A CULT CLASSIC: SNEAKER CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Gianni Dejesus
University of Rhode Island

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/theses

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/theses/2309

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Access Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu.
A CULT CLASSIC: SNEAKER CULTURE
AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

BY

GIANNI DEJESUS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

2023
MASTER OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

OF

GIANNI DEJESUS

APPROVED:

Thesis Committee:

Major Professor    Renee Hobbs

Angie Chiang

Lauren Labrecque

Brenton DeBoef

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

2023
ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to examine the idea that social media marketing done by sneaker companies create content that reinforces the feelings of identity and belonging to connect with their audience as an effective marketing strategy. This study was meant to investigate the influence social media has in terms of marketing done by sneaker brands affect consumer engagement behaviors. There were two phases created for the methodology used in the study, including content analysis and deep dive analysis. The findings show that the type of marketing tactics used, design features implemented and the type of post that was used can determine the type of engagement the brand will receive.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and give thanks to my Major Professor, Renee Hobbs who worked with me all year long to produce a well-done thesis. Her guidance allowed me to complete all the stages in terms of writing and conducting research. I also would like to thank my committee members for taking the time to attend my defense and for your amazing comments and suggestions. It is thanks to you that I was able to produce a piece of work to be proud of.

I would also like to give a special thanks to my friends and family who gave me unconditional support. Thank you for understanding the time and dedication I needed to complete this. Your guidance did not go unnoticed, and I appreciate you all for the faith you had in me to complete a master’s degree.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................... ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................... iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS ....................................................................................................... iv

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. v

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................ vi

CHAPTER 1 .............................................................................................................................. 1

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 2 .............................................................................................................................. 6

REVIEW OF LITERATURE .................................................................................................... 6

CHAPTER 3 .............................................................................................................................. 22

METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................................... 22

CHAPTER 4 ................................................................................................................................ 33

FINDINGS ................................................................................................................................ 33

CHAPTER 5 .............................................................................................................................. 58

DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................................... 58

CHAPTER 6 .............................................................................................................................. 71

CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................................... 71

APPENDIX A .......................................................................................................................... 78

APPENDIX B .......................................................................................................................... 79

APPENDIX C .......................................................................................................................... 80
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Content Analysis Table .......................36
Table 2. Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Deep Dive Table ..................................43
Table 3. Celebrity Endorsement: Content Analysis Table ...........................................49
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1. Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Low Engagement (Pinterest Board)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2. Type of Post Indicates Popularity: High Engagement (Pinterest Board)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3. Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Deep Dive Analysis (Pinterest Board)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4. Celebrity Endorsements (Pinterest Board)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5. Themes Found in Deep Dive Analysis (Pinterest Board)</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sneaker marketing is a niche market that has become very popular where advertisements are seen on billboards, magazines, television, and most importantly social media. Sneakers have become a staple in every consumer's closet and are incorporated into their daily life. Sneakers are a type of footwear that was developed to help increase the athletic performance of consumers, athletes, and just anyone who wears them. Consumers now purchase them for a variety of reasons like sports performance, aesthetics, and comfort. (Choi, 2017). Their meaning and functionality have changed, and brands have shifted their marketing styles to fit those changes. Sneakers are an item that has immense value for consumers for many reasons. Some consumers put a lot more value into sneakers compared to others due to the sense of belonging and fostering a sense of identity they provide. Many of the individuals who follow sneaker brands and purchase sneakers can be known as sneakerheads. They are a type of consumer group that is known for having specific consumer behavior patterns with the collection and reselling of sneakers. They have helped create this lifestyle known as sneaker culture which is known for its influence in the sneaker market (Choi, 2017). Sneakers have become a commodity for many consumers and have become an item that is globally consumed. It is an item that follows the trend and provides a fashion aesthetic that many aspire to emulate.
Sneaker culture is defined as “a set of expressive practices centered on sneakers that communicates a desire for expressive and economic agency. (King, 2020, p. 2).

Sneaker culture is an important part of contemporary consumer culture because it expresses ideas about identity, race, and gender. Studies of the athletic apparel industry in the United States focus on how marketing strategies have long reinforced racist stereotypes, and athletic sneakers have been transformed into a status symbol that is valued at $181 billion in 2019 (Wallace, 2022). Young people have relationships with footwear as a form of personal expression and footwear can influence them down to their posture and sense of movement. For some youth, the choice of sneakers even functions to brand themselves, and it is undoubtedly a part of African American cultural studies.

Cult-like obsession is a term that was formulated to define the community behavior that is seen within the sneaker culture and on social media. This is not related to cult behavior in terms of religious devotion but more so the infatuation with a phenomenon. There has been research on the fact that sneakers have evolved from their functional use to having this “cult-like” following where consumers are becoming fanatics (Cunningham, 2008). Sneakers are known for being a popular footwear since they were created, and mass-produced. As footwear continues to become popular individuals will continue to desire them more resulting in this kind of obsession. It is an item that can represent one’s identity, help form connections, and even bring status. It has been mentioned that with, “a mix of popular culture, nostalgia, technology, and disposable income as drivers for the increased fascination with sneakers.” (Cunningham, 2008 p. 3). The idea of the term cult-like obsession for this study is to define the
fascination individuals can have when it comes to sneakers. Many behaviors go along with it, especially on social media where they can express their interest. This term is used to describe sneakers have become a popular item where individuals have developed a need for sneakers. The study is attempting to see how consumers engage with sneaker brands on social media based on their content. It was difficult to quantify and view this idea of a cult-like obsession from simply looking at likes and comments. Those actions could be passive or active which is hard to determine since it was impossible to ask the reason behind the like and/or comment. There has been previous research that discuss the obsession consumers have with sneakers was difficult to view that in this study as it progressed.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the social media marketing done by sneaker companies who create content that reinforces the feelings of identity and belonging to connect with their audience as an effective marketing strategy. These strategies include implementing specific marketing tactics and design features that can be seen as a factor if a consumer engages with the content through a like and/or comment. Two objectives will be discussed which are the social media consumers and the producers. Social media consumers are individuals who consume information from the producers. Social media producers are the brands, specifically sneaker brands who are posting the content on the platform. While the consumers are being viewed in the study, there is more of a focus on the producers and how the content they create influence consumers. This study was meant to investigate the influence social media has in terms of marketing that affects consumer engagement behaviors. The cult like obsession that
consumers of sneakers can develop is another factor that sneaker brands use to produce content on social media that keeps the audience fascinated. This was viewed in the form of how individuals engage with content on social media from sneaker brands.

Marketing plays a role specifically on social media used to persuade people to buy certain lifestyles. Previous researchers have examined the idea of how “worn objects of material culture, shoes contribute towards the visualization and experience of identity” (Braithwaite, 2021 p. 5). Sneaker companies are promoting lifestyles that can become one’s identity and provide a sense of belonging. This lifestyle they are promoting is known as sneaker culture. There are three reasons why this problem was chosen since it helps to gain a better understanding of consumer behavior and the influence social media has on consumers. One reason is this topic hasn’t been researched and has immense potential for providing a different perspective on consumer behavior. Another reason is that this problem can help provide insight as to whether the idea surrounding sneaker culture has an impact on an individual's feelings of identity and belonging. The last reason is that this study will also help to analyze the features of a social media post that are associated with engagement that leads to individuals purchasing the products they see on a post.

This study attempts to advance ideas from two authors that have been cited in this proposal, who are Jeymayne L. King, N. Braithwaite, Brandon Wallace, and Jin Woo Choi. These authors have worked on contributing to research on the concept of footwear and the influence it has on an individual's consumer behavior, self-identity, and sense of belonging. The study will advance their ideas by the approach of looking at them through
the lens of social media. Content analysis was implemented as the methodology for this research to advance the ideas from previous studies. The method was used to investigate how sneaker companies utilize social media platforms like Instagram to implement effective marketing tactics to attract consumer engagement.

**Research Questions**

1. What engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media?

2. How does sneaker culture and the marketing surrounding it reinforce a cult-like obsession by activating feelings of identity and belonging? What features of the social media post including gender, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product are associated with engagement in the form of likes and comment?
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sneakers brands have a long history where the marketing strategies used can be seen as harmful when it comes to incorporating race into their advertisements. In this section, there will be a review of previous research that has contributed to existing knowledge on the history of sneaker marketing, effective marketing strategies, and analyzing social media through content analysis. First, previous research on the connection between race history and sneaker marketing. Secondly, studies focused on the idea of consumers attributing feelings of belonging and identity can be used as an effective marketing strategy. Thirdly, previous research on the scope of the sneaker industry where there are major and minor players involved. Lastly, studies that utilized content analysis as their methodology to analyze data.

RACE HISTORY AND SNEAKER MARKETING

There is a deep history between race and sneaker culture specifically the way it has been marketed to the public. Since sneakers were invented in the 19th century, they have evolved from their use for athletics, “conveying ideas about national identity, class, race, and other forms of social meaning.” (Campbell, 2016). The basketball and the Hip-
Hop community has had an immense influence on how sneakers were changing from just athletic use to a form of expression. Many brands started adapting their marketing strategies where they used harmful stereotypes to market their products. A harmful stereotype is prejudices and/or hostility towards a minority group. Sneaker brands have embedded certain harmful stereotypes towards the black community to market their sneakers. Adidas is a brand that uses Hip-Hop to promote the “racialized ghetto aesthetic” (Wallace, 2022 p. 46). There are also indications where sneakers brands used to incorporate other stereotypes of the black community being ghetto, involved in crime, and association with violence. Brands were using these stereotypes as a marketing tactic to commodify Black Hip-Hop aesthetics. This study attempted to implement race to investigate if it is still an effective marketing tactic that brands use to commodify harmful stereotypes. Instead of investigating harmful stereotypes the study found that there were new tactics where brands are working on being more inclusive and diverse in terms of minorities and global celebrities to represent them. Brands are working on having more representation where the visuals that are used in marketing are including individuals that are amplifying them instead of exploiting them.

Sneaker culture is a subculture that has been relatively untouched in the research field. There have been a few studies and research done on sneakers and sneaker culture. They focus on how these strategies reinforce African American stereotypes. Many sneaker brands are enforcing racialized marketing, and most of it is used to advertise sneakers. Racialized marketing can be seen as a tactic that brands can use to exploit and
include harmful messages towards minority groups. This can also be seen as brand appropriating certain cultures and aesthetics. Brands specifically sneaker brands have a history of reinforcing harmful stereotypes towards minority groups which can also be defined as racialized marketing.

Nike and Adidas use promotional strategies that include images and messages that serve to exploit Black communities, using familiar cultural symbols to create a link between their products with Black athletes, styles, and cultural signifiers (Wallace, 2022). This may function as a form of “commodity racism” (p. 43) when commercial goods and their mechanisms of production, representation, and promotion send messages that reinforce harmful ideas of race. Much of the marketing we see with sneaker culture conveys damaging ideas about Black culture. For example, Adidas made sure to advertise that their sneakers were worn by mainly African American players, and with advertising that included prominent Black athletes like Bill Russell. They became a sneaker brand that Black consumers would identify with since they are seeing athletes who look like them wear those sneakers. Wallace (2022) offers other examples of sneaker companies including Converse and Nike exploiting Black culture for monetary gains. Sneakers became an item that started to have a link to the racialized perception of drug culture and violence, as “the sneakers became a central emblem of what was perceived as the trivial motivations of criminality within the Black community and in the context of the intensified ‘tough-on-crime’ rhetoric” (p. 51). Promotion strategies have helped to create sneaker culture and their advertising messages continue to reinforce centralized racism against the Black community. Critics like Brandon Wallace have failed to provide prime
examples of advertisements these brands have used to target African American customers or offered evidence designed to document the negative impact they have on Black individuals. Brands that appeal to a certain target audience are only used to sell a product to individuals they feel fit their demographic which is not inherently a racist practice.

Sneaker culture has many influences with popular media that have been heavily involved in African American culture. King (2020) investigates the question of “what is sneaker culture literature and why does it speak to today’s concerns surrounding individual empowerment?” (p. 9). There are also definitions mentioned including inauthentic sneaker culture literature. This is a type of literature that originates from inauthentic subscribers and corporate entities which are also known as Hypebeasts. It is a term for individuals that are concerned with fashion trends, social statements, and profitable investments. They are individuals who don’t care for sneaker culture’s history and its connection to Black America. Hypebeasts create and sell sneaker culture-related products which also includes buying sneakers in bulk with the intent to sell them at a significant price increase. These are people posing as authentic sneaker subscribers all for monetary gain and using the love individuals have for sneakers. The research employs Hip-Hop theory and cultural studies to understand sneaker culture as an extension of African American culture. The research is looking into pop culture including the genre of hip-hop and its connection to sneaker culture. Some brands and companies utilize Hip-Hop and sneaker culture to advertise their products to appeal to the African American demographic.
Athletic apparel brands have gained much success by selling sneakers it has become an item every consumer needs. Sneaker culture is an extension of Hip-Hop culture that is associated with African Americans and other minority groups as well. The genre celebrates and focuses on the struggles and perseverance of African Americans. It speaks about their struggles with racism, classism, and much more. The association between sneaker culture and Hip-Hop is the fact that African American and other minority groups use them as a form of expression. Incorporating Hip-Hop music to their advertisements was meant to appeal to African Americans since the genre has such a deep connection to their culture. It was being used as a marketing strategy and tactic that can be viewed as harmful especially when stereotypes are being used.

BELONGING AND IDENTITY AS A MARKETING STRATEGY

A brand’s goal is to implement and create marketing strategies that get their audience to feel connected with them. A marketing strategy is a business’s overall plan for how they will advertise and attract consumers to buy their product. They wish to sell items that consumers would love and create content that allows them to engage with the brand. This can help brands connect with a consumer’s social identity and develop a feeling of belonging. Marketers and brands work hard to provide a community where consumers can feel they belong and form deep connections. That is an effective marketing strategy where the post makers (brands) can guide a consumer’s behavior to want to be more engaged in the content (Champniss et al., 2015). Identity is viewed in the study as
social identity is referring to how individuals define themselves. Sneakers brands are fostering this sense of self by providing them a space to be who they are and allowing them to express themselves. Belonging is where individuals who are creating their identity within a community specifically on social media. Brands that create content that plays into a consumer’s identity and provide a community, where they belong is an effective marketing strategy to get engagement on their platforms.

Sneakerheads are known as the target consumers of sneaker brands and have helped foster this lifestyle called sneaker culture. Choi (2017) conducted a study to understand the value of sneakers as perceived by sneakerheads. Their study included a qualitative research method used to explore various topics to gain insight into the culture, lifestyle, behaviors, and motivations. The research used in-depth interviews where the author used a semi-structured interview. The findings found after the study several themes influence “sneakers’ monetary value which is supply and demand, celebrity endorsement, collaboration, marketing, and sneaker condition.” (p. 90). There are emotional, functional, and social values that sneakerheads perceive sneakers to have. There is emotional value that sneakers can connect the sneakerhead to their friends, and family, endorse, and be seen as an expression of their own identity. Sneakers have a functional value where sneakers can be worn, collected, and resold. They also have a social value where they can be seen as a luxury good, and sneakers are seen as high-quality goods. There are various social meanings where sneakers can help consumers build social connections and obtain a certain social status.
Sneakers are known as accessory items that individuals use to express themselves and show their individuality. It has become more than just an item but a part of the individual. Braithwaite (2021) created a project that was meant to capture and document the experience of British-based teenagers and their take on footwear. The project, “Shoe and Tell” wanted to shed light on the perspective of the teenage identity by documenting images of their narratives and experiences as teenagers. The author used photography as a form of ethnographic research to analyze self-identity through the shoes they are wearing. Each participant was photographed in the footwear of their choice as a way of documenting and helping stimulate their emotions tied with their shoes. Once the participants are photographed an interview is conducted to explore identity from the perspective of teenagers. N. Brainwhite is focusing on Generation Z individuals who are the products of the digital age where they have a lot more stress on understanding their self-identity. This helps to understand how identity is constructed to delve deeper into the world of a teenager. Being able to understand the relationship between the shoes and the wearer shows how footwear influences one's personal story, aspirations, and memories. Connecting the idea of self-image and sneaker culture can lead to more information about the emotional weight consumers put on material objects. The author mainly focuses on the fashion choices individuals make in the form of photography. It is another form of media that can help understand the identity attached to footwear since sharing on social media has become a form of expression.

Many terms are used for footwear which includes sneakers and trainers. Footwear has become an integral part of one’s identity and lifestyle. Hockey et al. (2015) explores
how the word “trainers” represents a form of footwear that attracted academic attention due to its relation to the development of footwear. The authors show how there are social divisions in gender, sexuality, and social class that are correlated to trainers. It is meant to acknowledge and describe how trainers can influence an individual to brand themselves due to the shoe's status and even authenticity. Footwear has ties to one's aspirations with sports, leisure activities, music, and fashion. Individuals tend to create meaning for their trainers. The authors also mention the various terms we have for footwear which include sneakers, kicks, trainers, training shoes, and athletic shoes. This article is here to see how trainers can formulate one’s identity. It is even mentioned how footwear can be seen as a kind of extension of an individual like a “body prosthetic” (Hockey et al., 2015, p. 23).

The authors were investigating the functionality and symbolism of footwear and its impact on individuals. They conducted a 3-year study to use footwear as a lens to explore the process of identification. They investigated a range of beliefs, values, and experiences that are associated with trainers within 12 focus groups. Their participants included parents who purchase shoes, people with health problems, and self-proclaimed shoe lovers. The focus groups included a range of themes like mixed experiences with shoe shopping and the tension between fitting in and standing out in society (Hockey et al., 2015). Overall, the term trainers have intertwined with how the action of wearing them can help an individual self-identify themselves.

SCOPE OF THE SNEAKER INDUSTRY: MAJOR AND MINOR PLAYERS
The sneaker industry has major and minor players that are the focus of this study. The industry will be looked at through social media to analyze the engagement seen through effective marketing strategies and design features. The major player is the social media producers better known as the sneaker brands. Social media producers are the accounts of the sneaker brands where consumers can view and engage with the content they produce. The minor player is the social media consumers who are just the individuals consuming the content from the producers. This study focuses on how the social media producers create content to influence the consumers.

Social media has been at the forefront of marketing for many companies, and it has propelled many to be more successful. It has become a new marketing tactic that many brands, especially sneaker brands, have been using to promote their products. Social media “is a collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration” (Lutkevich, 2021). It is a space where consumers can stay in touch and interact with other users and brands. Producers better known as brands use social media to market and promote their products. Social media has various platforms that includes TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. This study focused on using the platform, Instagram. It is a platform where users and producers can post and share photos and videos. The main objective of the study is to investigate visuals and marketing strategies used by the brand by looking at the visuals and text within a post.
Social media for them is used to help define what they are about which includes defining their voice, core values, brand vision, and mission (Stanciu, 2022). There are brands like Adidas who use social media as their branding strategy where they sell this idea that they sell more than athletic apparel, they are selling a lifestyle. Adidas is known for having “one of the best advertising slogans of modern brands” (p. 1). Their marketing on social media is simple, catchy, and tells a story that appeals to their consumers. Adidas uses social media to win their consumers over by creating compelling taglines, building smart social media campaigns, partnering with influencers, and advocating for social issues. Sneaker companies use social media to advocate for certain issues that their consumers care about which include sustainability, women empowerment, and racial issues. It became a tool and one of the quickest ways to gain trust with their audience which is through “community involvement” (Stanciu, 2022). This is a platform where companies can embrace inclusivity, diversity, and visibility so that consumers can see the human side of their brand. Social media is used to form an emotional connection with their consumers and bring their community together. Brands like Adidas understood that being involved with social issues is the future of social media and can garner more success.

Sneaker companies have also used social media to collaborate and reach all kinds of people. Companies like Converse are known for having a link to the music genres of Rock and Roll, Alternative, Indie music, and much more. These are sneakers that have been worn by many different generations of bands like the Ramones and the Strokes (Sisario, 2010). This is another brand that is selling lifestyles and creating a special
connection with music. Converse has been working with many different bands from collaborating on social media, paying for studio time, and scouting talent. They have become a supporter of rock arts where consumers will naturally associate converse with the music genre of rock. They use social media to promote collaborations with artists, promote bands, and promote this carefree lifestyle. They are cultivating their role and brand as music curators, lovers of the arts, and a brand for all generations. Social media has become such a big part of how companies market their products, connect to their audience, and garner more success.

Sneaker marketing includes many different forms of strategies and tactics and one of them includes celebrity endorsements. It is one of the most used advertising strategies and it can be defined as “the image of a celebrity is transferred to the particular brand or goods. In this process, the product or brand acquires additional value” (Choi, 2017 p. 38). It is a tactic that is used by many sneaker brands to not only have a larger reach to different consumers but also promote this feeling of belonging and identity. The consumer will see that if they purchase the product that the celebrity is endorsing makes them feel like they can be just like them. It builds an emotional connection between consumers and sneaker brands. There are not only endorsements done by celebrities like singers, but popular athletes are also used as celebrity endorsements. Sneaker brands are known for their athletic and athleisure wear which means they will have athletes endorse their products. As mentioned previously, marketing strategies are a business’s overall plan for how they will advertise their products. Previous research has touched the surface of how sneaker brands advertise. This study analyzes marketing in terms of social media,
the marketing tactics and design features used. Marketing tactics are strategic actions that promote a brand’s product. Design features are the visuals that are seen in a post which can include the setting, clothing, sex appeal, product featured, and individuals featured.

ANALYZING SOCIAL MEDIA THROUGH CONTENT ANALYSIS

There have been analyses done on various media where researchers have used content analysis methods. This is a research tool used to understand the presence of specific words, themes, and/or concepts within qualitative data. It is used to quantify and analyze the meanings and relationships of the themes, words, and concepts (Columbia Public Health, 2022). It is a method that is commonly applied to help analyze text like books, essays, media essays, etc. Content analysis is suitable since it allows for substantial qualitative and quantitative analysis. It can be used to provide cultural insights over time and allows a closeness to the data (Columbia Public Health, 2022). A study was done where gender stereotypes were analyzed in Children's books (Taylor, 2003). They used a sampling strategy and created criteria of selection where they looked for themes and keywords. There is another study that used content analysis to examine modern comic books. They worked to assess themes regarding race, gender, and class in comic books. The content analysis was done by randomly selecting comic books and analyzing certain frames (Facciani et al., 2015).

Another study went a different route by conducting a content analysis that examines social media and marketing. The authors created a study where they collected
Instagram posts that focused on the hashtag “#hookah.” They included a sampling frame by using longitude and latitude to make sure the content they are studying is happening within the United States (Allen et al., 2017). A study that incorporated content analysis used in communications research focused on humor in advertising (Alden et al., 1993). They used content analysis to investigate how humor is constantly used as a communication tool in the U.S. and the study aimed to show how marketers can use it effectively and efficiently. Content analysis was used by examining TV advertisements from four different countries which helps them to see how humor is used culturally. Each study focused on using content analysis methodology to answer their research questions. They are focused on learning the effects certain media have on consumers whether it is advertisements, children’s books, or social media. These authors agree that using content analysis is the best method to gain a better understanding of themes regarding gender, race, and class. These authors differ in the types of sampling they used, and the criteria used as well. They each used a different sampling method and media to be able to collect as much information as they could. There were certain criteria used where one author would collect the data during a certain week and another collected data based on certain dates. The studies mentioned all used the methodology of content analysis which will help further this study to understand how to conduct one. This study will be using content analysis to investigate the idea that there are marketing tactics and design features that connect with a consumer’s cult-like obsession, social identity and need to belong. They are used as marketing strategies for brands to develop bonds with their audience to receive more engagement.
There are many contributions that are analyzed in this study that helps to see how post-makers are using certain marketing strategies to influence consumer behavior. Other studies have included engagement as a focus where they investigate the measures that determine what is considered engagement on social media. Engagement in this study is measured in the data in terms of likes and comments that the posts accumulated. It is one of the biggest contributions that consumers can give to the brands that provide a bit of insight that they are engaging with the content. Engagement has been viewed in other studies where it is correlated with social media engagement. Where actions are measured by how an audience interacts with a brand’s content. When a social media consumer likes or comments on a post it is a contribution they are making to a brand’s overall engagement on social media. This is also viewed engagement behavior where an action is taken by the consumer.

Previous research investigated engagement on social media based on several factors that can help firms make better decisions while enhancing their consumer engagement. This study is using a similar idea of investigating consumer engagement on social media. Except it will be analyzing how certain marketing strategies and design features can impact a brand's engagement. A brand’s goal when it comes to social media marketing is to increase consumer engagement since it can show their interest in the products or the overall brand. Previous studies have made it known, “there is still a lack of understanding of how to conceptualize, validate or measure consumer engagement…” (Eslami,
et. al. 2022, p.2). There are also common factors on social media platforms that reflect engagement which includes likes, comments, and shares. This study was unable to account for shares since on Instagram you cannot view the shares of other accounts publicly. It was taken out of the study as a measure while likes and comments were kept. These were the measures used to investigate which factors in marketing tactics and design features influence consumer engagement.

This study is here to merge those research topics to understand how social media can be used to promote sneaker culture. It is a marketing strategy that many sneaker brands use to win people’s hearts on social media by pitching a certain lifestyle. It is a tool used to reach larger audiences to create strong relationships with them. That is an aspect of sneaker culture that has been overlooked since we are in an age where everything seems to be done on the internet. The idea of social media will be looked at as a concept for the idea of sneaker culture creating this cult-like obsession and even promoting certain stereotypes. It will be incorporated into the study where content analysis will be conducted to investigate different marketing strategies used on social platforms like Instagram by certain sneaker companies. Social media will be one of the key takeaways from this research since it seems to be a major factor as to why sneaker culture is popular. This will be used to collect and analyze data to see certain trends, marketing strategies, and consumer interactions. It is essential that utilizing social media platforms like Instagram will allow for an effective way of collecting and analyzing data as it allows there to be a collection of visuals and text.
In this chapter, I examined the literature on sneaker marketing in a cultural context and then I explored the role of social media in reshaping consumer behavior and the relationships between companies and consumers, and I also considered the value of content analysis as a research methodology for social media marketing. In the next chapter, I will present the research methods used in the study where both phases of the study will be discussed.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis as the methodology to conduct the research to examine engagement behaviors on the social media platform, Instagram. Specifically looking at the marking tactics and design features that are used by sneaker brands. The study is looking at quantitative data in terms of likes and comments as a measure of engagement. As mentioned, engagement is the quantitative actions by consumers which indicates the contribution made by consumers to the post makers. The study accounts for investigating the visuals, which are the images that the brands post. This is where the visuals are analyzed in terms of the marketing tactics and the design features used. There were two phases in this study where a content analysis is conducted with a large data set. The second phase is the deep dive analysis that will analyze posts in depth looking at rhetorical themes. These phases were formulated based on previous studies that investigated visuals in terms of graphics. This study took inspiration from previous research where they used content analysis to analyze humor in advertisements. Their study aimed to show marketers effective strategies to incorporate humor into advertisements (Alden et al., 1993). This study took a similar route and has a similar aim, but it focuses on analyzing effective marketing strategies by sneaker brands that show marketers can use to influence consumer engagement.
Social media as mentioned previously is incorporated in this study as the focus of looking at engagement that is happening specifically on social media platforms. Instagram is the platform chosen to collect data from because it provides data collection of text and visuals. The study also focused on Instagram due to the inspiration from a previous study that included Instagram to look at marketing done on water pipe promotion (Allem et al., 2017). This study is using that framework to analyze marketing done by sneaker brands on Instagram. It was the platform that fit this study best as it allows for investigation on engagement, marketing tactics and design features of a post. Marketing strategies are viewed in this study as the business’s overall plan for how they will advertise products to reach their target audience. Marketing tactics are the factors that are analyzed in the study since these are the actions used to promote the products which can be used when a post is a celebrity endorsement or a partnership. Design features are the visuals that are seen in a post which includes the fact that the images they present are analyzed based on the setting, clothing, products, creativity and more. The idea of analyzing design features was applied from a previous study that investigated visuals from graphic novels. Analyzing visuals was implemented to see if those featured in an Instagram post influence engagement. These are all factors that are accounted for in the deep dive analysis to investigate the idea of how a brand’s marketing tactic and design features in a post can affect the engagement a post can receive. As Appendix B shows, a coding strategy was created to identify the codes used to reference what will be analyzed in both phases. For example, marketing tactics and design features were coded as taking notes of what is
seen in the posts in the form of sentences. That coding strategy was included due to inspiration from a previous study done where they created a coding frame to study gender stereotypes (Taylor, 2003). This study went a slightly different route and created a coding strategy to investigate themes surrounding sneaker marketing on social media.

The Scope. The time frame of conducting the research and collecting data from the range of 2019-2023 where various events occurred that could influence the engagement seen on the posts. Those years are when COVID began, and a worldwide quarantine was implemented which was a time when many people were on the internet specifically on social media. Consumers had more free time to surf the internet from being on social media to online shopping. Those are factors to consider since that could affect the engagement that is seen across each brand. Another event to consider that showed in the data was the 2023 World Cup. It is a very popular soccer event where soccer players from all over the world play for their country in a tournament. Athletic events like this gain a lot of attention, and many sneaker brands use them to attract attention.

Another scope that was considered was the fact that the study was looked at through the first-world lens where social media is accessible and available in regions like North America. Other regions are also considered but it also pertains to the ones who have access to social media. The study looked at where the accounts were filtered that tailor to English speakers in North America. The users that were considered for the data do range in terms of age, gender, and class. Social media in North America is used for
Phase One: Content Analysis. The first phase investigated the engagement behaviors by examining the individuals featured in the social media posts and the engagement that they received. The engagement behaviors that were focused on were measured by likes and comments. In Appendix B, it shows the various codes used in the content analysis to investigate engagement behaviors found. To conduct the content analysis, a coding strategy was created to determine and manage the codes into categories for analysis. Code categories were created which can be seen on Appendix B which provides insight about the codes with information about the rationale, importance, connection to research questions and notes on the coding process. One of the main codes that are focused on is likes and comments that were collected from the brands Instagram post. The posts featured individuals who are athletes, celebrities, and models. The visuals that were considered for the data needed to be images that included human beings and exclude non-photos. Images that are non-photos which include drawings, digital art, videos, and pictures of shoes only will not be considered for the study. The reason for this is that non-photos don’t provide the data needed to see how social media advertisements post up their engagement by using real people. Images that depict humans allows the study to collect the data needed to see the correlation between engagement and the
downtime which is just a platform to scroll leisurely and engage passively as well. It is a scope that needs to be considered as users may not be as engaged and can be hard to determine that through quantitative data. These are all scopes that needed to be considered when conducting the study and once it was completed. Many outside factors can contribute to the engagement that a post will receive.
features of a social media post. Each post that was selected will be accounted for the visibility they have, which includes likes and comments.

**Sampling Plan.** The sample consisted of 200 social media posts from the accounts of Nike, Adidas, Vans, and Puma. These are all very well-known sneaker brands that have become increasingly popular on social media. These brands were selected for this study as they are all well-known sneaker brands who are competitors with one another. They were also chosen based on how active the brands are on Instagram and have posts that include advertisements. Nike is an American multinational corporation that is known for selling athletic footwear, apparel, equipment, etc. (“Nike, Inc.,” n.d.). Adidas is a German multinational corporation that is known for selling sportswear in Europe and now in the U.S. (“Adidas,” n.d.). Vans is an American lifestyle brand that is known for selling footwear and apparel tailored to skateboarding that is owned by VF Corporation (“Vans,” n.d.). Puma is another German multinational corporation that is known for selling athletic and casual apparel tailored to those who are athletic (“Puma (brand),” n.d.). The posts ranged from the years 2019 to 2023 and were collected from their Instagram pages. The selection process that was used to sample the posts consisted of analyzing each company's Instagram page 20 posts at a time. The ones that were selected must meet the requirements of having over 5,000 likes and include an individual. There were many posts where more than one image was included, and each image will be accounted for within that post. The process will continue until 50 posts were selected from each of the brand's accounts. A preliminary test took place before the sampling and data collection happened. This will involve a pretest where samples will be taken and
added into Microsoft Excel to make sure the sampling goes correctly, and the coding variables are useful.

*Variables of Interest.* As referenced previously, these are the variables of interest focused on in the study. They are coming from the coding strategy that was created for the study which can be seen in Appendix B. The coding variables include engagement, which was measured by the number of likes and comments. The next variable is gender with the categories of men, women, and non-binary which can be viewed based on what is depicted in the images or if it is mentioned in the post specifically. The code was implemented to see if sex appeal was a factor when post received a certain amount of engagement. This will also be discussed in the deep dive under the design features of a post. It will include the observation of the clothing on the individuals. Other variables included celebrities (musicians, athletes, others), what sports are depicted (dance, football, basketball, soccer, golf, etc.), type of post (partnership, collection, collaboration, celebrity endorsement), tags (Instagram accounts) and authors (brands, celebrities, influencers).

Race was a code that was going to be used in the study to help analyze if race indicates whether a post gains a certain amount of engagement based on an individual's race. It was excluded due to the difficulties of interpreting the individual's race based on visuals alone. It became hard to indicate race in the preliminary analysis as it was hard to tell and make assumptions, especially in this global climate it seemed unethical to add it in if it was not specifically mentioned the individual's race. It also seemed to be complicated to implicate if race was indeed a factor in engagement since many other
factors are involved like celebrity status. Overall, it was excluded from the data as a code as it became increasingly complicated and no longer useful for the study.

Engagement measures were a major interest in the study which includes the likes and comments that the posts received. Likes were taken in the form of numbers and were included as an indicator for engagement levels based on the amount a post would receive. It was used to help see if a post that received a certain amount of likes indicated the amount of attention it received. Comments were included in the data as another measure of engagement and an indicator for engagement level. Another code included is connected to the engagement measures, which is celebrity. This is when the profession of the celebrities is identified which includes athletes, singers, actress/actors, and influencers. These were determined by further research whether it was through internet searches or if it was specified on their Instagram accounts. This code was considered for the study as it was meant to see if a post that featured a celebrity made a difference in the engagement compared to other posts that include models or consumers.

In terms of the type of post, the study included a variety of post types that were consistently present. It includes four types that showed up the most throughout both phases of the study. A partnership is where the brands mentioned partner with other brands (and/or celebrities) that are promoting a new product, collection, etc. This was identified when the brands were seen promoting partnerships with specific athletes, celebrities, and brands. An example of a partnership is the concept of a Nike athlete where Nike has athletes they sponsor. The athlete will promote, collaborate, and model for the brand since it is a partnership between both the brand and the athlete. This can be
where the post mentions the partnership or when it is an announcement of a new athlete joining the brand. A collection post used to promote an upcoming series of products the brand is selling. This can be identified when a post mentions the fact it is about a collection or when there is a series of photos showcasing different products. An example of a collection is when a brand is posting about its newest collection centered around the World Cup which includes clothing and footwear. A collaboration post is when a brand joins with another brand, influencer, or celebrity to create a new product and/or collection. This can be identified when the post mentions that it is a collaboration or when the post includes the other collaborators. An example can be when an artist is collaborating with a sneaker brand to release a new pair of sneakers. These were the most common types of posts that occurred during the study that helped to indicate if a post will receive a certain amount of engagement.

Approach to Data Analysis. The analysis was done by constructing a Microsoft Excel chart. The social media platform, Pinterest was used to create a visual board where all the posts collected can be viewed and the links accessible. The images were coded and had specific coding variables used to conduct the content analysis. The data collection was done on Microsoft Excel for a more efficient way of examining the textual and visual data. Once the data was collected it was analyzed to see if the factors and measures that previously discussed influence were the engagement a post received. The data will show the trends that sneaker brands use within their social media marketing to gain more success.
**Preliminary Analysis.** The preliminary analysis was running the test for both phases, including the content and deep dive analysis. The content analysis included a smaller sample and used different social media accounts. The preliminary analysis for both phases was conducted for one week. The sample included 100 posts from the Instagram accounts of Reebok and New Balance. There were nine codes used for the sample to test out if they work to obtain the information needed for the data. The codes included Author (Brand, Influencer, Celebrity), hashtags, comments, likes, type of celebrities, sports depicted, and gender. The sampling plan stayed the same for the preliminary and the post-test. As the analysis was conducted there was one code that didn’t collect as much data which was hashtags. That was a code that was taken off for the content analysis and a few other codes were added in. The preliminary for the deep dive consisted of a sampling of 20 posts from the content analysis. These included the campaigns and advertisements that will be analyzed more in-depth during the deep dive. The codes used for the preliminary analysis included the author, a summary of the advertisement, design features, marketing strategies, references, engagement, and information about celebrities & brands. Once the preliminary analysis was finished, another code was added, which was a type of post that will help gain more information on the design features of these advertisements on their social media.

**Phase Two: Deep Dive Analysis.** A deep dive critical analysis of a small sample of the social media posts was conducted to examine the engagement and design features in depth. It shows in Appendix C, a sample of the analysis that was conducted where it includes the codes and provides an example of how the data was conducted. This phase
helped to see how social media marketing may affect an individual's social identification and sense of belonging. The deep dive helped me gain a better understanding of the goals of the campaigns and why they chose certain people to represent their campaigns. Out of the 200 posts, 40 were picked for the deeper dive based on the criteria that they contain links to an advertisement, hashtags, include a celebrity and the post must be a campaign/advertisement. The analysis will be a write-up that contains a few sentences discussing the design features of the posts that include gender, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product. The codes that were included in the deep dive included the author (including the brand), a summary of advertisement, design features, marketing strategies, references, engagement, type of post, and information about the celebrity & brand. This will take place after the content analysis and will be conducted for three days at the University of Rhode Island. The analysis will be done on Microsoft Excel, which will contain all the data needed to examine the consumer engagement received on the campaigns.

Engagement thresholds were created during this phase to help differentiate between the levels of engagement found within the data. The posts ranged from 8,642 to 2,930,044 likes. In this phase engagement was coded with both likes and comments as one code. The study only accounted for likes as the threshold since comments were determined after the data was collected it does not provide much information about engagement. Comments can be messages that can be from bots, include emojis and much more. It was still included in the data as it still counts as an engagement measure but is not useful in determining the level of engagement. The thresholds included low,
somewhat high, high, and extremely high engagement. They were created to help make a
distinction between engagement levels based on the data collection. Posts that were under
20,000 likes were considered low engagement. Posts between 21,000-100,000 likes were
considered somewhat high engagement. Posts between 100,000-500,000 likes were
considered high engagement. Posts that were above 500,000 likes were considered
extremely high engagement.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The content and deep dive analysis helped investigate the following questions: 1). What engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media? 2). How does sneaker culture and the marketing surrounding it incite a cult-like obsession by activating feelings of identity and belonging? 3). What features of the social media post including gender, race, hashtags, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product are associated with high engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments? The first research question addresses the factors that contribute to the engagement behaviors seen on social media. The second research question addresses the idea of how social media advertising can activate feelings of identity and belonging due to the love consumers have for sneaker culture. The third research question addresses the design features used in social media posts that have a connection with high engagement. The research questions help analyze the messages found on social media advertisements through a sneaker company's social media page. The analysis contributes much-needed information about the immense influence social media has in terms of marketing that affects consumer behavior.

The main findings of this study include the claims that the type of posts that sneaker brands use does indicate if they receive a certain amount of engagement based on
their popularity. Popularity was a measure and term that came about after the analysis was included as it was found that when brands include certain celebrities would receive a certain amount of engagement. Popularity in this study is based on the number of followers they have, established credibility, and overall success. This is where the idea of major and minor celebrities to differentiate between whether the post received the engagement it did based on the status of the celebrity. A well-known celebrity in the study is based on the criteria of their social media following, their relevance in the media, their success, and known globally for their efforts. These celebrities are considered A-List and B-list, which is when they have a huge social media presence. Somewhat well-known celebrities have a social following but not as much as well-known celebrities. They are not as relevant in the media and are known nationally. These are celebrities considered C-List and D-List celebrities.

Many of the brands use the same strategies but didn’t receive the same engagement compared to other brands which can be due simply to popularity. Brands like Nike and Puma received extremely high engagement due to their popularity and use of celebrity endorsements. Another finding is that celebrity endorsements not only increase engagement but help brands better their trust and loyalty with their consumers. This provides an idea of how including well-known celebrities allows consumers to relate to the brands as they continue to see individuals who inspire them. The last finding is that there are specific design features and marketing strategies that can be used efficiently to promote engagement, and a sense of belonging and formulate one’s identity. This includes the use of celebrities, and athletes within the visuals, the use of aesthetically
pleasing settings, and much more. Overall, these main findings help to showcase that sneaker marketing on social media can be an effective marketing strategy that enhances engagement, fosters a sense of belonging for consumers, and helps formulate one’s identity. Those can be viewed as effective marketing strategies where brands are working to connect to their consumers through the posts that they come across. Creating content that will connect with them in terms of their cult-like obsession with sneakers, social identity, and need to belong.

Type of Post Indicates Popularity

The collection of social media sneaker posts varied widely in popularity. During the content analysis process, a separate sheet was created to review the likes in descending order that ranged from 2,930,044 to 8,642. This helped me to find the natural break points in the data to help answer the research question of what engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media. As Table 1 shows, out of the 200 posts that were sampled, four received very high engagement (more than 1 million likes) and two received pretty low engagement (fewer than 10,000 likes). There seems to be a relationship between likes and the type of post that is associated with high and/or low engagement. The number of likes that were reviewed showcased which posts gained the most attention and why. The type of post includes if the post is a collaboration, influencer/celebrity endorsement, brand deal, etc. It showcased the type of posts that are circulating on social media and which
ones are being used in a sneaker brand's marketing plan. This process helped answer the question of is the type of post a factor in the association of high engagement in the form of likes and comments.

Table 1 Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Type of Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>2,930,044</td>
<td>Event Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>2,383,770</td>
<td>Collection Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>2,175,487</td>
<td>Celebrity Endorsement Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>1,406,593</td>
<td>Event Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>199</td>
<td>990,820</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>20,211</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>172</td>
<td>14,886</td>
<td>Celebrity Endorsement Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>8,642</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Posts with high engagement.* In the study, it was found that the posts that received extremely high engagement featured globally known pop stars and soccer stars who seem to be huge figures in the world of social media sneaker marketing. Figure 1 shows the five posts that received over 1 million likes and the posts that generated these numbers came from Adidas and Puma. Artifacts 58 and 56 both came from the author Adidas. Artifact 58 had 2,930,044, the highest number of likes. It was posted by Adidas and included the celebrity Lionel Messi, who is an Argentine professional soccer player who plays for the teams of Paris Saint-Germain and the Argentina national team (“Lionel Messi,” n.d.). The post wasn’t an advertisement or campaign, it was a post focusing on the event known as the World Cup. Posts featuring soccer were very popular especially
when they included Messi. He is known for recently winning the World Cup for the second time as the captain of the Argentina national team (Borg, 2023). For example, artifact 56 was another post by Adidas that generated 1,406,593 likes. It was another 2023 World Cup post that included the celebrity Leo Messi and Emi Martínez who are both professional soccer players.

Artifact 58 had the highest engagement, as the post features Lionel Messi again. The post wasn’t an advertisement or campaign, it was a post about the 2023 World Cup. This showcases that a simple post about a well-known event and soccer player will garner a lot of engagement since it invokes some type of identity and belonging. Soccer is one of the most popular sports and the World Cup is an event that millions of people tune into. This type of post pushed consumers to engage with the post if they have a fondness for Leo Messi, The World Cup, and/or the sport.

Pop singers were also featured in the most popular posts which were a common use as brands are trying to incorporate different kinds of celebrities to gain more potential consumers. Artifacts 160, 163, and 199 were posted from Puma. Artifact 160 generated the 2nd most likes, 2,383,770 in a post centered on Dua Lipa as the collection's face. Dua Lipa is a globally famous singer and songwriter who has won numerous awards including winning three Grammy Awards (“Dua Lipa", n.d.). Not only has she made her mark in the music industry but is slowly becoming well-known in the fashion industry. She was chosen to be a co-chair for the Met Gala 2023, which is one of the most well-known fashion events of the year. Co-chair means that she will be helping in curating a guest list, assisting with interior designs, defining the theme, and much more. It is a very big
accomplishment for an individual to co-chair an event like this, especially for someone who is not as well known in the fashion industry (Dailey, 2023). Artifact 163 generated 2,175,487 likes that centered around a product that Dua Lipa is modeling in the post. Artifact 199 generated 990,820 which was the natural break for the high engagement of likes. The post is centered around the collaboration between Puma and Dua Lipa which is releasing a new collection.

Three other posts include Dua Lipa in partnership with Puma. This includes Artifact 56 which generated the 2nd most likes which were 2,383,770 likes. The post is also announcing their new collection where Dua Lip is the face modeling the collection. This gained the engagement it received because they have a well-known singer as the face of their new collection. They gain the attention of their followers and Dua Lipa’s followers. It entices consumers to view the post and react in a manner that is a like or comment since it features someone that is globally known. The other artifact is 163 which generated 2,175,487 like where the post is simply posting Dua Lipa modeling in their sneakers making it a simple celebrity endorsement post. The last one is Artifact 199 generated 990,820 likes which was the natural break for the high engagement of likes. The post is centered around the collaboration between Puma and Dua Lipa which is releasing a new collection. The post is introducing their new collection with Dua Lipa where they are introducing new items that include sneakers. All three of the post also have something in common where Dua Lipa is exuding sex appeal where she is showing skin. That could be another reason as why they received a certain amount of engagement.
Sex appeal could be a factor in terms of consumers engagement but there is not definitive answer if that contributes to a posts likes and/or comments.

There was also an artifact seen in the deep dive analysis where the same post including Dua Lipa is recorded. This was artifact 34 had the highest engagement in the phase with 2,383,770 likes and 4,867 comments. The post is advertising their new collection called the "Thrift Pack" which features Dua Lipa. where she models for their new collection. This is a post that has received extremely high engagement in terms of likes and comments. This is a collection and a celebrity endorsement post that seems to prove to be effective in gaining engagement from current and new consumers.

**Figure 1 Type of Post Indicates Popularity: High Engagement (Pinterest Board)**

*Posts with low engagement.* In the study, it was found that the posts that received low engagement featured somewhat well-known global singers, models, and designers.
They included the use of having niche designers, celebrities, and brands in hopes to gain more engagement from their followers. This resulted in the brands receiving low engagement compared to the other brands due to the use of every niche endorsement. In the data, 56 posts were below or about 20,000 likes which means they received low engagement. Figure 2 shows the three posts that received low engagement from the social media accounts of Vans and Puma. Artifacts 162, 101, and 172 each showcase the range within the data where we see the lowest, highest, and median of this data. This helped to see the variety within the engagement received in each post and compare them. It shows how depending on the codes that were used help to gauge the type of engagement a post can receive.

Figure 2 Type of Post Indicating Popularity: Low Engagement (Pinterest Board)
Artifact 162 generated 8,642 likes that were promoting the collaboration between Puma and Ami Paris. The post also includes celebrities Giveon and Quannah Chasinghorse modeling the new collection. Giveon is an American singer who became known due to his collaboration with Drake in 2020 which led to a Grammy nomination (“Giveon,” n.d.). Quannah Chasinghorse is an indigenous American model who has made her mark in representing indigenous individuals in the fashion industry (“Quannah Chasinghorse,” n.d.). The brand Ami Paris is a French luxury brand that was founded by Alexandre Mattiussi that focuses mainly on menswear (“Ami Paris”, 2023). It is a collaboration and collection post of new items from both brands. Despite the fact, this post not only includes somewhat well-known celebrities it is also a brand collaboration. The post didn’t receive as much engagement compared to their previous posts since they had three that received the most engagement out of the 200 posts. This post received the lowest engagement out of the 200, which seems to be because it didn’t entice consumers to want to like or comment as much compared to their previous posts.

Artifact 101 generated 20,211 likes promoting the collaboration between Vans, Vans Vault, and Joe Fresh Goods. It is showcasing their new collection that Joe Freshgoods helps design. Joe Freshgoods is a designer and creative director from Chicago who is known for creative apparel and footwear tailoring to the style of streetwear (“Joefreshgoods,” 2022). It is a collaboration & collection post that is announcing the new items designed by the designer. This post was the natural break and the highest of the posts that received low engagement. It is a post that involved both a
famous designer and a brand collaboration. It didn’t receive as much attention, which could be because it was another post that didn’t capture the audience.

Artifact 172 generated 14,886 likes while the post was meant to be a celebrity endorsement post of their own partnered athlete. It included the athlete Gianluigi Buffon, who is a professional soccer player from Italy that plays as a goalkeeper for the Serie B club Parma and is known for being one of the greatest goalkeepers (“Gianluigi Buffon,” n.d.). It includes images of him in their clothing. This post was the median among all 56 posts, and this was in the middle since it received about 14,000 likes. It is a post that includes a somewhat well-known soccer player. The post itself only shows an image of the athlete; it is not a collaboration or collection post but a celebrity endorsement post.

There were similar findings in phase two of the study where posts received extremely high engagement and featured globally known pop stars and soccer stars. They also received low engagement by using niche athletes, celebrities, and designers for celebrity endorsements. The deep dive analysis included engagement codes and type of post, the same as content analysis and correlation to engagement behavior. In terms of the deep dive, engagement included a summary of the engagement the post received based on the likes and comments. It provides information if the posts collected received high, low, somewhat high, or extremely high engagement. This helps answer the question of what engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker-related posts (advertisements) on social media. The code type of post includes a few sentences about what the post is about, the purpose, etc. It narrows down the marketing strategies sneaker brands use when posting specific content on their social media page. This helps
answer the question: is this an effective marketing strategy that is exhibiting high engagement?

There are 40 posts that were collected that ranged from extremely high to low engagement where we see a variety of engagement vary from post to post and then there is one post that received extremely high engagement. There were 9 posts that received low engagement, 16 posts that received somewhat high engagement, 14 posts that received high engagement, and 1 post that received extremely high engagement. Table 2 shows the six posts that will be mentioned in this section. Figure 3 also showcases the posts' visuals that were collected on a Pinterest board.

Table 2 Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Deep Dive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Type of Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>2,383,770 likes and 4,867 comments</td>
<td>Collection Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>176,613 likes and 1,664 comments</td>
<td>Event Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>179,713 likes and 2,138 comments</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>37,433 likes and 134 comments</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>36,718 likes and 300 comments</td>
<td>Event Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9,660 likes and 138 comments</td>
<td>Collaboration Post</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Artifact 31 had the lowest engagement with 9,660 likes and 138 comments. The advertisement introduces the collaboration between Puma, Kith, and Dapper Dan. The collection offers a few pieces that take consumers back to the 80s, which is a collaboration between Puma and Dapper Dan's new collection with Kith. The celebrity mentioned is Dapper Dan who are an African American fashion designer and haberdasher.
from Harlem who had a popular store known as Dapper Dan’s Boutique in the 80s and early 90s (“Dapper Dan (designer)” n.d.). Kith is a streetwear brand that was founded by Ronnie Fieg who is a well-known figure in the footwear industry (“Kith,” 2023). This artifact is an example of how a post can be a collaboration between a famous brand and designer and still not gain as much engagement compared to other social media posts. This can be all due to the fact they may not be as well known, the timing of the post, the collection failed to capture the attention, and much more. There are many outside factors that can be a reason as to why the post received the engagement it did.

Artifact 14 was one of the two medians from the somewhat high engagement data. This post received high engagement where it had 36,718 likes and 300 comments. The post is advertising their yearly event "Run for the Oceans” from Adidas'. This is an event that focuses on sustainable initiatives and includes collaboration with environmental organizations. The advertisement introduces a collection for people to purchase whether they are participating in the event or not. They partnered with Parley which is an environmental organization. This post may have had the engagement it received for the fact it is a call for action. They are taking a stance on how they are working towards being sustainable with their brand and creating events to help contribute. There are no celebrities mentioned in this campaign, which could be a reason why it didn’t receive as much attention as it could have.

Artifact 26 received somewhat high engagement where it had 37,433 likes and 134 comments. The advertisement announces the collaboration between the brand IRENEISGOOD LABEL and Vans. A collection that centers around bold and playful
patterns that consumers see based on the visuals presented. The celebrity mentioned in
the advertisement is Irene Kim who is also known as Ireneisgood. She is an American
model, beauty, and fashion blogger and owns the clothing brand IRENEISGOOD
LABEL ("Irene Kim," n.d.). This post is another example of how when a post is not only
a collaboration between a brand and a celebrity as well may not receive as much attention
compared to others. Irene Kim is also a celebrity who is well known overseas in South
Korea which helped Vans gain more consumers from her following.

The next two artifacts are the medians from the high engagement data. Artifact 1
received 176,613 likes and 1,664 comments. The advertisement focuses on advertising
their podcast that anyone can listen to through an FM broadcast. They are creating a
space where anyone who either knows of Nike or buys from them will find a place to
hear from people they admire. They posted a specific post that focuses on the disparity in
football with minorities. The post was timed since the World Cup was coming up. It is a
broadcast that focuses on social issues and includes collaborations with influencers,
celebrities, etc. The celebrities mentioned include Mayowa Quadri, John Adekunle,
Founé Diawara, and Taiwo Awoniyi. They are all known in the soccer industry to discuss
the upcoming World Cup ("Nike," 2023). This is a post that is a bit different from
previous ones as it is introducing a podcast instead of a collection or collaboration
making it more of an event post. They are offering an experience for their consumers that
can make them feel connected to this brand.

Artifact 5 received high engagement where they had 179,713 likes and 2,138
comments. The advertisement focuses on the collaboration between Nike and a Popular
dance group to celebrate 40 years of the Air Force 1, which is their most popular silhouette. The celebrities mentioned include various dance groups like Memphis Jookin, So Dope Dance Academy, RIEHATATOKYO, The Council, Da-Ting & Lit Hip Hop. This post is a bit different from the others as it is celebrating and collaborating with groups that are professionals in dancing. It is shedding light on other sports other than basketball, soccer, and football. It is also collaborating with dance groups that may not be as well-known, but it is an advertisement that is enticing followers to want to learn more and feel inspired.

Figure 3 Type of Post Indicates Popularity: Deep Dive Analysis (Pinterest Board)

**Celebrity Endorsements**

In the study, it was found that the posts that received a certain engagement were based on the celebrities that the brands partnered with. Brands included globally known
pop stars and soccer stars. Some brands use somewhat well-known and very niche celebrities and athletes. This led to the next relationship focusing on engagement in terms of likes and comments with the type of celebrity featured in the post. The code of the type of celebrity included a few sentences about what type of celebrity an individual is and who exactly they are. It also determined if it was a celebrity or a brand. This provides information about the celebrity and/or brand that works well with these sneaker brands. If these collaborations help these brands engage more with their audience. It helps to answer the question if this is an effective marketing strategy that helps exhibit high engagement. Table 3 and Figure 4 show the four posts that will be discussed that include the two highest and lowest engagements out of all 40 posts received in the Deep Dive analysis.

Figure 4 Celebrity Endorsements (Pinterest Board)
The post that received the highest engagement out of the 40 posts was artifact 34 from the Deep Dive. It features a celebrity endorsement from Dua Lip who has collaborated with Puma numerous times and was mentioned previously as a Global singer and songwriter. The post is advertising their new collection which is the “Thrift Pack” where Dua Lipa is the face of the campaign. This is the same artifact that was from the content analysis as artifact 160. This post received 2,383,770 likes and 4,867 comments, which were high compared to the other posts collected.

The post that received the second highest engagement was artifact 2, which received 489,868 likes and 3,851 comments, high compared to the other posts collected. The post was from the Nike social media accounts where they announced their collaboration with Billie Eilish. Billie Eilish is an American singer and songwriter who gained immense fame after her single “Ocean Eyes” became very popular in 2015 (“Billie Eilish”, n.d.). She is well known recently for getting into acting as she will be starring in the series named ‘Swarm’ which is leading her to make her way into the entertainment industry in terms of acting (“ETOnline,” 2023). The post is introducing its new sneaker collection that incorporates new recycling methods. It is another post that was a celebrity endorsement where they invited a globally known singer who is known for her contribution to sustainability.

The post that received the lowest engagement was Artifact 31, which received 9,660 likes and 138 comments, the lowest compared to the other posts collected. It was a
post from the Puma social media account announcing their collaboration with Kith and Dapper Dan for their new collection. The collection offers pieces that are centered around 80’s fashion. Dapper Dan and Kith have been mentioned previously as fashion designers and streetwear brands.

The post that received the second lowest engagement was Artifact 24,5125 and 57 comments, the second lowest compared to the other posts collected. It was a post from the Vans social media account showcasing the collaboration between the Vault by Vans and Deaton Chris Anthony. The advertisement announces the collaboration and the newest collection that is bringing back the style centered around those who love to bowl. It is another celebrity endorsement and brand collaboration where it features a somewhat well-known musical artist and sub-brand within the brand.

Table 3 Celebrity Endorsement: Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Type of Celebrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>2,383,770 likes and 4,867 comments</td>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>489,868 likes and 3,851 comments</td>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>12,5125 and 57 comments</td>
<td>Fashion Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9,660 likes and 138 comments</td>
<td>Musical Artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Design Features and Marketing Strategies**

In the study, it was found that posts that utilized specific design features and marketing strategies can be used effectively for a brand to receive high engagement. This
can be based on a variety of factors which can include the brand's popularity, and the use of globally known celebrities and athletes. Brands that use the same design features and marketing strategies may not be as effective if they include lesser-known or niche celebrities/athletes. This leads to the next relationship which focuses on the design features and marketing strategies code from the deep dive analysis. Design features included a few sentences discussing the design features of the posts that include gender, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product. Provides information on the specific features these brands use to gain engagement from their users on social media. These are the features to push a user to click on that link and learn more about the advertisement. This also helps the question of what features of the social media post including gender, race, hashtags, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product are associated with high engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments.

Marketing strategies included a few sentences discussing the marketing strategies used on social media and their website. This can include influencer marketing, engagement, links, hashtags, promotion, updates, cultural relevance, etc. It provides key information on the strategies these brands use to gain high engagement and activate feelings of identity and belonging. This code helped answer the question of the marketing strategies used to help brands activate feelings of identity and belonging within their community. Two categories that were discovered in the study were the most prominent were the image's content and the captions which seem to lead to various forms of
engagement. They seem to indicate if a post will receive low engagement, somewhat high engagement, high engagement, or extremely high engagement.

In the category of low engagement in terms of the image's content and caption, there were 9 out of 40 posts collected. The design features that focused on the content of the image included the tactic of photo dumps where one single post will include several images and videos where the settings are creative. In those images, many of the individuals were fully clothed in brand items and the individuals varied in gender and race. The marketing strategies used for these posts that centered around the content of the caption included the tactic of celebrity/brand endorsement. The use of tagging the brands, celebrities, and production that were involved in the advertisement. Other tactics included the use of links and having their captions includes brief information about the collection and collaborations.

In the category of somewhat high engagement in terms of the image's content and caption, there were 16 out of 40 collected. The design features that were focused on the content of the image include the use of photo dumps where we see somewhat creative settings with individuals that varied in gender and race. The settings were mostly basic where it was just solid colors to put more of an emphasis on the models and clothing instead of the setting. The individuals in those posts are fully clothed in the collections mentioned and/or in the brand's clothing in general. There is also the use of images depicting individuals playing certain sports. The marketing strategies used focused on the content of the caption including the use of information about the collaboration, collections, and the post featured in the caption. They also included links and taglines that
help to capture the attention of users. These posts have many brand and celebrity endorsements that were collaborations.

Another tactic was that some posts were a call for action that centered around sustainability, which was seen to be a factor that was used when posts had a somewhat high engagement. The content of their images focused on having imagery surrounding sustainability. The caption's content included providing information about the post, facts about sustainability, and more. Artifacts 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, and 19 seemed to be more centered around the focus on sustainability which is a popular marketing tactic to show consumers that their brand is working towards being more ethically and socially sustainable. An example of a post that focuses on sustainability is Artifact 12, which is advertising Adidas's new collection and an initiative called "Made to be Remade". It focuses on their new route towards being more sustainable. They used design features where the post includes 2 images and a video that depicts male and female models modeling the new collection. They are fully clothed when they have captured hiking. The marketing strategies include the caption using a brief description of the collection and its initiative. It also includes a few steps on how the users can also get involved. They include a link for the users to get on to buy the collection. This led to the post receiving somewhat high engagement where they had 39,394 likes and 22,541 comments.

In the category of high engagement in terms of the content of the image and caption, there were 14 posts out of 40 that were found to receive high engagement. The design features of these posts include the use of photo dumps as well, which is the same as the other categories. Many of the images include individuals that are fully clothed in
the collection items that vary in gender and race. Most of the settings for the visuals seem to be high-budget photoshoots that focus on the items involved in the collection. These were all strategies used when it came to the content of the image. The marketing strategies used to focus on the content of the captions include the fact that many of them were simple collection posts where brands are introducing new items. Another tactic is the use of tags where celebrities, production, and other social media accounts. Their captions include links and provide information about the collections for users to gain a better understanding.

In the category of extremely high engagement in terms of content of the image and caption, there was 1 out of 40 that was collected that had very high engagement compared to the other artifacts. This post is specifically artifact 34 which has been mentioned previously and includes four images of Dua Lipa in the new collection where she is set in what seems like home to give it those cozy vibes. She is fully clothed in most of the images compared to the previous posts. These were components of the content of the image that the post includes which seemed to help in the engagement. The marketing strategies include the use of tagging the celebrity and the production behind the shots. The caption provides a tagline and a date for consumers to know the release of the collection. They also use hashtags specifically the “#ThriftedPack” hashtag. This post is specifically a celebrity endorsement as Dua Lipa is known to be under contract with Puma as the face of their brand. These were components of the content of the caption that the post includes which seemed to help in the engagement.
Partnerships, Global Athletes, and Minority Celebrities

The deep dive had three themes that were very prevalent throughout the data collection where it is shown that the posts that were collected have certain themes that are repeated through every brand. The first theme is partnerships which focus mainly on partnerships between authors (brands and celebrities). The posts are focused on advertising new collections and collaborations between other brands and celebrities. These are strictly posts to announce or repeat these partnerships that are selling their new products. There were 21 posts out of the 40 that fit into this theme, which is where figure 4 showcases the posts that will be discussed.

An example of a post that fits the theme of partnership is artifact 3 where the post is advertising the collaboration between NOCTA which is the Nike Sub Label owned by Drake. They are releasing a new AF1 silhouette which is Nike’s most popular sneaker. It is a post that is partnered with a well-known celebrity which is Drake. He is a Canadian rapper and singer who is known for popularizing the idea of mixing singing into Hip Hop ("Drake (musician),” n.d.). He is also known for owning NOCTA which is a Nike-branded label. The post itself received high engagement where it had 225,479 likes and 2,088 comments. Many other posts within the study included partnerships with celebrities and brands which lead to a variety of engagements. This was to be expected since depending on the celebrities, athletes, and brands that were involved in the partnerships dictated the engagement the post would receive due to popularity.
The next theme is global athletes/celebrities which focuses on the intention of these brands to have the posts & advertisements focus on global athletes and celebrities. This is a common tactic used for brands to have a larger audience reach. Help them attract new customers and become more well-known. Receive more engagement and become more diverse in terms of content, followers, and much more. There were 4 posts out of the 40 that fit into this theme. An example of a post that fits the theme of global athletes/celebrities is artifact 11 which is advertising Adidas's newest World Cup Collection for the 2023 World Cup. They included six well-known soccer players like Jude Bellingham, Achraf Hakimi, Lionel Messi, Serge Gnarby, Pedri González, and Son HuengMin who are all representing their countries in the World Cup. The post itself received somewhat high engagement where it had 55,949 likes and 612 comments. The other post also had a somewhat high engagement despite the fact it includes global celebrities/athletes which were expected to have high engagement since previous posts including these individuals had a high or very high engagement.

The next theme is minority token celebrities/influencers which focuses on the idea that brands will collaborate and/or partner with other celebrities and influencers as a representative for their minority demographic. The concept of tokenism in this study is to refer to the idea that individuals can be used by brands to appeal to specific minority groups. They are seen more as a representative where they are viewed as a token. The brand is working to show that they are working on being more inclusive and diverse with the individuals they include in their campaigns and social media page. This can help them engage with their audience where they feel like they are being represented. This is also
about the brands being perceived as diverse. There were 10 posts out of the 40 that fit into this theme. An example of a post that fits this theme is artifact 27 which is a post that advertises the announcement of the "Classic Since Forever" that stars Paloma Elsesser. It is a campaign that focuses on individuality and creativity. It encompasses the fact that she is from New York with immigrant roots. Paloma Elsesser is an American fashion model who is well known for her becoming well known as a plus-size model (“Paloma Elsesser,” n.d.). The post is meant to bring attention to the various stories’ individuals have by being from New York which is the home to various people from all over the world. It appears she was their token minority since she was known for being mixed with Chilean and African American. She is also known for the strides she has made as a plus-size model. The post received low engagement where it had 19,033 likes and 161 comments. This was surprising since having individuals who differ from the norm and allowing brands to show more diversity on their platforms would gain more engagement. It appears individuals truly wish to see well-known celebrities and not just ones who are seen as a “token” for a brand to incorporate more diversity on their platforms.
The main findings of this study include the claims that the type of posts that sneaker brands use does indicate if they receive high or low engagement based on their popularity. Another finding is that celebrity endorsements not only increase engagement but help brands better their trust and loyalty with their consumers. This provides an idea of how including well-known celebrities allows consumers to relate to the brands as they continue to see individuals who inspire them. The last finding is that there are specific design features and marketing strategies that can be used efficiently to promote engagement, and a sense of belonging and connect with one’s identity. This includes the use of celebrities, and athletes within the visuals and captions.
DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are meant to provide a better understanding of the consumer engagement behaviors that come across sneaker-focused advertisements on social media. Through a close analysis of sneaker marketing, certain behaviors are exhibited by consumers, how media depictions activate feelings of identity and belonging, and how some of the marketing tactics and design features seen in the posts are associated with high engagement. The findings of the study also expanded on previous research about the history of sneakers and its correlation between sneakers and race, identity and belonging, and value perception.

As mentioned previously, the methods incorporating race into the study proved to be complicated as it was difficult to assume the race of individuals if it was not explicitly mentioned within the post. It was excluded as a possible factor since it was also difficult to see if the race of the individuals included is a reason why a post would receive a certain amount of engagement, provide individuals a sense of belonging or help form one’s identity. Instead, global celebrities and athletes were included which are individuals from other countries are more based on nationality than race. The only time race was discussed is in the focus of the themes found in the deep analysis where token minority celebrities/athletes are used in a sneaker brand's post. This helps to see if brands that try
to incorporate diversity on their platform help them to receive more engagement since it allows consumers to see individuals who look and possibly inspire them. Previous research has made a distinction between the relationship between race and sneakers this study decided to look at it on a smaller scale where it includes nationality and the idea of token minorities. This allows the study to show how when brands use global, or minority celebrities and athletes may not be as useful of a tactic compared to others.

The findings in the study have come across three prominent themes which include partnerships, global athletes/celebrities, and minority token celebrities/athletes. Each theme shows how each post has a motivation for the post and a central focus as well. Many included partnerships which are a popular marketing strategy used to have a larger audience reach and receive more engagement. Other posts focused on global athletes/celebrities which is when the sneaker brands branch out and have celebrity endorsement from individuals from different countries. This helps to reach a different audience than the U.S. which can again allow the brand to expand its audience and receive more engagement. The last theme is a minority token celebrity/athlete which is meant to have their posts include more diversity. This is meant to have their followers feel a sense of belonging and feel represented as well. These are themes that help add to previous research to expand the importance of sneaker culture and the literature surrounding it.

In this chapter, it will explain the results found in the study and its connection to previous research. It will also provide more information on how the results helped to answer the research questions that were formulated and offer insights into what questions
have emerged from the results. Finally, this chapter will review engagement concerning other codes (e.g., design features, marketing strategies, type of post, etc.) and provide insight to the engagement behavior exhibited on social media.

**Complications with Implementing Race**

The findings of the study provide a better understanding of how the relationship between likes and the type of post can answer the question of what engagement behaviors are exhibited on social media. They also support and add to the previous research by Brandon Wallace who studied the idea of racialized marketing in the athletic apparel industry. The apparel industry and social media marketing are niches in terms of industry and marketing. As mentioned previously racialized marketing is a tactic where brands can include harmful messages and exploit certain minority groups to promote their products or overall brand. The previous research focused on the idea of how the athletic apparel industry had previously implemented certain promotional strategies that focused on associating their products with Black athletes and Black culture (Wallace, 2022). The industry is known for exploiting black communities which is where we see the continuation of racialized marketing. The item that has received these types of promotional strategies is the sneaker which is well known for its relationship with race. Social media marketing and racialized marketing may go hand in hand as we see sneaker brands link sneakers with Black athletes and celebrities to include more diversity.
The previous study presents the idea that there is a relationship between race and sneakers which can be viewed as racialized marketing. The findings from this study works to expand the idea of how the athletic apparel industry is modifying its marketing strategies by using social media. That has increased their engagement with the number of likes based on the type of posts they use. Social media marketing has become the main strategy sneaker brands use to promote their collaborations and collections at a greater scheme. As mentioned before previous research done by Brandon Wallace focuses on the idea that athletic apparel brands promote their brand using black athletes and celebrities. Whereas the posts that were collected include athletes and celebrities who vary in race and even gender. Wallace has provided information on how the most popular brands like Adidas, Converse, and Nike promoted ideals and mottos that would target African American consumers. Many of the posts that received the highest engagement currently focus on large worldwide known events like the world cup where we see the representation of different races that vary from Black to Hispanic.

Previous research introduced the concept of “commodity racism” (Wallace 2022, p. 43) which is known for embedding harmful ideas about race into a brand's advertisement. This was known for conveying damaging ideas and reinforcing harmful stereotypes about Black culture. It was an idea and type of marketing that was used by all types of brands and industries. As time moved forward so has the type of marketing and promotional strategies used by sneaker brands. Social media marketing is a strategy that can be very successful, but some brands won’t have consistent engagement if they are unable to see which type of posts work to benefit them the most. The study combined and
added to the idea of racialized marketing and social media marketing can explain the connection between likes and types of posts can explain the engagement behaviors exhibited by consumers.

The findings in the study have come across certain themes that were prevalent in the Deep Dive analysis where certain posts had a theme attached to them. Previous research has been done where author Jemayne L. King focuses on sneaker culture literature and its influence on modern media like television, sports studies, and music. Some themes surface from the research like the exploitation of black culture, the significance of Hip Hop, and sneaker culture's influence on individual empowerment. The study's findings help add a new media to be focused on, more specifically Instagram. There isn’t much research done on how sneakers and the culture surrounding it is very prominent on social media. It’s a platform where consumers can purchase, view, and stay up to date on everything sneaker related.

In summary, the findings in this study help answer the question of how sneaker culture and the marketing surrounding it incite a cult-like obsession by activating feelings of identity and belonging. The ideas in this study are to be considered effective marketing strategies where brands work to generate content that entices their audience. Individuals want to look at a brand's page and see they are represented and can connect with what they see. These themes are present in the study where they are common marketing strategies used to help activate those feelings. The measures that were included do not provide as much information if consumers are actively or passively engaging with a post. It was difficult to account outside factors with the current measures since likes and
comments are only viewed quantitively. It only provides information if a consumer liked or comments but does not give data if the codes mentioned push them to engage with a post.

Identity and Lifestyle

Previous studies have focused on the relationship between sneakers and their relationship with race, specifically with Black culture. As mentioned previously, research done by Wallace focuses on the concept of racialized marketing. There has also been research done on the correlation between sneakers and their history with the intersection between the sneakers and individuals who wear them (Hockey, et al, 2015). Sneakers have become an extension for many consumers and now that social media has become a part of a consumer’s daily life. Instantly purchase sneakers that continue to become a way for individuals to identify themselves. Sneakers provide meaning where individuals view them as an extension of themselves. The findings in this study attempted to add onto previous research on how consumers have attributed sneakers to a lifestyle where sneaker brands will see more engagement on their social media since they add to this style known as sneaker culture. This helps to answer the question of what engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media which can be seen as likes and comments. Many sneaker brands receive the engagement they do based on the type of posts they are adding to their accounts. Many posts received extremely high engagement that surpassed a million likes where we see celebrities as the
focus of the post, call for action, and brand collaborations. The posts that receive high engagement are celebrity endorsements that are modeling the items for the brand. That promotes the idea that consumers can look just like the individuals on the post if they buy the items featured. It will continue to fuel the lifestyle that sneakers provide for consumers.

The themes found in the previous research were meant to showcase how sneaker culture has its literature and is very influential on all types of media. Sneaker culture literature was developed within African American communities that focus on documenting what seems like a fashion movement (King, 2020). Sneaker culture has become an industry where it is seen in films, music, TV, and in academic courses. It was known to be an extension of Hip-Hop culture which ties in with the Black community. It has taken a course where brands use it to exploit these communities for monetary gain. It is a theme prevalent in literature and practice too. Sneaker culture is also known for its empowerment which has been mentioned previously. Individuals get involved in this culture to find this sense of belonging and figure out their identity where they can also form bonds with other individuals. It is meant to empower individuals just like other fashion items since sneakers are known to feel like an extension of oneself.

Previous research focuses on the idea of how sneakers can be viewed as an extension of oneself and become a part of their daily routine. The findings in this study add to that by giving examples of how sneakers promote a certain lifestyle that sneaker brands provide for all consumers. As mentioned previously there are many marketing tactics and design features that were found that can allow brands to receive high engagement, but the study
was unable to account for outside factors that can affect a post's engagement. Some brands have used celebrity endorsements and the engagement varied especially in this study which means it may not always be as effective across all brands. This can be due to many other events and factors that the study did not consider.

**People’s Relationship with Celebrities**

There have been previous studies done that focus on the idea of how sneakers have various values from monetary to emotional. The study by Jin Woo Choi focuses on the idea of how sneakers have evolved from their value in athletic performance. Consumers attribute a variety of values that foster a type of identity they formulate where they can be known as sneakerheads (Choi, 2017). Sneakers have evolved where they are worn for sports performance, comfort, and style, and their meaning and purposes have changed. Consumers view them as a presentation of “freedom, autonomy, and individuality” (Choi, 2017 p. 1). It was mentioned that sneakers have monetary, social, emotional, and functional values that consumers attribute to them which validates the idea of purchasing them to collect them. The study added to the previous studies by showing that the value sneakers have on consumers can be attributed to what posts they see on social media. Consumers can be easily persuaded to purchase items with the right marketing styles. Sneaker brands have realized the values and the culture that has been formulated by consumers play in their favor. Creating different types of posts and overall
prioritizing social media as their primary marketing strategy may help these brands receive high engagement.

The relationship between engagement and type of celebrity to see if posts receive high engagement due to the fact a well-known celebrity is featured on the post. This helps to answer the question of what engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media. The idea of including celebrities in a campaign and collaboration can be known as a celebrity endorsement. Many posts that were collected in the study showed that the ones that included well-known celebrities received more engagement compared to somewhat-known celebrities. Consumers want to see individuals that are well-known and who also support the brand. It facilitates the idea of how individuals wish to see athletes and celebrities that feel as though they represent them.

Previous research has also mentioned the concept of celebrity endorsement as an advertising strategy that is commonly used now, especially on social media. This promotes the idea that the product and/or brand have more value to them since a certain celebrity endorses it. It gives the idea of how consumers can look and be like the endorser if they purchase the product or wear the brand (Choi, 2017). It enhances a consumer's purchase intent when they can connect with the posts, they see which promotes this sense of belonging between the consumers and the brand. This study adds to the idea of how successful celebrity endorsement may be for sneaker brands. It pushes the consumers to add more value to the brand if they see how well-received it is by the celebrity. Social media is well known as a platform used to help facilitate consumer loyalty. The findings
attempt to show that the relationship between engagement and the type of celebrity can help a brand have higher engagement when their posts are endorsed by well-known celebrities compared to lesser-known celebrities. As mentioned before, engagement measures including just likes and comments which as the study was conducted, don’t provide as much information about consumer engagement. It does not provide data on why a consumer engaged and what factors contributed to their like and/or comment. Adding in the type of comments can provide more insight as to what a consumer thinks of the post, the products shown, and the individuals featured.

**Design Features and Marketing Strategies**

The findings in this study add to previous research on how consumers can form a sense of belonging and/or attribute a sense of identity to sneakers. A study was done by N. Braithwaite where they focus on how shoes can foster a sense of identity, specifically during an individual's teenage years. Shoes play a role where teenagers can recount key memories and transitional stages in their life (Braithwaite, 1970). The results of this study help to add to the idea of how shoes, more specifically sneakers, can formulate one's sense of belonging and identity. Social media can help individuals feel a sense of belonging where they can form relationships and feel a part of a community. Sneakers and sneaker brands have created this culture which is better known as sneaker culture that promotes this sneaker-loving lifestyle. While previous research has used other forms of media, this study focuses on social media which helps to add a new media to factor in.
Social media itself has created a new marketing strategy that is well-known and used by many different industries. It includes many subcategories within the marketing strategies which can include celebrity endorsement, brand endorsement, collaborations, and much more. They also have a relationship with design features which are included in every post on social media. This mainly focuses on visuals where consumers can see the models involved, product, setting, and much more. The idea that shoes help connect to a consumer’s sense of belonging and identity is also an effective marketing strategy for sneaker brands. Brands creating content that plays into a consumer's need to belong and connect with their social identity can push them to engage. Brands are aware of how shoes can be an extension of oneself and create content that perpetuates that ideally allows them to connect with their consumers. This also ties in with the idea of how consumers have developed this cult-like obsession with sneakers. These all correlate with the idea that the content posted by sneaker brands works to connect with a consumer’s identity, present them with a place to belong, and entice their obsession with sneakers.

The findings show how when individuals come across these types of marketing and design features allow, they feel connected to the brand. Design features allow individuals to see the products, connect with the individuals featured in the post, and come across aesthetically pleasing posts. This is where the study focuses on the visuals, specifically the individuals featured in the advertisements which are where brands are working to connect with their audience. Consumers want to see people who look like them and celebrities they look up to or know of. It is also a type of marketing strategy where brands not only are using celebrity endorsement but trying to be more diverse.
Brands, specifically sneaker brands, seem to be working on including different types of individuals in their advertisements.

The results help to give examples of how certain marketing tactics and design features used that affect the engagement brands will receive. Posts that received high engagement included individuals that vary in gender, and the setting was aesthetically pleasing. The marketing strategies that were used that received high engagement were celebrity and brand endorsement. Some were focused on movements that are better known as call-for-action posts. It is a marketing strategy that brands use to capture the attention of their audience and encourage them to click. The posts that received low engagement included the same design features, but their marketing strategies included more collection and brand endorsements. As mentioned previously there were engagement thresholds created for the data set to determine the engagement levels. Engagement levels were difficult to define and differentiate as the engagement measures varied drastically. The study attempted to form thresholds that fit the data, but it did not consider other outside factors including the follower count, date posted in correlation to an event, and much more. Those can affect why the post received the engagement it did. There is also the factor that the thresholds pertain to the data in this study and may not be the same for others. A different criterion could be created to determine engagement levels to allow for more accurate numbers that correlate with the levels. The thresholds were based on cutoffs that were seen in the data which means this can only pertain to this study and is not an accurate depiction of engagement levels. Cutoffs were when the data had specific jumps in terms of likes throughout the data for example for low engagement the
cutoff was at 20,211 like and jumped to 30,000 which is where it was decided that is the level for low engagement. Again, creating a different criterion or scraping the idea of engagement levels could allow for more accurate information on engagement.

These findings help to add to previous research on how social media marketing done by sneaker brands where they connect with a consumer’s social identity and help them develop that sense of belonging. Overall, as the results were analyzed it was difficult to see if consumers truly were affected by those marketing strategies and design features by looking at a post likes and comments. There was also no indication if the consumers who engaged in the post have that cult-like obsession with sneakers as it was mentioned previously. The engagement measures used did not provide much data if the marketing tactics and design features used influenced a consumer’s cult-like obsession, identity, and sense of belonging. The data simply shows that users are engaging with content created by sneaker brands and there are various marketing tactics and design features that are used. Each of the marketing tactics and design collectively have an impact on the engagement brands receive.
CONCLUSION

The findings from this study helped answer the questions 1) What engagement behaviors are exhibited by individuals when they consume sneaker advertisements on social media? 2) How does sneaker culture and the marketing surrounding it incite a cult-like obsession by activating feelings of identity and belonging? 3) What features of the social media post including gender, race, hashtags, celebrities, depiction of the human body, and depictions of the product are associated with high engagement in the form of likes, shares, and comments? In this section, there will be a discussion about recommendations for marketers, and academic researchers. It will also discuss the limitations of the present study, and suggestions for future studies.

Recommendations for Marketers

This study provides some recommendations for marketers where they can see how beneficial social media marketing is for every industry, specifically for sneaker brands. The findings suggest that marketers can learn how to better their engagement on their social media by implementing specific marketing strategies and design features. The findings show that posts that were centered around celebrity endorsement received very
high engagement compared to others. It is a strategy that many different brands incorporate, especially on social media. Marketers can see how previous brands have done it and figure out which works for them. Certain brands benefit from specific strategies and design features depending on their audience. It shows that there are certain steps brands could take that can generate more attention and possible sales if they tailor their marketing to social media.

Marketers need to keep up with the trends involving new strategies regarding marketing and promotions. This study helps them to gain a better understanding of what trends are working that keeps the attention of their audience. The findings show that there are specific strategies and design features that increase consumer engagement on social media. This can increase a brand's reach to different consumers which could lead to loyal customers. This study is here to showcase how to influence and effective social media marketing. It not only enhances consumer engagement, but they will be more likely to purchase what is being promoted. Marketers are known for figuring out different strategies that will boost a brand's sales and meet consumer needs. Social media is a platform that has allowed brands to build relationships with their audience. They can tailor their advertising to attract potential and existing consumers. It also provides a space for consumers to converse with the brand and other consumers which allows for relationships to be formed. The study helps marketers to see how important it is for brands to implement social media marketing to generate more engagement.
Recommendations for Academic Researchers

This study provides some recommendations for academic researchers. It will give a better understanding of consumer engagement behaviors on social media when it comes to sneaker-related posts. Previous studies have focused on other types of media when social media has become the most used compared to other media. Sneaker culture and sneaker marketing is another topic that hasn’t been researched by many as it is a very niche topic. The findings show that these topics help to see the influence social media has on consumer behaviors, specifically engagement behavior. Social media is a concept that has been researched by many but there isn’t much regarding social media marketing. That is also a niche marketing strategy that is fairly new as social media continues to grow.

Further research could be done where researchers could see which platforms allow brands to see the most growth, which strategies work for which platform, and the connections that are formed on social media. Previous research has focused on the bonds individuals can form with their footwear. Individuals attribute memories, and key moments and formulate a sense of identity with the shoes they wear. Researchers are provided insight into how an item like sneakers can be used to see the different marketing strategies, and the influence it has on individuals whether it is on social media or their personal lives. Academic researchers will see how the effect sneaker marketing has on consumer engagement behavior and the influence social media has on individuals. They will also see how sneaker brands are promoting lifestyles that can become one’s identity and provide a sense of belonging.
Strengths

The study had many strengths where it has allowed the idea of combining two ideas of sneaker and social media marketing can allow other industries to implement the design features and strategies found can help gain more engagement on their social media platforms. It has also utilized the method of content analysis which allowed the study to truly see if there is a distinct difference between the factors discussed and if it can allow a brand to receive a certain amount of engagement. The study finds new information about how sneakers and the marketing surrounding it has a great effect on consumers. The impact can be positive or negative, but the study shows how individuals develop a bond with sneakers and the culture it encompasses. They are not only finding their style but connecting with other consumers, brands, and celebrities who all share the same love for sneakers. Overall, this study’s strength is contributing new knowledge of how social media and the marketing involved have a great impact on sneaker brands, consumers, and researchers to learn more.

Limitations

The findings that have been discussed previously prompted the author to realize some limitations that have come about during the study. Content analysis is a quantitative method where it lacks interaction between the researcher and participants. This topic focuses on the connection between consumer engagement and sneaker brands. A
qualitative approach could have been taken where more data could be collected about human experience. The findings from this research provide data about the marketing strategies, quantifying engagement behavior, and the design features of the advertisements. The study could have benefited from taking an approach where data could be collected about how individuals perceive sneaker brands and their advertisements. The findings also don’t provide much information about how the advertisements consumers see on social media generate more sales. The content analysis doesn’t allow researchers to see when consumers see posts on social media and what pushes them to like, comment, follow, or click.

Nevertheless, despite the limitations, this study adds a different perspective in terms of sneaker marketing and sneaker culture. It allows researchers, sneaker brands, and marketers to see how social media marketing can incite a cult-like obsession that activates feelings of identity and belonging. This study helped investigate the influence social media has in terms of marketing that affects consumer engagement behaviors.

**Suggestion for Future Studies**

This study focused on the methodology of a content analysis which took a more quantitative approach. As mentioned previously in the limitations section, the study could take a qualitative approach. This could include interviews or focus groups to gain data from consumers and how they view sneaker marketing. It could be used to test an individual's thoughts on how a single post affects their engagement behavior. More
information could be discovered about the idea of how social media marketing activates feelings of belonging and forms a sense of identity. Qualitative methods could allow testing the relationship consumers and sneaker brands may have. It can also consider factors like celebrity endorsements and design features which affected a consumer’s engagement behavior in this study. The sampling methods will differ since a content analysis allows for more data to be collected and a qualitative approach can be more time-consuming.

Another suggestion is factoring in other social media platforms instead of Instagram. This can include Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok. Only images were included in this study and another suggestion could be to add videos as well. Many advertisements that are posted include videos where it showcases the products and individuals involved. It can be considered another type of data to be collected apart from just photos. Findings from this study could be enhanced further by examining various types of posts which also factor in videos. It has become a new aspect of social media where accounts can post not only images but videos. There can also be research where there is a focus on influencers instead of celebrities. Influencer endorsements are a common marketing strategy and have become popular on platforms like Instagram. This can help add more information about the different strategies and their benefits when it comes to brand advertisements on social media.

Another suggestion is adding further the study by adding other themes that are present in sneaker marketing. As mentioned previously, there has been previous research done on sneaker culture but in terms of other media like television, music, and film. This
study attempted to explore how these topics are creating this obsession where it can become a consumer's lifestyle. It looked at it through the lens of social media specifically where it involves imagery, videography, and text. Future research could investigate further how all media including social media advertise sneakers and sneaker culture. This is where other social media platforms can be implemented. Instagram is a well-known platform that most brands use to advertise but there are many other platforms that they use as well. That leads to another suggestion where research can be done to see which platforms generate the most engagement and are more effective for sneaker brands. There are many suggestions for future research as this topic is something that few have tackled. This study will help to propel more research to be done on effective marketing strategies.
APPENDIX A

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy used in the study included picking 200 posts for the content analysis. They were sampled from the following accounts of Nike, Puma, Vans, and Adidas. The posts ranged from the years 2019 to 2023 and were collected from their Instagram pages. The selection process that was used to sample the posts consisted of analyzing each company's Instagram page 20 posts at a time. The posts that were selected must meet the requirements of having over 5,000 likes and include an individual. The process will continue until 50 posts are selected from each of the brand's accounts. A criteria was created for the sampling strategy to sample images that feature individuals who are athletes, celebrities, and models. Images that are non-photos which include drawings, digital art, videos, and pictures of shoes only will not be considered for the study. Once the samples were collected on Microsoft Excel the social media platform, Pinterest was used to create a visual board where all the posts collected can be viewed and the links accessible. The sampling strategy for the deep dive analysis included the choice of collecting 40 posts from the 200 in the content analysis. The criteria created for the sampling include that the posts need to include links to an advertisement, hashtags, include a celebrity and the post must be a campaign/advertisement.
# APPENDIX B

## Coding Protocol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes For Content Analysis</th>
<th>Rationale: (What am I putting in the box)</th>
<th>Why is this important?</th>
<th>Methodology Notes</th>
<th>Research Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes</td>
<td># of likes the post received</td>
<td>It tells us how much attention the content received</td>
<td>Used as an indicator for engagement level.</td>
<td>What are the engagement behaviors? What posts are the most engaging?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags (Used in Preliminary Analysis)</td>
<td>The hashtags the company used in their post</td>
<td>This will allow us to see how they attract and retain followers.</td>
<td>Not used.</td>
<td>Will not be used in the Content Analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td># of comments the post received</td>
<td>The number of comments the post receives</td>
<td>Used as an indicator for engagement level.</td>
<td>What are the engagement behaviors? What posts are the most engaging?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>The types of celebrities such as athletes, singers, actresses, influencers, etc. That can be seen in the post.</td>
<td>Provide information about the celebrity's engagement.</td>
<td>Include all names tagged and featured in the post.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Depicted</td>
<td>The sports depicted in the image (eg, someone playing basketball, tennis, baseball, etc.)</td>
<td>This allows us to see if there are sports-related influences.</td>
<td>Sports are not depicted on the posts that were collected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author (Influence, Celebrity)</td>
<td>Include the influencer's name and the brand.</td>
<td>This allows us to see if there are brands mentioned in the post.</td>
<td>Develop inclusion &amp; exclusion criteria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author (Brand)</td>
<td>Include the brand's name in the post.</td>
<td>This will allow us to see if the post is sponsored.</td>
<td>Create multiple columns for each author and brand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Post</td>
<td>Mention the type of post which can include a collaboration, an influencer post, and a brand post.</td>
<td>This allows us to see the types of posts that exist and if they are being used in their marketing plans.</td>
<td>Many posts are collaborations, or just highlight posts of an ambassador's brand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags</td>
<td>Include the tags that were tagged in the post which can include other celebrities, other brands, etc. (Specify what tags they are)</td>
<td>This will allow us to see how the influencers use them to attract more followers and users to like their page.</td>
<td>Many posts include tags so maybe add a section to specify how many tags and what they are.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Posts</td>
<td>Include the amount of pictures within the post (photo drop).</td>
<td>This tells us how many images are included in their posts and which posts include more than one image.</td>
<td>Every post should be accounted for and if they include more than one image each image should be analyzed (if it meets the criteria).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat Posts</td>
<td>Specify if the post has been repeated and contains the same information (advertisement post, collection, collaboration).</td>
<td>This tells us how often they have specific posts that are repeated which can include collections, sponsorships, and collaborations.</td>
<td>Is this a new effective marketing strategy?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborations</td>
<td>Specify the collaboration they have with celebrities, other brands, and influencers.</td>
<td>This will give information about what the collaboration is and the success it received (or did not receive) on social media.</td>
<td>Does this activate feelings of identity and belonging?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram Accounts</td>
<td>Include all Instagram accounts that are tagged in the post.</td>
<td>This will tell us the number of Instagram accounts that were included in the one post.</td>
<td>Helps to keep track of all the accounts that were sampled.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79
## APPENDIX C

Sample, Deep Dive Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Summary of Advertisement</th>
<th>Design Features</th>
<th>Marketing Strategies</th>
<th>Type of Post</th>
<th>Information about Celebrity &amp; Brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>The advertisement focuses on advertising their product that anyone can listen to through an FM broadcast. They are creating a space where anyone who either knows of Nike or buys from them will find a place to hear from people they admire. They posted a specific post that focuses on the disparity in football with minorities. The post was timed since the World Cup was coming up.</td>
<td>The post includes 2 images and 2 videos that showcases the celebrities featured in the broadcast. There is an image of a minority woman who is wearing a hijab. The image is in a setting that calming where you can see the man having a chat. The individuals are all covered up and there is no product featured in the post.</td>
<td>The marketing strategies used include tagging, and caption that includes tags to other people. They also included 3 posts into one and provide a link for anyone to use to listen to the broadcast. They also use influencer/celebrity endorsement.</td>
<td>This post received high engagement where it had 376,653 likes and 1,664 comments.</td>
<td>This is a post that is promoting Nike’s African show. It is a broadcast that focuses on social issues and includes collaborations with influencers, celebrities, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>The advertisement focuses on the collaboration between Nike and Billie Eilish. It is a new collection where they are introducing her new sneaker collection that is incorporating recycling methods.</td>
<td>The post includes 3 images and one video that depicts Billie Eilish in her new sneakers. The setting is in a desert where she is fully clothed. There are images and a video that include her in full body and the items itself. The branding is clear with the tagline “Eilish”.</td>
<td>The marketing strategies used include tagging especially tagging Billie Eilish. The caption includes a description of the items, a quote from the celebrity and the date it will be released. This is another post that uses celebrity endorsement. They made sure the images give a story and give a look at the products as well.</td>
<td>This post received high engagement where it had 488,866 likes and 3,851 comments.</td>
<td>This is a post that is advertising the collaboration between Nike and famous singer Billie Eilish. It is a collaboration that is introducing her new shoe collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>The advertisement focuses on the new collaboration between NOCA and Drake. They are releasing a new Air Jordan silhouette.</td>
<td>The post includes 5 images that depict male models cycling around outside in a city. They are all fully clothed which even includes their faces being covered while wearing the new sneakers.</td>
<td>The marketing strategies used include tagging the brand NOCA. In their caption, they include a brief description of the products and say that the item is available for purchase. This is a brand endorsement post but it includes collaborating with Nike’s sub-label.</td>
<td>This post received high engagement where it had 220,479 likes and 2,088 comments.</td>
<td>The post is advertising the collaboration between Nike, NOCA, and Drake. It is introducing the new collection focused on the Air Jordan silhouette.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

https://www.amiparis.com/us/about

Journal of Marketing, 57(2), 64–75. https://doi.org/10.2307/1252027


Choi, J. I. W. (2017, June 21). Sneakerheads' Assessment of Sneaker Value and Behaviors Throughout the Sneaker Ownership Cycle. ScholarsArchive@OSU. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/graduate_thesis_or_dissertations/9306t3488


Stanciu, T. (2022, February 8). Key Takeaways From Adidas' Social Media


Retrieved March 17, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel_Messi


Retrieved March 17, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paloma_Elsesser

Retrieved March 17, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puma_(brand)
