NAME-BRAND SNEAKERS: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ADOLESCENT CONSUMPTION

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ABSTRACT

Relatively little is known about how commodity consumption amongst African-Americans affirms issues of social organization within society. Moreover, the lack of primary documentation on the attitudes of African-American (A-A) commodity consumers contributes to the distorting image of A-A adolescents who actively engage in name-brand sneaker consumption; consequently maintaining the stigma of A-A adolescents being ‘addicted to brands’ (Chin, 2001). This qualitative study sought to employ the attitudes of African-Americans from an urban/metropolitan high school in dialogue on the subject of commodity consumption; while addressing the concepts of structure and agency with respect to name-brand sneaker consumption. Additionally, this study integrated three theoretical frameworks that were used to assess the participants’ engagement as consumers of name-brand sneakers. Through a focus group and analysis of surveys, it was discovered that amongst the African-American adolescent population, sneaker consumption imparted a means of attaining a higher socio-economic status, while concurrently providing an outlet for ‘acting’ as agents within the constraints of a constructed social structure.

This study develops a practical method of analyzing several issues within commodity consumption, specifically among African-American adolescents. Prior to an empirical application of several theoretical frameworks, the researcher assessed the role of sneaker production as it predates sneaker consumption. Labor-intensive production of name-brand footwear is almost exclusively located in Asia (Vanderbilt, 1998), and has become the formula for efficient, profitable production in name-brand sneaker factories. Moreover, the production of such footwear is controlled by the demand for commodified products in the global economy. Southeast Asian manufacturing facilities owned by popular athletic footwear companies generate between $830 million and $5 billion a year from sneaker consumption (Vanderbilt, 1998). The researcher asks, What are the characteristics that determine the role of African-American consumers within the name-brand sneaker industry? The manner in which athletic name-brand footwear is consumed is a process that is directly associated with the social satisfaction of the consumer (Stabile, 2000). In this study, the researcher investigated the attitudes of adolescents towards name-brand sneaker consumption and production in order to determine how their perceived socioeconomic status affected by their consumption. Miller (2002) suggests that the consumption practices of young African-Americans present a central understanding of the act of consumption itself. While an analysis of consumption is vital in determining how and to whom a product is marketed Chin (2001), whose argument will be discussed further into this study,
explicates that (commodity) consumption is significant because it provides an understanding of the socially constructed society in which economically disadvantaged children are a part of.

**Rationale**

The interest in clothing as a commodity has been investigated in previous studies, such as in Swain’s (2002) investigation of the relationship between identity and clothing in the southeast of England. In an effort to explore the attitudes of English junior high students towards name-brand fashion, Swain discovers that “[their] appearance was a central part of how they (Westmoor Abbey pupils) defined themselves, and clothing seemed to signify self-worth” (Swain, 2002). The current study aims to pursue similar questions about the consumption practices of high school students in northern California. Specifically, the researcher investigated the social significance of the consumption of name-brand sneakers amongst African-American high school students, from an urban/metropolitan high school in Northern California who were between the ages of 15 and 18.

**Literature Review**

Production and consumption are inherently allied and “where there is subsistence production, there will be subsistence consumption” (Corrigan, 1997). This concept is particularly true of global production and consumption. Stabile (2000) suggests that “Production produces not only the object but also the manner of consumption, not only objectively but also subjectively”. Stabile’s statement leads to a widely deliberated topic: the nature of production and consumption within the footwear industry.

Many studies (Schilling, 1996; Carty, 2000; Koggard, 1998) have examined the issue of global exploitation and production in the footwear industry, particularly in Southeast Asian sweatshops. Vanderbilt (1998) suggests that “…shoe production has become a perfect fit for developing nations…” such as Asia. An athletic shoe made by Nike is “designed in the United States; uses synthetic rubber made from petroleum from Saudi Arabia; is sewn in Indonesia; is transported on a ship registered in Singapore, which is run by a Korean management firm using Filipino sailors; and is marketed in Japan and the United States” (Anderson & Taylor, 2005). One nation that has been the object of much debate concerning the exploitation of industry workers is Indonesia. Within Indonesian factories, workers build a tolerance for harsh working conditions, consisting of 60-65 hours of work each week for a little over $10 (Frederick, 1998).

One particular area that has been considered within only a fraction of studies concerning global exploitation studies is the relevance of the consumption of name-brand footwear amongst African-American adolescents. The concept of global exploitation played a significant role within this study, in that it generated the discussion amongst the participants. The intentions of this
study were two-fold: 1) It investigated whether a compelling proportion of adolescents have little or no knowledge of the global production process of the sneakers that they consume; thus feeding into the multifaceted cycle of globalization; and 2) It explored the social implications behind the consumption of name-brand sneakers amongst African-American adolescents. Although globalization was discussed throughout the present study, it was not the prime focus; rather it stimulated the discourse within this investigation, particularly during the survey and interview segments.

The Role of Social Structures
The role of social structures (or the socially constructed orders in society) was central to this study. Structuralists have suggested that social structures have the capacity to elucidate human behavior (Risman, 2004). More specifically, the concept of structure encompasses the idea that the social forces that exist within society dictate the role that an individual is expected to adopt. Individuals operating within structures are referred to as social actors, or agents of social change. Risman (2004) suggests that the association between actors and social structures is that actors purposely seek to increase their “self-perceived well-being” under the constraints of social structures. Therein provides the foundation for discerning the role of commodities, more specifically, name-brand sneakers in the lives of A-A youth. Like clothing, name-brand footwear functions as a symbol (Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006). Johnson (1989) augments Beaudoin and Lachance’s (2006) argument when he suggests that symbols influence consumer choices in such a way that an “object is symbolically harmonious to the buyers’ goals, feelings, and self-definitions”. Obtaining social acceptance through the consumption of a commodity, such as a sneaker, fashions a false perception of the consumer. Adolescents are socialized to conform to clothing patterns as a part of their social interaction (Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006) with the expectation of being rewarded through how their well-being is perceived by themselves and others. Furthermore, the understanding of social structures provides a platform for understanding consumer culture.

The Culture of the Consumer
One of the essential properties of consumer practices is that “we purchase the meanings of objects rather than the objects themselves” (Corrigan, 1997). This concept is referred to as the culturalization of merchandise. Other researchers, including Hollowman (1996) and Swain (2002) have investigated this facet of cultural sociology and consumption, thus providing a platform in which studies such as this can be introduced. In her study on dress-related behavioral problems in public schools, Holloman (1996) notes that reports of dress-related behavioral problems imply that “the phenomenon occurs mainly among low-income youth of certain ethnic minority groups, most notably African-American and Latinos, who represent large numbers of the youth in public schools” (268). Swain’s study looked at the relationship between school children and name-brand clothing. He proposed that “a relaxed
enforcement of school uniform created a space for pupils to use clothing as a means of gaining recognition, of generating common bonds, and of sharing interests and intimacy within the peer group of cultures (Swain, 2002), thus reinforcing Corrigan’s (1997) previous statement pertaining to the meaning of objects. Douglas and Isherwood agree that people consume goods in order to maintain their social relationships (Corrigan, 1997). Using the theories of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Swain (2002) illustrated the correlation between the consumption and wearing of name-brand clothing and “pupil culture and networks” as he frequently referred to them in his study. He defined Pupil Cultures as “a way of life or shared guidelines” (Swain, 2002). Both studies (Holloman, 1996; Swain, 2002) were critical in evaluating the social significance of the consumption amongst adolescents, because they acknowledged that the consumption of name-brand clothing and footwear is a cultural as well as a social phenomenon.

African-American youth “constitute an important part of the multibillion-dollar youth consumer market, especially with regard to specific products such as athletic shoes” (Hollowman, 1996). This can be attributed to the fact that, in a social context, “clothes are an important part of teenage culture” (Bernard, 1961). While it is important to take into account the reality that all teens are not partakers in the teenage culture (Bernard, 1961), there is a significant number of adolescents who contribute to consumer culture. More specifically, due to the influence of television and advertisements, youth are more likely to participate in conspicuous consumption and materialism (Lee & Brown, 1995). Conspicuous consumption, the manner by which wealth and status are measured, is characterized by “…unproductive consumption of goods; suited to larger, more developed societies of strangers; and middle- and lower-class strategy” (Corrigan, 1997). A second factor that perpetuates teenage consumer culture, particularly the subsistence of conspicuous consumption and materialism amongst adolescents, is that during adolescence it is common for youth to begin to value their appearance more than before (Holloman 1996). Schwartz (1963) suggests that “some black youth, especially those from impoverished backgrounds, may embrace certain kinds of clothing because they represent possessions that they can readily obtain and control” (Holloman, 1996).

**Sneakers and African-Americans**

Among some of the most popular footwear companies in the world is Nike Inc., which controls almost half of the retail sneaker market (Vanderbilt, 1998). In 1996, Nike, the world’s largest athletic shoe company, generated sales of $5,008,000,000 (Vanderbilt, 1998). With the support of spokespersons such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods, the company has developed into an international industry. Nike’s popularity amongst African-American consumers could be attributed to African-American endorsers and spokespersons such as Jordan and Woods. Lee and Browne (1995) suggest that “African-Americans in general react favorably to advertisements and
products that use African-American endorsers. Aaron Cooper’s, an art-
school graduate working for Nike Inc., states that:

> When we go to the playground, and we just dump the shoes out it’s unbelievable. The kids go nuts. That’s when you realize the importance of Nike...Nike is the number one thing in their life [or lives]” (Vanderbilt, 1998).

The term broing is industry terminology that refers to visiting a ‘hood (neighborhood) and suggesting a product to its residents; and implies that Nike, amongst other sneaker companies, continues to leave an impression on African-American adolescents within urban and metropolitan communities.

In order to interpret the social practices of a population of people, it has been suggested that several variables should be examined. Among them include self-efficacy. Within the framework of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Boardman & Robert, 2000). In investigating the impact of individual’s neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES) in relationship to self-efficacy, Boardman and Robert (2000) noted that in past studies, Socioeconomic status (SES) on an individual level has been related to self-efficacy. This relationship gives meaning to the manner in which people operate as agents within social structures.

**Status Attainment**

According to Corrigan (1997), goods play a key role in defining and redefining one’s social status. Hollowman (1996) affirms that “some impoverished black youth may desire or select clothing that communicates middle or upper class wealth and status.” In 2001, nearly 3.5 million black teens under the age of 18 were living in families where the income was under the poverty level (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Despite the reality that a considerable amount of African-American youth experience poverty, studies suggest that this group challenges their economic/social status by purchasing name-brand commodities. Sexton (1972) also acknowledged the implications of African-American name-brand consumption by suggesting “a need for higher status” (Johnson, 1989). Lamont and Molnar (2001) also noted in a study on African-American consumption and identity that “marketing specialists believe that blacks use consumption to signify and acquire equality, respect, acceptance and status.” This concept has endured over time. In past studies, theorists have discovered that within the African-American community, the desirability to wear fashionable clothing and partake in conspicuous consumption is strong because it reflects the means by which one can achieve a high socioeconomic status (Alexis, 1970). Although a considerable number of theorists propose that status is of paramount importance in terms of shoe consumption, Chin (2001) discovered that this trend tends to vary. In a study on African-American inner-city children
in Newhallville, Connecticut, Chin (2001) tracked the consumer habits of several African-American children. She discovered that the children’s desire to consume brands, fashion, and items that communicate status “does not exist at a constant level and exerts a fluctuating force in children’s consciousness”. Social perception was also significant when examining the function of consumption in the lives of African-American adolescents.

In accordance to the role of status as it relates to name-brand sneakers, self-efficacy has also been considered as an influencing variable in determining the influences of commodity consumption. Within the framework of social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Boardman & Robert, 2000). In investigating the impact of individual’s neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES) in relationship to self-efficacy, Boardman and Robert (2000) noted that in past studies, Socio-economic status (SES) on an individual level has been related to self-efficacy. This relationship gives meaning to the manner in which people operate as agents within social structures.

The Qualities of a Commodity
In his theory of the Fetishism of Commodities, Karl Marx (1867) states that “A commodity is a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character” (Garner, 2000). The fetishism of commodities implies that through the products of human labor, human beings are brought into relations with each other” (Corrigan, 1997). Within Marx’s paradigm, a commodity is characterized by two major factors: its exchange value and its use value. Without both use value and exchange value, a commodity can not exist (Brewer, 1984). Hornberg (1992) suggests that “in order to rethink ‘production’ in any profound sense, we must start by reintroducing the distinction between use value and exchange value. He explains that exchange value can be used interchangeably with the notion of price; and use value “should be judged in relation to the metabolic needs of some kind of structure” (Hornborg, 1992). Additionally, exchange value acquires its value from market valuation and when excessive emphasis is placed on market valuation, it leads to Marx’s Fetishism of Commodities. Brewer (1984) proposes that all commodities are characterized by and possess use value. Similar to Hornborg’s explanation of value, Hodges implies that “the value of a commodity is distinct both from its usefulness to consumers and from the so-called equivalent given for it in trade, its trade value” (Hodges, 1965). Both theorists determined that, in terms of defining the value of a commodity, such as a sneaker, a distinction between use value and exchange value must be determined. Furthermore, Hodges explicates that Marx’s theory is designed to illustrate that the exploitation of the laborer is the effect of continually applying the idea of value, “[rather the] social expression of the human labor expended in production…in classical political economy” (Hodges, 1965). This supposition, when applied to the conditions...
of the laborers of Nike Inc., constructs an understanding of the exploitative labor practices in nations such as Indonesia. The actual effort laborers put into producing sneakers is a measure of value. While determining the costs, in terms of labor, that distinguishes commodities from other manufactured products, there is something that is experienced at the level of meaning by the consumers that must be explored as well.

**Culture and Consumption**

The second theoretical framework that the researcher used to navigate this study was developed by Grant McCracken, whose analysis of consumption considers the concept of *displaced meaning*. McCracken’s notion explores the role of objects in relationship to social realities and ideals. More specifically, his analysis examines goods as representations of the desired conditions of a lifestyle that an individual cannot obtain provided his/her current social standing (McCracken, 1990). It is suggested that within the experience of transferring meaning, the individual transports his/her ideals to a “distant cultural domain [where] ideals are made to seem practicable realities” (McCracken, 1990). Additionally, Corrigan’s (1997) interpretation of McCracken’s theory of *displaced meaning* advances that “objects represent bridges to meaning that cannot be attained easily in the here and now [thus] one can take a concrete step by purchasing an object that finds a place in the ideal lifestyle.” Individuals buy “high involvement goods (a car, a watch, an article of clothing)...to take possession of a small concrete part of the style of life to which they aspire. These bridges serve as proof of the existence of this style of life and even as proof of the individual’s ability to lay claim to it” (McCracken, 1990). Ultimately, the individualistic pursuit of displaced meaning influences the desire to violate the standard limitations on income and making the exceptional purchase (McCracken, 1990). Figure 1 illustrates McCracken’s theory.

**Cultural Capital**

A final theoretical framework was used to explain class and consumption. French theorist Pierre Bourdieu, an internationally renowned French scholar, has made numerous contributions to the study of class relations, including cultural capital. Bourdieu (1984) states, “Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make.” *Cultural Capital* is defined as “high status cultural signals used in cultural and social selection” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). People appropriate themselves as a culture through their taste, which is not based on the influence of individual desire; yet through

![Figure 1. McCracken's Theory of Goods as Bridges to Displaced Meaning](image-url)
a “mediated preference”, class distinctions and economic structures of a society are produced (Dolby, 2000). Lamont and Lareau’s (1988) study speaks well to Dolby’s work (2000) in terms of the function of cultural capital as an assessment of “the process through which social stratification systems are maintained. Swain (2002) proposes that Bourdieu “views taste and fashion as an important form of capital which can be used … to gain advancement in the social hierarchy.” Similar to Swain’s proposal, Lamont and Lareau (1988) assert that cultural capital functions as a resource for investment, and ultimately can be converted in order to amplify one’s upward mobility. Contrary to Bourdieu’s view, Lamont and Lareau (1988) imply that Bourdieu’s major concern is “with the institutionalized structure of unequally valued signals.” In the self-contained society of a high school, it is probable that name-brand sneakers provide a means to upward mobility. Bourdieu (1984) believed that, “the working classes make a realistic or, functionalist use of clothing…looking for substance and function rather than form, they seek ‘value for money’.”

Problem Statement

This study analyzed the implications of the consumption of name-brand footwear amongst African-American adolescents. The study proposed a list of questions that were designed to explore the likelihood of the subjects to consume footwear on the basis that they will achieve higher social status and increase their concept of self value. In order not to influence the subjectiveness of their responses, the subjects were not provided with any prior information concerning the production of name-brand footwear. Questions were prompted in the following areas:

1. Purchase of name-brand sneakers
2. Status that is attributed as a result of wearing name-brand sneakers
3. Familiarity with the production process of name-brand sneakers
4. Knowledge of the production of sneakers and its influence on consumption
5. Dollar amount spent on a pair of name-brand sneakers
6. Confidence associated with consuming name-brand shoes
7. Role of the name-brand sneaker in social life

The researcher used the responses from these questions to analyze several selected scholarly works and theories. These bodies of work provided the basis for an analysis of the participants’ responses. The researcher intended to reveal the significant correlation between the appropriated literature and conjectures, and the subjects’ responses in the current study.

Methodology

This study was completed by analyzing selected social theories in respect to the consumers of commodities in a metropolitan/urban community. The
researcher retrieved the needed information from online databases, including Sociological Abstracts, EBSCO HOST, & JSTOR, as well as related text. Additionally, the researcher applied a qualitative mode of inquiry that placed specific emphasis on the following variables: status, social perception, and value. This study required the participation of a large number of African-American adolescents; therefore the researcher sought an organization whose demographics reflected the needs of the researcher’s intended purpose. After selecting an organization to work with, the researcher contacted the advisor, who allowed the researcher to spend a month attending the organization’s weekly meetings.

Participants: The Black Student Union (BSU)
This study was conducted at a northern metropolitan/urban California high school campus. During the 2006/2007 academic school term, the ethnic demographics of the student population at the school involved in the current study were as follows: African-American, 25.0%; Hispanic/Latino, 27.4%; White (not Hispanic), 16.5%; Asian, 8.5%; Pacific Islander, 1.5%; Filipino, 6.1%; and American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.8% (California Department of Education).

The study’s participants were all members of the high school’s Black Student Union (BSU), a student-run club on the campus, which, at the time of the study, was in its 10th year as an active club. According to the president of the BSU, the purpose of the club is to “provide mutual support amongst each other (the students), explore and share knowledge of other cultures, and provide information concerning leaders in the world.”

Data Instruments
The researcher gathered data using a ten-question survey that was administered to 13 African-American male and female adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18. The survey was designed to attain the participants’ attitudes concerning the consumption of name-brand footwear, and, their activity as consumers of name-brand clothing. The central objective of this survey was to interpret the perspectives of high school students in such a way that the researcher could distinguish the roles of social structures in their lives as individual actors, or agents.

Results
Over the course of two months, the researcher worked with a Black Student Union (BSU) associated with a northern California High School. While the majority (seventy-seven percent) of the participants identified themselves as African-American/Black; eight percent of the participants identified themselves as Mexican, and the other fifteen percent categorized themselves as Other/Mixed. For the purpose of the current study, the researcher collected data from only the African-American participants. The participants, whose ages ranged from 15-18 years of age were surveyed only once. The
surveys revealed that ninety percent of the participants purchased name-brand sneakers. When asked if they believed that the shoes that they wore played a significant role in their social lives, seventy percent responded ‘yes’. Thirty-percent of the participants believed that they were more confident and attained a higher status when they wore or were the owners of name-brand sneakers.

The BSU members participated in an interview that used an unstructured method, in which the following three questions were discussed simultaneously amongst the entire group:

1. Do you wear name-brand sneakers? If so what is your motivation to purchase/own/wear name-brand sneakers? If not, why?
2. Do you feel that wearing name-brand sneakers contributes to your value?
3. If you wear name-brand sneakers, do you feel that the sneakers you wear are reasonably priced? Are they worth what you pay for them?

The participants’ responses varied significantly. An overwhelming majority was in favor of wearing name-brand shoes and acknowledged that: “They’re cute and it [wearing the shoes] is a popular thing.”

When the researcher asked the group why they wear the name-brand footwear the following responses were made:

- *It is that serious, you gotta’ have the J’s [ Jordans].*
- *The people that do [wear the shoes] are more respected or whatever.*

In an attempt to communicate the importance of wearing name-brand sneakers as a high school student, one of the participants stated that his or her peers responded to their name-brand footwear in the following way “Look! She’s got the new Js”. The group mentioned multiple times that wearing the name-brand footwear suggested that they were in “the in crowd”.

The researcher also inquired about the participants’ feelings concerning the correlation between name-brand sneakers and individual value. A common response to the question posed was “no”. The participants elaborated in the following ways:

- *I don’t have to purchase them just because everyone else is wearing them.*
- *I don’t think something materialistic should classify you.*
- *When they [friends/family] see me, they look at me like I’m rich.*
- *It’s a status thing.*
- *If you see name brand sneakers on T.V. and you get them, it gives you status.*
- *It shows that you have money.*
Finally, the participants were asked if they believed that the shoes that they purchased were reasonably priced. The following responses were documented:

- I’ll buy a pair [of sneakers] for seventy bucks or so, and then you go over to China and the shoe is made for seven dollars.
- I’m paying so much money and they’re really only worth seven dollars.
- Shoes are not reasonably priced at all…sometimes I break down and buy them…you’re paying for a name…you’re paying for that status.

Other participants stated that:

- I don’t have money, but I still have Jordans.
- I know a lot of people who live in 1-2 bedroom apartments who has all the Jordans.

The responses from the participants suggested their consciousness of the social structures within which they are operating as social agents. While the students were aware that they were being exploited through their consumption, they acknowledge that they consumed the name-brand sneakers in return for higher status.

**Discussion**

The current study was designed to communicate the social implications amongst consumers of name-brand sneakers. The researcher reported that ninety percent of the participants classified themselves as consumers of name-brand sneakers, thus indicating an overall high demand for the product. Seventy percent of the participants revealed that the name-brand sneakers that they wore were important in terms of their social life. Based on the considerably high response from the questions addressed to the participants, the researcher was able to support this finding with Corrigan’s (1997) literature, which suggested that social relationships are maintained through the consumption of goods.

While only thirty percent of the participants showed favorable qualities when asked questions related to their views on status attainment, the focus group revealed even more favorable qualities towards the researcher’s status-related questions. These findings supported the works of Sexton (1972), and Lamont and Molnar (2001), who suggested that African-Americans fulfill their desire for a higher socio-economic status through consumption. Chin’s (2001) implications concerning status attainment were also supported in this study. She proposed that adolescents’ desires for name-brands fluctuate, rather than existing at a constant level. The participants revealed that their demand for status items depended on the trend at a particular time. Moreover, the findings in this study supported the general presumption that social structures are key to understanding commodity consumption, specifically among adolescents.
LIMITATIONS

While the method that was used in this study can be applied to assess the implications of name-brand consumption amongst adolescents, its findings are limited because it does not determine the attitudes of all African-American adolescents; thus the researcher could not generalize the findings in this study. A further constraint was the limited amount of time available to complete the study. While the researcher’s initial objective was to survey adolescents from multiple urban communities throughout northern California, it was discovered that the amount of time that would be allotted for the study would not be sufficient to amass concise and detailed data; therefore this method was deferred until the study could be conducted over an extended period of time. An additional constraint was the range of students who were surveyed and interviewed. While it is the intention of the researcher to further investigate the implications of sneaker consumption amongst additional ethnic groups, the researcher limited the responses to a pool of participants whom identified themselves as African-American adolescents. Future studies might also integrate the experiences of adolescents from various cultural and economic backgrounds in order to determine if the distinguishing characteristics among the African-American consumers were considerably unique to this population.

Lastly, this study was not all-encompassing of the participant’s sources of income, consequently limiting the researcher from developing a more comprehensive analysis of the student’s consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

Within this study, the researcher sought to expose the function of social structures through the consumption of sneakers that are classified as name-brand. The results of this study revealed a positive correlation between adolescent African-American consumers and their purchase of name-brand sneakers; ultimately suggesting that the structure of the urban/metropolitan community in which they belonged influenced the manner in which they consumed. Furthermore, a majority of the participants acknowledged that name-brand sneaker consumption as a social practice among adolescents in which the consumer sought a higher status as a reward.
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