

**THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON PURCHASING AUTHENTIC SHOES VERSUS REPLICAS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY*****Noor Radwan and Taymaa Akkad**

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Abstract

This study explored the difference between authentic and replica Nike shoes and the psychological effect they have on people aged 11 to 25 years. The study aims to investigate the significant difference between original and fake Nike shoe products based on consumer purchases. It attempts to compare the quality, price, and durability of replica and authentic Nike shoes. A comparative experiment was conducted to identify the effect of an authentic Nike shoe versus a replica on individual image and social status. The researchers tested the hypothesis that people tend to purchase shoes for the brand name or trendiness. The results were categorized based on the experiments conducted. Additionally, participants were divided into three age groups: 11 to 16-year-olds, 17 to 20-year-olds, and 21 to 25-year-olds. Researchers observed participants' behavior during the experiments, influencing their perceptions of the shoes. This observation provided valuable insights into the psychological aspects of individuals' beliefs about wearing authentic or replica shoes.

Keywords: Nike shoes, Authentic Nike shoes, replica Nike shoes, Psychology behind shoes, Nike experiment.

INTRODUCTION

In society, the position of a human in the social hierarchy relies not only on the level of education of an individual, but the sophistication of vocabulary, wisdom, and life experiences (Farkas, 2022). The factors affecting how people are perceived are largely based on how one dresses oneself, the fashion trends one chooses to follow, and their style. For instance, according to research (*Identities Through Fashion*, n.d.) it has been proven that the fashion style of a person plays a profound role in forming a part of their identity. To illustrate, the concept that the fabric covering the body of an individual is the painting of their canvas, and the canvas represents the mind of the individual and all the thoughts one would want to voice effectively. Furthermore, as previously mentioned in the article *Identities Through Fashion*, in this modern society, branded, flashy shoes, rank a person higher in social class, enhance the prestige of an individual, and grant a louder and more concise influence on whatever one says. The hypothesis of this paper targets the psychological aspect of a customer when purchasing trendy products, whether authentic or fake. Delving into the assumption of whether money spent on authentic trendy shoes is for the durability and effectiveness of it, or rather paying for the validation automatically achieved once joining a trend in society. According to the National Institute of Health, the innate desire of a human is to constantly try and fit in, throughout all stages of life: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Allen *et al.*, 2021). There is an observable unity and harmony when it comes to trendy fashions as humans constantly change what they wear to follow what is currently respected and deemed prestigious. Often, this trend follows luxurious or expensive brands, most noticed to include Nike. Regardless, it has been equally and more prominently observed that the gap between people with lower socioeconomic backgrounds and the difficulty in purchasing authentic and trendy products is due to the mere concept of conforming to societal norms.

Owning replicas of shoes of trendy or well-known products and brands may be a solution for people who want to have trendy shoes but are unable to afford them or buy the original ones, but it still leaves some questions behind it. Hesitation on whether fake Nike shoes perform better than original ones, consequently, causes doubt on the cost-effectiveness of real Nike shoes and if they are worth it which provokes the concept of whether price guarantees better quality and durability. Counterfeit Nike shoes have spread worldwide. According to EUIPO, the volume of international trade in counterfeit 2021 amounts \$464 billion, which is 2.5% of world trade (Globaleyez, 2023, para.1). Due to the exponential growth in counterfeit products, as mentioned by Globaleyez, it is increasingly difficult for a customer to differentiate between a replica and the original product just by glancing at it. Contrastingly, this has created a contradicting mindset for customers on where their money is better spent; spending the full and intended amount of money with clear conscience of knowing to be granted their desired position in society and its durability, or to spend a noticeably less amount for the pressuring need to conform to modern norms.

Objectives

This study aims to approach the significant difference between original and fake products of Nike Shoes Based on consumer purchases. The study attempts to compare the quality of duplicate and real Nike shoes while evaluating their price and durability. The study will analyze the fundamental points that make or break a shoe. The ethical procedures, the trust of the customer, the legal implications, the brand loyalty and prestige, and finally, the quality and durability of the original Nike shoes and the counterfeit.

Research Questions

- How does the perception of consumers differ when purchasing and using real shoes compared to duplicates?

- How does consumer demand fluctuate based on factors such as fashion trends, marketing strategies, social influence and pressure, and celebrity endorsements?

Significance of the Study

This study delves into the psychological aspect of the decision of a customer when purchasing products. Whether they prefer money spent on the prestige that comes with the product or spending money on a product solely for its durability. This research would help businesses understand more on how their marketing can affect their sales, in the sense of consumer behavior, market dynamics, and brand perception. Furthermore, it can give insight into the psychological and sociological aspects of an instinctive impulse of a customer to constantly fit in, the desire for status, trust in a brand, as well as the appeal of exclusivity. This can overall help achieve a better customer-creator connection and satisfaction by matching their expectations.

Structure of the study

The first chapter introduces the topic of the study and the statement of the problem. It also covers the objectives of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study. The second chapter delves into the previous research on the multibillionaire company, Nike, examining both the psychological and economic aspects of the decision-making process of purchasing authentic products versus replicas. Finally, follow with an examination of previous experiments and identification of where it was lacking. In the third chapter, methodology, a comparative experiment will be conducted to identify the effect of an authentic Nike shoe and a replica on the individual image and social status. As well as comparing the cost effectiveness and durability, to reach a conclusion on which shoes are most effective for teenagers.

Literature Review

This chapter delves into the previous psychological and business research done in the fashion field, more specifically on the multibillionaire shoe company, Nike. Beginning with the backgrounds, origins, and history of the company. Furthermore, it analyzes its marketing strategies and the cause of its significant influence on fashion trends and its relation to the social identity and status of a customer. Followed by prior research on the conception of counterfeit fashion products and the deciding factors of what product to replicate. Discussing and examining the effectiveness of replicas compared to authentic shoes and the decision-making process of a customer are the last points covered in this chapter.

Overview of the Nike Company

Founded in 1964 by Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight, Nike, Inc. has grown to become and emerge as one of the top producers of athletic footwear, apparel, and equipment worldwide. Recognized globally for its iconic "swoosh" logo, Nike has established itself as a powerhouse in the sports and fitness industry (Nike, Inc, 2022). Amongst the many interviews on Nike, Harvard Business Review interviewed Nike's Phil Knight highlighting and emphasizing the emotional and psychological aspects of its marketing strategies; "Nike is a champion brand builder." (Willigan, 2007).

Marketing Strategies

The demographic of the Nike brand mainly targets athletes ages 11-55 and plays with related emotions such as success, power, self-victory, morale, and motivation, making it a powerful product (Themezhub, 2023). However, its psychological approach is not only aimed at its athletes, but rather any consumer with an interest in sports, whether it is through watching it, playing it, or simply talking about it. According to research done at Los Angeles Mission College, "Nike fosters an attitude, it develops a lifestyle. Events such as Nike: Run with Me, Sports Improvement Clinics, Social Media contests, and athletic and non-athletic endorsements go a long way to create community and a feeling of "belonging" to the Nike family." With its strategic marketing, Nike has earned a dominant and almost unmovable position in the market with a stable yet profitable brand. Its marketing strategies and advertisements introduce the intersection of business, sports, and popular culture (Nike, Inc, 2022).

Social Media Presence

Along with its different marketing approaches, its presence on social media also contributes to its dominant hold and influence on the market and social trends. An analysis of Nike's social media activity and account concluded that their social media success is comprised of nine main strategies, some of those including experimentation with content format, which includes the various multimedia to present their products whether it is through videos or graphics. Not only is it imperative to engage with its audience to foster a deeper connection and loyalty, but engaging its audience is equally as important as following viral trends to stay relevant. Another effective strategy includes frequent collaboration with public figures such as famous athletes and celebrities which helps generate a larger customer range with exposure from the audience of the influencer (Panigrahi, 2023). Some of the most profitable collaborations listed on the journal article GQ include the 2003 Nike x Geoff McFetridge Vendal Supreme, Nike x Off-White Air Presto in 2017, and the most recent collab in 2023 with Tiffany & Co.; putting the company at a current net worth or market cap of 185 billion dollars as of December 15, 2023. A 6.18% market cap increase in one year, as stated by Stock Analysis ("Nike, Inc. (NKE) Market Cap & Net Worth," 2023).

Authenticity in Consumer Goods

Authenticity in the context of consumer goods is defined as the degree to which a clear balance and alignment are observed in terms of what the brand promotes, markets, and its messages, and with what it produces, the reality of its values and actions as well (Duberg, 2020). According to Real Research Media, over 40% of customers report satisfaction with Nike products, hence enhancing the authenticity and credibility of its brand (Author, 2021). Consequently, building a larger and stronger vision can lure more customers to trust that their money and feet are supporting a reliable brand. Following the great authentic rise of brands is the equally convincing and wanted growth of replica products. This is because counterfeit brands are not easily followed and able to be eliminated (Theo, 2022), thus creating competition against authentic brands such as Nike due to the general market growth for both authentic and counterfeit shoe brands. Even some sneakerheads, according to Wisser Market, might opt for a high-quality dupe that is highly

difficult to differentiate from an authentic product (Theo, 2022). This is due to many reasons such as limited availability, in which counterfeit brands exploit the strong competition and push sneakerheads to often spend more on replicas than what the authentic shoe costs. This pushes the counterfeit businesses and increases their profit to maintain a successful and stable position in the market.

Consumer Behavior and Psychological Factors

As previously mentioned in brief points, psychological research justifies this behavior as a response to the innate desire to conform to norms and constantly fit in. However, the psychological factors behind consumer behaviors in terms of authentic products and replicas vary. As mentioned in a research paper on footwear consumer behavior (Juárez-Varón *et al.*, 2023), the main psychological factors contributing to the decision-making process of purchasing authentic shoes can be summarized and categorized into 5 dimensions, namely: brand identity, self-expression, quality perception, social approval, and psychological ownership. On the other hand, the psychological motives for purchasing replicas include trend and fashion, cost consideration, perceived similarity, risk aversion, instant gratification, and social acceptance. Regardless, both products share similar justifications and cross-cutting factors like cognitive dissonance, marketing and advertising, and cultural influences (Juárez-Varón *et al.*, 2023).

Consumer Perception of Quality and Performance

Currently, the exclusive item strategy that points out the scarcity of the product is often used by the most prominent sneaker brands in the world (Burgess, 2022). Nike and Adidas, for instance, are chasing a strategy through cooperation with popular designers, artists, and luxury brands with restricted quantities. In the past, Nike published the Air Yeezy series via a partnership with the American rapper Kanye West, who has a distinguished impact on music and fashion and recorded a remarkable popularity and high sales rate (Burgess, 2022). This phenomenon occurs because people often aspire to imitate the celebrities they admire by purchasing items or products associated with them. (Choi & Rifon, 2012). Thus, self-congruence with worldwide famous people stimulated the limited-edition partnership strategy exploited by sneaker or shoe brands to proliferate sales volume. The pursuit of counterfeit products is usually from widespread and popular brands since these brands are recognizable to the eye of an individual and wanted by many. Consumers tend to buy these counterfeit products to conform to the hierarchy of celebrities and look prestigious. (Choi & Rifon, 2012).

Market Trends

One of the underlying views of Nike marketing trends and strategies is to establish an appealing brand image. The Nike Swoosh logo, a simple yet impressive symbol, has become rapidly identifiable worldwide. By linking itself with the Swoosh logo, Nike has established brand perception and loyalty among its buyers (Andersson, 2023). The company values what the audience wants and produces marketing campaigns that resonate with such wants and needs. Nike has built a very strong passionate connection with its buyers by placing itself as a brand that supports athletes and inspires them. Nike shows its support by embracing a healthy and athletic lifestyle and by pushing the customers to their limits

and achieving greatness (Andersson, 2023). The marketing strategy of Nike goes way past traditional advertising and deals. The company has deliberately formed collaborations with athletes, including well-known icons like Michael Jordan, Serena Williams, and Cristiano Ronaldo (Andersson, 2023). These partnerships have played a crucial role in founding the credibility and desirability of Nike in the sports industry. As declared by Andersson (2023), these collaborations aid the whole brand experience for customers. Nike leverages the influence and admiration of these popular athletes to establish marketing campaigns that grab the attention and ingenuity of consumers. The presence of the previously mentioned athletes in the advertisements and promotions of Nike helps further improve the credibility of the brand and it also inspires customers to contribute to purchasing more products from Nike (Andersson, 2023).

Industry Impact

Nike places a major emphasis on its retail stores, aiding customers with a distinctive and immersive shopping experience (Andersson, 2023). Nike stores serve as active spaces where customers can have fun and engage with the brand, discover new products, and dynamically participate in community affairs. As mentioned by Andersson (2023), one of the many key features that set Nike stores apart is the prominence of presenting exclusive advantages to customers. These advantages include tailored fittings, where expert staff aid customers in finding the accurate fit for their athletic shoes and wear. This tailored facility makes sure that customers exit the store with goods that cater to their explicit needs, enhancing their satisfaction with the Nike brand. Nike stores also propose access to limited-edition publishes, establishing a sense of superiority and excitement. As Andersson stated, customers could be able to get their hands on highly wanted and desired products that are often available for a limited time. This superiority appeals to customer engagement, promotes a sense of insistence, and encourages duplicate visits to the store (Andersson, 2023).

Counterfeit Culture and Ethical Considerations

Technological advancements tailored for counterfeit products ameliorate their quality which further provides these goods with a distinctive competitive edge. This is done by adeptly replicating the colors, shapes, and symbols of luxury brands which is considered an illegal action. Mangundap, B (2018). Comparative research of consumer purchase intention towards original and counterfeit products of Nike shoes (IJCRT editor in Chief, n.d., pp. 530–531). Additionally, the amelioration of these counterfeit products is further recognized and fueled due to consumer demand for luxurious items and prestigious clothing at more affordable prices. However, the fluctuation of counterfeit products poses underlying risks for consumers. Notably, counterfeit products lack warranties, exposing buyers to greater financial risks and safety concerns. In the absence of warranties, consumers face challenges when their expectations are not met, as these products do not come with warranty services that explicitly state the liability of the said product and its guaranteed satisfaction statement.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the procedures and techniques used to gather information on consumer behavior in relation to

authentic versus replica shoes for those between the ages of 11-25 in Sharjah. By comparing the results to earlier studies, the researchers attempted to investigate and interpret the psychological significance of the customers' behavior, including their speech patterns and body language, which are influenced by authentic versus replica shoes.

Description of Data

For the researchers to collect the desired data, the main method used was a social experiment following an interview with teenagers. The data collected from the participants is qualitative with minor quantitative figures when mentioning prices, ratings, and an overall description of the findings. The method was to give authentic and counterfeit shoes for all ages between 11-25. The teenagers' behavior, speech patterns, and responses to the researcher's questions were then examined by the researchers. The researchers were able to identify which age group was completely impacted by authentic shoes and celebrities, and which group was not, by using this strategy. The researchers gained insight into the personalities and thought processes of the group interested in real shoes and celebrities. The researchers gained insight into the personalities and thought processes of the group interested in real shoes and celebrities, as well as how these factors impact their social interactions. But compared to the first group, the second one from which the researchers collected data was completely different. This helped to make it easier for the researchers to observe how these two age groups differed in their social lives and perceptions of the social hierarchy.

Methodology

The approaches and methods taken to satisfy the objective questions of the research were social experiments on teenagers ages 11 to 25 in Sharjah, and a short physical interview following it. The social experiment was comprised of two parts: a physical test and a picture-based questionnaire. The age groups were divided into three categories based on teenage stages: 11–16-year-olds, 17-20-year-olds in the second category, and finally, 21-25-year-olds tested in the last separate group. Each age category was split into two batches as participants of different batches will be given different information to analyze the psychology behind their purchasing pattern. Each subject was displayed a picture of an untraditional “fake” Nike shoe, and then was asked for their personal opinion on the style and how likely they were to purchase it. The second batch was shown the same Nike shoe style; however, it is worn by a celebrity, then will be asked the same question as the first batch. The second part of the social experiment is a more practical version in which participants wore a pair of Nike shoes and were put through multiple tests to evaluate their opinion on its durability. However, what the participants were unaware of was that each pair consisted of one real and one fake shoe. The first batch was told that the pair they wore were replicas and the second batch was told it was authentic shoes, and after completing the same set of activities, participants were asked about the durability and how likely they were to purchase it. The results of each age group were analyzed separately and compared with the batches within the same category.

Rationale of the Study

The researchers chose the age range of Generation Z, 11 to 25, as studies have recognized this age range to have the biggest

link between purchased products and social media reviews and trends: up to 49% of people within this generation purchase products after seeing it on social media (Statista, 2023). This allows the experiment to be most accurate as it shows how the psychology of media can control consumer behavior in particular when it comes to the current trend of favoring luxurious spending on products, emphasizing the contrasting view on replicas and authentic Nike shoes. This age range is also suitable as they are the most fit in relation to body coordination and awareness. This age range is most suitable for being aware of what their body responds in terms of pain and fatigue, as well as being the most active, whether it be from walking high school stairs, working out, or walking around the mall: this age range is most fit to completely fulfill the experiment (Mitchell, 2023). The brand of shoes chosen was Nike since it is the most worn among generations and has also been the most copied in the replicated shoe industry. The set of obstacles the contestants will go through are all under human control and include active movements without any hazardous outcomes. The obstacles included a set of day-to-day activities such as walking on different floors, walking on puddles, running on inclines, and walking up stairs. As a result, teenagers and adults had a variety of reactions depending on what information they were given and how they perceived the product and its value.

Procedure of the Analysis

The results were carefully examined, taking into account a wide range of variables to offer a detailed comprehension of the dynamics impacting teenagers' choices between authentic and counterfeit shoes. The analysis's main categories, which included psychological and practical aspects, were selected in light of prior findings that showed their significant influence on the thought processes and behavioral patterns of teenagers. The researchers acknowledged the wide-ranging effects of these components and their potential impact on youths' everyday emotional experiences and cultural attitudes. Participants were asked carefully crafted questions that tested both the mental and practical, real-world effects of their decisions, delving into the complex interaction between psychological and pragmatic factors. The physical exam that followed provided an additional source of behavioral information, enabling an in-depth evaluation of the individuals' answers. According to the previously described division, each category—psychological and practical—was examined by the researchers separately and the results showed a thorough and complex comprehension of the elements at play in the complicated world of teens' preferences for either authentic or counterfeit shoes.

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the corpus description, methodology, rationale of the study, and procedure of the analysis. This study explored the psychological aspect of consumer behavior when purchasing authentic versus replica shoes. Based on the assigned objectives, the collected data through the social experiment were analyzed to satisfy the objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The question of this paper was experimented with and answered in this chapter; it discusses the data found and what

the researchers observed from the information presented. Before beginning, the researchers presented a thorough description and demonstration of what is expected from the participants in the set of actions to be completed in the practical part of the experiment. Consent was required to record their data in the social experiment part when it came to the interview. Hence, researchers provided a form for participants below 18 to be signed by a guardian, for consent and agreement to provide authentic and genuine responses. Participants aged 18 and above provided signed slips to confirm their consent and agreement to not be biased or prejudiced based on the information they will be presented with as well as continuing with the assigned courses with as much authenticity and realism in order to mimic their day-to-day behavior.

Firstly, the researchers collected relevant data on participants that could affect their results: nationality, fitness levels, employment status, the main form of transportation and how frequent, how often they check social media or if they stay up to date with trends, and their opinion on their sense of fashion and overall style. After collecting quantitative data, researchers compiled data that highlighted the connection between time and durability of each shoe with a follow-up question on the participants' opinion of the shoe and its value after every activity. The study was conducted in a controlled indoor environment to avoid any sudden weather changes, in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Moreover, it consisted of 24 participants, from 3 different age groups, ages ranging from 11-25, and within every age group, the first batch were told the pair of shoes worn were authentic, and the others were told they were fake. This process of data compilation was over the course of 3 weeks. On top of that, the information collected, and the different responses were analyzed while taking into consideration multiple points from previous studies and further comparing it to our personal experience and the results. The statistics are presented in the form of percentages and ratios throughout this paper for efficiency and comprehensive purposes.

Form of Data Representation

To ensure optimized comprehensiveness in the analysis of the study, the results of how the shoe lasted, and the responses from the participants, descriptive data methods such as statistics which include percentages and ratios, graphs, and visuals were employed for the facilitation of a thorough examination of the outcomes.

Pre-Experiment Data: Participants' Profile and Demographic Factors

With the awareness of how other factors play a role in the outcome of the study, this section outlines the demographics of the following: the number of participants, both children and adults relating to their age group, nationality, level of fitness, and how frequent they exercise physical activity, employment status or source of income for adults, existences of allowances and their relationship and view of money for children, the frequency of social media usage and finally, how often they stay up to date with fashion trends.

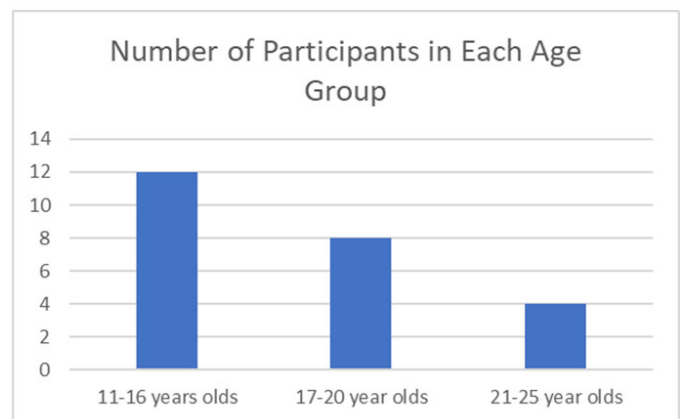
Age Groups

This experiment acknowledges how children and adults contribute differently to the results; however, the stark age

gaps help with inclusivity and awareness of how common and likely consumer behavior is affected psychologically. Nevertheless, the three selected age groups of Generation Z are 11- to 16-year-olds, 17-20-year-olds, and 21-25-year-olds.

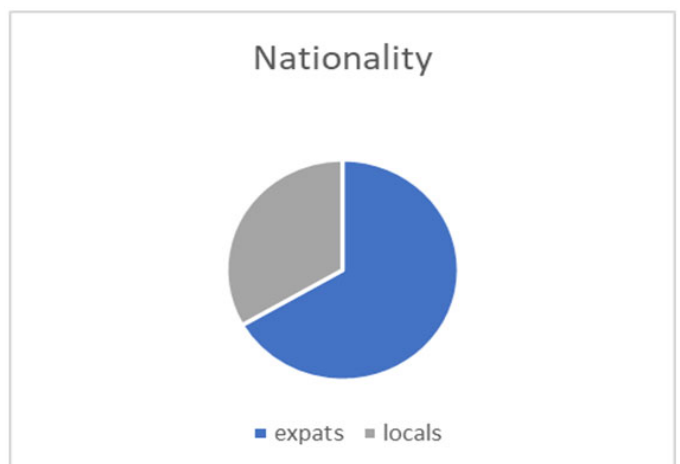
Number of Participants in Each Group

According to the analysis, the three different groups had varying numbers of participants ages ranging from 11 to 25 years old. However, there was an equal split in every age group, team A (believes are dealing with authentic Nike shoes) and Team B (believes are dealing with duplicates of Nike shoes). Out of the 24 total participants, the majority, 12, (50%) are children or teenagers between the ages of 11 to 16; 8, (33.3%) were in the range of 17 to 20 years old, and only 4(16.6%) were above the age of 20.



Nationality

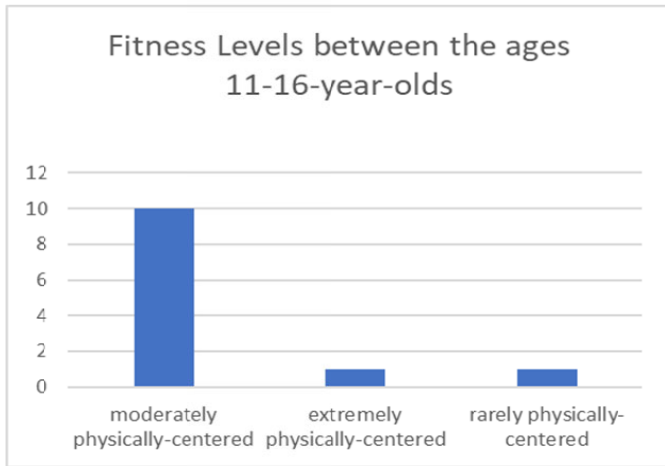
In total of participants, two-thirds (66.6%) were expats, and only one-third (33.3%) were locals. Moreover, in every age group, an average of 1 in 3 participants are of Emirati nationality. Those who are foreigners feel less connected to this country as they do not share the nationalistic joy of celebrating Emirati traditions and norms. Thus, allowing the societal norm to revolve around Westernized fashion without the bias of being strictly stuck to the country's traditions.



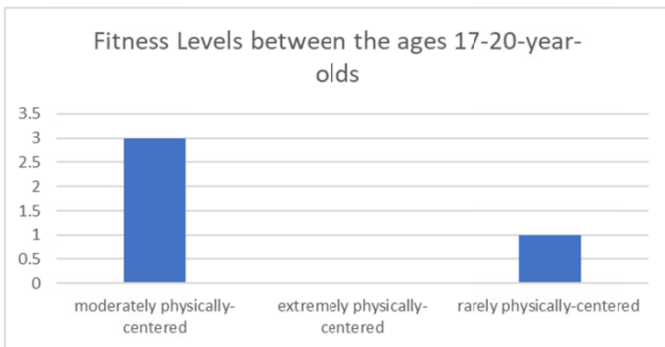
Lifestyle and Physical Activity in Each Age Group

The statistics presented are not only differentiated amongst the three selected age groups but across the two different teams in every category as well for specificity when it comes to interpreting the relation of lifestyle to their opinion on the

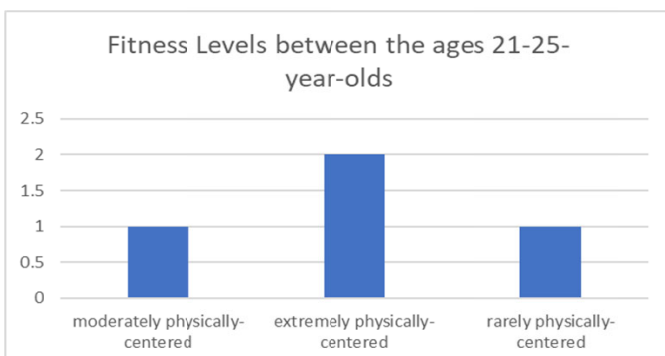
shoe: presenting the data in six results. The answers were one of the options of frequency, the lowest being rare physically-centered activities (excluding less than 5-minute necessary walks and such), moderately physically-centered activities (participates in sports or the gym at least once a week or walks/runs no less than 30 minutes daily or 3 km), and lastly, a lifestyle routine that always centers around physical activity (participating in fitness programs for more than twice a week or runs/walks for one hour daily or 5 km). In children or teenagers, most of them, 10 out of the 12 (83.3%), scaled their daily routine and activities to be moderately physically-centered, a lifestyle with rare physical engagement and an extreme physical engagement both have 1 person each (8.3%).



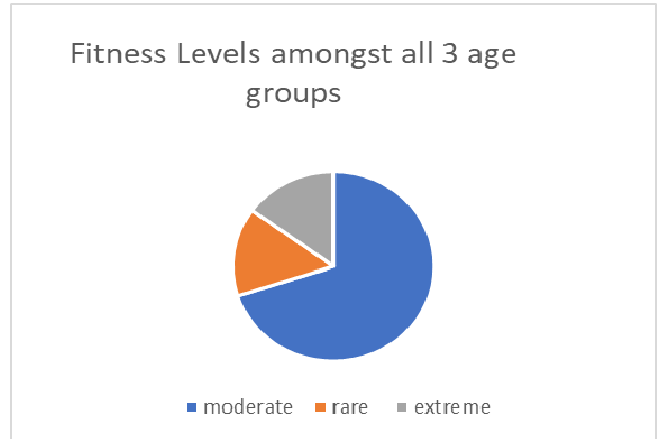
The second age group reports show that 1 in every 4 participants (25%) engage in a rare physically centered routine, and the highest number, 3:4 (75%), have a moderately physically centered lifestyle.



Participants between the ages 20 and 25, 2 report having extremely physically centered routines, rare physical routines, and moderate physical routines each have (25%) or 1 participant.



From a more generalized perspective, an average of (58.3%) had moderately physically centered routines, and (12.5%) had extreme physical-centered routines. Moreover, (12.5%) had rarely physically centered routines. The largest targeted group is physically active, hence making their opinion based on its durability in the long term due to the constant heavy use. This might suggest that the fashionable aspect of the shoe may not be the priority of the participants.



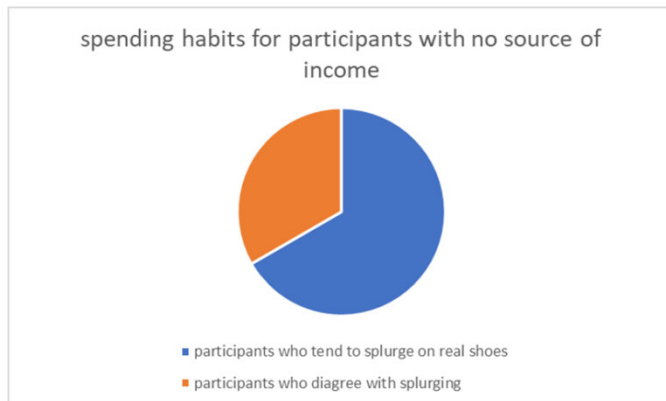
Employment Status and Relationship with Money

This analysis aspect is split based on the age group and if a source of income exists whether it is through a corporate 9-5 job or small business shop. Out of the 24 participants, 9 of them have a personal source of income, making their evaluation process different than those who deal with money and financing through allowances. Participants who have a steady flow of income were asked questions in relation to their spending patterns and how often they splurge on themselves. This can help researchers identify the link between the social status that humans desire to climb based on financial accessibility. Results have surprisingly shown that those who have a steady flow income is more than the average of the United Arab Emirates (roughly 16,000 AED) monthly, prefer splurging on other aspects of their lives, quoting one of the subjects: "I live alone; I cook when I want and what I want, and I can buy what I want when I want: I know best where my money is best spent and it's not on shoes." Out of the 9 participants with personal income, 5 strongly agree with this lifestyle and even own some replica shoes rather than originals.



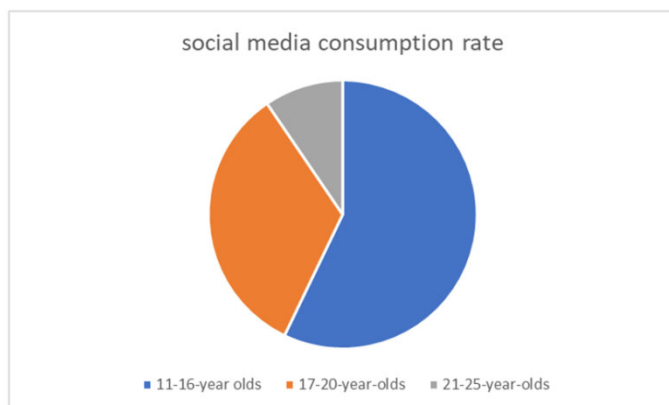
On the other hand, the 15 participants who rely on an allowance have mainly responded with the opposite answer: they do not believe in replicas and take measures as far as saving up for months to purchase their desired shoe. This shows the psychological role in consumer behavior as those with a steady flow of income are secure in their self-image and capability knowing they have the ability to spend on things if they want to, building a stronger wall between human satisfaction and the temptation to be accepted by society. Out

of the 15, the majority, 10 (66.7%), responded similarly to the overall consensus that they believe their money is worth being spent on authentic shoes and that it does make a difference in terms of durability and overall fashion statements.



Frequency of Social Media Usage

The average screen time for an individual is 7 hours on a daily basis. With this given information researchers are able to assess the amount participants have spent on their phones, more specifically on social media, and its direct link to the tendency to follow trends and constantly change styles and their fashion identity. The researchers, while analyzing this aspect, kept another factor in mind that contributes to the result which is the age of the participants as ages between 11-18 years are more prone to being influenced in opposition to 19-25-year-olds.

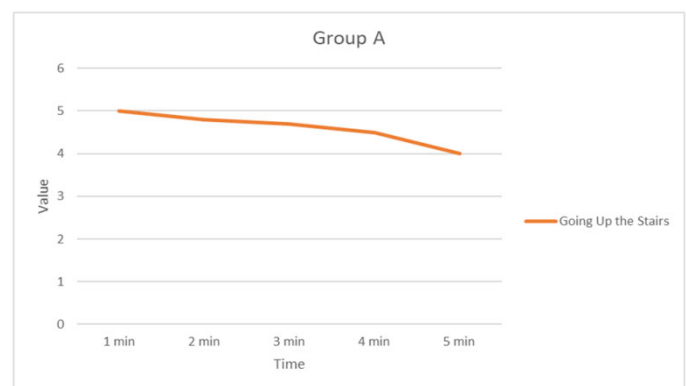


In the first age group, aged 11-16 years, all 12 participants have either an average amount of screen time or above average, with an approximated 25% (2.5 hours) of consumption through social media such as Tiktok or Instagram, the direct door for fast fashion trends. In the second age group category, 7 (85%) of the participants spend their screen time on social media platforms for approximately 55% (3.5 hours). Only one participant from this age category has a screen time of 7 and a social media consumption rate of 90%. The eldest group category has different results, 2 share an above-average screen time and around 85% is on social media, 1 has a below-average screen time and 70% consumption of social media, and 1 participant also has a high screen time but only 45% of the time is on social media.

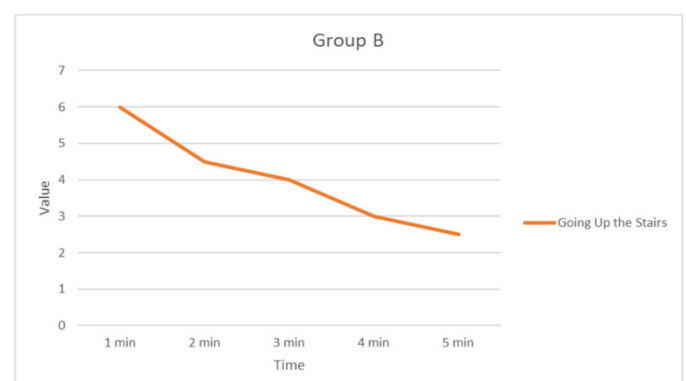
Testing the value of Nike shoes: practical approach

The researchers aimed to comprehend people's perception of product quality, particularly shoes, depending on whether they

think they are wearing authentic items or replicas. In order to accomplish this task, they enlisted 24 participants to participate in an experiment. Every person was requested to wear a set of Nike shoes. However, it was uncertain to the participants that one shoe was an original Nike, while the other was a replica. The real Nike shoe was worn on the right foot, while the fake one was worn on the left. In essence, each group, A or B, was told different things; Group A was told that the pair of shoes they were wearing were authentic while Group B believed they were replicas. This set of tasks helped the researchers gather information on how the participants' views and experiences could vary depending on whether they think they are wearing genuine items or replicas. It also helped the researchers gather data on the durability of both authentic and replica Nike shoes.

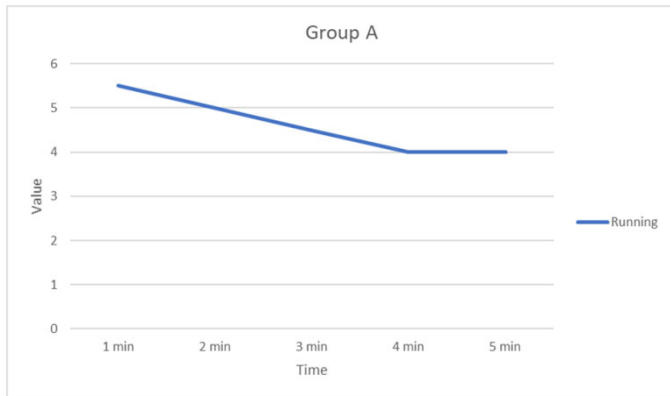


To begin the assessment, the researchers created an uncomplicated but effective evaluation: ascending stairs continuously for 5 minutes. This task aided the researchers in evaluating the durability of the shoes, offering information on how well each shoe could withstand continuous movements similar to everyday use. While going up the stairs, both the replica and the authentic shoes showed some light creasing, yet surprisingly, neither sustained any lasting harm. The researchers' findings on the correlation between shoe value and the length of time spent climbing stairs are shown in the graph above. Based on the feedback received from the participants in Group A, 75% of them noted no noticeable damage or decrease in the shoes' value following the experiment. The researchers received valuable insights from participants in a detailed review, which helped them understand how people perceive and react to shoe creasing or its value. Despite the deliberate misrepresentation of the shoes, one being authentic and the other a replica, participants consistently believed that both pairs were in excellent shape.

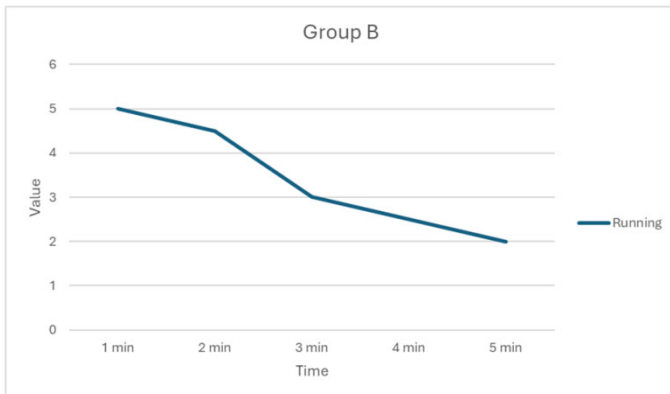


As time passed, a noticeable decrease in the shoes' worth was apparent, as shown by the downward trend on the graph. This

trend highlights an important connection: the longer people spent climbing stairs, the more noticeable the decrease in the value of the shoes they were wearing. This finding corresponds with the comments that the participants made from Group B, who mentioned that the shoes tend to crease quickly, which made them appear less valuable. After a 5-minute test where they believed they were wearing replica shoes, 25% of participants perceived the shoes as lower in value compared to authentic ones.

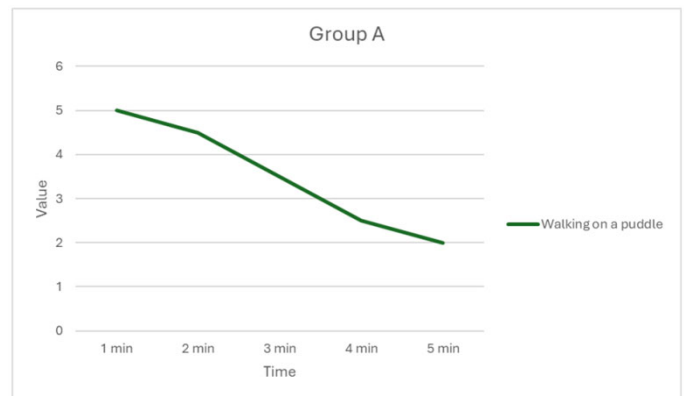


In the experiment, Group A and Group B were both given the same task of running for 5 minutes. When Group A was asked to give their opinions on the shoes they had worn, their feedback offered valuable insights. Even though they were told they had genuine shoes, about 25% of Group A participants noticed a small problem with the left shoe (which is a replica). More specifically, they noticed that the adhesive applied appeared to be less durable, resulting in slight separation on the edges of the shoe. Nevertheless, even with this minor difference, individuals in Group A highlighted that the shoe's general quality and value were still credible.

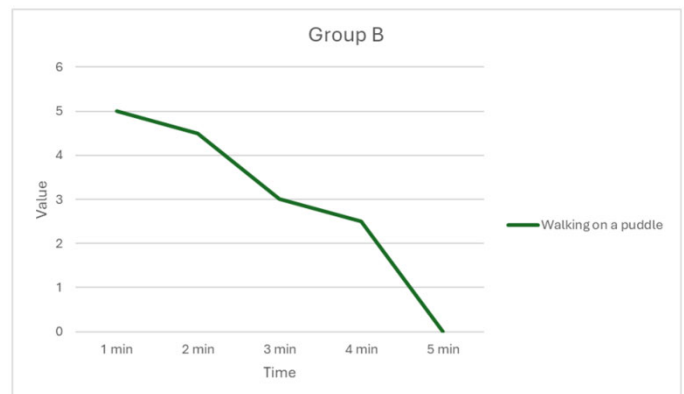


After finishing the task, Group B members were asked to share their thoughts and assessments of the shoes they had. Contrary to Group A, the responses from Group B depicted a slightly varying image. Numerous individuals were unhappy with their experience, specifically pointing out issues with the left shoe. They noticed that the adhesive on the left shoe seemed to have weakened during the activity, resulting in a loss of grip and structural strength. The perceived reduction in quality prompted multiple participants in Group B to reconsider their opinions on the overall worth of the shoes. Indeed, about 25% of Group B members gave negative feedback on the footwear. The feedback provided by Group B highlights the sophisticated methods consumers use to assess the quality and authenticity of a product. It emphasizes the significance of resolving issues

concerning product uniformity and longevity to maintain consumer confidence and contentment.



During this specific assessment stage, the researchers presented a new task to both Group A and Group B members: walking in a puddle for 5 minutes. After finishing the task, researchers asked participants for feedback to assess their reactions and perceptions. Around 50% of the participants in Group A were not satisfied with the results of the test. They were dissatisfied because both shoes got completely soaked and as a result, were damaged. However, they were disappointed with the result, as both shoes were eventually ruined by the water and could no longer be used. Approximately 25% of the participants praised the quality of the shoes they were wearing since they believed them to be authentic.



While conducting tests on Group B, a significant number of participants showed discontent with the results, especially concerning the quick absorption of water by the shoes. Around 75% of these participants credited the fast absorption of water to the characteristics of the shoes. They concluded that knowing the shoes were replicas, they expected them to perform poorly. Therefore, they saw the rapid flooding of the market with the shoes as a direct result of them being fake, which caused a decrease in perceived value and quality. On the other hand, around 25% of the individuals in Group B responded in a different way to the outcomes. Even though they recognized the shoes were getting wet quickly, they decided to take a more careful approach when evaluating them. In contrast to their peers, they were not completely caught off guard by the result, given the difficult task of walking through a puddle for a long time. Therefore, they did not solely credit the results to the genuineness of the shoes. However, they acknowledged the inherent challenge of the task and avoided placing excessive blame on the shoes. Therefore, their

responses were not as critical as most of the participants in Group B.

Testing the value of Nike shoes: psychological approach

In the first experiment, the researchers tested how 3 different groups of people would psychologically react to an unappealing pair of shoes when they were told about its authenticity and how seeing a celebrity wearing that specific pair of shoes affected their responses. The researcher asked the first group of 12 twelve-year-olds their opinions on the unattractive pair of shoes, in the first test, 6 twelve-year-olds were told the pair were originals. The responses were similar stating that the shoes were unique to them and they liked them, they were then shown a picture of a celebrity wearing the same pair of shoes and their responses were more confident as if their response was validated. In the second test, the other 6 twelve-year-olds were told that the shoes were replicas. They responded that the shoes were repulsive, and they would not wear them, once shown a picture of a celebrity wearing the same shoes they hesitated in their response and were less confident in their answer. This shows how children base their opinions on how they think other people or celebrities would respond. When they were shown a picture that doesn't necessarily agree with their opinion the children felt uncomfortable and apprehensive about their opinions.

In the second experiment, the researchers asked the second group of 8 seventeen-year-olds the same questions. In the first test, 4 seventeen-year-olds were shown a picture of hideous shoes and were told that they were authentic, they acknowledged the authenticity and the pricing of the unique shoes but admitted that they would not spend a large amount of money on them as it wasn't something they were fond of. When shown a picture of a celebrity wearing the same unappealing shoes they mentioned how the shoes grabbed a lot of attention, which is what celebrities nowadays aim to do. In the second test, the other 4 seventeen-year-olds were shown the same unattractive shoes, except they were told they were counterfeit, the individuals expressed how they didn't like the shoes but wouldn't mind trying them out since they were inexpensive, once shown a picture of a celebrity wearing them the teenagers admired how the celebrity wasn't following the expectations of wearing costly shoes and felt more encouraged in purchasing the shoes seeing that they looked good on the celebrity. The experiment showed how the first test affected the views the teenagers had on the celebrity was negative while the second test had a more positive response directed to the celebrity wearing fake shoes.

In the third experiment, the researchers asked the same questions for the third group of 4 twenty-three-year-olds. In the first test, 2 twenty-three-year-olds were shown unattractive shoes but told they were original, they disliked the shoes and stated how they didn't think they were appealing to anyone. Once shown a picture of the celebrity wearing those same shoes, they admitted that it was nice seeing different styles being represented but they were still not convinced about trying them. In the second test, the other 2 twenty-three-year-olds had very similar reactions and stated how the shoes were hideous and that they wouldn't wear them. Their opinions didn't change after seeing the celebrity wearing the shoes. In this group, the responses were very similar in both tests showing how young adults' opinions aren't as affected by celebrities as the other age groups.

Conclusion

This section further supports the study's findings based on the research questions. It emphasizes the significance of the research and suggests avenues for future research. The study's findings could be beneficial for psychologists, designers, and marketing managers. The valuable insights provided by this study aim to uncover new information on the practical and psychological evaluation of authentic and replica Nike shoes.

Conclusion

After analyzing human behavior and opinions on branded footwear and replicas across multiple age groups, it is concluded that the information provided and media coverage heavily influenced human perception and consumers' purchases. The results indicate that customers given information deemed prestigious and of value influenced their responses positively in opposition to those who were knowledgeable of otherwise: wearing replica shoes which produced an averaged negative feedback.

Summary of the Findings

The responses received from various age groups and demographics revealed distinct factors that shed light on the psychological and practical implications behind them. This was proven by direct interactions with participants during the research. Furthermore, researchers observed the behavior of participants during the assigned exercises, which influenced their perceptions of the shoes. This observation provided valuable insights into the psychological aspects of individuals' beliefs about wearing authentic or replica shoes. Colors, aesthetics, design, and trends played a crucial role in the data collection process, enabling researchers to understand individual thought processes and reactions. Some responses initially appeared vague, but further investigation into the influence of celebrities wearing the shoes uncovered deeper meanings in participants' verbal expressions. This highlighted the significance of diverse opinions in gaining a comprehensive understanding of participants' perspectives. Different shoe designs appealed to various age groups, with celebrities exerting a significant influence on younger generations. This insight helped researchers discover different thought patterns among different age demographics. Ultimately, the diverse range of shoes reflected individuals' unique styles and self-perceptions.

Implications of the Study

The current research that has been carried out demonstrates the clear yet complex dynamic of media exposure and consumer behavior, additionally emphasizing the significance of credibility and authenticity of footwear among 11-25-year-olds in the city of Sharjah. The implications of this research work are multifaceted and extend to various and broader stakeholders. Those include to begin with, the use of insight provided through this study by businesses to refine their marketing strategies, tailoring messaging to influence the younger demographics in a way that allows resonance to the product. Fraud detection organizations require warranted efforts to strengthen their ability to protect consumers in addition to exposure to education initiatives to increase responsible and informed purchasing decisions. The significance of effective brand repuating management is

concluded as well as that policymakers can use results to inform regulations. This experiment delves into a new dimension of insight into the dynamics shaping purchasing decisions in the footwear marketplace.

Delimitations of the Study

The current study which combines both a practical case study and a theoretical approach demonstrates notable delimitations. Firstly, the restriction in the generalizability and inclusivity of the findings due to its conduction in only the city of Sharjah and emphasizing on the age range of 11 to 25 year-olds. This creates a possibility of overlooking other fine distinctions and aspects of consumer behavior such as the more general cultural or regional influence. Additionally, the confinement in research caused a lack of diversity which may obscure many perspectives or behaviors bound to exist in broader and more heterogenous populations. In terms of the methodology, the reliance on self-reports through interviews and surveys influences the results. This may be due to the reality that self-evaluation may provide an inaccurate reflection of actual behavior. Moreover, the results were assessed without the control of other variables such as past experiences with counterfeit products which could dramatically shift the responses and compromise the validity of the concluded results. The study also mainly relies on temporal factors due to its heavy dependence on constantly changing trends, events, or cultural shifts which may limit the relevance of the study in different contexts and periods.

Further Research

Further research is required to determine the impact of age on individuals' perceptions of different Nike shoes and the influence of multiple celebrities wearing these shoes. Future studies should also consider factors such as the color, design, trendiness, and overall aesthetics of the shoes. Furthermore, exploring other types of shoes and conducting different experiments beyond those discussed in this study could provide further insights for future research.

Conclusion

This section emphasizes the relevance of the study and underscores the need for further research by reaffirming the findings of this study with its research questions. The results provided are poised to target and offer valuable insights to marketing analysts, businesses, psychologists, and regular consumers who might find them helpful. Through this study, it is expected to expand the psychological view of consumer behavior in relation to media exposure and perception. Consequently, these academic theories offer the possibility to explore the unknown areas in the complex interactions between media portrayal and the form of information displayed in consumer decision-making.

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