

Abstract

Sneaker culture remains to be an attractive and lucrative niche market for fashion enterprises, and sneaker collaborations such as Nike Air Jordan's and Yeezy had catapulted this once black minority subculture, into mainstream success and awareness. However, the marketing efforts and materials utilized to reach the aforementioned success, should be scrutinize as it puts into question about accuracy, credibility, and appropriateness on whether sneaker culture gained popularity in spite of its roots in black culture, or not. Given the history of blackness and their identity not being represented appropriately in various marketing activities, this research aims to explore, investigate, and critically analyze black identity representation found in the Instagram content marketing of Nike Air Jordan's and Yeezy, approached through exploratory research. In achieving so, this research used 3 interconnected conceptual findings as the benchmark to grasp this topic thoroughly, these include commodified black characterization, objectified Representation and the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). Data analysis are conducted through a modified semiotic framework called a Semiotic Analytical Technique (SEANT), which aims to decode both digital visual and textual cues of a social media content, and linked the results with real world circumstances. The results implied variations of overarching key insights regarding black identity representation, including 1) both brands had limited their perception towards black identity due to commodification practices, 2) the sole collaborator became a benchmark of black identity representation, resulting in both the oversaturating and desaturating values of factual black identity values and philosophies, 3) how both brands seemed to suffer from the dissemblance power of business rationalization.

Keywords : *Semiotic, Instagram, Objectification, Commodification, Blackness*