

The Consumer Buying Habits of Sneakers among College Students

by

Mykal D. Polite

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Thesis Directed by

Dr. Kim V. Scott
Assistant Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship

and

Director of the University Honors Program

Abstract

“Fresh sneakers are important on a man. It’s like a new pair of boxers or a new pair of socks. ” - DJ Khaled (BrainQuote, n.d.)

“Good shoes take you good places.” – Seo Min Hyun (Quotefancy, n.d.)

Growing up in the African American culture and continuing my education at a Historically Black University, I have always been exposed to the world of sneakers, especially as an African American male. My research is dedicated to exploring the spending habits and consumer behaviors of college students at an Historically Black College and University (HBCU), specifically the spending habits of sneaker consumption. In order to better understand sneaker consumption, I indulged into the history of making sneakers, selling sneakers and what is known today as “sneakerhead culture.” I examined the factors I felt necessary through surveying methods in order to gather my data. The factors I examined were student demographics, prices paid for sneakers, how they value their sneakers, etc. A survey was administered to the study body at ECSU. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to determine the key influencing factors.

Key words: sneakerheads, sneakers, African American, culture

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to a few influential individuals in my life:

To my deceased grandmother, Vernita C. White, and my mother, Sherron D. White, who inspired my extraordinary love of learning and whose memory has inspired me time and time again to put my best foot forward in everything that I do.

To my love, Shikyla Williams, and my son, Malakai Polite, thank you both for being my motivation to continue accomplishing any goal I set. You two have been the biggest blessings of my life. I'm grateful to share this experience with you.

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Chapter I:

Introduction

“Sneakerhead. Sneaker addict. Sneaker slave. Call it what you want; there’s a certain thrill, like an itch only shoes can scratch, that sneakerheads feel for their passion.” –

Unknown (ShoeTease, n.d.)

The sneaker industry has experienced explosive growth in the past decade. Also known as athletic footwear, sneakers are now a \$67.5 billion industry (Brandessence Market Research and Consulting Private Limited [Brandessence], 2022). With sneakers as the preferred footwear and status symbol for today's youth, this industry is expected to reach \$95.6 billion by the end of 2028 (Brandessence, 2022). Sneakers were once reserved for sporting activity but are now considered fashionable footwear as many youths match their sneakers with their outfits.

Today, sneaker collecting has become more of a hobby and a way of life for those who love sneakers. Houston (YouGov, 2023) defined sneakerheads as any consumer willing to spend \$100 or more to purchase a pair of sneakers. Those who are passionate about collecting, wearing and the acknowledgement of the history of sneakers, are also referred to as a "sneakerhead". The term sneakerhead was first used in the late 1970s/early 1980s and became a world-wide known term in the 1990s (Oleniacz, 2021). Sneakerheads are primarily male and part of Generation Z (Gen Z) who were born between 1997 and 2012 (Meola, 2023). Research shows that Gen Z is more digital savvy, value individuality and is highly influenced by social media (Vigo, 2019).

Aboud (2019) contends that sneaker culture is highly influenced by sports and music, more specifically, basketball and hip-hop music. "The sneaker culture community is preoccupied with commercialization, status symbols and ideologies associated preliminary with professional sports, the leading force in the development and glamorization of sneakers. (King, 2020). Thus, researchers have found that the buying behavior of sneakerheads is unique since many value their collections as though they are awards.

Sneakers have been a phenomenon for ages and in 2016, Kawamura reported that there have been three phenomenal waves of sneakers over the last 50 years (Braithwaite, 2021) . The first and second waves have been associated with African American culture. The first wave came

during the 1970s when the music genre of hip-hop emerged. Thus, the birthplace of sneaker culture is synonymous as the birthplace of hip-hop. “Components of hip-hop, which at the time was also partly to be understood as a lifestyle, included rap music and a particularly expressive style of dress” (Sanne, 2021). Sneakers were an important part of this lifestyle and because hip-hop culture was mainly associated with black males, the sneaker culture was also associated with black males.

Sanne (2021) stated:

This trend was seen the world over; whether sneakers were initially worn for skateboarding, playing football or just wandering the streets, it was hip-hop culture that turned them into objects of desire. Just think back to Run-DMC’s “Walk This Way” promo; it’s a much-cited example, but those box-fresh adidas Superstars had a lasting impact on the youth culture of the day (“Anti-Mainstream” section).

The second phenomenal wave is associated with National Basketball Association’s (NBA) player, Michael Jordan. This second wave increased how sneakers are valued and how they are desirable as status items, fueled through celebrity endorsements (Braithwaite, 2021). It was during this stage that sneaker culture became more mainstream, and more competition developed among brands (Sanne, 2021). In 1985, Nike released the Air Jordan 1, which has been a favorite among consumers since its debut (Braithwaite, 2021). Michael Jordan first wore these black and red sneakers in 1984, violating the NBA uniform rule. Jordan wore the sneakers three times and was fined \$5,000 each time. Nike paid the fines and used the opportunity to further promote their brand. Today, there are over 35 Air Jordan models, and in 2022, Nike generated \$5.1 billion from the Jordan brand (Kidane, 2023). Many argue that Nike’s popular “Be Like

Mike” campaign was an attempt to exploit Jordan to sell more sneakers to young black men.

(Chertoff, 2012) quoted Michael Dyson when he stated:

Basketball is the metaphoric center of black juvenile culture, a major means by which even temporary forms of cultural and personal transcendence of personal limits are experienced. Michael Jordan is at the center of this black athletic culture, the supreme symbol of black cultural creativity in a society of diminishing tolerance for the black youth whose fascination with Jordan has helped sustain him. But Jordan is also the iconic fixture of broader segments of American society, who see in him the ideal figure: a black man of extraordinary genius on the court and before the cameras, who by virtue of his magical skills and godlike talents symbolizes the meaning of human possibility, while refusing to root it in the specific forms of culture and race in which it must inevitably make sense or fade to ultimate irrelevance (Thirteen paragraph down).

Kawamura (Braithwaite, 2021) noted that the third wave is marked by digitalization of sneakers. This digitalization includes how sneakers are marketed and purchased. The internet and the development of the smartphone are the biggest drivers of this wave. “Globalisation and the advancement of new technologies have also increased the worldwide spread of sneaker popularity with social media as a communication tool” (Sanne, 2021). In addition to the digitalization, the third wave is also highly influenced by the global sneaker resale market, which was valued at \$6 billion in 2019 and is expected to grow to \$30billion by 2030 (Braithwaite, 2021).

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the consumer buying habits of sneakerheads and other sneaker consumers. Specifically, this study will explore factors that influence the decision-making process of African American Gen Z students on a college campus in rural North Carolina. Due to the rural setting, this study explores factors that may be different from consumers from more urban areas of the world.

Research Question

What factors affect the decision making process of sneakers buying among students over the age of 18 on a rural North Carolina university campus?

Hypothesis

1. Ho - There is not a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.

Ha - There is a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.

2. Ho - There is no significant difference in the buying behavior of black students

Ha - There is a significant difference in the buying behavior of non-black students

3. Ho - Students who identify as sneakerheads are not loyal to one or two brands.

Ha - Students who identify as sneakerheads are loyal to one or more brands.

Chapter II:

Literature Review

“Sneakers are worn by millions worldwide and seem to transcend gender, age, and socio-economic condition. Yet under the broad category of ‘sneaker’ lies a minefield of meaning full of social significance. In other words, although sneakers might appear to be democratic, not all are created equal, as the rise of sneaker culture attests .” - Semmelhack et al (Choi & Kim, 2019, p. 141).

The History of Sneakers

Today, “sneakers” is a common term that most people know, however, when these shoes were first made, they were known as “sports shoes” (Braithwaite, 2021). The birth of sports shoes is believed to have been during the 1830s by the Liverpool Rubber Company. The Liverpool Rubber Company was founded by Scottish inventor John B. Dunlop, who devoted his manufacturing company to only rubber-based products. (Braithwaite, 2021)

Figure 2.1 - John Boyd Dunlop



Note. John Dunlop riding a bicycle in 1915 photograph provided by MyArtPrint.

Dunlop invented the sneaker by fusing the material of canvas uppers to rubber bottoms. By the early 20th century, Dunlop’s model evolved into what is now known as the *Converse All Star* brand. Converse were popular among athletics and heavily used for playing basketball

during the 1900s. By 1924, German manufacturer Adolf “Adi” Dassler had created a new version of the sneaker, modeled after Dunlop’s creation but was made of leather with spikes attached to the bottom. Those shoes were first worn in the 1936 Olympics by African American Olympian, Jessie Owens. That brand is now known as Adidas (Adi Das) since the company rebranded in 1949. (Braithwaite, 2021)

Figure 2.2 - Jessie Owens wearing Adidas track shoes in the 1936 Olympics.



Note. Jessie Owens wearing original Adidas sneakers with spikes for 1936 Olympics article written by Wikimedia.

While Adidas were created in the 1930s, there was no denying Converse as the top brand in the world of basketball. These iconic shoes were worn by men and women of all ages and races. Both rookie players and “All-Star” players preferred to wear this versatile shoe. However, Converse eventually became defective with and caused numerous knee and ankles injuries to basketball players. Chris Severn, a former consultant for Adidas, noticed this and saw a business opportunity (Quint, 2020). In 1969, Adidas launched their “Superstar model”. Chris Severn and his design team, which included Horst Dassler, the son of *Adidas* founder Adolf Dassler,

designed this new style of sneakers and visited basketball courts around the country to convince basketball players to try out their newly designed shoes.

However, the popularity of Adidas did not grow until the emergence of hip-hop. Hip-hop and Adidas were considered to be conjoined during this era. So conjoined that Run-DMC created a song, “My Adidas”. Run-DMC promoted the *Adidas* signature logo of three stripes from hats to tracksuits to their shoes. The group quickly started a fashion movement and hip-hop fans everywhere wore Adidas from head to toe. Run-DMC’s song “My Adidas” cemented the sneaker’s status in popularity. The song created a direct relationship between Run-DMC and Adidas, which was evident in a Run-DMC concert held in Madison Square Garden. Adidas representative, Angelo Anastasio identified Run-DMC as the sole reason why there was an increase in sales, and the concert proved him right (Quint, 2020).

Figure 2.3 - *RUN-DMC World Tour Promotional Poster*



Note. From 80s Casual Classics article written by Luke Taylor.

The release of the first Air Jordans transformed the sneaker culture. Miner (2019) describes the transformation as “one where shoes functioned as a secondary accoutrement to one where sports, celebrity, and sneakers were reciprocal signifiers within basketball culture”. Today, Nike’s Air Jordans is just one of the most popular sneaker brands and is often seen as a status symbol in the African American community. Lee and Browne (1995) addressed the correlation between African American youth and the popularity of sneakers. By the early 90s, African American generated over one-third of Nike’s \$2.5 billion in sales (Lee and Browne, 1995).

Figure 2.4 - Nike Dunk Lows in Varsity Blue and White Colorway



Note. Nike Dunk Lows in Varsity Blue and White article written by Sophie Caraan.

Generation Z

Generation Z, better known as Gen Z, is composed of individuals born between 1997-2012 (Meola, 2023). Those who belong to Gen Z are commonly the children of those who belong to Generation X (born between 1965-1980). Kawamura notes that each generation is marked by either a national or global phenomenon (Braithwaite, 2021). Gen Z is marked by being born into the era of television, computer, and the Internet. Towards the end of the Gen Z era, iPhones launched in 2007. Many Gen Zers were 9-10 years old at that time. When Gen Zers reached their teenage years, there were even bigger technological expansions with Wi-fi, social media platforms, and on-demand entertainment platforms. It has been noted that Gen Z is on the path to becoming the largest number of consumers. Meola (2023) adds that Generation Z will soon become the most pivotal generation to the future of retail, with huge spending powers by 2026.

Sneaker Culture/Sneakerheads

Sneakerheads take something with a specific intended use and repurpose it to their own needs, subverting its original meaning without political intentions. Take Jordan 11s, sneakers designed to be worn for basketball. They're performance shoes right down to the full-length carbon fiber plates in their soles. So, when a sneakerhead repurposes Jordan 11s as a fashion statement, an icon of commodity fetishization, and a marker of

community identity, that original athletic intention has been subverted...sneakerheads wear them as an emblem, creating a whole we of meaning around them that exists outside of athletics (Barnett, n.d., introduction section).

Figure 2.5- Air Jordan 11 Retro Concord Defining Moment Pack (DMP) in 2023



Note. Air Jordan 11 article written by Jovani Hernandez

Early research on sneakerheads focused on the connection between advertising and consumer behavior (Choi & Kim, 2019). “I think the footwear trend has mirrored what’s happened in athleisure apparel,” said Matt Powell, vice president and senior industry analyst at the NPD Group (YouGov, 2023). Powell notes that sales of sneakers outpaced both dress and casual shoes combined, and that it’s “really about a look, a lifestyle, today more than anything.” Later, research focused on the decision-making process included articles about the motivation and perception of sneaker buying (YouGov, 2023).

Grounded Theory

Choi et al. (2015) used the Grounded Theory to answer three primary questions related to sneaker buying: “1) Why do these sneakerheads buy, collect, and wear sneakers with such a high level of enthusiasm?, 2) How do these sneakerheads go about buying, collecting, and wearing

sneakers?, and 3) What perceptions do these sneakerheads have regarding inequity and violent incidents related to the limited release of highly anticipated sneakers?’. Grounded theory (GT) method employs theoretical sampling for developing theory. According to the most prominent authors, Glaser, Strauss, Corbin, and Charmaz, theoretical sampling is a sampling strategy that enables collecting new data that will help in developing categories (Qureshi, 2018). Snowball sampling is a sampling strategy where existing study subjects help in recruiting future subjects among their acquaintances. Using snowball sampling, Choi et al. (2015) found that there were six themes that were apparent. These six themes included culture (social identity), rarity, purchase decision process, quality and price, reselling and violent incidents.

Social Identity Theory

Matthews et al. (2021) used the social identity theory to study brand preferences and loyalty among sneakerheads. The social identity theory is a contribution made by Henri Tajfel to the world of psychology (McLeod, 2023). Social identity is a person’s sense of who they are based on their group membership(s). In 1979, Tajfel proposed that the groups (e.g., social class, family, football team etc.) which people belonged to be an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give us a sense of social identity: a sense of belonging to the social world. If an individual has a brand preference or loyalty to only specific, it could be due to factors such as their family or friend group(s). Social identity theory can help prove that individuals decide on sneakers based on the athlete, musician, or figure they seek to emulate. By that same token, by owning the shoe that is worn by that figure, their identities are then further shaped as they connect to the sneaker brand.

Chapter III:

Methodology

“Whether high/low culture, urban/country, Western/Eastern, fashion/utility, collector/athlete or just someone who needs a comfortable shoe, it is almost certain that most people own or wear sneakers” – Joseph Hancock (Hancock, 2019, p. 4).

Chapter Two discussed the history of sneakers, sneakerhead culture and explored theories related to sneaker culture. The review of past literature on sneaker culture revealed that few studies have explored factors that influence the consumer buying habits of sneakers. Thus, the goal of this study is to investigate the consumer buying behavior of sneakers among students at a rural NC campus.

Quantitative Data

For the purpose of this research, quantitative data will be obtained using a survey. Quantitative data focuses on comparable and numerical observations. There are three types of quantitative data: descriptive, experimental and correlational. Quantitative data in a descriptive sense is used to describe the basic increments of data in the given study. Descriptive data represents the data and only the data. Experimental quantitative data consist of collecting and analyzing data with ongoing research. Correlational research is used to investigate relationships between variables. The purpose of the data collected in this study is to determine if there is a correlation between the buying habits of college students and the various factors.

Factors

The factors that will be studied are gender, brand loyalty and race.

Gender

“Male athletes and artists have promoted sneaker culture by incorporating the industry into their lifestyle and work, creating hype in their fan bases...” (Salvano, 2020). Nike is banking on women to drive sneaker innovation going forward, the genre tends to be more male-dominated, as that’s arguably where the ‘sneakers as everyday shoes’ trend originated. Sneaker culture is rooted in basketball and hip hop music, both were male dominated fields in the 1970s. “Since sport has historically been related to masculine social roles, the consumption of these products reaffirms the consumer’s identity as male” (Miner, 2019)

Brand loyalty

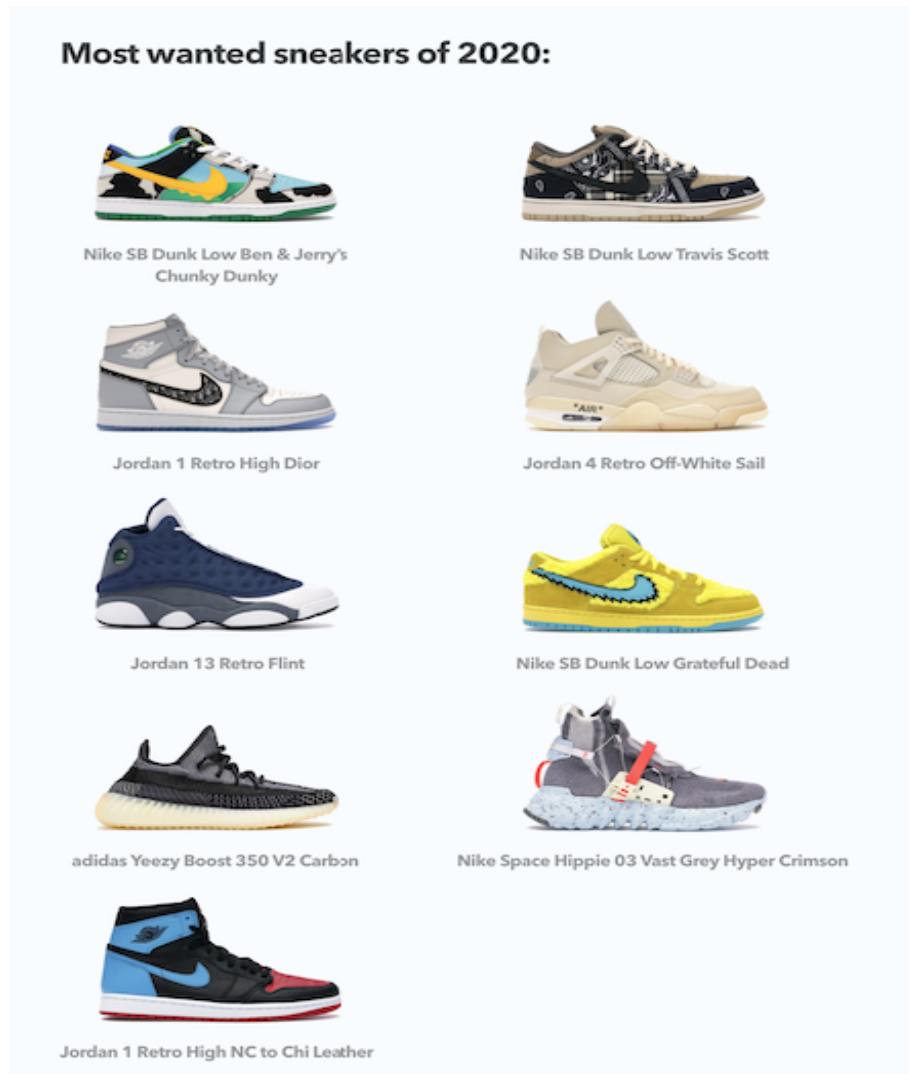
Traditionally, sneakerheads have been loyal to one brand, Nike Air Jordans (Matthews et al., 2021). Nike marketed their sneakers to black youth using a slogan, ‘Be Like Mike’. These ads associated Michael Jordan’s great athletic ability to the sneakers (Chertoff, 2012). In Chertoff’s (2012) research, Dyson argues that these ads were created to myth that whoever wears the sneakers would have the same athletic ability as Jordan. “The particular shoe brand a sneaker head covets is Nike and Air Jordan, although many other footwear brands have blossomed a dedicated following” (Sneaker News, 2023). Figure 3.1 shows an infographic (Regis, 2021) report that shows that 8 out of the top 9 sneakers wanted in 2020 were Nike’s.

Race

Sneaker culture is uniquely connected to hip-hop culture which began in the early 1970s. Hip-hop was born in the “ghetto” of New York City at a time of increased social segregation (Sanne, 2021). Thus, sneaker culture, much like hip-hop culture, was primarily connected to black culture. In 2012, Chertoff wrote in *The Atlantic* that “...mostly white hipsters, rockers, and other subculture types perennially buy new Converse every fall. It's comparatively rare to see

them in Jordans or Dunks”. Dyson also argues that “It was black street culture that influenced sneaker companies’ aggressive invasion of the black juvenile market” (Chertoff, 2012).

Figure 3.1 - Regis (2021). Infographic: The 2020 Guide for Sneakerheads



Note. Most wanted shoes of 2020 article by Regis.

Data Collection

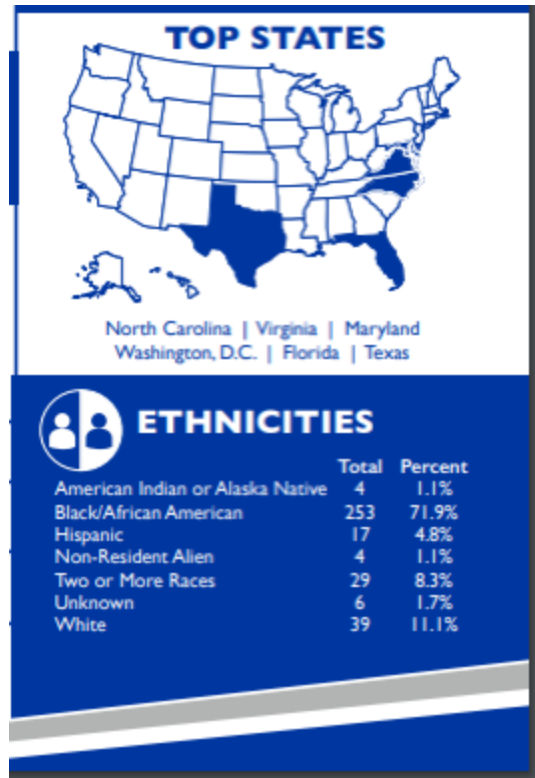
The data for this study will be collected using a survey. A survey will be created and administered to students of Elizabeth City State University. The survey will be available to all on campus students regardless of classifications, race, gender or background. Dr. Kim Scott, my

thesis advisor, and Dr. Dolapo Adedeji, University Honors Program Director, will primarily administer the survey to students in their respective classes. Additionally, the survey will be made available to the general student body to ensure the minimum required surveys are obtained.

The goal is to gain a sample size at 95% confidence of at least 131 responses from the population of on campus students at Elizabeth City State University. The population of on campus students is 1032 (Elizabeth City State University [ECSU], 2023). The sample size was determined using an online sample size calculator provided by Creative Research Systems. There are only two requirements to be eligible to participate in the survey: participants must be a student at Elizabeth City State University and must be at least 18 years old.

The survey is meant to capture a diverse population even while being administered at an historically black university in North Carolina. As seen in Figure 3.2, ECSU has a diverse student population.

Figure 3.2 -Demographics of ECSU Student Population



Note. Image from ECSU Census for Fall 2022 Semester

The survey will be conducted using Microsoft Forms. The survey will consist of 16 questions and will be comprised of multiple choice questions and written responses. Items surveyed in this research are composed of the following factors: demographics, sneaker consumption, and sneaker spending habits.

Chapter IV:

Results

The research question guiding this study is: *What factors affect the decision making process of sneakers buying among students over the age of 18 on a rural North Carolina university campus?* To answer this question, a survey was created and administered to students to test the following hypotheses:

1. Ho - There is not a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.

Ha - There is a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.

2. Ho - There is no significant difference in the buying behavior of black students

Ha - There is a significant difference in the buying behavior of non-black students

3. Ho - Students who identify as sneakerheads are not loyal to one or two brands.

Ha - Students who identify as sneakerheads are loyal to one or more brands.

After completing all training and receiving approval from Elizabeth City State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I was able to administer my survey to the student body of Elizabeth City State University. A copy of the IRB approval is attached at Appendix A. The survey was administered to the student population for roughly two weeks. After the two weeks were complete, I received a total of 133 responses to analyze.

Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Figures 4.1 to 4.3 show the demographics of the survey participants. Survey data obtained includes race, gender, location (hometown).

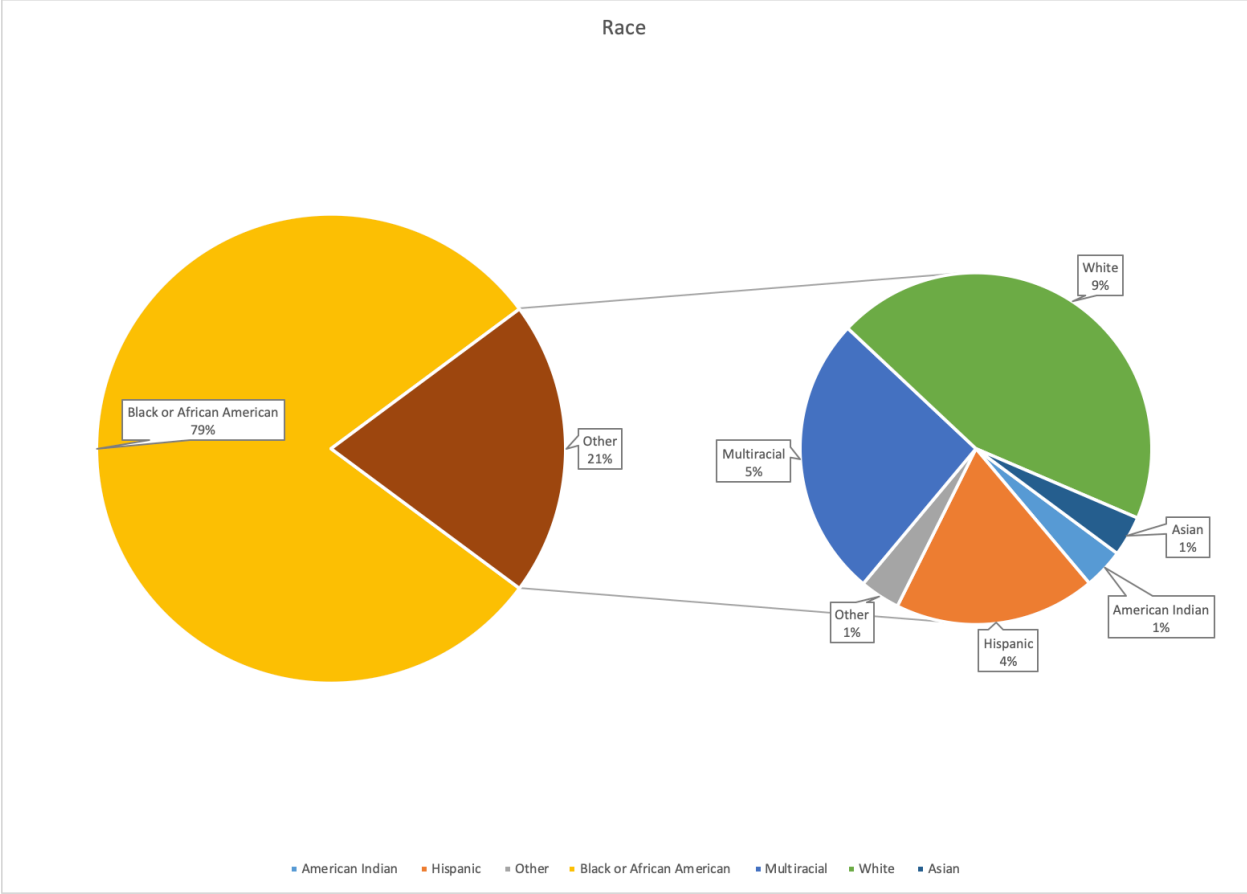


Table 4.1 Race of Survey Participants

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the survey participants (79%) identified as African American. This is not surprising seeing that the survey was administered on the campus of an HBCU. The other 21% was comprised of White (9%), Multiracial (5%), Hispanic (4%), Asian (1%), American Indian (1%) and Other (1%).

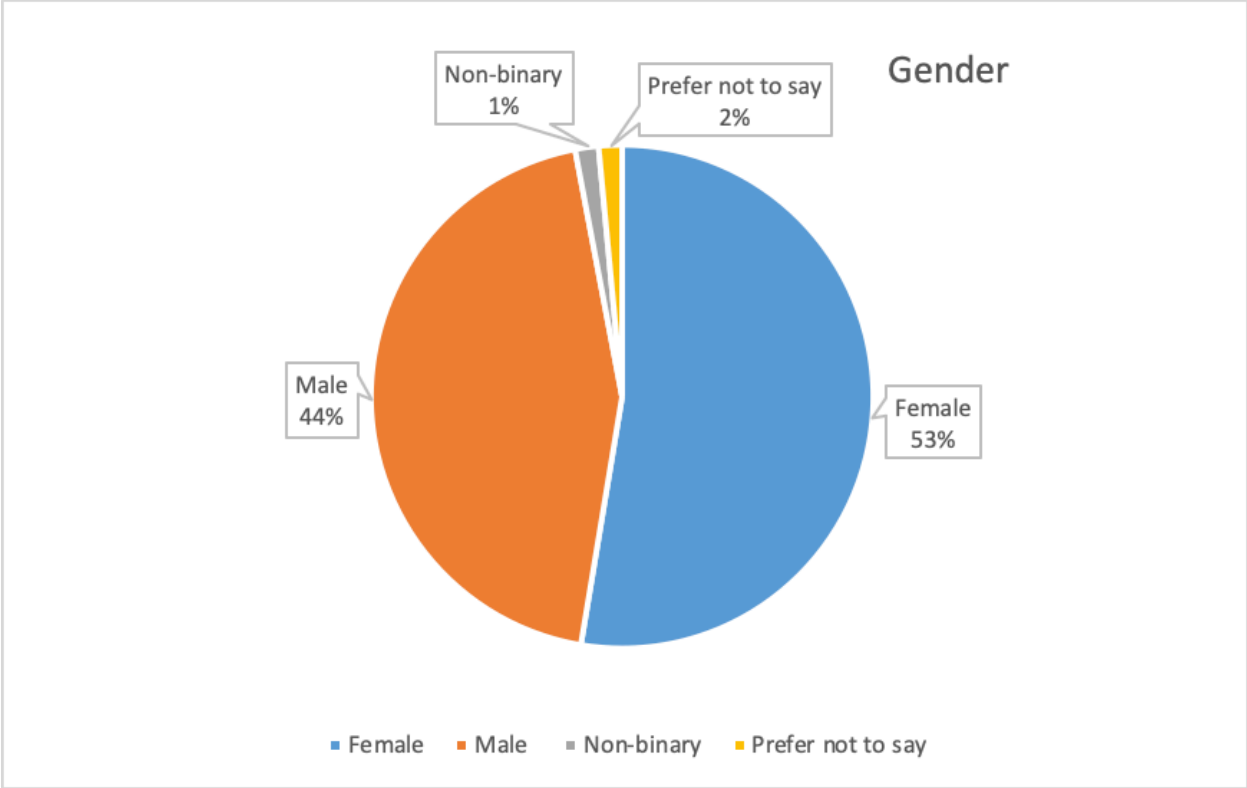


Table 4.2 Gender of Survey Participants

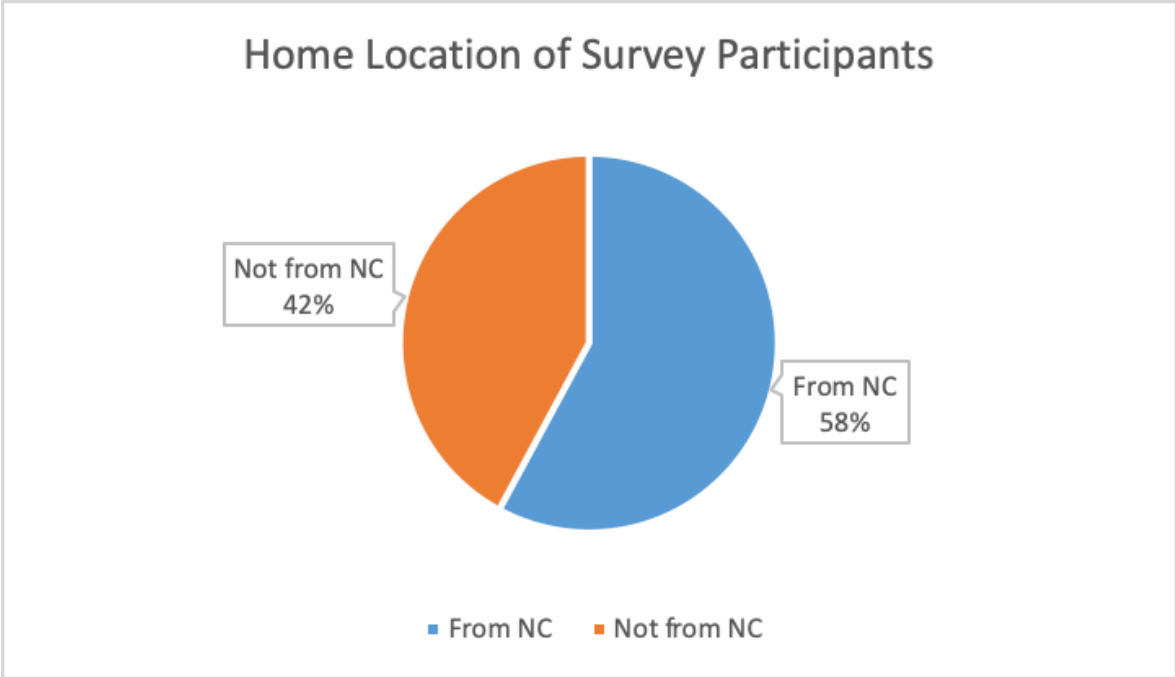


Figure 4.3 Home Location of Participants

In order to obtain an idea of where participants claim their residency, participants were asked whether they were from North Carolina. Figure 4.3 shows that (58%) of participants are originally from North Carolina (NC). The other 42% were from locations other than NC. Figure 4.4 shows the home location of students. The highest number of participants are from Virginia (15) and Maryland (8).

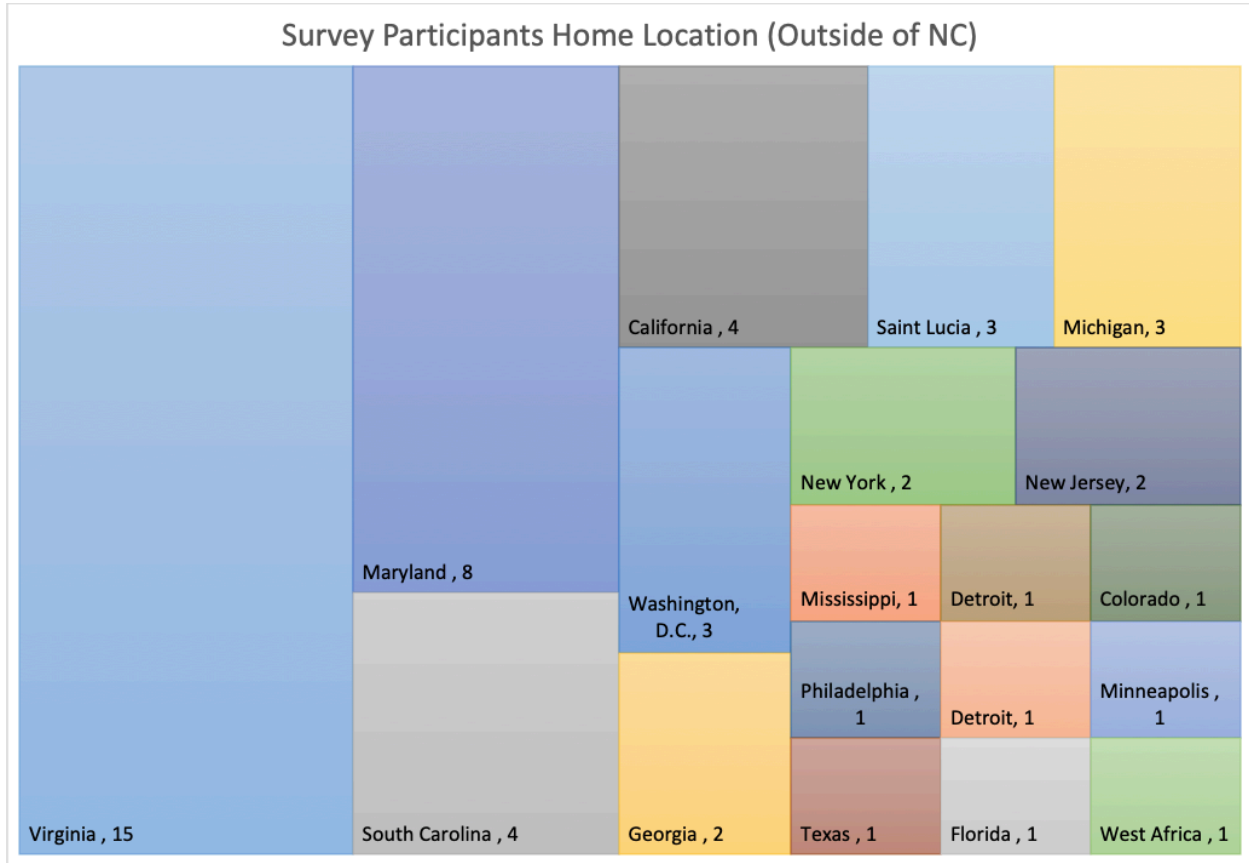


Figure 4.4 Home Location of Participants outside of North Carolina

	What is the minimum price you have paid (or would pay) for a pair of sneakers?	What is the maximum price you have paid (or would pay) for a pair of sneakers?
Mean	\$67.31	\$244.65
Mode	\$50.00	\$150.00
Median	\$60.00	\$200.00

Table 4.5 - Statistics of Survey Question

In this survey, I asked multiple questions referring directly to spending habits. I asked questions that contribute to how much they'd spend on a pair of sneakers: the minimum price that they pay for sneakers and also the maximum price that they would pay. After reviewing all responses, I calculated the mean, median and mode for minimum and maximum prices.

Chapter V:

Conclusions

Hypothesis

1. **Ho - There is not a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.**

Ha - There is a significant difference between the number of women and the number of men who are sneakerheads.

Gender	Total	Self-Proclaimed Sneakerhead	Percentage	Sneakerhead (by definition)	Percentage
Female	70	7	10%	55	78.57%
Male	59	19	32.2%	54	91.53%
Nonbinary	2	0	0%	0	0%
Prefer not to say	2	0	0%	1	50%

Table 5.1 - Self-Proclaimed Sneakerhead vs Actual Sneakerhead (Gender)

Table 5.1 is associated with Hypothesis #1. For my research, I am using the definition of a sneakerhead as someone who owns at least 10 pairs of sneakers, is willing to spend at least \$100 on sneakers and has a passion for collecting, wearing and knowing the history of sneakers. As determined by column 5 (highlighted in blue), the amount of defined sneakerheads between male and female does NOT have a significant difference. I have to **accept** hypothesis 1, Ho. In fact, there is only a difference of one female.

2. **Ho - There is no significant difference in the buying behavior of black students.**

Ha - There is a significant difference in the buying behavior of non-black students

Race	Total	Sneakerhead (self proclaimed)	Percentage	Sneakerhead (by definition)	Percentage
Black	106	13	12.26%	93	87.74%
Non-Black	27	2	7.41%	19	70.37%

Table 5.2 - Buying Habits in Black vs Non-Black Students

Table 5.2 is associated with Hypothesis #2. Using the same definition of a sneakerhead, I will have to **reject** Hypothesis 2, both Ho and Ha: There is no significant difference of the buying behaviors of Black students. I believe the Black student difference of 13 to 93 is more significant than the Non-Black student difference of 2 to 19. The differences are indicated by the orange highlight.

3. Ho - Students who identify as sneakerheads are not loyal to one or two brands.

Ha - Students who identify as sneakerheads are loyal to one or more brands.

	Total	Loyal to Brand	Percentage
Self Proclaimed Sneakerhead	15	7	46.67%
Sneakerhead (by definition)	112	11	9.82%
Not a Sneakerhead by definition	21	0	0.00%
Does not identify as a Sneakerhead	118	7	5.93%

Table 5.3 - Self-Proclaimed Sneakerhead vs Actual Sneakerhead (Brand Loyalty)

Table 5.3 is associated with Hypothesis #3. Using the definition of a sneakerhead of those who are willing to spend at least \$100 on sneakers, I wanted to also assess the consumer's loyalty to at least one brand to determine their willingness to spend. I **accept** Hypothesis 3, Ha, that students who identify as sneakerheads are loyal to at least one brand. As defined highlighted

in green, the calculations show that out of 15 students who IDENTIFY as a sneakerheads, 46.67% (7/15) ARE loyal to at least one brand.

Future Research

I believe that without time constraints, I could have surveyed more students at Elizabeth City State University. I could have possibly expanded to other college campuses even Elizabeth City's own College of the Albemarle or Mid-Atlantic Christian University to increase the number of students from different backgrounds. In my survey, I asked more questions to determine the exact reasons why students buy the sneakers they do, however, I didn't have enough information and time to analyze the responses. Also, interviews may have provided a little more information than a survey.

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


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Appendix A: Mykal Polite IRB Approval for Student Survey

 George Cox ☺ ← ↶ ↷ ...

To:  Kim Scott;  Mykal Polite
Cc:  Kulwinder Kaur-Walker Mon 3/27/2023 4:14 PM

Re: 23-0007- The Consumer Buying Habits of Sneakers among College Students

Dr. Scott and Mr. Polite,
This email is to certify that the ECSU IRB has fully approved the above referenced protocol via an exempt status review process pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46.104 category 2i.

Research proposals with exempt status are not subject to IRB audits, continuing review, or requests for project closure, as long as no material changes are made to the protocol. Any change to the protocol requires the primary investigator to resubmit a revised application the IRB for approval.

It is the principal investigator's responsibility to ensure that all individuals involved in the research adhere to ECSU policies and procedures for research with human participants (CITI Training), and to notify if any changes are made to the original protocol.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Kaur-Walker at kpkaur@ecu.edu or me at ghcox@ecu.edu.

GEORGE H. COX
Compliance Officer/Pre-Award
Office of Sponsored Programs
1704 Weeksville Rd. | Elizabeth City, NC 27909
phone: 252.335.3823 | fax: 252.335.3106
ghcox@ecu.edu | www.ecsu.edu | www.ecsu.edu/osp

Appendix B: Mykal Polite's IRB Approved Survey

Survey Questions:

1. Are you 18 or older? (Required) a. Yes b. No

- 2. Are you from North Carolina? (Required)** a. Yes b. No
- 3. If No, where are you from? (Open Ended based on Response to #2)**
- 4. What is your gender?** a. Male b. Female c. Transgender d. Non-binary e. Prefer not to say
- 5. What race do you classify with? (Required)** a. Black or African-American b. White c. Asian
d. American Indian or Alaska Native e. Hispanic or Latino f. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
g. Multiracial h. Prefer not to say
- 6. Are you loyal to a specific brand or brands of sneakers? (i.e. you only wear Jordans.) (Required)** a. Yes b. No
- 7. If yes, why? (Optional & Open Ended)**
- 8. Is there a brand you would not buy? (Required & Open Ended)**
- 9. Where do you buy your sneakers from? (Required)** a. Directly from source (Nike, Adidas)
b. Retail (Foot Locker, Hibbett's) c. Reseller/Flipper d. Online e. Other (Written Answer if
chosen)
- 10. How do you decide what brands to buy? (Required & Open Ended)**
- 11. What is the minimum price you have paid (or would pay) for a pair of sneakers? (Required & Open Ended)**
- 12. What is the maximum price you have paid (or would pay) for a pair of sneakers? (Required & Open Ended)**

13. What makes you say "I'm not wearing these sneakers anymore." ? (Required & Open Ended)

14. When do you usually buy sneakers? (Required) a. As soon as they release b. After they've been in store for some time c. When they're on clearance d. Special Occasion (such as birthday or holidays) e. Other (Written Answer if chosen)

15. How many pairs of sneakers do you own? (Required) a. Less than 10 b. 10-19 c. 20-29 d. 30-39 e. 40-49 f. More than 50

16. Do you consider yourself a sneakerhead? (Required & Open Ended)