closest to their barbers, the clients in the large area do not greet the barbers in the extension area. The barbers and their clients located in the extension areas are often isolated from the majority of the shop because of separation caused by the walls. Only when the men have entered or exited the barbershop are they greeted and acknowledged by the other men in the barbershop (See Appendix G for layout of Charlie's Barbershop).

RESULTS

From the interviews with the Black men in the Charlie's Barbershop, two overarching themes emerged: Masculinity versus Manhood and Rigidity versus Fluidity. Below I examined these two dichotomies.

Masculinity vs. Manhood

The first overarching theme that emerged from the text referred to the dichotomy of the masculinity versus manhood within the Black barbershop. Throughout the interviews, participants differentiated masculinity from manhood. The masculinity theme revealed acceptable and unacceptable nonverbal and verbal behaviors for Black men to display in the barbershop. In essence, masculinity refers to how Black men are supposed to act in a "manly way." Manhood refers to the political construction of manhood that emerged from experiences lived by Black men in the barbershop. More specifically, manhood referred to the performance of responsibilities associated with Black men. The theme revealed several roles Black men play in the barbershop such as role model, father figure, therapist, and community activist.

Masculinity. On one side of the dichotomy is masculinity. To confirm the masculinity of the barbershop, several participants described the barbershop as a "manly" environment. Participant 001 labeled the barbershop as a "man's man shop." Participant 003 also mentioned that the barbershop is a man's space; therefore individuals have to "respect a man's space." Because the barbershop places men together in a close proximity, in order for "their masculinity not be questioned" they must physically be

spaced out from each other. For instance, I observed a customer physically move chairs to allow an empty chair between him and another customer.

Furthermore, participant 003 mentioned that it is crucial for individuals to not perform any "unmanly" activities. The participant used the example of picking lent out of a man's hair as an unmanly activity. Instead, individuals should brush the lent out of the man's hair. Because the barbers' job involves a great deal of touching, it is important for the barbers to remain masculine as the touch other men's heads.

Individuals displayed their masculinity in the barbershop as a technique to handle the barbershop culture. Participant 007 described the barbershop where teasing and banter occurs. As the participant explained, "if you can't handle the heat don't come in here." If individuals failed to display their masculinity they are viewed as weak and encouraged to leave the barbershop environment. The participant then stated, "if you can't handle what they are talking about then leave. People say anything in the barbershop, especially in here." In essence, Black men use their masculinity to demonstrate to the other men that they are able to handle the teasing in the barbershop.

To attest to their masculinity, one of the popular topics discussed in the barbershop is women. For instance, participant 003 stated that women were a popular topic in the barbershop. He further revealed that most of the conversations focused on their physical attributes and participant 013 mentioned that he and his barber have had conversations about strip clubs. Participant 006 mentioned a popular topic of conversation is the differences between men and women, but more specifically different mental characteristics of a woman. Participant 014 mentioned that "you can't bring your

23

wife in the barbershop because we talk about women a lot." He further added that when a woman comes in with her child, the men are "checking her out and discussing her." In addition, participant 012 also mentioned that conversations centered on heterosexual sex. More specifically, men talked about "not being able to rise to the occasion". If a man is unable to perform sexual acts, he is not considered a real man, thus his masculinity is then questioned. By boasting about sexual performance, the men were able to affirm their masculinity. In essence, Black men in the barbershop used the physical appearance of women and sexual topics to confirm their masculinity as they talk to other men in the barbershop.

Another topic that affirmed masculinity in the barbershop is sexual orientation. Participant 012 mentioned "gay jokes" are often included in the conversations. He further explained that these gay jokes often serve as icebreakers and are not use to offend individuals. In essence, the "gay jokes" confirmed that the men believe being masculine is associated with being hyper-heterosexual. Furthermore, "gay jokes" allow heterosexual Black men to contrast themselves against homosexual Black men who are perceived to be less masculine.

Another popular topic to verify one's masculinity was sports talk. Participant 007 mentioned that in the Black barbershop "you may learn a sport statistic you were unfamiliar with." Participant 001 mentioned that the LeBron James versus Kobe Bryant topic is debated daily. It is in these conversations that individuals revealed their knowledge of sports. Furthermore, it is through sports talk that individuals are able to display their masculinity to the other men of the barbershop by knowing sports statistics.

When describing the conversations discussed in the barbershop, participant 002 referred to these dialogues as "manly conversations." He further elaborated that "manly conversations" included the politics Black men have to deal with and their experiences as a Black man. According to participant 007, one of the most popular topics is referred to as "baby mama drama." When discussing "baby mama drama," the men of the barbershop explain difficulties they encounter when dealing with the women of their children. Participant 006, who works at Charlie's Barbershop, mentioned that he and his clients often discuss "Commonwealth versus the man." He further explained that the court system often supports the woman in a custody or child support case. Participant 009, who is also a barber in the barbershop, mentioned one of his clients disclosed to him that he had to attend court because of a child support hearing. The men believe the court system makes it extremely hard for men to play an active part in their children's lives.

Manhood. One the other side of the dichotomy is the men's ideas of manhood. The men's interpretation of manhood was revealed through their interactions with other men. For instance, Black men within the barbershop served as father figures to their own children but also to individuals who do not have paternal relationships. Participant 012 mentioned the barbers told him "he needed to get his butt back in school" and stay in school until he graduated. He also mentioned that the barbers would "stay on him" to make sure he went to school everyday. In essence, Black men of the barbershop fulfilled the role the father figure by acting as a discipliner, reprimanding the participant if he failed to attend school. In addition, the men of the barbershop acted as a nurturer by providing support and motivation for the participant to complete school.

Several participants of the study stated that the barbershop helped individuals become men by raising children into adults. The barbershop is able to instill what being a man is about in the Black youth, specifically Black boys by allowing them to take on responsibilities in the barbershop. Participant 005 described throughout the years the Black barbershop has allowed young Black boys to spend their days sweeping hair and running errands for the barbers. According to participant 007, the barbershop is viewed as a "rite of passage." More specifically, the barbershop is a cultural institution where young Black boys transform into Black men. In essence, because of the clientele of the barbershop, Black men are able to learn from other Black men of "how to be a man" and "what it means to be a man."

Participant 002 goes into depth by saying the barbershop and the people within the barbershop taught him to "handle his business." More specifically, it was in the barbershop that the participant was able to interact with individuals who helped instill characteristics such as being responsible and providing his family with a stable, healthy household. Participant 002 further explained being a barber in the barbershop helped him become responsible and self-disciplined. In essence, participant 002's responses described how being a part of the barbershop culture for fourteen years helped him enter manhood.

Secondly, through dialogue and interactions Black men are able to serve as role models to other Black men. Several of the barbers mentioned that being a barber changes the stereotypical image of successful Black men. For instance, participant 001 described himself as being a role model by being a "professional man who is not in corporate America." In essence, the Black barber creates an image that individuals can be

successful without being forced to wear a suit or tie. The Black barbers demonstrate individuals can be viewed as being professionally dressed by wearing jeans and a button down shirt. Furthermore, individuals can be successful by working a job that they enjoy. In addition, the barbers serve as a lens to the clientele. It is through this lens that individuals of the barbershop understand the importance of developing a trade and using that trade to provide stability in their lives. It is in the barbershop that individuals can learn from other Black men about being a man.

Not only did the men serve as role models, but so did Charlie's barbershop. This barbershop is identified as being the first Black barbershop in the area. Participant 017 stated, "I think it is good we support Black owned business for one to see them strive cause there are not too many in the area." The participant then continues by mentioning the deterioration of other Black owned businesses. This participant's response revealed the images of successful Black businesses are rare. This Black barbershop illustrates that Black businesses are able to succeed. Furthermore, the Black barbershop represents success to this Black community.

Third, Black men emerged as therapists in the Black barbershop. As therapists, the men of the barbershop fulfill several roles by providing advice or just listening to each other. Participant 008 elaborated on his relationship with several barbers of the shop by explaining "once you sit in the barbershop chair you begin to talk about subjects "you never thought you would talk about." Participant 001 mentioned because he has been married for fifteen years, he often receives questions about relationships and maintaining a healthy marriage. Black men at Charlie's Barbershop provide other with

advice about handling specific situations, like marriage. In essence, the barbers and clients fulfilled the needs of the community by serving as unlicensed therapists.

The conversations that emerged in the barbershop confirmed individuals' manhood. For instance, one of the most popular conversations topics discussed in the barbershop is family or family related problems. To confirm their manhood about being responsible, participant 006 mentioned he and his clients discuss men who are "not taking care of their responsibilities." In essence, the barbers and the clients often discuss other men who are not fathering their children to demonstrate how they reveal are active fathers. In addition, the men of the barbershop confirm their manhood by contrasting their actions against men who are absent in their children's lives.

Although it is usually the Black barber that emerges as a therapist, sometimes it is the barber that seeks advice from other men in the barbershop. For instance, participant 004 mentioned a conversation he had with another barber about becoming a father, giving spiritual advice to the other barber. He comforted the other barber by stating that he would be able to provide for his newborn child. It this case, a barber became the client and received therapeutic services.

Lastly, the behaviors of the men within the Black barbershop revealed that they served as community activists. In order for the men to emerge as community activists, a community needs to be formed. The barbershop created this community atmosphere. Participant 008 described when he first came to the barbershop he was not familiar with anyone in the shop. Yet, during his first visit the barbers were able to make him "part of something." Furthermore, the community atmosphere made it "comfortable to get a

haircut." In sum, the barbershop, but more specifically, the barbers function as community developers in discovering what are the needs of the clients and fulfilling those needs.

In addition, participant 004 described the barbershop as being the "foundation of Blacks." He further explains that the Black barbershop is the "soul of Blacks," specifically Black men because the barbershop brings communities together. Also, the barbers create dialogue to bring awareness to community needs. But more importantly, the barbershop is a cultural environment that brings individuals together through dialogue. It is through dialogue that individuals become aware of and share community problems. Furthermore, it is the dialogue that promotes change to solve community problems. Participant 008 explained the barbershop as "brings us mostly together as a community." He further explained that because the barbershop has a small white percentage of White customers it makes the community "more unified." In a sense, the Black barbershop serves as a safe common ground for both Black and White men to interact verbally and nonverbally. But more specifically, the Black barbershop provides an environment where Black men do not mask themselves in the presence of White men.

The barbershop meets the needs of the community by being active and having a presence within the community. For example, the barbershop has hosted several concealed weapon license classes by the request of the clientele. Furthermore, the barbershop is the home base of a youth football team. In addition, the barbershop gave out free haircut coupons to assist with the local church events. Also, at the beginning of each school year, the barbershop offered free haircuts to children whose parents cannot

afford a haircut. It is through these various activities that the barbershop is able to meet the needs of the community.

An important element of being a community activist is understanding the needs of the community and assisting the community's members. For instance, participant 004, the oldest barber of barbershop, described how the barbershop community came together to help him when he had a stroke. He further explained the barbershop community provided him with financial assistance when he was unable to work. In addition, participant 004 attested it was because of the support and love from the barbershop community that brought him "back to life" but also back to the barbershop. Participant 004 mentioned that it was not until being sick did he realize the camaraderie he had with the barbershop community.

According to participant 005, "without them there is no us." In essence, the participant recognized the barbers' and barbershop's need of the community. For this reason, it is essential in meeting the needs of the client, but more specifically the community. By meeting the needs of the community, the barbershop is able to remain in business. Participant 005 described the barbers' versatility as creating collectivism within the community. One way to ensure the community needs are meant is for barbers to be multidimensional and being able to cut and design any type of hair. Participant 005 stated, "a Black barber will try to cut a White person hair. They may get in the chair and their name might be Tommy getting in the chair but when they get out of the chair their name is Tyrone." In essence, Black barbers are trained to adapt to the specific needs of the client while staying true to Black cultural identity and norms. Participant 006 mentioned both the neighborhood and the barbershop catering to each other's needs.

30

More specifically, placing a Black barbershop in the current location eliminated the far commute for the community members. Because of the convenience Charlie's Barbershop provided its clients, the clientele has supported the barbershop by keeping the barbershop in business for fourteen years. It is through meeting the needs of the community that the men of the barbershop are able to understand and demonstrate manhood.

Participant 004 further explained, "it is not the haircut that the barbers and barbershop provides the client with, but rather it is the people in the barbershop." The community has a sense of loyalty to the barbershop and barber because of the services both the barber and barbershop provide. The barbershop and barbers are able to provide the community with self-confidence to feel good about themselves.

Rigidity vs. Fluidity

The second overarching theme that emerged from the data refers to the dichotomy of the communicative culture within the Black Barbershop shop. The men of Charlie's Barbershop struggle to find the balance in the barbershop. The barbershop communication is described as fluid because it created an open environment where almost any topic or subject can be discussed. However, the barbershop is also described as rigid when full disclosure is discouraged or when Black men did not conform to a masculine communication style in the Black barbershop.

Fluidity. Fluidity emerged from the interviews to capture the Black barbershop's openness. Participant 001 described the barbershop where "anyone is welcomed." According to participant 002, the barbershop is a "place of solitude." It is in the Black barbershop where a Black man can be given privacy to discuss anything he wants to

31

discuss. Participant 012 described the barbershop as being a "safe house." More specifically, the barbershop is safe environment where Black men are able to self-disclose freely without any consequences. For instance, participant 006 described the Black barbershop as a location that allowed "you to be anything you wanted to be and say anything as a Black man." In the barbershop Black men are able to strip away societal expectations and perceptions of what Black men are. Participant 012 further mentioned that the barbershop is where individuals can "venture and converse" and "place to be ourselves." He further added that Black barbershop culture "makes you feel good about yourself." Several participants even mentioned that the fluidity of the barbershop allowed for open dialogue about any subject due to the Black barbershop's ability to create a safe environment for Black men. According to several of the participants, there is not a subject that is not talked about or mentioned in the barbershop. It is through the open dialogue that individuals can express and discuss anything as a Black man.

It is the Black barbershop's environment that allowed open communication. According to participant 008, the barbershop atmosphere is described as an environment that "makes you want to wait an hour to get your hair cut." In the barbershop, especially on the weekend, customers can expect to wait for several hours to get a haircut from their barber. Described by participant 006, the barbershop is more than just a place to receive a haircut; rather the Black barbershop is a "Black man's country club." He further explained the Black barbershop is a place where "you can exhale." Black barbers create the atmosphere that allows the Black community to express themselves in a positive, safe environment. Participant 004 described the barbershop as being the only place where Black men are "free" without being criticized by their wives or their jobs. He further

explained that a Black man can "be himself" and "be natural" in the Black barbershop. Also, Black men are able to "laugh and feel good." The fluidity of the barbershop allowed the men to be themselves within social constraints.

Participant 013 described the barbershop as a "being laid back" and as "place of release." He further explained the barbershop is where "if you have any issues that you want to talk about you can talk about them in here without having no trouble or without having to worry about somebody taking you to HR." Because it is an open environment, it seems as if rules do not exist within the barbershop.

Rigidity. It is only after individuals become enmeshed within the barbershop that the men display rigidity when communicating. Rigidity emerged from the data due to Black men's hesitation to fully self-disclose in the barbershop. For example, several participants stated that everything is talked about from sports to matters going on in one's personal household. Yet, participant 001 stated that he was guarded when disclosing personal matters due to fear of exposure. More specifically, participant 007 expressed concern about having his personal matters revealed throughout the city by the patrons. Displaying the rigidity of the barbershop culture, participant 002 attested that individuals should not talk about in-depth family issues such as martial problems with one's wife. Participant 005 further confirmed that individuals should not disclose personal information of other individuals. In addition, participant 006 explained that despite being able to talk about anything in the barbershop, he only offered advice to his clients when he is asked to do so. It is because of the concern of exposure that the unspoken rule of not repeating barbershop talk outside of the barbershop is revealed.

Because the barbershop identifies as a family oriented environment, another unspoken rule of censoring the conversation or language is revealed. According to participant 006, "the conversation flows according to a customer base." When females are in the barbershop, the male patrons and barbers often avoid any discussions about women. In addition, the barbers and patrons modify their language by avoiding vulgar or sexually explicit language in front of women. The men barbers and patrons also modify their language for smaller children. The unspoken rule of modifying one's language in the barbershop is also applied by the young male patrons and barbers when communicating with the older clientele.

Participant 013 mentioned that "you don't want to come in here in a messed up way." He elaborated how individuals dress or act can cause individuals to be talked about. To not be singled out, Black men are forced to incorporate the acceptable image of a Black man. For instance, a participant recalled when a client came into the barbershop with Velcro shoes. Because of this fashion failure, the man was teased by the other men in the barbershop. Since the client failed to adapt or understand the standards of the barbershop, he was reprimanded by being teased and hackled by the other men of the barbershop. The unspoken rule of dressing in a presentable manner is emerged. In addition, individuals must understand current fashion trends.

# DISCUSSION

Harris-Lacewell (2004) described Black public spaces as "heart of Black counterpublic" (p. 8). She further described Black public spaces as forums where Blacks are expected to be in the presence of other Blacks (Harris-Lacewell, 2004). According to the researcher, "Black public spaces are unique because African Americans come together in these arenas because of their blackness in a way that can, but does not necessarily, happen in other counterpublic arenas" (p. 8). She further described Black-owned and supported barbershops as Black public spaces because of the permanence of the physical spaces, even though the individuals who engage in this Black public space are constantly changing (Harris-Lacewell, 2004). In addition, Harris-Lacewell mentioned Black barbershops as selected communities where men come to "confirm and affirm". (Harris-Lacewell, 2004). In essence, Black barbershops emerge as a gathering place for Black men.

In this study, according to several participants, the Black barbershop is an important element of the Black community. The Black barbershop and the community have a dependent relationship where one is not able to succeed without the other. Charlie's Barbershop depends on its customers to maintain its success. In addition, the customers expected the barbershop to provide support to the community. Because of this mutually dependent relationship, the barbershop maintained an active role within the community is identified as being the heart of the Black community.

Not only do the clients have a sense of loyalty to the barbershop but the barbers as well. For instance, the owner of the barbershop revealed that in the fourteen years that the barbershop has been in business, only four barbers were not able to maintain a part of the barbershop culture. Several of participants who identified themselves as being clients revealed that if their barbers were to leave and work at another barbershop they would follow their barber.

Nunley (2011) described the barbershop as a place where Black men "dream about, wrestle with, and struggle for their social, political, and spiritual lives" (p. 85). Furthermore, the researcher described the dialogue that emerges from the Black barbershops as "African American male way of knowing" (p. 2). Also the researcher explained that the barbershop is an equal playing field where both Black boys and men negotiate their masculinity. It is in the Black barbershop where individuals are praised for demonstrating their masculinity and manhood (Nunley, 2011).

In the current study, Black men reveal the barbershop provided different services. The barbershop is a safe house where Black men are able to escape problems. In addition, the barbershop served as a location for rites of passage, transitioning from boys to men. Also, Charlie's Barbershop serves as a cultural location which encourages dialogue between men. It is through the dialogue and common experiences where Black men are able to bond.

In this study, Black men used dialogue and interactions to discuss the performance of responsibilities associated with being Black men, as well as their experiences. In addition, it is through these exchanges that men express the struggle

between negotiating their masculinity and manhood in Charlie's Barbershop. But more specifically, Black barbershop discourse allowed men to affirm both their masculinity and manhood to other men within the barbershop.

It is through chauvinist dialogue about sex, sexual orientation, and women that Black men able to confirm their masculinity. By addressing and using homosexuality in a humorous way, Black men are able to confirm their masculinity if they were not viewed as being homosexual by other Black men. It is also through banter that the men demonstrate that they are tough enough to endure the barbershop culture. Sports talk often allowed Black men to demonstrate their masculinity. It is through the conversations within Charlie's Barbershop that individuals prove to other Black men that they are masculine.

Black men of the barbershop feel that establishing their manhood is just as important as affirming their masculinity in the barbershop. Through the interactions and dialogue, Black men discussed topics such as fatherhood and being responsible to their families. Not only did Black men discuss topics that aided their credibility of manhood, they also demonstrated their manhood. For instance, Black men in the barbershop fulfilled several roles. In essence, Black men demonstrated being versatile to meet the needs of the barbershop culture. More specifically, Black men fulfilled the role of father to their biological children but also as surrogate fathers to children who did not have relationships with their fathers or who needed the guidance of positive Black men in their lives. Black men also served as unlicensed therapists to each other. It is in the barbershop, but more specifically in the barber seat, where men disclose their personal problems and experiences of being a Black man.

Nunley (2011) described barbershops as being a hush harbor where Blacks are able to be candid and frank with other Blacks. Black barbershops allow individuals to function as philosophers to provide knowledge and experiences to other individuals in the barbershop (Nunley, 2011). According to Nunley (2011), "barbershops become de facto schools of black ritual, culture, and communal and individuals subjectivities" (p. 76). In essence, it is vital to Black culture, but more specifically, the barbershop is vital to addressing "intracultural concerns."

In this study, it was discovered that Black men struggle between wanting to share more deeply and knowing how to communicate in the Black barbershop. Black men disclosed that they were able to talk about anything in the barbershop, yet when Black men disclosed verbally and nonverbally they felt it was necessary to display their manhood and masculinity for the other men in Charlie's Barbershop.

Murphy (1998) mentioned Black barbershops require Black men to learn unspoken etiquette. At a young age, he discovered it was an unspoken etiquette to ask the barber how many customers where ahead of him to determine when it would be his turn to receive his haircut. Furthermore, Murphy (1998) described that it was not until he was a teen did he begin to understand the unspoken and unwritten etiquette.

In this study, the unspoken rules of the barbershop emerged because of the interactions and dialogue Black men have with other Black men. The unspoken rules are never discussed in the barbershop. Individuals who know and understand the rules are deeply rooted within the barbershop culture. Revealing the unspoken rules, one learns that the barbershop is not as free and open as Black men describe it to be. By verbally

revealing the unspoken rules, the men then break the unspoken rule of disclosing too much information. With the barbershop, Black men are hesitant about disclosing too much information due to exposure. But more specifically, the threat exposure weakens Black men's masculinity and manhood. Individuals who disclosed felt that the exposure would challenge their masculinity and manhood.

As stated previously, the barbershop in the study had a small percentage of Black female clientele. For this reason, future studies should explore how women define their space and disclose within the Black barbershop which was identified as a male dominated environment. Because the barbershop employed a female barber, future research should examine if the gender of a female barber affects how she is able to communicate in the Black barbershop. Since masculinity and manhood play an influential role in how Black men communicate within the barbershop, future studies should focus on how gay Black men communicate within the barbershop. Future studies should focus in these areas to develop the literature that focuses on Black men but also to understand how gender and sexuality might affect self-disclosure within the Black barbershop.

Although this study will enhance Black male communication literature, there are several limitations to this study. First, the study was conducted by a female researcher in a male dominated environment. Although the participants and the researcher are of the same race, there is a gender difference. For this reason, it would be interesting to learn if a male researcher received the same responses from the same participants. Another limitation of the study is that it was completed only at one barbershop in a metropolitan city in a southern state. It is difficult to tell if the same themes would emerge in other Black barbershops. The last limitation of the study was that the thematic analysis and

coding was conducted by one researcher. It is difficult to determine if the themes would

emerge if another researcher analyzed the in-depth interviews.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study focused on how Black men communicate in the barbershop. This study found that barbershop communication revolved around Black men feeling dichotomized between being masculine but also a man. Black men in the study used sports talk, the politics of being a Black men, sex, and sexual orientation to define and disclose their masculinity in the barbershop. In relation to being a man, Black men served as father figures, community activists, therapists, and role models, to display their manhood.

In addition, Black men described the barbershop as an environment where individuals are able to self-disclose about any subject matter. It is through this fluid open community that Black men disclose the importance of the barbershop community and culture. Yet, Black men express rigidity about disclosing too much information to the barbershop community. The rigid environment of the barbershop allowed` the unspoken rules of the barbershop to emerge.

Although the study centered on the communication process of Black men in the Black barbershop, it is important to note that this discourse may not have occurred if it was not for the Black barbershop. The barbershop gives the Black community a physical location that allows individuals to engage with each other in a safe atmosphere where individuals are able to be a part of something. The barbershop brought the men together and allowed them to form a community. For Black men, the barbershop is their meeting place. It is a place where "guys get to come in and be men" (Participant 017). The Black

barbershop creates "brotherhood and fellowship." The barbershop represents male Black culture. Best stated by one of the participants, the black barbershop represents "our culture, it is black culture; it is black men's culture stripped down raw. It is how we are – it is men being men without having to apologize for it."

In conclusion, the men of Charlie's Barbershop rejected the negative stereotypes that are often associated with Black men. These men are in committed relationships, they have regular employment, and they refuse to internalize the negative stereotypes of being a Black man. It is in Charlie's Barbershop that the men understand the rewards of being Black men and embrace being labeled as a Black man. In Charlie's Barbershop, I was able to discover how Black men communicate verbally and nonverbally to portray their-masculinity and what they think it means to be a Black man. It is through these interactions that I was able to understand and embrace the Black barbershop culture.

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45

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## APPENDIX A-Participant Demographics

| Date of Birth | 5/18/74 | 3/9/75 | 9/23/74 | 3/22/48 | 9/8/72 | 8/31/69 | 4/9/77 | 9/27/57 | 8/15/74 | 9/4/51 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classification | 001 | 002 | 003 | 004 | 005 | 006 | 007 | 008 | 009 | 010 |
| Marital Status | Married | Married | Married | Married | Married | Divorced | Committed relationship | Single, never been married | Married | Married |
| Highest Level of Education | Specialty education | Specialty education | Associate's degree | Bachelor's degree | Some College | Some College | Bachelor's degree | $12^{th}$ grade/ high school/ G.E.D | Specialty education | Bachelor's Degree |
| Barber/Client | Barber | Barber | Barber | Barber | Barber | Barber | Client | Client | Barber | Client |
| Travel time to barbershop | 5 minutes | 20 minutes | 7 minutes | 30 minutes | 20 minutes | 15 minutes | 20 minutes | 5 minutes | 20 minutes | 10 minutes |
| Form of transportation | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Walks | Drives self | Drives self |
| Current Employment Status | Works part-time | Works full-time | Works full-time | Works part-time | Works full-time | Works full-time | Self-employed | Works full-time | Works part-time | Retired for 5 months |
| Current household income | 15, 001-30, 000 | 45,001-60,000 | 60,001-75,000 | 15,001-30,000 | 30,001-45, 000 | 30,001-45, 000 | 15,001-30,000 | 30,001-45, 000 | 0-15,000 | 75,001 + |
| Visits to the barbershop | 5 days per week | 5 days per week | 5 days per week | 2 days per week | 5 days per week | 5 days per week | 2 days per week | 1 day per week | 2 days per week | 2 times per month |
| Duration of visit at the barbershop | 3.5 hours-4 hours | 4 hours or more | 4 hours or more | 4 hours or more | 4 hours or more | 4 hours or more | 2.5 hours-3 hours | 1 hour-1.5 hours | 4 hours or more | 31-45 minutes |
| Relationship with barbershop | 9 years or more | 9 years or more | 9 years or more | 9 years or more | 9 years or more | 7 years to 9 years | 7 years to 9 years | 1 year to 3 years | 1 year to 3 years | 3 years to 7 years |
| Type of household | Apartment | House | House | House | House | Apartment | House | House | House | House |
| Length of | 40:44 | 30:16 | 60:11 | 41:50 | 33.23 | 28:25 | 25:29 | 31:40 | 26:01 | 31:52 |

| Interview | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes | minutes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Date of Birth | 5/5/34 | 9/2/81 | 08/04/80 | 11/28/78 | 6/11/1985 | 1/23/71 | 3/3/90 | 7/25/85 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Classification | 011 | 012 | 013 | 014 | 015 | 016 | 017 | 018 |
| Marital Status | Married | Committed relationship | Married | Single, never married | Single, never been married | Single, never been married | Committed relationship | Single, never married |
| Highest Level of Education | 12th grade /high school/ G.E.D | Associate's degree | 12th grade/high school/ G.E.D | Some college | Associate's degree | Some college | Some college | Bachelor's degree |
| Barber/Client | Client | Client | Client | Client | Client | Client | Client | Client |
| Travel time to barbershop | 20 minutes | 30 minutes | 15 minutes | 15 minutes | 20 minutes | 10 minutes | 5 minute | 3 minutes |
| Form of transportation | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self | Drives self |
| Current employment Status | Retired | Works full-time | Works full-time | Works full-time | Works full-time | Works full-time | Works part-time | Works part-time |
| Current household income | Did not disclose | 30,001-45,000 | 30,001-45,000 | 15,001-30,000 | 30,001-45,000 | 45,001-60,000 | 15,001-30,000 | 15,001-30,000 |
| Visits to the barbershop | 2 times per month | 3 times per week | 2 times per month | 2 times per month | 2 times per month | 2 times per month | 3 times per month | 2 times per month |
| Duration of visit at the barbershop | 1 hour-1.5 hours | 2 hours-2.5 hours | 2 hours-2.5 hours | 1 hour-1.5 hours | 1 hour-1.5 hours | 31-45 minutes | 16-30 minutes | 1.5 hours-2 hours |
| Relationship with barbershop | 7 years to 9 years | 9 years or more | 3 years to 7 years | 3 years to 7 years | 7 years to 9 years | 1 year to 3 years | 9 years or more | 7 years to 9 years |
| Type of household | House | House | House | House | Apartment | House | House | House |
| Length of Interview | 26.29 minutes | 26.42 minutes | 28.25 minutes | 29.42 minutes | 40 minutes | 29.08 minutes | 36.58 minutes | 26.02 minutes |

APPENDIX B-Summary of Participant Demographics

| Characteristics | Percentage | |
|---|---|---|
| Marital Status | Married | 50% |
| | Divorced | 5.5% |
| | Committed relationship | 16.7% |
| | Single, never been married | 27.8% |
| Highest Level of Education | Some college | 27.8% |
| | Specialty education | 16.7% |
| | Associate's Degree | 16.7% |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 22.1% |
| | 12 grade/high school/G.E.D. | 16.7% |
| Barber/ Client | Barber | 38.9% |
| | Client | 61.1% |
| Travel time to barbershop | 3 minutes | 5.5% |
| | 5 minutes | 16.7% |
| | 7 minutes | 5.5% |
| | 10 minutes | 11.1% |
| | 15 minutes | 16.7% |
| | 20 minutes | 33.4% |
| | 30 minutes | 11.1% |
| Form of transportation | Drives self | 94.4% |
| | Walks | 5.6% |
| Current employment Status | Works part-time | 27.8% |
| | Works full-time | 55.6% |
| | Self-employed | 5.5% |
| | Retired | 11.1% |
| Current household income | 0-15,000 | 5.6% |
| | 15,001-30,000 | 33.3% |
| | 30,001-45,000 | 33.3% |
| | 45,001-60,000 | 11.1% |
| | 60,001-75,000 | 5.5% |
| | 75,000 + | 5.6% |
| | Did not disclose | 5.6% |
| Visits to the barbershop | 1 day per week | 5.5% |
| | 2 days per week | 16.8% |
| | 3 days per week | 5.5% |
| | 5 days per week | 27.8% |
| | 2 times per month | 38.9% |
| | 3 times per month | 5.5% |
| Duration of visit at the barbershop | 16-30 minutes | 5.5% |
| | 31-45 minutes | 11.2% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1 hour-1.5 hours | 22.3% |
| | 1.5 hours-2 hours | 5.5% |
| | 2 hours-2.5 hours | 11.2% |
| | 2.5 hours-3 hours | 5.5% |
| | 3.5 hours-4 hours | 5.5% |
| | 4 hours or more | 33.3% |
| Relationship with barbershop | 1 year to 3 years | 16.7% |
| | 3 years to 7 years | 16.7% |
| | 7 years to 9 years | 27.8% |
| | 9 years or more | 38.8% |
| Type of household | House | 16.7% |
| | Apartment | 83.3% |

APPENDIX C-Demographics Questions

1. What is your date of birth?

2. How do you describe your gender?

    a. Male

    b. Female

    c. Other_____

3. How do you describe your race/ethnicity?

    a. Black—Not Hispanic

    b. White—Not Hispanic

    c. Hispanic or Latino

    d. Asian or Pacific Islander

    e. Other (Please Specify):_____

4. What is your marital status? Circle all that apply.

    a. Married

    b. Single, never been married

    c. Divorced

    d. Widowed

    e. Separated

    f. Committed relationship

5. What is your highest level of education completed?

a. Less than a high school education

b. 12<sup>th</sup> grade/ high school/ G.E.D

c. Some college

d. Specialty education (for example, Barber's license)

e. Associate's degree

f. Bachelor's degree

g. Master's degree or higher

6. What is your current employment status? Circle all that apply.

a. Work Full-time (40+ hours per week)

b. Work Part-time (Less than 40 hours per week)

c. Retired (if retired, how long have you been retired?) _____

d. Unemployed

e. Other (Please Specify):_____

7. What is your current household income?

a. $0-$15,000

b. $15,001-$30,000

c. $30,001-$45,000

d. $45,001-$60,000

e. $60,001-$75,000

f. $75,001 +

8. How often do you come to this barbershop?

_____ Per week

_____ Per month

9. During your visit to the barbershop, how long do you stay?

    a.  0-15 minutes

    b.  16-30 minutes

    c.  31-45 minutes

    d.  46-60 minutes

    e.  1 hour -1.5 hours

    f.  1.5 hours-2 hours

    g.  2 hours -2.5 hours

    h.  2.5 hours-3 hours

    i.  3 hours-3.5 hours

    j.  3.5 hours-4 hours

    k.  4 hours or more

10. How long have you been coming to this barbershop?

    a.  Less than 6 months

    b.  6 months -1 year

    c.  1 year to 3 years

    d.  3 years to 7 years

    e.  7 year to 9 years

    f.  9 years or more

11. Does anyone else in your household come to the barbershop? If yes, please list relationship.

12. What is your travel time to this barbershop?

13. What form of transportation do you use to get to this barbershop?

a. Walk

b. Bus

c. You drive yourself

d. Someone else drives you

e. Taxi

f. Bicycle

g. Other (Please Specify):_____

14. What type of household do you live in?

a. Transitional housing (halfway house, shelter, etc.)

b. House

c. Apartment

d. Senior living community

e. Other (Please Specify):_____

APPENDIX D-Standard Interview Questions

1. How would you describe this barbershop?

2. How did you start coming to this barbershop?

3. What are some of the reasons you continue to come to this barbershop?

4. Why do you come to this barbershop? Do you come to the barbershop for more than just a haircut?

5. Do you attend any other barbershops? Why or why not?

6. How would you describe the location of the barbershop?

7. How would you describe the location of your house in relationship to the barbershop?

8. Tell me about the people that come here.

9. What are some of the things you talk about in the barbershop?

   a. How do people talk about current events such as gay marriage or politics?

10. What are some of the unspoken rules on the barbershop?

    a. How do you know when it is your turn to get in the barber's chair? Do you pick a number?

    b. Do you wait until the barber calls you?

11. What are some of the lessons you have learned in the barbershop?

12. Do you feel that you can talk about anything in the barbershop? If so why or why not?

    a. Why are Black barbershops important to the Black community?

13. Compare your first appointment in the barbershop to your last appointment in the barbershop.

14. If this was a movie who would be the players? Can you describe the characters?

15. What interactions in the barbershop stand out? Why?

16. What do you think I need to know about this barbershop?

17. What do you think I need to know about relationships in the barbershop?

18. What do you think I need to know about the culture of the barbershop?

19. What do you think I need to know about the friendships in the barbershop?

20. What do you think I need to know about the community that the barbershop is located in?

21. What do you think I need to know about the laughter in the barbershop?

    a. Why is there humor in the barbershop?

APPENDIX E-Barber Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to work at this barbershop?

2. What type of topics do you talk about with your clientele?

3. Give me an example of a memorable conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

4. Give me an example of a funny conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

5. Give me an example of a political conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

6. Give me an example of a sad conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

7. Give me an example of a typical conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

8. Give me an example of an outlandish conversation that you have had with another barber or client in the barbershop?

9. Do you give advice? What kind of advice?

10. How would you describe your clientele?

11. How would you describe your relationship with your clients?

    a. Are they more than just clients?

    b. How do you build a rapport with your clients?

12. Do you meet with your clients outside of the barbershop?

13. If you were to leave the barbershop, would you take your currents clients to the new barbershop?

14. How would you describe your relationship with other barbers?

15. How would you describe your relationship with other individuals in the barbershop?

16. What does the barbershop mean to you?

17. Why are you a barber?

18. What are important features of being a barber?

19. Why are barbershops important?

20. Why are barbers important?

21. Do you think you have an active role in the community because of the barbershop? Why?

22. Are there differences between a male and female barber? If so, why?

    a. What are some of the communicative differences between a male and female barber?

23. Are there similarities between a male and female barber?

    a. What are some of the communicative similarities between a male and female barber?

APPENDIX F-Client Interview Questions

1. Walk me through a typical appointment.

   a. Is there one particular barber that cuts your hair in the shop or do you allow multiple barbers within the barbershop?

   b. Do you have to tell your barber what type of haircut you want or does the barber just know?

   c. Does your barber make house calls? If there is a long line ahead of you are you able to skip everyone?

2. If your barber left this barbershop to work for another barbershop, would you follow him or continue to come to this barbershop?

   a. What is so special about this place?

3. How would you describe your relationship with your barber?

   a. How would you describe your relationship with other men in the barbershop?

4. What are some of the things you talked about with your barber?

5. Give me an example of a memorable conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

6. Give me an example of a funny conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

7. Give me an example of a political conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

8. Give me an example of a sad conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

9. Give me an example of a typical conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

10. Give me an example of an outlandish conversation that you have had with your barber in the barbershop?

11. How do you think the barber is viewed?

12. How does the barber meet or not need the needs of his clientele?

13. Would you like to add anything else? Is there something I should ask that you feel I should be asking that I am not asking?

APPENDIX G-Layout of Barbershop

61
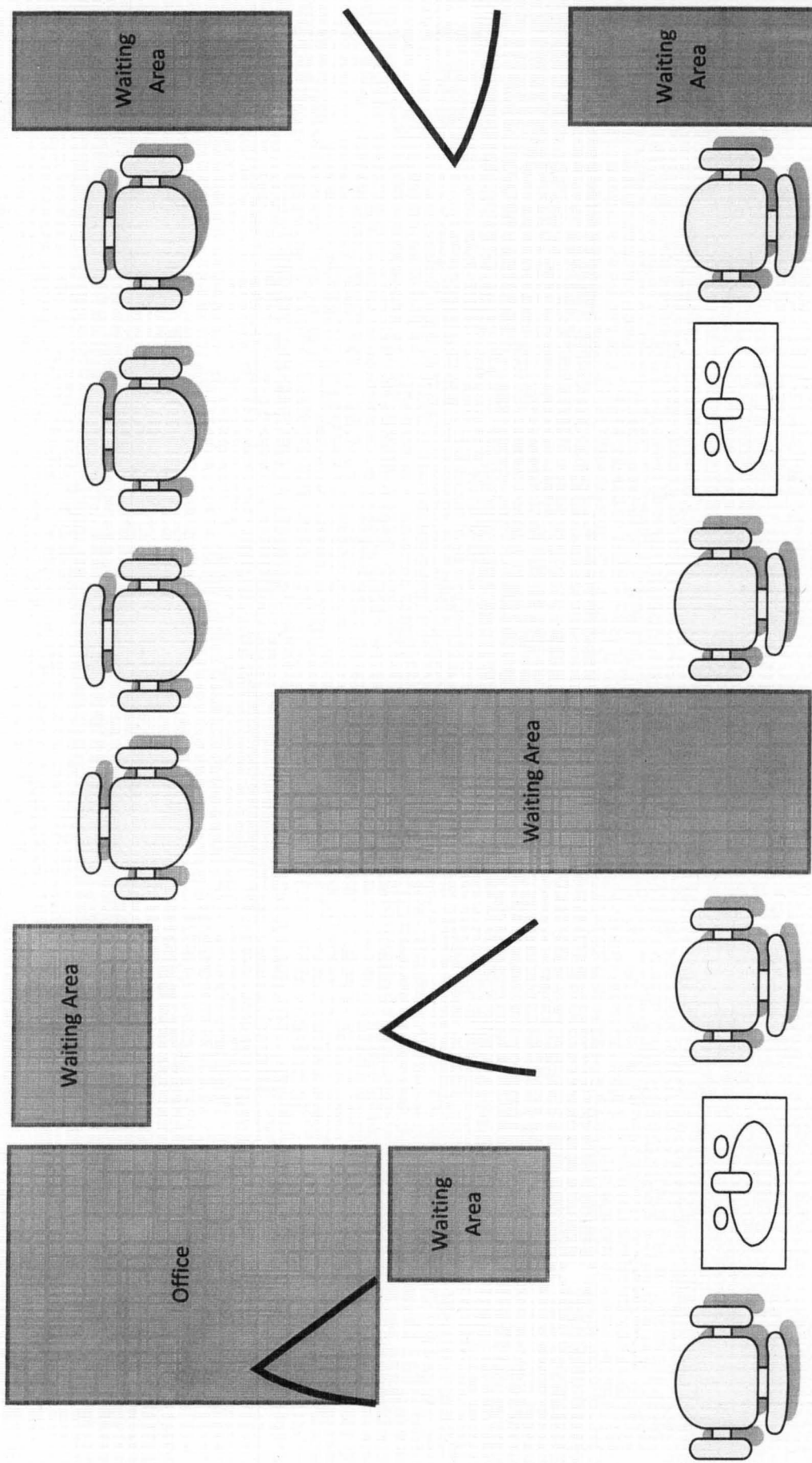
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## ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Hart, J. L., Walker, K. L., Jones, R. D.,Manguson, J., Hendricks, L., & Jones, N. (2011).
    McDonald's Sunrise: Graduate research team experiences.  Paper presented at
    Kentucky Communication Association Conference, Cadiz, Kentucky.

Hart, J. L., Walker, K. L., Jones, R. D., Manguson, J., Hendricks, L., &  Jones, N. (2011).
    Waiting to inhale: An analysis of publication patterns on smoking and tobacco.
    Paper presented at Kentucky Communication Association Conference, Cadiz,
    Kentucky.

Hart, J. L, Walker, K. L, Manguson, J., Hendricks, L., Khariwal, P., Long, K., Nelson,
    G., Mudd, M., Koetter, S. & Jones, R. D. (2011).  An exploratory study
    investigating the verbal and nonverbal communication of later-life men. Paper
    presented at the Southern States Communication Association Conference, Little
    Rock, Arkansas.

Jones, R.D. (2012).  Lather and laughter: Talk in Black barbershops.  Presentation
    presented at the annual Graduate Research Symposium, Louisville, Kentucky.

Jones, R. D. (2011). Understanding Hutchin's social responsibility theory on Black newspapers: The relevance of Black newspapers within the Black community. Poster Presentation Winner at the annual Graduate Research Symposium, Louisville, Kentucky.

Jones, R. D., & Smith, S.E. (2011). More than a haircut: A content analysis on MTV's *The Shop*. Paper presented at The Organization for the Study of Communication, Language and Gender Conference, Evanston, Illinois.

Jones, R.D. (2012). Racing away and racing home: How I came to understand more about race through travel and service. Presentation presented at Western Kentucky University Statewide Study Abroad Symposium.