

## **The Meaning of Air Jordan Sneakers for Air Jordan Sneakers Users in Indonesia**

### **Memahami Sepatu Sneakers Air Jordan bagi Pengguna Sepatu Sneakers Air Jordan di Indonesia**

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#### **Abstract**

Air Jordan is a sneaker made by Nike for Michael Jordan in 1984. Air Jordan was first made as a basketball shoe and was worn by Michael Jordan in his matches. Currently, Air Jordan has become a fashion trend where these sneakers are worn by people daily, from children to adults. Based on this phenomenon, the researchers wanted to see what meaning was contained in the Air Jordan sneakers for the Air Jordan sneakers users and how Air Jordan sneakers users understood themselves when wearing Air Jordan's. This research will be reviewed using phenomenological theory. The research method used is a qualitative method, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with five informants who are members of the Air Jordan Indonesia community. The results of the study show that in a noema, Air Jordan is a sneaker that has a colorway and a model that is favored by the public. Noeically, Air Jordan has historical, investment, and social value for its users. In addition, Air Jordan also makes its users feel more confident, cool, and youthful. Therefore, it can be concluded that Air Jordan has its meaning for its users.

**Keywords:** Air Jordan; Meaning; Noemas; Phenomenology; Sneakers.

#### **Abstrak**

Air Jordan adalah sneaker yang dibuat oleh Nike untuk Michael Jordan pada tahun 1984. Air Jordan pertama kali dibuat sebagai sepatu basket dan dipakai oleh Michael Jordan dalam pertandingannya. Saat ini Air Jordan sudah menjadi trend fashion dimana sneakers ini dipakai oleh masyarakat sehari-hari, dari anak-anak hingga orang dewasa. Berdasarkan fenomena tersebut, peneliti ingin melihat apa makna sebenarnya yang terkandung dalam sepatu Air Jordan bagi pengguna sepatu Air Jordan dan bagaimana pemahaman pengguna sepatu Air Jordan saat mengenakan sepatu Air Jordan. Penelitian ini akan diulas dengan menggunakan teori fenomenologis. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif, dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dengan lima orang informan yang tergabung dalam komunitas Air Jordan Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam sebuah noemas, Air Jordan merupakan sneaker yang memiliki colorway dan model yang digemari oleh masyarakat. Air Jordan memiliki nilai sejarah, investasi, dan sosial bagi penggunanya. Selain itu, Air Jordan juga membuat penggunanya merasa lebih percaya diri, keren, dan awet muda. Oleh karena itu, dapat disimpulkan bahwa Air Jordan memiliki arti tersendiri bagi penggunanya.

**Kata Kunci:** Air Jordan; Fenomenologi; Makna; Noemas; Sneakers.

## 1. Introduction

Fashion is a style of attire that is used every day by someone, both in everyday life and at certain events to support their appearance. When it comes to fashion, usually the younger generation is the one who most often follows current trends (Setiawan, 2021).

Fashion or clothes worn are considered capable of representing the message that the wearer wants to display (Barthes, 2013). The creation of a message from the use of fashion items, especially from certain brands, can certainly be studied as part of communication science. In this study, the form of communication that is highlighted is intrapersonal communication, where communication occurs within one individual. Intrapersonal communication occurs based on the knowledge and experience of the individual (Physipol, 2021; Susilo & Putranto, 2021).

Currently, various forms of footwear are becoming popular, and have become one of the most important fashion commodities in supporting appearance. One of the footwear that is popular with the public, especially the younger generation today is sneakers. In everyday life, we may come across lots of sneaker brands. Each brand has its unique sneakers. These sneaker brands often rely on collaboration as part of their marketing strategy, whether in collaboration with other brands or with well-known celebrities.

Today, many artists and influencers are wearing sneakers in their daily lives. This causes from year to year the number of sneakers lovers or the so-called sneakerheads is increasing and increase. Sneakerhead itself is a term that refers to people who like sneakers and collect them. Shoes that are popular with sneakerheads, of course, are not chosen at random but have their values, both historical and economic values.

Of the several collaboration sneakers on the market, this study will only discuss Air Jordan sneakers. Air Jordan itself is a collaboration brand between Nike and Michael Jordan, which is currently popular. Although it was originally designed as a basketball shoe, now it has become a popular fashion item.

Air Jordan shoes were first made by Nike for Michael Jordan at the end of 1984 and were introduced to the public on April 1, 1985. These shoes are basketball shoes or basketball sneakers and were worn by Michael Jordan in his matches.

In Indonesia alone, Jordan I has become a fashion trend for the past few years. Some of the Air Jordan series are considered to have a certain value, and because of that, they become a collection of sneakerheads. In certain releases or editions, they are even willing to pay more to get these special sneakers. The extra price meant here can reach 5 times or more than the retail price of the shoe. When someone wears it, it seems that there are certain concepts and perceptions for the users.

It is the meaning and perception of the Air Jordan that is the main reason for the popularity of the sneakers. This is interesting to note, considering that a shoe that was originally footwear and serves to protect the feet when walking, now seems to have a special meaning for its users.

Seeing this phenomenon, it is important to see what meaning is conceived in Air Jordan sneakers for Air Jordan sneakers users, especially in Indonesia.

## **2. Literature Review**

In this study, researchers will specifically use the phenomenological theory according to Edmund Husserl. Air Jordan sneakers will act as noemas (objects that can be captured by the five senses) and Air Jordan sneakers users' understanding of these sneakers will act as noesis (perception of objects in the mind) that researchers want to explore further. So, when you see Air Jordan sneakers, it's not shoes as footwear that come to mind, but the user's perception of the Air Jordan sneakers themselves.

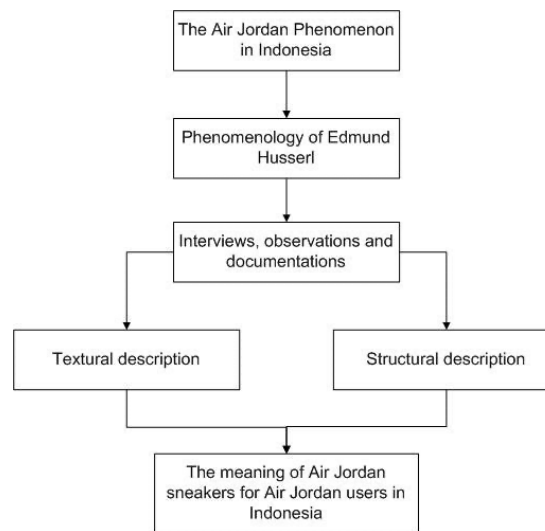
The concept of meaning is very important in phenomenology. Meaning is based on the experience of the human life concerned, so it can differ from one individual to another. An experience can be part of a person's consciousness because

people interpret it. Phenomenology itself is intended to reveal the meaning that a person builds on a phenomenon that appears from everyday actions that are carried out consciously. Through these concepts and theories, researchers want to see the perceptions of informants about Air Jordan sneakers, which are users and fans.

For example, when people want to buy an Air Jordan shoe, communication through the central route can be achieved through pricing, quality, and comfort (Michelle & Susilo, 2021). On the other hand, communication through the peripheral route can be achieved by attractive shoe colors, determination of social status, and levels of prestige. In connection with this study, the researcher wanted to see how Air Jordan users received messages conveyed by the Air Jordan sneakers themselves

Therefore, the topic of this research is "The Meaning of Air Jordan Sneakers for Air Jordan Sneakers Users in Indonesia". The aims of this research include: (1). To find out the meaning of Air Jordan sneakers for Air Jordan sneakers users. (2). To find out how Air Jordan sneakers users understand themselves when wearing Air Jordan sneakers

There is also the flow used in this research is as follows.



**Figure 1.** Research Flow

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021

The results of this study are expected to be useful as a reference as well as to contribute to research on topics related to sneakers and the meaning of sneakers, as well as knowledge related to phenomenological studies. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to be useful for sneaker users in exploring and understanding the use of Air Jordan sneakers.

### 3. Research Methods

This study uses a phenomenological paradigm. This research will use a qualitative approach. This research is descriptive in nature, where the researcher already has an overview and information about a social phenomenon, and the researcher is willing and ready to explain the phenomenon in detail. The data collected in phenomenological studies come from individuals with a certain similarity to certain experiences and is then developed

into an essential description of "what" and "how" they experience it.

Researchers will select several informants who have something in common, namely liking and using Air Jordan sneakers. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used as a participant-determining technique in this study. The researcher chose several respondents who were members of the Air Jordan sneakers lover community named Air Jordan Indonesia with the following criteria: (1) Love Air Jordan sneakers; (2) Own and like to collect Air Jordan sneakers; (3) Wear Air Jordan sneakers every day

In this study, researchers used in-depth interviews as a technique for primary data collection. Researchers will conduct in-depth interviews with informants, namely members of the Air Jordan Indonesia community. Interviews will be conducted online, via the WhatsApp Call application. In addition to in-depth interviews, researchers will also conduct

observation and library methods to collect secondary data. The results of observations and literature will later support the results of the researcher' (Hidayat et al., 2021) interviews with informants.

After obtaining the data and conducting the analysis, it is necessary to test the validity of the data to prove that the data obtained by the researcher is valid. In this study, the researcher used the phenomenological data analysis technique revealed by Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen : (1) Describe the phenomenon experienced directly by the informant; (2) Study every verbal statement related to the research, recording and recording the statement, making a list of statements, grouping each unit of meaning into certain themes, making textural descriptions, constructing structural descriptions, and finally determining the meaning of the phenomenon; (3) Repeat step (2) to each informant; (3) Make a thorough explanation of each meaning and essence of the phenomenon obtained.

This technique is used to make an explanation of the meaning of using Air Jordan sneakers for every informant who is an Air Jordan sneakers user in the Indonesian Air Jordan community.

#### **4. Research Results**

After conducting interviews with 5 informants, the researchers managed to find information related to the meaning of Air Jordan sneakers for them.

#### *Textural description*

Based on the textural description, Air Jordan has various meanings, as follows. (1) Historical factors as a determinant of the meaning of Air Jordan, where Air Jordan can be interpreted as a historical item that holds many memories of Michael Jordan and his victories. (2) Air Jordan as a fashion trend, where Air Jordan has succeeded in becoming a trend and has many fans because of social media support, and hype, and is also used by many influencers. (3) Air Jordan as a form of investment, where Air Jordan apart from being sneakers, is also considered a form of investment because the price tends to rise. (4) Air Jordan as a hobby, where currently Air Jordan has become a hobby or habit of sneakerheads. (5) Air Jordan as a form of sacrifice, where the intended sacrifice can be categorized into two, namely financial sacrifices and physical sacrifices. (6) Air Jordan in the Indonesian Air Jordan community, where the passion for Air Jordan enabled the formation of the Indonesian Air Jordan community.

#### *Structural description*

In this study, the structural description was compiled from the informants' understanding of eating Air Jordan sneakers and summarized as follows. (1) The historical factor as a determinant of the meaning of Air Jordan, which is based on the statements of several informants, one of the factors that make them like Air Jordan is because of its originality and timeless model. In addition, Air Jordan has been considered a legacy

or legacy from Michael Jordan. (2) Air Jordan as a fashion trend, the five informants agreed that currently, Air Jordan has become a fashion trend that can be used for walking in the mall or going to certain formal events. (3) Air Jordan as a form of investment, where the informants stated that there was no harm in buying Air Jordan because it has a promising investment value. (4) Air Jordan as a hobby, currently Air Jordan has become a hobby that cannot be abandoned. The informant found happiness in collecting the sneakers. (5) Air Jordan as a form of sacrifice, where most of the informants agree that Air Jordan is less comfortable to wear. However, they all still wear it for style. (6) Air Jordan in the Air Jordan Indonesia community, where the Indonesian Air Jordan Community itself is a community formed of several people who like Air Jordan sneakers. Thanks to this similarity, the informants managed to get new relationships and friends, even this community can also become a marketplace.

### **Discussion**

The results showed that there were several meanings of Air Jordan received by the informants who were users of Air Jordan sneakers. The meanings obtained include the following: (1) Air Jordan has historical value; (2) Air Jordan as a fashion trend; (3) Air Jordan as a form of investment; (4) Air Jordan as a hobby; (5) Air Jordan as a form of sacrifice. (6) Air Jordan in the Air Jordan Indonesia community (as a relationship builder)

Air Jordan is a basketball shoe that has a close relationship with basketball player Michael Jordan. This fact makes many fans of Michael Jordan, or the Chicago Bulls which is Michael Jordan's basketball team, know and even love Air Jordan sneakers. This historical value is one of the main meanings received by the informants regarding Air Jordan sneakers. Air Jordan itself can be said to be a legacy or legacy from Michael Jordan.

In addition, Air Jordan has become a fashion trend among people. This is marked by the rise of influencers and artists who wear these sneakers on social media and television. In addition, this is also marked by the conversion of Air Jordan, which is a basketball shoe, to a casual shoe worn by the general public for walking.

Air Jordan is also considered by its users as a form of investment. This is with the consideration that the price of Air Jordan will continue to increase for a certain period, whether it is still in a new condition or even if it has been worn. The investment value owned by Air Jordan is what makes many users feel more confident in buying and collecting them.

The results of this study are then supported by the ELM theory, where all incoming information will be processed through two routes, namely the central route and the peripheral route. This study shows that in the central route, the five informants consider that Air Jordan has a fairly expensive price and the technology is still not capable enough so it is less comfortable when worn for a long period. However, they still buy,

collect, and wear Air Jordan sneakers every day.

This is none other than the process in the peripheral route, namely that they feel Air Jordan has historical value, has a good and cool style or model, many people wear it, or maybe because they see influencers and artists wearing Air Jordan sneakers. As mentioned by Petty and Cacioppo (Griffin, 2012), everyone acts because of motivation. Although it is not always logical, there is always a reason behind every person's actions.

This situation is also supported by the phenomenological theory, where human consciousness is divided into two, namely noema and noesis. Noema or objects perceived in this study are Air Jordan sneakers. Objectively and according to the five senses, Air Jordan is a sneaker that has its design and is made as a basketball shoe.

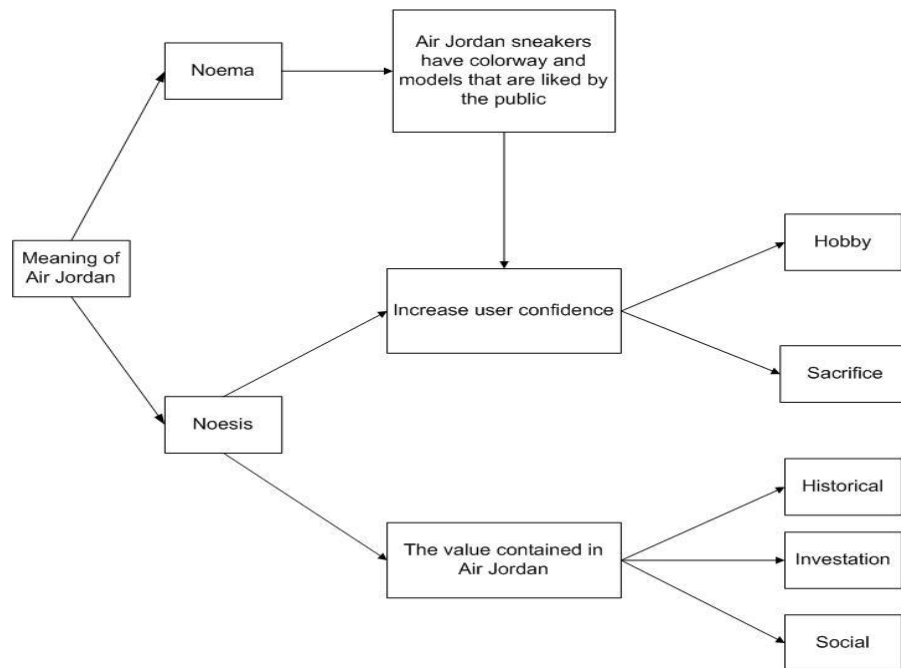
While on the noesis or perception of the informants, Air Jordan is not only limited to that but has its value and meaning that other sneakers do not have. The process of change that occurs in a person's mind is called the process of changing noema to noesis.

Based on the results of the study, it is known that the meaning of Air Jordan for each informant has the same, and the researcher writes it down into points as mentioned above.

In short, the informant's perception of Air Jordan is as a legacy from Michael Jordan that has historical value, is a fashion trend that has investment value, can be used as a hobby, requires sacrifice in several aspects, and can be a means to increase relationships through the community.

The concept owned by Air Jordan is in line with the concept of simulacra reality. Simulacra itself is a combination of values, facts, signs, images, and codes. According to (Tuela & Susilo, 2017), in the Simulakra era, the use value, function, and exchange value of an item have been replaced by sign value and symbolic value, therefore the value of the use or function of objects (commodities) is now not very meaningful. In the presence of sign values, symbolic values, and the world of images. In Air Jordan sneakers, the use value and function of Air Jordan as footwear have been replaced by its sign and symbolic value. Signs and symbolic values are intended, among others, as historical products, investments, forming relationships, and so on. So for the informants, the main function of Air Jordan as footwear is not very meaningful and has been replaced with other implied meanings.

The following is a simple flow of discussion obtained from this research.



**Figure 2.** Flow of Discussion  
Source: Processed by Researchers, 2021.

## 5. Conclusion

The research entitled "The Meaning of Air Jordan Sneakers for Air Jordan Sneakers Users in Indonesia" aims to see what the true meaning of Air Jordan sneakers is for Air Jordan sneakers users and how Air Jordan users understand themselves when wearing Air Jordan's. After conducting in-depth interviews with 6 informants who have met the criteria, the following conclusions can be drawn from this research: (1) Air Jordan has historical value. Air Jordan is closely related to Michael Jordan; therefore, the meaning of Air Jordan can be determined based on its originality. For example, whether the model and colorway of these sneakers are original and have been used by Michael Jordan. (2) Air Jordan as a fashion trend. Currently, Air Jordan has become a fashion trend among people. Switching from its main

function as a basketball shoe, it is now more often used for walking. Air Jordan is also considered a mandatory item for celebrities. (3) Air Jordan as a form of investment. Apart from being footwear, Air Jordan is also known to have a good investment value. The informants also acknowledged this and considered the investment value of Air Jordan as an important value in interpreting Air Jordan. (4) Air Jordan as a hobby. Some informants admit that for them Air Jordan has become a hobby, and the decision to buy Air Jordan for them is no longer rational. Moreover, they find pleasure in collecting Air Jordans. (5) Air Jordan as a form of sacrifice. According to informants, Air Jordan has also been considered a sacrifice. Where to look attractive, they are willing to wear Air Jordan even though it is less comfortable. (6) Air Jordan in the Air Jordan Indonesia



community. The informants are members of the Air Jordan Indonesia community. Through this community, Air Jordan helps them to build relationships, exchange information, and even increase their income.

Apart from these six meanings, according to the respondents, Air Jordan also leaves a distinct impression when worn. For example, Air Jordan makes them feel more confident and valued. In addition, wearing Air Jordans also makes them feel cooler and younger.

Furthermore, the researcher hopes that further research can develop further with topics around the problems that arise in the meaning of Air Jordan sneakers. This research is also expected to be able to help further research in terms of enriching information so that it can deepen further studies of sneakers to be compared with Air Jordan sneakers.

The results of this study are expected to increase public knowledge regarding the meaning of sneakers, especially Air Jordan. In addition, it is also hoped that it can provide an overview to the public that an object can have a different meaning for each person. Researchers also want to provide input to the Nike company to improve the technology available in Air Jordan to increase comfort for its users and be able to compete with other sneaker brands.

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