

Sneakerheads – Understanding the Sneaker Industry

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Abstract

Sneaker culture is no longer a ‘geek chic’ rather sneakerheads appropriately influence the market with rare and customary sneaker releases and brands such as Jordan. Therefore, my research focuses on the history of the sneaker focusing on the emergence of street wear and athletic shoes. It will focus on Michael Jordan and the Jordan Brand’s contribution to the growth and development of the sneaker, turning it from a mere necessity for the feet into a fashion accessory. Pivotal to my study is the identification of what drives people within the context of sneaker collecting. It breaks down the psyche of the sneakerhead, ranging from luxury to gaining personal identity and one’s ownness. Appreciating the multifaceted relations between the social, cultural, and the personal kinds of capital, we then comprehend how sneakers are not only mere objects of consumption but also representations of people’s social roles, group affiliations, and self-images.

Therefore, my study explores the various facets that revolves around sneaker culture and their impact on the buying behavior and market trends. We further explain how sneaker collection goes beyond simple consumption but relates to purchase choices, consumer allegiance, even in the realm of investment. Furthermore, we discuss how sneakers became not only a billion-dollar business in the resale market sector but also defied the cultural engagement with brands and key cultural figures on the fashion corporations’ direction and the retail business. In this paper, we use examples and cases to give an example of sneaker culture’s impact on different layers of the population and different countries. Thus, the conclusions are made regarding the role of sneaker culture in modern culture and the perspectives for further evolution. The findings of my study provide a detailed analysis of sneaker culture, features the purpose of such phenomenon and its influence on the society. By analyzing this cultural phenomenon, I promote the clarification of the primary aspects of consumers’ lives and the process of identity construction today.



Keywords: Sneakerhead, Consumer Behaviour, Jordans and Nike

1. Understanding Sneaker Culture

Sneaker culture began in the middle of the '70s and '80s and was associated with hip-hop and basketball scenes. Many global brands such as Nike, Adidas, and Puma always used enshrinement from prominent personalities in sports like Michael Jordan together with other cultural figures, they produced trendy and rare, limited-edition products which foster popular culture.

As sneaker culture gained momentum, it began to transcend the realm of sports, becoming increasingly commercialized and mainstream. This shift was driven by several key factors, including celebrity and athlete endorsements, the influence of hip-hop and street culture, the growth of the sneaker resale market, and the emergence of online platforms and dedicated sneaker conventions. Restriction of the release of its designs to specific occasions that were considered 'drops' instilled the temptation for people to spend hours sleeping outside for a pair of shoes or engaging in raffles online.



Sneaker culture is defined as the specific relation to design, innovation, and history of footwear. Sneaker collectors, or 'sneakerheads', are well-informed about sneaker history and constantly maintain order in their collections. Indeed, secondary markets have risen rapidly, especially for limited edition sneakers, with resale rates hundreds of times more expensive than the primary market. Finally, sneaker culture is a representation of memories, desire, and aesthetics, thereby becoming one of the most popular and significant subcultures of today's world.

1.1 Origins and Evolution of Sneaker Culture

Sneaker culture became global by the end of the 1990s. Originally popular among urban black youth and white skateboarders, by the 21st century it had gained a sizable Asian following. Sneakers have had cult followings in Japan since the 1990s, where many American fashion brands remain highly covetable. Most sneakerheads credit the advent of their subculture to the rise of athlete-endorsed shoes in the late '70s and early '80s. Converse's Chuck Taylor All-Stars had dominated the basketball courts for decades and brands like Puma and Adidas started to get in on the action. Sneakers have come a long way from when they were first invented in 1860s England for the upper-class playing croquet and tennis. Long worn for functions rather than fashion, today sneakers are an entire culture a form of self-expression and high art found in museum exhibits and designer auction houses where a single pair can fetch millions of dollars.



As Ben Affleck's star-studded film *Air* depicts, the emergence of sneaker culture can be traced to Nike's 1984 collaboration with basketball superstar Michael Jordan on their iconic Air Jordans. Here's the story of sneakers and the sneakerheads who collect them. It began with Converse, the company that introduced the first-ever basketball sneaker in 1917. Fast forward to 1984, and we have Michael Jordan entering the scene with his signature line of sneakers from Nike. The Air Jordan transformed the sneaker industry, and their popularity skyrocketed as Jordan became one of the most iconic basketball players of all time. Nike continued to push the boundaries of sneaker design, creating innovative styles that not only looked great but also boosted athletic performance. Today, sneaker culture is a thriving phenomenon that proudly showcases the intersection of fashion and sports.

1.2 The Rise of Jordan Brand

The Air Jordan is a line of basketball shoes produced by Nike. Related apparel and accessories are marketed under the Jordan Brand. The first Air Jordan shoe was produced for basketball player Michael Jordan during his time with the Chicago Bulls in 1984 and released to the public in 1985. The shoes were designed for Nike by Peter Moore, Tinker Hatfield, and Bruce Kilgore. On October 26, 1984 Michael Jordan signed a five-year, US\$2.5 million deal with Nike, three times more than any other deal in the National Basketball Association at the time. Nike released the Air Jordan sneaker line in April 1985 with the goal of making \$3 million in the first three years. As Michael Jordan entered his rookie year, he was approached to sign a shoe deal with Adidas, Converse, and Nike. In their meeting with Jordan, Nike centered its presentation around a highlight video of Jordan's various slam dunks, scored to "Jump (For My Love)" by the Pointer Sisters. Nike showcased the first design of the shoe, but Jordan criticized its colorway. While other companies saw Jordan as a figure for promoting preexisting shoe lines, Nike took Jordan's criticism into account to make him "a stand-alone star and give him a signature shoe line. On September 9, 1997, Michael Jordan and Nike introduced Jordan Brand. The brand has built a sustainable business model by releasing Air Jordan shoes and apparel and collaborating with popular artists. In 2022 alone, Jordan Brand brought in \$5.1 billion to Nike. Of that, a reported \$150-256 million went directly to Michael Jordan under his deal with Nike.



2. The Social Awareness about the term “Sneakerheads”

2.1 Political, Economic, and Social Factors

Government trade policies, which include tariffs on imported goods, can have an impact on the cost of sneakers. Governments may provide support or incentives to domestic manufacturers, such as subsidies, tax breakers, or grants, which can lower

production costs and enhance competitiveness. For instance, tariffs on China imports have resulted to pricing changes as well as disruptions in the supply chain for many brands of sneakers. Manufacturing practices and costs may be influenced by such

factors as health and safety standards or labor laws. In this market shoes copies are very common making it important to have strong intellectual property rights that would safeguard against counterfeit products. Regions where sneakers are produced should remain stable so as not to interfere with production and supply chains. The political stability of manufacturing countries affects supply chain reliability. Political unrest or instability can disrupt production and logistics, leading to delays and increased costs.



Most of the time, if there is more money available for spending which can be directed towards sneakers, the consumer will part with it. During economic recessions however, people may decide to cut back on such outlays. The confidence of consumers in these markets can be enhanced by a strong economy leading to increased sneaker buying. Conversely, when an economy is undergoing a recession less money is spent by consumers resulting in low sales. Economic conditions that affect disposable income, such as unemployment rates and wage levels, have a direct impact on non-essential goods expenditures of consumers including sneakers. Production costs can be increased by inflation while volatile currency exchange rates can influence earnings derived from international sales. High inflation rates increase prices of raw materials, production costs and logistics making retail prices for sneakers go up too. This may lead to shifts in consumer demand patterns as well as purchasing behavior. Innovation and pricing strategies may be influenced by a situation where there are numerous brands and competition in the industry. General economic growth or downturns affect consumer confidence and spending on luxury and lifestyle products including high-end sneakers.

Sneaker brands are frequently endorsed by athletes, musicians, and social media influencers who have great influence on the choices made by consumers and push sales up. Sales of sneakers are greatly affected by fashion trends, endorsements from celebrities and cultural developments such as athleisure becoming popular culture. Increasing emphasis on health has resulted in higher demand for athletic shoes among consumers. Similarly, there is an increasing interest in sustainable products produced ethically that affects consumer decisions. Changes in fashion and streetwear trends impact sneaker designs as well as their popularity, expanding their market beyond athletes and sports enthusiasts who traditionally patronized them, thereby integrating sneakers into mainstream fashion. Market demand may shift due to age structure, sex composition, or spatial distribution patterns like urbanization. The sneaker industry is shaped by changes in consumer values such as growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical production which influences brand strategies alongside product offerings. In this regard, for instance, young generations might exhibit a preference towards trendy, tightly branded sneakers. Critical roles are played by social media platforms and influencers in shaping the mindset of customers and stimulating their demand for

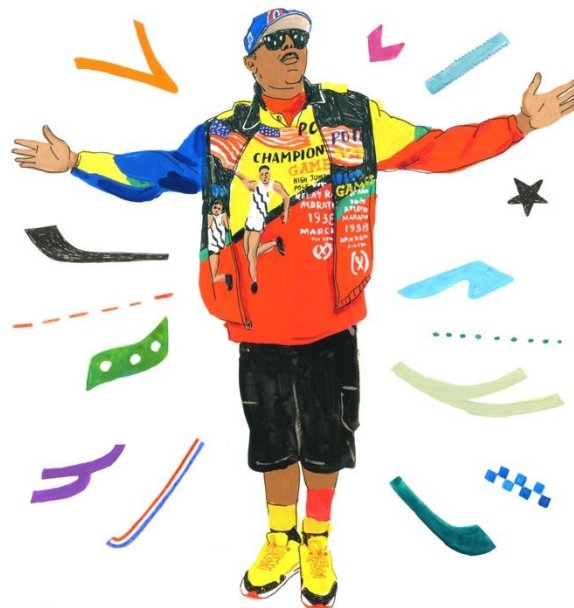
particular brands and models. The sneaker industry’s dynamics are a combination of such factors, which determine everything including production, distribution, marketing, and sales.

2.2 Profile of a Sneakerhead

A Sneakerhead’s identity is featured by his/her love to sneakers as more than only a kind of shoes, but also as the signs of world view. They spend a lot of time, tracking the new products from the brands that they only wait for Nike, Adidas, Jordan etc. Every sneaker tells a story; from the latest collaborations, quick strike re-releases, or the game-changers in the annals of sneaker history.

For Sneakerheads, their shoes are their treasures, and this is true particularly to realistic replicas which are usually well-selected as well as exhibited in different artistic manners like a personal museum. This practice is not rare at all, in fact, some sneaker heads complain of having between 200-300 pairs each one symbolizing a phase of their lifestyle. In the closed boxes and plastic covers, there are themes of classic Air Jordans to today’s Yeezus which are historic stories of advancement in design or reflection of the affirmation of sports culture.

Besides collecting Sneakerheads are associated to a community which is fast growing. They hook up on social media platforms, forums and via sneaker conventions for sharing experiences and narrations, dealing boutiques, and discussing the pros and cons of the latest releases. Sneaker culture creates the concept of fellowship and connections, still binding people who like sneakers and are ready to share their attitude.



“I’M A SNEAKERHEAD.
I collect sneakers. I trade
with other sneakerheads.”

Fashion in general is a significant element that is present in the life of the Sneakerhead. Given the diverse characteristics embraced by today’s generation, it would only be fitting to say, sneakers are not only worn, but they are styled. Each pair matches outfits correspondingly and playing with the topics of street-sportswear or chic everyday wear according to the occasion. Sneakerheads paint themselves as people who can wear even the hardest to find sneaker to the latest parties and get noticed.

3. Motivations Behind Sneaker Collecting

Sneaker collecting, once a niche interest, has evolved into a global phenomenon, blending elements of fashion, sports, culture, and commerce. The motivations behind sneaker collecting are diverse and multi-faceted, driven by a variety of root causes that appeal to different demographics. Understanding these root causes sheds light on why sneaker culture has become so pervasive and enduring. The roots of sneaker collecting can be traced back to the historical and cultural significance of certain sneakers.

Many iconic sneakers have stories that resonate with collectors, growing up, the sneaker game was a Black thang.



Talking about 1985–1986 here. The average person may have rocked any old type of shoe. It was Hip-Hop that got the craze of Jordans, other sneakers, were of no importance. Soon shoe endorsements started becoming a part of the conversation. Yes, it had existed before, the Pumas that were known as Clyde's. But that was before we were functioning, cognizant human beings.

3.1 The Root Causes

A. Celebrity Endorser and Role-models

Sneaker collecting is highly dependent on celebrity endorsements. Just when athletes or singers or movie stars put on sneakers, the sneakers become desirable. Kanye West's case with Adidas for the Yeezy line is a perfect illustration. It may also help to create the demand when celebrities want them, then these sneakers become the sort after products on the market for collectors. It is not limited to the areas of sportswear; artists like Travis Scott and Pharrell William have their own sneaker lines faithfully followed by fans and trendsetters.

B. Annex, Special Cuts, and exclusivity

Besides, the fact that people would buy sneakers with the specific release date in mind is also closely connected with limited edition. To enhance consumers' craze for shoes, sneaker brands put into the market a small number of shoes of specific designs. This scarcity is the reason people want to own what they know only a few people have; collectors are everywhere. This often results in 'Statement Releases' where brands collaborate to drop sneakers in small numbers, and thus results to form lines at the stores or online

craziness. This is because the unique status of the shoe is part of their value for collection purposes hence makes the shoes more attractive to collectors.

C. Fashion and Self-Expression

A shoe has evolved from being used in sports or physical games to be seen as a fashion accessory and an individual's status. Sneakers are often referred to as part of the collector's identity since people find identity in those shoes. Sneakers offer the society and every person in it a chance to be different and create a personal statement. Thus, sneakers often become an essential accessory that is no less organic to the style of a particular person. The need to remain relevant by wearing the latest fashion all the time makes people search for the new and the rare sneaker drops.



D. Investment and Resale Value

This has also made the element of investment value a strong motivation in the collection of sneakers. Sneakers, especially the limited-edition ones and those created in a collaboration with other brands, can become more valuable over time. Today, platforms for the resale of sneakers are skyrocketing such as StockX and GOAT that provide the marketplace for the new and rare sneaker. People who collect items, many a times, approach collection with a business-like perspective; with the idea that their collection is an investment, that may yield high profits. This financial aspect layers up the strategic collecting, where people are picking sneakers that are likely to appreciate in the market.



E. Social Relations

The social aspects regarding sneaker collection, especially the creation of a sense of belonging or to social circles is also very influential. Sneaker culture involves the social and virtual meeting points as various discussion threads, profiles on social media, and sneaker-related events. These platforms enable collectors to express themselves, talk more about the sneakers to look forward to or trade sneakers. The close-friendly and like-minded part make collector feel like they belong to a certain group of people with similar passion and hobbies. Sneaker conventions and meet-ups additionally fortify these connections as they provide a chance to meet similar people.



4. The Role of Media and Technologies in Sneaker Culture

Sneaker industry has come a long way from becoming a mere functional footwear to now becoming a style statement that are fetching record-breaking prices at auctions. The cultural significance of rare and limited-edition sneakers has transcended their status as fashion items, elevating them to the realm of art and collectibles. These sneakers are now seen as coveted treasures that transcend the boundaries of fashion, becoming cultural phenomena and collectors' items. The growing appreciation for sneakers as a form of art and collectible that has been driven by several factors that includes the influence of celebrities, fashion houses, and the broader cultural significance of sneaker culture. Also, Luxury fashion houses, musicians and contemporary artists have all collaborated with sneaker brands. The rise of sneakers is collectible art that has been further solidified by the record-breaking prices achieved at auctions. Moreover, in 2021, Sotheby's made a history with its first-ever sneaker auction, where a pair of Nike 'Moon Shoes' were sold for a staggering 437,500 dollars.



This groundbreaking sale did not only set a new record for sneakers at auction, but it also firmly established sneakers as a legitimate collectible asset class. As the cultural significance and value of rare and limited-edition sneakers continue to grow, sneakers have transcended their original purpose and have it have become an art form. The rise of sneakers as collectible art is a testament to the enduring influence of sneaker culture and its ability to shape popular culture, fashion, and even the art world itself. Also, the impact of sneakers on popular culture can be traced back to the late 1970s, when the basketball and hip-hop subcultures contributed to their popularity. The release of Air-Jordan 1 in 1984 further revolutionized the sportswear industry and created a new market of sneakerheads.

4.1 Social Media Influence

Social media has had a significant impact on sneaker culture. Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube acts as a platform for sneakerheads and brands to expose their collections, reviews, and releases to the global market. Sneaker brands use social media to create hype around new products. Often limited edition drops and collaborations are hinted at through social media which increases demand and encourages consumers to buy before they miss out. Sneakers can be connected through social media where they share data or hold discussions on them with hashtags and dedicated sneaker pages creating community.

The growth of the sneaker resale market has been fueled by social media, such as Instagram and Twitter, where resellers advertise rare or limited-edition sneakers, which are often priced much higher than the original ones. There are many celebrity endorsements among influencers that shape the perception of sneakers in popular culture. Social media has transformed the sneaker industry by enabling the rise of sneakerhead communities and influencers who share their knowledge, collections, and passion for sneakers with wider audiences.

This has allowed sneakerheads to become part of the industry conversation and has contributed to the growing visibility of sneakers in popular culture. High profile personalities endorsing certain sneakers or wearing them can cause increased demand leading to their popularity growth as well as sales. One interesting thing about social media is that we can get instant information about release dates of sneakers, reviews on these sneakers or events concerning them, therefore, shoppers have no reason for being in dark regarding what they wish to purchase.

The prominence of sneakers in popular media and culture is a testament to their enduring influence and their ability to shape fashion, lifestyle, and self-expression. As sneakers continue to be featured in various forms of media and are embraced by celebrities, influencers, and fashion houses their status as a cultural icon is only to set to grow, solidifying their place in the zeitgeist of our times.

4.2 Sneaker Design and Manufacturing Technology



Technology has, in a big way, changed how sneakers are designed and made so as to increase creativity, efficiency and sustainability. Programmes such as CAD (Computer-Aided Design) and 3D modeling software help designers in making highly detailed and intricate shoe designs that are perfect. Additionally, they enable quick prototyping and iterative design processes. Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality technologies enable designers to get into virtual environment where they can visualize and manipulate their sneaker designs, this is a more immersive experience than before. Besides, with the help of Augmented Reality there is an opportunity to virtually try the shoes on so that one can see its real look.



Moreover, 3D printing enables users to create complex custom designs that would be hard or impossible to achieve via conventional manufacturing methods. By using 3D printing technology, we can get faster production cycle. Automated machines and robotic arms have increased efficiency and precision in the production of sneakers. Such technological developments are making it possible to minimize human error, increase rate of production alongside running them nonstop. Technology today supports more customization alternatives than ever before.

5. Sneaker Culture and Identity

There is a rich and dynamic sneaker culture where identity, gender and cultural expressions met, forming a many-faceted landscape that mirrors wider social trends and individual self-expression. Sneakers as personal style statement, preference or association to a particular lifestyle brand. The choice of sneakers can indicate participation in specific subcultures or communities like hip-hop, skateboarding or basketball. In many cases, limited edition sneakers or collaboration often become status symbols for some people who wear them. Through possessing rare or high-end sneakers we can make others feel inferior while with our peers. Air Jordans are more than just basketball shoes; they represent Michael Jordan's legacy and have had an impact on the development of hip-hop music as well as street fashion culture.

The sneaker sector, which has been typically male-oriented is changing as women increasingly become influential designers, influencers and collectors. Stereotypes are being debunked by ladies who enjoy shoes, and they are advocating for inclusion in sneaker culture. More brands now offer unisex designs and extended sizes catering to all sexes. This way there is a wide range of sneakers in the culture thus enabling people to find shoes that match them in terms of style, size among other factors. Collaborations with female athletes, artists and designers have increased bringing out the contributions of women to sneaker culture. This input often brings new ideas and designs to the market.



Ethnicity Pride can be used as a way of showing pride for one's ethnic group or heritage while wearing it like what traditional patterns in design colors or symbols may stand for. Sneakers create a sense of community with people around the world who shares similar cultural backgrounds or interests. What this shared affinity does is bring a sense of community and even tribe, within the broader contexts in nature. Grounded in Affection for Sneakers Is a Cultural Outsider, due to the worldwide audience of this culture, it has led to sneakerheads all around the globe bonding and coming up with new fashion trends. With the powerful influence of Asian, African and Latin American cultures on sneaker designs and trends. Sneaker Arts and Creativity Techniques of sneaker artists and enthusiasts vary a lot to provide them with the uniqueness suitable to their creative mind. Sneakers can be a great way to make some political or social opinions known. Designers and wearers transform them into a social justice, equity platform for speakers to be heard through their footwear. Yeezy sneakers represent one of the key elements in shaping the youth culture today and reveal much about the younger generations value. Sneaker design, and its marketing is one of the few fashion trends in which a young person may express themselves through the outfit they wear. In conclusion, sneaker culture is a complicated mixture of personal and group identities, gender relations, cultural representations-so many human things. It mirrors, and sometimes precedes in a chicken-and-egg-way, mainstream societal developments to weave into an intricate fabric or identity. From personal style to community building, and even social activism: sneakers are used in myriad of forms as one's voice for identity and culture.



6. Environmental And Ethical Considerations

Sneaker culture as a thriving and highly influential sub-culture takes many contexts to the idea of sustainability lore- both environmental concern, legality and ethics about production processes. Material sourcing like leather is used in wide number of sneakers, leather is connected to major environmental harms such as deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions throughout its production stages from mainly water consumption. Petrochemicals are too often the base ingredients which means more pollution and non-biodegradability issues. Manufacturing process requires a lot of energy to produce sneakers. Pollution and health hazards for workers can result from the use of chemicals in manufacturing. Most sneakers are made with materials that take decades, and sometimes centuries to decompose in a landfill. Sneaker culture is naturally trend-driven, and this promotes over-consumption-with many sneakers being purchased for one-off wears. Brands like Nike and Adidas have also introduced programs to recycle old sneakers into new products or other materials.



The increasing use of sustainable materials like recycled plastics, organic cotton and plant-based alternatives. A multitude of sneakers are assembled in manufacturing facilities characterized by substandard working conditions, inadequate remunerations, and occasionally, child labor exploitation. Securing fair compensation and ensuring safe working environments persist as significant issues of concern. The elevated costs and restricted availability of select sneakers may exacerbate economic inequality, fostering a sense of exclusivity. The culture associated with the collection of sneakers can potentially drive unsustainable consumer conduct, prioritizing status and ownership over actual necessity. Corporate Transparency is increasingly expected that brands should be accountable for their supply chain methodologies, environmental repercussions, and ethical obligations. Certain brands participate in social and environmental initiatives, yielding beneficial results for communities and contributing to global sustainability endeavors.



6.1 Ethical Issues In Sneaker Manufacturing

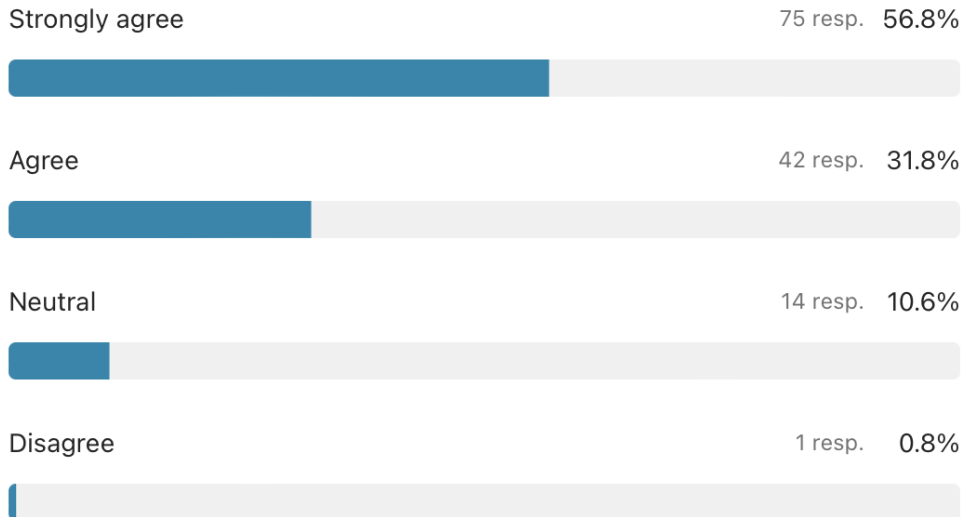
Ethical issues in sneaker manufacturing can be described as the set of problems that can be associated with labor conditions, environmental concerns, and company conduct. Most sneaker companies have been accused of outsourcing their production in developing nations where the workers are subjected to poor working conditions, low pay and working long hours.

Cases of child labor have been observed in some of the sneaker manufacturing value chains. Employees have hardly any rights at work and these are basic human rights such as freedom of forming a union, freedom from risky working environments, and adequate wages. The making of sneakers also entails chemicals and certain processes that are hazardous to the quality of air, water, and soil in the surrounding environment. Shoe production processing also leads to a lot of waste; it ranges from the leftover raw material to the final product that is not sold. The industry needs many natural resources, which include water, rubber, and synthetic materials that are extracted from fossil fuels. Leather material applied to sneakers causes discussion regarding animal cruelty and the harm of leather tanning for the environment. The increased talk lately is that synthetic fibers might not be as kind to the environment, seeing that they do not degrade on the regular. Most organizations are not transparent when it comes to their supply chain, therefore the issue of having a check on correct ethical practices becomes hard. While some brands want to use a third-party audit to check the conditions in the factories they collaborate with, these audits can be very rare and not very extensive at that. Again, some firms may come up with a perception that they are more environmentally conscious than they are or that they have a better ethical standard than what is the case.

7. Survey Insights

✓ 17 Are Jordans a Status Symbol for you?

132 out of 161 people answered this question

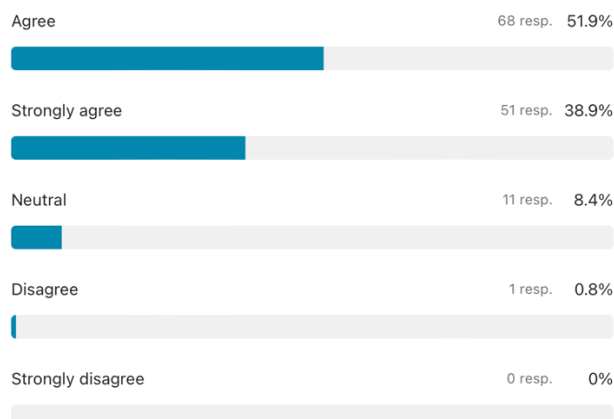


(Figure 1)

The above statistic is from the survey conducted on over 150 sneaker owners. Upon analyzing their answers with **56.8% strongly agreeing**, It is evident that Jordans are indeed a Status Symbol in today's time.

✓ 12 Do you think Jordan's are synonymous to Sneakers?

131 out of 161 people answered this question



(Figure 2)

The above statistic is from the survey conducted on over 150 sneaker owners. Upon analyzing their answers with **51.9% agreeing**, it is evident that Jordans are nowadays more or less synonymous to sneakers.

8. Research Methodologies

Qualitative Methods

a. Interviews: I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants who were aficionados of sneakers, specifically sneakerheads. The employees of the company varied in age, gender, and backgrounds. Through these interviews, I sought to uncover individual anecdotes, reasons for purchasing a pair of Jordan sneakers, and the emotional aspects associated with them. I asked questions about participants' first pair of Jordans, how they collect them, and the cultural and societal factors influencing their purchases.

b. Focus Groups: I arranged two sets of focus group discussions to avoid biases toward positive or negative responses regarding Jordan sneakers. These groups allowed participants to engage actively and express their opinions. This setup gave me an opportunity to observe the group dynamics and their processes for reaching a consensus.

Quantitative Methods

a. Surveys: I developed an online survey to maximize the number of responses. The survey included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather information on participants' demographic profiles, purchasing behavior, perceived brand image of Jordan sneakers, and their perceived value of Jordan sneakers. I conducted the survey and processed the results using statistical methods to determine the relationships between variables.

b. Market Analysis: I analyzed financial data, market research reports, company sales records, and social media activity to establish the economic significance and market trends of Jordan sneakers. This included examining the resale price, the timeline of sneaker releases, and the role of limited editions as drivers of demand.

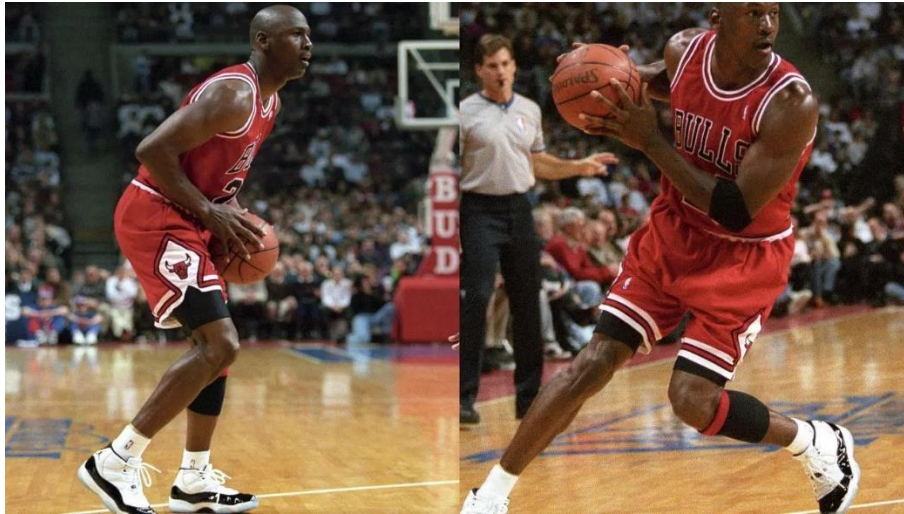
Ethnographic Methods

Participant Observation: I engaged credibly with communities by attending sneaker conventions, store releases, and forums. This approach enabled me to gain an ethnographic view of the subculture, observing rituals, language, and interactions among sneakerheads. I recorded these observations as field notes and/or field recordings.

9. Conclusion

Sneakerheads of all generations' attachment to Jordans can be attributed to it being historically relevant, culturally relevant, the result of remarkable marketing and the creation of a sneaker family.

First, Air Jordans are historically important shoes. The beginning of this change could be attributed to Michael Jordan agreeing to sign with Nike in 1984 sports marketing / sneaker. Given the outstanding performance of Jordan on the basketball court and his personality, the brand became not only associated with the sport of basketball but with the entire sphere of popular culture. Every new Air Jordans release came with expectations of better performance as a sneaker and consummated that with the hope of owning a piece of history. The incorporation of Michael Jordan and his illustrious career is a sign of longevity and heritage to the society hence making it appealing to both the view the prime years of his career live and those who only hear stories about him.



Culture is an important determinant of long-wearing shoe Jordan's. The brand has always been linked to music especially the hip hop and has frequently been used in music videos, songs and artists' outfits. This link to the music industry is the reason Jordans are now seen as having the swag and or status. Moreover, the sneakers were featured in many other movies and series, thus becoming a part of the pop culture. This way of doing this maintains the brand in view and wanted across the various media platforms. Various marketing activities carried out by Nike have been just amazing beyond any doubt. Rare drops, exclusivity, and major designers or celebrities who will endorse the product give the audience a feeling of exclusivity or rarity of the product. Consumers always look forward to new products which create a sort of enthusiasm that drives people towards the products. The sense of community and identity among sneakerheads is another significant factor. Owning a pair of Jordans is often seen as a rite of passage in the sneaker community. It's a symbol of membership in a global tribe that shares a passion for sneakers and street culture. Sneaker conventions, online forums, and social media groups provide platforms for enthusiasts to connect, share stories, and showcase their collections. This community aspect fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty to the brand, encouraging continued engagement and interest.



Thus, the craftsmanship and innovation associated with Jordans contribute to their lasting appeal. Nike consistently integrates cutting-edge technology and high-quality materials into their designs, ensuring that each release offers something new and exciting. This commitment to excellence not only meets the functional needs of athletes but also caters to the aesthetic preferences of fashion-conscious consumers.



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