Predicting the Power of Famous Sport Endorser Indices on the Tendency to Purchase Sporting and Non-porting Goods: A Quasi-experimental Study

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Abstract

Purpose: Nowadays, the use of sports and famous athletes in advertising has become one of the most common advertising practices. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate the ability of predicting the indices of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of the renowned sport endorser on the consumers' willingness to buy sporting and non-sporting goods. **Method:** This study was a quasi-experimental study on a sample of 150 students of sport science at Ferdowsi University of Iran. The statistical sample was divided into two homogeneous groups; for one month, one group watched the advertisements of an artificial sport product and the other group watched the advertisements of an artificial non-sport product endorsed by the famous sport personality on the telegram. Finally, the results were analyzed by completing standard questionnaires of purchase willingness (Zichkowski, 1985) and advertising celebrities (Ohanian, 1990) and simultaneous regression statistical methods. **Results:** The results showed that all three indices of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of the renowned sports endorser have high predictive power for the tendency to purchase sporting and non-sporting goods. Also in the sporting goods group, the expertise, and in the non-sporting goods group, the attractiveness had the highest predictive power of tendency to buy. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the perception of the popular sport endorsing indices in advertising sporting and non-sporting goods. **Conclusions:** Through a promotional period for two endorsed sporting and non-sporting products, this study provides useful findings for product and service institutions to select and employ renowned athletes to endorse their products and influence consumers' purchase intention. In the text, the detailed descriptions of the expected results and discussions have been reported.

Keywords: Sport endorser; Famous athlete; Endorser indices; Purchase tendency; Attractiveness sport endorser; Expertise of sport endorser; Trustworthiness of sport endorser

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, one of the new advertisement practices is the marketers' willingness to use sports and famous athletes in advertising. Sport has close interactions with the life and work of millions of people worldwide, and makes a large audience available to companies. Athletes, on the other hand, have countless enthusiasts around the world who are influenced by their behavior (Brigham, 2011). In fact, based on the opportunities celebrities provide for their products and services, companies are increasingly investing billions of dollars for the presence of these prominent figures in their advertising (Ahmad et al., 2015). Many companies tend to endorse their brand by these stars for reasons such as the presence of more athletes in the media, the abilities, the extraordinary performance and their high attractiveness for customers (Roşca, 2010; Keat, 2011). An example of high-profile companies in the field of sport endorsement is that of the famous tennis player Maria Sharapova in 2011. Of $ 24 million of her annual revenue, just $ 1 million was through competitions and prizes, and $ 23 million of it have been acquired by endorsing the products of Nike and Sony Ericsson (Badenhausen, 2011).

In fact, endorsement of a product by the athletes is its affirmation (Piacentini and Miller, 2004). On the other hand, Stafford et al. (2003) refer to a sport endorser as an athlete, trainer, or any sport personality who uses his or her being known among people to recommend or introduce a product in advertising. In other words, brand owners support athletes or sport teams to endorse their products through various media. Athletes' support for products may lead to a positive attitude and tendency toward those products from the customer (Till et al., 2008). At the same time, athletes make a lot of money by endorsing companies and giving them the right to use their image or name. Companies also benefit greatly by using the image and name of the athlete as they add value to their image (Roşca, 2010). In other words, famous athletes convey their desirable values to the brand. In particular, in the case of sport products, they transfer their ability in the field of sports to the product in question (Yoon and Choi, 2005).

In this regard, the benefits of endorsing renowned athletes for their contracted companies are considered as a result of the direct relationship between the athlete and the brand on the one hand and the immediate brand recognition by their supporters (Cianfrone and Zhang, 2006). In

sum, as the modern world of marketing communications is saturated by various advertisements and makes it difficult for designers of advertising activities to distinguish themselves from others and attract viewers and consumers (Rafique and Zafar, 2012), the endorsement of famous sport personalities can be considered as a new approach to advancing advertising.

Ohanian (1990) considers the credibility and effectiveness of celebrity endorsers in advertising because of their three main dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness; he expresses these dimensions in the form of a source credibility model. The source credibility model has two components of expertise and trustworthiness; of course, we can also mention the attractiveness as the third component. In fact, the credibility and effectiveness of celebrity endorsers derives from the three main dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness, and these dimensions are generally expressible in a single theory called source credibility. The theory revolves around audience perception of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the source, with the premise that celebrities are often more credible than the ordinary persons; the greater the expertise, attractiveness, and confidence of an endorser, the probability of being perceived as a more reliable source increases.

Many endorsement studies have used the dimensions of the source credibility model to measure the structure of celebrities in advertising (Muda et al., 2014). In fact, they are the expertise, knowledge, and skill that the communicator must have for supporting the claims expressed in advertising (Ohanian, 1991). An expert endorser is more effective in persuading customers to buy a product or service and create a more positive attitude toward the brand (Mohd Suki, 2014). When the consumer realizes that the celebrity is highly specialized, he or she gets persuasion by the communication message in the advertisement and his/her purchase intention is increased (Roy et al., 2013). The expertise is important because the speaker places the message as a credible reference in the mind of the audience (Gan, 2006). Numerous studies support the effect of endorser's expertise on the consumer's buying behavior. They have found that the more professional the celebrity is, the more persuasive he/she is and the greater the intention to purchase a product is made (Kang et al., 2019; Gauns et al., 2018; Zipporah and

Mberia, 2014; Oyeniyi, 2014; Sassenberg et al., 2012; Biswas et al., 2006; Fink et al., 2004).

Another important aspect of famous endorsers that influences the product advertising process is attractiveness. Researchers point out that the consumers tend to have positive stereotypes about attractive people, and that the physical attractiveness of the famous personalities have been more successful in changing audience beliefs than their unattractive counterparts (Surana, 2008). The physical attractiveness of celebrities by clearing the appearance of the product and giving the appearance of the celebrity to the product creates the positive attitude towards the product (Gan, 2006). In the literature of celebrities' endorsement, the character of attractiveness has played a very important role. Many researchers have found in their studies the effects of attractiveness on variables of consumer attitudes such as attitudes toward advertising, credibility, and purchase intention (Kang et al., 2019; Zakari et al., 2019; Khalid and Yasmeen, 2019; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018; Agnihotri et al., 2018; Gauns et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2016).

We can define the trustworthiness component as "the customers' trustworthiness to the sender of the message on the basis that he or she makes the most credible claims." The reliability, truthfulness, credibility and intimacy determine the attribute of source trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). Reliability plays a key role in advertising programs and activities, and in particular, endorsement. In other words, the key to the effectiveness of an advertising activity is the degree of trustworthiness that the recipient of the message has in relation to the sender (Amos et al., 2008). Endorsement of celebrities who promote trustworthiness in the company creates a positive view of consumers about the corporate social responsibility approach and its marketing capability and ensures that the company is trustworthy (Kim et al., 2014). In this regard, many studies point to the positive role of trustworthiness in the endorser's effectiveness in consumer behavior and willingness to buy (Zakari et al., 2019; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018; Oyeniyi, 2014; Kim et al., 2014; Sertoglu et al., 2014; Sassenberg et al., 2012).

There have been many studies on the use of famous personalities in advertising as endorser. But one of the researches that has a great deal of relevance to the effectiveness of advertising in terms of endorsing personality is the study done by Ohanian (1991), which examines the

impact of perceived image of a well-known spokesperson on the consumers' willingness to buy. He showed that of the three dimensions of the credibility model, only the perceived expertise of famous personalities in the product correlates significantly with the willingness and intention to buy, and was able to predict the willingness to buy. These results were in contrast to the research conducted by Sertoglu et al. (2014), conducted to "investigate the impact of endorser's credibility on consumers' willingness to buy" and showed that all three dimensions of expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the well-known endorser relate positively and significantly to customer willingness to buy. Sassenberg et al. (2012) and Pornpitakpan (2004) also found in their studies that all three dimensions of the credibility model are in relation with consumers' willingness to buy.

Zakari et al. (2019) also examined in a research the "role of celebrity endorsement on telecommunication companies' credibility"; they concluded that attractiveness, likability and endorser's trustworthiness had a direct (positive) effect on telecommunications' credibility, and moderates the role of famous confirmation in the credibility of telecommunications companies.

In this regard, Kang et al. (2019) also examined in a research the effect of celebrity endorsement on firm's enduring value and concluded that enhancing the attractiveness and expertise of endorser's famous personality has a positive effect on firm value, while losing a celebrity's reputation greatly reduces the value of the company. When a celebrity loses confidence, its negative impact on the value of the company will almost never improve, as the negative impact of losing a celebrity's reputation is seven times greater than the positive impact of his or her expertise.

Despite the popularity of athletes' endorsement in other countries, this is a new issue in Iran and has had different obstacles. Therefore, this area has gotten little researches, and marketing knowledge in this field in the Iranian sport advertising industry is scarce. As companies seek to understand the needs of market customers, they seek to understand consumer products and the factors that influence their customers' buying behavior. The fact that endorsed products can help customers understand well and considering the high costs involved in advertising and the investors' efforts to improve the advertising methods of their products

with the use of well-known sport endorsers, a research study in this field seems necessary. Considering the questionable results of the study of Ohanian (1991) in comparison with other studies and the necessity of examining his results on the endorsement of famous personality in other culture and population, the researcher seeks to investigate the predictive power of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of famous personality of an athlete regarding the tendency to buy sporting and non-sporting goods, and the perception of indices of an athlete's famous personality were compared between the two groups of sporting and non-sporting goods.

METHOD

This research is applied and quasi-experimental in terms of method because the statistical sample is fallen under influence of advertising for a period of one month and then their willingness to buy is measured. The statistical population of this research consisted of all students of sport science in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad; we selected them by sampling at convenience. Based on the research background and considering that our research is quasi-experimental and the need to have complete control over the statistical samples, we sent ads for one month; the sample size was 150 individuals. Samples were divided in two 75-individual groups, and homogenization tests were performed on them. In order to prevent drop of subjects, we added 10 persons in each group. The first group of statistical sample was influenced by sporting goods advertisement, and the second group was influenced by non-sporting goods advertisement which was endorsed by famous sport personality.

Data collection tool of the research was standard questionnaires of tendency to product (Zaichkowsky, 1985), celebrities in advertising (Ohanian, 1990), demographic information and the questionnaire of well-known endorser selection. The demographic questionnaire included information on age, gender, education, and electronic media used, and preferred media for sending ads via telegram, Instagram, and email. The endorser selection questionnaire was used to select the celebrity sport personality from among 6 famous sport personalities (Ali Karimi, Ali Daei, Saeed Marouf, Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Sardar Azmoun). These 6 celebrities were selected from among the renowned Iranian athletes based on factors of physical attractiveness, number of fans in the cyberspace, good track record, professional and

international sports presence, and likability among friends. After selection by the sample, they are to advertise desired products. The standard questionnaire of willingness to buy consisted of ten questions in the form of a seven-option Likert scale, and the Questionnaire of famous persons in Advertising also included 15 items and three subscales of Attractiveness (Questions 1 to 5), Reliability (Questions 6 to 10), and Expertise (Questions 11 to 15) in the form of a seven-option Likert. After distribution of a number of questionnaires among the sports marketing experts and on their viewpoints, the content and apparent reliability of the questionnaires wereconfirmed. On the other hand, for calculating the reliability of the mentioned questionnaires, 30 questionnaires were sent electronically as an initial sample. After gathering them by calculating Cronbach's alpha by SPSS 23 software, the reliability of the questionnaire tendency to purchase sport product and non-sport product was (0.92) and (0.90); respectively, and the reliability of the celebrity questionnaire in advertising for sporting and non-sporting products was (0.84) and (0.96); respectively.

After selecting a celebrity as an endorser from among the available options and the electronic media intended to submit ads by the statistical sample, we divided the audience into two homogeneous groups and subscribed them to the advertising channel. We sent for the first group the endorsed advertising of a sport product (sneakers) and for the second group, the non-sporting product ads (sunglasses) for one month. To avoid the impact of simultaneous advertising of other media, the brand and product desired for the sneakers and sunglasses were chosen equally and artificially. The number of sending Ads was considered according to the number of Tarp (Target Audience Rating Point) needed for a new brand, three ads as photo, clip and graphic ads that are sent weekly for one month. In simple terms, a tarp is the size at which an ad is viewed. The term is a reflection of the audience's exposure to the advertising and the number of offers an advertiser pays for. The tarp score is a measure of how many people in the target market are sitting in front of their receiving device while displaying an ad. The appropriate tarp score for promoting new brands is around 100-300 tarps (Sutherland, 2009). In this regard, the researcher considered the Tarp 200 score for effective advertising, and the number of advertisements per week was 3 to 4 advertisements. The reason for choosing one month of advertising was

to repeat the ads in different forms (photo, clip, text) and give the audience an opportunity to see the ads and think well about the product and brand and measure the tendency to shop precisely. Thus, the audience does not suffer from puberty, decline, or disgust, this research is more accurate in this respect than previous studies.

At the end of the advertising period, the questionnaire of tendency to buy and celebrities were given to the samples to determine the tendency to buy brand and sporting and non-sporting artificial products and the effect of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of the renowned sport endorser on sporting and non-sporting goods advertising. Finally, for data analysis in the level of descriptive statistics we used mean, standard deviation and tables and in the level of inferential statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of measuring data distribution. We applied Pearson correlation and simultaneous regression to determine the relationship and predictive power of athlete's endorsement indices in relation to the Consumers' tendency to purchase the sporting and non-sporting goods. Independent t-test was appropriate for comparing perception of athlete's endorsement indices in advertising sporting and non-sporting goods.

RESULTS

According to the results of the research, 60% of the sample were women and 40% were men with a mean age of 23.72; 66% of them were studying in undergraduate, 26% in MSc and 8% in PhD of sport sciences. On the other hand, data from the sport celebrity selection questionnaire showed that Alireza Jahanbakhsh was considered as the first priority of the statistical sample more than other famous athletes (48%) and consequently was selected as an endorser. On the other hand, the survey of statistical sample status in terms of using electronic communication media as well as favorite media for receiving ads showed that email (86%) and telegram (76%) were the most used but telegram was the most favored (74%) in comparison with emailInstagram, was chosen as the medium of research advertising for sending the ads.

The results of normality analysis of the research data using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for tendency to buy sneakers and sunglasses were respectively ($\alpha = 0.097$ and $\alpha = 0.192$). Attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of famous personality in the sporting goods group were respectively ($\alpha = 0.074$, 0.071 and 0.093) and in the non-sporting

goods group (α = 0.200, 0.067 and 0.195), indicating that the data were normal. Thus, we use parametric tests to examine the data.

This section examines the ability of predicting the indices of celebrity sport personality for tending to purchase sporting and non-sporting goods. For this purpose, first, we obtained the tendency to buy scores and the indices of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness in the sporting and non-sporting goods group after the advertising period of one month through questionnaires of willingness to shop and celebrities. Pearson's correlation between perceived attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness in the sport celebrity and willingness to buy sporting goods were (r = 0.92, 0.92, and 0.86) and for non-sporting goods (r = 0.92, 0.95 and 0.98); respectively. There was a significant positive correlation between perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise of a celebrity athlete, and the tendency to purchase sporting and non-sporting goods.

According to the results of the simultaneous regression test as shown in Table 1, in the sport product group, the Durbin-Watson statistic value which should be between 1.5 and 2.5 was 1.74. 94% of the changes of tendency to purchasing a sporting goods is related to the perception of attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise of a sport celebrity (R^2 = 0.94). On the other hand, in the non-sporting product group, the Durbin-Watson Statistical Value was 2.03, and we can say that 97% of the variance in the tendency to buy a non-sporting product are explained by the perceptions of the attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise of the sport celebrity (R^2 = 0.97).

Table 1: Explaining the variance of famous sport personality indices on the willingness to buy

Type of goods	R	R2	R2 adjusted	Standard error of explanation coefficient	Durbin-Watson statistic	Significance level
Sport	0/97	0/94	0/94	1/60	1/74	0/001
Non-sport	0/98	0/97	0/97	0/98	2/03	0/001

Table 2 of regression analysis results for sporting and non-sporting goods show that all three indices of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of the famous sport personality in both sporting and non-sporting goods groups can predict and make changes in the tendency to buy sporting and non-sporting goods. According to the standardized beta value, these three indices have the highest ability to predict the variable of tendency to buy in the sporting goods group, respectively expertise (0.442), trustworthiness (0.407) and attractiveness (0.190), and in the non-sporting goods group they have by attractiveness (0.960), expertise (0.140) and trustworthiness (-0.120); respectively.

Table 2: Concurrent regression test results between the indices of famous sporting personality and willingness to buy sporting and non-sporting goods

		B	SE	Beta	t	sig
Sporting goods	Fixed	-34/047	2/530		-13/457	0/000
	Perceived attractiveness	0/557	0/146	0/190	3/819	0/000
	Perceived trustworthiness	1/149	0/152	0/407	7/558	0/000
	Perceived expertise	1/285	0/147	0/442	8/745	0/000
Non-sportin goods	Fixed	8/009	0/772		10/370	0/000
	Perceived attractiveness	1/460	0/121	0/960	12/032	0/000
	Perceived trustworthiness	-0/158	0/079	-0/120	-2/008	0/048
	Perceived expertise	0/210	0/090	0/140	2/324	0/023

As a result, the regression equation formula for the tendency to buy a sporting and non-sporting product is as follows:

Willingness to buy sporting goods= -34/047 + 0/557 (Perception of attractiveness) + 1/149 (Perception of trustworthiness) + 1/285 (Perception of expertise)

Willingness to buy non-sporting goods= 8/009 + 1/460 (Perception of attractiveness) - 0/158 (Perception of trustworthiness) + 0/210 (Perception of expertise)

A comparison of the mean scores of perceived attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of a sport celebrity in the two groups that were exposed to sporting and non-sporting advertising showed that the

participants who have being exposed to the sporting advertising had a higher degree of perception of expertise and trustworthiness than those who exposed to the non-sporting advertising. However, the perceived score of attractiveness of those exposed to the non-sporting advertising was higher (Table 3).

Table 3: Mean scores of indices of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of the famous person

Variable	Advertised goods	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean standard error
Attractiveness	Sporting goods	22/30	2/31	0/29
	Non-sporting goods	25/21	4/18	0/48
Expertise	Sporting goods	31/29	2/52	0/29
	Non-sporting goods	27/26	4/29	0/49
Trustworthiness	Sporting goods	28/02	2/40	0/27
	Non-sporting goods	25/97	4/41	0/51

We used Independent t-test to investigate the significant difference between the scores of perceptions of sport celebrity indices between the two groups exposed to the sporting and non-sporting goods advertising. As Table 4 shows, the significance values of the t-test indicate a significant difference between the mean scores of celebrity indices scores in the two groups. This means that the average perception of the expertise and trustworthiness of the sport celebrity in the sporting goods advertising group is significantly higher than in the group of non-sporting product advertising. On the other hand, the mean score of perceived attractiveness in the non-sporting goods group is significantly higher than the perceived score of attractiveness in the sporting goods advertising group.

Table 4: Independent t-test for the indices of attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of the famous person in two independent groups

Variable		F	Sig	t	df	Sig	Mean difference	Standard error
Attractiveness	Homogenous variance	19/09	0/000	-5/25	148	0/000	-2/90	0/55
	Heterogeneous variance			-5/25	115/46	0/000	-2/90	0/55
Expertise	Homogenous variance	17/34	0/000	6/99	148	0/000	4/02	0/58
	Heterogeneous variance			6/99	119/63	0/000	4/02	0/58
Trustworthiness	Homogenous variance	22/25	0/000	3/53	148	0/001	2/05	0/58
	Heterogeneous variance			3/53	114/32	0/001	2/05	0/58

DISCUSSION

One of the new promotional approaches targeted by marketers and advertisers is the use of famous athletes in advertising because celebrity

athletes have countless fans around the world influenced by their behavior (Brigham, 2011); so one of the techniques influencing customer's buying behavior is utilizing them. This influence of celebrities, especially athletes, is due to the three dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness that together constitute endorser's credibility and can influence customers' purchase intentions (Ohanian, 1990). As the results of the present study confirm, the three dimensions of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of a sport celebrity are a good predicting endorser of the willingness to buy sporting and non-sporting goods. This result can be in line with the studies conducted by Sertoglu et al. (2014), Sassenberg et al. (2012), and Pornpitakpan (2004) who showed that all three dimensions of the expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the advertising celebrity are capable of predicting customers' willingness to buy. On the other hand, this result is inconsistent with the study done by Ohanian (1991) because, based on that, from the three dimensions of the credibility model, only the perceived expertise of the celebrities has the ability to predict the willingness to buy. This inconsistency in results can result from the cultural and normative differences of the propaganda of the statistical population and the different research tool and methods. The present research used electronic media advertising, which unlike Ohanian's research who used print advertising, was able to transmit light, Image, sound, motion, and other attractive effects leading to the more attention of the audience to the ad.

According to the results in the sporting goods group, the most predictive variable of buying tendency was attributable to the sport celebrity's expertise. This may be due to the effect of the celebrity's knowledge of the product on the perceived quality and greater audience credibility. When a consumer realizes that a celebrity has a high level of expertise in the advertised product, his / her belief in the communicative message of the advertiser increases, resulting in a greater confidence in the better characteristics of the product than in other similar goods and a willingness to buy the product increases (Roy et al., 2013). In line with this, this result of the research is consistent with the results of many researchers, including the studies of Kang et al. (2019), Zipporah and Mberia (2014), Oyeniyi (2014), Sassenberg et al. (2012) and Ohanian (1991). Similarly, Biswas et al. (2006) showed that athlete expertise in

the advertised product is supposedly the most important factor for an athlete's reputation in a target market and driving customers to the endorsed product brand. On the other hand, Fink et al. (2004) in their study concluded that the athlete's expertise is more important than his attractiveness in the endorsed advertising. In this regard, we can say that because the present research sporting goods is the sport shoe, specialized goods for sport, therefore, the endorser's expertise has a high impact on audience behavior, and one can conclude that product endorser expertise is an important factor in predicting consumers' willingness to buy.

On the other hand, according to the results of the research, in the non-sporting goods group, the attractiveness index compared to expertise and trustworthiness had the highest ability to predict the variable of willingness to buy non-sporting goods. In explaining this result, one can say that the attractiveness component is very effective in remembering the message and better understanding the characteristics of the advertised product. In fact, the attractiveness component of celebrities by clearing the appearance of the product and letting their own apparent appeal to the product leads to the creation and promotion of a positive attitude to the advertised product and increases the willingness to buy (Gan, 2006). Similarly, many scholars have pointed to this overwhelming influence of endorser attractiveness on customer buying behavior (Kang et al., 2019; Zakari et al., 2019; Khalid and Yasmeen, 2019; Agnihotri et al., 2018; Gauns et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2016). In this regard, in a research Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) entitled "Increasing Brand Reputation through Celebrity endorsement" showed that consumers' perception of the celebrity's attractiveness and trustworthiness of an endorser celebrity increased brand attitude, brand credibility, and intention to buy in the endorsed brands. In this regard, according to the results of the research, the score of attractiveness index in the non-sporting goods group was significantly higher than in the sporting goods group. However, given the high impact of the attractiveness of endorser in the present research on the sporting and non-sporting product and many studies supporting this result, we can consider attractiveness as an important factor in predicting consumers' purchase intention and behavior.

On the other hand, in addition to the attractiveness and expertise indices in the sporting and non-sporting goods group, the celebrity trustworthiness index had a relatively high predictive power of purchase

intention. There is a great deal of research in this area that is consistent with the present study and has supported the high predictive power of celebrity endorser trustworthiness on the customer buying behavior and willingness to buy (Zakari et al., 2019; Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018; Oyeniyi, 2014; Kim et al., 2014; Sertoglu et al., 2014; Sassenberg et al., 2012). In this regard, Braunstein and Zhang (2005) examined the effect of athlete's endorsement power dimensions on the sport consumption and concluded that one of these dimensions namely professional integrity (trustworthiness) is a sport endorser that has a direct impact on sport consumption and the consumers' sport consumption is predictable based on the trustworthiness of the endorser. Finally, based on the large number of researches that emphasize on the high impact of endorser trustworthiness on the customer buying behavior and that the result of our research confirms the high predictive power of this component, we conclude that the endorser trustworthiness is one of the key factors for predicting behavior and willingness to buying the sporting and non-sporting goods.

The other result of the present research showed a significant difference between the perceived score of expertise and trustworthiness of a sport celebrity in the sporting goods advertising group compared to the non-sporting goods group and the mean perceived score of attractiveness in the non-sporting goods group compared to the sporting goods advertising group. In this regard, we can say that because the present research sport product is the sport shoe that is a specialized product for sport, therefore the expertise and trustworthiness of the endorser has a high impact on audience behavior. On the other hand, because the non-sporting product of the present research was sunglasses related to the apparat attractiveness, this influence and predictability of the attractiveness index justifies the tendency to purchase non-sporting product. In a study, Cunningham et al. (2008) also found that, similar to our study, attractiveness plays a less important role when it comes to promoting more specialized product, and when the importance of expertise diminishes the attractiveness plays a more prominent role.

Accordingly, relying on the high power of predicting sporting personality indices for the tendency to purchase sporting and non-sporting goods, in the present research and the rich research background that supported this result, we can make sporting personality indices an

essential and important factor in predicting behavior and desire to buy sporting and non-sporting goods. In this regard, we recommend the marketers and advertising experts to evaluate carefully the attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness of the celebrity before selecting a celebrity endorser for advertising their products. On the other hand, according to the results of the research, it is advisable that the endorser has the necessary expertise on the product to increase effectiveness. Sometimes, as in the present research, athletes may be used to promote non-athletic products, in which case the athlete of high attractiveness and trustworthiness is recommended to offset his/her lack of expertise in the product and positively impact audiences' attitude to advertising and increase their willingness to buy.

Limitations and recommendations

From a practical and implementation point of view, the results of this research can provide useful information on the effective use of celebrity athletes as endorsers for the sport marketers, manufacturers and sellers of sporting and non-sporting goods, sport clubs, policy makers of Sport industry and advertising program specialists. Among the major limitations of this research, it can be mentioned that, first, the endorsed product was studied only at the introduction stage of the product life cycle, so it is recommended that such research be performed at other stages of the product life cycle.

Second, due to the cultural limitations of using Iranian female athletes in advertising, this research used only the Iranian male athlete as the endorser. A comparison of Iranian and non-Iranian athlete endorsement should also be done to determine the impact of native or non-native endorser in the promotion of products in regard to the cultural differences of the endorsers and the society in which the advertising is performed. Finally, the third limitation is that in the present research, the telegram was the advertising medium, so it is advisable to use other Internet communication media as a propaganda platform in the future studies.

CONCLUSIONS

The results showed that all three indices of attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of the renowned sport endorser have high predictive power for the tendency to purchase sporting and non-sporting goods.

Also, the expertise in sporting goods group and in non-sporting goods group the attractiveness had the highest predictive ability to buy. Accordingly, the use of well-known sport endorsers with attractiveness, expertise and trustworthiness in advertising of sporting and non-sporting goods can be effective in increasing the willingness of consumers to purchase. It is better for sport endorsers to have high expertise in the field of advertising to influence the advertising and increase the audience's desire to buy.

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