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 Methods
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The Effect of Influencers on Black Purchasing Decisions

Abstract

Social media has become an essential aspect of consumer lifestyles. Most social media platforms encourage users to make purchases, generating higher profits. While extensive research indicates that social media influences purchasing decisions, a significant gap persists in examining the relationship between Black communities and social media's impact on their buying choices. This paper will explore how social media shapes the Black community's identity and purchasing habits through qualitative analysis using NVivo to gather data from surveys, interviews, online comments, and the formation of focus groups. This study anticipates that influencers' perpetuation of conspicuous consumption will lead consumers to make more purchases. This contributes to the growing body of literature aimed at understanding socioeconomic behaviors in the market.

"The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment," said German American philosopher Herbert Marcuse in his book *One-Dimensional Man*. Consumerism and materialism have taken hold of many communities in America. To push these concepts to their limits, marketing campaigns have found ways to deconstruct and exploit human relationships. Among the marketing tactics of firms is the sponsoring of social media influencers. Influencers have a large social media following and sway in fashion, games, fitness, and other industries. This leads to companies sending influencers money, so they endorse certain products related to their field.

One of the communities that these tactics have penetrated is the black community. The spending tendencies of the black community are well-documented. In this community, consumption for the sake of status is prevalent. According to Charron-Chénier, Fink, and Keister's article "Race and Consumption: Black and White Disparities in Household Spending," Black consumers often purchase products due to the perceived status they gain; This is to the detriment of spending money on more critical assets.

There exists a stigma among African Americans that they prefer expensive brands despite being low-income—data from the US. Department of Labor found that relative to white workers, black people have the second lowest income, only ahead of the Latino/Hispanic population. This indicates that black people must be more particular with their spending habits. It also means that when they consume a good, that good must have had more consideration put into it than the average consumer. Many news sources and articles regard black Americans as valuable customers, even going so far as to call them "top consumers," according to Roberts' article "Why Black People Are Top Consumers But Lack Wealth." This stigma is harmful because it can perpetuate narratives that justify the removal of safety nets, framing financial struggles as a matter of poor money management or a failure to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps."

Furthermore, Leslie and Felipe studied "Ethnicity's Effect on Brand Loyalty among American Consumers." They found that Black people have the highest level of brand loyalty. If a

brand gains the favor of black people, it can expect constant revenue from them. This means the firm will profit more if they get someone from their community, like an opinion leader, to influence others. Marketing campaigns often use social media to influence black purchasing decisions.

While black consumerism may be beneficial to firms and the influencers that they sponsor, the exploitation of consumerism may have destructive effects on the community. Capitalizing on a historically lower-income community invites more significant financial stress to said group. This paper seeks to delve deeper into how recent marketing approaches affect the purchasing choices of black communities and explore economic inequality, identity, and social pressure.

Literature review

This paper examines the impact of socioeconomic factors on consumer choice. This research contributes to the limited qualitative exploration of behavioral socioeconomics studies related to social media, which mainly focus on a marginalized community. Although existing studies address consumerism and social media, the phenomenon of influencers is relatively novel. It necessitates a more comprehensive investigation to elucidate its relationship with collective identity, consumption, and market strategies. Furthermore, in addition to expanding the understanding of the relationship of Black consumers with social media, this research offers a theoretical advancement concerning the influence of social dynamics on the social media marketplace.

Identity and conspicuous consumption

In the article “Conspicuous Consumption and Race,” Charles et al. (2009) apply the concept of symbolic interactionism to black consumers. They define conspicuous consumption as a devotion of much of one’s wealth to status-increasing goods. Their study shows that minority groups, namely African Americans and Hispanics, spend more money on conspicuous consumption items than White groups. Conspicuous consumption affects all aspects of life, including clothing and relationships. It also complicates how individuals shape their identity, as consumption and acceptance become critical factors. (Dantas and Abreu 2020; Wang and Griskevicius 2014).

Charron-Chénier, Fink, and Keister (2017) argue that black people spend less at all income levels due to racial inequalities, such as retail desertification in black neighborhoods, restricted access to credit, and consumer racial discrimination. They also argue that black people spend less on non-essential goods, which contradicts Charles et al.’s study on the black community spending more on conspicuous consumption items, which would fall into the non-essential category. However, non-essential goods encompass a more significant category than conspicuous consumption items. At each income level, whites will, on average, spend more on non-essential goods; however, black people will spend less on non-essential items, but the money they spend on non-essential items is allocated towards status boosting.

Lamont and Molnár (2001) state that for the black community, “the formation of collective identity is centered on defining their place in US society.” (32) They also claim that marketers: (1) shape the meanings of ‘the black consumer’ for the public at large and the

advertising industry in particular; (2) promote normative models of collective identity for blacks that equate social membership with consumption; (3) believe blacks use consumption to be recognized as sharing the collective identities most valued in American society (middle-class membership in particular). The first point relates to contractors' kite theory but on a larger scale. (Contractor et al., 2014) Advertisements function as opinion leaders and connectors for the masses, influencing their opinions on the collective identity of black people. While those in the collective usually define their collective identity. According to Lamont and Molnár, opinion leaders can impose it on them. For black people, the collective identity imposed upon them is an identity intertwined with consumption. Lamont and Molnár provide context to Charles et al. (2009) and Charron-Chénier, Fink, and Keister (2017). Low-income black communities spend less than white people in the same income level, but due to the identity pushed onto them; they spend what they can on conspicuous consumption items to appear as middle class.

Consumer Relations to the Brand: How a Constraint in Income and Brand Manipulation Affect Choice

In their 2015 article "The Impact of Economic Freedom on the Black/White Income Gap," Hoover, Compton, and Giedeman defined economic freedom as minimized government involvement, lower taxes, and fewer labor market restrictions. In theory, a free market would provide individuals with greater upward mobility. Consequently, they chose to investigate how economic freedom influences income disparities between races. They discovered that economic freedom significantly impacts the income of white individuals while having a much lesser effect on black individuals. Economic freedom only widens the income gap between whites and blacks. Charron-Chénier, Fink, and Keister argue that this is attributable to retail desertification in black neighborhoods, limited access to credit, and consumer racial discrimination. With these obstacles in place, coupled with economic freedom lacking consumer protections, upward mobility tends to benefit those already nearer to the top. Some people tend to support economic freedom, contending that reduced regulation leads to better outcomes, or that unions and social security hinder firm entry rates and economic freedom (Gehring 2013; Bennett 2021). This remains a highly debated topic that drives policy changes which affect the income of black individuals.

In Murthi and Srinivasan's article (1999), "Consumers' Extent of Evaluation in Brand Choice." Among other things, they discuss the impact of long-term and short-term Loyalty on brand choice versus the time the consumer takes to evaluate the item. They conclude that if the consumer does not take a stern evaluation of a product, they will go with short-term loyalty or the product they purchased at their previous store visit. However, if the consumer takes their time evaluating items, they will give more weight to their long-term loyalty. They also noted that those with higher loyalty may evaluate products and prices less, and those with higher incomes are less likely to evaluate. Brand loyalty goes hand in hand with what Dretsches and Kirmani (2016) call co-creation, or the collaboration between marketer and consumer, to shape the brand's meaning. This allows the consumer to discover their relevance to the brand through their identity. This self-brand connection is brought on by the activities the brand engages in to interact with its consumers. A high self-brand connection leads to brand loyalty. As the median black person is of lower income, they are more likely to be sensitive to price and would become

less so as they become more loyal to the brand. This can be manipulated to some extent by brands establishing a connection to the consumer. For instance, A firm might market their products in a way that resonates with the identity of the black consumer, such as through an influencer or other Advertising strategies.

Networks and Social Capital: How Marketers May Profit from Online Connections

In Contractor's article, "Integrating Social Networks and Human Social Motives to Achieve Social Influence at Scale," influence and influencer are defined. They describe the influencer as a structured influence process (SIP). It discusses how people are motivated to influence their community by identifying the opinion leader, the peers prone to following, the influence of the leader, and the social interaction that gets the opinion leader to change their behavior. In particular, they use the "Kite Method" to measure one's centrality in a social network. Centrality is interpreted in many ways in this paper, but for this review, centrality will be defined as an individual with the most connections in a social group. The one with the most centrality is called the connector. The connector is seen as the most capable of sharing knowledge and influencing others within the group. While the Contractor visualizes a social network at a meso-sociological level, Esser Hartmut (2008) adds to the Structured influence Process with the idea of social capital, that is, the resources someone can use or profit from because of their encapsulation in a social network. This macro-level theory is demonstrated in many forms, such as using a collective trust or how much help someone gets. Those with high social capital have a high-profit potential. Brands lack social capital; however, others with high social capital, such as those with large followings on social media, may wish to exchange their potential profit for realized profit by using their position as connectors to link their audience with the product the brand wants them to buy. It works due to the connectors' high social capital.

In the article "Marketing Strategies in a Multi-Ethnic Environment," Cui Geng discusses how advertisers can choose between different marketing strategies to appeal to various audiences. These strategies include total standardization, which is best when ethnic and mainstream consumers have identical product choices; product adaptation, which means changing products to satisfy ethnic consumers; advertising adaptation, which pertains to evolving advertisements while keeping the product the same to fit the cultural nuances of ethnic groups; and ethnic marketing, which involves changing the product and marketing to satisfy the ethnic market. This fills in the gaps of Lamont and Molnár by providing specific strategies marketing specialists may use to define the black collective identity. Strategies like advertising adaptation have shown that "African American consumers have been found to hold more favorable attitudes towards television advertising." This combines with Murthi and Srinivasan (1999), as these marketing strategies help build rapport and loyalty between the brand and the consumer. Black consumers often evaluate products more due to lower income; however, if the product advertised transitions to a long-term loyalty to black consumers, the firm may see increased purchases from that demographic.

Research Question

The existing research constructs a narrative that those with the most connections to African American communities can influence their decisions. Specifically, African Americans and Hispanics spend more money on conspicuous consumption items than White groups due to these influences. However, low-income Black communities spend less than White individuals at the same income level due to retail desertification in Black neighborhoods, restricted access to credit, and consumer racial discrimination. Still, because of the identity imposed on them, they allocate what they can toward conspicuous consumption items to appear middle-class.

Based on the research, there are gaps in knowledge regarding how social media influences Black consumers, how social media affects collective identity, and how influencers impact brand loyalty. According to the literature, the research aims to answer the central question: How do social media influencers affect the Black community's purchasing decisions and brand perceptions? This study also addresses the following questions: How do one's physical and online communities influence spending habits? And what adaptations to advertising are most effective for the Black community?

While existing research identifies the intersecting effects of advertising, collective identity, and inequality on Black purchasing decisions, it does not clarify how the digital realm affects those making purchases or the physical community around them. This paper seeks to identify and understand the missing link between purchasing decisions and marketing strategies, specifically influencer marketing techniques.

Methodology Protocol

This study will distribute a physical survey to Black students at Grinnell College. Participants qualify for the survey if they identify as Black and use social media. For this study, acceptable forms of social media include Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Tumblr, Facebook, YouTube, and Snapchat. In the survey, participants will be asked to list any influencers they follow; these influencers will then be examined to identify patterns in their marketing, sponsorships, and audience engagement with their content. Additionally, some survey respondents will be interviewed to explore their experiences with influencers and purchasing habits in greater depth. Finally, a focus group will engage in dialogue to create a community perspective. This paper will conduct a qualitative analysis because individuals experiencing this phenomenon have a rich understanding of how it affects them. However, a quantitative study cannot capture the same depth as personal accounts. Convenient samples of individuals will be asked to complete a questionnaire or participate in an interview. This strategy works due to its high response rate. The questionnaire will be printed out and handed to participants, and some will be asked if they would like to be interviewed; the interview will then be recorded and transcribed into NVivo.

This study will occur from December 10 to December 20, 2024. A specific time frame is ideal for gathering data to analyze consumption habits. After surveying the participants, individual spending habits are expected to remain consistent. Ideally, the results of this study will be relevant to the educated Black community population.

This paper will use NVivo to organize data, create cases for focus groups along the lines of income, tendency for brand loyalty, how much the participants use social media, and conduct individual interviews. Nvivo also has a feature that creates nodes that can be used to categorize Influencer engagement further. The paper will also search for word frequencies and maps to determine how certain concepts connect. This approach captures subjective experiences and offers insights into how influencers shape consumer behavior in ways that cannot be fully quantified. Identifying these patterns will demonstrate how marketing strategies resonate with or alienate Black consumers.

In addition to using Nvivo, the content analysis of influencer behavior will examine how influencers convey their messages, such as posts that portray a sense of dependability about their products or posts that invoke the collective identity of Black people, drawing on their unity. Furthermore, their self-presentation will be analyzed. Do they depict themselves as wealthy, successful, and larger than life to inspire their viewers to aspire to be like them? Or do they present themselves as relatable everyman? Additionally, this study will investigate their engagement patterns, such as whether their product endorsement posts receive as much attention as their typical posts. Lastly, the study will explore whether the audience perceives the influencer as genuine when endorsing a product.

Focus groups highlight messages that can be delivered through surveys and interviews. Ideally, a group of at least five people would participate for 30 minutes and meet at least twice. A moderator would stimulate conversations, asking questions concerning the effectiveness of influencers, the ethics of marketing to minorities on social media, and the pressure to buy a product to fit in. With the consent of the participants, there would be a camera to capture reactions to other participants' statements. Ultimately, the focus group will allow participants to shape their own collective shared experience.

The interviews and surveys are intended to obtain a nuanced narrative from the individual and a more shallow but numerous opinions from the general population. The interviews would ideally involve about fifteen participants who would follow a line of questions from the interviewer and last about 20 minutes. Not every question has to be answered if the conversation remains on topic. The surveys would feature about one hundred people, considering Grinnell's small black student population. Once both data are gathered, NVivo will be used to find averages and percentages or analysis of responses to find recurring ideas.

Dependent Variables

Consumption expenditure

Consumption expenditures involve buying goods and services, which will serve as the response variable in this study. Understanding consumer patterns is essential for research, including this paper. Consumption behavior significantly changes under various constraints, influenced by opinion leaders and the wider consumer community. This variable will be assessed using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "definitely agree" to "definitely disagree," and from "true" to "false." Participants will indicate their level of agreement with statements such as "Influencers or individuals who promote products online affect your spending habits" followed by a question about which influencers impact their spending

Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption refers to the purchase of goods to enhance one's status. It plays a crucial role in the decision-making process for Black consumers. Socioeconomic factors compel many individuals within the Black community to make purchases to gain control over their status in society. Influencers and marketers also employ this tactic to pressure consumers into buying products, asserting that certain items are trendy or that their offerings originate from luxury brands. This paper will examine this phenomenon by exploring the pressure to conform. This will be measured through questions 8 to 10 of the survey. Participants will respond to questions about how individuals in their physical and online communities react to product influencers; for instance, question 9 asks, "Consider the following: after some time, this brand is recognized as a "Luxury Brand" in your physical community (friends, school, work, etc.). Would this influence your decision to purchase products from this brand?" The questions are rated on a 4-point Likert scale with responses of "yes," "I would consider it (leaning yes)," "I would consider it (leaning no)," and "no."

Collective Identity

Collective identity refers to an individual's shared sense of belonging to a group. Typically, it encompasses common physical traits, shared practices, and beliefs. A group can create and define its collective identity, or an outside entity can impose it. Marketers often shape the meanings of 'the black consumer' and equate their social membership with consumption. While the collective black community may resist these imposed definitions, such definitions have permeated the group and influenced their behavior. It only takes a few opinion leaders to accept this notion before a considerable portion of the community aligns with it. Evidence of this concept's impact on the community is apparent in conspicuous consumption, as part of the black identity involves making purchases that enhance their social acceptance, such as being viewed as middle class or higher. This consumption aspect is crucial because understanding how the black community defines itself allows influencers to engage with them more effectively. Identity will be assessed through question 2, which asks participants, "How does being part of the Black community shape your identity, both through expectations within the community and those from society at large? Can you share how this influences your choices or behavior when purchasing certain products?"

Independent Variables

Social Media Influence

Social media influence refers to the impact social media has on consumer opinions and behaviors. This strategy has become a crucial approach that marketers use to engage consumers. They leverage influencers who have a substantial following on social media platforms. Brands sponsor these influencers to endorse their products. Typically, influencers promote items that resonate with their demographic audience. For instance, in the Black community, a hair care brand might sponsor an influencer who caters to this demographic to promote a bonnet or shampoo specifically formulated for Black hair. This represents the independent variable of the study. This research explores how social media shapes and impacts consumer spending. Various questions in interviews and surveys will evaluate this variable, determining how likely consumers are to purchase a product when an influencer endorses it. These questions will include different variations to gauge the extent of influence when

consumers' communities are factored in compared to when they are not. As a follow-up to question three, researchers will identify social media influencers and analyze their content to detect patterns in their marketing tactics, alongside examining engagement by reviewing comments on their posts.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty exists in two forms: long-term and short-term. Short-term loyalty refers to choosing a product without much consideration, such as when a consumer selects the same product again. Long-term loyalty involves the consumer taking time to evaluate items, which gives more significance to their enduring loyalty. Individuals with stronger loyalty to a brand may assess their products less critically. This is a crucial factor to consider when conducting the study because if a social media influencer promotes a new product from a brand to which a consumer is already loyal, they may overlook the price and purchase it regardless. This suggests that a company can set higher prices for communities with stronger loyalty. African Americans are known for exhibiting high brand loyalty compared to other demographic groups, indicating that regardless of external influence, they might dismiss certain influencer advertisements if they have doubts about the brand. This presents a potential confounding variable that will be addressed in the study. When developing the questionnaire for interviews and surveys, there will be questions examining how brand loyalty influences purchasing habits, thereby integrating it into the study's metrics. Question 6 of the survey prompts participants on a 4-point Likert scale, "If you are a repeat buyer, consider this: The brand raises the prices on all the products you typically purchase. Would you still buy products from this brand?" with response options ranging from "Yes, definitely" to "I would not purchase any more of their products."

Economic Freedom

Economic freedom entails less government involvement, lower taxes, and fewer restrictions in the labor market. Hoover, Compton, and Giedeman discovered that the effects of economic freedom primarily favor White Americans, leading to a wider income gap between Black and White individuals. Consumerism and the desire to be perceived as middle class are vital elements of Black collective identity, which may drive increased conspicuous consumption as individuals attempt to project wealth similar to their peers. As a result, they may become more influenced by marketing from social media personalities, particularly when products are presented as trendy. Given the constantly changing political and economic landscape, fluctuations in economic freedom could impact the income gap and lead to variations in conspicuous consumption among Black individuals, making them more inclined to buy products promoted by influencers. Participants' incomes will be assessed in the first question, which asks about their income level ranging from low to high income.

Other considerations

Consumerism

Consumerism is the ambition of people to acquire goods that are not necessary for the baseline of survival. This concept is essential to the formation of this study as it is the progenitor from which all other terms in this paper derive. Consumerism permeates the lives of all, and with society consistently enabling and encouraging this style of living, it has consciously and subconsciously affected everyone to some degree. Unless shown otherwise in the data, this paper will assume consumerism as implied in all other terms. This will be measured through a

lengthy focus group discussion where influencers, consumerism, and the participant's feelings toward societal expectations will be discussed. The content of this discussion will be analyzed and synthesized with the other methods.

Limitations and Ethics

The surveys and interviews the study will conduct are sufficient to understand consumption habits. However, this paper lacks pretested and validated tools. The study design considered confounding variables when creating questionnaires for interviews and surveys and incorporated them into the results. The sampling methods are conflicting as the subject of this study will be black students from Grinnell College. Though Grinnell College admits black students from all locations regardless of income or religion, the commonality of all black students admitted here is their education level, meaning the results will be biased. The findings of this study may be limited to a broader population due to constraints in the number of participants and the convenience sample this study uses. The findings of this study cannot be generalized to other populations, as African Americans have a unique relationship with consumption and advertisement. The recency of influencer media means that the results cannot be generalized to any other time frame. The research setting and conditions are reflective of real-world scenarios. The assumed scenario is a potential black consumer on their phone scrolling through social media and seeing an influencer they follow endorsing a brand. Cultural factors related to the black community have been considered, such as invasive questions, respectful dialogue, and accurate community representation.

The data collection methods are clear and will be standardized for each participant. This study may be repeated, but the results will be different depending on the sample type and size. The surveys and interviews have been tested for reliability per the guidelines of Xavier Escandell. There is no evidence of prior use of the instruments in related studies. This study does not have a pilot study to confirm its validity. There is high inter-rater reliability as only one person would conduct this study, leaving no room for inconsistency. As per the Methods Empirical Investigations class, the data collector is trained to reduce bias and variations in the data collection process. There is a clear protocol for every step of the research process so it may be repeated.

The research uses surveys, interviews, content analysis, and focus groups to enhance reliability and validity. Ethics regarding representing the black community in this study have been considered. The data, methods, and results will be shared to strengthen reliability further.

Some expectations for this research suggest that conspicuous consumption will be less significant due to the sample's education level. Educated individuals tend to be more aware of their social status and how an influencer or company might exploit it. The income of college students may play a critical role since those with limited finances cannot make purchases they otherwise would if they had the necessary funds. Individuals without social media may be outliers in this study. There is a strong likelihood of a moderate positive correlation between social media influence and consumption. Ultimately, the study anticipates that influencers promoting products will increase profits for the company while potentially harming the identity of the Black consumer.

As a Black man, I believe it is essential to understand my consumption habits and those of the people I care about. Recognizing how my race influences my shopping patterns will help me become more aware of harmful practices and allow me to advise others based on the

results of this analysis. Due to our shared race and similar understandings, my observations will reflect a more honest approach from the participants.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to the growing body of research on social media, consumer purchasing decisions, and marginalized communities. It evaluates how influencers and marketers perpetuate consumerism by leveraging trust, goodwill, and identity. When the market for a product becomes saturated, a firm can only boost demand in specific ways. The research suggests a link between social media influence and increased demand for products. This study provides a deeper understanding of the relationship between market strategies and consumer behavior. This newfound insight should be applied to the ethical considerations of marketing to marginalized communities while maximizing the relationship between the brand and the consumer.

Appendix

1. What is your income level

Low income \$14,000 - \$29,000

Medium-Low income \$29,000 - \$58,000

Medium income \$58,000 - \$169,000

Medium high income \$169,000 - \$250,000

High Income +\$250,000

2. How does being part of the Black community shape your identity, both through expectations within the community and those from society at large? Can you share how this influences your choices or behavior when purchasing certain products?

3. (Online) Influencers or individuals who promote products online affect your spending habits

Definitely Agree

Somewhat Agree

Somewhat Disagree

Definitely Disagree

If you agree tell us more about the influencers who effect your spending (I.E. Race, Gender, Name of their site/page)

4. What kind of content do the influencers who affect your spending center around?

5. If you've been influenced to buy a product, you are more likely to continue purchasing additional products or repurchasing the same products from that brand.

True

Somewhat true

Somewhat false

False

6. If you are a repeat buyer, consider this: The brand raises the prices on all the products you typically purchase. Would you still buy products from this brand?"

Yes, Definitely

Yes, But not as often

Only occasionally

I would not purchase anymore of their products

7. If "only occasionally" or "I would not purchase," consider the following: suppose the influencer who originally introduced you to the brand and its products continues or even increases their advertising of said brand. Would you buy more of their products?

Yes.

I would consider it. (Leaning Yes)

I would consider it. (Leaning No)
No.

8. Based on question 6 and 7, consider the following: After the brand has increased the prices of their products, and the influencer increases their advertising of said brand. Your “trend setter” friend convinces many people you know to buy the brands products. Do you buy into the trend?

Yes.
I would consider it. (Leaning Yes)
I would consider it. (Leaning No)
No.

9. Consider the following: after some time, this brand is recognized as a “Luxury Brand” in your physical community (friends, school, work, etc.). Would this influence your decision to purchase products from this brand?

Yes
I would consider it. (Leaning Yes)
I would consider it. (Leaning No)
No.

10. Consider the following: after some time this brand starts to be heralded as a “Luxury Brand” in your digital community (friends online, Tik Tok, Instagram etc.) Would this influence your decision to buy products from this brand?

Yes
I would consider it. (Leaning Yes)
I would consider it. (Leaning No)
No.

Definitions

Connectedness - frequent interactions with the community, cultural values, support of causes

Influencer - an individual who impacts their viewers spending habits by endorsing products

Recurring buyer - someone who has a loyalty to a brand and will continue to buy the same products.

Luxury brand - A brand that holds high status and priced higher than their competitors

Concept Matrix (Provided By Miro)

Conspicuous Consumption	The purchase of goods to enhance one's status.	Survey questions
Collective Identity	An individual's shared sense of belonging to a group,...	Survey questions and focus group discussions.
Social Capital	The quantification of good will. Those with high soci...	Analysis of influencer content and survey questions
Social Media Influence	The impact social media has on consumer opinions...	Survey questions, Interviews, Focus Groups
Brand Loyalty	A consumer's commitment to repeatedly buy from a...	Survey questions
Economic Freedom	Reduced government involvement, lower taxes, and...	Income level questions, analyzing spending patterns
Consumerism	The ambition to acquire goods beyond basic needs....	Focus group

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Interview Questions

So, what are your shopping habits, and how do you decide what to buy?

Do you use TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, or any other social media apps? If so, which ones do you use most

What types of influencers or personalities do you follow online, and why?

Do you recall a time when a post or influencer affected your decision to buy something?

How do you feel about brands collaborating with influencers from the Black community? Do you think they resonate with you more?

What role does social media play in shaping perceptions about status or success in your community?

Why do you think specific influencers resonate with you more than others?

You mentioned [specific example]; could you tell me why that experience stood out to you?

How does seeing people in your community endorse certain brands online impact your opinion of those brands?

Do you feel that influencers or brands consider your community's cultural or social issues when marketing to you? How so?

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