An Ethnographic Exploration of the Culture of Sport Consumption at a Historically Black College/University: Elucidations of Blackness

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who is the head of my life. Without His hand of guidance, I am nothing, but with Him, I am equipped to accomplish anything far beyond human comprehension. I am grateful for your extraordinary love, steadfast grace, and mercy. The most potent purpose of my life is to give God glory and honor. I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother, sisters, nieces, and nephew. Without their unconditional support, and love, I would not have been able to make it this far. I love you all more than my words can express. Thank you all for being the greatest family. Furthermore, I dedicate this dissertation to my advisor/mentor Dr. Ketra Armstrong. Thank you for your patience, kindness, and support throughout this journey. I cannot think of another person I would have wanted to guide me through this process. Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my late friend, Sadé Kirby. When I did not believe in myself, you pushed me beyond my limit to pursue this journey. Even though you are no longer here physically, you live in my heart forever. Rest in peace, my friend.

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"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand" (Isaiah 41:10, NLT).

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to: (a) identify and examine ways in which culture was signified, expressed, performed, and manifested in sport consumption at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), and (b) explore the manner in which culture motivated HBCU sport consumption. There is very limited refereed research on HBCU sport consumption. However, while the available research (Armstrong, 2002a, 2002b) has demonstrated that elements of culture impact Blacks' HBCU sport consumption, such research has failed to examine and specifically determine: (a) what culture is in the context of HBCU sports, (b) how culture is produced, performed, and/or experienced at HBCU sports, and (c) how and why culture matters to the HBCU sport consumption experience (i.e., what makes culture meaningful to HBCU sport consumption). Therefore, a gap in the understanding of the culture of HBCU sport consumption exists. This study aimed to fill this gap. More specifically, unlike previous research on this topic, this study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to identify the elements and attributes that comprise the 'cultural charisma' (Armstrong, 2013) of HBCU sport consumption. The findings elucidated an overarching theme of a culture of Blackness that was expressed in three sub-themes: (a) Blackness in consumers' Africentric cultural taste preferences (for Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors); (b) Blackness in the celebration of the cultural habitus that was created by the HBCU band's performance, tailgating, a sense of community and family togetherness, and a sense of protection and safety; and (c) Blackness underlying the participants' cultural affinity to HBCUs and HBCU sports, based on the tradition, pride, love, and loyalty to HBCUs, and the sentiment that HBCU sports are more

than just a game. Although the predominant findings of this study substantiated the salience of the culture of Blackness to the HBCU sport consumption experience, an interesting finding was also revealed illustrating the nuanced balancing of cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports. For most of the participants, the culture of the event was most meaningful such that it buffered the negative outcome of the event when the team loss. However, in other instances for participants who were psychologically attached to the team, the game mattered and the event was most meaningful when the team won. Thus, the determination of event satisfaction or dissatisfaction was based on whether the participants' attachment was anchored to elements of Blackness (i.e., reflecting a cultural disposition of consumption) or to the outcome of the competition (i.e., reflecting a sport disposition of consumption). The findings resulted in the creation of the Culture of Blackness in Sport (COBIS) model depicting the varied ways in which Blackness was expressed in the HBCU sport consumption setting and influenced the HBCU sport consumption experience. Although the results are not generalizable beyond this particular setting, a number of practical implications for marketing HBCU sport are gleaned/presented. Like previous research, the findings reinforced the notion that HBCU sport events offer Black consumers a culturally empowering experience (Armstrong, 2002a; 2013a). However, unlike previous (quantitative) research, this (qualitative) study was significant in that it offered cultural specificity to the empowering essence of HBCU sport consumption, and gave voice and vitality to the unique relationship Black consumers have with the culture of HBCU sports.

Chapter I

Introduction

Football games at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) are not just games or competitive physical activity; they are full-on events. I distinctly recall the first HBCU sport event I ever attended. It was the season opener at my alma mater, Hampton University in Hampton, VA. It was early September and my friends and I were all donning royal blue Hampton shirts. We were filled with excitement as we headed to cheer on our beloved Pirates. The consumers at Hampton University were predominately individuals of African descent; however, they reflected a diverse array of Blackness (in nationality, language, home state residence, ideologies, etc.). Being a part of this type of crowd fueled our excitement to get to the game.

As we walked closer to the stadium, we could hear the sound of the band. The FORCE (Hampton University's band) was the stuff of legends, and not limited to 'showing out' at halftime; they gave us life for the entire game. Talk about a ridiculously loud, colorfully-costumed, soul stepping, note-hitting band! I recall just stepping to the beat with my friends as we heard the band playing my all-time favorite game day song: 'Talkin' by Atlanta artists Dem Franchize Boyz. We were elated — rocking and fist pumping. As the resonance of the beat filled our souls, we started singing together: 'oh-oh-oh-oh talkin' out the side of yo' neck.' My friends and I burst out into laughter as I tried to copy one of the moves the cheerleaders would do to accompany the song; of course, I was off beat.

"TOUCHDOWN PIRATES!" The sound of the stadium's public address system (PA system) kept us informed as we continued to make our way to the game. "Kristal because you were late, we missed the touchdown," one of my friends said, playfully hitting me on the arm. "I'm sorry," I said, "but we are almost there." The closer we got, the more I felt goose bumps of anticipation covering my body. We entered the stadium, and BAM! It was empty. Well, maybe I am exaggerating, but it was certainly far from being filled. I had expected the normal audience size you would see on television at collegiate football games, particularly those at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) — which became my frame of reference and expectation being new to the United States sport scene. To my disappointment, the size of the crowd was not even as large as high school athletic events in my home country of Jamaica.

Back in Jamaica, athletic events were always sold out and were often over-crowded. Sometimes people would even fight to get into a track meet (e.g. ISSA/Grace Kennedy Boys and Girls Championships). I was not accustomed to this lack of attendance at an athletic event. I thought to myself, "*What was this? Why was no one at the game? Did they not receive the flyers and emails about the game? Did they just not care about the football team? Although our team did not start off on a winning streak, where was the loyalty? Why was the game day attendance so low?*" I had so many questions, and I needed answers. I was in disbelief, and I simply could not understand why there were not more people in attendance. Eventually, I decided that it was an anomaly; something went wrong on this particular day, which explained the crowd size. I decided to keep attending each game, hoping each time that the crowd would be larger. Week after week I attended a game, but nothing changed. Then, one cool October day, it finally happened during our homecoming football game.

During homecoming week, the atmosphere on campus was completely different. It was electric. So, I was eager to see what the stadium looked like this time around, with so many people back on campus to celebrate (the university, their friendships, and hopefully our football team). Would the attendance this week be different than it was for our 'regular' football games? As I journeyed towards the stadium, the aroma of freshly fried fish filled the air. Swarms of students and alums were decked out in their Hampton University apparel. Vendors filled the sidewalks selling food (fried chicken, funnel cake, fried shrimp, lemonade, french fries, etc.), and other vendors displayed their clothing, books, jewelry and one-of-a kind Hampton and HBCU-made merchandise. A DJ played soulful old-school R&B, providing the background music to everyone dancing, laughing, and having a great time.

I entered the stadium, and to my delight, it was packed! My heart was happy! *Yes! I've been waiting for this moment*, I thought to myself. The stadium was filled with students, alumni, parents, and individuals from the surrounding community. We cheered on our team together, and before I knew it, it was half-time, and our team was winning the game. Soon, it would be time for the band to perform. Everyone was glued to their seats. The cheerleaders were on the sidelines dancing to the beat of the band. I found myself entertained by the showmanship of the band's performance, but once it was over, I was ready to get back to the main event: the football game. However, it seemed that for some, the halftime show was the main event. Droves of people began making their way towards the gate, and in a matter of moments, a stadium that was packed thirty minutes ago, only had approximately 40% of its spectators remaining. The other 60% of spectators had gone back to the adjacent parking lot to socialize and continue tailgating. I could not comprehend why 60% of the spectators stopped watching the game, but I knew in that moment, that I wanted to know more. Since then, I have had a burning desire to better

understand the nuances of the HBCU sport consumption phenomena. This desire provided the impetus for this study.

There is very limited refereed research on HBCU sport consumption. However, while research (Armstrong, 2002a, 2002b) has demonstrated that elements of culture impact Blacks' HBCU sport consumption, research has failed to examine and specifically determine: (a) what culture is (i.e., what constitutes 'culture,' and how is culture signified, expressed, performed, and manifested) in the context of HBCU sports, and (b) what makes culture meaningful to the HBCU sport consumption experience (i.e., why and how does culture matter). Moreover, previous research (Armstrong, 2002a, 2002b) has employed quantitative methods to capture sport consumption and has missed the depth and richness that qualitative inquiry could offer in increasing our understanding of this complex phenomenon. Therefore, a gap in the understanding of the culture of HBCU sport consumption exists.

This gap in information has limited understanding of the sociology and social psychology (Armstrong, 2002a, 2002b) of sport consumption, it has failed to theoretically or conceptually explore the cultural nuances of HBCU sport consumption, and it has led to uninformed and ineffective HBCU sport marketing strategies. This study sought to address these misgivings and fill this composite gap in the literature by: (a) centering the experiences of Black HBCU sport consumers and (b) engaging in a methodology that will allow for a deeper exploration and insight into the role and implications of culture in the context of HBCU sport consumption.

Unlike previous research on this topic, this study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to identify the elements and attributes that comprise the 'cultural charisma' (Armstrong, 2013b) of HBCU sport consumption. Cultural charisma refers to attributes and

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characteristics that imbue a product, activity, or event with a cultural image or culturally pronounced persona (Armstrong, 2013b).

To provide a context to better understand how and why culture may be salient to the HBCU sport consumption experience requires a background/introductory discussion of HBCUs and HBCU sports. Therefore, this chapter will discuss: (a) the history and purpose of HBCUs, and the challenges they encounter, (b) the uniqueness of HBCU sports, and (c) the demographics of HBCU sport consumers, along with the factors motivating HBCU sport consumption. This chapter will conclude with the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study.

Overview of HBCUs

History and Purpose of HBCUs

HBCUs were created in the 1830s with the overarching mission of providing a space to educate Black Americans (which is a term used interchangeably with Blacks and African Americans throughout this document), as Black students did not have the same opportunity as Whites to receive an education in the United States (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Palmer & Gasman, 2008). Segregation and discrimination were very prevalent in the United States during this period. This resulted in Black Americans being denied access to admission to White institutions. Prior to the Civil War that started in 1861, there was no structured system in place that would allow educational opportunities for Black Americans, because laws prohibited Blacks from receiving an education in numerous areas throughout the United States (Brown & Yates, 2005). For instance, in 1819, the state of Virginia passed a law that banned teaching or reading to Black Americans. The logic of the time asserted that if Blacks had no opportunity to receive an

education, then Whites would have an indefinite advantage over their Black counterparts. Despite this injustice, Black Americans remained steadfast in their pursuit of access to higher education (Cooper, Cavil, & Cheeks, 2014).

Education can be considered as a pathway to upward mobility (Cole & Omari, 2003), racial pride (Murtadha & Watts, 2005), and community empowerment (Maton, 2008). Education for African Americans not only embodies the pathway towards gaining equality and progress, but education is also the essence of citizenship and personhood (Allen, Jewell, Griffin, & Wolf, 2007). Furthermore, "African Americans viewed education as the ultimate emancipator, enabling them to distance themselves from slavery, move past their subordinate status in society, and achieve social mobility" (Allen et al., 2007, p. 267). As a result, education became the most powerful weapon African Americans would be able to utilize to fight against segregation, racism, and poverty (Cooper et al., 2014). Thus, the formation of HBCUs was significant in that they provided "educational opportunities for African Americans, when other higher education venues restricted their participation" (Palmer & Gasman, p. 52).

Despite the advancement in establishing HBCUs as 'Black' educational institutions, these institutions were separate from and unequal to PWIs (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014). HBCUs had inferior resources, funding, institutional infrastructure, etc. These disparities were believed to be related to White supremacy (Fleming, 1984; Hikes, 2005). The idea of White supremacy in the United States is the ideology that Whites are superior to Blacks; hence, justifying mistreatment and enslavement of Black Americans (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2006). Contributing to the perception of their superiority, white institutions had better facilities and provided more opportunities to promote the growth of their white students, in comparison to what was provided by their HBCU counterparts (Albritton, 2012). In 1862, the United States

Congress passed the first Morrill Act. As highlighted by Lee (1963), the Act had three components:

> The first of these was the creation of an endowment in public lands for support of higher education. The second component of the Act was the definition of the enterprise to be supported, the designation of the particular sort of higher education the federal government was disposed to sponsor. The third component obligated the states to maintain the endowment intact and to replace any reduction in the amount of that fund. Moreover, they were required to furnish the money for building and capital outlay; only 10% of the land-grant proceeds could be applied to such purpose (p. 26–27).

Therefore, with states accepting the conditions of the Morrill Act land-grants:

> They obligated themselves to go far beyond those grants; it is unmistakably clear that the Morrill Act and its successors were deliberately designed, not simply to encourage, but to force the states to significant increases in their efforts on behalf of higher education (Lee, 1963, p. 27).

Since the Act did not refer to race in the division of land-grant funds, new colleges in Southern and border states were still free to grow and develop on a strictly segregated basis (Neyland, 1990). Even though there were no direct provisions made for Black students in the Morrill Act of 1862, there were four Black land-grant schools that eventually received funding from the federal government: Alcorn State University, located in Mississippi; Claflin University, located in South Carolina; Hampton University, located in Virginia; and Kentucky State University, located in Kentucky (Neyland, 1990).

Laws were passed which effectively mandated the marginalization of Blacks, and policies were established that only allowed HBCUs to offer vocational training courses (agricultural, mechanical, and technical) to their students (Browning & Williams, 1978). Nevertheless, in 1890, United States Congress passed the second Morrill Land Grant Act, which stated that money should be rightfully divided between White and Black colleges. Furthermore, the second Morrill act required that all states with a racially segregated public education system either provide separate educational facilities for Blacks, or allow them to be admitted to existing traditional institutions. Additionally, the second Morrill act prohibited funding to states with educational systems that racially discriminated in admissions (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Fleming, 1984). This resulted in an increased establishment of HBCUs in the South, as many Southern states wanted to be able to keep their federal funding for White institutions, while continuing to limit Black access to White institutions (Hikes, 2005). However, HBCUs often had limited financial resources and inadequate facilities, since some states failed to adhere to mandates in place (Cheeks & Carter- Francique, 2015). Irrespective of all these obstacles, HBCUs were still able to "provide an opportunity for Black students to attain higher education" (Cheeks & Carter- Francique, 2015, p. 2).

Other landmark political decisions impacted the existence of HBCUs such as: (a) *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which instructed the desegregation of public educational institutions in the United States, and (b) the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was mandated to protect people from discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. The Civil Rights Act also prohibited racial segregation in schools (Palmer & Gasman, 2008). While *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act led to the enrollment rate of Blacks in higher education overall, particularly at what became PWIs, this shift led to drastically

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decreasing the enrollment rate of Blacks at HBCUs (Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Palmer & Gasman, 2008). According to Allen (1992), since the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision of 1954, "profound changes have occurred in patterns of college attendance among African Americans" (p. 27). Prior to 1954, the majority of Black college students were enrolled at HBCUs (Anderson, 1984). However, both landmark political decisions contributed to Blacks gaining access to white colleges throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, which impacted the number of Black students enrolling at HBCUs (Cheeks & Carter-Francique). For instance, by 1975, three-quarters of Black college students attended PWIs (Allen, 1992).

The occurrence of lawful racism in the South, and the existence of a culture in the North that was more receptive to providing educational opportunities to Black Americans, catalyzed the establishment of Black colleges in the North. Cheyney University, the oldest HBCU in America, was founded in Pennsylvania in 1837. It was followed by Lincoln University — also located in Pennsylvania in 1854, and Wilberforce University, in Ohio, in 1856 (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008). As reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics, in 2018, there were 101 HBCUs. Of the 101 HBCUs, 100 are located in the continental United States, and one is located in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of the total, 51 HBCUs are public institutions, while the other 50 are private nonprofit institutions (NCES, 2017). See Appendix A for a list of the HBCUs, their locations, and their institution type.

Challenges Facing HBCUs

As reported by the U.S. Department of Education (1991), there are important accomplishments and positive impacts associated with HBCUs such as: (a) having an important role in enhancing equal educational opportunity for all students, (b) providing undergraduate

training for 75% of all Black persons holding a doctorate degree in the United States, 75% of all Black officers in the armed forces, and 80% of all Black federal judges, and (c) continuing to rank highly in terms of the proportion of graduates who pursue and complete graduate and professional training. Additionally, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), HBCUs had 291,767 students enrolled during the 2017–2018 academic year. At the end of that academic year, HBCUs issued a total of 48,300 degrees. Of the degrees conferred, 5,313 were associate's degrees, 32,844 were baccalaureate's degrees, 7,728 were master's degrees, and 2,415 doctoral degrees.

While the positive accomplishments of HBCUs are numerous, these institutions and their students still encounter significant challenges. For example, in a report by the Postsecondary National Policy Institute (PNPI, 2019), it was revealed that one challenge for HBCUs is the tightened credit eligibility (i.e., an applicant cannot have an adverse credit history) for the Parent PLUS federal direct loans. With a tightened credit eligibility, many families — especially those of lower income students — do not meet the credit requirements necessary to receive a Parent PLUS federal direct student loan. According to the PNPI report, in 2012, a total of 14,616 students at HBCUs were notified that their parents' applications for PLUS loans were denied under this tightened eligibility. This resulted in the HBCU enrollment rate decreasing, and HBCUs losing an estimate of $168 million from students who could not pay for their education (PNPI). Another challenge revealed by the PNPI report was the lack of academic preparedness for some students, which often resulted in a need for remedial education. According to Jimenez, Sargrad, Morales, and Thompson (2016), "remedial classes increase students' time to degree attainment and decrease their likelihood of completion" (p.2). Furthermore, Jimenez et al. noted that remedial classes tend to be "worse for low-income students and students of color, whose

rates of remedial enrollment are higher than their white and higher income peers" (p.2). As revealed in the PNPI report, there is a high proportion of Black students who are enrolled in remedial courses at HBCUs. However, HBCUs' lack of funding often limits the academic preparedness, resources, and services that they can provide for their students who may need remedial or special services. This situation is in contrast to the wealth of resources many PWIs have (Cooper, 2013) which allows them to better offer support services for their students with special needs.

There are additional challenges beyond what was presented in the PNPI report that are tied to the current culture in America surrounding race. As a more temporal distance is created between now and the time in which segregation was legal, many Americans believe that the country exists in a 'post-racial' society, where racism is no longer an issue (Hannah-Jones, 2016). The election of Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States is often cited as evidence of the existence of this society. In Mark Orbe's book *Communication Realities in a "Post-Racial" Society: What the U.S. Public Really Thinks about Barack Obama* (2011), a woman being interviewed shortly after Obama's 2008 election stated: "at this point, the whole race thing is over . . . it doesn't matter anymore. We've transcended it. Now we have a Black president, so clearly, we are not racist" (p. 72). While many believe this myth of a 'post-racial' society, Obama himself refuted its existence during his Presidential farewell address: "after my election, there was talk of a post-racial America. Such a vision, however well-intended, was never realistic. Race remains a potent and often divisive force in our society" (Bush, 2017).

HBCUs were (and in some instances still are) in the middle of a public discourse regarding a 'post-racial' society. Critics of these institutions have asserted they are no longer

needed for Black students, because racism is no longer an issue in the United States (Howard & Flennaugh, 2011). Consequently, many have questioned whether HBCUs have ultimately served their purpose, and therefore, should cease to exist (Waymer & Street, 2015). Some individuals believe we are living in an era where segregation and racism have somehow become non-existent where everyone is treated '*equally.*' However, Bonilla-Silva (2015) argues that racism continues to produce a societal racist structure. This structure is established at various levels of society (social, political, economic, and ideological), and it shapes the life chances of individuals of various races. It also produces racial advantages for members of the dominant racial group, and disadvantages members of the oppressed racial groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Still, Blacks are often expected to believe and embrace the dogma of post-racialism, even though it is remarkably evident that racism and discrimination are present in the United States (Brown & De Lissovoy, 2011) and very much still operative in contemporary society.

Much of the belief in 'post-racial' ideology is tied to a lack of understanding of covert forms of racism. Our society has turned to more covert practices of racism, many of which are blindly accepted because they happen under the guise of maintaining the law. Take, for example, the killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson and Laquan McDonald in Chicago. These young men — both African American — were gunned down by White police officers using unnecessary force; however, their Blackness led to them being described as criminals in the media more than the officers who unlawfully killed them (Butler, 2018).

The misguided ideology that we are living in a 'post-racial' society can be examined by what Bonilla-Silva (1997) classified as the "theory of racialization". Bonilla-Silva's theory argues that in the United States, racial inequality is viewed as normal; hence, it serves as justification for covert and overt racial behavior. Alexander (2010) asserted (in the book *The*

New Jim Crow) that the myth of America being a 'post-racial' society is related to a conscious and unconscious bias where society is "colorblind" (p. 103). In other words, many in the public are completely unaware of the system of racial and social control, and how these systems are affecting Black people in America and thus, how they also impact HBCUs.

Another critical challenge for HBCUs is having insufficient financial resources that affect the sustainability of their institutions (Cheeks & Crowley, 2015). There is a lack of federal support due to the historic racial hierarchy of a White-controlled government which decided how money was to be distributed (Cooper, et. al, 2014). For example, in 2015 there were several lawsuits in the states of South Carolina and Maryland related to racist funding practices. It was noted that the HBCUs of South Carolina State University, Morgan State University (located in Maryland), the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Coppin State University (located in Maryland), and Bowie State University (located in Maryland) have historically received less federal funding and have been subject to inequitable program offerings, in comparison to the PWIs in their respective states (Arnett, 2015). More recently, the state of Maryland was found guilty by a federal judge for not adequately funding the state's four HBCUs in comparison to federal funding provided for the state's white institutions (Baltimore Sun, 2019).

Scholars argue that the narrative of HBCUs' inferiority has a weak foundation (Hawkins, Cooper, Carter-Francique, & Cavil, 2015; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015), given that HBCUs provide a critical cultural experience for its stakeholders (students, student-athletes, alumni, faculty, staff, and the African American community as a whole). HBCUs offer a space for African Americans to be amongst peers of their same race who also share educational and career aspirations (Charlton 2011; Cooper & Hawkins, 2012). HBCUs allow African Americans to explore their own interests and ambitions through the lens of the race and culture to which they

belong. They provide African American students with the unique opportunity of obtaining an education that not only centers their racial identity, but it also allows their self-identity to develop in ways in which it likely would not develop at a PWI (Singer, 2005, 2009). Moreover, HBCUs provide Black students with an opportunity to learn in an atmosphere that is important to their racial identity both inside and outside of the classroom (Cooper & Hawkins, 2012). Researchers have also found that the immersion of students in Black ideas, Black culture, and fellow Black people allows them to establish a positive self-identity without the inundation of anti-Black narratives that often accompanies a Black student's collegiate experience at a PWI (Cooper, 2013). For example, Cokley (2000) noted that African American students at HBCUs tend to have "more positive experiences and perceptions of their environment than their peers attending PWIs" (p. 159). Therefore, the distinct confidence in self-identity that HBCUs foster among its stakeholders are integral to their future success and their positive self-perceptions (Cooper, 2013; Hodge, Collins & Bennett, 2013).

Educational attainment at an HBCU is unique because it is centered in offering a holistic educational experience that: (a) focuses on service to the Black community, (b) celebrates the importance of supporting the Black culture, (c) nurtures cultural relationships, and (d) develops critical life skills for individuals of African descent (Cooper, 2013; Cooper & Hawkins, 2014; Gallien & Peterson, 2005; Palmer & Young, 2010). While many critics may consider HBCUs to be a thing of the past, many scholars also argue that racism persists, and the historic legacy and traditions of HBCU institutions must be preserved because HBCUs offer a unique culture-centric buffering and protection from the effects of racism and discrimination that is distinct from that offered by other social institutions (Armstrong, 2007; Broady, Todd & Booth-Bell, 2017; Cooper et al., 2014; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Waymer & Street, 2015).

Given the positive implications of the culturally empowering environment of HBCUs, it is important to explore multiple ways of elevating and sustaining the social cultural value of HBCUs to society in general, and more specifically to the Black community. One element of HBCUs that has the power and potential to illustrate the sociocultural relevance of HBCUs is HBCU sports. Research (Jessop, 2013; Sorter, 2017) has attested to the sociocultural connection and impact of sports to/on their respective universities, cities, and regions; however, the role of sports in the culture of HBCUs has been underexamined.

Overview of HBCU Sports

History of HBCU Sports

While HBCUs were successful in assisting Blacks with higher educational opportunities, and offering opportunities for upward mobility (Fleming, 1984; Palmer & Gasman 2008), they struggled with formulating organized athletic programs for their students (Cooper et al., 2014). For example, during the 1890s, HBCU athletic teams were comprised of student-athletes and professors. Student-athletes also had the option of competing for both collegiate and professional teams. With this lack of structure, many student-athletes were prone to injuries. However, in the 1900s, sports evolved in the United States from unorganized activities to more structured and institutionally-controlled programs (Wiggins, 2000).

In 1906, a group of HBCU leaders met in Washington D.C to discuss issues related to the informal athletic programs at HBCUs (Borican, 1963). This meeting resulted in the creation of the first Black athletic conference, called the Inter Scholastic Athletic Association (ISSA). The establishment of ISSA (Cooper et al., 2014) contributed to the birth of other Black athletic conferences throughout the United States. In 1912, the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic

Association (CIAA), now known as the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, was created. Shortly afterward, in 1913 the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) was formed, followed by the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) in 1920, and the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) in 1969 (Chalk, 1976; Gaither, 2013; McClelland, 2011). As aforementioned, with the NCAA excluding Blacks and HBCUs from being participating institutions, the HBCU conferences were necessary because they were the only opportunity for Black student-athletes at non-PWIs to participate in structured sports (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015).

Presently, all HBCUs with athletic programs are typically members of one of the following three major HBCU athletic conferences: (a) Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA), (b) Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), and (c) Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC). The MEAC and the SWAC are both NCAA Division I members. Generally speaking, institutions with a Division I designation are typically universities with large student enrollments. These universities are required to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women or six for men and eight for women, with at least two teams for each gender and provide scholarships to their student-athletes. The majority of these institutions tend to have world-class facilities, attract top athletes around the country, and receive major media coverage (NCAA, 2018). Schools in the CIAA are NCAA Division II members. Division II schools tend to be much smaller in size than their Division I counterparts. These institutions are required to sponsor a minimum of five sports for women and five for men, or six for women and four for men. Regardless of the gender split in sports (5-5 or 6-4), all Division II athletic programs must include two team sports for women, and two for men. Both genders must also be represented in every college playing season. The NCAA sets maximum financial aid awards for each sport that

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must not be exceeded by the Division II institution. Division II institutions also offer scholarships to their student-athletes (NCAA, 2018). Within each division of the NCAA, member institutions are eligible to compete in their respective conference postseason championships, and to compete in national postseason championships within their respective NCAA divisional classification.

Similar to government initiatives that resulted in a decrease in enrollment at HBCUs, racial integration also affected the athletic programs at HBCUs. Integration was an opportunity for Black Americans to have a 'choice' in where they wished to obtain an education or compete in athletics. However, integration resulted in HBCUs being in newfound competition with PWIs for Black enrollment (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Gaither, 2013). Black American athletes were now being recruited by PWIs, which had better funding and resources; this competition created an uphill battle for HBCUs (Cheeks & Carter- Francique; Cheeks & Crowley, 2015). PWIs offered: (a) a higher quality sport experience, due to superior practice and competition facilities; (b) greater student financial support (stipends and per diems); (c) better sport-related amenities like athletic trainers, and team nutritionists; and (d) greater corporate support for sport teams (Cooper et al., 2014; Gaither, 2013; Lillig, 2015). This increasing disparity took — and has continued to take — a toll on HBCUs, and has gradually resulted in a major decrease in the opportunity for HBCUs to successfully recruit talented African American student-athletes (Gaither, 2013). Gaither stated:

> When majority institutions began recruiting Black student athletes en masse, HBCUs had to compete with schools that were significantly better funded, had better facilities and the advantage of television exposure. As a result, the talent pool drawn to HBCUs has decreased dramatically in the last 40 years (p. 2).

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Therefore, it can be suggested that HBCUs' limited or lack of resources contributes to the narrative that HBCUs and their athletic programs are inferior.

Elements of racism that impacted HBCUs (as discussed previously) also impact HBCU sports. Historically, HBCUs were excluded from participating in any organized sports. In fact, when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) was created in 1906, it was controlled by Whites and excluded HBCUs and Blacks from competing in sports (Wiggins, 2000). Jackson (2017) argued that there is "polite racism" (p. 1) within the structure of the NCAA. For example, in 2017 the NCAA released a report of 17 Division I sports teams that were faced with post-season bans for the 2017-18 school year due to low graduation rates of their student-athletes. HBCUs accounted for 15 of the 17 schools reported (Jackson). Jackson stated:

> The NCAA still runs from demanding full accountability from majority-white Division I sports programs. Even though public pressure has forced most universities to work harder to keep athletes in the classroom, the NCAA still refuses to sanction schools that fool the system with overall graduation rates that appear acceptable but harbor vast and unacceptable disparities between white and black players (p.1).

According to Jackson (2017), nine men's basketball teams played in the NCAA tournament for the national championship with graduation rates of their Black student-athletes under 50%. Jackson noted:

> The NCAA shows no sign of cracking down on the likes for UCLA, Oklahoma State and Northern Kentucky, which were at the bottom of the list with respective rates of 17%, 25%, and 29% for black basketball players. The respective white graduation rates for those three teams were 80%, 100%, and 71% (p.1).

Furthermore, Jackson believes that these sanctions by the NCAA are "hypocritical, almost plantation-like, for the NCAA to demand holistic improvement from HBCUs when PWIs fear no penalties for grossly disparate academic performance" (p.1). Additionally, the format of the NCAA post-season tournaments, bowl games, and multimillion-dollar television contracts all benefit PWIs while excluding HBCUs, placing the HBCUs at a disadvantage (Cooper et al., 2014). Based on their predominance in the NCAA system, PWIs allocate a significant amount of money to their sports programs, which can be utilized for their recruiting budgets, coaches' salaries, and facilities (Lillig, 2009). This luxury is not experienced by HBCUs.

These structural arrangements that adversely impact HBCU sports can be heavily related to the ideology of White supremacy, where PWIs continue to benefit from the societal and institutional structures that disregard systemic racism and hardship affecting HBCUs and their athletic programs (Cooper et al., 2014). With systemic racism affecting HBCUs, it seems as if the battle between HBCUs and PWIs athletic programs is equivalent to the system of slavery Hawkins (2010). With this parallel, Cavil (2015) noted that the NCAA model serves as the "new plantation" (p.50), using Black athletes to bring in millions of dollars. The NCAA disseminates revenues to bigger PWIs, while turning their backs on HBCUs, leaving them to fend for themselves (Cheeks & Carter-Francique, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014; Gaither, 2013; Gill & Hart, 2015).

A racial hierarchy is also evident within the NCAA system, as there is a major revenue disparity between Division I Football Bowl Division (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Divisions, with HBCU conferences being members of the FCS. The FCS, when compared to the FBS conferences, receives substantially less revenue. For example, in 2012, *USA Today* released a report describing the total revenue and expenses of Division I public

colleges from 2006 to 2011. Providing data from the report, Gaither (2013) emphasized that

seven of the ten schools ranked at the bottom of total operating dollars for athletic department

rankings, were HBCUs. Coppin State University (Division I HBCU) was ranked at number 230,

bringing in less than $3.5 million in revenue during the five-year period. On the other hand, the

University of Texas (Division I PWI) accumulated more than $150 million during the same

amount of time. It is apparent that HBCU athletic programs are at a disadvantage and it is

impossible for these institutions to compete with PWIs (Cheeks & Crowley, 2015; Gaither,

2013). Scholars have argued that race and racism have contributed to the disparity of revenue

allocation within the NCAA, and that it worsens the economic inequality between Division I

PWIs and Division I HBCUs (Cooper et al., 2014; Johnson, Crowley, & Carter-Francique,

2015).

As HBCUs continue to receive unequal funding and second-rate resources (Arnett, 2015),

some of these institutions have been forced to eliminate their athletic programs to enhance their

financial status. For instance, in 2007 Paul Quinn College (which is located in Dallas, Texas)

discontinued their football program in an effort to reduce their expenses. The school converted

their football field into an agricultural farm and generated more than six figures income over a

two-year period for the institution (Adelson, 2013). According to Adelson, the revenue now

serves as a funding source for academic scholarships for students. Another example of an HBCU

that has eliminated their athletic program is Spelman College, located in Atlanta, Georgia (The

New York Times, 2013). The president of Spellman College decided to utilize the one million

dollars allotted for sports to fund campus-wide health and fitness facilities. This eliminated their

under-performing and under-utilized athletic program that only served 80 students of out 2,137

students enrolled. Therefore, the history of HBCU sports has been decorated with a number of

systemic challenges that have impacted their financial well-being and their overall attractiveness and marketing appeal.

Uniqueness of HBCU Sports

Although HBCU sports have experienced their share of challenges, they also boast a historical and contemporary uniqueness. Research (Armstrong, 2013) has shown that HBCU sport events attract a more niche market of Black consumers and offers them something that no other type of sport event is able to offer: a culturally empowering experience. This is accomplished through the presence of an Africentric ambience that promotes cultural kinship, cultural upliftment, and cultural affirmation (Armstrong, 2002a; Burwell, 1993; Cavil, 2015; Latta, 2001; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015). An Africentric ambience is best described as a performance of race — entertainment and a cultural event that is packaged with Africentric merchandising, concessions, music etc. (Armstrong, 2002a; Cavil; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015). HBCU sports also offer a community space, an emotional homeland, and racial relief for its Black consumers (Armstrong, 2013), where "the ordinary set of conditions of life are set aside so definitively and so consciously …" (Durkheim, 1912, p. 163). In other words, sport events at an HBCU create a space where Black people feel safe from discrimination and can come together in a positive way to celebrate culture (Armstrong, 2013; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015).

Furthermore, HBCU bands and cheerleaders also contribute to the uniqueness of HBCU sports. Burwell (1993) mentioned that HBCU bands tend to catch consumers' attention during the game by playing different popular songs each week, or songs that will take spectators down memory lane. In comparison, PWI marching bands generally perform the same set of songs

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during each game for the entire season, with different songs only being played during the halftime show. Burwell asserted that HBCU bands provide an atmosphere that is comparable to the ones created during "Mardi Gras, New Year's Eve, or a family reunion" (Burwell, p.5c). In fact, Rodgers (2015) highlighted that "no other sporting experience combines culture, athletic competition, entertainment, and togetherness like the experience provided by HBCUs" (p. 160).

Even though HBCUs provide a unique culture-laden sport experience for their Black consumers, regular season attendances at revenue-creating HBCU sports (football and basketball) is often relatively low. However, this is not the case with HBCU Classic games. For the 2018 football season, there were a total of 26 HBCU Classics (Fraser, 2018). HBCU Classics are different from regular season games in that: (a) they take place during the regular season and are held at neutral sites, and (b) they incorporate special cultural events surrounding the game such as: career fairs, community engagement activities, Battle of the Bands (which feature marching bands and auxiliary dance lines from both schools competing), concerts, parades, and parties before and after the football game. HBCU Classics are also more heavily advertised than regular season games (Cooper et al., 2014). In some instances, Black consumers have attended venues hosting HBCU sport classics (i.e., Circle City Classic in Indianapolis, IN and the Bayou Classic in New Orleans, LA) in record-breaking numbers (Armstrong, 2002a). HBCU special events such as conference tournaments are also unique in their cultural packaging and presentation. Some HBCU tournaments and special events also garner the attraction similar to HBCU Classics. For example, the CIAA basketball tournament is one HBCU tournament that has become the largest annual event for the city of Charlotte (White, 2018; Minium, 2017) and yielded an economic impact of $47.4 million, while attracting 103,000 to 138,00 visitors

(Spanberg, 2017). This pattern of attendance at HBCU sport Classics, tournaments, and special events are based on the unique representations of culture.

Demographics of HBCU Sport Consumers

Given the cultural uniqueness of HBCU sports, what do we know about HBCU sport consumers? As mentioned previously, although there is limited research on HBCU sport consumption, previous research by Armstrong (2002a, 2002b) has explored race, culture, and HBCU sport consumption motivations, and has provided insight into the demographics of HBCU consumers. For instance, in Armstrong's (2002a) study of 278 Black spectators at an HBCU football Classic event, 57% of the respondents were females, while 43% were males. Regarding their age, 42% of the respondents were aged 25–35, 26% were aged 35–44%, 15% were aged 45–54, and 17% were aged 55 and older. Additionally, 35% of the respondents attended college, 24% graduated from college, and 25% attended or graduated from graduate or professional schools. The sample was reasonably wealthy, as over one-third of the respondents have incomes that surpass $50,000 per year. Additionally, 29% of the respondents had some form of affiliation with an HBCU (i.e., HBCU student, alumni, or employee) while 71% of the respondents did not have any affiliation with an HBCU (i.e., non-HBCU student, non-HBCU alumni, or employee).

Armstrong's (2002b) study had a sample size of 226 that was comprised of Black spectators at an HBCU special event (an All-Star basketball game). Within this sample, 50.2% of the respondents were females, while 49.8% were males. The sample had a variation of ages, however 65% of the respondents were aged 18–34. In terms of education, 19 % had a post-graduate degree, 36% graduated from a 4-year institution, 19% graduated from a 2-year college, and 26% graduated from high school. There was also some variation within the income ranges

for this sample: 30% were in the upper ranges, 30% in the lower ranges, and 40% in the middle ranges. While the majority of the sample held professional occupations, approximately 35% of the respondents were students. Furthermore, 58% of the respondents did not have any affiliation with HBCU sports, while 42% did.

Interestingly, Armstrong's (2002a, 2002b) research suggested that many consumers at HBCU sport Classics and special events may not have an HBCU affiliation as students, faculty, staff, or alumni. The diversity within the HBCU consumer samples in Armstrong's research, and the patronage of HBCU sports by non-HBCU affiliates leads one to ponder whether it is the cultural attractions (representations of cultural Blackness) that are the consumers' touch points/connections to the consumption experience, and thus, the factor motivating their HBCU sport attendance.

Consumer Motivation for Attending HBCU Sports

According to Jansson-Boyd (2010), motivation focuses on the process that influences people to behave in a certain manner. As it relates to the consumption of sports, motivation refers to the factors that influence consumers to engage with or participate in sports events, products, or services. Motivations influence how individuals consume sports — meaning, their loyalty is based on the frequency with which they purchase sport related products and/or attend sport events (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). With sports playing a vital role in the United States, it is important that researchers and sport marketers examine the motivational factors that contribute to the consumption of sports.

Sport motivation factors can be varied and multidimensional because consumers' attitudes and behaviors are not determined by a single sport-related motivational factor such as

the quality of the team, psychological factors, tourism related factors (which includes consumers having the opportunity to visit a particular city), and social factors which includes spending time with family and friends (Armstrong, 2002b, 2008). However, regarding HBCU sport consumption, Armstrong (2002a, 2002b) revealed that ethnic identity/identification and the racio-cultural ambience of the sport consumption setting are motivational factors that influence the HBCU sport attendance of Black consumers. She therefore concluded that it is likely that African American consumers will attend HBCU sport events more frequently than they attend any other sport events (i.e., professional and PWI sports) because of the ethnic representations found at HBCU sport events.

According to Smith (1991), ethnic identity is the "process of coming to terms with one's ethnic-racial membership group as a salient reference group" (p.182). An ethnic group shares a common culture (shared beliefs, values, morals, traditions, and practices among a group of people) that influences their social standards, cognitions, social perceptions, feelings, and sources of motivations (Armstrong, 2002a; Smith, 1991; Swidler, 1986). Since an ethnic group consists of individuals that share a sense of group identity through a unique culture, members tend to maintain a sense of togetherness and community. Research has highlighted that ethnic identification is important to ethnic groups, and that the more strongly an individual identifies with their ethnic group, the more likely the individual will react positively to a product or service that exemplifies their ethnic features or salient ethnic attributes (Brumbaugh & Grier, 2006; Grier & Deshpande, 2001; Grier & Kumanyika, 2010).

Armstrong (2002b) also examined Black consumers' motivations for sport consumption by applying the widely used Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) developed by Wann (1995). The SFMS is comprised of eight motivational factors for sport consumption: (a) eustress (the

positive arousal or stress release experienced by someone when they consume sports), (b) entertainment value (the desire to be entertained by sports), (c) self-esteem (the reassurance or personal enhancement someone receives from their sport consumption experience), (d) escape (a break from everyday life), (e) affiliation needs (the need for socialization with other sport consumers), (f) economic values (offered through sports betting), (g) aesthetic value (artistic and beauty characteristics of sport performances), and (h) family motives (the need to spend time with family and friends).

The SFMS did not include any culture-specific factors such as race and ethnicity. Thus, Armstrong created a cultural affiliation component to accompany the SFMS that lead to the creation of the Black Consumers' Sport Motivation Scale (BCSMS). The BCSMS was administered to Black sport consumers and yielded a different factor structure from the SFMS (which was primarily based on the responses of White sport consumers). The BCSMS resulted in the identification of nine motivational factors: entertainment, eustress, aesthetics, group affiliation, cultural affiliation, self-esteem, family, escape, and economic. The noteworthy contributions of the BCSMS were: (a) its demonstration of the salience of cultural affiliation as a motive for Black consumers' sport consumption and consequently, and (b) its support of the inclusion of cultural related variables in studies seeking to understand Blacks' consumption of sport (Armstrong, 2002b).

In addition to cultural affiliation being a motive and attribute for HBCU sport consumption, HBCU athletic events are critical to the creation of an institutional space for African American consumers to be liberated from discrimination (Armstrong, 2013). Just as HBCUs offer its faculty, staff, and students a buffer and protection from racism, HBCU sports offers its spectators a similar buffer and protection. For example, soon after the election of

Donald Trump as President in 2016, a spectator at the University of Wisconsin-Madison attending a football game versus University of Nebraska had on a face mask of President Obama with a noose around his neck, resulting in Black spectators feeling threatened (Hensley, 2016). This discriminatory action towards Black people would be less likely to occur at an HBCU event, as those in attendance are more likely to share and celebrate ethnic values, beliefs, and identities associated with the Black community (Hawkins, Cooper, Carter-Francique, & Cavil, 2015). Although there is limited research addressing the relationship between culture and HBCU sport consumption, research (Armstrong 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2013) has demonstrated that among the various factors motivating HBCU sport consumption, racial-ethnic identity and cultural affiliation are among the most salient.

Statement of Problem

As this brief introduction has sought to convey, HBCUs and HBCU sports have not outlived their social or cultural relevance to the Black community — despite perceptions to the contrary. While cultural attributes, notably representations of Blackness, have been reported to define the uniqueness of HBCU sports, questions remain regarding what the cultural attributes are, how they promote group affiliation, and how they are expressed and manifested in the context of HBCU sports to make it a meaningful experience. Research has not adequately examined or specifically identified what culture is, and how and why culture matters to the HBCU sport consumption experience. However, based on the reported salience of culture to the HBCU sport consumption experience, there is an established need for sport researchers to: (a) gain a deeper understanding of the relationship Black consumers have with HBCU sports, utilizing a sociocultural approach, and (b) more fully identify the cultural attributes and cultural

signifiers of the HBCU sport consumption experience. Obtaining a deeper understanding of culture in the context of HBCU sport consumption was the problem this study sought to address.

Purpose of the Study

Research has revealed that material and symbolic elements of Black cultural life (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, usage of the body, and the Black physical form itself) influence consumption desires of Black Americans (Crockett, 2008). However, research has not explored the existence and relevance of these elements of culture to Blacks' consumption of HBCU sports. Therefore, the purpose of this study was two-fold. It sought to: (a) identify and examine ways in which culture is signified, expressed, performed, and manifested in HBCU sport consumption, and (b) explore the manner in which culture motivates HBCU sport consumption. The focus of this study was on food, music, and clothing and visible goods as elements of culture that are salient to the Black community and also relevant to the sport consumption experience.

Research Questions

Three broad questions that guided this research were:

1. What are the cultural attributes of the HBCU sport consumption experience? {What are the signifiers of culture in the context of HBCU sports?}

2. How is culture produced, performed, and/or experienced in HBCU sports?

3. What makes culture meaningful to the HBCU sport consumption experience? {Why and how does it matter to HBCU sport consumption?}

Significance of the Study

According to Sands (2002), "sport reflects culture and culture reflects sport" (p. 150). Sands emphasized that within the United States, sport plays a dominant role; however, many cultural anthropologists have discredited the fact that sport culture is heavily embedded in human behavior through religion, economic and political systems and language. Sands asserts that, "sports are pervasive and never ceasing, casting giant shadows on other facets of life. For a culture, a world to go crazy over a ball game, a camel race, a lacrosse match, a run, speaks volumes about human behavior" (p, 150). As a result, the significance of this study lies in gaining deeper insight into the role of culture in the HBCU sport consumption experience. Unlike previous research on the HBCU sport consumption experience, this study utilized qualitative ethnographic approach to offer cultural specificity regarding the elements of culture that comprise the 'cultural charisma' of HBCU sport consumption. Since there is limited research on understanding the culture of HBCU sport consumption, this study sought to offer some cultural specificity and culturally-relevant insight to advance our knowledge in this area of inquiry.

As discussed previously, HBCUs have struggled with low and/or inconsistent game attendance. According to Jackson, Lyons, and Gooden (2001), "it is widely perceived that the majority of HBCUs have never been effective at marketing their athletics programs" (p.19). One factor contributing to their attendance struggles is their inability to identify and effectively market the cultural attributes that seemingly define the HBCU sport consumption experience. Enhancing our understanding of what culture is in the context of HBCU sports can inform and improve their marketing strategies. Therefore, in addition to seeking theoretical insight to improve our comprehensive understanding of the culture of HBCU sport consumption, this study

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also sought to obtain practical information to inform and improve the strategic marketing of

HBCU sports.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the necessary background information about HBCUs and HBCU sports

was presented. The history and purpose of HBCUs, along with the challenges they encounter was

discussed. The chapter provided an overview of HBCU sports (their history, challenges, unique

cultural attributes, consumers, and factors influencing their consumption). This chapter also

highlighted previous research about HBCU sport consumption, illustrated the salience of culture

to the HBCU sport phenomenon, and justified the need and substantiated the theoretical and

practical significance of this study.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

To best explore the ways in which culture may be expressed and manifested in HBCU sports, it is important to identify elements of culture that: (a) are significant to Black consumers, and (b) are also relevant to the sport consumption experience. As informed by Crocket's (2008) research on cultural representations of Blackness, the focus of this study is on the cultural elements of food, clothing/visible goods, and music. This chapter will begin by defining culture, and it will then discuss various elements of culture and their likely influence on consumption, notably HBCU sport consumption. This chapter will also offer a discussion of the theories and concepts (such as social identity theory, habitus, and collective effervescence) that support the likely impact of culture on HBCU sport consumption.

What is Culture?

Culture can be defined as symbols, beliefs, and values that are shared by members of a society or group. Culture consist of various patterns of behavior, basic assumptions, learned responses, habits, and traditional ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). According to Spradley (1980), culture is "the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret, experience, and generate social behavior" (p.5). As highlighted by sociologist, Mariampolski (2006), culture is also ingrained within human minds causing humans to operate on the premise of feelings, sensation, and emotions. Culture is related to the way in which humans learn to live with one another and their environment. Mariampolski stated that "humans are capable of

continuous learning and adaptation" (p.29), where they not only react to situations but also to underlying cultural meanings, expectations, and symbols. In other words, culture allows human beings to be flexible enough to learn and engage in vastly different ways of living. Culture includes but is not limited to a collection of patterns of behaviors, sense and meaning making, knowledge production, different ways of representation, language, traditions, social roles and norms, gender, aesthetics, consumption, geography and space, food, clothing, taste, music, political and social ideologies, symbols, ethnic identity, ethnicity, and race, that are related to a specific group of people (Barker & Jane 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017; Wilson, 2017).

Culture can also be conceptualized as a unique facet of a social group where the members' shared values and norms differentiate them from other social groups and are influenced by conscious beliefs. This does not suggest that one culture is better than the other, or that one culture is right and another is wrong. However, there are differences in individual's clothing, food, music, language, religion, expressions, beliefs, values, and symbols, that are often culturally rooted (Lebrón, 2013). Culture is the foundation of any group's shared memory and provides a source of awareness. Encrypted in culture are people's values, sense of self, and aspirations (Mariampolski, 2006). Because culture is so heavily tied to people, it plays an important role in choices, usage, and resistance. At a profound level, culture represents "the 'soul' of a group of people because it is rooted in tradition" (Baba, 2003, p.33). For instance, in 2017 the CIAA issued a rule stating that visiting football teams' bands are not allowed to play during halftime (Gaither, 2017). However, this rule was eventually reversed due to the ire it provoked from Black consumers. Within HBCU sport culture, marching bands represent the soul of HBCU sport (Doty, 2018). Therefore, removing the ability of HBCU bands to perform also

removed a cultural component that was valued by Black consumers. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) also gave an in-depth definition of culture, stating that:

> "culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action" (p. 181).

Kroeber and Kluckhohn's perception of culture contends that the behavior of an individual within a group is formed by the cultural elements within that cultural system. In other words, the society in which an individual is a part of tends to shape their values, beliefs, and norms.

While culture is complex and operates at many levels, McCracken (1986) considered culture to be two-fold: (a) culture as the lens through which the world is seen, and (b) culture as a blueprint that determines the way in which the world is shaped by human behaviors. In other words, the lens and blueprint descriptions of culture define it as a source of meaning. Thus, culture is formulated by the "ideas and activities with which we construe and construct the world" (McCracken, 1988, p. xi). Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch (1983) highlighted that culture is both a process and an outcome, because it constructs human interactions while also being an outcome of the interactions. Leung, Bhagat, Buchan, Eriez, and Gibson (2005) added that culture is a multi-layered construct occurring at different levels (global, national, and organizational/group cultures) and incorporate the individual. All of the previous definitions demonstrate that culture tends to shape the behavior of people within a specific group.

Culture as Expression

Culture is the accumulation of learned behaviors that distinguishes groups of a society, and includes the group's symbolic and material expressions and what the group thinks, says, and does (Schrieber, 2001). Therefore, culture may be expressed in a myriad of ways. Expression can be classified as the way in which individuals share or communicate their thoughts and/or feelings (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, 2016). Expression offers individuals validation and permit them to distinguish themselves from others. They also offer them an opportunity to reflect on their personal beliefs and needs. Additionally, through expression, people from different cultures communicate their own identities and find themselves interacting with their environment mentally and physically (Kim & Ko, 2007). This process of expressing one's thoughts and feelings can be communicated through words, choices, and actions. Consequently, people from different cultures may express themselves through music, art, clothing, or body language based on their own personal and cultural beliefs. Through all the aforementioned expressions, an individual is able to convey their feelings, state of mind, and emotions to demonstrate their inner thoughts (Gordan, Krishnan, & Khairuddin, 2013).

Expression can be categorized into the two forms of communication: verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal communication is understood as the process of communicating through gestures and touch by posture, body language, eye contact, and facial expression (Johnson, 1999). As stated earlier, culture influences all aspects of human behavior, which impacts all facets of social behavior and interaction. Therefore, culture is "embodied in the objects used in everyday life and modes of communications" (Craig & Douglas, 2006, p. 323). Non-verbal communication has different meanings in different cultures (Matsumoto, 2006). Table 1 demonstrates the meaning of nonverbal communication in six different countries.

Table 1

Meaning of Nonverbal Communication in Different Countries

Countries	Nonverbal communication meaning
Canada	- It is polite to maintain good eye contact. - Women greet with a slight nod while men greet with a firm handshake.
Nigeria	- Using the left hand to receive objects or doing anything with the left hand is considered unclean. - A wink at a child in the presence of a guest indicates that the child leaves the room.
South Africa	The most common form of non-verbal communication when greeting is a handshake.
India	- People grasp their earlobes to express remorse or honesty. - To apologize, tap someone's shoulder and then tap your own forehead. - Women should never initiate the handshake; women will often shake hands with other women but not men.
Philippines	Greets with a quick flash of the eyebrows.
United States	- Using a firm handshake is considered appropriate to greet a stranger or another business professional. - Standing with hands on the hips may suggest power or pride.

Note. Examples adapted from Evason, 2019 and Matsumoto, 2016.

While some nonverbal gestures may represent something positive in one culture, they can represent something negative in another culture. For example, in the United States, the 'A-OK' sign is seen as a positive gesture, while in most European cultures it is seen as an offensive

gesture related which has sexual implications (Matsumoto, 2006). Similarly, in some cultures, placing both hands at the side of one's head and pointing upward with the forefingers indicates that one is frustrated or angry, while in other cultures, it represents that one wants to have sexual intercourse (Matsumoto). According to Johnson (1999):

> Nonverbal communication is used when one does not know what word or words to use, it is used to send a powerful signal, it is used when honesty counts, it is used to express feelings of distress, and it is used when the message is of a complex nature (p. 5).

On the other hand, verbal communication is communication done through voices and sounds. Verbal communication through words tends to have power, structure, tradition, and different meaning in different cultures at different times (Johnson, 1999). For instance, in the Caribbean when a person says "good night" it is an expression used to greet someone at night time before speaking. However, in the United States, "good night" is an expression used when one is going to bed. Therefore, communication varies from culture to culture, where people from different groups utilize different languages to communicate different messages (Hong, 2014).

Verbal expression through spoken language serves as an important cue for constructing cultural identity (Doss & Gross, 1994). In fact, within the African American community, verbal expression is associated with an individual's social status and cultural membership (Morgan cited in Mufwene et al., 1998). Morgan highlighted that the way in which African Americans interact with the dominant culture and within their own community speaks volumes about how they are perceived by others. Through verbal communication within the African American community one becomes competent to communicate their culture, identity, and their rights as a citizen (Morgan cited in Mufwene et al., 1998). This demonstrates that members within this

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community are able to "construct or (co-construct) social relationships and deconstruct the power/truth dynamics of social interaction" (Morgan cited in Mufwene et al., 1998, p. 252).

For many years, scholars have examined the language used by many African Americans, referring to it as 'Black English.' While 'Black English' is associated with the African American community, not every member within this community speak in Black English vernacular, as some members use 'Standard English' or in some situations a mixture of Black English and 'Standard English' (Doss & Gross, 1994). African Americans who make the decision to use both 'Black English' and 'Standard English' are considered to be code switching. Code switching, also known as language mixing, is the "use of elements from two languages in the same utterance or in the same stretch of conversation" (Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011, p. 88). Black English is considered as an illiterate or poorly learned English (Speicher & McMahon, 1992) which includes features such as verbal repartee, repetition, and call and response (Smitherman, 1977).

There is often a negative connotation associated with individuals who speaks a language that is not deemed as the dominant language used in mainstream society. In the United States, Standard English is considered to be the dominant language. Therefore, Standard English carries power and prestige, while other dialects are degraded (Speicher & McMahon, 1992). Doss & Gross (1994) highlighted that "individuals who speak differently (e.g. in a language viewed to be nonstandard or inferior) may be perceived as possessing inferior or undesirable traits," on the other hand, "people who speak like the positively viewed in-group will be perceived as possessing positive attributes" (p. 283).

In the study by Doss & Gross (1994), the authors wanted to examine the impact vernacular Black English had on intra-racial perceptions. Their study consisted of 63 African

American male and 67 African American female college students at a predominantly White rural university. The subjects listened to an audiotape of an African American male who either code switched, spoke in Black English, or spoke in Standard English. The hypothesis was that subjects were expected to rate the code-switching model more favorable than the Black English and Standard English speakers. The findings revealed that the hypothesis was not supported, as Standard English was the vernacular of preference for this population. However, Doss and Gross suggested that it is likely that depending on the cultural setting, that the findings would be different such that Black English and/or code switching could be the preferred modes of communication. In any case, language (either in isolation or in combination with non-verbal communications) is a salient verbal expression of culture.

In summary, throughout the world culture is expressed in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways. Throughout different cultures, people tend to convey their feelings through various ways of expressions, to create a sense of self, engage in symbolic interactions with others, and to construct a shared understanding of the world. However, it is an individual's unique culture that will often influence the way in which they express themselves — whether it is done verbally or non-verbally.

Elements of Culture

There are many characteristics at sport events where consumers are provided with opportunities to express, affirm, and celebrate their cultural beliefs and values. Consequently, sport events can also be seen as a cultural ritual that establishes idealized roles and performances by consumers (Birrell, 1981). The elements of culture that this study placed an emphasis on were those that were relevant to the Black community and also components of sport consumption. The elements of culture selected for this study were those that may serve as: (a) lenses and blueprints

through which consumption is shaped and becomes meaningful (McCracken, 1986), (b) the process that constructs human interaction, as well (c) the outcome of human interaction (Jelinek et al., 1983). The elements of culture this study sought to explore in the context of HBCU sport consumption were food, music, and clothing and visible goods. Following is a discussion of each.

Food as Culture

Food is one of the most basic needs of life. It is not strictly a source of nourishment, as it also serves a purpose in social capacities. For example, food operates as a leisure activity. It offers a way for socializing with friends, family, and others, contributing to an individuals' general and national well-being (Sobal, Bisogni, Devine, & Jastran, 2006; Wright, Nancarrow, & Kwok, 2001). Food choices are not only used for socialization, but are also connected to re-telling cultural stories, and highlighting imperative historical events for different ethnic groups (Williams, Crockett, Harrison, & Thomas, 2012). For example, Hughes (1997) suggested that American soul food and Mexican-American food symbolize the struggle of slaves and Indigenous people to survive trying conditions with limited access to food options. Eating traditional food symbolizes the cultural connections and the need for individuals to maintain their ethnic identity. According to Hughes, "the essence of black culture has been handed down through oral history, generation after generation in the African tradition, through selection and preparation of soul food" (p. 272). For the Black community, soul food was prepared and designed to nourish the emotional, social, and spiritual selves, in addition to the physical self.

Blacks were given the unhealthiest type of food — leftover scraps, animal innards, etc. during slavery due to their treatment as subhuman. However, they transformed the food given to

them by using their own ideas, hands, and cooking skills to create food that was important to their well-being. As such, food carried special meaning in and of itself for Blacks (Hughes, 1997). Similarly, the way in which foods were transported from Africa to the United States was also important to the culture of individuals of African descent. For instance, watermelon seeds, yams, peanuts, okra, sesame seeds, and rice (Byars, 1996) are a few foods that were transported to the United States from Africa which carried a very strong meaning. Hughes stated that "accessibility to the roots of plants is preserved by possessions of seeds. Forced to leave their native land, their home, family, and African tribes, many slaves brought seeds with them" (p.272). This approach assisted many Blacks with maintaining their ethnic identity, with food becoming a source of Black history and culture.

Food is a salient component of cultural practice for various groups whose histories have been disrupted by oppression; in many ways, it assists their members with the reconstruction of their cultural identity (Williams et al., 2012). Williams et al. attested that food consumed in the presence of others: (a) creates a meaningful and powerful experience, (b) constructs and maintains affinity, and (c) sustains other social bonds. Therefore, food is a meaningful element of culture.

Music as Culture

While food is considered a basic necessity for one to survive and function properly, music — although not generally a requirement for survival — is also considered to be an important element of an individual's life (Boer, 2009). Music is a global complex phenomenon that is essential in many individual's lives because it serves in various capacities and fulfills various roles for an individual (Cross, 2001). For instance, for some, music is a constant comfort

that brings joy, motivation, encouragement, and acts as a buffer during difficult times. Across

cultures, music is utilized for expressing values, for social bonding, and it serves a myriad of

other functions (Boer, 2009). Music also impacts people on various psychological levels such as

intellectually, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Ethnomusicologist John Blacking believed

that within each culture: (a) there is something that is considered as music, and (b) each member

within that culture is musical (Blacking, 1995). Simply put, within each culture, there are

individuals who create music, and those who consume music through listening, dancing, and

gaining a strong identification with it (Cross, 2001).

Music creates a close connection between place and people, as it shapes their way of

thinking and their identity. The effect of music can be seen during religious events and other

cultural settings such as sport events. Irrespective of an individual's race in the aforementioned

settings, faith and belief songs or team chants can bring togetherness and a sense of belonging

amongst various individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Research has revealed the

particular salience of music to individuals of Color. For instance, according to Padilla (1989),

music unifies members of Hispanic groups in the United States (e.g. Mexican Americans, Puerto

Ricans, Cubans) who have come to understand that regardless of the difference between their

nationalities and cultural traditions. Music is one element that can allow them to embrace their

shared realities. For Hispanics, music is utilized as an element that gives them an opportunity to

set aside their differences and celebrate their realties. Music also played a salient role historically

for African American slaves, as they perceived music as an expressive form that symbolizes their

survival from oppression (Maultsby, 2005). African American slaves had different European

cultures and traditions forced upon them, but they refused to conform to that dominant culture.

Instead, slaves adjusted to life in America by holding on to their perspective of their past — their

own culture of music. In doing so, they were able to reshape their identities and create a new African American symbolic culture expressed in their music, language, folklore, religion etc. that would be passed on to generations to come (Maultsby, 2005).

Making music within African and African American cultures is often governed through the collectiveness of performance. It is through the performance of music that members within these cultures are able to participate collectively in an activity that brings unity for Black people in a space that creates cohesiveness for a common purpose (Maultsby, 2005). Therefore, throughout the African diaspora, music is also conceptualized as a performance of race — in that it often facilitates a delivery style employing movements of the body, facial expressions, and clothing often associated with a particular racial/ethnic group (Maultsby, 2005). The delivery style certain music facilitates may generate cultural and aesthetic components that are unique to the African diaspora that become fundamental elements of Black cultural expression (Maultsby, 2005). There is also a connectedness between music and clothing demonstrated through culture. For African Americans, the way in which they dress for a performance is just as significant as the sound of the music. It is through the visual imagery of clothing that music is communicated to the audience such that an atmosphere of 'aliveness' is created through the colorful and flashy costumes being worn by performers (Maultsby, 2005).

Music is also an expressive language of culture that tells a story, expresses emotions, shares ideas with a society, and brings attention to social issues. Music represents the views and ideas of a culture and its members. It continually gives people an opportunity to connect throughout the world, while sharing a special feature of each culture with one another. Gospel music is one form of music that has special meaning for the Black culture. Be it in an informal or formal setting, it is "a process of esoteric sharing and affirmation. It embodies much more than

text, harmonies or instrumental accompaniment" (Burnim, 1988, p.112). More specifically, gospel music is an act of celebration and affirmation of life. It is through the performance of gospel music that Black Americans have an opportunity to identify with their cultural and historical past, surpass their past trials and tribulations, and gain the courage and the strength to push forward towards the future (Campbell, 1995). Music is therefore, a salient element of culture.

Clothing and Visible Goods as Culture

Similar to food, clothing and other visible goods also serve as basic necessities that can also satisfy physiological, emotional, and social needs (Barnard, 2002). Clothing and other visible goods are outward expressions of culture (Nguyen & Brown, 2010). Simmel (1904) emphasized that clothing is a particular good used to concurrently satisfy an individual's need to belong and to be distinct. As noted in previous research (Cherrier, 2009; De Mooij, 2004), clothing can satisfy diverse consumer strivings and is also purchased for different reasons in various cultures. Clothing and other forms of visible goods are considered representations of symbolic functions, such as the expression of one's unique identity, communication of group affiliation, and the expression of group-oriented values and social identities (Barnard, 2002).

Clothing and visible goods play a pivotal role in constructing and expressing the sociocultural make up of a society (Kuchler & Miller, 2005). They are mechanisms for expressing, reinforcing, and enhancing an individual's social status (Barnard, 2002). Clothing and visible goods do not only influence an individual's identity, but they also reinforce the relation of dominance and subordination within society, and are "linked to the operation of power that constructs the body and its presentation" (Hansen 2004, p. 370).

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Cross-cultural psychologist Geert Hofstede developed a cultural value dimension (CVD) framework which can be employed to understand the connection between culture and clothing. Although Hofstede did not specifically discuss visible goods, they would also fit Hofstede's framework. Hofstede's (1980) framework featured four dimensions: *power distance*, *masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance*, and *individual/collectivism*. Power distance societies are more likely to consume status clothing and brand name items. High power distance societies focus on wealth, power, prestige and status symbols. On the other hand, low power distance societies focus less on status clothing and brand name items (Hofstede, 2001). As such, individuals in high power distance cultures are more likely to purchase status goods, are very interested in high end fashion, and place an emphasis on globally known brands (De Mooij, 2004).

Hofstede's (2001) dimensions of masculinity and femininity are associated with existing gender roles within a society. Masculinity represents a society in which men are expected to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; while women ought to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Masculinity represents a society where social gender roles are clearly distinct; however, femininity represents a society in which social gender roles intersect and within this paradigm men and women are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede). According to De Mooij (2004), within a masculine culture, an individual will most likely purchase clothing for show; however, in a feminine culture an individual will purchase clothing for use.

Hofstede's (2001) dimension of uncertainty avoidance refers to the way in which members of a culture handle uncertainties that are related to their daily life and future. In a low uncertainty avoidance culture, people will endure unstructured situations and embrace their

innovative and entrepreneurial self while being less apprehensive. On the other hand, a culture with a high level of uncertainty avoidance members tends to be more anxious about abstruse and risky situations, thus seeking stability (Hofstede). In a high uncertainty avoidance culture, an individual places high emphasis on being well groomed, which in return assists them with overcoming their own personal insecurities and increasing their self-confidence (De Mooij). Individuals within a high uncertainty avoidance culture will have a higher level of brand loyalty, as a particular brand will provide them with feelings of security and comfort (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011). These categorizations of culture may be expressed in clothing and other visible goods.

The dimensions of individualism and collectivism as presented by Hofstede (2001) represent the level of integration of individuals into groups. Individualism refers to a society in which there are loose ties between people, and everyone is expected to look after themselves (Hofstede, 2001). This expectation is believed to foster the independence necessary to facilitate achievement, self-reliance, and an individual taking care of their own immediate family. Within a collectivist society, people belong to strong, cohesive in-groups with harmonious relationships. Individuals within an individualist culture will automatically have a stronger desire to purchase clothing and visible goods that allow them to express their uniqueness (Hofstede, 2001). Conversely, an individual within a collectivist culture is more likely to purchase clothing or display visible goods that embody symbolic possessions that will aid them in accomplishing social goals. This includes a goal of gaining acceptance to and from reference groups they consider important. Therefore, clothing and visible goods allow individuals to experience a specific cultural affiliation and a sense of belonging (Gregory, Munch, & Peterson, 2002).

As research has illustrated, clothing and other visible goods are salient elements of an individual's identity that offers a visual statement of an individual's self-perception and their role performance. Clothing and other visible goods serve as signs and construct meaning, while also presenting a message about the individual (Hall, 1997). Clothing and visible goods also act as signifying practices, and when different styles are combined, they are associated with socially constructed notions such as being cool, fashionable, formal, or informal. Some style expressions also signify differing ties to the gender (Brydon & Neissen, 1998; Wilson, 2017). Thus, the blend of different clothing styles and displays of visible goods in different places and at different times will demonstrate and deliver a different message to a specific audience about an individual's cultural identity (Schechner, 2003). Clothing and visible goods are therefore important elements of culture.

These elements of culture are also critical ingredients of the sport consumption experience: (a) food is a unique component of sport consumption experience as sport events feature specialty foods (i.e., Seattle Mariners Ichiroll, Colorado Rockies Rocky Mountain Oysters, and Cincinnati Reds Cheese Coney); (b) music is carefully and strategically selected to enhance the entertainment value of sport; and (c) sport consumption offers a platform by which symbolic clothing and goods are visibly displayed. Overall, depending on the nature of the food, music, and clothing and visible goods present, featured, or displayed, the sport consumption setting may reflect a 'mainstream' culture (non-culturally targeted to a specific racial/ethnic group), or the sport consumption setting may be 'culturally distinct' (targeted to a specific racial/ethnic group) for which the food, music, and clothing and visible goods are particularly salient. Relative to the HBCU sports consumption experience, the cultural distinctiveness of the food, music, and clothing and visible goods featured are value added components that

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differentiates the HBCU sport consumption experience making them particularly salient to Black consumers.

Symbolic and Material Culture

The various elements of culture previously discussed (food, music, and clothing and visible goods) may be broadly classified in two domains: symbolic culture and material culture. Symbolic culture is a group's way of doing and thinking which includes; values, beliefs, and other assumptions about the world. The common patterns of behavior associated with symbolic culture include symbols, languages, gestures and other forms of interaction. On the other hand, material culture includes all the physical things that people create and attach meaning to, such as tools and technology, clothing, eating utensils, means of transportation, hairstyles, buildings, art, jewelry, weapons and machines (McCracken, 1988; Schlereth, 1985). As stated earlier, culture is a man-made part of society that can be broken down into categories of material and symbolic culture. As such, it is imperative to recognize that symbolic and material cultures are not mutually exclusive.

Figure 1 portrays some examples of expressions of symbolic and material element of culture. As the figure conveys, food, music, and clothing and visible goods may serve as both material and symbolic expression of culture. An examination of the ways in which elements of culture (food, music, and clothing and visible goods) influence consumption will now be examined.

EXPRESSIONS OF CULTURE

<u>**Material Culture**</u>

Buildings

Hairstyles

Art

Weapons

Machines

Tools

Eating Utensils

Transportation

Technology

Food

Music

**Clothing/
Visible
Goods**

<u>**Symbolic Culture**</u>

Gestures

Values

Beliefs

Symbols

Norms

Religion

Status and role in society
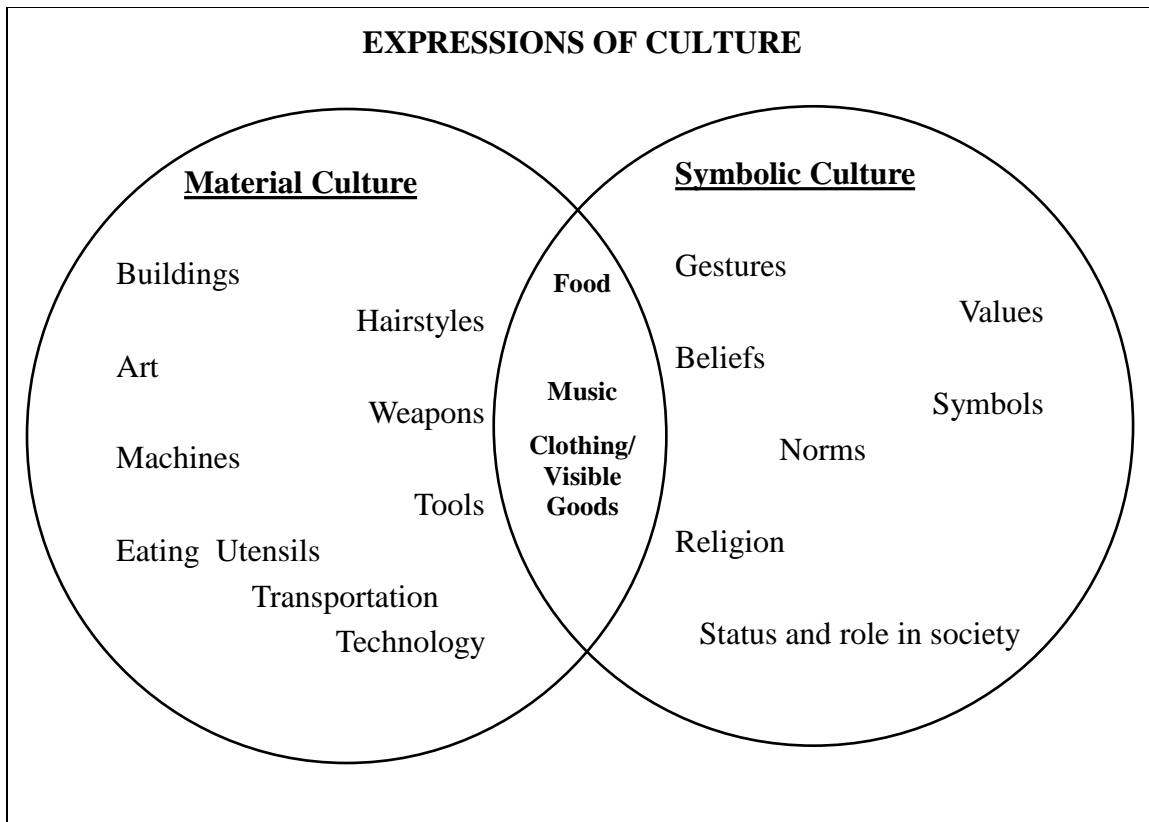
Figure 1. Expressions of Culture.
This figure demonstrates the expressions of the interlocking effects of symbolic and material culture. Examples adapted from McCracken, 1988 & Schlereth, 1985.

Culture and Consumption

As previously discussed, culture is a comprehensive concept. It consists of many factors that may influence individuals' consumption decisions and behaviors (Aaker & Sengupta, 2000). Since there are many attributes of culture, a mixture of different attributes can contribute to consumption behavior. Among them are subjective factors such as values, attitudes, identity, and social status (Crane, 2010). In addition, consumer behavior can also be influenced by shared norms, group culture, and social controversies (Crane, 2010). For example, a consumer's existing cultural values, may adversely impact the way they view a product that conveys values

that differ from their cultural values, thereby influencing their consumption intentions and desires.

Crane (2010) highlighted that consumers are more likely to be associated with a particular consumption experience that aligns with their own cultural ideals and identities, because it allows them to be a part of a particular social group or environment. Therefore, an individual's cultural affiliation with a particular group creates a set of meanings that is connected to their identity as they interact with others in this particular group. For example, research has revealed that sport consumption behaviors of people of Color are not only influenced by the social environment (Kyle & Chick, 2002), but are also related to the culture that is created through interactions with other spectators (Armstrong, 2001). Additionally, it is the desire of group identity that also influences the sport consumption behaviors of people of Color (Wakefield, 1995; Wann, Brewer, & Royalty, 1999). Lastly, the 'cultural essence' of sport events also contributes to the overall sport consumption experiences of people of Color (Armstrong, 2008). For these reasons, it can be inferred that Black consumers often prefer to consume products that are connected to their cultural heritage and traditions.

According to Hogg and Mitchell (1996), consumption can be termed as the "search for, choice, acquisition, possession, and disposal of goods and services" (p. 629). Consumers often make their decision on what to purchase based on their ethnic identity or the identity they wish to depict or communicate to others. As noted by Donovan (2001, cited in Arnould, 2002) consumers' decisions to purchase a product or service provides them with an opportunity to express their uniqueness, which in turn becomes a way in which they communicate with others. Therefore, consumption is two-fold as it serves as a functional tool, while providing symbolic pleasure to the owner. Consumption for Black consumers may be seen as pleasurable because it

provides them with an opportunity to socialize with other consumers and satisfies their desires to have fun irrespective of their status (Twitchell, 1999). Such satisfaction may be influenced by their cultural preferences.

As previously noted, culture is a prevalent component throughout the world which influences people's lives. Many scholars have highlighted that culture is vital to people of Color, specifically African American consumers (including those of all age groups) when compared to Whites (Brumbaugh & Grier, 2006; Grier & Deshpande, 2001; Grier & Kumanyika, 2010; Williams et al., 2012). Cleveland and Laroche (2007) indicated that consumers' attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles are primarily influenced by culture, which in return triggers consumers to fulfill these needs through the consumption of products and services. The following section will seek to illustrate how elements of culture such as food, music, and clothing and visible goods influence consumption in general, and HBCU sport consumption in particular.

Food and Consumption

With numerous selections of food choices in most countries, consumers are left with a plethora of choices, which at times can be overwhelming. As such, consumers' food choices pertaining to their food selection are influenced by various values such as: availability, perceived health value, convenience, and economic considerations (Logue, 1991). According to Herne (1995), food choice is termed as "a set of conscious and unconscious decisions made by a person at the point of purchase, at the point of consumption or any point in between" (p. 13). For many, food choices tend to influence the symbolic, economic, and social aspects of their lives being that food is one way in which people can express their identities, cultural meanings, and cultural preferences (Sobal et al., 2006).

Food consumption can be classified as a multifaceted paradigm that is influenced by numerous factors such as culture, religion, and socio-demographic factors, to name a few (Köster, 2009). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, culture is a shared set of characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, and values that influence a group of people on what to do and how to do it. With the influence of culture on the actions of a particular group (in varied aspects of their lives), it is natural that culture also impacts their consumption of food (Atkins & Bowler, 2001). Culture impacts the ways in which members of a particular community or group label or describe food as being 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable,' 'good,' or 'bad' (Meiselman, 2000). Within every culture, there are various spices and mixtures of seasonings that are used to distinguish which food is considered appealing (Rozin & Rozin, 1981). In fact, Rozin and Rozin highlighted that the characteristics of seasonings serve as a marker that is used to identify different dishes from different cultures. For example, in Mexico, salsa, corn and beans are all essential to making Mexican food Mexican (Rozin & Rozin, 1981).

Applying this element of culture to sport consumption, food/concession items are noted as a critical part of sport consumption (e.g. hotdogs—'Dodgerdogs' at baseball games, popcorn at basketball games, pizza at football games, etc.). Based on the history and tradition of HBCUs, certain foods may be a salient element of the HBCU sport consumption experience, notably if they are a part of the cuisine associated with Black culture. For example, at some HBCU sport Classics and homecoming games, it is the norm for vendors to sell 'soul food' such as fried fish, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, cornbread, etc. Such a culturally-relevant cuisine may contribute to the uniqueness of HBCU sports as a meaningful consumption experience for Black consumers, as soul food cuisine is tied to Black culture. On the other hand, Black consumers may opt for the 'traditional' concession items (popcorn, hotdogs, etc.) that are

not culturally constituted from the Black community. In either case, food is generally a salient element of sport consumption culture, HBCU or otherwise.

Music and Consumption

Music is another element of culture that is influential in the shaping of people's lives. Within various settings, the force of music is employed to capture people's attention, express people's identity, define people's associations, and trigger people's memory. Music can be considered as one of the most prevalent leisure activities in which people partake. Whether or not one purposely listens to music, they are still being affected and shaped by music. This is done when music is played at social gatherings, religious events and cultural ceremonies, sport events, restaurants, and retail stores. Straightforwardly, there is absolutely no escape from music because it is heavily rooted in our society and culture.

Music serves as a key component in the retail industry as it entertains, engages, uplifts, includes, and creates an enjoyable experience for consumers. Herrington and Capella (1994), asserted that background music directly affects consumer's shopping experience by impacting their purchase needs, overall affective evaluations, and service evaluations. Herrington and Capella also noted that for retailers, background music has the power to impact the amount of time and money their consumers spend in their store. It also serves as an element employed to "reduce counter-productive psychological states such as frustration, anxiety, depression, or negative mood" (Herrington & Capella, p.54). Garlin and Owen (2006) conducted a meta-analysis review to examine the effects of background music in retail settings. They categorized previous studies into five general categories of dependent variables such as financial returns, affective, attitudinal/perceptual, temporal effects, and behavioral responses. Their review of

previous studies demonstrated that there is a substantial effect of background music on value

returns, behavior duration, and affective responses. Additionally, their review revealed that the

presence of music has a positive effect on support as well as felt pleasure, and that slower tempo,

lower volume and familiar music will influence customers with to staying longer at a venue.

Smith and Cunrow (1966) also demonstrated that consumers alter their pace in walking,

chewing, or speaking to match the tempo of music. For instance, they reported that consumers

tend to walk, chew, and speak faster when surrounded by loud music.

Oakes and North (2008) also conducted a study which examined significant findings

from empirical research to observe the impact of music within real and simulated service

environments. Their study demonstrated the positive influence of musical congruity upon desired

outcomes, and how music is used to enhance desired cognitive and affective responses. Oakes

and North highlighted that musical variables such as genre, tempo, volume, and liking can be

controlled to accomplish anticipated effects relating to the evaluation of service environment,

speed of consumption, the perceived wait and stay duration, affective response, and spending.

In a study by DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990), they examined the racialized preferences

observed in Blacks' musical tastes and consumption. DiMaggio and Ostrower found that even

though Blacks are engaged in Euro-American cultural activities, they are still "considerably

more likely than comparable Whites to attend jazz concerts, watch jazz on television, or report

that they enjoy listening to jazz. They are also significantly more likely than Whites to report

enjoying soul, blues, or rhythm-and-blues music" (p.761).

The previous findings (DiMaggio & Ostrower, 1990; Herrington & Capella, 1994; Smith

& Cunrow, 1966) about the impact of the types, taste preferences, and tempo of music may also

apply to sport consumption. The type and the tempo of music played is often varied to heighten

the sport consumption setting or situation in an attempt to elicit the desired responses/reactions from consumers. Musical congruity (Oakes & North, 2008) also plays an important role in sport consumption contexts and may impact sport consumers' cognitive and affective responses. Within a sport context, music has the power to "capture attention, lift spirits, generate emotion, change or regulate mood, and evoke memories" (Terry & Karageorghis, 2006, p. 1). Music allows people's feelings to soar. Therefore, music performs several functions such as: (a) elevating the mood for consumers and athletes, (b) creating and inviting a welcoming atmosphere, and (c) keeping consumers engaged with supporting their team.

As reported previously, DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990) observed racialized preferences in Blacks' musical tastes. Therefore, within the HBCU sport context, music may serve a unique and particular function in motivating Black consumers if certain music is played. Certain culturally salient musical genres (such as soul, blues, rhythm and blues, jazz, or gospel) may: (a) serve as an expressive language for African Americans that symbolizes freedom from current social issues, (b) act as a conduit for celebration and togetherness amongst African American consumers, and (c) add a cultural undertone and overtone to their consumption desires, intention, and satisfaction. Music therefore serves many functions (such as celebration, affirmation, connection to cultural identity), and is performed in formal and informal sport consumption settings. No sport event would be the same without the enhancement of the music it plays to motivate and heighten the celebrations and emotions of the spectators in attendance. In the context of HBCU sports, the type of music played may create a liveliness and vibrancy that makes the consumption experience culturally meaningful.

Clothing/Visible Goods and Consumption

Clothing and visible goods have been found to influence consumption patterns and behaviors among certain ethnic groups. For example, a study by Nguyen & Brown (2010) sought to examine the meaning ascribed to style and how style behaviors were used to distinguish identity among Hmong adolescents in America. The study revealed that it was through their clothing (stylistic) behavior that Hmong adolescents' cultural identities and social group affiliations were constructed, expressed, and transformed. Furthermore, clothing allowed them to set social and cultural boundaries for identity formation and were used to establish identity and symbols to negotiate status within the dominant culture. Similar to the Hmong adolescents who expressed their identity through clothing, at every level of sports, wearing sport clothing and displaying sport merchandise also offers consumers a platform to visibly express their affiliation as a fan to a particular team, sport, or player. The display of clothing and visible goods therefore serves as an outward marker to symbolize an association to a social group that creates a sense of belonging for consumers.

Lacy (2007) examined the lives and lifestyles of Black elites and demonstrated countless ways in which upper-middle class Blacks create their public identities. This identity creation is based on their class standing, in an effort to minimize the impact of racial stereotypes. Lacy's work revealed that while shopping, Black elites made an effort to dress with care, as this would impact how they are treated in public. Lacy described the participants as always being mindful of their presentation and highlighted that they were very attentive to their choice of clothing, because they believed that they would be treated harshly or would encounter unpleasant experiences if their clothing was too casual. According to Lacy (2007), whites may "portray distinct identities as a way of signaling social position" (p. 39), however, Lacy argued that

"Blacks who have "*made it*" must work harder, more deliberately, and more consistently to make their middle-class status known to others" (p. 3). Lacy also found that some participants did not want to demonstrate their status and instead they intentionally dress casually while shopping. However, if they were mistreated they would utilize their middle-class resources to demonstrate the error by issuing a formal complaint with management. As a result, Lacy's findings are related to the arguments of Blacks using goods as a means of disrupting the dominant order.

Charles, Hurst, and Roussanov (2007) provided evidence demonstrating that Blacks are conspicuous consumers. They found that Blacks spend roughly 30% more on visible goods than whites, a rate that had been relatively consistent for the period of 1986–2002. As such, they proposed a model based on the idea that goods are used in competitive displays, and they argue that the consumption of visible goods is driven by the relative status of an individual's reference group. They define a visible good as one that is both portable and easily perceptible to others (e.g., cars, clothing, and jewelry), and they identify an individual's reference group as their racial in-group. They argue that Blacks' reference group consists of other Blacks, and therefore Blacks gauge their status by comparing themselves to other Blacks. They also found that Blacks engage in consumption of visible goods at higher levels in states where Blacks are on average poorer.

The cultural value dimensions offered by Hofstede (2002) previously discuss as well as that of DeMooij (2004) also offer avenues by which to further examine how culture may influence HBCU sport consumption. Although many HBCU sport events attract a gender balance among their consumers (Armstrong 2002a, 2002b), it is likely that the consumers' use of clothing and other visible goods (as expressions of culture) is aligned with the tendencies of the dimensions of masculinity and/or femininity as Hofstede described. The behaviors be witnessed in HBCU consumers' appearance and overall grooming, as well as their use of clothing and other

visible goods may correspond to Hofstede's conceptions of uncertainty avoidance. The nature of the clothing and visible goods displayed at HBCU sports may also represent and convey Hofstede's depiction of individualistic culture (elevating the individual) and/or a collectivist culture (celebrating the social group membership).

With sport being socially consumed, and clothing and visible goods considered outward expressions of one's culture, sport events offer a unique venue for using clothing and visible goods as performances and expressions of culture. Within a sport context, consumers may wear team apparel to demonstrate their team spirit, and also to provide them with a sense of belonging to their respective team. However, as it relates to HBCU sports, clothing and visible goods may also reflect consumers' cultural and ethnic identity instead of, or in addition to their sport identification. In each case, the clothing and visible goods displayed by HBCU sport consumers may be an expression of their culture as an HBCU affiliate, a sport fan, or an individual of African descent. Clothing and visible goods as ways of performing culture at HBCU sport events may enhance the cultural appeal and attractiveness of HBCU as a consumption opportunity.

Expression and the Culture of Sport Consumption

As noted earlier in this chapter, individuals may express their thoughts and feelings through words, choices, and actions. People's use of food, music, and clothing and visible goods as forms of cultural expressions may allow them to express themselves differently in different settings. However, sport consumption welcomes individual and collective expressions in various forms. There are a wide array of verbal and non-verbal expressions beyond the food, music, and clothing and visible goods that contribute to/help to create the culture of sport consumption that must be acknowledged.

Through their interaction with others, people are often inclined to express their emotions collectively through verbal and nonverbal means of communication (Altheide, 1996). Such expressions are often heightened in the context of sport consumption. Also, within a sport context there is a possibility that events on and off the field of competition may generate an emotional encounter for sport consumers. This may be expressed through collective gestures and verbal responses that may be positive (e.g. cheering, high-fives, smiling, clapping, hugging, hand-claps, or dancing) or negative (e.g. booing players or officials, shrugs when they are disappointed in a play or a player, or looking away from the field because their team is performing badly). Sport consumers may also use verbal responses such as chants to motivate their team, trash-talking to opposing team and supporters, or painting their bodies or faces to support their team or a particular athlete. Additionally, sport consumers may create posters that are supportive, funny, or disrespectful. Regardless of the message being communicated, sport consumers utilize various ways and means to express their emotions (Rocca & Vogl-Bauer, 1999; Serazio, 2013).

As discussed previously, language is considered as one of the most prominent expressions of the African American culture. Within an HBCU sport context, consumers may use different slangs to communicate and describe their consumption. For example, the slang *'it's lit'* (which means something fun is happening) may be employed to describe the game day experience at an HBCU, or it can be used in the context of stating that the band is playing excellent music that creates an amazing atmosphere. Another slang associated with the HBCU experience is *'dressed to kill'* (possessing a fashionable look that is very impressive), which may be used to describe how African Americans use fashion to express their identity when they attend a sport events. Since language is classified as a form of expression that is considered a

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symbolic element of culture, language and communication exchanges may contribute to creating

the culture of HBCU sport consumption (Maffi, 2001; Salzmann, Stanlaw, & Adachi, 2014).

In summary, consumption itself is a form of expression. Consumers who are actively

participating at a sport event may seek to express themselves individually or with others through

different gestures, language, objects, and symbols. The emotional energy and group camaraderie

that sport offer is unique and heightened when they are experienced in the moment. The

opportunity for racially/ethnically-relevant verbal, non-verbal, individual, and collective

expressions during HBCU sport consumption may add cultural meaning that influences Blacks'

consumption desires, intention, and satisfaction. Therefore, the culture of expressions allowed,

witnessed, experienced, and celebrated at HBCU sport events (be they associated with food,

music, and/or clothing and visible goods or not) may add value to the creation of a unique culture

of HBCU sport consumption.

Culture and Sport Consumption: Theoretical and Conceptual Support

There are several theories and concepts that support the likely impact of culture on

consumption, be it sport or otherwise. This section will seek to explain and illustrate one theory

(social identity theory) and two concepts (habitus and collective effervescence) that will

demonstrate how and why elements of culture may influence African Americans' sport

consumption.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory (SIT) was developed by Tajfel and Turner, and stems from social

psychological studies (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Tajfel (1978) summarized SIT to be the

individual's knowledge that he/she belongs to certain social groups, together with some

emotional and value significance to him/her of this group membership. Within the field of

psychology, this theory was used to understand identity. SIT highlights, social identity as: (a) a

way of defining who people are in terms of their similarities and differences with others, and (b)

something that is shared with others that provides a foundation for common social action. Within

this framework, researchers have detailed processes that give practical insights into the ways that

groups work in society. This work has been applied to different types of groups, crowds, and to

organizational behavior, focusing on socialization, role conflict, and inter-group relations

(Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

SIT focuses on the social self, which differentiates the individual as a person (personal

identity) and the individual's knowledge that he is a member of a group (social identity) (Abrams

and Hogg, 1990). Within this theory, a person does not only have one perspective of self, but

they have numerous selves that correspond to widening circles of group membership. For

example, related to HBCU sport consumers, they may have different identities such as their race,

HBCU affiliation, geographical location, age, residence, social status, etc. However, when

attending a HBCU game, they may choose to only focus on the most salient identity, so that they

can be recognized as members of the in-group. SIT states that people tend to categorize

themselves and others into various social categories such as organizational membership,

religious affiliation, and gender (Tajfel & Turner 1986). SIT asserts that group membership

creates in-group/self-categorization and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the

expense of the out-group. For example, in the minimal group study by Tajfel and Turner (1978),

individuals who categorized themselves as group members had in-group favoritism.

As noted by Tajfel (1978), SIT proposes that an individual's belonging to a specific

group happens through self-categorization and sentimental components that are associated with

group membership. It is through this process that the group provides an individual with a definite level of comfort, which can lead to a positive outcome. As such, through self-categorization and group membership, an individual will develop their social identity, which influences their own norms, values, and beliefs. Ultimately, the individual will embrace the identity of the group, which will influence their motives, expectations, beliefs, norms, and values (Turner & Onorato, 1999). As previously highlighted, culture is seen as a unique facet of a social group where the members' shared values and norms differentiate them from other social groups and are influenced by conscious beliefs. Therefore, it can be inferred that culture can be considered a component of SIT.

Consumers at an HBCU sport event (who are predominantly of African descent) may identify with the elements of culture that are salient to other members of their social (racial) group, making the HBCU setting meaningful and culturally empowering. HBCU sport consumers may partake of the food, dance to the music, wear the clothing and visible goods, and/or demonstrate certain expressions to validate or signify their identification with their racial/ethnic group members also in attendance. Being present and expressing culture with their cultural in-group members may: (a) serve as important sources of pride and self-esteem, (b) promote a sense of social identity, and (c) offer a sense of belonging to the social world. Based on the cultural uniqueness of HBCU sport events, Black consumers tend to form a strong identity with HBCU sports. The social/ethnic identification and psychological attachment Black consumers have to these events may influence their consumption of HBCU sports (McGreggor & Armstrong, 2016). Therefore, SIT serves as a theoretical tool which can be employed to not only examine why HBCU sports are important to the Black community, but also to explain how

elements of culture in the HBCU sport setting allow for unique and meaningful expressions of their social (racial and ethnic) identity.

Habitus

Another concept that supports the premise of culture affecting HBCU sport consumption is the concept of habitus. According to Bourdieu (1984), the habitus is a system of class-based dispositions of an individual that are usually shared by people with similar background (in terms of social class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, education, profession, taste, etc.). Bourdieu considered habitus a structure that influences cultural taste and social action. Additionally, Bourdieu mentioned that the habitus includes a way of moving, dressing, attitudes, postures, mannerism, accent, and facial expression. It also reflects an individual's class and background.

Within sports, the habitus can be considered as a structure that constructs a community through culture. With sports being an important aspect for Black consumers, it can be inferred that through sports, a material and symbolic habitus is created for Black consumers. An example of this is HBCU sports. HBCU sports is a habitus based primarily on race/ethnic identity for Black consumers that influences (celebrates, facilitates, and encourages) their cultural tastes and social actions in a sport context. It consists of various elements of culture such as movement, expressions, values, thoughts, social cognitions, schemes, feelings, and actions that are culturally produced and consumed by Black consumers. The HBCU habitus is unique to Black consumers' distinct ways of being and doing culture.

Collective Effervescence

The concept of collective effervescence is another concept that seems relevant to the culture of HBCU sport consumption. Durkheim's (1912) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, was the study of an Indigenous religion in Australia to illustrate the complex relationships between society, individual consciousness, and subsequent actions. Durkheim demonstrated the immense role of religion, or moral power plays in organizing societal order and norms. Durkheim argued that religion, and the ideas contained within these systems of belief, work to organize and enforce social life and norms, amid an individual's consciousness and ways of knowing and behaving. In other words, Durkheim suggested that the work of the dominant system of ideas and beliefs within a given society greatly shapes our reality and our actions.

Durkheim (1912) sought to merge the relationship of the role of ideas to reality by showing how the most sacred ideas become sacred objects and interactions, which serve to reinforce societal categories and norms in everyday life and individual consciousness. Durkheim explained that the sacred rites of a religion are practiced within a moral community. When together, this moral community invokes intense emotionality, or a 'collective effervescence,' which causes excitement or upliftment towards the sacred, within the divine and humankind. Durkheim defined collective effervescence as "the very fast assembling of an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are assembled, their proximity generates a kind of electricity that quickly transports them to an extra-ordinary degree of exaltation" (p. 162).

HBCU sports can be conceptualized as a ritual that produces a collective effervescence for Black people and the Black community. The representations of Blackness that permeate HBCU sports create an atmosphere that provides racial upliftment for Black consumers

(Armstrong, 2002a). As described previously, the collective Africentric ambience of HBCU sports provides electricity and exaltation through the 'stimulants' of the performance of race and culture – 'Black' entertainment and cultural event packing with merchandising, concessions, music, clothing, food, expressions, etc. that are salient to the Black community (Cavil, 2015; Latta, 2001; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015). As such, HBCU sport settings offers and elicits racial eustress where "the ordinary set of conditions of life are set aside so definitively and so consciously" (Durkheim, 1912, p. 163). In other words, at a HBCU event, sport is that ritual that triumphs over all social issues, creating a 'safe space' where Black people can come together in a good and positive way celebrating their collective culture (McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015). In so doing, the HBCU sport consumption experience may reflect a culturally infused collective effervescence.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to offer a general discussion of culture and its impact on consumption. This chapter illustrated that culture is expressed through a variety ways. Additionally, this chapter defined and described various elements of culture, highlighting food, clothing and visible goods, and music as the elements of culture this study sought to explore. This chapter also illustrated the ways in which culture influences consumption, and discussed various expressions that create the unique culture of sport consumption. Lastly, this chapter discussed social identity theory, habitus, and collective effervescence as theoretical and conceptual underpinnings supporting the likely impact of culture as a salient attribute and outcome of the HBCU sport consumption experience.

Chapter III

Methodology

As mentioned previously, the overarching purposes of this investigation were to: (a) identify and examine ways in which culture is expressed, performed, and manifested in HBCU sport consumption, and (b) explore the manner in which culture motivates HBCU sport consumption. This study examined: (a) the cultural attributes (and cultural signifiers) of the HBCU sport consumption *(Research Question 1)*, (b) the performance and expressions of culture in the context of HBCU sport consumption *(Research Question 2)*, and (c) the meaning of culture (how and why it matters) to the HBCU sport consumption experience *(Research Question 3)*. In an attempt to address the guiding research questions, and the overall research problem of understanding culture, a qualitative design was implemented. More specifically, an ethnographic approach was particularly suitable for this study, as it provided me with an opportunity to be immersed in an HBCU sport setting to examine, observe, and directly experience the culture thoroughly. This chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed in the current study.

Research Methods: Qualitative Research

As noted previously, the majority of research on HBCU sports consumption has been from a quantitative perspective. Quantitative research focuses on examining the relationship between variables with the objective of providing a statistical analysis (Creswell, 2003). Studies that employ quantitative research designs "emphasize objective measurements and the statistical,

mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys,

or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques" (Babbie, 2010,

p. 1). Table 2 demonstrates some advantages and limitations of quantitative research.

Table 2

Advantages and Limitations of Quantitative Research Design

Advantages	Limitations
Data collected are numeric, allowing for collection of data from a large sample size.	Does not always provide information on complexity of human experience or perceptions in its entirety
Statistical analysis allows for greater objectivity when reviewing results, therefore, results are independent of the researcher.	Is able to reveal *to what extent but* cannot always explore *why or how.*
Numerical results can be displayed in graphs, charts, tables, and other formats that allow for better interpretation.	May provide a false impression of homogeneity in a sample.
Analysis of data is less time-consuming and can be done using statistical software.	Fairly inflexible.
Depending on the type of data being collected, data collection methods can be relatively quick.	

Note. Advantages and limitations adapted from LUMS Effective Learning, 2016.

Armstrong (2002a) employed a quantitative approach to examine the influence of ethnic

identification on Black consumers' attendance at HBCU sport events, and to also examine

Blacks motivations for sport consumption by applying the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS),

developed by Wann. In Armstrong's (2002a) study, the hypothesis was to test if Black consumers' identification with their ethnic group would have a significant influence on their attendance frequency at HBCU sport events. The findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between their ethnic identification and attendance frequency. By employing a quantitative approach, Armstrong's study was able to have a large sample size which added support to the statistical analysis. However, as noted by Armstrong, the study was restricted in capturing or describing the "complexities of the constructs included in this study such as perception, involvement, and ethnic identification" (p. 285). Armstrong therefore, stressed the need for qualitative studies to address the ambiguity concerning the cultural dimensions of the HBCU sport experience that "reflect salient aspects of Black consumers' ethnicity and foster social and psychological involvement among Black consumers in a manner that influences their overall sport consumption patterns" (p. 285).

In another quantitative study, Armstrong (2002b) added a cultural component to the widely used SFMS and tested it on Black sports consumers. The findings revealed that cultural affiliation was a salient motive for Black consumers sport consumption. However, there is limited research addressing what cultural affiliation is and what it means in the context of HBCU sport consumption. Given the complexities of culture, it seems as though an interpretive approach would offer additional insight beyond what has been revealed in research that has utilized survey methods to explore this phenomenon of culture. Therefore, this study implemented a qualitative approach to fill this gap, and to address the shortcomings of previous research.

Qualitative research approaches seek to understand a given research problem or phenomenon from the perspective of the members of the local population being studied. It is

especially effective in attaining culturally relevant information relating to the values, behaviors, opinions, social contexts, and the meaning making of the community being examined (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Wilson, 2016). Qualitative research has the ability to provide multifaceted textual descriptions of people's lived experiences. It provides a holistic approach to research which uses a process-oriented approach to knowledge building. Qualitative research offers insight into the "social meaning people attribute to their experiences, circumstances, and situations, as well as the meanings people embed into texts and other objects" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, p.4). It offers important information about the personal side of an issue that can be conflicting, such as the behaviors, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Wilson, 2016). Additionally, qualitative research is very operational in categorizing intangible factors, which include social norms, gender roles, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and religion within a study where these factors may not be obvious. Qualitative research includes a unique process that formulates ways of asking questions and a particular way of thinking through problems in order to gain extra meaning from data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Qualitative research is best suited for naturalistic observations and field studies (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Therefore, a researcher may observe and document behaviors, opinions, patterns, needs, main points, and other types of information without fully understanding what data will be meaningful. An advantage of qualitative methods is that they can employ open-ended questions and probing to attain insight and information. Qualitative research provides participants with the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than compelling them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods often do. In that case, open-ended questions have the ability to invite responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the

participant, explanatory in nature, and unanticipated by the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Table 3 demonstrates some additional advantages of qualitative research, as well as some disadvantages.

Table 3
Advantages and Disadvantages of Qualitative Research

Advantages	Disadvantages
The research framework can be fluid and based on incoming or available data.	Data collected is highly subjective.
It is based on human experiences and observations.	It is difficult to access and demonstrate data rigidity.
Operates within a structure that is fluid which allow researchers to follow-up interesting answers with additional questions.	It is time consuming.
Can be utilized to create industry-specific insights.	Data created through qualitative research is not always accepted by members of the researched community.
Provides more content for creative and marketing teams.	

Note. Advantages and disadvantages adapted from Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011 and Regoli, (n.d).

Relative to enhancing the comprehension of the HBCU sport consumption experience, a qualitative approach allows for a richer and deeper exploration of what culture is, and what role it plays in motivating and sustaining the consumption of HBCU sports to a greater extent than what is allowed or has been revealed by quantitative methods. Qualitative research can offer unique insight to determine ways of capturing the salience of culture in a strategic manner, to

positively impact HBCU sport consumption. Given the overall purpose of this study and its focus on culture, qualitative research was chosen as the research method.

Overview of Ethnography

This qualitative research drew upon the overall methodology of ethnography to conduct a briefer and more bounded ethnographic study. Ethnography is founded in the tradition of anthropology, and it is a qualitative method where the intent is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice. According to Peacock (1986), ethnography is "devoted to describing ways of life of humankind, a social scientific description of a people and the cultural basis of their peoplehood" (p. 32). Ethnography aims to acquire a holistic understanding of how individuals in different cultures and subcultures make sense of their lived reality (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). It can be classified as a straightforward type of social research because of its long history, and it resembles how people uses culture to make sense of the world (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). An ethnographic study allows the ethnographer to be able to capture their participants' behaviors, emotions, consciousness and body language in a natural setting (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Mariampolski, 2006; Sands 2002).

While an ethnographic study starts with a problem or a set of issues, the researcher should never enter the study looking for anything, or trying to prove something, specific (Mariampolski, 2006), as the purpose of ethnographic studies are to produce descriptions and explanations or develop theories, rather than seeking to test an existing hypothesis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). However, Luttrell (2000) stated that a researcher may enter a study with "particular theoretical, ontological, personal and cultural frameworks" (p.499). The methods employed in this study allowed for both. The approach to this study was theoretically and

conceptually grounded in a general framework that allowed for a rich discovery and emergence of 'culture.'

Ethnographic studies may require that the researcher participate in different activities within the selected community, ask questions, watch ceremonies, and take field notes, along with many other things (Spradley, 1980; Zubrzycki, 2017). When conducting an ethnographic study, one must decide on how involved they want to be as a researcher. A researcher can choose to be a(n): (a) complete observer, (b) observer-as-participant, (c) participant-observer, or (d) complete participant. Table 4 highlights the different characteristics of each role:

Table 4
Characteristics of the Role of the Researcher

Complete Observer	**Observer-as-Participant**
• Researcher's true identity and purpose are not known to those observed • Researcher has no interaction with people in the setting • Researcher uses devices to conduct their observation (such as hidden cameras).	• The researcher role involves more formal observation • How active the researcher is in the setting is very limited
Participant Observer or Participant-as-Observer	**Complete Participant**
• Researcher participates fully in the setting • Researcher interacts with the members of the group • Both the researcher and informant are aware that there is a research relationship	• Researcher actively participates with members in the setting • Researcher's true identity and purpose are not known to those observed

Note. Adapted from Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011.

It is important to note that the role of the researcher is based on how involved the researcher chooses to be, and how much access they have to the research site. The role of the researcher is not restricted, but may move back and forth on the continuum between observation and participation, depending on the circumstances they encounter while they are in the research setting (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Pope, 2005). My role as the researcher allowed me to occupy various spaces along the participant-observer continuum, however, I was primarily a participant-observer.

In an ethnographic study, it is also critical that the researcher has a detailed understanding of the fundamental features of the human experience which are engrained in the participants' cultural behavior (what people do), cultural knowledge (what people know), and cultural artifacts (things people make and use) as the researcher will be seeking to learn from others through the process of their own culture (Spradley, 1980). Thus, when a researcher can differentiate various cultural patterns, they will be able to produce 'thick description' in which the researcher will be able to discuss cultural practices from the participant's perspective (Geertz, 1973). Furthermore, the researcher must be capable of traveling between territorial and semantic boundaries, constructing cultures and understanding through observation and interaction with the participants (Wilson, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017). In other words, the researcher must be able to understand that there are boundaries within each culture that are salient, because they often provide cultural meanings.

For example, when I entered the research site, I quickly learned that the members of this community embodied a family-oriented culture. It was their custom to share their food with others. During an interview, a participant offered me a drink, and I refused it. In doing so, I created a boundary around myself. However, the participant brought to my attention that it would

be an insult if I did not partake in what he was offering. As a result, I accepted the participant's offer because I did not want to insult his culture, his cultural practice, or his cultural expectation by creating this boundary of non-participation. Additionally, the researcher must recognize cultural norms that regulate human behavior. As a researcher, an HBCU alumna, and a sport consumer, I was able to: (a) bring a fundamental knowledge of the culture in which I was a participant-observer, (b) exhibit an ability to distinguish cultural patterns, (c) travel the boundaries in culturally appropriate ways, and yet (d) obtain a better/deeper learning from others through the process of my own culture just as Spradley (1980) and Geertz (1973) discussed.

Since ethnography provides a path to move from unstructured observations to discover the underlying meanings behind behavior, and to understand feelings and intentions (Mariampolski, 2006), an ethnographic approach was applied in this study to document the importance of the culture of HBCU sport consumption. Through this approach, I effectively: (a) explored the unique elements of culture and attributes that contribute to HBCU sport consumption, (b) examined and experienced how culture is performed by others through rituals, practices, behaviors, traditions, and patterns, and (c) understood the meaning of culture in/to the HBCU sport consumption experience.

Ethnography and Marketing

While ethnography is a particularly suitable approach for obtaining a deeper understanding of culture, it also has practical usefulness for individuals seeking to use culture as an element of marketing strategy. The applicability of ethnography to marketing was very important in the context of this study, given that the anticipated practical significance of this study is to inform and enhance HBCU sport marketing. Ethnography enhances marketers' ability

to strategically understand how culture relates to the attributes of a product/event. Ethnographic approaches to studying marketing allow researchers to directly observe cultural concepts rather than examining social concepts that are already obvious. It also allows for an observation of behaviors that may infer a basis in culture. It provides in-depth information that serves as the foundation for researchers to construct more adequate, accurate, and efficient marketing strategies that can assist a business, and speak to consumers (Mariampolski, 2006). Additionally, ethnographic approaches are used in marketing when "little is known about a targeted market or when fresh insights are desired about a segment of consumer-related behavior" (Mariampolski, p. 3). Given the failure of previous sport marketing research on HBCU sports to delve into the specificity of culture, ethnographic methods are not only appropriate, but they are needed.

The way in which people behave in their everyday life is grounded deeply in their cultural patterns, demonstrating how they make sense of their reality (Swidler, 1986; Zubrzycki, 2017). As a result, a consumer's consumption of a product is often influenced by their culture. Given that consumption is a social process (Jansson-Boyd, 2010), ethnography can be used to study how culture influences consumption, as it allows researchers to understand consumers and the culture of consumption in a critical and theoretical way (Mariampolski, 2006). According to Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), using ethnographic methods in marketing is appropriate to understand consumption, as it provides "implications for market segmentation and targeting; product and service positioning; and product, service and brand management" (p. 484).

Ethnography provides the opportunity for the creation of marketing strategies through thick description, thick transcription, and thick inscription. Thick description provides marketers with learning more about the meaning of particular consumption patterns of a specific group. Thick transcription allows marketers to create "evocative representations of consumption

behaviors to develop line extensions, product reformulations, and more effective promotional strategies" (Arnould & Wallendorf, p. 501). Through thick inscription, marketers can create strong marketing strategies that are geared towards a segment that is "characterized by strong insider-outsider boundary mechanisms, such as embedded subculture, collectors and other enthusiasts, and youth cultures" (Arnould & Wallendorf, p. 501).

Ethnography can also serve as a tool that constructs how cultural messages and products can be more relatable to their consumers. In other words, it provides marketers with cultural information that allows them to know the different types of communication channels to use, to effectively convey their marketing message. For example, Figure 2 demonstrates how ethnography serves as a tool to collect data that informs marketers on how to integrate culture into their marketing strategies. Thus, marketers will have a better understanding of how to send a consistent message, and how to know the appropriate channel of communication to use.

Ethnography	•Observation, interviews, artifact collection in a natural setting to identify elements of culture that influences consumers.
Consumer Behavior	•Through ethnography, researchers are able to understand the symbolic and material elements of culture and factors that influences consumer behavior.
Channel of Communication	•Based on the information collected from consumers, it contributes in assisting marketers with making a decision on the best element (s) of the promotional mix that can be employed to deliver a culturally effective message that is relatable to consumers. •Assist marketers with deciding on which channel of communication will be effective for their product and assist with budget determination.

Figure 2. Ethnography and Marketing.
This figure demonstrates how ethnography can be consumer oriented.

In summary, ethnographic research is an important tool that provides marketers and businesses with the opportunity to: (a) better communicate the culture and cultural meanings to their consumers, and (b) improve or create culturally effective marketing strategies. Mariampolski (2006) mentioned that ethnography in marketing "embraces the more humanistic, naturalistic, creative, and intuitive ways of acquiring knowledge and making sense of the world," (p.7) which provides the foundation for analysis on the concept of culture. Furthermore, it "discover(s) the underlying meanings behind behavior; to understand feelings and intentions in order to deduce logical implications for strategic decisions" (Mariampolski, p. 18). For these reasons, an ethnographic approach was considered most appropriate for this investigation.

Research Design

Through an ethnographic approach, interviews, the role of the researcher, observations, and the collection of artifacts played an important role in the research design process. As discussed throughout this document, the focus of this study was on the exploration of culture. Culture can be defined as an entire way of life for an individual or a group that focuses on meaning-making (Zubrzycki, 2017). Culture is the complex collection of patterns and behaviors of an individual or a group. Within the HBCU sport experience, various patterns and behaviors are considered to be elements of culture. To enhance my ability to grasp the complexity of the culture of HBCU sport consumption (to understand what it is, how it is performed, and why and how it matters to HBCU sport consumption), multiple approaches were incorporated into the ethnographic research design. This chapter discusses the strategic selection of the site, and the data collection methods employed of: (a) participant-observation, (b) casual unstructured interviews, (c) collection of artifacts, and (d) field notes and photographs. Following is a discussion of the methods employed to obtain the data for this investigation.

Site Selection

The site selected for this study was a well-attended HBCU football program in the United States. Minchfield College (the pseudonym to protect the identity of the site selected) was founded in the late 19th century as an HBCU, specifically to provide educational opportunities for 'Colored' students. Minchfield College is a participating member in an NCAA Division I Conference located in the Southeastern region of the United States. The conference has a total of 13-member institutions. Minchfield College is a four-year public HBCU and has a student body of over 8,000. Minchfield College football team averaged over 17,000 consumers at home games during the 2017 football season. Minchfield College was chosen for as the site for this

ethnographic study because of their consistent attendance rate over the last three football season amongst all HBCU football programs in the United States (as reported by the NCAA). Therefore, the site was strategically selected as one that would adequately allow for an exploration of the culture of HBCU sport consumption.

Data Collection

As mentioned previously, to fulfill the purposes of this study of exploring the role of culture to the consumption of HBCU sport, a number of data collection methods were employed. Data for this study were gathered by my participation in Minchfield College football game day activities, observations, casual unstructured interviews with participants in attendance, the collection of material and visual artifacts, and field notes and photographs.

Participant-Observation

Participant-observation was the main fieldwork method employed for this study. The participant-observer role allows the researcher to be immersed in the studied community by being actively engaged in day-to-day or routine activities with the members of the community (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Sands, 2002). For example, in an ethnographic study by Sands, his intent was to understand the culture of surfing. Sands participated by going to the ocean each day with members of the community and partaking in activities such as: waking up early to catch waves, waxing his surfboard, and building a spiritual connection with the ocean. Sands emphasized that the only way to understand the routine activities of the surf community, was to be actively engaged in the experience. On the other hand, observation allows the researcher to witness events, behaviors, rituals, and artifacts. Observation provides researchers with the opportunity to observe events that in which participants partake, observe nonverbal expression of

feelings, observe how different participants within that community interact and communicate with each other, and observe how much time participants spend engaged in the studied activities (Sands, 2002). In the same ethnographic study, Sands highlighted as an observer what was learned about the different surf symbols, meanings associated with each symbol, and how to accurately apply wax to his surfboard.

Participant-observation served as an important role in this study, as it allowed me to directly participate in and observe the cultural elements at an HBCU sport event. As a participant-observer, I was actively engaged in the HBCU sport experience. As a spectator, I participated in pre-game rituals, post-game rituals, half-time rituals, school chants, and interaction with other spectators. I was able to participate in various expressions of culture. As an observer, I was able to also witness various elements and expressions of culture among the participants such as: the type of food vendors sold, music, the performance of the band, cheerleaders, spectators' attire, camaraderie amongst spectators, dances, the way in which spectators' responded to the band, spectators' engagement in watching the game, concession lines, merchandise vendors, fraternity and sorority involvement, and fan experience. In summary, participant-observation provided me with the opportunity to participate in and observe: (a) the cultural norms of the HBCU sport consumption experience, (b) the performance and creation of culture in the HBCU sport setting, and (c) the cultural attributes that make the HBCU sport experience meaningful.

Casual Unstructured Interviews

To obtain a first-hand account from the consumers at the site about the attributes they perceived as salient to HBCUs/HBCU sports and what made the culture of HBCU sport

consumption meaningful, casual unstructured interviews were also employed. Unstructured interviews provided the opportunity for more flexibility during face-to-face contact with the participants (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Like the name suggests, unstructured interviews have no structure. Instead, they allow the researcher to build rapport with their participants, by allowing the participants to express themselves in their own way. Unstructured interviews also allows the researcher to explore additional topic areas or general issues of interest to the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Cohen, 2006). Luttrell (2000) mentioned that "the narration of these stories is meant to provide the listener with a sense of what life is like or what it means to be a member of a particular culture" (p. 503). Thus, casual unstructured interviews aided with generating life stories from members within this community, and provided me with a chance to learn about 'external' stories.

Casual unstructured interviews with the consumers at the Minchfield College sport event occurred before the game, during the game, and after the game. Since the interviews were unstructured, the time frame for each interview differed. The interviews ranged from five minutes to thirty minutes. The interviews were conversational in nature as the participants were asked questions relevant to them and based on the nature of the interactions with them. Fontana and Frey (2000) reported that it is imperative that casual unstructured interviews are friendly and that there is a possibility that the interview may deviate from the primary topic of the research. As such, building a rapport with each participant by connecting with them on a personal level was essential. For example, I wore Minchfield College apparel which automatically made the participants very willing to answer questions pertaining to the research. There were moments when the participants offered personal information that was not relative to the study, however, it allowed me to have an honest conversation with each participant. This approach was valuable as

it created a relaxed environment and allowed an interactive conversation (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Additionally, I got an opportunity to conduct casual unstructured interviews with members of the surrounding community (Uber drivers, employees at the hotel). With permission from each participant, a voice recorder was used to capture interviews, but not any personally identifying information. Utilizing a voice recorder was beneficial, as it allowed me to interact with the participants while following the conversation without any distraction.

During these interviews, it was very difficult to take notes. Therefore, I made mental notes of each participant's nonverbal behavior (emotions and gestures). Immediately following each interview, I recorded these observations. Lastly, after each day, I set aside to reflect and transcribe the overall experience.

Participant Selection. Participants for the unstructured interviews were selected through a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is a process of sampling where participants are intentionally selected in alignment with the purpose of the research, and the reasons for the research question(s) (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Therefore, for this study on the culture of HBCU sport consumption, purposive sampling was used to target Black (or non-Black) participants who identified as consumers of HBCU sports. Convenience sampling, as the name implies, refers to a sampling process of selecting participants who are convenient, accessible, and readily available to the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy). Via convenience sampling, participants were selected at the HBCU sport event who were willing to share information about their HBCU sport consumption experience. Interviews were conducted on campus, at the football game, during tailgating, and in commute to the venue (Uber).

Participants' Profile. According to Morse (1994), an ethnographic study should have approximately 30 to 50 participants. However, Mira and McKenzie (2006), argued that a researcher should not focus on the number of participants but more on the quality of participants. That is, the focus should be on how well-informed or knowledgeable the individuals are about their culture. Through both purposive and convenience sampling techniques, a total of 25 interviews were conducted with 'well-informed' individuals. Of the 25 participants, only 24 participants identified as HBCU sport supporters. One participant did not state his affiliation, but he provided contextual information that assisted me with navigating the research site. Three interviews were conducted with Uber drivers. Two of the Uber drivers' interviews were conducted in commute to the Minchfield College campus, while one was conducted on the way to the hotel. In addition, interviews were conducted on campus, during tailgating, and at the football game, and at the end of the game.

Of the 25 participants in this study, 15 of them identified as males, while 10 identified as females. Thirteen (13) male participants identified as Black Americans, one identified as White, and the other identified as Hispanic. All 12 females who participated in the study identified as Black Americans. Twenty (20) of the participants were Minchfield College affiliates (as current and former students, alum, faculty, or staff). Five (5) participants had no affiliation with Minchfield College affiliation; however, four (4) of them considered themselves to be supporters of HBCUs. Table 5 provides demographics and a brief description for each of the participants of this study.

Table 5
Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Race	Description/Affiliation with Minchfield College
John	Male	White	No Minchfield affiliation (Uber Driver, HBCU supporter)
Alberto	Male	Hispanic	No Minchfield affiliation (Uber Driver)
Mrs. B	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum and Staff
Tyler	Male	Black	Current Minchfield Student
Logan	Male	Black	Current Minchfield Student
Lisa	Female	Black	Current Minchfield Student
Jordan	Female	Black	Current Minchfield Student
Older Lady	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum
Sandra	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum (Uber Driver)
Rick	Male	Black	No Minchfield affiliation (HBCU supporter)
Bob	Male	Black	No Minchfield affiliation (HBCU supporter)
Ray	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum and Athletics Booster
Sam	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum and 2x Graduate
Tim	Male	Black	No HBCU affiliation (HBCU supporter)
Maria	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum
Mr. Brown	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum
Bobbie	Female	Black	Former Minchfield Student
Pat	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum
Jon	Male	Black	Minchfield Staff and Former Student
Dean	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum, Faculty, and 2x Graduate
Kim	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum and 3x Graduate
Roger	Male	Black	Current Minchfield Student
Mark	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum, Faculty, and 2x Graduate
Alisa	Female	Black	Minchfield Alum
Dr. White	Male	Black	Minchfield Alum, Faculty, and 2x Graduate

Artifacts

Another crucial part of the research design was the collection of artifacts. Artifacts refer to any signs, symbols, and representations of the material and symbolic elements of culture in the context of HBCUs. Such evidence may include, infer, indicate, or represent elements of the embodied, objectified, and institutional culture of HBCU sports. Through the collection of artifacts, I was able to examine the history and tradition of HBCU sports at the respective site, and gain information on the consumers and evidence of the ways in which the respective HBCU sport event had been marketed.

The artifacts captured included photographs of marketing artifacts (that were displayed on campus and/or within the local community), food and food menus, visible goods, and clothing. Through my participation and observation, I learned that Minchfield College does not physically/tangibly disseminate marketing flyers as artifacts to promote their athletic events. All game day marketing announcements were posted digitally throughout the campus. I also viewed Minchfield College football team's Instagram account to examine how they utilized this platform to market their program.

Field Notes and Photographs

Through participation and observation, field notes were generated. Field notes are the interpretations or representations that follow from the purpose and theoretical concepts the researcher has (Kouritzin, 2002, p. 120; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2002), highlighted that field notes allow the researcher to be able to "formulate theories, see connections and themes, follow hunches, confirm understandings of the culture that you are investigating" (p. 80), which all contribute to the epistemology process of ethnographic work.

For this study, field notes were employed to capture my experience (as the researcher) in real time using a journal and audiotape.

Through my observation while at Minchfield College, I made "double-entry" field notes (Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater 2002, p.78). This allowed me to list verifiable information, observable facts, and details observed on the left-hand column of my journal, while using the right-hand column to record subjective and reflexive responses to facts and details. All participation and observation field notes were transcribed immediately following my conversations and experiences. In moments when not taking field notes, a camera was used to capture photographs of the 'culture' at Minchfield.

Data Collection Timeline

To collect the necessary data for this investigation, the research site was visited from Friday, November 9th – Monday, November 12th, 2018. To capture the full experience, it was necessary for me to participate in activities on campus, tour the campus, visit historic buildings, and connect with my gatekeeper for this study. On Saturday, I attended a non-rivalry regular season football game and participated in pre-game festivities (tailgating), in-game activities, half-time activities, and post-game activities. On Sunday, I visited the campus to observe the atmosphere after game day and spoke with students I encountered. During the time of my visit, Minchfield College had a three-game winning streak, before losing a game before this current game. While this was a non-rival game, the game still carried weight, as a win would grant Minchfield College an opportunity to have an advantage over the other teams in their conference to clinch the conference title. I spent a total of eighteen hours of active participant observation (six hours on Friday, nine hours on Saturday, and three hours on Sunday). I departed the site on Monday, November 12, 2018.

Data Analysis

Since the data collection methods generated qualitative data, procedures for coding and

analyzing qualitative data were employed. Qualitative coding is labelled as a link or summation

between data collection and results explanation (Yin, 2014). It is through the process of coding

that a researcher is able to recognize words, and reconfigure phrases that can be applied to

translating symbolic information or meanings as expressed by the participants of the study

(Charmaz, 1983). These words and phrases are then employed to identify various patterns,

categories, assumptions, assertions, and themes that ultimately contributes to a theoretical

analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Overall, coding is essential as it provides greater interpretation of the data that allows the

researcher to learn from the data, and understand emergent patterns and explanations relevant to

the phenomena (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Through open coding and axial coding, the raw data was analyzed and coded line by line,

and grouped open codes into specific categories (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Gratton & Jones,

2010; Saldaña, 2016). During this process, emergent themes were identified from a list of codes

from each participants' response to the interview questions. Once the themes started to emerge

from the data, main-categories were created, with sub-categories that supported the higher-level

themes. Boyatzis (1998) highlighted that thematic coding can be established in three ways: (a)

theory driven, (b) prior research and data driven, and (c) inductive or interpretation from the raw

data. This research employed a combination of all three to code the data and capture the lived

experiences of each participant. In order to have a clear understating of the data, the codes were

examined from a deductive perspective (previous research, guiding research questions, guiding

theoretical concepts and framework) and an inductive perspective (open codes, researcher's

experience, axial categories) (Boyatzis, 1998; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Patton, 2002; Saldaña, 2016).

The transcriptions of the participants' responses were analyzed using NVivo 11 software platform. This software assisted with coding, organizing, and reporting the findings. Additionally, by utilizing this software, decontextualizing and re-contextualizing of the data were possible. Using this software to decontextualize the data allowed me to recombine the data with shared index words to form a pattern of meaning (Stewart, 1998). The software also assisted with re-contextualizing the data using inclusive themes that were created and deemed important to the study (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995).

Trustworthiness

To ensure the soundness of an ethnographic study, Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided four criteria to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is the researcher ensuring that: (a) data are collected from multiple sources, (b) the study is connected to theoretical frameworks or concepts, and (c) there is triangulation. Transferability focuses on the way in which the results of the study are applicable to other contexts. Dependability focuses on the data and findings being consistent. Lastly, confirmability is the study having as little bias as possible. In other words, the findings of the study should be shaped by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, motivation or interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

For this study, to ensure trustworthiness I utilized credibility and dependability as highlighted by Lincoln and Guba. Triangulation is one method that researchers employ to enhance the data quality and credibility of the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Patton, 2002). Triangulation is the process of using multiple data sources to produce

understanding. Patton (2002), highlighted that triangulation in a qualitative study contributes to the accuracy and credibility of research through "true value and plausibility of findings, credibility, impartiality, and independence of judgment; confirmability, consistency, and dependability of data; and explainable inconsistencies" (p. 93). Hence, given the nature of this study, triangulation was established from: (a) the data collection process (interviews, observations, artifacts, and field notes), (b) previous research, and (c) connecting the data to the theoretical framework (social identity theory) and concepts (habitus and collective effervescence) that guided this study. Dependability was established as the findings from this study were consistent with previous research and also extended previous literature.

It should be noted that an ethnographic study is meant to examine a specific issue or phenomenon in a certain population or ethnic group, and in a particular context (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Sands, 2002). Thus, generalizability is not an appropriate goal for an ethnographic study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). While ethnographic studies cannot be generalizable to other studies, they can be generalizable to theory (Finfgeld-Connett, 2009). Thus, a qualitative researcher may imply how their findings may build on or extend the current theories which guide their study. Finfgeld-Connett (2009) noted that it is through this process, that findings from qualitative research may be transformed into more "highly abstracted and generalizable theoretical frameworks" (p. 248). Therefore, this study was generalized to theory to build on and extend prior theoretical framework (social identity theory), and concepts (habitus and collective effervescence).

Researcher's Subjectivity Statement

The motivation for this study derives from my life experience as an avid consumer of sports and a proud HBCU alumna. Growing up in Jamaica, sports played a huge role in my life

resulting in my love to attend sport events frequently. In 2009, I received an athletic scholarship to attend the HBCU of Hampton University as a member of the women's track and field program. Hampton University provided me with an opportunity to get an education, and I vowed always to support my institution. When I attended my first football game at Hampton University, I was excited yet also disappointed. I was elated to support my institution and fellow student-athletes, but I was disappointed by the few people who were in attendance. However, I soon realized that this was not the case during homecoming games. It was in this moment I was eager to understand the nuances of the HBCU sport consumption phenomena.

My experience at Hampton University provoked a passion in me for serving/assisting HBCUs. When the opportunity presented itself to obtain a doctoral degree, I knew I wanted to be an advocate for the future of HBCU athletic programs. As such, I dedicate myself to examining the HBCU sport consumption experience. My personal background (being an HBCU alumna, my race, and my ethnicity) gave me an opportunity to connect with each participant. Thus, I fully acknowledge, embrace, and accept my unique positionality as a researcher.

Furthermore, my subjectivities influenced my analysis of the data. I believe that my personal experiences as an HBCU alumna and a HBCU sport consumer provided me with critical insight and understanding that allowed me to irradiate the voices of HBCU sport consumers. However, to counter potential bias associated with this study, I used participant data, my lived experiences as an HBCU alumna, the theoretical framework of social identity, theoretical concepts of habitus and collective effervescence, and triangulation methodology to increase the credibility of my findings. Therefore, awareness of my subjectivity supported my research rather than restricted it (Luttrell, 2000; Stovall, 2014).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to one HBCU in United States that had a high attendance rate as reported by the NCAA. The study was also delimited to the accessible consumers in attendance at the HBCU sport event that served as the research site. Another delimitation of this study was its intentional selection of a 'regular' HBCU sport event, as opposed to a special HBCU sport event (such as an HBCU homecoming event or an HBCU sport Classic). Lastly, the consumption experience that served as the focus of this investigation was HBCU football. Different findings may have emerged if other sports were included in this investigation.

Assumptions

The three primary assumptions of this research were that: (a) the site selected was appropriate to examine the culture of HBCU sport consumption, (b) the participants would be honest and authentic during my casual conversations with them as well as during the consumption experiences in which I observed and/or participated, and (c) elements of culture can be 'captured' and inferred from the behaviors observed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology employed for the current study. It discussed the contributions of qualitative research in general, and ethnography in particular to this topic of culture and sport consumption. This chapter provided the rationale for the selected site and also discussed the various data collection processes, along with the process of coding the data, analyzing the data, and ensuring the data's trustworthiness. The profile of the individuals who participated in this study was presented, as were the delimitations for the scope of the study, and the assumptions underlying this investigation.

Chapter IV

Findings

To recap, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the cultural attributes of the HBCU sport consumption experience? {What are the signifiers of culture in the context of HBCU sports?}

2. How is culture produced, performed, or experienced in HBCU sports?

3. What makes culture meaningful? {Why and how does it matter to the HBCU sport consumption?}

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section I provides detailed information about my reflections and observations regarding my arrival at Minchfield College and gaining access for this study to fulfill my roles as a researcher and participant-observer. Section II provides an overview of the emergent themes from my participation, observations, interviews, and photographs. Ethnographic writing was employed to convey the findings, as it served as a fluid measure which assisted me with combining storytelling, interpretations, and analysis (Behar, 2016).

Section I: The Journey

Pre Arrival

Two weeks before visiting Minchfield College, I sat at my desktop to purchase a single game ticket to attend the event. When the Minchfield College athletic website loaded, I searched a few minutes before I saw a tab tucked away in the right corner to purchase my ticket. I then clicked on the tab which redirected me to a third party site. The third party site also had a plethora of other tickets on sale such as concerts, sports, art and theater, and more. With insufficient instructions, I decided to click on the sports tab. Once again, I was redirected to another page that had a list of sport events that were also scheduled for the same weekend.

In all my years of purchasing tickets for any athletic event, the process has never been this daunting. A process that generally takes less than five minutes resulted in more than ten minutes. To an extent, I was not motivated while purchasing my ticket, but I knew I needed it for my research, so I waited. I prayed that tickets would still be available being that I waited a week before the game to purchase my ticket. Fortunately, I was in luck, and I was able to purchase my ticket to my very first Minchfield College football game. At the end of the transaction, the final price for the ticket was twenty-seven dollars. Upon the completion of my purchase, I received an email from the third party site with my attached ticket. The email stated, "*This event is a mobile entry only. Your mobile ticket must be displayed on your phone to get into the event. Tickets will not be mailed or available for print*." Without hesitation, I saved my ticket to my Apple Wallet so that I would be able to easily access it on game day. While I was excited about my purchase, I wondered for a moment if the elements of purchasing access to the consumption experience would deter consumers who were not as motivated to attend the event as I was.

My Arrival

Cumulonimbus clouds filled the sky. Alberto, my Uber driver, said, "Oh man, we are in for a treat today with this rain. Do you see the clouds?" I glanced from my phone as I was reading a text message from Mr. Nar. "Yes," I responded. "Well you be careful Kristal," Alberto said. I smiled and said, "I will be. I don't want to get wet!" Alberto chuckled, and said, "Yes, that wouldn't be fun." We continued our journey in silence. The beautiful trees that lined across Minchfield College campus danced in the soft wind that filled the air. We drove by a group of students who were dressed in their Minchfield College raincoats and carried their umbrellas as well. They were more prepared for this weather than I was. From a distance, you could hear the blaring sound of music; the beat sounded good, but the words were not clear. Alberto turned his blue minivan onto Regent Street. "Here is your stop Kristal," Alberto said, he continued, "If you walk up those flight of stairs you will be at the museum." I responded, "Thank you so much, Alberto. You enjoy the rest of the day." I closed the door to Alberto's van, put by black bag pack on, and waved goodbye. I followed Alberto's directions and made my through the glass double doors of the museum to meet my gatekeeper, Mrs. B.

Gaining Access

When conducting an ethnographic study, gaining access is crucial. Gaining access can be done through what Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), refer to as "gatekeepers" (p. 201). Gatekeepers play the role of allowing a researcher with an outsider status to gain access to that community so that they will be able to live or work among the people with whom they wish to study; which allows them to understand the worldviews and ways of life of that community. Even though I am an HBCU graduate, I have been removed from the HBCU setting for quite a while now and I did

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not want to be labeled as an 'outsider.' Therefore, I needed assistance with gaining an insider status. When I decided to visit Minchfield College, I immediately thought about Mr. Nar. We met a few years prior, and he told me if I ever needed assistance I should not hesitate to contact him. When I contacted him, he informed me that he would not be in town during my visit, but ensured that he would connect me with someone who would be reliable and willing to assist me with gaining access. Mr. Nar introduced me to Mrs. B via text message a week before my visit, and now that I was there, she was happy to meet me in person and serve as my gatekeeper. With Mrs. B's assistance, I was able to obtain inside information about Minchfield College along with pertinent information about the pre-game day schedule. With being considered as an insider, it provided me with the opportunity to develop relationships with members at Minchfield College.

Mrs. B works in the museum, and once I got there she decided to take a break so we could talk more about my study. We journeyed towards the "yard." The yard is where everything happens. From block parties to stroll-offs, to students just having a grand time. Mrs. B wanted me to experience the festivities that were taking place on the yard; Minchfield style, and I was eager to do so. The thought of being amongst my 'HBCU people' was a feeling I was excited to encounter once again. It was also the Friday before game day, so I was looking forward to experiencing everything. The music that I heard while in Alberto's mini-van was now clear. The sidewalk and street were filled with people dancing.

"Is this something that is done every Friday before a game?" I asked Mrs. B. She paused for a moment and smiled, then she slowly said, "Well we do this every Friday, but it is not related to the game at all." I was shocked by her response because I thought this would be related to the pre-game day festivities. Maybe I got accustomed to the sport experience at Predominate White Institutions (PWI) where activities leading up to the game begin as early as Thursday

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night. I said, "oh really?" Mrs. B said, "Yes, this is more like a reward for working hard Monday thru Thursday. So now, we get together, listen to music, support the vendors, relax, and enjoy the food. But it is not associated with the game. This is a part of our culture here. It is just what we do." "That's pretty dope," I said. With excitement, Mrs. B said, "But don't get it wrong now. We bring this same energy to every game. Food, music, vendors, this is how we do culture here at Minchfield. We eat, dance to our music, and support our own vendors. That's the Minch-way!"

Ms. B had to return to work. She said goodbye and told me she would see me tomorrow. Here I was again all by myself. I was nervous. Would they be able to tell I wasn't a student here? Would they treat me differently? People walked back and forth with food in their hands. I notice a vendor putting away his merchandises. I made my way to another vendor. I browsed her customized apparel. I asked the vendor if they had a particular color in a shirt that I wanted to purchase, she responded, "No we don't, but follow us on Instagram, send us a DM and we can make that item for you." I followed the page but did not send a message. I kept on walking and thought to myself *I do fit in*. She thought I was a student. This feeling was great!

I continued walking when my eyes glanced at a banner which read *Student Housing*. Students dressed in school polo shirts stood behind the table with what looked like application forms. I continued walking, and I noticed another vendor who had merchandise supporting the culture. One of her shirts read "*We Do This for The Culture*." I smiled and continued walking. I noticed another group standing behind a table. Three athletically built men dressed in black dress pants, dress shoes, and a school polo shirt placed a garbage bag over their shirt. I was intrigued to see what they were about to do. I saw a girl with a plate of whipped cream. She selected one of the athletically built men, and he sat on the chair smiling. She then walked up to him and

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smacked him in the face with the plate. Everyone started laughing. I had never experienced this before, and I was quite intrigued. His face was filled with whipped cream. He got up from the chair and started dancing. He then reached for a paper towel to clean his face. We made eye contact, and smiled at each other. He yelled, "You should try it!" I giggled and said, "I will, just give me a minute." I had noticed a sign on the door in front of me which read *Student Activities*. I figured this would be an opportunity to gain more information on different activities that were going on.

I made my way towards the door and went in. Two ladies stood behind the desk. One lady was assisting a faculty member; the other lady greeted me. I asked her if she could provide me with any information relating to activities leading up to the game tomorrow. She stated that the institution did not have any activities leading up to the game; just tailgating in the morning. However, she informed me that fraternities may have a few parties Saturday night. I thanked her, and before I left I asked her if she would be attending the game, she said, "No, I'm not really a football fan." The other lady dressed in a Minchfield College shirt which displayed their mascot said, "Yes, I will be there for sure. It's the last game for the season. It's going to be lit." I responded, "Maybe I will see you there." She smiled and said, "Ok, if I see you, I will say hi. If not, you have a great game." I said, "Ok," with a smile and made my way back to the yard.

Being that I had promised the young man I would participate in their whipped cream activity, I went over and introduced myself. I figured this would allow me to not only participate in the different activities at Minchfield College, but it also provided an opportunity to gain more cultural insight, and gain a sense of trust from the participants. Figure 3 exhibits a photo of me participating in a *pie face* activity.

Figure 3. Researcher as a Participant Observant.
Photograph of researcher actively engaging in an activity at Minchfield College to build trust with the participants.

The decision to participate in this activity was beneficial as Tyler was willing to participate in my study. During our conversation on Friday, he revealed that the game on Saturday would be a blackout game. This meant everyone should be dressed in black apparel. I utilized this information and made the decision to purchase black Minchfield College apparel for the game. Being that I wanted to completely participate in the consumption experience, it was important that I dressed as a member of this community to: (a) enact my insider status, and (b) demonstrate my outward expression of my sport identification to Minchfield College through clothing. Furthermore, gaining access allowed me to become familiar with each participant which resulted in creating relationship and trustworthiness. For instance, I wanted to be very transparent with each participant so I decided to share my own story as it pertains to my interest in my research topic. Sam stated: "I am very impressed by the work that you're doing, and your journey is very inspiring. You can consider yourself a part of the Minchfield College family, and if you need anything while you're here, don't be afraid to ask." Likewise, Mark was also inspired

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by my story and appreciated me being transparent. He stated: "I'm very proud of you Kristal and I'm willing to assist you in any way that I can. Feel free to ask me any questions, and I will be sure to answer them to the best of my ability. If I can't, I will lead you to someone who can." Overall, through my role as a participant-observant I was able to develop a relationship with each participant which created the space to cultivate rapport and trust which are critical for an ethnographic study (Adler & Alder, 1987; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Section II: Themes of Blackness in HBCU Sport

As mentioned previously, methods of participant-observation, casual unstructured interviews, and photographs were utilized in the process of data collection. Through participant-observation, I was allowed to participate in different activities such as tailgating, touchdown celebration, and other rituals that allowed me to understand how culture is performed and experienced at Minchfield College. Casual unstructured interviews provided the opportunity to have face-to-face fluid conversations with each participant allowing them to be transparent and honest in our discussions about culture and sport consumption. Each interview participant was given a pseudonym in the presentation of the findings to protect their identity. Photographs were taken to capture the symbolic and material elements of culture that were portrayed as expressions of culture at Minchfield College.

Through observation, I was able to witness the usage of language at Minchfield College, and it was evident that culture was expressed differently in the language I heard throughout the consumption experience. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, language is a potent element of culture. While 'Black English' is associated with the African American community, not every member within this community spoke in Black English vernacular, as some members used 'Standard English' or in some situations a mixture of Black English and 'Standard English'

(Doss & Gross, 1994). While many of the younger participants I interviewed (who were primarily current students) spoke Standard English, a lot of them also spoke in Black English vernacular. For instance slangs that were used by many of the younger participants reflected popular urban culture such as '*it's lit*' when referring to the excitement of various elements of the event*, 'okurrr'* which is a reference to the phrase for 'okay' used by famous rapper Cardi B, *'fam'* when referencing a symbolic kinship with another person, to name a few. On the other hand, some alumni spoke in Standard English, while other alumni code switched —which pertains to the mixture of Standard English and Black English vernacular (Doss & Gross, 1994). The older participants all spoke with a thick Southern accent, oftentimes using slang and broken English. While watching the game, many of the spectators I talked to spoke in Black English vernacular during conversations with their friends, to celebrate a touchdown, or to express their frustrations with the calls made by the referee. Additionally, during the band's performance, the announcer would say phrases in Black English vernacular such as: "whatcha say, whatcha gonna do and lemme hear ya" or "makin' it do what it do!" to excite and engage those in attendance. Therefore, language (via cultural slang) was an important form of expressing the various elements of culture associated with the HBCU sport consumption experience.

Through this critical examination of data utilizing a collaboration of various data collection methods, significant themes and patterns were found. I obtained a plethora of information, which led to a rich and thick description of the culture at Minchfield College sport event and the respective sport event I attended for this investigation. The overarching theme of the findings reflected symbolic and material expressions of the *culture of Blackness* at Minchfield College sport event relative to the HBCU sport consumption experience. Furthermore, the findings consisted of three sub-themes categorized under the primary theme of

the culture of Blackness: (1) Blackness in consumers' Africentric cultural taste preference for: (a) Africentric food, (b) Africentric music, and (c) Africentric vendors; (2) Blackness celebrated in the cultural habitus: (a) band performances, (b) tailgates, (c) a sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) a sense of protection and safety; and (3) Blackness underlying the cultural affiliation the participants had with HBCUs/HBCU sports: (a) a sense of tradition, (b) pride, love, and loyalty, (c) more than a game, and (d) the nuanced balancing of cultural affinity to HBCUs and their psychological attachment to sports. It must be noted that the themes were evident and expressed in a myriad of verbal and non-verbal ways. A detailed summary, inclusive of the results will now be discussed, and the pertinent themes will be depicted.

Blackness in Consumers' Africentric Cultural Taste Preference

    Africentric food, music, and vendors. During my observation at Yard Fest (an activity that takes place each Friday at Minchfield College for three hours) students get a moment to enjoy music and food, while addressing or bringing light to a particular social issue led by a student organization, or fundraising for a particular cause. It was evident that Africentric food, Africentric music (gospel, R&B, jazz, reggae etc.), and Africentric vendors were all potent cultural signifiers at Minchfield College. I was not familiar with the type of music being played; however, I found myself grooving to the beat as I watched the students dance. The students situated themselves on the sidewalk as well as in the middle of the street. Everyone was performing coordinated dance moves. It was beautiful. I wanted to gain a better understanding of what cultural attributes causes Minchfield College to stand out from other HBCUs, so I decided to have a conversation with Tyler and Logan as we enjoyed the music in the background. Both participants interviewed at Yard Fest shared the same sentiments highlighting that it was a

mixture of material and symbolic culture that served as significant cultural attributes at Minchfield College.

Tyler stated, "It's everything, to be honest. Like the band and food vendors. Just everything makes the whole game day experience." On the other hand, Logan only focused on the music. He stated, "It is the music. Our music is just different. Like we got our own music out here, and it is just different." Logan pointed to a group of students dancing and having a good time and said with exuberance, "This is how we turn up out here! This is how we dance! It is part of our culture! It is what we do!" Logan started to *Milly Rock* (a popular dance in the Black community) and hinted that I participated. I declined because my *Milly Rock* is hideous.

I began to make my way to the stadium and scheduled an Uber. Sandra, my Uber driver, was playing 'old school' music, which she grooved to as she drove. Her left hand gripped the steering wheel, while she used her right hand to snap her fingers to the beat of the music. Sandra asked why I was heading to the stadium this early. I told her I wanted to experience the pre-game festivities being that this was my first time attending a Minchfield College football game. Sandra chuckled, and said, "Baby, ain't nothing going on now. The game starts at 4:00 pm. People will start coming in around 2:45 pm." It was 1:30 pm. I was extremely early, but I figured I would use this opportunity to explore. I asked Sandra if she could talk to me about the cultural attributes associated with Minchfield College game day. She told me it was the vendors. She said:

> It's not a lot of vendors out now, but later there will be more. During our homecoming, you wouldn't be able to get through this street we are on right now. Vendors everywhere! Every type of food you can think of, is here. This is what makes it different out here. The food and the vendors.

I had to agree with Sandra. I had never seen so many slots in place for vendors for a regular season game. During my HBCU undergraduate days, we only had this amount of vendors at our homecoming games. As we drove on Arthur Street, I saw vendors setting up for the game. I saw signs with a wide variety of food such as: *garlic crabs, gator tails, frog legs, fried fish, oysters, chicken wings, conch fritters, fried garlic shrimp, shrimp and grits, pork chops, collard greens, corn on the cob, french fries, ribs, garlic eggs, garlic sausage, curry chicken, jerk chicken, oxtails, curry goat, and cake*, to name a few. Through observation, I saw vendors who sold Africentric items such as: black hair care products, grooming products, incense, perfumes and colognes, Africentric banners, African print clothing, African art paintings, Africentric CDs (jazz, R&B, gospel, and reggae), Greek paraphernalia, and clothing with images and narrative to celebrate and uplift the Black community (ex. *Black & Blessed*, *Black & Educated*, *HBCU Made*, *The Blacker the College, the Sweeter the Knowledge*, etc.). Figures 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 provide photographs captured at Arthur Street to highlight various Africentric items sold by vendors at Minchfield College.

Figure 4. Africentric Food Menu.
Photograph of an Africentric food menu on Arthur Street.

Figure 5. Black Clothing to Uplift HBCUs.
Photography of a vendor's merchandise with a narrative celebrating and uplifting the Black community on Arthur Street.

Figure 6. Greek Paraphernalia.
Photography of an Africentric vendor at Minchfield College selling Greek paraphernalia.

Figure 7. Africentric Clothing for the Black Community.
Photograph of shirts with narratives celebrating and uplifting the Black community.

Figure 8. Africentric Artwork.
Photography of an Africentric vendor selling artwork on Arthur Street.

To gain more insight on the cultural attributes, I asked Sam to share with me some

cultural attributes that are unique and significant to the sport consumption experience at

Minchfield College. With a huge smile on his face he said:

It's really everything if I'm being honest with you. We have food, music, we even got a TV. But if you want me to be very specific, I would have to say it is about the food, music, and the vendors. Arthur Street right over there, that's where we have all food vendors. That's a big thing here for us, it's part of our culture here. Out here, food is big for us, the food is different and we have a variety. Like there's this one lady on Arthur Street that has been here for years. There's always a line of people just waiting to get her food. She's Jamaican, and she cook some Jamaican food that is so good. I know people who come to the games just to purchase food from the vendors and then go to the game.

During my observation at Arthur Street, I saw the Jamaican vendor who Sam spoke highly of. I wanted to try her food, however, the line was very long. With such a long line, it supported Sam's statement that the food she offers is delicious. Figure 9 is a photography of the Jamaican vendor's menu. The menu contained items generally classified as soul food (curry chicken, jerk chicken, stew chicken, oxtail, goat, baked macaroni and cheese, pigeon peas and rice, cabbage, and green beans).
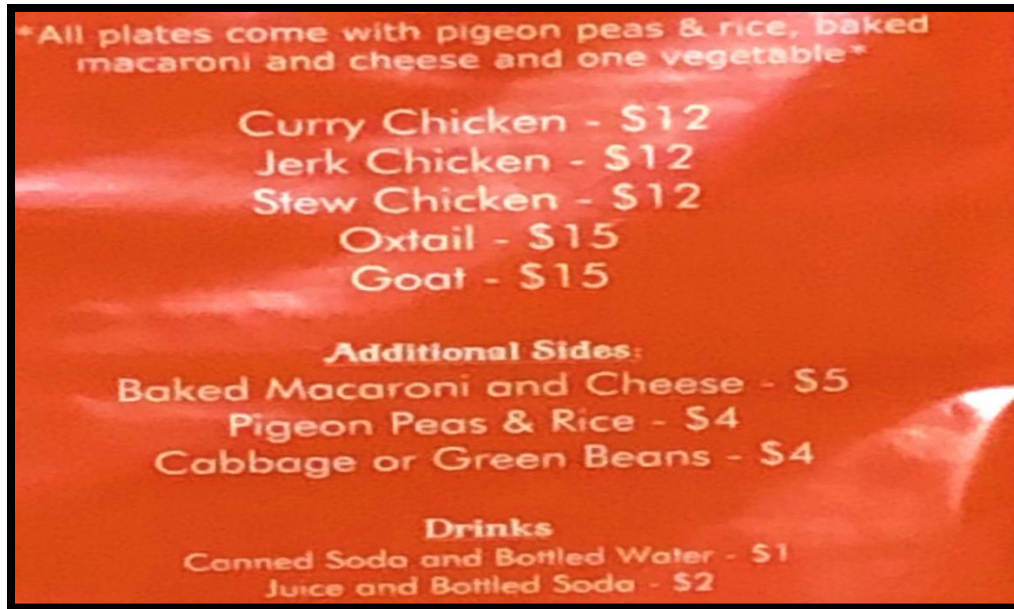
Figure 9. Jamaican Food Menu.
Photography of a vendor's menu who sold Jamaican food on Arthur Street.

Previous research has highlighted that food serves in a capacity that allows consumers to

socialize with friends, family, and visitors, (Sobal et al., 2006; Wright et al., 2001). This concept

related to the sport consumption experience at Minchfield College sport event as through my

observation it was evident that food allowed the members within this community to socialize.

Moreover, Sam noted that because food is important to the consumption experience, a lot of

planning goes into creating a menu for each season. He stated:

> This game is our seafood game. So every seafood you can think of we have this week.
>
> But then we still have a little chicken just in case someone don't like seafood. We create
>
> a menu for each game where we will have steak, fried chicken, barbequed chicken, ribs,
>
> ribs sausages, macaroni and cheese, collard greens, chicken and rice mix, and baked
>
> beans. It's mainly soul food southern cooking made with lots of love. It's the type of food
>
> you would have at a Black family thanksgiving minus the turkey. Earlier in the season

when the sun is really hot, we had a cookout. We brought several grills and we placed

everything on it. The children love hot dogs and burgers so we ensure we always have

that for them.

Furthermore, Sam highlighted that in addition to food and vendors at Minchfield College, the

music is just as important. He emphasized that the music here is entirely different and it gives

people a feeling they will never receive anywhere else. Sam stated:

I've been over to Manchester University (pseudonym given to a predominantly White

institution that is near Minchfield College) and they just not us. I mean the music is

different, the food there is different, and I don't see any vendors there. The culture is

different. Their culture is centered on football. So you go there, and it's all about football,

let's get as drunk as we can and then go cheer for our team. I'm not saying we don't

cheer for our team, but we just do it differently. We bring things from our culture that's

important and let that stand out. We are more relaxed and just ready to have a great time.

Likewise, other participants also highlighted that food, music, and vendors are critical cultural

attributes at Minchfield College. Maria who graduated in 1987 stated:

It's really about the food, music, and supporting the vendors. I love it all. I love to eat our

food. I love to support the vendors that are here too. We play music that everyone can

dance to, music that the kids will enjoy, and the older people will be able to rock to. The

vendors we have here, they have some unique merchandise. So we come to see who got

different swag and we support. Even though we tailgate, we still go out on Arthur Street

and support the food vendors.

Similarly, Maria's sister Bobbie also enjoys the food, music, and vendors. However, she emphasized the importance of music. In a cool manner, Bobbie said:

> I'm at every game, and I am the DJ. I know what the people want to hear, so I come ready to play. I play a little of everything. I love me some Blues and Jazz, so if you come back over later around six, it will be the Blues and Jazz segment. I'll drop some old school rhythm and blues for the people. Overall, I love being here, and food and music make this an amazing time for me.

I got an opportunity to speak to Roger who is a current student at Minchfield College. He expressed that:

> The food, music, and vendors definitely serve as cultural attributes here. Personally, I believe this is the reason why there is so much love here. I get to buy food from the food vendors on Arthur Street.

Additionally, both Mark and Alisa shared their love for the food and music at Minchfield College. Mark who is a two-time graduate and current faculty, stated:

> Whenever it is game day and I get right here on campus I am extremely happy. You can smell boiled peanuts, seafood, and barbeque. You hear music blasting from speakers. I can't speak for any other HBCU, but food and music are key components to our culture here.

On the other hand, Alisa expressed that for her music is definitely important. She stated, "The music is everything. I love that there is always a great mix between new and old school. So everyone feels included. It's not one-sided. Music shifts the atmosphere and it makes everything great on game day."

I recall making my way to meet with Mrs. B inside the stadium. As I journeyed, I walked by a concession stand on the East entrance of the stadium which was opened for business, but yet only two customers were at the counter. I was baffled. I walked closer so that I would be able to gain a better look at the food that was being sold. Figure 10 demonstrates the menu located at the East entrance of Minchfield College stadium.

Figure 10. 'Regular' Game Day Concession Menu.
Photograph of the East entrance concession menu.

I was not sure why there were only two people at this concession stand. I thought to myself maybe everyone was full from eating at the tailgate or from getting food at Arthur Street. I continued walking, and soon I was now on the West side of the stadium. I saw a group of students walking towards me with chicken wings and fries. I saw a plethora of people standing in line. As I got closer I realized that they were standing in line at the West entrance concession

stand. I was curious to see why everyone was waiting in line here when the East entrance

concession stand was empty. To my surprise, both concession stands had different menus. My

initial thought immediately vanished. I now realized that the consumers were standing in line

because the food here was different from the food sold at the East entrance concession stand.

Through observation, I realized that they were not interested in the 'typical' game day/sports

food such as nachos, hot dogs, and candies, but they wanted more. They desired food that was

part of their culture. This was unique. I had never been at any HBCU game that had different

menus at their concession stand. Figure 11 displays the menu located at the West entrance of

Minchfield College stadium. The menu included hot wings, fries, hamburger, chicken tenders,

pork sausage with onions and pepper, Mexican corn, mozzarella sticks, ched-o-peppers, and

fresh lemonade and tea.
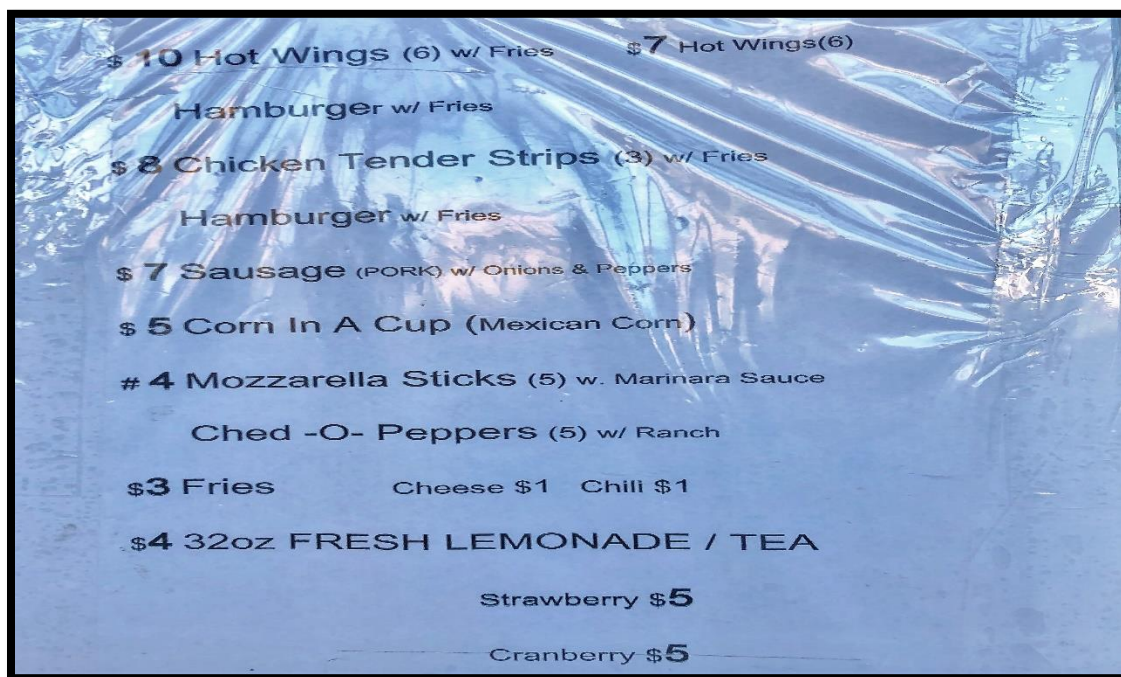
Figure 11. Africentric Concession Menu.
Photography of the West entrance concession stand menu.

I continued walking in amusement until I made it to Mrs. B. I sat next to Mrs. B and her son inside the stadium as we watched the game. At the end of the game, Minchfield College lost. However, even while the team was losing with just a few seconds to go everyone was cheering and dancing to the music. It seemed as if the music was being used to uplift their spirits. We exited the stadium and made our way to Arthur Street. I now had an opportunity to experience the famous Arthur Street that everyone spoke so proudly of. The street was filled with every food vendors you could think of. *(With the home team losing, I thought everyone would be a little disappointed. Instead, they made their way to purchase food).* I saw some unusual food that I do not normally see at any athletic event. I saw vendors selling *pig tails, oxtails, jerk chicken, crab, conch, curry chicken, lemonade, cake, fried fish, greens, corn bread, shrimp, oysters, smoothies, sausages, and BBQ* (to name a few).

Music played in the background while everyone stood in line at various vendors. Everyone was laughing, dancing and having a great time. To be honest, if I did not know that a game had just ended, I would have thought that people were only there to purchase food and socialize. Mrs. B and I got some chicken wings, fries, and garlic shrimp. We saw a group passed by with an 18oz cup of lemonade. My mouth watered because it looked so refreshing. I told Mrs. B I wanted some. We made our way over to the lemonade stand and placed our order. Figures 12 and 13 demonstrate the beverage and food I purchased after the game.

Figure 12. Lemonade Menu.
Photography of a vendor's lemonade menu on Arthur Street.

Figure 13. Food Purchased by the Researcher.
Photograph of food purchased after the game on Arthur Street.

In summary, the data offered a plausible answer to learning more about the cultural attributes of HBCU sport consumption experience (what are the signifiers of culture in HBCU sports)? The findings suggested that the most salient cultural attributes of the HBCU sport consumption experience at Minchfield College sport event was Blackness as conveyed in the consumers' Africentric taste preferences. This was illustrated in the consumers' preferences for Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors. These elements of culture offered at Minchfield College sport event were unique signifiers of the culture of this HBCU sport consumption experience.

Blackness Celebrated in the Cultural Habitus

The habitus is a system of class-based dispositions of an individual that are usually shared by people with similar background (i.e., religion, nationality, ethnicity, education, profession etc.). In addition, habitus serves as a structure that influences cultural taste and social action (Bourdieu, 1984). The findings demonstrated that Minchfield College football game created a cultural habitus infused with Blackness which offered Black consumers in attendance a potent cultural experience that illuminated different elements of Black culture. When compared to other sport events, Blackness as a defining feature of the cultural habitus atmosphere is unique to the HBCU sports consumption experience (Armstrong 2002a; Burwell, 1993; Cavil, 2015). The culture of Blackness that permeated the sport habitus was expressed in: (a) the band's performance, (b) the tailgating, (c) a sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) a sense of protection and safety. Following is an illustration of each of these sub-themes of Blackness.

Band performance. I was standing next to Mark when he tapped me on my shoulder with excitement and said, "It's about to happen!" I was not sure what he was referring to, and out of nowhere, I heard the blasting sound of the bass drums, tuba and French horn. The band had arrived! As they made their way, I saw a herd of people rushing towards the stadium. I started to rock my head and shoulders to the beat they played. Mark looked over and giggled, and said, "You feeling it huh?" I laughed and said, "Yes I am." Mark said, "the game is about to start." HBCU bands typically consist of a large brass and percussion section. Their marching style is considered to be a 'show band,' where there is an emphasis on showmanship, precision, clarity, and musicality (Whitley, 2015). Along with the playing of popular songs, hip hop, and 'oldies but goodies,' HBCU bands also showcase school mantras mixed with flashy dances, field presentations, and drum major performances.

The way in which everyone reacted when they saw and heard the band gave the impression that the band's entrance signals that the game is about to begin. The spectators here at Minchfield College sport event spoke highly about their band. With excitement in her voice, Lisa who is a current student said, "Honey, you will be in for a treat when you hear our band. The band is about to go off. They go off every week. It's just what they do. You just have to be there to experience it!" Roger, on the other hand, expressed that for him, everything about the Minchfield College game day experience is all connected to the atmosphere. He stated:

> I have been coming to games for years. Since I was a kid, I've always loved it. The food, music, fellowship is great. But what sets the atmosphere each week is our band. We have the best band in the world. The minute they start playing, it just shifts the entire atmosphere. I don't know how to explain it, but it's just different and it feels so good.

When Lisa and Roger spoke about the performance of the band, they spoke with so much passion and joy, and at that moment it was evident that they enjoy the atmosphere on game day.

The effervescence created in this environment is hard to describe. Mark emphasized that the band allowed everyone at the game to have a collective experience. I could see Mark wrestling with his thoughts, trying to figure out the best way to explain everything attached to this experience. In the end, with a smile on his face, all he said was, "The band allows us to cherish parts of our culture that is important to us. And when we experience that, it gives us goosebumps."

Tailgates. Another concept that relates to the sub-theme of Blackness celebrated in the cultural habitus was tailgating. I got closer to the parking lot around the football stadium and noticed that it was empty. Only five tailgate tents were arranged. It was now 1:54 pm. I heard no music. I saw no one cooking in the parking lot. I continued walking then soon saw that more cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks were starting to enter the parking lot. I saw three older men to my right arranging their tailgate area. One man walked towards his pick-up truck which was parked a few feet away from his grey tent. He lifted a speaker from the front of his two-door truck and placed the speakers in the back of his vehicle. I heard R. Kelly's (a popular R&B singer) voice coming through the speakers. One of my all-time favorite songs, "Step in the Name of Love" was playing and I started singing and rocking my head to the beat. The man who turned the music on yelled, "Yessss! This is my jam!" We made eye contact, he smiled, and I smiled back. I figured this would be the perfect time to approach him. He danced and made his way back to his blue chair. I made my way over to him.

I walked towards him and introduced myself. His name was Bob. I stretched my hand out to shake his hand, but instead, Bob reached over and gave me a huge hug. His unexpected hug

caught me off guard. As he hugged me with a thick Southern accent, he said, "Baabee girl, you FAMILY now!" He chuckled. I awkwardly hugged him back and said thank you, to acknowledge his warm welcome. I asked Bob to talk about the culture here at Minchfield College, and he said:

> At the end of the day it is all about camaraderie, hanging out with people, and eating food. Every year students come out, freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. We welcome them and feed them. We tell them to keep on coming back. We welcome everybody, that's what we do. My family coming here in a few, we gon' eat and have a good time.

As I walked around the different tailgate tents at Minchfield College, everyone was welcoming and kind. Almost every tent I walked by I received an invitation to make myself a plate of food. It was during my conversation with Sam that I realized why this was the case here. At Minchfield College, tailgating is bigger than drinking alcohol and playing various games in a parking lot. It is more about fellowship and networking. In a fervent tone, Sam said:

> Tailgating is how we show everyone that we are people. That we are kind and caring. When we come out here week after week it is more about showing love than just drinking. It is more about checking in to ensure that the people we see week after week are doing well. If they had a long day, they can come here and unwind. Food, music, and alcohol is here but it is bigger than that. In our culture we value family. So when we are here, we want everyone to feel like they are family. That is the culture here.

Sam emphasized that everyone who attends a football game on Saturday at Minchfield College is welcome to participate in any tailgate. He stated:

We will never turn anyone away. Even when visiting team supporters come here we will feed them. Like I said, it is about family, and we consider everyone who comes on our campus family. I believe that anyone who attends any of our football game will always be able to say the people at Minchfield College are just different, their culture is different and they make me want to return.

According to Bobbie, tailgating at Minchfield College sport event is truly different. She stated:

To be totally honest, before I started tailgating here about five years ago, I didn't truly understand the meaning of tailgating. I really thought it was just a bunch of people in a parade of cars, riding around town, getting drunk. But Girl! Once I got a taste of tailgating at Minchfield and saw how it include so many things from our culture, nothing can stop me now from attending. I am here every week. I just love it!"

Both Roger and Mrs. B expressed that they appreciated the way in which culture is embedded in their tailgate. Roger stated:

I love the fact that we can just go to any tailgate and we are treated with so much love. They will ask me questions about school and how I'm doing. I remember one time a man told me if I ever need an internship opportunity to reach out.

Similarly, Mrs. B stated:

I love Minchfield College and what it stands for. I love the fact that our tailgate is not just about being drunk, but it fosters a space that helps us to create relationships. This is who we are at Minchfield. I believe our tailgate allows us all to come together and just celebrate our culture in a good way.

Through my participation and observations, I strongly believe that Minchfield College tailgates are unique. This was my first time attending a game at Minchfield College, and it felt as if I had been there multiple times. Being at the tailgate allowed me to not only experience the culture, but also provided me with an opportunity to observe the way in which culture is produced at Minchfield College. While Africentric food is important to the HBCU sport consumption experience, it was evident that as it pertains to the tailgates, soul food was particularly significant. For example, I watched as people transported trays of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, green beans, coleslaw, and fish to be fried from their cars to their tents. Figure 14 is a photography of soul food I received while attending the tailgate. I had fried chicken, fried fish, coleslaw, fries, hushpuppy, baked macaroni and cheese, and shrimp jambalaya. The food was delicious, just as Sam had described it, "That good Southern cooking made with love."

Figure 14. Soul Food Provided at Minchfield College Sport Event.
Photography of a sample of soul food offered to the researcher at Minchfield College.

My tailgate experience at Minchfield College sport event demonstrated how culture was expressed. For instance, I noticed that everyone interviewed greeted me with a hug. When this first happened, I was caught off guard, however, I soon realized that culture was enriched by non-verbal expressions at tailgates through hugging. Likewise, I also noticed that handshakes were also a unique way in which people greeted each other at the tailgate. I was in the middle of interviewing Sam when a young man approached him. While they both shared a hug, they also exchanged a *dap*; it was a sweet handshake, where they grabbed each other's hand, then pulled away with a slide snap. It was evident that the members within this community made it their priority to utilize nonverbal communication (through their body language, gestures, and facial expression) to construct a positive experience, and to demonstrate their inner thoughts (Gordan, Krishnan, & Khairuddin, 2013) as co-creators of the family-oriented and friendly atmosphere at Minchfield College. Such expressions of their inner thoughts allowed participants to connect to this culture of the consumption community in a very unique and symbolic way.

Another unique element of culture that was enriched by non-verbal expressions during tailgates at Minchfield College sport event was prayer. I recall speaking to Mark with my back towards the tent. Mark was facing the tent so he could see all that was going on. I saw him removed his fraternity hat, but I was not sure why he did it. Shortly he said, "Kristal, we are about to pray." I turned around, and to my surprise everyone was in a circle around the tent. The children had stopped running around and they were now holding an adult's hand. Sam yelled from the other side, "Join us Kristal! You're now family!" Everyone celebrated and welcomed me. My heart was filled with joy. For a moment, my mind flashed back to the day I accepted Christ as my personal Lord and savior. It was the same excitement. Everyone was happy that I

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was there. Mark and I joined the circle and held hands. Mr. Brown stood in the middle of the circle. Everyone stopped talking and gave him their undivided attention. Mr. Brown spoke with so much passion, and gave a brief speech thanking everyone for their support throughout the season. He expressed that he was delighted to see the love, bond, and family here week after week. He then prayed, thanked God for provision, family, and for keeping them through another season. Everyone joined in at the end saying "AMEN!"

Mr. Brown's prayer was not surprising; however, it caught me off guard. I have not been in an HBCU setting for over four years, and this act of prayer is not something I have experienced at other tailgates. Nevertheless, the act of prayer demonstrated that religious practices are essential to the members of this group. This finding is consistent with previous research, which has revealed that African Americans are more religious than any other U.S. ethnic group (Pew Research Center, 2014). Masci (2018) noted that the Black church played a crucial role in strengthening African American communities during the post-Civil War and provided support to the Civil Rights movement. Hence, since expressing religious beliefs in various settings is a cultural practice that is salient to the Black community, it serves as an explanation for why Mr. Brown took a moment to pray.

A sense of community and family togetherness. Similar to the band performance and tailgates, a sense of community and family togetherness also contributed to the theme of Blackness celebrated in the HBCU cultural habitus. For instance, Armstrong (2013b) noted that HBCU sport events provide a community space for Black consumers. According to Armstrong, "HBCUs create leisure environments in which the salience of group identity of people of African descent is created, celebrated, affirmed, and reinforced" (p. 217). Such was the case for Minchfield College. Mark affirmed:

We always have a festive atmosphere here on game day. And so, that's one of the prime

reasons individuals come. It's not just for the team, not for the band, but it's really

because they have access to a space where they can hang with friends and meet new

people. To be reassured that they have a community here that will support them. I am not

related to these people here by blood, but I consider them as my family.

Alisa expressed that the culture at the football game creates an atmosphere like no other. In her gentle low-pitched voice, she said:

 A communal aspect. You get to see students, alums, and retirees come together just

ready to have a great time. It really is a community event for us where everyone is

welcomed, and I love that aspect of our culture here. This sense of community

encourages me to drive two hours to a game because I don't live in this area anymore.

Dr. White mentioned:

At the end of the day we would love for our team to win, but coming here knowing that

you will be around people that care about you and support you make this experience so

much better. We are a community, and we stick together.

The majority of the participants stated that the culture does not only create a community space but it exudes a feeling of family and togetherness. Simply put, Sam with an enthused voice said:

This is family! That's it! When you come here, that's what the culture is all about. It's

just a family thing. You won't go to any other game and feel this way. At an HBCU event

it's just different; it's just a whole family feeling. This is how we experience our culture

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Tim noted that the culture at Minchfield is, "Just a good family environment, which gives you a great family feeling." Maria also expressed:

> Our culture bring people together. I mean Black people from all different walks of life come together and just have a good time. I look forward to meeting people and building relationships. I get to see people I haven't seen in years because they don't live here anymore. The culture here bring families back together. You may be busy during the week, but you look forward to game day on Saturday. You just know you about to see your family even if it's only for four hours. We all get so busy in our lives doing so much stuff, but we know on Saturdays we're going to put everything aside and come back together, eat, have fun, watch football and celebrate our people together.

Mr. Brown who has been doing this for over thirty years stated, "I just love the feeling of family. That's what our culture here is about. I come here with my sisters, and I just love it." Likewise, Mr. Brown's sister Pat shared, "The culture here is about family and togetherness. I love being able to come here to be with friends and family and to be part of something that is so much bigger than me. It's just a big family feeling, and I love it." Similarly, Jon asserted, "Here we are family! To be around other Black people, people that I can relate to. So we just a big family and we all come together and assist with everything that goes on at each game." Additionally, Kim expressed:

> The culture here is real, like it's a real family. We call ourselves family, and we pride ourselves in that. This bond that we have, this togetherness between diverse groups of Black people is not fake, it's so real, and I can't stress that enough. People who don't understand us probably get sick and tired of us talking 'bout the family at Minchfield

College, but we don't care, because we love Minchfield, and we love the family-centered culture we create here.

Kim continued:

So, week after week I am here. Why? Because of family, fellowship, and togetherness. We get to see all the people we went to school with, and then even the people who didn't attend school here, we embrace them too. If they are here it means they love Minchfield, so we love them too, we treat them good. All in all, it is about the family and fellowship, and the atmosphere here allows us to really experience our culture.

In a few words, Mark said everyone is able to experience the culture here because, "It's family. At the end of the day, it boils down to family. It's just a big family union here!" Historically, when compared to Euro-American families, African American families have tended to be more interdependent, which was/has been necessary for their cultural survival (Foster, 1983). This notion of family is a particularly salient factor for African Americans' cultural survival because it has long provided them with a strong sense of self, ethnic awareness, and empowerment (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). Sam commented on the role of Minchfield College in reinforcing the cultural salience of family:

Here at Minchfield, we embrace each other even though we are not blood-related. At Minchfield, we have the mentality that we all are African Americans, and that means we have to support and uplift each other no matter what. When we are in this space together, as family, *man!* It ignites something deep within. Coming to these games when I was younger developed my self-esteem and showed me that even though I am a part of a marginalized group, I have what it takes to accomplish all that I want. This mindset was

instilled in me as a child attending Minchfield College games. Now, I use these games to teach my children to have a strong mentality, embrace their culture and heritage, and always show pride in themselves.

Through my participation and observations, it was clear that the idea of family was essential to the cultural habitus at Minchfield College as the participants continuously expressed that Minchfield College embodied a family-centered culture which supported and assisted them in establishing and maintaining a form of reciprocity with and among the members of their cultural in-group.

A sense of protection and safety. In addition to the Minchfield College culture creating a sense of community and family togetherness where members within this community see themselves as part of a larger family, they also expressed that the culture at Minchfield College created an environment that fostered a sense of protection and safety. Recently, there have been many reported instances where Black Americans' safety is a significant concern in the United States. For example, in the last five years, there have been several, high profile incidents of police violence towards unarmed Black men and women in the United States (Glover, Khan, & Harrison, 2017). As a result, many Black Americans' are fearful of the police (Hannah-Jones, 2018). Additionally, with the election of President Trump, there has been an increase in overt practices of racism. Williamson and Gelfand (2019), stated, "His election emboldened Americans to engage in racist behavior" (p.1). Edwards and Rushin (2018) attested that there have been an "anomalous increase in the overall number of hate crimes and hate crime rates" (p.7) since President Trump's election. Furthermore, a study conducted at the Ohio State University revealed that young Black males tend to feel less safe when they go into

neighborhoods that has a larger white population than where they usually spend time (Grabmeier, 2018).

Racism has also continued to permeate sport settings as well. Many incidents of racism in sport go unreported and thus, are not accurately accounted for in research seeking to document this. Nonetheless, according to research from the University of Central Florida's Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, documented acts of racism in sports in the U.S. increased from 41 in 2017 to 52 in 2018. Internationally, there were 137 documented racist acts in sports in 2018, a substantial increase from 79 in 2017 (Lapchick, 2019). Fans and athletes of Color must often fight against racism (racial slurs, racial chants, etc.) before, during, and after their sport competitions (Marlin, 2017). For example, in 2019, the University of Michigan wide receiver Ronnie Bell, received an email from an angry fan after Bell dropped an end-zone pass that would have put his team in a position to tie the game against Penn State late in the fourth quarter. In the email, the fan stated, "Please quit the team already. Utterly sad that my tuition goes to paying for the scholarship for such a scrub (expletive) player like you. Bum (expletive). Go play basketball somewhere. Please do us all a favor and never play football again" (Zuke, 2019). In another instance, the National Basketball Association (NBA) permanently banned a Utah Jazz fan from all events due to excessive and derogatory verbal abuse directed at Oklahoma City's player Russell Westbrook. Westbrook stated that "A young man and his wife in the stands told me to get down on my knees 'like you used to'" (Stevens & Draper, 2019). The fan's behavior was deemed disrespectful and racist.

This finding of the safety of the HBCU sport habitus is paramount, because it demonstrates that these environments create a safe space for African American sport fans and athletes where they are not subject to racial slurs, racial chants, taunts, etc. However, the safety

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of the HBCU sport habitus transcend sports, as safe spaces "are necessary and vital to protect the mental health and support the multi-faceted well-being of Black people" (Glover, Khan, & Harrison, 2017, p.1).

Sam stated, "I feel safe here. I'm safe here and I just love this environment." Likewise, in a strict tone, Dean expressed:

> To be honest, this is a safe space for all of us. This is where we can be who we are. We can be Black. We don't have to worry about looking over our shoulders. We can just have a good time with each other, enjoy the game and be human. Our culture here gives us an outlet outside of the normal corporate positions that we find ourselves operating. It is a safe place that creates relationships with others like me.

Furthermore, Mark emphasized:

> The football game has always been a safe haven for us. We look forward to it. Being in the Black professional, and Black middle class here, there is not really much for us really to do outside of Minchfield College, but Minchfield College athletic experiences and events. And so, the biggest events is Minchfield College football games. So you would have individuals who are not alum who would come to these events, because this is an opportunity for them to have a good time and feel safe. It's just a beautiful event. It's something where you get to see many African Americans coming together. You ain't worried about violence, you ain't worried about crime. People are just having a good time. People are enjoying their libations. People get to let their hair down and just really enjoy themselves. I love that this environment creates a safe space, and I love that we are family!

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As a participant observer I also echoed the participants' perspective as I witnessed children running around different tents and playing in the parking lot. I recalled seeing cars pulling slowly into the parking lot, ensuring that they would not hit any child playing in the area. I heard the laughter of the children, and their faces shone bright as a diamond as they smiled. Parents allowing their young child/children to run around freely demonstrated that they trusted that this was a secured space, where they can let their guard down. This was readily apparent in my observations. For instance, I stood to the side of Sam's family tent, which was on a small hill with my plate of food from the tailgate. The sun smiled at my face as I gazed across the parking lot. I witnessed as four little girls sat on the grass in a circle — the sun kissed their beautiful skin as they all laughed and played with their dolls. Occasionally, they would skip over to Sam, and ask him if it was time to eat. A few older boys and girls ran through the parking lot, laughing and chasing each other. I assumed they were playing tag. A boy and a girl were a few feet away from me with a small container in their hands as they searched the area for different shapes of stones. Through observation, it was evident that this safe space allowed the attendees to enjoy their food, dance to their music, socialize with others, and it provided their children with an opportunity to play freely. All that occurred in this space illustrated a culture of safety based on shared elements and expressions of a familial Blackness at the Minchfield College sport event.

In summary, the HBCU habitus was infused with a culture of Blackness that had a profound impact on the culture of Minchfield College sport consumption experience. The findings revealed that the cultured sport habitus at Minchfield College allowed its consumers to freely celebrate, embrace, share, and participate in different elements of a collective culture of Blackness. Through my participation and observations, the findings suggested that the cultured sport habitus at Minchfield College was produced and created in four ways: (a) band's

performance, (b) the tailgate experience, (c) a sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) a sense of protection and safety. Overall, the nature of the habitus offered a platform where Black consumers could celebrate and experience their culture in an environment that gave them a "feeling that will get their spirits to soar and their humanity finds a larger expression" (Dahl, 1972, p.23).

Blackness as Cultural Affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU Sports

Blackness was also evident in the participants' cultural affiliation to HBCUs and HBCU sports. Such affiliation was based on: (a) a sense of tradition, (b) participants' pride, love, and loyalty to HBCUs, (c) the sentiment that HBCU sports were more than a game, and (d) the nuance of balancing cultural affiliations with HBCUs and the psychological attachment to sport. Following is a discussion of these sub-themes that expressed Blackness as cultural affiliation.

A sense of tradition. One way in which the theme of Blackness as cultural affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU sports was seen through the concept of tradition. Relating to game day attendance, Minchfield College can be considered as one of the few HBCUs within the NCAA Division I Football championship subdivision (FCS) that has been ranked in the top 20 of all FCS teams consistently (NCAA, 2017). Armstrong and Stratta (2004) highlighted in their study that African Americans' attendance rate is more likely to be higher in the South than in any other region based on the pronounced African American population in the southern states. While this may be an explanation as to why the attendance rate at Minchfield College football events has been consistently high amongst all HBCUs, I was still eager to gain a deeper understanding of what could be the driving factor that motivated consumers to attend the games weekly, and why the experience was meaningful. Dr. White expressed with pride and passion:

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When you think about it in a larger context, Minchfield College has a long history. It's one of the most storied in HBCU football. And so, when you come here, you already get ingrained with that tradition and experience. When I was a student our team was winning, we were seen as a top program, and we had athletes making it to the NFL. Now that I am older and no longer a student I have this chance to return home to be part of an amazing tradition. So it is the tradition that I experienced, and the history that I learned when I was a student here that motives me to come week after week. Now I am fired up to come out and see what the younger athletes are doing and how they will contribute to the legacy and tradition here at Minchfield College.

Rick, who I met when I first got to the stadium on Saturday is an avid HBCU supporter. While he did not attend Minchfield College as a student, he also expressed similar sentiments about its rich tradition in sports. He asserted:

Well historically speaking, Minchfield College has a rich tradition in sports. I've been to many HBCU sports events, and I must say Minchfield College is my favorite HBCU to attend. They always have a great number in the crowd, and their facilities look very good. It's pretty cool out here. Most times HBCUs don't have a good perception, and their facilities aren't the best, but I believe Minchfield College is doing a great job. Even the communities surrounding the campus is very colorful and beautiful. You see a hint of Minchfield College everywhere you go around town. So for me, it is the rich tradition that attracts me here, along with how they are making changes to their facilities.

While Dr. White and Rick expressed that it is the rich tradition of Minchfield College that motivates them to attend the games and also make the experience meaningful, some participants

did express that, yes it is a sense of tradition, but a tradition that is more rooted in their families' tradition. Sam stated:

> My family and I are not from this area, but the majority of my family attended Minchfield College. So when I was younger, I just knew this is where I would attend college. I did, and I loved it. Now I have to provide my children with the same experience so that the family tradition continues. So when I come out here, it's to show my children that this is who we are. Minchfield College is a part of our history and culture. So this tradition must keep going even when I am no longer here. I was raised the same way. My mom would bring me to every game with her, and my mom also graduated from Minchfield College. So this is a family tradition. I can't stop supporting. I looked forward to it when I was a kid, and even now I look forward to being here week after week. It's like a family reunion every home game.

Maria also expressed:

> We have been doing this for ten years now and it keeps growing and growing each year. Everybody here is either a graduate or a parent, and then they bring their children. The kids have to be able to get this experience because this is a family tradition, and they are the future.

Correspondingly, Dean asserted:

> I've been associated with HBCUs throughout my life. I would visit different HBCU campuses and my family went to HBCU, even back to my grandpa. So this is a family tradition. So coming to these games were instilled in me since I was a kid. Now that I am a parent, my children are both students here at Minchfield College, and they understand

this is part of our tradition. Since it is our tradition, we just have to support. It is ingrained in my blood.

Roger also expressed that because it is a tradition for him, he continues to do it. He stated, "I have been attending Minchfield College games since I was a kid with my family and even with my friends. So now that I am older this is just automatic. When we have a home game, I just know that's where I need to be."

Pride, Love, and Loyalty. While a sense of tradition contributed to the theme of Blackness as cultural affiliation, pride, love, and loyalty, notably to Minchfield College, also contributed to this theme. Sam expressed, "This is our institution. And we love it. I love the fact that our culture here is so unique. I love everything about it and because of the uniqueness we just have to support and be here." Bobbie also shared that:

> I love this place. It's a fun place. It allows you to celebrate and embrace your culture and the color of your skin. You know, growing up my only option was to go to a Black College. They never allowed us to go anywhere. So I have to come here and support my college, the college that gave me a chance. I was supposed to graduate from Minchfield College in 1979, but I didn't and that doesn't change a thing because this is my school and I am a die-hard supporter.

Similarly, Pat who graduated from Minchfield College in 1981, stated, "I am a proud graduate of Minchfield College, and back in my days I attended every game. Back in my day everything that Minchfield represents influenced my decision to attend a game. Now that I am older, nothing has changed. I will forever be loyal to Minchfield College because I can relate to the culture here." Likewise, Jon emphasized,

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I come here because I love my school, for the fellowship, and I love everything. All the

people here are at every game, and it's just amazing because these spots are not free. I am

loyal to my school because I love my culture and I love Minchfield.

According to Kim, she has a sense of loyalty to Minchfield College because she believes

in the product. She stated:

My husband and I believe in the product, so we support the product. I am a three-time

graduate, and I am proud of that, so I support my team no matter what. I love my school and

culture and what we have going here, so that makes it meaningful for me.

Mark also shared the same sentiments, "I keep coming back week after week because I love my

school so I support them." Dr. White took it a step further stating:

At the end of the day, I love Minchfield College. If it wasn't for Minchfield College, I

wouldn't be in the position I'm in. So, as an alum, as a faculty member, I feel like it's so

important to come and support my institution. So again, regardless of what we are doing

on the field, I will be here week after week, I will buy tickets, I will support because it's

about the institution. So I make sure I support. Whether it is in the classroom, outside the

classroom, on the field, on the courts, I support! So, you can just say my love for my

school along with my love for my culture makes me a loyal supporter.

Similarly to all the other participants who spoke about their loyalty for Minchfield College,

Mrs. B disclosed:

I graduated in 1987, and I love Minchfield College. Even before I attended Minchfield

College, I grew up around people who attended Minchfield College. So I had the love for

Minchfield College like no other. This is my school and I will forever support it because the culture here is important to me, so I have to support, I just have to.

In addition, Jon noted that because of his loyalty to the institution, regardless of how the team performs, he will still support Minchfield College. Jon stated:

The last few years our team has been struggling. At many institutions, I'm sure if they have a bad record they will have a hard time getting people in the stadium. We see that in major league baseball and other sports. But here, we are still able to fill our stadium. That's because of the culture that we created here. It means something to us. Our regular supporters come knowing that regardless of the outcome of the game we still will have an atmosphere like no other. At the end of the day it's what we have going on here that draw people to the game. If you ask me, it is not even about the team, but it is more about the game day atmosphere that's here and that makes me a loyal fan.

Through an interview with Bob, it was revealed that he has pride, love, and loyalty for Minchfield College and the athletic program, regardless of the fact that he did not attend the institution. Bob stated, "I did not attend Minchfield College, but I'm an avid supporter. I've been coming to these games for over thirty years now because I love the culture here. The culture is what makes me a loyal fan, plus I love the team." Bob's statement supports previous research (Armstrong 2002a, 2002b) which revealed that some HBCU sport consumers do not have an HBCU affiliation as students, faculty, staff, or alumni, instead their attendance is motivated by the representations of cultural Blackness that fostered a deep and powerful love for the HBCU sport consumption experience. Additionally, Bob's response demonstrated that his cultural identification with HBCUs was a driving factor that made him an avid HBCU supporter. Relative to social identity theory, this process of social identification, demonstrates how people

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categorize themselves as members of different social groups (Bar-Tal, 1998). Therefore, Bob's strong identification with his ethnic group may have fostered a pride, love, and loyalty that influenced his decision to support HBCUs (Brumbaugh & Grier, 2006; Grier & Desphande, 2001; Grier & Kumanyika, 2010) where such identity was affirmed and celebrated.

The consumers at the Minchfield College event also demonstrated their pride, love, and loyalty for Minchfield College through their clothing. Through my interviews and observations, one unique finding pertaining to clothing illustrated that clothing was primarily not used as on Africentric expression of the participants' identification with their culture, but it was used to identify their cultural affiliation to the institution or the team. This was unique to me because at a few HBCU games that I have visited in the past, the consumers' clothing tended to reflect their affiliation and identification with their culture (racial or ethnic group), more so than it reflected their identification with their team or school. However, at Minchfield College it was evident that the consumers' outward displays of pride, love, and loyalty were targeted to Minchfield College. I wondered what could be the reason for this. Tyler provided me with an answer from a student's perspective. He stated:

With Manchester University (a PWI) close by, we have to differentiate ourselves. Not only that, but we have to let everyone in town know that we are proud students of an HBCU and not just any HBCU but of Minchfield College and they need to respect that.

Tyler also added:

You will see a lot of 40, 50, 60, 70- year- old Minchfield College fans at the game. Man, they love Minchfield College. You will see them in Minchfield College shoes, shirts,

hats, everything Minchfield. You will see it! In all honesty, that is what really get

everyone fired up to go to the game. Being able to dress in their Minchfield apparel.

In the same way, the older lady I met while I was at the bookstore on campus stated:

> I have a lot of Minchfield College stuff. This is what I do. I have to support my team no
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> matter what, and this is one way I do that. This is one way I express myself. I'm
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> connected to Minchfield College because I went here during a time when I did not have
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> access to any white college. I know what the culture here is all about, and one thing we
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> pride ourselves in is always to let people know we support Minchfield College. So yea, I
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> attend the games, I tailgate and I buy merchandise to show others that this is my team. To
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> show them that what we have here is meaningful. So I pride myself in that, and I wear my
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> paraphernalia with pride.

As she spoke, I heard disappointed and frustration in her voice. She spoke with so much passion,

as she expressed how much she values Minchfield College, tears filled her eyes. In addition, Sam

stated:

> I am a proud graduate of Minchfield College. I make it a priority to support my school.
>
> This is my school, so I have to support. I'm a season ticket holder for both football and
>
> basketball. I also pay for my tailgate spot and parking. I travel with the team when my
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> schedule permits it. It's one of those things that when you understand the culture here,
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> you are just automatically drawn to support the program and all that we have going on
>
> here. I love my school and I let people know that. I wear my Minchfield College apparel
>
> with confidence because what we have here is important to us.

Likewise, Maria expressed that she attended every football game during her time as a student. She went on to say in a convincing tone:

> I am a sports fanatic! I love sports, and I love Minchfield College and because I love my school, I support in any way I can! The fact that I love my school everything here is meaningful to me and it motivates me to keep supporting. I truly enjoy the atmosphere here, I have to feel like I am a part of what's going on. I can do that by wearing my apparel when I attend the games each week.

Jon echoed that the culture at Minchfield College is meaningful in so many ways, and as a result it motivates them to support the team by coming to the games and wearing Minchfield College apparel.

Historically, African Americans were required to: (a) lessen parts of themselves that reminded them of the stigma of being African American, or (b) ignore the societal prejudice against them in order to survive (Allport, 1954). Additionally, African Americans were "deprived of access to their indigenous culture" (Sellers et al., 1998, p.18) when they were brought to the United States against their will. Sellers et al. noted that, "African Americans were not afforded the choice of whether to assimilate into new culture or retain their indigenous culture" (p.18). In other words, when African Americans came to the United States as slaves, they were stripped of having the right to celebrate their traditional culture. Hence, Jon's sentiment is important because it demonstrated the role of HBCU sports in allowing African Americans to express the love and pride they feel for their race, and experience a sense of self-affirmation and cultural ownership. Additionally, it allowed them to challenge the disparaging stereotypes many have of African Americans, while also redefining how other races view and understand the African American experience and culture.

More than a game. Through observation and interviews, it was evident that the culture at Minchfield College was much bigger than football. Therefore, the idea of the football event being more than a game was another sub-theme of Blackness as a cultural affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU sports. It was revealed that the culture at Minchfield College was used for socializing Black youths to the HBCU culture. Sam highlighted that the culture at Minchfield College created an atmosphere that was welcoming to everyone, and as a result, they took the opportunity to invite Black youths within the community to experience the culture offered at an HBCU. Sam stated: "The lady at that tent across from us goes to our church. She brings a group from her church and other youths from the community every week to the game. This way, they get a taste of what it's like to attend an HBCU and a Minchfield College football game." Based on this, regardless of the team's performance, this event was used by the community to show Black youths a positive depiction of: (a) Black life, (b) Black interaction, and (c) the celebration of elements of Black culture.

In addition, the findings revealed that the game was also used to challenge/change the negative perception of HBCUs. With a sense of frustration and hurt Sam said:

> As a teacher, I've experienced that a lot of the kids, they have this negative stereotype towards Black colleges. So, I would ask them if they have considered Minchfield for college. They say, "I'm not going to that dumb school. I'm going to Manchester University." Then I ask them, "Why you going to Manchester University? What's the difference?" And they say, "Well it's just better over there." I then ask them how you know Minchfield College is dumb and Manchester University is different if you've never been to either. You have to experience it first before you jump to a conclusion.

Sam wrestled with his emotions has he tried to help me understand some of the misconceptions people in the community have about Minchfield College. It was revealed that this is something that they have been doing for a while. He noted:

> Myself and the other lady from my church we bring teens with us to the games to show them what this experience is about. We might not change their mind, but we can help change their perception of the school. Every student I have ever brought here, they absolutely love the experience, and they keep supporting and coming back. So for me, this is what motivates me week after week to be here. Yea, the game is great, but the fact that I get to help these students, with a slight possibility of changing their minds about Minchfield College is meaningful.

According to Sam, one thing that the game does is try to challenge the perception that HBCUs are inferior. Sam stated:

> I try to tell these kids that not everything that glitters, and glistens is always good. I ask them all the time what have they been saying about me? I'm their teacher, and I'm a two-time graduate from Minchfield College. Am I a dummy? And then they're like, "No, we're not saying that. You are cool, it's just the other stuff." The other stuff they talk about is how the football team perform, or what the media says about HBCUs. So, if the team is losing, they see that as HBCUs are not good, they don't have anything good, or it must be a horrible school.

Sam's heartfelt response was consistent with scholars who have argued against the narrative of HBCUs' being inferior (Hawkins, Cooper, Carter-Francique, & Cavil, 2015). The negative narratives and perception of HBCUs tend to always "overemphasize challenges and

depict from a deficit perspective, without balanced of nuanced consideration of their assets"

(Williams, Burt, Clay, & Bridges, 2019, p. 558). Williams et al., argued that HBCUs are

constantly required to defend their relevance regardless of their success and contributions they

have made to society through higher education. As an HBCU alumna, I have heard narratives

similar to that which Sam spoke about. For example, I have heard HBCUs: (a) being

characterized as inferior to PWIs as it relates to academic and athletic standards, (b) being a

space that perpetuates segregation and discrimination, (c) students not being smart enough, (d)

admission standards are low, and (e) students are always engaged in partying, and being '*bougie'*

(being better than others, not being humble). This dominant discourse then becomes problematic

and influences the ideology that contributes to meaning making and perceptions of HBCUs. Yes,

as research shows, HBCUs do have some challenges (as do PWIs), but HBCUs also have many

accomplishments, strengths, and benefits to society in general, and to the African American

community in particular (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Gasman, Nguyen, & Commodore, 2015;

Shorette & Palmer, 2015) as this study's data emphasize. Furthermore, Maria expressed that

during homecoming, often, the bad things that happen within the community are unfairly and

unjustly linked to Minchfield College spectators. However, Maria stated:

> It's unfortunate, but the true Minchfield College fans continue to push through it. Support
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> the team. 'Cause you know, you wanna see positive things with HBCUs. People are
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> always focusing on the negative things. We just wanna focus on the positive things.
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> Fellowship, eat food, and have a good time. At the end of the day, football brings us here,
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> but what you see here this very moment, is way bigger than the game that's being played.
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> If we can start here, show people who we are and what we do, maybe over time, they will

stop focusing on the bad and just focus on the fact that what Minchfield College have

going on is actually good. This is meaningful to us so we keep coming out.

Similarly, Kim expressed that coming to the game week after week shows people in the

community that Minchfield College has something great going on. Kim revealed:

The game brings us together and allows us to have a great time, but when it is all said and

done, this is really to shake up some of the negative stigmas associated with our

institutions, and it is important that we do this, because if we don't, no one will.

Kim looked me in the eyes with a stern voice and continued:

Many times people believe if you attend an HBCU you cannot become anything. But that

is a lie. When my kids were younger we brought them to the game not only to watch the

team play, but we also wanted to show them that you can attend an HBCU and still be

successful, because when they attend these games, they get a chance to meet some smart,

educated, black individuals that are products of Minchfield College. So, the culture here

is meaningful because this is bigger than the game.

In various ways, many of the participants commented that HBCU sports was much more than a

game because it allowed them to challenge the disparaging stereotypes many people have of

African Americans, while also redefining how other races view and understand the African

American experience and culture.

A balancing act: Cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports. Lastly,

relating to the sub-theme of Blackness as cultural affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU sports, it was

evident that the participants were often required to balance their cultural affinity to HBCUs with

their psychological attachment to sports. Through my interviews and my observation, I gained a

deeper understanding of the attachment the participants had towards the culture of

HBCUs/HBCU sport events and sports in general. The weather conditions helped to illustrate

this. It was around 6:30 pm. The sun had set, and it was now chilly. With the weather being in

the high 60s earlier, I was not prepared for the sudden change in the temperature. The weather

was now in the low 30s, and my light jacket was not enough. I was freezing! Mrs. B laughed at

me as I tried to generate some heat in my body by rubbing my hands together while blowing in

my palm of my hands. Minchfield College was down by three touchdowns, and there were only

three minutes of play time remaining. At this moment, I sat in amazement as Minchfield College

supporters kept on cheering. The band kept on playing, and students kept dancing. They were

having a great time. Amidst the team losing, the spectators were still in good spirit; well some

were. Some spectators left the stadium devastated about the loss, while the spectators who

decided to stay until the end were having a great time cheering for their team. The spectators

were having so much fun to the point where the officials had to pause the game be they were

disruptive.

The participants expressed that the culture at Minchfield College encourages them to

support Minchfield College at all cost. They explained that the atmosphere created at each home

game balances the feeling of the team losing or winning. Lisa's demeanor changed to that of a

kid in a candy store as she spoke about her love for Minchfield College football. As Lisa

expressed herself, she clapped her hands numerous times, and during other moments she made a

fist pump. Lisa stated:

> I am a real fan! I attend the game when we are winning or losing! The games be so much
>
> fun that even if we are losing it hurts but the experience kind of make me feel better. I
>
> remember going to a game, and it was a close one. I mean we were neck to neck.

Everybody was excited. The band was playing. Everyone was watching the game. But in the end, we lost by a field goal. I felt that man; it really did hurt. But, at the moment, being in the game day atmosphere just made it hurt less.

On the contrary, Jordan expressed that even though she has a great time at the game, it takes a significant toll on her when they lose. Jordan stated in a voice of disappointment:

I like to go if they are winning. When they lose, it hurts so much. I don't want to have to deal with the walk of shame; it's just too much for me to handle. So I protect myself. If I'm at the game and I know that we are going to lose I leave early and just go to my room. It's too hard to deal with, to be honest.

Similarly to Jordan, Bob explained that both he and Ray love their team, but when they lose it hurts badly. He stated,

I'm gonna put it this way. If we know we gon' lose we just stay out here eat, drink and fellowship. But if we know we gon' win or we have a chance to win we going inside and we staying. But if we losing, we can't handle it. Our hearts can't handle it, to be honest. So, if we know we gon' lose, we staying right out here, listen to our music, dance, eat some good food, and have a great time. Everything that we do out here is an important part of our culture just like the game is. So either way, we supporting our own. We connected for life.

On the other hand, Tim felt that regardless of how the team is performing the experience is still meaningful and it is his responsibility to support. He stated:

When I was in college, I never attended many games. I am not sure why, but I just didn't. About six years ago I came to a game with Sam, and since then I haven't missed a game.

I love what we have here. It matters! It means something to us. We have been going

through a rough time these last couple of seasons, but I never threw in the towel on the

team. The team is winning this year, and that is good. I continue to support no matter

what. But now that we are winning it's a plus, and I love it.

Likewise, Sandra expressed that even though the atmosphere at each game is filled with so many

cultural festivities, she still supports the team. She explained:

We don't only come for the band. We come here to stay. To enjoy everything that's being

offered here and we appreciate it. We come to watch the game. We in the process of

winning this year, so people ain't gon' leave. We love some football out here.

In addition, Sam stated:

We come out to support every football game no matter what. Whether we win, lose or

draw we will be right here. The last six years we have been struggling. It has been hard,

but that doesn't change anything. This is still our team, and we have to support no matter

what. It matters to us because this is more than just football. This whole experience does

something to you week after week. It's really hard to explain, but what we have here is

meaningful and it matters in so many ways. If you ask me, that's all that matters.

Dr. White who is a two-time graduate and current faculty stated:

Our success on and off the field brings us here. The atmosphere is great, so even if we are

not having a good season, we still will come and support and watch our team develop.

When you think about it from a family aspect, and look at it from the HBCU game day

experience, it becomes just another great opportunity to come together and experience

our culture. So our culture matters, it's meaningful, it is needed for Black people. I am

invested in my team; I love my team and my culture so I will always be motivated to support.

In summary, the findings suggested that culture was meaningful because it provided the participants with the ability to identify with a social group where their culture was freely affirmed, embraced, and celebrated. Furthermore, in a white-dominated society, the culture of the HBCU sport consumption experience was meaningful because it cultivated a space that focused on Black equality and expressions of Black cultural identity. With HBCUs having been labeled as inferior for years, HBCU sports provided a platform to counter such narrative based on the positive contributions the HBCU sport consumption experience makes to the consumers and the Black community at large. The HBCU sport consumption experience was much more than just a game. Therefore, for most of the participants, the culture of the event was most meaningful and buffered the negative outcome of the game when the team loss. However, in other instances for participants who were psychologically attached to the team, the game mattered and the event was most meaningful when the team won.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV was comprised of two sections. Section I highlighted my reflections and observations of my journey to and through this research endeavor: my pre arrival, my arrival, and gaining access. Section II presented the results from the data collection methods (participation, observation, casual unstructured interviews, and photographs) employed in the current study. The findings revealed an overarching theme that reflected the symbolic and material expressions of the culture of Blackness relative to the HBCU sport consumption experience. Three sub-themes emerged under the primary theme of expressions of Blackness which were: (1) Blackness in consumers' Africentric cultural taste preference: Africentric food,

Africentric music, and Africentric vendors; (2) Blackness celebrated in the cultural habitus: (a) band performances, (b) tailgates, (c) a sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) a sense of protection and safety; and (3) Blackness as cultural affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU sports: (a) a sense of tradition, (b) pride, love, and loyalty, (c) more than a game, and (d) a nuanced balancing of culturally affinity and psychological attachment to sports. Lastly, the themes were evident and expressed in a myriad of verbal and non-verbal ways such as high-fives, facial expressions, emotions (laughter and tears), handshakes, prayers, hugs, bodily gestures, language, and others.

Chapter V

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

This research sought to expand prior research that focused on understanding the Historically Black Colleges and University (HBCU) sport consumption experience. However, unlike previous research, this study aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of: (a) the cultural attributes (and cultural signifiers) of the HBCU sport consumption *(Research Question 1)*, (b) the performance and expressions of culture in the context of HBCU sport consumption *(Research Question 2)*, and (c) the meaning of culture (how and why it matters) to the HBCU sport consumption experience *(Research Question 3)*. An ethnographic approach was utilized to: (a) discover the underlying meanings behind behavior, (b) document the importance of culture in HBCU sport consumption, and (c) identify the elements and attributes that comprise the 'cultural charisma' (Armstrong, 2013a) of HBCU sport consumption. The theoretical and conceptual support for this study was provided by the premise of the social identity theory (SIT), along with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of a habitus, and Durkheim's concept of collective effervescence. The methods, theories, and concepts employed allowed me the fulfillment of the broader purposes of this study.

This chapter will offer a brief overview of the concept of Blackness as a frame for discussing the findings and addressing the research questions that guided this investigation. In answering the research questions, this chapter will also reference the literature reviewed. The theoretical and conceptual implications of the findings will be presented, as will the practical implications

for marketing HBCU sports. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

Discussion

Elucidations of Blackness

The findings summarily illustrated the elucidations of Blackness at Minchfield College sport event. Crockett (2008) defined Blackness as the various "forms of signs, which may include black people or other symbolic and material artifacts of black cultural life (e.g. speech and phonetic conventions, folklore, style, fashion, music, usage of the body, and the physical form itself)" (p.246). Each of Crockett's descriptors of Blackness were evident (expressed and/or implied) in the findings relative to the culture of HBCU sport consumption. Hall (1993) indicated that Blackness "has come to signify the various communities that keep black traditions, historical experiences, aesthetics, and counter-narratives" (p. 4). The findings depicted different ways in which Blackness was pronounced in the HBCU sport consumption experience in a manner that elevated its salience to the Black community. Furthermore, the findings of this study also demonstrated how HBCU sports and its Black consumers are the keepers of traditions of individuals of African descent. Consequently, HBCU sport consumption facilitates and encourages a celebration of historical experiences and aesthetics of Blackness that are salient to the Black community. Moreover, the elucidations of the elements and expressions of Blackness that are embedded in the culture of HBCU sports consumption substantiate the contemporary sociocultural relevance of HBCUs and HBCU sports.

Research Question #1: *What are the Cultural Attributes of the HBCU Sport Consumption Experience?*

The first research question examined the cultural attributes associated with the HBCU sport consumption experience. The findings indicated that Blackness was expressed in tangible and intangible elements of culture and was a defining attribute of the HBCU sport consumption experience. More specifically, Blackness as expressed in the consumers' Africentric cultural taste preference for Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors was a salient composite attribute of the HBCU sport consumption experience. Green (2001) noted that sport provides a salient setting that incorporates distinctive values and beliefs which add value to the sport experience. Such was the case at Minchfield College sport event where the cultural attributes offered at the football event served as distinctive elements, representations, and expressions of Blackness that uniquely defined and added value to the HBCU sport consumption experience as Green noted. The findings of this study were consistent with Armstrong's (2002a) findings about the distinctive and unique cultural appeal of HBCU sports and Black consumers' desire for a culturally relevant sport consumption experience.

Within the context of HBCU sports, the findings revealed that Africentric food served as a leisure activity and a way for participants to socialize with friends, family, and others which contributed to their overall sport consumption experience (Green, 2001; Sobal et al., 2006; Wright et al., 2001). According to Hughes (1997), "the essence of black culture has been handed down through oral history, generation after generation in the African tradition, through selection and preparation of soul food" (p.272), as soul food serves to nourish the emotional, social, and spiritual selves, in addition to the physical self. The particular relevance of soul food to the HBCU sport consumption experience was evident in this study. Therefore, as Hughes suggested,

soul food seemed to have also nourished their emotional, social, spiritual, and individual selves of the Minchfield College consumers.

Music is a global complex phenomenon that is essential in many individual's lives because it serves in various capacities and fulfills different roles for an individual (Cross, 2001). Additionally, music is utilized for expressing values and social bonding (Boer, 2009). Through observation and interviews, the findings revealed that music was: (a) a vital part of the production and consumption of sports at Minchfield College for Black consumers, (b) a source of cultural entertainment at Minchfield College that rivals any other sport consumption experience (e.g., Tyler expressed that the music at Minchfield College is different than music you would hear at any other sport events, and even at other HBCUs located in the same region), and (c) a heightened feeling of cultural exhilaration at Minchfield College which provide Black consumers with an opportunity to embrace their cultural traditions and embrace their shared identities. The findings also supported the notion that Africentric music allowed members of the Black community to participate in activities that unify and offer them a space that creates cohesiveness for a common purpose (Maultsby, 2005). Additionally, through observation, it was revealed that music allowed Black consumers at Minchfield College sport event to express their freedom through dance moves.

Visible goods are considered representations of symbolic functions, such as the expression of one's unique identity, community of group affiliation, and the expression of group-oriented values and social identities (Barnard, 2002). The findings illustrated that the Africentric vendors sold Africentric visible goods which served as an explanation of the participants' racial/ethnic taste preferences that were significant to their unique identity. It can be highlighted that visible goods can act as a signifying practice which constructs notions of an individual being

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cool, fashionable, formal, or informal (Brydon & Neissen, 1998; Wilson, 2017). Hence, the findings supported this concept, as it revealed that different Africentric visible goods sold by Africentric vendors, provided participants at Minchfield College sport event the opportunity to purchase cool and fashionable attire which allowed them to express a specific message about their identity. For example, Maria highlighted that the Africentric vendors at Minchfield College sport event all sold unique Africentric visible goods which allow them to purchase different items that will allow them to display their *swag* weekly.

The findings also supported Armstrong's (2008) study which exemplified that cultural factors at sport events are important to consumers of Color. Armstrong (2008) attested that when sport events are permeated with cultural artifacts and expressions, they may provide consumers with a satisfying sport consumption experience. Similarly, the expressions of Blackness in Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors: (a) created a meaningful and powerful cultural experience, (b) allowed consumers to maintain their cultural preferences amidst their sport experience, and (c) sustained other social bonds (Williams et al., 2012). Furthermore, the findings extended previous research (Armstrong 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2013a) by addressing specific elements of culture that serve as salient attributes to Black consumers' consumption of HBCU sports.

Previous research has also revealed that sports is cultural and culture plays a unique role in the consumption of sports (Armstrong, 2008, 2013a; Green, 2001; Moragas, 1992; Pons, Laroche, Nyeck, & Perreault, 2001). However, it is essential to note that it is not necessarily one component of culture that contributes to the HBCU sport consumption experience. As cited by nearly all participants in this study it was the combination of Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors that served as cultural attributes. This finding is beneficial as it

reinforces the notion that HBCU sport events offer Black consumers a culturally empowering experience (Armstrong, 2002a) but it also illustrated that it is the composite culture (combination of different cultural attributes) that makes the HBCU sport consumption experience worthwhile, unique, and meaningful to Black consumers' identity (Green, 2001). Lastly, these findings supported the interlocking model of symbolic and material culture referenced in Chapter Two of this document. The results illustrated that elements of culture are not mutually exclusive and are significant to the expressions of Blackness of the HBCU sport consumption experience.

Research Question #2: *How is Culture Produced, Performed, and Experienced in HBCU Sports?*

The second research question focused on understanding how culture is produced, performed, and experienced in HBCU sports. The participants consistently expressed sentiments related to Blackness celebrated in the cultural habitus, which served as a salient site for the production, performance, and experience of Blackness. This theme was conceptualized through the expressions of Blackness as the: (a) performance of the band (b) consumers' participation in pre-and post-game tailgates, (c) consumers' sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) consumers' sense of protection and safety. Through observation and interviews, it was evident that the band performance was particularly important as it set the game day atmosphere at Minchfield College. When the participants spoke about the band performance, they spoke with excitement.

It appeared as though the band fully recognized its role in the Minchfield College sport consumption experience. The band made their proud and bold entrance to the stadium from the street (which was adjacent to the tailgating area). There was a long sound of a whistle, the

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pounding of drums, and the sound of the trombones. It caught the attention of the individuals in

attendance and myself as well. A group of men standing close by yelled, "***There they gooooo!***

There they gooooo! Whattttt!'' I was not sure what was happening, but at that moment, it felt as

if electricity had ran through the parking lot. The consumers started yelling and cheering and one

could feel the exhilaration in the atmosphere. This was profound, as the presence and the

performance of the band created a powerful intangible cultural stimulant that appeared to

resonate deep within the souls of consumers in attendance. The band's performance created a

shift in the atmosphere that lifted the consumers' spirit, generated their emotions, and evoked

their memories (Terry & Karageorghis, 2006), which made their sport consumption experience

most joyful.

The performance of the band at Minchfield College sport event supports Maultsby's

(2005) concept that within African and African American cultures music is a collectiveness of

performances which allow members within these cultures to participate in an activity that is

meaningful. Through observation at the pre-game show, during the game, halftime, and after the

game, I had a chance to witness the collectiveness of performance through Minchfield College's

band. Minchfield College band entered the stadium. I watched as they had their instruments

slanted at a 45-degree angle. My gatekeeper informed me that the position of their instrument is

what allows them to deliver unforgettable dance routines week after week. They bobbed their

heads, swung their arms, and a few drummers; tossed their drum sticks in the air as they

marched. The band's movement was impeccable to the rhythm. Their uniforms were flashy with

exaggerated embroidery, which embodied a historical memory — a patch on the sleeves, which

symbolized the original symbol of Minchfield College's mascot used during the 70s. During

halftime, I watched as the band brought the dance floor to the field through dance moves and

routines that are unique to the Black culture. The band came on the field with exceptional

instrumentation and intricate formations. The drum major did an amazing backbend until his

head touched the ground, which generated excitement throughout the stadium. Minchfield

College band employed a delivery style where the performers' created an atmosphere of

"aliveness" (Maultsby, 2005, p. 330) through energetic body movements and flashy clothing that

were unique expressions of their culture. Through a collectiveness of performance, Minchfield

College's band displayed elements of the African and African American culture that are of

significance to Black consumers in attendance and to the culture of HBCUs.

Furthermore, the notion that HBCU bands influence the game-day experience supports

Burwell's (1993) findings that HBCU bands typically catch the attention of those in attendance

by its dance routines and by playing different songs that are popular with the culture and songs

that will take them down memory lane. For example, during the Minchfield College sport event I

attended, the band gave a tribute to the late *Queen of Soul*, Aretha Franklin, and also played

popular songs from contemporary (non-African American) musicians such as Cardi B, Maroon

5, and Bruno Mars, which created a fun and entertaining atmosphere for the generations of

consumers in attendance. The performance of the band served as an important element that

created a cultural ambience which made Minchfield College sport consumption a distinct HBCU

experience that no other (more specifically, no other non-HBCU sport event) can duplicate

(Rodgers, 2015).

Similarly, the participants expressed that culture was produced, performed and

experienced on game days through tailgating. They stated that tailgating allowed everyone to

come together at each home game to enjoy their culture (food, music, values, beliefs) while

spreading love, and sharing food with others in attendance. While there is limited research on

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tailgating at college football games, the findings from this study supports prior literature indicating that sharing at tailgates is a way of life as it demonstrates tailgaters' generosity to others (Bradford & Sherry, 2015). This generosity of community/communal Blackness and cultural sharing was embedded in the culture of the Minchfield College game day experience.

Previous literature (Armstrong 2002a, 2008, 2013a, 2013b; Cooper, 2013; Rodgers, 2015) highlighted that HBCUs and HBCU sport events provide Blacks with a sense of belonging, togetherness, and safety which are all valuable to their social psyche, and is rarely reproduced at other non-HBCU sport events. Moreover, HBCU sport events provide an environment where Black consumers can express their Black cultural heritage without fear or racial discrimination and cultural oppression, which creates a unique sense of racial kinship (Stayman & Deshpande, 1986). The findings supported these premises and revealed that the expression of Blackness experienced in the HBCU setting created an atmosphere that provided a sense of community and family togetherness, along with offering a sense of protection and safety for the Black consumers in attendance. For example, Maria stated, "The culture here brings people together. I mean Black people from all different walks of life come together and just have a good time." Alisa also stated, "It is a communal aspect…. It really is a community event for us where everyone is welcomed, and I love that aspect of our culture here." Both sentiments support the idea that HBCUs serve as a space where the group identity of people of African descent is acknowledged, celebrated, affirmed, and reinforced (Armstrong, 2013b).

Additionally, the findings from this study validated the significant role HBCUs play in cultivating a safe-space for Black consumers and students (Armstrong, 2013a; Cooper, 2013). It can be highlighted that Black consumers tend to attend HBCU events because it gives them a feeling of being emancipated from discrimination and segregation (Armstrong, 2013a). For

example, Dean stated, "This is a safe space for all of us. This is where we can be who we are. We can be Black. We don't have to worry about looking over our shoulders… we can enjoy the game and be human." Dean's concept supports previous research by Armstrong & Stratta (2004), highlighting that African Americans naturally make an effort to engage in activities that serves as racially self-affirming opportunities which provide them with a sense of belonging and freedom.

As discussed previously, hate crimes against Blacks have increased at an alarming rate (Edwards & Rushin, 2018). Therefore, one of the most insightful findings of this study was the sense of safety provided by HBCUs. For example, in a New York Times article by Alina Tugend (2019), one student stated, "I chose an HBCU because I felt safe — especially now during the Trump presidency. It's scary to go out in a world where you feel less than human, and people close to my age are being murdered for the color of their skin" (p. 1). Furthermore, Dr. David Wilson, who is the President of Morgan State University (an HBCU located in Maryland), mentioned that Black Americans are looking to be valued and respected (Tugend, 2019). The Minchfield College sports consumption experience created a space where being Black was not marginalized but celebrated, embraced, valued, and respected. For many Black Americans, being able to have a sense of safety gave them a chance to be free from racial discrimination (Armstrong, 2013b), and as Dean explained, "an opportunity to be human." For Dean, being human meant the ability to have the freedom to do whatever he wanted to do and be whoever he wanted to be. Hence, it can be inferred that one contemporary benefit of HBCUs/HBCU sport events is that they provide Black Americans with a much needed sense of safety. This finding is significant as it supports the ideology that racism continues at every level in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) and that the United States is not a 'post-racial' society. Hence, HBCUs are needed and relevant because they serve as a safe space for Black Americans.

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Moreover, the findings also indicated that Minchfield College was a safe cultural space for Black Americans, so much so that the celebration of their culture was more potent than the actual sport event itself. In other words, Blacks in attendance at the Minchfield College football game seemed more inclined to enjoy the cultural celebration with other group members rather than only being psychologically attached to the game. Maria stated,

> We love sports, we love winning, but what we love more is the chance we get to gather here for six home games; sometimes seven, to enjoy our culture, and have great time with our friends and family. Of course we want our team to win so we can brag about it, but just to be in this space to celebrate our culture, to hold on to our traditions, and legacy, far more exceeds the importance of winning here at Minchfield. Whether we are winning or losing, we will come here, because what this space has to offer is important to us.

Thus, through elements of Blackness, Minchfield College sport consumption experience provided a sense of cultural enrichment for spectators and created a space that was welcoming, loving, and family-centered.

Maria's statement demonstrated that due to the salience of the culture of Blackness permeating the Minchfield College football game, the consumers at the game may have been less psychologically attached to the game, and thus less vested in the outcome. Not being highly vested in the outcome of the game may have made them less likely to engage in behaviors that threatens the safety of others when the outcome of the game is not in their favor. Previous research on spectator aggression demonstrated that "there is a heightened potential for spectator aggression when highly identified individuals witness their favorite team's defeat" (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001, p. 111). Aggression can be defined as "behavior that intends to destroy property or injure another person or is grounded in a total disregard for the well-being of

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self and others" (Coakley, 1998, p. 180). Thus, in many sport settings where spectators are strongly attached to their team, the safety of others may be at jeopardy if their team loses. Throughout various sport events at the professional, collegiate, and high school level, spectator aggression is a significant concern (Wann et al., 2001).

Spectator aggression can either be hostile or instrumental (Wann et al., 2001). According to Wann, Carlson, & Schrader (1999), hostile spectator aggression "involves violent actions that are motivated by anger with the goal of harming another person" (p. 279). On the other hand, instrumental spectator aggression refers to "actions intended to harm another person with the goal of achieving a result other than the victim's suffering" (Wann et al., 1999, p. 279). Previous research (Wann et al., 1999; Wann et al., 2001) has revealed that spectators who strongly identify with a team are more likely to demonstrate a high level of both hostile and instrumental aggression. Previous research on spectator aggression (Wann et al., 1999; Wann et al., 2001, and others) has focused on PWI sports/sport settings and has not explored this issue in the context of HBCU sports. Therefore, such finding may not apply to this HBCU sport setting.

As revealed in this study, the majority of spectators at Minchfield College sport event mostly identified with the culture of Blackness that defined the consumption experience. Furthermore, the notion that HBCU sport consumption experience provides a safe space for Black Americans exemplifies the uniqueness of the cultural habitus offered at HBCU sport events and the sense of family and cultural togetherness. This finding was noteworthy. Hence, although spectator aggression was not directly examined in this study, it could be argued that Minchfield College spectators may be less likely to display hostile or instrumental aggression subsequent to an unfavorable outcome of the game. For instance, Sam expressed:

When I go to any HBCU sport event, it's a more of a family thing; it's more about our culture, the food, the music, and the band, all that stuff. But then if I go to a PWI game, it's more about football. It's almost like they are saying: oh let's get as drunk as we can, let's cheer for our team and act out. The mission for us at Minchfield College is to have a great time, enjoy our culture, and support our team.

Sam continued:

Even when we play other HBCUs, other teams come, and it's no yelling at them, throwing stuff at them. It's like: hey come on in and have a great time with us. For our season opener, we played Huron Valley, and we had so many people here. It was almost like a homecoming. Half us, and half Huron Valley. We had a great time. Of course, we did a little trash talk, more along the lines of bragging that Minchfield is going to win. We have that HBCU connection. There's no animosity or need for fights. Even when we play our rivals, I mean, we love them, but it's a love/hate relationship. It's like that cousin that you got that rival with, you know you're family, but it's just bragging rights because I got to beat you. So that's the culture here, it's not like fighting or nothing. Nah, we ain't trying to do all that. We are trying to come out and have a good time and make sure everyone is safe.

Overall, the findings revealed that relative to *Research Question Two*, culture was performed, produced, and experienced through the expressions of Blackness in the cultural habitus created for Black consumers. The HBCU sport consumption experience was heightened by the habitus created by the band's performances, participation in the tailgates, feeling a sense of community and family togetherness, and the sense of protection and safety. Such habitus

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created a bounded racial space where consumers embraced their culture and behaved in a manner that was performed with and created by interactions with members of their cultural community.

These findings extended Bourdieu's (1984) notion of the habitus who argued that the habitus is the physical embodiment of cultural capital, which lends meaning to how people tend to navigate social environments. Additionally, Bourdieu expressed that people's relationships with the dominant culture conveyed in various activities may include eating, speaking, and gestures (Bourdieu, 1984). Though Bourdieu never addressed how race may impact the habitus, the findings of this study demonstrated that the habitus could also be race-based. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the racialized habitus at Minchfield College sport event: (a) played a prominent role in how the Black consumers functioned in the social groups to which they identified, and (b) allowed them to be active participants in the creation, expression, and performance of a culture that influenced their social identity in the context of sports.

Research Question #3: *What Makes Culture Meaningful to the HBCU Sport Consumption Experience?*

The third research question in the current study focused on understanding what makes culture meaningful, and why and how does it matter to the HBCU sport consumption experience. Through the expressions of Blackness, the findings revealed that it was Blackness as cultural affiliation to HBCUs and HBCU sports that made the culture meaningful to the sport consumption experience. This was illustrated through: (a) a sense of tradition, (b) pride, love, and loyalty, (c) more than a game, and (d) a nuanced balancing of cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports.

A sense of tradition. The consumers' sense of tradition was a particularly prominent factor that contributed to why culture is meaningful and how it matters to HBCU sport consumption. Dr. White noted that it is a combination of the history and traditions of HBCUs and the history and traditions of the Minchfield College football program that makes the experience meaningful. The findings revealed that the consumers' sense of tradition was rooted in their families' tradition as the majority of participants attended Minchfield College games when they were younger with their families. A significant amount of the participants noted that, growing up, their family members (grandparents, mom, aunt, or uncles) would take them to HBCU football games. They stated that these games were necessary because they saw them as a "fun teaching moment" where they would learn about the African American culture and the history and purpose of HBCUs. As a result, attending these games became a family tradition that they valued and vowed to pass on to their children.

This finding is notable as it supports the notion that sports play a significant role in culture as it creates "traditions that bring loved ones closer together and create a sense of euphoria throughout the sports community" (Allgood, 2019). Furthermore, sports consumption allows consumers to "maintain a sense of identity by attaching symbolic meanings to objects and activities, securing valuable traditions, and anchoring behavior in cultural and social orders" (Chun, Gentry, McGinnis, 2005, p.1). In this study, it was evident that the Minchfield College sport event provided a space for African American consumers to secure valuable traditions that go beyond the realm of sports.

Pride, love, and loyalty. The findings also documented that culture was meaningful to the HBCU sport consumption experience through the consumers' outward expression of pride, love, and loyalty to the institution and/or the sport team. The participants revealed that they were

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proud to be affiliated with Minchfield College and as a result they demonstrated their support through clothing to show their affiliation to the institution and/or the sport team. Simmel (1904) emphasized that clothing is used to concurrently satisfy an individual's need to belong and to be distinct. The findings did support this notion made by Simmel. With a well-known PWI located a few miles from Minchfield College, it was evident that clothing served as an expression that Minchfield College supporters utilized to differentiate themselves and to demonstrate their love for and affiliation to Minchfield College.

The findings from this study can be related to Hofstede's (1980) cultural value dimension (CVD) framework which was used to understand the connection between culture and clothing. Hofstede's framework consisted of four dimensions: power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and individual/collectivism. Noted by Hofstede, a power distant society is one which is more likely to consume status clothing and brand name items. However, through observation it was revealed that Minchfield College was not classified as a power distance society as Black consumers in attendance were dressed in Minchfield College apparel versus status clothing. In Hofstede's (1980) second dimension, Minchfield College was classified as a feminine culture, as clothing was purchased for use and not for show. Black consumers at Minchfield purchased their clothing to demonstrate their affiliation to an HBCU, and their cultural identification to Minchfield College and/or the sport team.

In the third dimension of Hofstede's value framework, Minchfield College was seen as a low uncertainty avoidance culture. Within a low uncertainty avoidance culture, people will endure unstructured situations and embrace their innovative and entrepreneurial self while being less apprehensive (Hofstede, 2001). As highlighted by Grisaffe and Nguyen (2011), individuals within a high uncertainty avoidance culture will have a higher level of brand loyalty as the brand

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provides them with a feeling of security and comfort. However, the findings from this study

refutes this concept. Even though Minchfield College was identified as a low uncertainty culture,

the members within this community still showed their pride, love, and loyalty as it pertains to

Minchfield College apparel, because it provided them with an opportunity to: (a) differentiate

themselves, (b) identify with their culture, and (c) show their affiliation to an HBCU. Within the

last dimension of Hofstede's (1980) conception of value, Minchfield College was identified as

collectivism culture. Within this culture, an individual will more likely purchase clothing that

embodies a symbolic possession that will assist them with accomplishing a social goal such as

gaining acceptance to and from reference groups they consider important. Clothing was a visible

good announcing the participants' attachment to their university and their sport team.

Moreover, all participants expressed that because they have pride, love, and loyalty to

their institution, it encourages them to support everything at the university. For example, Sam

stated, "This is our institution, and we love it. I love the fact that our culture here is so unique. I

love everything about it and because of the uniqueness we just have to support and be here." This

finding is significant as it highlights that the participants support their own culture and the

culture of the institution. This was also evident during my observations of the multiple ways the

attendees used food, music, artifacts, products, clothing, and other items to display their pride,

love, and loyalty to their culture and to the institution. This finding aligns with previous non-

HBCU sport research which revealed that supporting their culture was important for African

American students (Bilyeu & Wann, 2002). Therefore, supporting the culture contributed to the

meaningfulness of the Minchfield College sport consumption experience.

The concept of pride, love, and loyalty was also significant relative to being an African

American in the United States. Historically, African Americans experienced discrimination,

oppression, and laws which regulated them as second-class citizens in a white-dominated society (Murtadha & Watts, 2005; Sellers et al., 1998). With African Americans being prohibited from: (a) having access to certain occupations, (b) being able to vote and testify in court, (c) traveling freely, (d) carrying firearms, and (e) obtaining an education (Murtadha & Watts) their experiences have profoundly impacted their view of being a member of a Black racial group in the United States (Sellers et al.). The findings of this study revealed that for Minchfield College spectators, being Black meant congregating among other Blacks, and celebrating their pride, love, and loyalty for their institution, race, and culture. This finding was unique because, while spectators at PWIs also display pride in their institutions, such cultural pride is not often witnessed or overtly displayed among PWI consumers.

The pride, love, and loyalty that Minchfield College spectators have for their institution and their racial group can contribute to making the HBCU sport experience an "empowering community setting" (Maton, 2008, p. 5). That is, a space that provides a group of marginalized or oppressed individuals with an opportunity to control their lives and environment. Maton highlighted that an empowering community empowers: "(a) adults to overcome personal difficulties, helping them to change and grow, (b) youth growing up in adverse circumstances to develop, achieve, and accomplish, (c) citizens in impoverished communities to take action to improve the locality in which they live, and (d) historically oppressed citizens to resist and challenge societal culture and institutions, and take action to change them" (p.5). All the characteristics of an empowering community setting, as defined by Maton, were echoed throughout the interviews and observations at Minchfield College, making it a culturally empowering community and a culturally meaningful experience.

More than a game. With the participants' expressions of Blackness being demonstrated through their affiliation to Minchfield College, the findings revealed that the perception of the experience being 'more than a game' was another reason why culture mattered in this sport consumption setting. Many of the participants indicated that the game/team itself was somewhat mediocre based on its performance. This finding was consistent with the discourse and the ideology many hold about HBCUs having an inferior product when compared to PWIs (Arnett, 2015; Hawkins, et al., 2015). However, the performance of the team seemed to be secondary in importance to what mattered, as the participants expressed that the HBCU sport consumption experience was a meaningful platform for: (a) socializing Black youth to the HBCU culture, and (b) challenging/changing the negative perceptions about educational, social, and other qualities of HBCU institutions. This finding is noteworthy as it counters the negative narrative surrounding HBCUs (Gasman & Bowman, 2011). The media's narratives frequently portray HBCUs as being incompetent to manage finances, having weak leadership, unresponsive alumni, and having low graduation rates. Gasman and Bowman alluded that mainstream negative portrayals of HBCUs mislead the public and "can even exacerbate problems some HBCUs already face" (p. 24). For example, Gasman and Bowman highlighted that editorial boards often write articles about HBCUs that employ outdated information, having no support for empirical research to support their work. Gasman and Bowman explained:

> Few reporters consider historical racism in the United States and the systematic lack of access to wealth experienced by African Americans and their institutions. An examination of the history of media coverage reveals a pattern of unfair news accounts and shows that HBCUs have experienced intense scrutiny from the beginning (p. 25).

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The media tend to highlight these institutions' flaws while comparing them to PWIs. Therefore, the media's narrative permeates the notions that HBCUs are 'inferior' or 'doomed', creating an ideology where society (i.e., the higher education community, student-athletes, and some African Americans) have a negative perception of HBCUs (Gasman & Bowman, 2011), thereby challenging the rich traditions of HBCUs.

This study revealed that sport could be a viable platform to uphold the values and traditions of HBCUs by educating the younger generation about HBCUs rather than their knowledge being shaped by what is in the media. With HBCUs in the middle of a public debate regarding a 'post-racial' society where many believed that these institutions have ultimately served their purpose, and are no longer needed, (Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Waymer & Street, 2015), the findings of this investigation offered a counter to that narrative. Not only did the findings illustrated the viable role that HBCUs still play for the Black community, but they also highlighted the unique role of sports as one way in which society can become better educated and informed about the sociocultural significance and relevance of HBCUs. Furthermore, the findings highlighted that at Minchfield College, the alumni make it a priority to counter this ideology of institutional inferiority by inviting people from the community to experience the game day atmosphere, providing them with an opportunity to learn more about the university in general — beyond the sports/teams. For example, Sam stated, "We bring teens with us to the games to show them what this experience is about. We might not change their mind, but we can help the change their perception of the school."

Moreover, this finding supports the alumni activation/community engagement pillar within the *Ten Pillars of Engagement for Sport Leadership & Administration in Creating Athletic Organizational Success & Sustainability* (Cooper et al., 2014). The *Ten Pillars* can be

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used as strategies to assist with organizational transformation of HBCU athletic programs (Cavil & McClelland, 2013). The *Ten Pillars* is divided into two fields — five internal pillars of engagement and five external pillars engagement. Table 6 displays the two fields of the *Ten Pillar*, only elaborating on the pillar relevant to this study:

Table 6
Dr. Cavil's Ten Pillars of Engagement

Internal Pillars of Engagement	External Pillars of Engagement
Academic alignment	Critical evaluation/ Continuous improvement
Athletic compliance	Strategic planning/ Tactical analytics
Corporate fundraising/ Capital campaigns	Shared vision/ Shared governance
Media solutions/ Event management	System thinking/ Operation practices
Alumni activation/ Community engagement	Personal mastery/ Team building

Note. Adapted from Cavil and McClelland, 2013.

The alumni activation and community engagement are the fifth component of the internal pillar which focuses on creating a relationship between alumni and the community to assist the athletic department. The findings from this study revealed that alumni activation and community engagement are current practices at Minchfield College and they are utilized to assist with not only building relationships with members of the community, but they are also strategies to promote change by challenging and contesting the negative perceptions about this particular institution. Therefore, the respective Minchfield College sport event was 'more than a game' because it is being used to bring awareness about the significance of HBCUs, making it culturally meaningful to consumers and the broader community.

Balancing act: Cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports. Although

the predominant findings of this study substantiated the salience of the culture of Blackness to

the HBCU sport consumption experience, an interesting finding was also revealed illustrating the

nuanced balancing of cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports. For most of the

participants, the culture of the event was most meaningful such that it buffered the negative

outcome of the game when the team loss. Hence, for many of the attendees, irrespective of the

outcome of the game, this consumption itself was culturally sacred and will always be respected,

valued, loved, and celebrated. However, in other instances for participants who were

psychologically attached to the team, the game mattered, the culture of the event was secondary,

and thus, the event was most meaningful when the team won.

Previous scholars have demonstrated that sport consumers tend to react positively (Wann

& Branscombe, 1990), display intense levels of pride and excitement (Kerr et al., 2005), and

have a strong desire towards a team (Madrigal & Chen, 2008) when the outcome of a game is in

favor of the team they support. The findings from this study offered nuances that supported and

extended these notions. For example, satisfaction for participants who were psychologically

attached to the sport team was anchored more to the performance of the team than to the culture

of the event. In this instance, they reacted more positively and were highly satisfied (as the

previous research indicated). However, unlike what previous research suggested, for most of the

participants, the culture of the event (instead of the performance of the team) was the most

salient feature and the core element of their satisfaction. In this instance, even after a loss, these

individuals reacted positively and had an enjoyable experience. Kim's response illustrated the

cultural salience and the meaningfulness of this HBCU sport consumption experience:

We love what each game day has to offer (food, music, our band, being around family and friends, and celebrating our culture) because it brings us happiness and encourages us to support Minchfield College. On top of that, my husband and I believe in the product, so we support the product. I am a three-time graduate, he is a two-time graduate, and we are both proud of that, so we support our team through it all. Whether we are winning or losing, Minchfield College will always have our support.

In summary, the findings from this study revealed that Black consumers at Minchfield College considered their HBCU sport consumption experience meaningful because: (a) of the cultural traditions of HBCUs and their salience to Black family traditions, (b) it constituted a culturally empowering community that affirmed the consumers' pride, love, and loyalty to Minchfield College, and to a lesser extent Minchfield College's sport teams, (c) for many of the attendees, the culture of HBCU sports was an experience that mattered far beyond the nature of the game itself, and (d) the unique way that it elicited a nuanced balancing of cultural affinity and psychological attachment to sports. Furthermore, for Black Americans at Minchfield College, the HBCU sport consumption experience was also meaningful because it offered a sacred space — a space that satisfied their Africentric cultural taste preferences, where Blackness is celebrated in a cultural habitus, and where the cultural affiliation to Blackness is experienced. The overall summary of key findings pertaining to each research question is demonstrated in Table 7.

Table 7

Summary of Results and Meanings for Research Questions

Research Question	Findings
RQ1: What are the cultural attributes of the HBCU sport consumption experience? {What are the signifiers of culture in the context of HBCU sports?}	Blackness in consumers' Africentric Cultural taste preference: • Africentric food (soul food), Africentric music (jazz, rhythm & blues, gospel, etc.), and Africentric vendors (clothing, artwork, memorabilia, etc.)
RQ2: How is culture produced, performed, or experienced in HBCU sports*?*	Blackness celebrated in the cultural Habitus: • Band performance • Tailgates • A sense of community and family togetherness • A sense of protection and safety
RQ3: What makes culture meaningful, and why and how does it matter to the HBCU sport consumption experience?	Blackness as cultural affiliation to HBCUs/HBCU Sports: • A sense of tradition • Pride, love, and loyalty • More than a game • A nuanced balancing act: cultural affinity and psychological attachment

Theoretical Implications

Social Identity Theory

As previously discussed, HBCU sport events typically attract a more niche market of Black consumers, offering them a unique experience that no other sport event is able to offer: a culturally empowering experience. This is accomplished through 'Black' entertainment that is packaged with Africentric merchandising, concessions, music, etc. (Armstrong, 2002a; Cavil, 2015; McGreggor & Armstrong, 2015). Collectively, this ambience promotes cultural kinship, cultural upliftment, and cultural affirmation (Armstrong 2002a; Burwell, 1993; Cavil, 2015; Latta, 2001). These findings may be explained by the tenets of social identity theory (SIT). SIT served as an appropriate theoretical tool to unpack why HBCU sports are important to its consumers and to the Black community.

Social groups are defined by Tafjel and Turner (1986), "as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership in it" (p.15). Culture is a unique facet of social groups where the members' shared values and norms differentiate them from other social groups and influence their conscious beliefs. Hence, culture becomes a critical component of SIT. HBCU sport events attracts a social group (Black consumers) and offers an experience rife with elements of culture that are prominent to their identity. The findings from this study revealed that the elements of culture that comprise the cultural charisma of HBCU sport consumption are all potent because it allows members within this social group to validate their identity with other group members in attendance, as SIT suggests.

For Black Americans, their cultural identity is crucial because it has been a foundation for them having self-esteem and hope in a white-dominated society (Henries, 1977). If the culture of Blacks is hidden or degraded in the United States, then everything related to Blackness will be associated with evil, stupidity, backwardness, and all that is low and degrading. As a result, generations of Blacks will be "ashamed of all the characteristics of their race" (Henries, p.121). Thus, this finding related to cultural identification is notable because it exhibits that the HBCU sport consumption experience offered Black consumers a chance to boldly and proudly express and maintain their cultural identity through food, music, clothing and visible goods music, food, visible goods, clothing, non-verbal, and verbal communication, while educating the younger generation about the African American culture.

As the SIT indicated, and the findings of this study confirmed, when Black consumers are in a setting with other in-group members they are able to express their culture because it: (a) serves as an important source of pride and self-esteem, (b) promotes a sense of social identity, and (c) provides a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the SIT supported the findings that Black consumers will form a strong identity with the cultural elements featured in the HBCU sport consumption setting.

Habitus

As noted by Bourdieu (1984), the habitus is a system of class-based dispositions of an individual that are usually shared by people with similar background (in terms of social class, religion, nationality, ethnicity, education, profession, taste, etc.). Bourdieu noted that, the habitus is the product of our position in society which shapes our thoughts and actions. It consists of our thoughts, tastes, beliefs, interests and our understanding of the world around us and is created

through primary socialization into the world through family, culture and education. Bourdieu indicated that the habitus is class-specific and formed within the social and cultural environment, particular to a social class. He argued that an individual's class influences their movement, dressing decisions, attitudes, postures, mannerism, accent, and facial expression (Bourdieu, 1984). However, the findings from this study refuted this notion. Casual interviews and participant-observation revealed that the Minchfield College sport event attracted a diverse group of African Americans, with different social class backgrounds. However, even though their social class was not identical, it was evident that they shared identity through their racial and ethnic culture. Hence, the findings demonstrated that in addition to the likely impact of social class in creating habitus, in this study, race may have interacted with social class and one's place in society. Race, rather than income/social class was the core ingredient on which the HBCU sport consumption habitus was created and structured.

As it relates to HBCU sports, the habitus can be considered as a structure that constructs a community through culture. The findings from this study illustrated that a culture of Blackness within the context of HBCU sports created a material and symbolic habitus for Black consumers. This was evident in the findings, as participants expressed that HBCU sport consumption gave them the opportunity to celebrate their culture. It also became a communal space that provided fellowship, safety, and community among a diverse group of African Americans. It was a space that facilitated a sense of belonging, served as an emotional homeland, as boundary maintenance, and a means for preserving a distinctive identity (Armstrong, 2013a). This finding is noteworthy as it expanded on Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus. It demonstrated that the cultural habitus as infused by a culture of Blackness created at an HBCU sport event permitted Black American spectators to not only be free from racial discrimination and inferiority, but it allowed them to

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congregate with others who share the same cultural values and beliefs. It also gave them a chance to put aside real-life problems and societal issues for a moment. Overall, the culture of HBCU sport consumption experience created a habitus that revitalized their being and permitted them to celebrate an identity that was potent and salient to their well-being.

Collective Effervescence

In Durkheim's (1912) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* he explained that the sacred rites of a religion are practiced within a moral community and when together, this moral community invokes intense emotionality, or a 'collective effervescence,' which causes excitement or upliftment towards the sacred, within the divine and humankind. Durkheim defined collective effervescence as "the very fast assembling of an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are assembled, their proximity generates a kind of electricity that quickly transports them to an extra-ordinary degree of exaltation" (p. 162).

The culture that is produced, performed, and experienced at the Minchfield College sport event served as a ritual that produced a collective effervescence for its Black consumers. Additionally, it made this HBCU sport experience sacred for Black Americans. The findings revealed that culture within the context of Minchfield College sport event created an atmosphere that provided racial upliftment for Black consumers (Armstrong, 2002a). Additionally, the findings revealed that the cultural charisma, ambience, and habitus of the Minchfield College sport event setting elicited racial eustress which energized, motivated, and created a sense of excitement its consumers.

Durkheim noted that in religious settings the effervescence is often potent leading to unpredictable behaviors where "the ordinary set of conditions of life are set aside so definitively

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and so consciously that people feel the need to put themselves above and beyond customary morality" (Durkheim, 1912, p. 163). Relating to the Minchfield College sport consumption experience, once the cultural effervescence intensified, consumers reached a level where they placed their personal problems, differences, and social issues aside for a moment to celebrate their racial, cultural, and ethnic identity. As a participant-observer, it was evident that at Minchfield College, game day meant that nothing else mattered because celebrating their race and culture was the only business at hand.

Culture of Blackness in Sport (COBIS)

Figure 15 provides the Culture of Blackness in Sport (COBIS) as a model that is theoretically informed by the social identity theory and the concepts of habitus and collective effervescence. The model summarizes the emerging themes relative to the elucidations of Blackness in the context of Minchfield College sport consumption experience. As the results revealed and the model depicts, Blackness was embodied in the: (a) product attributes (based on the premise of social identity theory), (b) sport consumption experience (based on the concept of collective effervescence), and (c) event ambience (based on the premise of the habitus).

As the COBIS demonstrates, Blackness in the product attributes and Blackness in the event ambience collectively contributed to Blackness in the overall consumption experience. As the model depicts, within this setting of HBCU sports at Minchfield College, the consumers' cultural taste preference for Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors led to a satisfying HBCU sport consumption experience. Blackness in the event ambience created a cultural habitus, which was formed by: (a) the band, (b) the tailgate, (c) a sense of community and family togetherness, and (d) a sense of protection and safety, which also led to a satisfying

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HBCU sport consumption experience. The COBIS also highlights that this HBCU sport consumption experience was meaningful, and consumers were motivated to attend the event because of their cultural affiliation to the university and its team. This meaningfulness of the consumption experience was conveyed through: (a) the consumers' traditions, (b) the consumers' pride, love, and loyalty to the institution and/or sport team, and (c) the notion that it was more than a football game. Based on these collection of factors, the consumers at this event had a satisfying HBCU sport consumption experience. However, the impact of the culture of the event was nuanced, and whether or not the consumers were satisfied with their consumption experience was mediated by the performance of the team.

In some instances, the participants reported being hurt by the team loss, but they were more strongly attached to the cultural engagement and their immersion in elements of Blackness. Thus, the end result was satisfaction with the consumption experience — in that the cultural elements buffered the sting of the team's loss (i.e., Bob stated that the loss really hurts, but when he gets back to the celebrations, music, food, dancing, etc. the hurt goes away). In other instances, the participants reported that while they enjoyed the cultural atmospherics and the elements of Blackness, they were more strongly attached to the sport/competition element of the event, and so the team's loss made them ultimately feel dissatisfied. Thus, the end result was dissatisfaction with the consumption experience, as the cultural elements were not able to buffer the sting of the loss (i.e., Lisa stated that she enjoyed watching the band and the celebration at the game; however, if the team is losing she leaves the game because she has a strong psychological attachment to the team). So, the determination of event satisfaction or dissatisfaction was based on whether the participants' attachment was anchored to elements of

Blackness (i.e., reflecting a cultural disposition of consumption) or to the outcome of the competition (i.e., reflecting a sport disposition of consumption).

While this model is centered on the sport consumption experience explored, investigated, and experienced at Minchfield College, it may also be applicable to other HBCU sport consumption experiences, and with some adaptations it could also be applied to other sport settings seeking to highlight the 'cultural charisma'(Armstrong, 2013a) of their consumers, sport/teams, and event ambience.

CULTURE OF BLACKNESS IN SPORT (COBIS)

Blackness in Product Attributes	Blackness in Sport Consumption Experience	Blackness in Africentric Event Ambience
Africentric Cultural Taste Preferences	Cultural Affiliation to University & Team	Cultural Habitus
Africentric Food / Africentric Music / Africentric Vendors	Pride, Love, and Loyalty / Traditions / More than a game	Band, Tailgating, Community, Family, Protection & Safety
Satisfaction	Sport Team Win → Satisfaction / Sport Team Lose	Satisfaction

Sport Team Lose:

Satisfaction
Hurt by the team's loss, but satisfied with the event experience due to stronger attachment to the elements of Blackness (i.e., a cultural disposition of consumption).

Dissatisfaction
Enjoyed the elements of Blackness, but dissatisfied with the event experience due team's loss and stronger attachment to the team (i.e., a sport disposition of consumption).
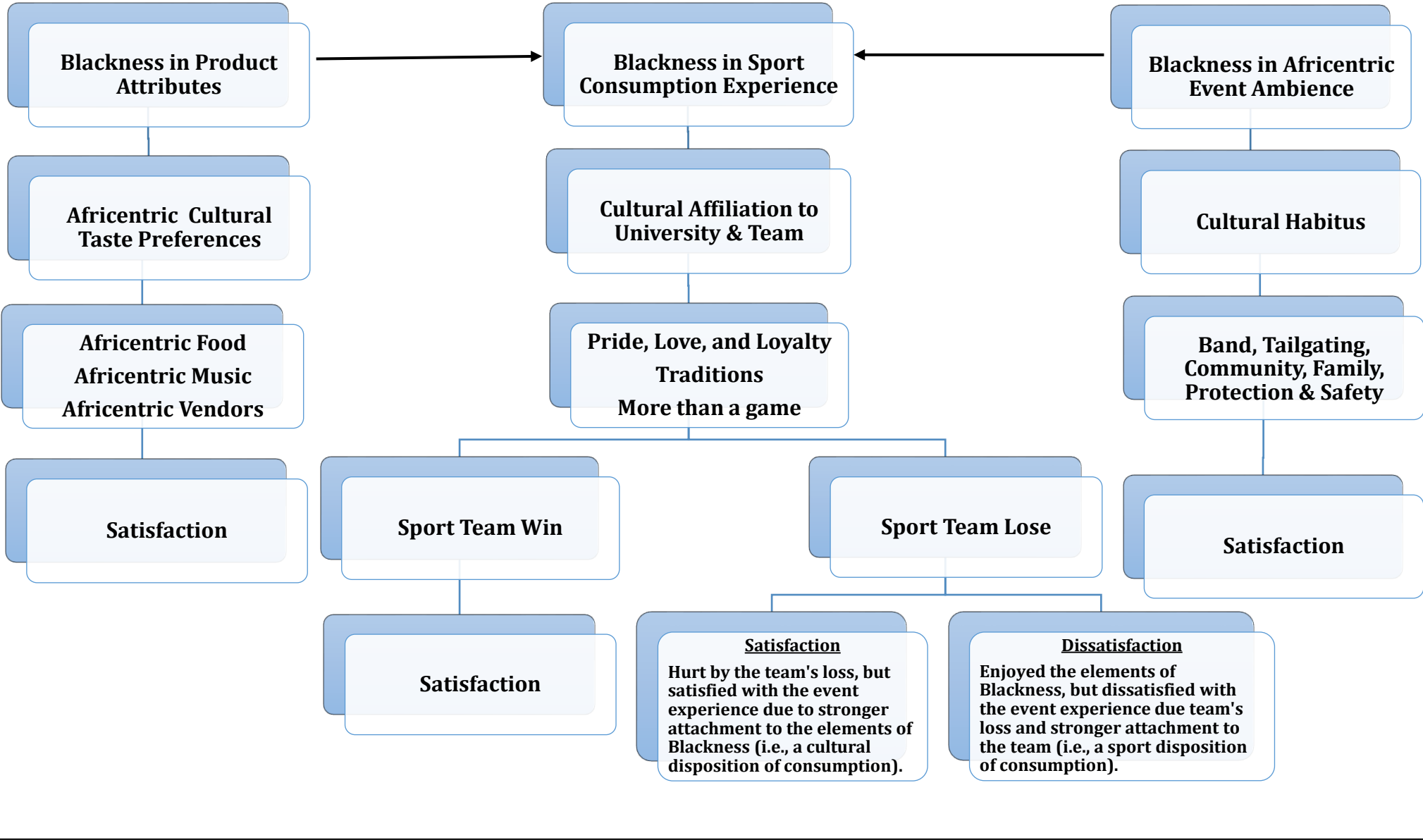
Figure 15. Culture of Blackness in Sport Model.

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Practical Implications

The findings from this study provided unique insight into the manner in which culture may influence the HBCU sport consumption experience. While these findings cannot be generalized to all HBCU athletic programs in the United States or to all HBCU sport consumers, they still can provide HBCU leaders (presidents, athletic directors, and marketing directors) with useful and practical information that can assist with informing and improving their marketing strategies. The findings from this study are consistent with previous studies (Armstrong, 2002a, 2002b, 2013b; Burwell, 1993; Cavil, 2015) which revealed that, for the most part, culture is a potent component of the HBCU sport consumption experience. The impact of culture was not as potent for participants who strongly identified with the team; these individuals were impacted more by the team's performance. However, while the cultural atmosphere created at a sport event is largely within the control of sport marketers, the performance of a sport team is not. Therefore, the practical significant of this study was that it extended prior research by: (a) identifying the specific and composite expressions of Blackness that creates a unique and cultured HBCU sport consumption experience, and (b) illustrating the need for HBCUs to strategically implement cultural elements of Blackness (such as the ones revealed in this study) into their marketing practices.

Jackson et al. (2001) noted that HBCUs are perceived as institutions that typically have never been able to establish effective marketing strategies for their athletic programs. In fact, the authors attested that at HBCUs there tends to be a misunderstanding about the importance of marketing athletics. Such misunderstanding has become a critical issue for these institutions, as the majority of athletic directors at HBCUs have limited amount of experience and training in marketing (Jackson et al., 2001). As a result, it becomes difficult for HBCU leaders to

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understand the importance of marketing and how to create an effective marketing strategy for their athletic programs that can assist with generating revenue, creating brand awareness, and building relationships with their consumers — all of which are key ingredients for marketing success.

In this study, the participants explicitly highlighted that the way in which culture was manifested and created a unique HBCU game day atmosphere (that is unlike other sport events). They highlighted that expressions of Blackness were embedded throughout the Minchfield College sport consumption experience that continuously influenced consumers' decisions to keep supporting the institution and its sport team. Therefore, it is important that HBCU the athletic marketing staff at Minchfield College strategically use the elements of Blackness to promote the values, traditions, and mission of their institution that their consumers seek, value, an expect to experience. Through their construction of marketing communications, Minchfield College sport marketers should strive to convey a consistent cultural message that highlights the cultural elements of Blackness and celebrate the implications and impact it has on its consumers. Based on the findings of this study, such messages can be used to assist with: (a) creating and rebuilding relationships with students, alumni, and the Black community who may not be affiliated with an HBCU, (b) motivating Africentric consumption desires, and thus, (c) increasing attendance and other consumption related behaviors — all of which would contribute to the financial viability of this HBCU sport venture.

Previous research (Armstrong, 2001, 2008, 2013; Jackson et al., 2001) has emphasized the need for strategic marketing of HBCU sports. In fact, Armstrong (2001) stated, "there is a need for sport marketing academicians and practitioners to increase their overall awareness of the social/cultural and implications of marketing HBCU sports and attracting Black consumers"

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(p.50). Nevertheless, while these suggestions are obviously important, research has failed to adequately: (a) examine the role of culture and how it influences Black consumers' consumption of HBCU sports, and (b) offer specific marketing strategies that are affordable and effective to assist with creating brand awareness and building brand loyalty for HBCU athletic programs. The findings from this study address the weaknesses in prior research, and offer a theory-driven and culturally-relevant framework to inform and maximize marketing of Minchfield College athletics, yielding insight for marketing HBCU sports in general.

COBIS: Marketing Implications

As it relates to marketing, ethnography can be used when "little is known about a targeted market or when fresh insights are desired about a segment of consumer-related behavior" (Mariampolski, 2006, p. 3). Therefore, given the failure of previous sport marketing research on HBCU sports to delve into the specificity of culture, this ethnographic study provided such information as codified in the Culture of Blackness in Sport (COBIS) model. The premise of the COBIS is that Blackness is a potent factor because it influenced the consumers' sport consumption experience, and the HBCU sport consumption experience was reliant on the creation and celebration of Blackness. However, the COBIS also addresses consumers' nuanced balancing of cultural affinity to Blackness and psychological attachment to sports.

There are a number of specific practical implications of these findings for marketing Minchfield College and perhaps HBCUs with a sport consumption profile similar to Minchfield College as conveyed in the COBIS. First, the results offered some insight relative to the consumers' Africentric cultural taste preference for Africentric food, Africentric music, and Africentric vendors. These findings suggest the need for Minchfield College athletic marketers

to: (a) engage in more sponsorships/partnerships with vendors of Africentric goods, which would give vendors an opportunity to sell their products and also contribute to the finances of the event, and (b) increase their offering of Africentric food throughout each concession area, since consumers were more inclined to purchase Africentric food as opposed to the 'traditional' sport concessions. The second unique contribution from this study was that it demonstrated that Blackness celebrated in the cultural habitus provided a unique event ambience that contributed to the distinctiveness of the HBCU sport consumption experience as a safe space. Another practical implication of this finding is for Minchfield College to provide more family centered activities surrounding the game (this could be pre-game, during the game, and post-game).

Additionally, the findings suggested that marketing communication for Minchfield College athletic programs should highlight expressions of Blackness, which includes the source (who they use to deliver the message) featuring representations of Blackness, and a message content that is culturally relevant to the Black community (Armstrong, 2000). Given HBCUs' financial challenges, social media is a viable way of communicating such messages. Social media advertisements can: (a) highlight the positive distinctive attributes and quality of HBCUs, and (b) illustrate a 'slice of life' imagery of Minchfield College and HBCU sports in general, allowing consumers to see themselves partaking in the experience. Lastly, the expressions of Blackness that the consumers relished were all related to relationships. Therefore, Minchfield College should implement relationship marketing to celebrate the cultural kinship that HBCUs bolster.

Overall, marketing the culture of Blackness (as depicted in the COBIS) must involve marketing strategies that appeal to: (a) the attributes of Blackness that define the Minchfield College sport event, (b) Black consumers' Africentric cultural taste preferences, and (c) other

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symbolic and material representations of Blackness (in the HBCU habitus or in association with HBCUs/HBCU sports). Minchfield College sport marketers must also be mindful of the situations in which the culture of HBCU sport events may or may not buffer the results of the team's performance. Since Minchfield College sport marketers cannot control their sport teams' performance (winning and losing), it becomes even more important that they strategically incorporate and elevate cultural elements of Blackness into the various facets of the Minchfield College sport consumption experience.

Limitations

The study contributes to the dearth of research that has examined the HBCU sport consumption experience (Armstrong 2001; 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2013a, 2013b; Burwell, 1993; Rodgers, 2015) and serves as the only research that has offered a holistic examination of: (a) what culture is in the context of HBCU sports, (b) how culture is produced, performed, and/or experienced during HBCU sport consumption, and (c) why culture matters and is meaningful to the HBCU sport consumers. Nonetheless, there were limitations that should be acknowledged.

Although the short window afforded the opportunity to spend the necessary amount of time to fully experience the culture of the HBCU sport consumption setting, it would have been more ideal to visit the site several times (such as at the beginning and end of the season). It would also have been preferred to visit at least two different HBCU sites for comparison. However, time and resources constraints would not permit more extensive site immersions. Therefore, the transferability of these findings is limited. With the focus being on just one research site, the findings from this study do not offer an all-inclusive explanation of what culture is, how it is manifested, and what makes it meaningful to all HBCU sport consumption experience in the United States. Nevertheless, this research serves as the foundation from a

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qualitative perspective to understand the role of culture in the context of the HBCU sport consumption experience that was explored, and it provided illustrations and explanations of the salience of culture to this particular HBCU sport consumption setting. Despite the limitations of this study, it can inform future studies examining the HBCU sport consumption experience.

Recommendations for Future Study

Future researchers examining this phenomena should seek to be immersed in the research site for an extensive period of time (several weeks) and/or during different phases of the football season (early season, mid-season, end-of season). Future research could also examine other sports, notably those that are generally popular to individuals of African descent (such as basketball and track and field). In doing so, the researcher will be able to have a larger inventory of data. Future studies should also conduct a comparative analyses on HBCUs with high-level attendance rate, mid-level attendance rate, and low-level attendance rate base on the NCAA attendance report, to further examine the culture of sport consumption at these institutions. Furthermore, future research should examine HBCUs that are located in the Northeast and Midwest regions in the United States. It is also recommended that future research include athletic directors and marketing directors in the sample of participants to offer additional insight on the marketing challenges, strategies, and practices employed to attract and sustain HBCU sport consumers. In addition, future research should use the COBIS as a theoretical foundation at other HBCU sites to determine if it adequately captures the culture of HBCU sport consumption. Future research should also seek to implement marketing practices as suggested by the COBIS at an HBCU sport event to determine if the model is effective in marketing HBCU sports.

Regarding research implications, future studies examining the culture of HBCU sports should examine this phenomenon from an ethnographic perspective. This method offers a critical

approach that challenges and enables researchers to examine culture and the consumption of sports from different epistemological and methodological stances, thereby enriching our understanding of the HBCU sport consumption culture and consumption behaviors of Black consumers. Furthermore, ethnography can offer rich, detailed descriptions of the meaning of culture, which can also yield new insights, leading to the creation of novel research and creative marketing interventions for HBCU sports. Lastly, ethnography would also contribute to giving voices to members of the HBCU community, which can empower them as co-creators of their sport consumption culture and offer additional insight from this unique niche market of sport enthusiasts to inform theory and practice.

Conclusions

As mentioned previously, this study built on previous literature relating to the HBCU sport consumption experience by examining in greater detail the role of culture. Previous scholars have noted the need for qualitative research in the field of sport management (Cooper, Grenier, & Macaulay, 2017) to further explore the cultural dynamics and motivation for HBCU sport consumption (Armstrong 2002a, 2002b, 2008). This study sought to address the need for qualitative research in a field that is dominated by quantitative research pertaining to the HBCU sport consumption experience. Through an ethnographic lens, this study offered vital information relative to understanding the culture of Blackness exhibited at HBCU sports. The findings reinforced the notion that HBCU sport events offer Back consumers a culturally empowering experience (Armstrong, 2002a; 2013a). However, unlike previous (quantitative) research, this (qualitative) study was significant has it offered cultural specificity to the empowering essence of HBCU sport consumption, and gave voice and vitality to the relationship Black consumers have with the culture of HBCU sports. Finally, this study sought to add to the field of sport

management and sport marketing by contributing to and filling the gap on research and literature examining the culture of HBCU sport consumption experience. It offered a theory-driven culturally infused model by which to: (a) contextualize the dynamics of the HBCU sport consumption experience, and (b) inform and improve the marketing of HBCU athletic programs. These composite factors comprise the significance of the contributions of this study.

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Appendices

Table 8
A List of all HBCUs

Institution	State	Type of institution
Alabama A&M University	AL	4-year Public institution
Alabama State University	AL	4-year Public institution
Bishop State Community College	AL	2-year Public institution
Gadsden State Community College	AL	2-year Public institution
H. Council Trenholm State Technical College	AL	2-year Public institution
J. F. Drake State Community and Technical College	AL	2-year Public institution
Lawson State Community College, Birmingham Campus	AL	2-year Public institution
Miles College	AL	4-year Private institution
Oakwood University	AL	4-year Private institution
Selma University	AL	4-year Private institution
Shelton State Community College	AL	2-year Public institution
Stillman College	AL	4-year Private institution
Talladega College	AL	4-year Private institution
Tuskegee University	AL	4-year Private institution
Arkansas Baptist College	AR	4-year Private institution

Philander Smith College	AR	4-year Private institution
Shorter College	AR	2-year Private institution
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	AR	4-year Public institution
Delaware State University	DE	4-year Public institution
Howard University	DC	4-year Private institution
University of the District of Columbia	DC	4-year Public institution
Bethune-Cookman University	FL	4-year Private institution
Edward Waters College	FL	4-year Private institution
Florida A&M University	FL	4-year Public institution
Florida Memorial University	FL	4-year Private institution
Albany State University	GA	4-year Public institution
Clark Atlanta University	GA	4-year Private institution
Fort Valley State University	GA	4-year Public institution
Interdenominational Theological Center	GA	4-year Private institution
Morehouse College	GA	4-year Private institution
Morehouse School of Medicine	GA	4-year Private institution
Paine College	GA	4-year Private institution
Savannah State University	GA	4-year Public institution
Spelman College	GA	4-year Private institution
Kentucky State University	KY	4-year Public institution
Simmons College of Kentucky	KY	4-year Private institution
Dillard University	LA	4-year Private institution
Grambling State University	LA	4-year Public institution

Southern University and A&M College	LA	4-year Public institution
Southern University at New Orleans	LA	4-year Public institution
Southern University at Shreveport	LA	2-year Public institution
Xavier University of Louisiana	LA	4-year Private institution
Bowie State University	MD	4-year Public institution
Coppin State University	MD	4-year Public institution
Morgan State University	MD	4-year Public institution
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore	MD	4-year Public institution
Alcorn State University	MS	4-year Public institution
Coahoma Community College	MS	2-year Public institution
Hinds Community College, Utica Campus	MS	2-year Public institution
Jackson State University	MS	4-year Public institution
Mississippi Valley State University	MS	4-year Public institution
Rust College	MS	4-year Private institution
Tougaloo College	MS	4-year Private institution
Harris-Stowe State University	MO	4-year Public institution
Lincoln University	MO	4-year Public institution
Bennett College	NC	4-year Private institution
Elizabeth City State University	NC	4-year Public institution
Fayetteville State University	NC	4-year Public institution
Johnson C. Smith University	NC	4-year Private institution
Livingstone College	NC	4-year Private institution
North Carolina A&T State University	NC	4-year Public institution

North Carolina Central University	NC	4-year Public institution
Saint Augustine's College	NC	4-year Private institution
Shaw University	NC	4-year Private institution
Winston-Salem State University	NC	4-year Public institution
Central State University	OH	4-year Public institution
Wilberforce University	OH	4-year Private institution
Langston University	OK	4-year Public institution
Cheyney University of Pennsylvania	PA	4-year Public institution
Lincoln University	PA	4-year Public institution
Allen University	SC	4-year Private institution
Benedict College	SC	4-year Private institution
Claflin University	SC	4-year Private institution
Clinton College	SC	4-year Private institution
Denmark Technical College	SC	2-year Public institution
Morris College	SC	4-year Private institution
South Carolina State University	SC	4-year Public institution
Voorhees College	SC	4-year Private institution
American Baptist College	TN	4-year Private institution
Fisk University	TN	4-year Private institution
Lane College	TN	4-year Private institution
Le Moyne-Owen College	TN	4-year Private institution
Meharry Medical College	TN	4-year Private institution
Tennessee State University	TN	4-year Public institution

Huston-Tillotson University	TX	4-year Private institution
Jarvis Christian College	TX	4-year Private institution
Paul Quinn College	TX	4-year Private institution
Prairie View A&M University	TX	4-year Public institution
Saint Philip's College	TX	2-year Public institution
Southwestern Christian College	TX	4-year Private institution
Texas College	TX	4-year Private institution
Texas Southern University	TX	4-year Public institution
Wiley College	TX	4-year Private institution
Hampton University	VA	4-year Private institution
Norfolk State University	VA	4-year Public institution
Virginia State University	VA	4-year Public institution
Virginia Union University	VA	4-year Private institution
Virginia University of Lynchburg	VA	4-year Private institution
Bluefield State College	WV	4-year Public institution
West Virginia State University.	WV	4-year Public institution
University of the Virgin Islands	VI	4-year Public institution

Note. List

Appendix B

Table 9
Definition of Terms

TERMS	DEFINITIONS
Africentric Ambience	The performance of race—'Black' entertainment and cultural event packing (merchandising, concessions, music etc.).
Africentric Food	African centered food.
Africentric Music	African centered music.
Africentric Vendors	Vendors selling African centered merchandises.
Black/African American	A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups in Africa, and who identifies as Black or African American.
Blackness	Various forms of signs, which may include Black people or other symbolic and material artifacts of Black culture (e.g. style, fashion, music, usage of body, etc.) It is also the myriad ways of making a claim on Black cultural identity (Crockett, 2008).

Consumer/Spectator	A person who purchases products and services for personal use. A person who consumes sports in any format (watching on television, purchasing tickets to the game and merchandise).
Consumption	A social, cultural and economic process of choosing goods and services. It is through this process where individuals consume not only to survive, but to entertain and amuse themselves and as a way of sharing time, and experience with others (Zukin & Maguire, 2004).
Cultural Charisma	Symbolic cultural essence that fosters a compelling emotional and transcendent experience repeatedly displayed by the extremes of loyalty among sport consumers (Armstrong, 2013b).
Culture	Shared beliefs, values, and practices among a group of people. It is an entire way of life. A collection of patterns and behaviors.
Central Intercollegiate Athletics Association (CIAA)	An NCAA Division II athletic organization of historically Black institutions based on mid-eastern and southeastern U.S. regional geography, founded in 1912. The conference currently has 12 current member institutions.
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs):	Institutions of higher learning that were established prior to 1964, which provides

	educational opportunities for Black Americans (The Education Act of 1965).
Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs)	Institutions of higher education in the United States whose student population is at least 50% White.
National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)	National governing body for collegiate-level athletics comprised of nearly 1,200 institutions of higher education, created to preserve competitive balance, academic integrity, and amateurism for its institutions and student athletes.
NCAA Division I	NCAA member institutions that sponsor at least 14 sports (at least seven for men and seven for women, or six for men and eight for women), compete in a minimum number of contests against Division I opponents (the number varies by sport), and offer a minimum amount of financial aid but do not exceed established maximums. All Division I institutions offers athletic scholarships.
Sociocultural	Factors, customs, lifestyles, and values that characterize a society or group.
Sport Consumption	The way individuals consume sport as spectators or participants.