Final Research Report

Converse Shoes

[redacted]

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Executive Summary

Throughout our three research types, we aimed to give the brand Converse a competitive edge over its competitors and determine how to cater the brand's products to 18-30 year old college consumers' preferences. In a highly saturated and competitive industry, we aimed to gather insightful knowledge on how Converse can enhance its brand appeal.

Our secondary research objectives focused on an in-depth analysis of the footwear manufacturing industry, Converse as a brand, competing brands like Vans and Reebok, and Converse's target consumer base. To analyze key trends within these segments, we explored databases' variety of credible academic journals and statistics, allowing us to identify challenges that Converse faces in terms of competitor threats, consumer behavior, and differentiation. The main findings from our secondary research reveal room for growth in retaining brand loyalty, providing unique benefits in products, and using the most effective social media platforms and celebrity or influencer partnerships.

Our qualitative research's main objectives were to understand our target consumers' attitudes towards footwear brands and the motivating factors behind purchase decisions. In addition, we hoped to gain insight into online advertising strategies that foster strong consumer-brand relationships, and how celebrity and influencer marketing can play a role. We recruited six individuals in our target consumer group to participate in one-on-one recorded interviews, either in person or over Zoom. We followed an interviewer guide beginning with questions on general experiences with footwear and factors influencing purchase decisions. The following two topics, attitudes towards footwear brands and celebrity and influencer impact, probed deeper into participants' opinions and relevant experiences. From analyzing interviewee responses, we determined Converse is reputable but not the most popular brand in the footwear industry. Native advertisements on footwear showed success in piquing consumer interest and leading them to conduct more in-depth research before making a purchase decision. Furthermore, participants label a brand as trendy based on opinions and observations from influencer endorsements, friends, and strangers.

Our quantitative research aimed to gain a deeper understanding of target consumers' attitudes towards Converse and its competitors, as well as the driving factors of making a purchase. Considering the expansion of celebrity and influencer marketing, we aimed to uncover if and how these notable figures connect consumers to a brand. We distributed an online questionnaire via texts, group chats, and social media to friends, family, and coworkers, and received 51 responses from individuals who aligned with our target consumer group. The questionnaire included topics on general experiences with footwear, factors influencing purchase decisions, attitudes towards footwear brands, and celebrity and influencer impact. Once completed, we then translated the gathered information into an Excel spreadsheet and used the jamovi application to discover patterns in the data. Through this questionnaire, we discovered that celebrity and influencer endorsements rarely impact consumer opinions on footwear or sway them when making footwear purchase decisions. Additionally, consumers agree that price and personal fashion taste are the most valued factors. In comparison to competitors, consumers ranked Converse high on aligning with personal fashion taste.

Combining all of this knowledge, we determined that Converse will see high engagement through native advertising on selective media platforms and word-of-mouth marketing from satisfied customers. The brand should emphasize the price, durability, and comfort of its shoes considering that the target audience gives the most weight to practicality when purchasing footwear. Finally, the brand should take advantage of its classic appeal and timelessness.

Secondary Research

Industry Analysis:

Converse operates in the footwear industry, particularly the lifestyle footwear sub-section. Its key competitors include Vans, Reebok, Puma, Adidas Sambas, and New Balance.

Size of the Industry: The footwear manufacturing industry is big and expected to grow at about 6% from 2023 to 2032. However, in the past five years, the Compound Annual Growth Rate has decreased by 3.4% (Ristoff, 2024).

Key Trends: There is a recent growth in footwear trends due to the increasing demand for comfortable and trendy shoes among all age groups. The sports industry is also rapidly growing, which has affected the demand for "sports-focused footwear." Another key trend is the rising popularity of sustainable and eco-friendly footwear, as concern for environmental issues grows worldwide and many footwear companies are taking active measures to reduce their footprint.

Factors Influencing Growth of Industry: Some of the factors influencing the growth of footwear are technological advancements, increased sports activities bringing investors, and widespread enthusiasm towards the health benefits of exercise (Data Bridge, 2022a). The onset of the global pandemic in 2020 disrupted the supply chain and operations for footwear companies. The industry saw a quick turnaround but still has not fully recovered (Ristoff, 2024).

Outlook of the Industry: Overall, there is a rapid expansion in this market due to economic, social, and lifestyle factors. Most consumers are looking to purchase goods in this industry for everyday casual footwear. As the pandemic and other factors are put in the past, the industry will become more stabilized due to social behaviors in consumers. It also seems like market share will be the most important for these companies to grow and find opportunities in the industry.

Brand Analysis:

Core Attributes, Functions, or Benefits: Converse shoes offer simple, classic, youthful designs and prides itself in individuality and self-expression. They are designed to function as soft and flexible for the optimal comfortability of the consumer. Some benefits of the brand include durability, comfort, affordability, and grip/traction of the shoes itself.

Prices or Price Range: The Converse shoes vary in pricing depending on the style, collaboration, and retailer. They are about between $25 to $100 dollars in the US, with consumers averaging $80 per shoe purchase (Lindner, 2023). However, pricing can increase or decrease depending on season, popularity, discounts, or limited edition styles.

Primary (and Secondary) Target Consumers: The brand's main target audience is people aged 15-30. Most of them are students and are known to be involved in fashion, music, art, and cultural topics. The secondary target consumers for Converse are older millennials, roughly 28-43 years old, who still have brand loyalty towards Converse (Lindner, 2023). Contrary to the main target consumer group, the brand incites a feeling of nostalgia amongst millennials from when they wore Converse in their younger years.

Current Positioning and Marketing Strategies: Converse's marketing campaigns involve using celebrities or influencers to show the incorporation of the shoes into people's lifestyles. The brand has collaborated with famous celebrities like Tyler The Creator and Virgil Abloh to encourage individuality and creativity. It continues to foster engagement on all social media platforms to help awareness and credibility for its young target audience.

Brand Personalities: Converse has a strong brand personality that focuses on self-expression and storytelling. It is known for its representation of individuality, authenticity, and inspiration. Its unique identity continues to stand out against other competitors attracting youth culture.

Competitor Analysis 1:

Core Attributes, Functions, or Benefits: Vans is an established brand that offers shoes with rugged, timeless, and colorful design options. The brand values creativity, authenticity, and community involvement (*Vans History* 2017). Benefits of the brand include affordable price range, product variety, and durable shoe soles designed to withstand wear.

Prices or Price Range: Vans offers fairly affordable footwear options that cost $72 on average (Sheena, 2023). However, price varies as certain shoe styles are priced under $30 while others, such as limited edition product collaborations, are priced at a premium well above the average.

Primary (and Secondary) Target Consumers: The primary target consumers are Gen Z males, ages 10 to 24, who are active and involved in sports (*Vans | Company Overview & News*). They prefer streetwear fashion and can be seen participating in skating, BMX, snowboarding, and surfing. Vans' secondary target consumers are "edgy" older Gen Z and millennials roughly 25 to 40 years old whose fashion sense also centers around hip-hop and skater style.

Current Positioning and Marketing Strategies: Due to the target audience's involvement in athletics, Vans partners with sports entertainment venues and other brands as a part of its marketing strategy. For instance, Vans collaborated with professional skateboarder Geoff Rowley to design limited edition shoes and sponsored the US Open of Surfing in 2013 (*Vans History* 2017). The brand not only sponsors events but also creates its own, as shown by its Vans BMX Pro Cup series and Vans Park Series (*Vans History* 2017). This attracts the target consumer group and engages them to interact with the brand outside of these sporting events.

Brand Personalities: The brand personality of Vans toes the line of rebellious, but manages to prevent consumers from being perceived in a negative light (Saharudin, 2022). Vans is also viewed as laid-back and authentic, with strong ties to youth culture and a distinct sense of identity.

Competitor Analysis 2:

Core Attributes, Functions, or Benefits: Reebok is a footwear company with athletic shoes that enhances performance, comfort, and style. Its products blend innovation with tradition, providing versatile options suitable for various activities and lifestyles. Reebok caters to athletes of all levels, ensuring they can perform their best while looking and feeling great (Reebok, 2022).

Prices or Price Range: Reebok's athletic shoes can range from around $50 to $150 or more. Basic models, such as casual sneakers, tend to be on the lower end of the spectrum (Rizzo, 2023)

Primary (and Secondary) Target Consumers: The primary target consumers for Reebok are typically active individuals who are in their late teens to early forties who engage in a variety of recreational activities. They usually value comfortable yet stylish footwear. Secondary target consumers are in the same age group but are sporty individuals (The Big Marketing, 2024).

Current Positioning and Marketing Strategies: The marketing strategies behind Reebok aim to rebrand the company away from sports-immersive and towards a perception that better resonates with the target audience. To further align with current trends and target consumers' fashion taste, Reebok recently partnered with women's fashion brand Anine Bing to develop vintage athleisure shoes (Baker, 2024). To regain the target audience's attention and increase receptiveness, they implemented a consumer loyalty program that rewards points through for purchases, product reviews, attendance at product launches, and other interaction points (*Reebok's Marketing* 2019).

Brand Personality: The brand personality of Reebok is athletic, innovative, and authentic as they try to maintain a youthful and community-driven approach. (*Reebok's Marketing* 2019)

Consumer Analysis:

Target Consumer Group: We propose that Converse's target consumer group should consist of college consumers aged 18-30. Within this group, we will focus on full-time college students who reside on campus or in off-campus housing. Targeting this population will prove beneficial for Converse since the brand offers relatively low prices for its products that college students can afford. Additionally, appealing to this target consumer group while they are enrolled in college will allow Converse to gain and retain customers as they soon become financially independent.

General Values and Beliefs: The target demographic prioritizes self-care, community involvement, activism, and mental health (Kondakciu, 2022a). Brands with similar values tend to receive more business from these college-aged consumers. These consumers also prefer brands to incorporate more realistic and diverse portrayals of people in their advertisements (Kondakciu, 2022a). Usually, college students first hear about new brands or products through friends, online, or TV, with friends' opinions being the most influential factor (Newcomer, 2015).

Digital Media Usage and Purchase Patterns: Converse's target consumer group frequently uses some form of social media, so they have a large digital presence that Converse can take advantage of. Additionally, they prefer to shop online to save time and tend to switch between different brands to find their desired product for the least amount of money (Kondakciu, 2022b).

Key Footwear Attributes and Brand Perceptions: Many consumers within this demographic favor affordability, comfortability, and trendiness in shoes. Shoes are a way for individuals to express their style and fashion interests, so wearing certain brands matters. Among the segment of consumers who are aware of Converse, nearly half of respondents agree that they like the brand (Kunst, 2023). The Chuck Taylor shoe makes up around 60% of Converse's sales, as consumers gravitate towards its popularity and simple design (Lindner, 2023).

Problem Statement:

Converse faces a challenge in retaining loyal customers because its consumers tend to switch between brands. Although Converse is well-known, it lacks distinct ties to popular trends. Its features are similar to its competitors, which prevents the brand from standing out. The target audience uses a variety of social media, making it hard to decide which platform to focus on. Also, the effects of celebrity endorsements on consumer purchase decisions remain uncertain.

One key opportunity for Converse to explore is advertising on social media through celebrity and influencer partnerships. The media usage patterns of the target audience should be studied through primary research. We can then identify which platforms are most suitable to achieve optimal engagement from the target consumer base. Primary research on values and consumer attitudes of Converse and its competitors will reveal how Converse can differentiate its products to attract greater appeal amongst target consumers and retain a loyal consumer base.

Research Questions:

1. What aspects of a footwear brand will make consumers more inclined to remain loyal? Insight gained from this question will allow us to pinpoint key indicators of what makes brands have a loyal following. Using this information, we can identify areas of improvement for Converse.
2. What attitudes do college students aged 18 to 30 have towards Converse and its competitors? By posing this question, we can determine which aspects of Converse's shoes have room for improvement. We can also understand how these attributes rank against competing brands.
3. In what ways are college students aged 18 to 30 looking to connect with brands online through social media? We can determine where and how our target consumer group prefers to be advertised to. This will reveal where Converse should invest more time into communicating with consumers to aid the conversion of engagement to purchases.

Qualitative Research

Research Objectives:

Converse's key problem lies in differentiating itself from its many competitors, all of which offer similar product benefits. Converse has the opportunity to take advantage of media trends to communicate the unique characteristics of the brand. The main objective of our qualitative research is to understand the existing perspectives college students aged 18 to 30 have towards footwear brands, which will provide insight into what promotion methods have proven to be successful and where there is room for growth. We wish to know the attitudes these consumers feel regarding footwear brands and what motivates them to go through with a purchase from these brands. Additionally, we aim to uncover the types of online advertising strategies that are the most effective in connecting consumers to a brand and dive deep into how this relates to celebrity and influencer marketing. By conducting this research, we hope to conclude with a strong sense of what compels consumers to prefer one footwear brand over another, as this knowledge can be used to improve Converse's position in the footwear market. Qualitative research follows a flexible structure, providing the unique opportunity to probe participants for deep reflection and elaboration on their perspectives.

Procedure:

Interviews were conducted over the span of a week. The first interview occurred on February 29th and the last interview happened on March 7th. Both Paige and [redacted] had interviews take place in their bedrooms with two chairs set up facing one another, and Paige conducted an additional interview seated around her kitchen island. In all instances, nobody else was present in the room. A Canon camera was used to record Paige's interviews and extra audio was recorded on an iPhone. [redacted] used an iPhone to record her two interviews. Both of [redacted] interviews were filmed through Zoom at her internship with the interviewee sitting next to her sharing the same camera screen. She printed out the interviewer guide for reference. The qualitative research was initially introduced to all the interviewees through a vague question asking if they'd be okay with answering some questions about their attitudes toward footwear. Once they agreed and were present for the actual interview, the script in the interview guide was closely followed to establish purpose, ground rules, and logistics.

Sample:

Interviewees were recruited through convenience sampling (friends, coworkers, etc.). The total sample size was six people, two recruited by each of the three group members. Interviewees were all asked the questions on the screener to make sure they were applicable for the interview. The four main screening criteria to sample the participants were age (18-30), enrollment status in college (enrolled either full-time or part-time), purchase history of the brand Converse and its main competitors (have purchased the brand Converse or its competitors in the last 3 years), and social media usage (use at least two social media platforms at least once a day). All the interviewees are full-time college students who use Instagram at least once per day. The majority (N = 4) of the interviewees have purchased Converse within the last three years. One purchased Reebok in that time frame, and two others purchased Puma. The majority (N = 5) of the interviewees use TikTok daily, and Snapchat and Pinterest are also frequently used.

Qualitative Questioning:

The main topics discussed in the personal interviews, in order of most broad to most specific to our research objectives, were general experiences with footwear, factors influencing purchase decisions, attitudes towards footwear brands, and celebrity and influencer impact. The interview guide was developed with primary questions and follow-up questions. Interviewers deviated from the guide to clarify interviewee answers or further probe for relevant insight. Special attention was given to ensuring that a wide variety of qualitative interviewing questions were used to efficiently and comprehensively probe for interviewee insight. At the end of the main discussion, the interviewer asked if the interviewee felt the need to add any additional comments, and then they were thanked for their time and participation.

Findings:

Each interviewer revisited recordings and transcripts of their interviews to draw meaningful conclusions from the interviewees' verbal and nonverbal responses. We sought to understand what the interviewees said, why they said it, and what went unsaid. Analyzing all of their comments as a whole, we successfully reflected and picked up on any contradictions or opinions changed. We also evaluated strong opinions from participants about particular shoe brands and their corresponding personalities. The consensus surrounding Converse was that it is a classic and reputable shoe brand, but doesn't stand out among current footwear trends. We uncovered that endorsements from influencers, friends, and even strangers are big determinants of which shoe brands are considered trendy. Participants also mentioned that their interest in footwear tends to be initially piqued by advertisements that blend well into social media platforms, which then pushes them to conduct deeper research they feel is necessary before purchasing a pair of shoes.

Theme 1: Converse is classic and has a good reputation, but it's not the hottest shoe brand on the market at the moment.

Converse is a classic footwear brand that holds a solid reputation among its target audience despite not being considered a fresh trend in the market. With an extensive history, Converse has been able to stand on a strong foundation and maintain relevance in the shoe market because of its recognizable identity. Although it is not dominating the current market in shoewear, it manages to avoid having a widespread negative perception, which is a strength of the brand. Our interviewees all associated neutral or positive words with the brand, such as "classic," "cute," and "nice". Because of its relevance spanning many years, the shoe isn't widely affiliated with fads and microtrends the way that newer shoewear brands are. Instead, it tends to be acknowledged for its current position as a staple lifestyle shoe that can be worn in a variety of different situations. One participant used this reasoning to identify Converse as the pop star of shoe brands.

> *"Immediately, I thought Converse. I feel like Converse are just like, they've just been around for a long time. I feel like for a lot of different reasons and a lot of different things… Converse are just like, fun but they've also stayed relevant, which I think is part of being pop. They've stayed popular."* (Woman, 20, full-time college student, has purchased Converse and its competitors in the past 3 years)

Although Converse was mentioned in conversation when discussing casual shoewear, it was not recognized by our interviewees as a shoe that is sought after for its trendiness. The brand tends to come across as the safe option for our target audience, as they are unable to identify why the shoes are popular beyond their simplicity and reliability. While this separation from trends is good for encouraging returning customers, it can cause the brand to be overlooked by those who have never purchased Converse. To boost market share by enticing new customers, Converse can reposition certain lines of shoes to be trendy options rather than safe options for loyal customers.

> *"I've been like a loyal Converse wearer since like- not even out of brand loyalty. It's just I like the way they look and like, I don't know. They're like just classic looking like I don't know and they remind me of like the 70s and 80s. I don't know, but I've worn Converse basically my whole life."* (Non-binary, 20, full-time college student, has purchased Converse in the past 3 years)

Theme 2: Native advertisements are effective among our target audience in garnering interest in shoewear and leading to deeper research.

When prompted to reflect on awareness of shoewear brands and trends, the majority of the interviewees mentioned being impacted by advertisements that matched the look and function of the platform where they appear, such as TikToks on the For You Page or pins on Pinterest. Although these native advertisements were effective in garnering attention, in-depth research into the shoe occurred between interviewees seeing the ad and making a purchase decision. This in-depth process includes reading product reviews, verifying website reliability, and checking return policies. Our interviewees engage in this research because shoes tend to be a more expensive fashion purchase and contain more functionality aspects than other articles of clothing.

> *"Well, I have directly bought, like, purses from TikTok shop. Shoe wise, I am a little bit more meticulous about my research just because, yeah, I want it to look good, but if I'm going to spend $300 on a shoe, I try for it to be a little bit comfortable. So I do usually try to be like, who can tell me if this is actually a good choice versus just seeing an ad and immediately purchasing it?"* (Woman, 20, full-time college student, has purchased Converse and its competitors in the past 3 years)

Because of the hesitancy people feel towards engaging with advertisements, our target audience may be more likely to consider the message contained in an advertisement if it is less obviously an advertisement. The interviewees expressed feeling impressed with the clever ways that advertisers use native formats to catch and retain their attention. They report that oftentimes they don't even notice the ad disclosure until after interacting with the media. To avoid being deceptive, these native advertisements must balance blending in with sufficient disclosure. While these advertisements seem to be effective in sparking interest, they don't necessarily directly lead to sales and instead lead to further research on a product.

> *"I guess for an example, a lot of times Instagram and TikTok, they'll have advertisements built into their media when it's Instagram reels, obviously TikTok's just TikTok.*

> *Sometimes what catches my eyes is when I don't realize it's an advertisement and I watch it anyway because it's clear. I end up staying on it and then I'll be like, Oh, that's an advertisement. That was cool."* (Man, 22, full-time college student, has purchased Converse's competitor brands in the past 3 years)

Theme 3: Endorsements from influencers, friends, and even strangers determine whether a brand is considered trendy or not.

Our interviewees report judging a brand's level of trendiness from how well it is accepted by friends, influencers, and even strangers encountered both on the Internet and in real life. Celebrities and influencers seen wearing or promoting products will capture the attention of their audience. As a result, these viewers may purchase the endorsed product due to its affiliation with that famous figure or a strong desire to resemble some aspect of that individual. This aspirational feeling was identified by our participants as the reason these figures are influential. Influencers have the ability to make a brand or product considered trendy online because they capture such a large audience who trust and listen to their recommendations.

> *"Like I was saying earlier, that kind of like, aspirational thing, where it's like, you see someone wearing this, that you admire their like, lifestyle, or the way that you perceive them, you want to also be perceived as, or something like that."* (Non-binary, 20, full-time college student, has purchased Converse in the past 3 years)

Endorsements from celebrities and influencers are not the sole factor in giving a brand a trendy status; the brand must also be popular among friends and other people seen in real life. Our interviewees seek out and value a balance between striving to fit in with influencers and fitting in with their peers, as admiration and aspiration are felt for people who are not famous as well. In addition, brands or products that frequently appear online in a positive light contribute to its level of trendiness. Participants who engage online through social media platforms notice products becoming trendy when posts about them constantly appear in their feeds, regardless of whether those posts are created by influencers, friends, or strangers.

> *"I think it has a lot to do with social media now and just what... I feel like trends go in and out really fast now, which is not, I feel, the best thing because everything's always changing. But I would say just how things are being talked about online, feedback. If a lot of people are purchasing it at one time, yeah."* (Woman, 20, full-time college student, has purchased Converse's competing brands in the past 3 years)

Conclusion:

Our qualitative data answered our research questions and satisfied the informational needs in our Research Objectives to a sufficient extent. We discovered where Converse stands in the minds of consumers, what promotion methods are effective, and how online advertising relates to celebrities and influencers. We were able to reveal important consumer insights like the internal process of purchasing shoes and how one determines whether something is trendy, which our secondary research was unable to uncover. In addition, the qualitative data uncovered what motivates interviewees to purchase a new pair of shoes and who they look to for guidance in their shoe selection process. Our secondary research mentioned information similar to these findings, but the interviews provided more detailed and specific insight aligning with our research objectives.

After probing and analyzing interviewee responses, we noticed an unexpected contrast between the women and men participants when asked about the most influential factors on their shoe purchase decisions. Influencers and celebrities did not impact any of the male participants' opinions in terms of purchasing shoes, while women interviewees mentioned that these societal figures play some role in their purchase decisions. This reveals that it may be wise for Converse to focus on influencer and celebrity endorsements when targeting its female audience in contrast to advertising efforts geared towards its male audience. Although we had previously known that advertising towards different demographics of Converse's target consumers would vary, our qualitative data provided a clearer picture of how gender plays a role in advertising efforts.

Speaking to the participants directly and creating a comfortable environment was part of the reason we were able to uncover these findings and discover how young adults truly feel about shoewear styles, brands, and trends.

Future Research:

Some of our interviewees reported instances where they made a conscious effort to stay away from following trends as a means of differentiating themselves from the perceptions associated with these trends. Because of the possibility that emphasizing trendiness may be ineffective in elevating brand perceptions, we would like to conduct further research on when this situation arises and understand how Converse can navigate this concept. Additionally, we wish to learn where trends and “aesthetics” originate from, as well as how to track the cyclical nature of these trends. This can be used to anticipate upcoming and outgoing trends in shoewear and place Converse ahead of the trend cycle.

Supplementing our findings with more quantitative research will help us understand further how these trends rise and why young adults associate themselves with a specific aesthetic. We hope to support the information we received from the participants and match it with statistical data that is provided through larger sample sizes in quantitative research. In our quantitative research, we aim to also get objective and measurable data to further support the theme regarding native advertisements being effective. It is beneficial to understand this so that Converse’s future advertising efforts can maximize the efficiency of native advertisements by incorporating research aspects.

Quantitative Research

Research Objectives:

Converse's key problem lies in differentiating itself from its competitors in such a dense market, meaning the brand has an opportunity to use consumer touchpoints to position itself as the brand with the highest quality and most fashionable shoes. The main objective of our quantitative research is to understand the existing perspectives college students aged 18 to 30 have towards footwear brands, as these consumers make up a large portion of footwear consumers as a whole. This will provide insight into what positioning methods are successful and where there is room for growth. We wish to know the attitudes these consumers feel regarding footwear brands and what motivates them to go through with a purchase. Additionally, we aim to dive deep into how celebrity and influencer marketing connects consumers to a brand. By conducting this research, we hope to conclude with a strong sense of what compels consumers to prefer one footwear brand over another, as this knowledge can be used to improve Converse's position in the footwear market. Quantitative research provides a unique opportunity for us to quantify data from a large sample on when and why people seek out new shoes, which can then be statistically analyzed to support our findings.

Procedure:

After creating and revising questions relevant to the research objectives, the final online survey was published on the morning of April 10th and closed early afternoon of April 11th. A link was distributed via texts, group chats, and social media to friends, members of clubs, and coworkers. The response rate was around 5%, with about 1000 people invited to the survey and 51 people completing it fully. The quantitative research topic was initially introduced to the respondents through a brief statement inviting them to answer questions about their attitudes toward footwear. Once they entered the survey, they were presented with an introduction statement that established purpose, ground rules, and logistics. Respondents took between 5 and 20 minutes to complete the survey.

Sample:

Respondents were recruited through convenience sampling (friends, coworkers, etc.). The four main screening criteria to sample the respondents were age (18-30), enrollment status in college (enrolled either full-time or part-time), purchase history (have purchased the brand Converse and/or its competitors), and social media usage (use at least two social media platforms at least once a day). Out of 65 total respondents, 14 did not meet all of the necessary criteria and were screened out, leaving the final sample size at 51.

Table 1 Age Screener Descriptives

	Between 18 and 30
N	51
Missing	0
Mode	1.00
Minimum	1
Maximum	1

Table 2 Age Screener Frequencies

Between 18 and 30	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
Yes	51	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 3 Respondents' Age

	Age
N	51
Missing	0

Table 3 Respondents' Age

	Age
Mean	20.8
Median	21.0
Mode	21.0
Standard deviation	2.05
Minimum	18.0
Maximum	29.0

All respondents are between the ages of 18 and 30. The average respondent age was 20.8 (*M* = 20.8, *SD* = 2.05).

Table 4 Respondents' Gender Descriptives

	Gender
N	51
Missing	0
Mode	2.00
Minimum	1
Maximum	3

Table 5 Respondents' Gender Frequencies

Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Male	22	43.1 %	43.1 %
Female	26	51.0 %	94.1 %
Non-binary	3	5.9 %	100.0 %

The gender demographics included 51% female (*N* = 26), 43.1% male (*N* = 22), and 5.9% non-binary (*N* = 3).

Table 6 Respondents' Race/Ethnicity Descriptives

	Race/ethnicity	Race/ethnicity other (text)
N	51	2
Missing	0	49
Mode	6.00	
Minimum	2	
Maximum	7	

Table 7 Respondents' Race/Ethnicity Frequencies

Race/ethnicity	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Asian	4	7.8 %	7.8 %
Black or African American	4	7.8 %	15.7 %
Hispanic or Latinx	17	33.3 %	49.0 %
White	24	47.1 %	96.1 %
Other, please specify	2	3.9 %	100.0 %

Table 8 Respondents' Race/Ethnicity (Text) Frequencies

Race/ethnicity other (text)	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Arab	1	50.0 %	50.0 %
white and asian	1	50.0 %	100.0 %

A majority of respondents are White (*N* = 24, 47.1%), and a significant portion are Hispanic/Latinx (*N* = 17, 33.3%). 7.8% (*N* = 4) are Asian, and 7.8% (*N* = 4) are Black or African American. One respondent reported being White and Asian (*N* = 1, 2%), and another reported being Arab (*N* = 1, 2%).

Table 9 Respondents' College Enrollment Status Descriptives

	College student
N	51
Missing	0
Mode	2.00
Minimum	1
Maximum	2

Table 10 Respondents' College Enrollment Status Frequencies

College student	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Part-time college student	2	3.9 %	3.9 %
Full-time college student	49	96.1 %	100.0 %

96.1% (N = 49) of the total respondents are full-time college students, making 3.9% (N = 2) part-time college students.

Table 11 Respondents' Purchase History Descriptives

	Ever bought Vans	Ever bought Converse	Ever bought Reebok	Ever bought Fila	Ever bought Puma	Ever bought Skechers
N	43	41	16	5	14	12
Missing	8	10	35	46	37	39
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 12 Respondents' Vans Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Vans	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	43	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 13 Respondents' Converse Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Converse	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	41	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 14 Respondents' Reebok Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Reebok	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	16	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 15 Respondents' Fila Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Fila	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	5	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 16 Respondents' Puma Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Puma	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	14	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 17 Respondents' Skechers Purchase History Frequencies

Ever bought Skechers	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	12	100.0 %	100.0 %

84.3% (N = 43) have bought Vans, 80.4% (N = 41) have bought Converse, 31.4% (N = 16) have bought Reebok, 27.5% (N = 14) have bought Puma, 23.5% (N = 12) have bought Skechers, and 9.8% (N = 5) have bought Fila.

Table 18 Respondents' Social Media Platform Descriptives

	Use Facebook	Use X	Use Instagram	Use Pinterest	Use TikTok	Use Tumblr	Use Snapchat
N	26	27	51	22	41	2	45
Missing	25	24	0	29	10	49	6
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 19 Respondents' Facebook Frequencies

Use Facebook	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	26	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 20 Respondents' X Frequencies

Use X	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	27	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 21 Respondents' Instagram Frequencies

Use Instagram	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	51	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 22 Respondents' Pinterest Frequencies

Use Pinterest	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	22	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 23 Respondents' TikTok Frequencies

Use TikTok	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	41	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 24 Respondents' Tumblr Frequencies

Use Tumblr	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	2	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 25 Respondents' Snapchat Frequencies

Use Snapchat	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	45	100.0 %	100.0 %

All respondents use Instagram (*N* = 51, 100%), nearly all (*N* = 45, 88.2%) use Snapchat, nearly all (*N* = 41, 80.4%) use TikTok, about half (*N* = 26, 51%) use Facebook, about half (*N* = 27, 52.9%) use X, and about half (*N* = 22, 43.1%) use Pinterest.

Table 26 Respondents' Financing for Shoes Descriptives

	Finance for shoes
N	51
Missing	0

Table 27 Respondents' Financing for Shoes Frequencies

Finance for shoes	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Cards	1	2.0 %	2.0 %
Checking	1	2.0 %	3.9 %
Credit Cards	1	2.0 %	5.9 %
Credit card	3	5.9 %	11.8 %
Credit cards	3	5.9 %	17.6 %
Credit cards	1	2.0 %	19.6 %
Credit cards, gift cards	1	2.0 %	21.6 %
Crédit cards	1	2.0 %	23.5 %
Debit	1	2.0 %	25.5 %
Debit card	5	9.8 %	35.3 %

Table 27 Respondents' Financing for Shoes Frequencies

Finance for shoes	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Debit cards/credit cards	1	2.0 %	37.3 %
Gift cards	1	2.0 %	39.2 %
Gift cards, savings	1	2.0 %	41.2 %
JOB	1	2.0 %	43.1 %
No	1	2.0 %	45.1 %
Savingd	1	2.0 %	47.1 %
Savings	6	11.8 %	58.8 %
Savings	1	2.0 %	60.8 %
Savings, gift cards	1	2.0 %	62.7 %
Savings, gifts	1	2.0 %	64.7 %
Savings/credit cards	1	2.0 %	66.7 %
Spending change (NOT SAVINGS)	1	2.0 %	68.6 %
Work	1	2.0 %	70.6 %
cash savings	1	2.0 %	72.5 %
credit card	1	2.0 %	74.5 %
credit card or gift card	1	2.0 %	76.5 %
credit cards	1	2.0 %	78.4 %
credit cards	1	2.0 %	80.4 %
credit cards, savings	1	2.0 %	82.4 %
debit	1	2.0 %	84.3 %
debit card	1	2.0 %	86.3 %
gift cards	1	2.0 %	88.2 %
gifts	1	2.0 %	90.2 %
savings	3	5.9 %	96.1 %
savings	1	2.0 %	98.0 %
savings and credit cards	1	2.0 %	100.0 %

Some common ways that respondents report financing for shoes include credit cards, debit cards, savings, gift cards, and cash.

Table 28 Respondents' Money Spent on Shoes Descriptives

	Money spent on shoes
N	51
Missing	0
Mode	3.00 [a]
Minimum	1
Maximum	6

[a] More than one mode exists, only the first is reported

Table 29 Respondents' Money Spent on Shoes Frequencies

Money spent on shoes	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
$50 or less	3	5.9 %	5.9 %
$51 to $70	5	9.8 %	15.7 %
$71 to $90	12	23.5 %	39.2 %
$91 to $110	9	17.6 %	56.9 %
$111 to $130	10	19.6 %	76.5 %
$131 or more	12	23.5 %	100.0 %

When it comes to money spent on shoes, 23.5% (*N* = 12) of respondents spend $71 to $90, and 23.5% (*N* = 12) spend $131 or more. 19.6% (*N* = 10) spend $111 to $130, and 17.6% (*N* = 9) spend $91 to $110. Only 9.8% (*N* = 5) report spending $51 to $70, and 5.9% (*N* = 3) spend $51 or less, meaning respondents generally spend higher amounts of money on shoes.

Questionnaire:

The questionnaire began with general questions and became more specific towards the end. We included question types such as checklists, rating and Likert scales, constant sum, and rank-ordering. A screener was introduced first to filter out respondents who did not meet the target demographic and behavioral criteria. We asked respondents questions about their past purchases and footwear experiences, footwear characteristics they consider when purchasing shoes online or in a store, thoughts and feelings towards footwear brands they have past experience with, and impacts of celebrities and influencers on footwear opinions. To assess this, we asked how often they have purchased new shoes in the past three years and typical places in which they purchase shoes (e.g., general footwear store or website, brand store or website, department store, resale website, thrift store). Respondents chose the factors they often consider when purchasing footwear. These choices were carried into the following question, which determined which of these factors is most important to respondents. We used display logic to present questions only regarding brands respondents have purchased. Respondents then rated these sneaker brands on various characteristics (e.g., trendiness, comfortability, affordability, uniqueness) and were posed with perceptions about the brands that they reported either agreeing or disagreeing with. Finally, respondents were prompted to choose brands they have seen endorsed by a celebrity or influencer and any social media platforms in which they viewed these advertisements. We concluded the questionnaire with a classification section to group respondents by similar demographic characteristics.

Findings:

To prepare for statistical analysis, the data was downloaded from Qualtrics and opened in Jamovi. Outliers, incomplete responses, and irrelevant columns and rows were removed. The questions and variables were relabeled with a few descriptive words, as were the nominal response categories. The measurement level and data type were specified, and then data analysis began.

Topic 1: General Experience with Footwear

Table 30 Situational Factors for Buying Shoes

	Buy to replace	**Buy for school**	**Buy for social event**	**Buy for fashion**	**Buy for new job**	**Buy for formal event**	**Buy to follow trends**
N	51	51	51	51	51	51	51
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.61	3.69	2.84	3.27	3.94	3.69	2.80
Median	5.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Standard deviation	0.695	1.26	1.36	1.17	0.925	1.21	1.23
Minimum	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

Respondents were presented with a few situations in which people seek out a new pair of shoes and then asked to rate their likelihood of buying new shoes when in these various situations. This was an interval rating question with a 5-point scale with a rating of 1 indicating very unlikely and 5 indicating very likely. The analysis shows that respondents are most likely to purchase shoes for practical reasons, such as buying to replace (M = 4.61, SD = 0.695) and buying for a new job (M = 3.94, SD = 0.925). Buying for school (M = 3.69, SD = 1.26), buying for a formal event (M = 3.69, SD = 1.21), and buying for fashion (M = 3.27, SD = 1.17) are all moderately likely to occur. Buying for a social event (M = 2.84, SD = 1.36) followed by buying to follow trends (M = 2.80, SD = 1.23) are the least likely to occur.

Table 31 Places to Purchase Shoes Descriptives

	Buy from footwear store	Buy from brand store	Buy from footwear website	Buy from brand website	Buy from department store	Buy from resale website	Buy from thrift store
N	35	38	10	37	23	9	5
Missing	16	13	41	14	28	42	46
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Table 32 Footwear Store Frequencies

Buy from footwear store	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	35	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 33 Brand Store Frequencies

Buy from brand store	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	38	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 34 Footwear Website Frequencies

Buy from footwear website	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	10	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 35 Brand Website Frequencies

Buy from brand website	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	37	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 36 Department Store Frequencies

Buy from department store	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	23	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 37 Resale Website Frequencies

Buy from resale website	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	9	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 38 Thrift Store Frequencies

Buy from thrift store	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	5	100.0 %	100.0 %

Respondents were asked to indicate the places they normally purchase footwear. This was a nominal checklist question. The checklist included 7 common places to purchase footwear and an additional “Other, please specify” option. The analysis shows that a large percentage of the respondents purchase footwear from stores that sell one brand (N = 38, 74.5%) and websites that sell one brand (N = 37, 72.5%), followed by footwear stores that sell many different brands (N = 35, 68.6%). A moderate percentage of respondents purchase footwear from department stores (N = 23, 45.1%), such as Target. In contrast, a small percentage of respondents purchase footwear from footwear websites that sell many different brands (N = 10, 19.6%), resale websites like Depop (N = 9, 17.6%), or thrift stores (N = 5, 9.8%).

Topic 2: Factors Influencing Purchasing Decision

Table 39 Attributes Considered When Purchasing Shoes

	N	Missing	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Comfortability points	44	7	24.77	22.5	20.0	10.89	5.00	50.0
Fashion points	46	5	28.57	27.5	20.0 [a]	11.20	5.00	50.0
Price points	49	2	31.82	30.0	30.0	14.08	10.00	70.0
Trendiness points	23	28	16.39	10.0	10.0	10.70	0.00	45.0
Friends' approval points	13	38	15.77	10.0	10.0	9.76	5.00	40.0
Celebrity approval points	5	46	6.60	10.0	10.0	5.64	0.00	12.0
Familiarity points	39	12	13.38	10.0	10.0	7.85	5.00	40.0

[a] More than one mode exists, only the first is reported

Respondents were asked to divide 100 points among the attributes they report considering when they purchase sneakers while assigning more points for the attributes that are more important for them. This was a ratio constant sum question following a nominal checklist question asking them to check the attributes they consider when purchasing sneakers. The choices from the preceding question were carried over to the constant sum question. The analysis shows that price (M = 31.8, SD = 14.1) is the most important attribute, followed by personal fashion taste (M = 28.6, SD = 11.2) and comfortability (M = 24.8, SD = 10.9). Following those top attributes are trendiness (M = 16.4, SD = 10.7), friends' approval (M = 15.8, SD = 9.76), and familiarity with the brand (M = 13.4, SD = 7.85). Celebrity and influencer approval (M = 6.60, SD = 5.64) is considered the least important attribute.

Table 40 Sources' Influence on Footwear Purchase Descriptives

	N	Missing	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
Product reviews	51	0	1.00	1	7
Celebrities/influencers	51	0	7.00	1	7
Product advertisements	51	0	4.00	1	7
Search engine results	51	0	5.00	1	7
Friends and family	51	0	2.00	1	7
Social media posts	51	0	6.00	1	7
Brand/company website	51	0	1.00	1	9

Table 41 Product Reviews' Influence Frequencies

Product reviews	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	16	31.4 %	31.4 %
2	6	11.8 %	43.1 %
3	7	13.7 %	56.9 %
4	7	13.7 %	70.6 %
5	3	5.9 %	76.5 %
6	5	9.8 %	86.3 %
7	7	13.7 %	100.0 %

Table 42 Celebrities/Influencers' Influence Frequencies

Celebrities/influencers	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	2	3.9 %	3.9 %
2	3	5.9 %	9.8 %
3	6	11.8 %	21.6 %
4	2	3.9 %	25.5 %
5	2	3.9 %	29.4 %
6	9	17.6 %	47.1 %
7	27	52.9 %	100.0 %

Table 43 Product Ads' Influence Frequencies

Product advertisements	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	2	3.9 %	3.9 %
2	6	11.8 %	15.7 %
3	6	11.8 %	27.5 %
4	13	25.5 %	52.9 %
5	11	21.6 %	74.5 %
6	9	17.6 %	92.2 %
7	4	7.8 %	100.0 %

Table 44 Search Engine Results' Influence Frequencies

Search engine results	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	2	3.9 %	3.9 %
2	6	11.8 %	15.7 %
3	8	15.7 %	31.4 %
4	7	13.7 %	45.1 %
5	11	21.6 %	66.7 %
6	10	19.6 %	86.3 %
7	7	13.7 %	100.0 %

Table 45 Friends and Family Influence Frequencies

Friends and family	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	10	19.6 %	19.6 %
2	12	23.5 %	43.1 %
3	7	13.7 %	56.9 %
4	6	11.8 %	68.6 %
5	9	17.6 %	86.3 %
6	5	9.8 %	96.1 %
7	2	3.9 %	100.0 %

Table 46 Social Media Posts' Influence Frequencies

Social media posts	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	4	7.8 %	7.8 %
2	9	17.6 %	25.5 %
3	8	15.7 %	41.2 %
4	9	17.6 %	58.8 %
5	6	11.8 %	70.6 %
6	11	21.6 %	92.2 %
7	4	7.8 %	100.0 %

Table 47 Brand/Company Website Influence Frequencies

Brand/company website	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	12	23.5 %	23.5 %
2	11	21.6 %	45.1 %
3	8	15.7 %	60.8 %
4	9	17.6 %	78.4 %
5	7	13.7 %	92.2 %
6	1	2.0 %	94.1 %
7	2	3.9 %	98.0 %
9	1	2.0 %	100.0 %

Respondents were asked to rank order 7 sources used to find information on footwear, placing "1" next to the most influential source and "7" next to the least influential source. This was an ordinal rank ordering question that instructed respondents to only use each number one time. Brand/company websites (N = 23, 45.1%), product reviews (N = 22, 43.1%), and friends and family (N = 22, 43.1%) were the most frequently ranked first or second as most influential. Product advertisements (N = 30, 58.9%), search engine results (N = 26, 51%), and social media posts (N = 23, 45.1%) were frequently ranked in the middle between 3 and 5.

Celebrities/influencers was the most frequent source ranked 7th as least influential (*N* = 27, 52.9%).

Topic 3: Attitudes Towards Footwear Brands

Table 48 Brand Rating on Outdated v. Trendy

	Vans Outdated:Trendy	**Converse Outdated:Trendy**	**Reebok Outdated:Trendy**
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	3.28	4.76	4.50
Median	4.00	5.00	5.00
Mode	4.00	4.00	6.00
Standard deviation	1.83	1.68	1.90
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	7.00	7.00	7.00

Respondents were asked to rate each brand on how outdated or trendy their sneakers are on a 7-point interval semantic differential scale. The latter of these characteristics received a higher rating, while the former received a lower rating. Converse was deemed most trendy (*M* = 4.76, *SD* = 1.68) compared to Reebok (*M* = 4.50, *SD* = 1.90) and Puma (*M* = 3.43, *SD* = 1.55). Vans was determined to be the most outdated (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.83).

Table 49 Brand Rating on Uncomfortable v. Comfortable

	Vans Uncomfortable:Comfortable	**Converse Uncomfortable:Comfortable**	**Reebok Uncomfortable:Comfortable**
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	4.58	4.73	5.38
Median	5.00	5.00	5.50
Mode	6.00	7.00	6.00
Standard deviation	1.61	1.79	1.20

Table 49 Brand Rating on Uncomfortable v. Comfortable

	Vans Uncomfortable:Comfortable	Converse Uncomfortable:Comfortable	Reebok Uncomfortable:Comfortable
Minimum	1.00	1.00	3.00
Maximum	7.00	7.00	7.00

Respondents were asked to rate each brand on how uncomfortable or comfortable their sneakers were on a 7-point interval semantic differential scale. The latter of these characteristics received a higher rating, while the former received a lower rating. Reebok was rated most comfortable (*M* = 5.38, *SD* = 1.20) alongside Puma (*M* = 5.36, *SD* = 1.50). Converse (*M* = 4.73, *SD* = 1.79) and Vans (*M* = 4.58, *SD* = 1.61) were rated above average on comfortability.

Table 50 Brand Rating on Ordinary v. Unique

	Vans Ordinary:Unique	Converse Ordinary:Unique	Reebok Ordinary:Unique
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	2.65	3.34	3.75
Median	3.00	3.00	4.00
Mode	1.00	4.00	4.00
Standard deviation	1.34	1.80	1.24
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	6.00	7.00	6.00

Respondents were asked to rate each brand on how unique or ordinary their sneakers were on a 7-point interval semantic differential scale. The latter of these characteristics received a higher rating, while the former received a lower rating. On average, Reebok (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = 1.24), Converse (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 1.80), and Vans (*M* = 2.65, *SD* = 1.34) all received low ratings on their uniqueness, with Vans considered the least unique. These findings reveal that all brands are generally viewed as ordinary by respondents.

Table 51 Perception of Brand Consumer Age

	Vans age	Converse age	Reebok age
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	3.30	4.00	3.31
Median	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode	4.00	4.00	3.00
Standard deviation	1.01	0.866	1.08
Minimum	1.00	2.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00

Table 52 Perception of Brand Casualness

	Vans casual	Converse casual	Reebok casual
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	4.02	3.78	3.06
Median	4.00	4.00	3.00
Mode	4.00	4.00	3.00
Standard deviation	0.556	0.881	0.772
Minimum	3.00	2.00	2.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00

Table 53 Perception of Brand Fashion

	Vans fashion	Converse fashion	Reebok fashion
N	43	41	16
Missing	8	10	35
Mean	2.72	3.90	3.63
Median	3.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	2.00	4.00	4.00

Table 53 Perception of Brand Fashion

	Vans fashion	Converse fashion	Reebok fashion
Standard deviation	1.08	0.917	1.09
Minimum	1.00	1.00	2.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00

Respondents were given three statements regarding the age at which people wear the brand, the lifestyle the brand is associated with, and how well the brand aligns with their fashion taste. They then selected on a 5-point interval Likert scale how strongly they disagreed or agreed with the statements. A rating of 1 indicated respondents' strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicated a strong agreement. Respondents generally agreed that people their age wear Converse sneakers (*M* = 4, *SD* = 0.866), followed by Reebok (*M* = 3.31, *SD* = 1.08) and Vans (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = 1.01). The agreement with the statement that the brand was associated with a casual and laid-back lifestyle was highest for Vans (*M* = 4.02, *SD* = 0.556) and Converse was second highest (*M* = 3.78, *SD* = 0.881). Reebok was the least associated with this lifestyle (*M* = 3.06, *SD* = 0.772). Converse (*M* = 3.90, *SD* = 0.917) and Reebok (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 1.09) sneakers were most agreed by respondents to align with their fashion taste. Respondents agreed least with this statement for Vans sneakers (*M* = 2.72, *SD* = 1.08).

Table 54 Likeliness to Purchase Brand in the Next Year

	Likely to buy Converse	Likely to buy Vans	Likely to buy Reebok
N	51	51	51
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	3.00	2.14	2.41
Median	3.00	2.00	2.00
Mode	3.00 [a]	1.00	1.00
Standard deviation	1.31	1.17	1.43

Table 54 Likeliness to Purchase Brand in the Next Year

	Likely to buy Converse	Likely to buy Vans	Likely to buy Reebok
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00

[a] More than one mode exists, only the first is reported

Respondents were asked to indicate on a 5-point interval rating scale how likely or unlikely they are to buy from certain brands in the next year. A rating of 1 indicated very unlikely and 5 indicated very likely. Respondents are most likely to purchase Converse shoes in the next year (*M* = 3, *SD* = 1.31), followed by Reebok (*M* = 2.41, *SD* = 1.43). They are least likely to buy Vans in the next year (M = 2.14, SD = 1.17), although respondents are only moderately likely to purchase any of the listed brands in the next year.

Topic 4: Celebrity and Influencer Impact

Table 55 Viewership of Brand Endorsements Descriptives

	Celebrity endorsement Reebok	Celebrity endorsement Vans	Celebrity endorsement Puma	Celebrity endorsement Converse	Celebrity endorsement other
N	16	15	18	17	1
Missing	35	36	33	34	50
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	1	1	1	1	1

Table 56 Viewership of Reebok Endorsement Frequencies

Celebrity endorsement Reebok	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	16	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 57 Viewership of Vans Endorsement Frequencies

Celebrity endorsement Vans	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	15	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 58 Viewership of Puma Endorsement Frequencies

Celebrity endorsement Puma	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	18	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 59 Viewership of Converse Endorsement Frequencies

Celebrity endorsement Converse	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	17	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 60 Viewership of Other Endorsement Frequencies

Celebrity endorsement other	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	1	100.0 %	100.0 %

Respondents were asked on a nominal checklist if they have viewed brands being endorsed by a celebrity or influencer. Out of 51 responses, Puma (*N* = 18, 35.3%) and Converse (*N* = 17, 33.3%) were the most viewed, followed by Reebok (*N* = 16, 31.4%), and Vans (*N* = 15, 29.4%), with one other brand not listed.

Table 61 Purchase After Brand Endorsements Descriptives

	Bought after endorsement Reebok	Bought after endorsement Vans	Bought after endorsement Puma	Bought after endorsement Converse	Bought after endorsement other
N	3	2	3	3	1
Missing	48	49	48	48	50
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1

Table 61 Purchase After Brand Endorsements Descriptives

	Bought after endorsement Reebok	**Bought after endorsement Vans**	**Bought after endorsement Puma**	**Bought after endorsement Converse**	**Bought after endorsement other**
Maximum	1	1	1	1	1

Table 62 Purchase After Reebok Endorsement Frequencies

Bought after endorsement Reebok	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
1	3	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 63 Purchase After Vans Endorsement Frequencies

Bought after endorsement Vans	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
1	2	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 64 Purchase After Puma Endorsement Frequencies

Bought after endorsement Puma	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
1	3	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 65 Purchase After Converse Endorsement Frequencies

Bought after endorsement Converse	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
1	3	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 66 Purchase After Other Endorsement Frequencies

Bought after endorsement other	**Counts**	**% of Total**	**Cumulative %**
1	1	100.0 %	100.0 %

Respondents were asked on a nominal checklist if they have bought brands after they were endorsed by a celebrity or influencer. Reebok (*N* = 3, 5.9%), Puma (*N* = 3, 5.9%), and

Converse (*N* = 3, 5.9%) were chosen most by respondents, followed by Vans (*N* = 2, 3.9%), and one other brand not listed.

Table 67 Ad Viewership Per Platform Descriptives

	N	Missing	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
Ad seen on Facebook	4	47	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on X	5	46	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on Instagram	30	21	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on Pinterest	7	44	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on TikTok	23	28	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on Tumblr	1	50	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on Snapchat	5	46	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on other	1	50	1.00	1	1
Ad seen on other (text)	1	50			

Table 68 Ad Viewership on Facebook Frequencies

Ad seen on Facebook	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	4	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 69 Ad Viewership on X Frequencies

Ad seen on X	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	5	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 70 Ad Viewership on Instagram Frequencies

Ad seen on Instagram	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	30	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 71 Ad Viewership on Pinterest Frequencies

Ad seen on Pinterest	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	7	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 72 Ad Viewership on TikTok Frequencies

Ad seen on TikTok	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	23	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 73 Ad Viewership on Tumblr Frequencies

Ad seen on Tumblr	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	1	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 74 Ad Viewership on Snapchat Frequencies

Ad seen on Snapchat	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	5	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 75 Ad Viewership on Other Frequencies

Ad seen on other	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
1	1	100.0 %	100.0 %

Table 76 Ad Viewership on Other (Text) Frequencies

Ad seen on other (text)	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
youtube	1	100.0 %	100.0 %

Respondents were asked a nominal checklist about social media platforms on which they have seen an advertisement or promotion for sneakers. Instagram was the most chosen (N = 30, 58.8%), with TikTok as the second most chosen (N = 23, 45.1%). The other platforms were

Pinterest (*N* = 7, 13.7%), X (*N* = 5, 9.8%), Snapchat (*N* = 5, 9.8%), Facebook (*N* = 4, 7.8%), and Tumblr (*N* = 1, 2%).

Conclusion:

Our quantitative data answered our research questions and satisfied our informational needs. A significant amount of the findings in the quantitative research were consistent across our secondary and qualitative research. The most important factors when consumers look for shoes are consistent across quantitative and qualitative research: personal functionality and fashion goals are most important. Also, there is support in both types of research for the statement that endorsements from friends, family, and even strangers on the internet are moderately influential in footwear purchase decisions.

We discovered that celebrities and influencers do not seem to have much impact on consumer footwear purchase decisions, as rarely any respondents have purchased sneakers after viewing an endorsed advertisement and they were frequently ranked last as an influential source. This is inconsistent with our qualitative research, where we found celebrities and influencers to be noteworthy sources of inspiration. Relative to competing brands, Converse ranked high when asked if its sneakers align with consumer fashion taste. When respondents were asked to rate Converse and its competitors on a 7-point scale ranging from outdated to trendy, Converse was deemed the most trendy. This is unexpected considering the conclusion we came to through qualitative research that Converse is not the hottest shoe brand on the market at the moment. To further improve its position in the market, it appears that Converse should emphasize the practical benefits of its shoes and seek to gain approval among average consumers rather than influential figures.

Although the research gathered in our quantitative analysis answered most of our informational needs, there are some areas in which the data does not address. Trendiness is generally a positive trait, but our qualitative research discovered it can have a negative connotation and deter consumers from buying a product. We were unable to determine what brings about a circumstance where trendiness is perceived negatively and therefore steers customers away.

Throughout the process of conducting quantitative research, we realized the difficulty of recruiting respondents to participate in the survey when our response rate was 5%. Additionally, we learned that randomization is essential when forming a questionnaire because it reduces the order effect and biases in responses. Skip logic and display logic are necessary to customize the survey to individual respondents based on their answers to certain questions.

General Conclusion and Recommendation

While Converse is well-liked by the target audience, its closest competitors have gained similar approval on aspects of functionality and fashion. Therefore, it is consistent throughout our research that Converse faces the challenge of differentiating itself from its competitors. A potential opportunity for the brand lies in its unique qualities of reliability and timelessness, both of which are illustrated by the brand's acceptance from youths on quality and appearance despite being an older brand. There is an additional opportunity for Converse to highlight the attributes of its shoes that are most important to the target audience. A deep understanding of the target audience allows for the brand to successfully reach them and position itself as the best footwear brand to satisfy the needs they prioritize. Our recommendations for where to place future advertising and what messages to communicate are as follows.

1. To most effectively garner the attention of the target audience, Converse can increase its production of native advertisements on social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok. These ads are likely to receive engagement from people aged 18 to 30.
2. Because the target audience highly considers practical elements such as price, comfort, and durability when purchasing footwear, Converse can emphasize these elements. This can be done by altering the marketing mix to reflect practicality as the top priority.
3. Rather than putting effort into celebrity and influencer partnerships, Converse can encourage word-of-mouth marketing due to the fact that real customers are evidently quite influential sources for the target audience.
4. Throughout these methods runs an undercurrent of the brand's status as a classic brand, which can be represented by the logo or shoe design that young people have found to be casually fashionable for decades.

Positioning Statement

From our research, we've developed a unique positioning statement for Converse: To college students between the ages of 18 and 30 seeking versatile sneakers that balance fashion and functionality, Converse is the classic brand of footwear that sells practical and versatile sneakers to encourage self-expression through fashion. The reason is that Converse are comfortable and durable sneakers that consistently align with many young people's fashion tastes and offer good value for the price. The brand characters are timeless, laid-back, and reliable.

We chose to highlight practicality, versatility, and self-expression through fashion as product benefits due to our research conclusions that these are both strengths of Converse's shoes and priorities of the target audience. Converse can uphold the promise to meet consumers' standards on these aspects, which is evidently important to the target audience when they seek out new shoes.

Converse is in a unique position where its shoes balance functionality and fashion. Our research shows that Converse shoes are designed to intentionally convey this balance, and the target audience's positive view of the brand on various aspects (comfort, trendiness, etc.) proves that Converse's efforts are acknowledged. The brand's main competitors, such as Vans and Reebok, fall short on one or more of these attributes, proving that the balance present in Converse shoes is unique and valuable for differentiation. Further, the brand's relevancy spanning many years is recognized by the target audience as a positive trait, making this important for Converse to use to gain a competitive edge over its competitors.

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