

A study to compare the use of real-life celebrity endorsement with digital endorsement in the sportswear industry

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Abstract: In recent years, sportswear industry occupies a very important position in the entire garment market; also, it has become more and more important to economic development. Celebrity endorsement is the most commonly used by sportswear brands, especially excellent athletes. Companies take advantage of the success and prestige of athletes to arouse the customer's buying interests. However, when the celebrity is no longer successful anymore or have any scandal and bad behavior, it may bring a loss to the company. With the rapid development of technology, marketers have researched the new type to their brands all the time. Innovation is the crucial factor for a brand. Creative digital endorsement of advertising has brought new effects to the company, but so far, there are almost no sportswear brands make use of digital endorsement their advertising. This article is aimed at exploiting the effectiveness of digital endorsement in the sportswear brand advertising, compared with celebrity endorsement, whether the advantages of the digital endorsement are same as celebrity endorsement, which can influence customers' purchase behaviour and intention; simultaneously, digital endorsement can solve the risk caused by celebrity endorsement in sportswear brands.

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1、Introduction

1.1 Background

With the rapid development of society and technology, people are fed the latest product information by advertising on television, magazines, newspapers and the Internet; today, advertising has become an important marketing tool for a variety of industries and brands to achieve success in the market (Fill et al., 2013). In a narrow sense, advertising can be divided into two categories, depending on the different purposes. One of is in order to get profit for companies; this type of advertising can be used to persuade the public to purchase the product as driving good profit is the ultimate purpose for a brand. This is commercial advertising (Žanetić, 2014).

The other purpose aims at disseminating messages and this type of advertising can be used as a way to spread information to the public. Brands use advertising to communicate with consumers, but it does not necessarily mean that making profits is the ultimate purpose, it is simply a mode of transmission to the outside world (William et al., 2007) Moderate advertising makes a better impression on the public, whereas bad advertising might not be able to effectively disseminate

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information; also, it might be resented by the public (Sorrentino, 2014). Overall, it is ultimately designed to deliver awareness in order to change people's attitudes about advertising goods and induce people's purchase intention (Fill et al., 2013).

Furthermore, celebrity endorsement is a frequent way of advertising. There are many forms of celebrity endorsement; it is not only used in brand advertising, but celebrity endorsements also apply in movies, social activities, and even politics, all which will impact on the purchase behaviour and intentions of customers. For example, the United States Presidential elections were one of the most influential events worldwide in 2008 and Mrs. Obama (the current US President's wife) wore a dress that attracted the attention of consumers, many of whom then decided to choose the brand worn by the US First Lady (Mrs. Obama). Mrs. Obama is not a brand spokesperson, but she still played an important role in promoting the brand (McNulty, 2009). There is another example. Many celebrities collaborate with brands to make money; Gucci designed a bag for Chinese customers called the Jackie bag, as Jackie Chan is the one of the most popular Kungfu movie stars in China. Jackie Chan is not a spokesperson for Gucci, but his name was used as a celebrity endorsement for Gucci to develop the Chinese market (Okonkwo, 2010).

Most importantly, as with advertising, celebrity endorsement has become a trend for brands to sell their products. Celebrity endorsements help a company to establish brand image through the celebrity's huge popularity in society. Although celebrity endorsement has a number of advantages in brand advertising, there are disadvantages too (White et al., 2009). Also, marketing researchers have innovated constantly in recent years and digital endorsement has been increasingly used as a creative marketing tool for advertising in all kinds of industry and brands (Wang & Doong, 2010).

Overall, celebrity endorsement can impact on consumers in many ways, but advertising remains the most common method for brands in current marketing. Even so, there are still disadvantages for brands. This is why the researcher is interested in the subject of celebrity endorsement in advertising and solving the disadvantages through digital endorsement.

1.2 Overview of relevant studies

Endorsement is a crucial factor for advertising to develop the market, even to the point of deciding whether the advertising is a success or failure. Therefore, the company will invest much money to cooperate with celebrities to impact on consumer purchase behaviour and intention (Busler & Michael, 2010). Hence, in the existing marketing literature, there are many studies regarding celebrity endorsement in advertisements. These studies include how to choose the right celebrity endorsement for brand advertising, how to promote a brand using celebrity endorsement, celebrity endorsement's impact on luxury brands, celebrity endorsement's credibility interaction and so on (Busler & Michael, 2010).

Although there are a large number of studies, celebrity endorsement still is a risky marketing strategy and there are no studies that have solved that risk. As for digital endorsement, existing studies have researched digital endorsement in the children's product industry, the music industry and other industries, but there is little about the digital endorsement of the sportswear industry in existing marketing literature.

1.3 Aims and structure of the study

In summary, this study focuses on two points; one aim of the study is the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in advertising in the sportswear industry; the other goal aims at researching consumer purchase behaviour and intention in regard to digital endorsement in the sportswear industry advertising.

The structure of this study is divided into four parts. The first part

is the literature review. Through researching existing academic literature, the researcher can identify the advertising value for brands and the commercial value of advertising, types of advertising, and, most importantly, whether celebrity endorsements occupy an irreplaceable position in the advertising market. There are few studies relevant to forms of endorsement in the sportswear industry, especially the application of digital endorsement in sportswear industry advertising.

Therefore, through the literature review, researcher identifies a gap regarding the effectiveness of digital endorsement in sportswear industry advertising. Thus, the researcher establishes the research questions. The second part is methodology. There are two research questions. Using secondary data, online collection focuses on finding the current situation of celebrity endorsement in sportswear industry advertising. Questionnaire is the second method to investigate the target population's purchase behaviour and intention regarding digital endorsement in the sportswear industry. Thirdly, the findings and discussion section analyses the results from the second part.

Finally, the researcher will present the conclusion to answer the research questions and will also offer recommendations for sports brands to use digital endorsement in advertising and the potential for future research.

2、Literature Review

2.1 Advertising

2.1.1 The commercial value of advertising for brand

Advertising is defined as belonging to the entertainment industry (Vogel, 2014). It involves many elements, such as writers, designers and artists devoted to designing the advertising, which means there is a good deal of creativity, wisdom, positivity and appeal (Miriam, 2014, p. 14). Most importantly, advertising also has commercial meaning. Advertising worldwide has a huge budget. Table 1 shows that every country has a huge advertising spend.

2010	Country	Advertising spend (\$m)	2013	Country	Advertising spend (\$m)
1	USA	151,519	1	USA	164,844
2	Japan	43,267	2	Japan	45,300
3	Germany	24,631	3	Germany	34,236
4	China	22,606	4	China	26,508
5	UK	18,047	5	UK	19,678
6	Brazil	14,243	6	Brazil	18,662
7	France	12,875	7	France	13,825
8	Italy	10,753	8	Italy	12,228
9	Australia	9,394m	9	Australia	11,734m
10	Canada	8,867m	10	Canada	10,981m

Table 1 Every country has a huge advertising spend.

(Miriam, 2014, p. 15)

Furthermore, advertising plays a crucial role in the development of a brand and is an important way to create product and brand characterisation (Fill et al., 2013). Advertising has a strong relationship with brand communication. Brand communication aims at telling the consumer how to understand brand value, how to use the products and other information pertinent to the brand (Keller, 2009). The function of advertising is to spread brand messages and to strengthen brand awareness in the consumer's perception. (Fill et al., 2013, p. 157).

Brand image is the subjective perception of the consumer about the brand; therefore, it is very important for a brand to use advertising to make a positive impression on the consumers. Advertising is used to

create a positive impression of products among consumers (Kirmani & Zeithaml, 1993).

2.1.2 Two different types of advertising

Advertising spreads effectively and quickly through all kinds of media, which help to convey the message to the audience. Therefore, media is a crucial factor for interaction with audiences (Dahlén & Edenius, 2007). In recent years, with the rising level of digital technology, advertising has gone through many changes and the digital media has been widely used (Flew, 2005). However, the traditional media still plays an irreplaceable role in the advertising industry (Fill et al., 2013, p. 214).

Traditional media

Fill et al. (2013) have categorised traditional media, as “print, electronic, out-of-home and direct mail”. Print media includes newspapers, magazines and all other printed advertising, which gives customers many choices and there are different options for different groups of people. Electronic media includes television and radio. This type of advertising is more visual. In addition, celebrity endorsement is the first choice for traditional advertising; brands take advantage of a celebrity to raise the popularity of products through the traditional media (Carroll, 2009).

Digital media

The growth of the Internet and the use of digital advertising have been crucial in the advertising industry (Flew, 2005). Fill et al. (2013) concluded that “Online, social media, in-game advertising and a host of other media are being used in new and innovative ways to target the consumer audience”. Compared with traditional advertising, digital media costs less and can communicate with the global consumer, rather than just the local people. In addition, with the rapid development of technology, digital images are appearing in advertising, such as the computer game characters. Most importantly, the digital image not only brings innovation to advertising, but also offers brands more options (Flew, 2005).

2.2 Comparison of real-life celebrity endorsement and digital endorsement

2.2.1 Definition of celebrity endorsement

Celebrity endorsement is deemed to be the most effective promotional tool in the global market. A quarter of all advertising worldwide uses celebrity endorsements as its marketing method (Spry et al., 2011). According to Miciak and Shanklin (1994), celebrity endorsements account for 20% of television advertising in the U.S.A; also, this advertising is broadcast in prime time. However, this does not mean that using celebrity endorsement in advertising is automatically successful; choosing a suitable celebrity is an important factor (Costanzo & Goodnight, 2006). The temperament of the endorser should match with the characteristics of the product; also they need to have ability to convey the attributes of the product to the customers (Costanzo & Goodnight, 2006). Celebrities could be artists, painters, writers, stars from the entertainment industry and sports, even politicians, but they all have something in common, which is high social status and great popularity in our daily lives (Mukherjee, 2009). Brands make huge investments in celebrities to support their products, seeking to improve the visibility of products through the fame of the celebrities and influence consumer purchase behaviour (Turner, 2013, p. 4).

2.2.2 Use of celebrity endorsement in advertising

Celebrity endorsement is an important tool in advertising for a brand. Agrawal and Kamakura (1995) found that, in the United States, advertising through celebrity endorsement accounted for 20% of all television advertising; moreover, television advertising of celebrity endorsements was 10% of annual television advertising expenditure. Successful advertising requires celebrity characteristics consistent

with the brand image and the brand needs to connect with the public through the right media. Therefore, it is crucial for a brand to choose a suitable celebrity, and that is a complex challenge. However, credible celebrity endorsement advertising has a positive effect in persuading customers to buy products and recognise brand value (Dekker & Reijmersdal, 2013).

2.2.3 Effect of celebrity endorsement for consumers and brand

Celebrity endorsement has become one of today's most popular marketing tools (Gurel, 2011). Celebrity endorsement can not only help the brand establish a good brand image, but can also promote the company's economic growth (AR, 2012). The fame and social status of a celebrity may increase the brand's credibility, attracting the consumers' attention. Also, brand image can make a deep impression on consumers; which is the first step in turning consumers into customers (AR, 2012). The social status of the celebrity represents the brand value.

Today's customers are willing to purchase high quality products and high value brand as a way to show their identity and social status (AR, 2012). Moreover, brand value can be expressed more accurately by using the right celebrity in the advertising, ensuring that the characteristics of the product make a deep impression on the consumers (Wang & Doong, 2010). The celebrity seems to personify the product (Simmers et al., 2009).

However, celebrity endorsement is a double-edged sword (Mukherjee, 2009). Due to the fame of the celebrity, the brand may need to pay higher fees, depending on the level of the celebrity's popularity. Also, the huge expense of hiring celebrities is a risk; if the brand cannot achieve the desired results, it is likely to lose money (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995).

In addition, celebrity behaviour and prestige can have a negative impact on the brand because the celebrity's behaviour is closely related to brand image. If the celebrity does something immoral or illegal, it will have a negative impact on the brand's image and reputation (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

2.2.4 Definition of digital endorsement

With the rapid development of digital technology, brands are constantly updating the nature of their advertising in order to arouse customers' interest (Stafford et al., 2002). Innovation is not only a key aspect of the success for the brand, but also a very important marketing strategy, which aims at stimulating consumption. Digital endorsement is totally different from a traditional spokesperson, and is a new type of endorsement in terms of rapid technological development (Stafford et al., 2002). This image is virtual and uses computer software to create a figure representing brand characteristics; also, it may be animated (Heiser et al., 2008).

2.2.5 Usage of digital endorsement in advertising

Due to the fact that networking has been widely applied, digital endorsement advertising has increased in our daily life. For brands, it is a challenge to design a digital character as a unique endorser. Creativity is the basis for this kind of advertising; the virtual figure should be consistent with brand value, attract the attention of customers and improve persuasion about the product (Heiser et al., 2008).

2.2.6 Effect of digital endorsement for a brand

According to Phillips and Lee (2005), the application of cartoon endorsement has been growing continuously over the past few years. Compared with celebrity endorsements, digital endorsement involves less expenditure, because digital endorsement doesn't involve high commissions to attract a celebrity. In addition, digital endorsement has a many forms, models and styles. As for the brand, diverse forms of advertising can be more interesting and unique. There is some evidence to suggest that customers prefer creative and interesting

advertising (Heiser et al., 2008). However, digital endorsement advertising has different effects in different industries. In the field of clothing, adults prefer celebrity endorsement, because digital endorsement cannot accurately show test results to customers.

2.3 Sportswear industry

2.3.1 Justification of the choice of the sportswear industry

Consumption marketing in the sportswear industry

The relationship between sports and the economy goes back to the first Olympic Games in ancient times (Andreff, 2008). The sports industry has been connected closely with the economy throughout the ages. Sports apparel and athletic footwear is one of the largest apparel markets worldwide with 80% of branded products throughout the sports apparel market; one third of these sports products come from Nike, Adidas and Reebok, which were the three largest sports brands in 2007 (Newbery, 2008). Therefore, the sportswear industry occupies an important position in the overall garment market and continues to grow (Huping, 2005).

Newbery (2008) illustrated that customers prefer to spend money on buying sports brands to follow their favourite sports stars or teams. Therefore, some celebrity endorsements of sports brands really make a profit. Indeed, the sportswear industry not only makes a huge profit in the global market, but in the Chinese garment market there are also a growing number of sports products developing strongly (Asiamoney, 2006).

According to 2006–2007 Chinese annual sportswear industry reports, sports product consumption is up to 30–40 billion in one year (Business Wire, 2007). In addition, in the Southeast Asian apparel industry, the sportswear industry also plays an important role. Using Indonesia as an example, customer attitude to branded sports products has a very high awareness and loyalty (Susanto, 2013).

Current types of advertising in the sportswear industry

Many of the current forms of sports brand advertising make use of traditional advertising and digital advertising; however, digital endorsement is used the least. Most of the advertising is celebrity endorsements, and most of the celebrities are athletes and sports stars. The majority of the sports brand endorsers are celebrities who come from the NBA (National Basketball Association) or other famous sports team (Yu, 2005). For example, in order to improve competitiveness with other sports brands, Adidas increased its brand image activities. They cooperated with players from the U.S National Football League and Major League Basketball, two of the most important unions in the U.S, seeking at consolidating a dominance of the soccer market in the U.S (Sara, 2015). Nike also likes to use celebrity endorsement in advertising, especially NBA basketball stars. The players consumers follow can change consumer purchasing attitudes (Jen-Mo, 2006). However, because of Kobe Bryant's sexual harassment scandal, although Nike and other industry brands had invested a lot of money, they had to terminate his endorsement (White et al., 2009).

2.3.2 Gap analysis

In summary, at present, the development of the sportswear industry is getting better and better all over the world. As for the economy, sportswear industry has played an important role. Moreover, sportswear industry advertising has used celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsements have brought profit to sports brands, but can also be a risky strategy (Silvera & Austad, 2004).

On the other hand, digital endorsement constitutes a viable alternative for brand advertising (Flew, 2005). With the rising level of technological development, digital endorsements are being used successfully in other industries (Wang & Doong, 2010). However, there are few studies on the use of digital endorsement in sports brands' advertising campaigns. Therefore, the sportswear industry is

a suitable research context for this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This dissertation focuses on comparison of celebrity endorsements and digital endorsements. This research aims at exploring the attitude of consumers to the two types endorsement and whether digital endorsement is suitable for the sportswear industry.

The study will use primary research and secondary research; secondary research uses sources such as online journals and article, and analyses existing data by a content analysis method to determine the current situation; primary research is through questionnaire with local university students and international Chinese students to get information about consumer attitudes, ideas and purchase intention; the results are then subjected to statistical analysis.

3.2 Research objective

This dissertation recognises the gap to research the use of celebrity endorsement and digital endorsement in the sportswear industry. The following are the specific objectives of the study.

- To assess the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in the sportswear industry and find the results regarding existing secondary data. For this objective, the study will use secondary data online to find the current situation about usage of celebrity endorsement. Also, it will be used to help prepare the questionnaire.
- To identify attitude, opinions and purchase intention from the young consumer perspective. For this objective, the study will use questionnaire to research results, which cannot be found in secondary data.
- To compare the differences in the young consumers' results between local university students and international Chinese university students. This objective will be analysed through the results from the questionnaire.

3.3 Research methods

3.3.1 Secondary data online

Sampling

Secondary data offer a great number of resources and their content can provide researchers information and data regarding the research question; secondary data are divided into two categories, internal data and external data (Proctor, 2005). This study will use external data.

The main sources of this study come from online. It is free of charge or costs less than the majority of information collected by other researchers. As some of the results have already been organised by others, it saves time for new researchers. In addition, compared other types of sources, online sources are easier to find (Zikmund & Babin, 2012). The following are the sample details regarding celebrity endorsement in the sportswear industry.

Types of sources	Main content of sources
Journal of advertising research	Sports celebrity influence on the behavioural intentions of generation Y (Bush et al., 2004).
International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship	Athlete endorsement in the international sports industry: A case study of David Beckham (Yu, 2005)
European Journal of Marketing	What is sports product and who buys it? The marketing of professional sports leagues (Mason, 1999)
European Journal of Marketing	Customer-based brand equity in the team sports industry: operationalization and

	impact on the economic success of sports teams (Bauer et al., 2005)
MA dissertation	The effectiveness of sports' brand endorser's credibility on consumers' buying decision—Case: Nike and Adidas' basketball endorsers for research purpose (Jen—Mo, 2006)
Ebook	Sports marketing: a strategic perspective (Shank & Lyberger, 2014)

Table 2 Samples of secondary data online

Procedure

In accordance with the research questions, the first step is to find secondary data about usage of digital endorsement in advertising in all kinds of industry. The second part is to find digital endorsement (e.g. cartoon, digital movie image) applied in a variety of sports brands. The third and most important section is the use of content analysis to analyse the relationship between the secondary data and the research questions in order to answer the first objective, namely, to assess the advantages and disadvantages of digital endorsement and find the usages of digital endorsement.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

Primary research contains two categories, quantitative research and qualitative research; questionnaire is a one method of quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Researchers should print out the questions that have been designed on paper and then give the questionnaires to participants of the study and analyse the data; in this way, researchers can obtain the findings regarding the participants' attitudes to the study (Zikmund & Babin, 2012). As secondary data may not have accurate information regarding the immediate research question, this study will use questionnaire to understand purchase intention from the perspective of young consumers.

Sampling

Sampling is selecting a group of people to investigate and the group of the population selected is called a sample (Proctor, 2005). This study selected college students as the target population, which is the young generation (18–30-year-olds), also known as generation Y (Bush et al., 2004). Generation Y accounts for nearly one-third of the total population; therefore, they cannot be ignored as they are one of biggest consumer groups (Morton, 2002).

Moreover, generation Y's lifestyle contains more sports; they not only like football and basketball, but also baseball, extreme sports, etc. (Bennett, 2003). The next step is deciding the sample size. In accordance with the aims of the research, to compare local university students and international Chinese students, this research used quota sample to choose 200 students, 100 local students and 100 Chinese students. Quota sample is beneficial to the accuracy of results; it can have a non-probability sample, which aims at ensuring "the same proportion of characteristics specified" in both groups (Clow & James, 2013).

Questionnaire design

Questionnaire design is an important step in primary research and a good questionnaire is very useful for marketing research (Proctor, 2005). This study chose closed-ended questions to investigate, which uses multiple-choice questions. It means that it lists the answers to several major problems with all the possible answers included, then the target population selected needs to choose one or several options from the answer list and they cannot reply outside of these answers (Clow & James, 2013).

These type of questions are not only beneficial to participants' understanding correctly and answering quickly, but it also offers convenience to statistical data and analysis of the results (Shukla,

2008). The questions of this study are divided to four categories. The first is demographic information about age, gender and educational status; secondly, questions inquiring about the consumer's brand knowledge; the third category of questions investigates the participant's knowledge of digital endorsement; finally, the most important category aims at investigating the customer purchase intention regarding the types of endorsements.

Procedure

Firstly, in order to conveniently recruit the target population, the researcher selected the libraries of the local universities. Because the target population of the survey is university students, these could ensure exact sampling. So, the locations were the libraries of the University of Winchester, University of Southampton and Winchester School of Art. Secondly, it is important to schedule time; one person needs approximately 10 minutes to finish.

Due to having 200 samples, the researcher needed five days and 40 samples a day. Next, when suitable student were found, the researcher introduced the subject of the research, the purpose of the investigation and the main content to the target population as well as the requirements of the respondents in filling out the questionnaires. At the end of the investigation, the researcher guaranteed the principle of anonymity and confidentiality.

3.4 Analysis methods

3.4.1 Content analysis

For a large number of text messages, content analysis is a fast and effective way to get results (Krippendorff, 2012). This dissertation will research online sources, which is secondary data, including articles, journal, reports, etc. Through frequency of keywords, the researcher can quickly sum up the results of the existing research regarding digital endorsement and celebrity endorsement.

3.4.2 Statistical analysis & tabulation

Proctor (2005) concluded that "three steps are involved in converting completed questionnaire to tables: editing, coding and counting". Data collection is crucial in finding the results from the research. Statistical analysis is used to count the numbers of the answers in the questionnaire and analyse the data obtained. "As for the reader, using percentage can facilitate understanding" (Proctor, 2005). Due to the fact that this study used questionnaire to research consumer attitudes and purchase intention, statistical analysis can show the numbers of the target population in relation to the research question.

In addition, as this research surveyed 200 samples, tabulation is a good tool to demonstrate the different data regarding the target population's attitudes to celebrity endorsement and digital endorsement. Through statistical analysis and tabulation, it can reflect the characteristics of the respondents quickly and effectively.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Secondary data online

The question arises of how celebrity endorsement has impacted on sports brands. It is a crucial factor for sports brands seeking for the market. Through content analysis of the sources of secondary data online, the study has found results organised by other researchers. According to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in the sportswear industry, this study has divided them into two categories.

4.1.1 Positive effect of results

In the article, "Sports celebrity influence on the behavioural intentions of generation Y", the most frequent words or phrases are athlete role models, teenagers' purchase intentions and behaviour, sports product marketing and advertising. It pointed out that sports celebrities play an important role in advertising and have positive impacts on brand loyalty. Also, its finding illustrated that generation Y is a group of great potential customers for the sportswear market. In

particular, sports celebrity endorsements affect females more than males of generation Y in the sports industry (Bush et al., 2004).

In the article, "Athlete endorsement in the international sports industry: a case study of David Beckham", the researcher counted the most frequent words and phrases, which were international sports industry, David Beckham, athlete endorsement, media attention, brand image, brand equity and brand awareness. This journal found that it has become a trend for the sports industry to use celebrity endorsements to open up global markets in order to achieve loyal customers. In particular, using a world-famous athlete to develop foreign markets and establish international brand image is a common phenomenon for sportswear brands to promote sports industry globalisation (Yu, 2005).

4.1.2 Negative effect of results

Other secondary data online also indicated that a successful celebrity could help sports brands to establish a good brand image; they can give the sports product personal characteristics and arouse the attention of customers, thus affecting customer purchase decisions.

However, the majority of the positive results are based on prestigious celebrities, for example, David Beckham and NBA (National Basketball Association) players. They are not only successful athletes, but also world famous celebrities. The following table shows the most frequent words and phrases in the secondary data. It lists clearly some negative words and phrases.

Types of sources	Main content of sources
Journal of advertising research	Sports celebrity influence on the behavioural intentions of generation Y (Bush et al., 2004).
International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship	Athlete endorsement in the international sports industry: A case study of David Beckham (Yu, 2005)
European Journal of Marketing	What is sports product and who buys it? The marketing of professional sports leagues (Mason, 1999)
European Journal of Marketing	Customer-based brand equity in the team sports industry: operationalization and impact on the economic success of sports teams (Bauer et al., 2005)
MA dissertation	The effectiveness of sports' brand endorser's credibility on consumers' buying decision-Case: Nike and Adidas' basketball endorsers for research purpose (Jen-Mo, 2006)
Ebook	Sports marketing: a strategic perspective (Shank & Lyberger, 2014)

Table 3 Content analysis of secondary data online

On the contrary, when celebrities were no longer successful or the media exposed their bad behaviour, the sports brand would suffer a loss; this can impact on customer purchase intention. In addition, the collaboration of sports brands, advertising agencies and sports leagues or sports endorsers also has conflict regarding finance.

4.2 Discussion

Through content analysis of secondary data, it is found that celebrity endorsement has become an important marketing tool in the sports industry. A previously mentioned, secondary data were used to investigate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement and the current situation in the sportswear industry; another important reason was to research the issue, which is not found in existing sources, to help

prepare the questionnaire. Therefore, the question arises of digital endorsement and the discussion of how sports brands have been impacted positively in the same way as celebrity endorsement, in terms of affecting brand image, arousing customers' attention and influencing customer purchase intention.

As regards the negative effect of celebrity endorsement in the sportswear industry, there are three factors - failure, exposure of bad behaviour and financial conflicts. Digital endorsement could solve this kind of problem for sports brands, because digital endorsements do not have bad news. Also the digital endorsement can be designed by the company, so there is no financial conflict in the cooperation between companies and celebrities.

4.3 Questionnaire

The purpose of this study is to investigate the target population's attitude to digital endorsement in advertising of sportswear industry as well as to find whether digital endorsement will impact on the participants' purchase behaviour and intentions. This questionnaire has 14 questions, divided into four categories. The first category is the customer's basic demographic information; secondly, whether the participants focus on sports brand advertising in their daily life; the third category investigates participants' understanding of digital endorsement; and the last category, the most important point, investigates the participants' purchase behaviour and intention. The results will be analysed according to these four clusters.

4.3.1 Results analysis

Findings of demographic characteristics

The study used statistical analysis to identify the participants' demographic characteristics.

British university student		International Chinese students	
Characteristics	People counting	Characteristics	People counting
Gender		Gender	
Males	59	Males	36
Females	41	Females	64
Age		Age	
Under 17	18	Under 18	8
18-25	56	18-25	67
Above 25	27	Above 25	25
Education level		Education level	
Undergraduate	17	Undergraduate	8
Postgraduate	56	Postgraduate	67
Doctoral student	27	Doctoral student	25

Table 4 Characteristics of samples

From the participants' data, the two groups are much the same in age, gender and educational level; this can ensure the accuracy of the results later.

Findings of participants' attention to sports brand advertising

Questions 4-6 of the questionnaire are used to investigate the participants' attention to their favourite sports brand's advertising.

Survey results show that the two most popular sports brands are Adidas and Nike; also the results are same between two groups. However, for attention to their favourite brands' advertising and endorsements, as shown in the pie chart, the answers are totally opposite between local university students and international Chinese university students.

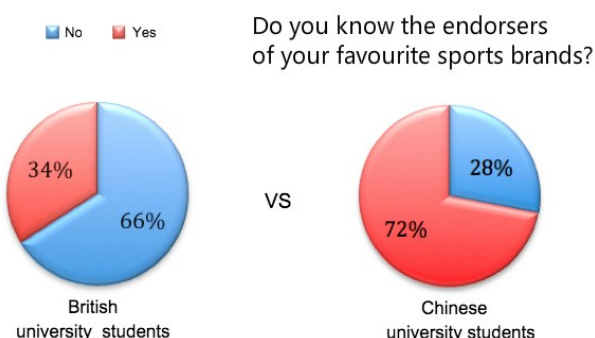


Figure 1 Percentages of participants' attention to sports brand advertising

The pie chart shows that 66% participants of British university students did not know information regarding the endorsers of their favourite sports brand advertising; just nearly one third of participants knew the endorser, included 27 females and 7 males. However, of the international Chinese university students, more than two-thirds had a deep knowledge about their favourite sportswear brands, while less than one-third of them knew any specific information.

The figures mean that British university students pay less attention to the advertising and endorsers, and of these females were a bigger proportion than males. However, international Chinese university students pay more attention to their favourite sports brand's advertising.

Findings of participants' knowledge about digital endorsement

Questions 9, 10, 11 of the questionnaire (for details, see appendix 1) were aimed at investigating the participants' knowledge of digital endorsement. Question 9 asked the participants' about how often they had seen digital endorsement in advertising. Of the local university students, 78 chose "So many", while only three chose "Not many". There were 62 international Chinese university student participants who also chose "So many".

As digital endorsement of advertising is used widely in daily life, almost 80 percent (for details, see appendix 2) of participants, both local university students and international Chinese university students, expressed that they usually see interesting digital endorsement advertising on the Internet rather than TV or in magazines or leaflets. Therefore, for advertising media, the Internet is the best way to build advertising for generation Y. In this question category, the last question investigated which types of digital endorsement were the most popular for the participants. The details are shown in table 5.

Question: If digital endorsement was used by your favourite sportswear brand, which type you would like?

Type of digital endorsement	British university students			Chinese university students		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Cartoon	1	14	15	0	7	7
Computer game characters	12	0	12	10	3	13
Movie characters	0	0	0	7	9	16

Designed by brand	46	27	73	19	45	64
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Table 5 Results of the types of digital endorsements from participants

From table 5, it is clear that the digital endorsement of designed by brand is the most popular type among the participants. There are two results in common for both participant groups. In the first option, females preferred a cartoon image (e.g. Mickey Mouse) as a digital endorsement in sportswear industry advertising. In the second option, the majority of participants were male. On the other hand, there were also different points; nobody chose the movie characters (e.g. Avatar) option among the local university students, but nearly one fifth of the international Chinese university students chose movie characters as a preferred digital endorsement in the sportswear industry.

Findings of the participants' purchase intention

The last category addressed the most important issues, which were participants' attitudes, purchase behaviours and intentions regarding digital endorsement in sportswear brand advertising compared with celebrity endorsements. The following three tables correspond to the three questions. Table 6 shows the answers to question 8 of the questionnaire: If the endorsing celebrity of your favourite sports brand were to be involved in bad behaviour (e.g. Kate Moss is a supermodel in the fashion industry who was reported to have used illegal drugs by the Daily Mirror newspaper), would you still pay attention to that sports brand?

Options	British university students	Chinese university students
Yes	26	49
No	52	17
Not sure	22	34

Table 6 Participants' attitudes to exposure of endorsing celebrity

From the table, the results of the British university students and international Chinese university students are the opposite. Chinese university students represented nearly half of the people who would be affected by the affairs of the endorsing celebrity; any revelations about the endorsing celebrity would affect their attitude towards the brand. In contrast, less than a third of British university students would be affected by any notoriety involving the celebrity's endorsement.

From the results of the last question, notoriety of the endorsing celebrity would affect the participants' attitude to their favourite sportswear brands. In this event, digital endorsement could be a solution for a company; but the two groups showed different results.

Question: If you like the fictional character, but your perception of the sportswear brand is negative due to previous bad behaviour by the brand's celebrity endorsement, would you change your perceptions of the sportswear brand after the new digital endorsement?

Options	British university students	Chinese university students
Yes	46	31
No	23	42
Not sure	31	27

Table 7 Participants' attitude to digital endorsement

The British university students preferred to choose "Yes" and expressed that they will would the new type of endorsements in advertising. However, most of the international Chinese university students chose "No", they would not change their perception of a

bad brand image simply because of an interesting digital endorsement; it would not be sufficient reason.

The penultimate question inquired after the participants' intention regarding celebrity endorsement and digital endorsement. It was aimed at researching which type of endorsement could impact on their purchase behaviour and intention regarding sportswear brand advertising.

Question: Do you prefer a real-life celebrity endorsement or digital endorsement for your favourite sports brands?

Options	British university students			Chinese university students		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Celebrity endorsement	16	22	38	21	57	78
Digital endorsement	43	19	62	15	7	22

Table 8 Participants' purchase intention regarding types of endorsements

As shown in table 8, the final result is different between British university students and international Chinese university students. The number of the international Chinese university students is greater than British university students in regards to the option of celebrity endorsement. In gender terms, more females than males chose celebrity endorsement in both groups of participants.

4.3.2 Discussion

In regards to the international Chinese university students, they were more concerned than British university students about their favourite sportswear brand's advertising and promotional material; therefore, Chinese university students will pay greater attention to the endorsers of their favourite sportswear brand. Because of today's Chinese generation Y lifestyle of, they prefer to focus on the social status of brands, brand image and brand awareness in the sportswear industry (O'Cass & Choy, 2008).

According to the results of the questionnaire, although celebrity endorsement of their favourite sportswear brands has been involved in some scandals and bad behaviour, which has led them to not like the brands any more, the use of digital endorsement still would not change their impression of the brand.

As for the British university participants, only a small percentage paid frequent attention to the advertising and promotional information of their favourite sports brands, of whom females more than males focused on the endorsers. This finding supports the results of online secondary data. Celebrity endorsement of advertising has more impact on females than males. In regards to substituting digital endorsement for celebrity endorsement in advertising, the results for the British university students were opposite to those for international Chinese university students; they would change their bad impression of a brand because of a successful digital endorsement image.

4.4 Summary

Overall, the final finding about international Chinese students is that they prefer to choose celebrity endorsement for their sportswear brands. According to their reported reasons, they think that real-life celebrity endorsement can reflect the effect of the clothing and that it is unreal to use digital endorsement which cannot display the true effect of the clothing. British university students prefer to choose digital endorsement, as they think it is more interesting and creative in advertising of sportswear brands.

5、Conclusion

The study found that existing academic literature researched that

a variety of industries and brands focused on their advertisements to obtain commercial value; also that they think celebrity endorsement is a crucial factor for advertising in order to develop the market. Indeed, using the social status, success and fame of a celebrity is a good way to help brands establish brand image and impact on consumer purchase intention, especially, given that most customers are fans of the celebrities used in the in the advertising. However, there are also negative effects of celebrity endorsement.

Any negative news can impact on brand image, even causing the brand to lose loyal customers. With the rising level of technology, computers and network development, a new type of endorsement has appeared, digital endorsement, which has been increasingly used by various industries and brands, but is rarely seen in the advertising of sportswear brands. In recent years, the sports industry has grown rapidly and played an important role in economic development.

Therefore, the purpose of this study focuses on the use of digital endorsement by sportswear brands as opposed to celebrity endorsement. In the methodology, it was found that successful athletes have been a trend to be used as endorsers in sportswear brands through secondary data online; also this offers both many advantages and disadvantages to brands. Comparing the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, the questionnaire aimed at investigating whether digital endorsement can not only influence customer purchase intention, but also can remove the shortcomings of celebrity endorsement in the sportswear industry.

The results showed that participants in both groups had different attitudes, the majority of Chinese university students chose celebrity endorsement, while the majority of British university students preferred digital endorsement in their favourite sports brands.

5.1 Limitation

There are some disadvantages to secondary data. Firstly, accurate information may not be available (Burns & Bush, 2000). Secondly, the secondary data may have the exact answers needed by researchers (Cooper et al., 2006). Finally, the secondary data are not enough to answer the research question (Lefever & Matthiasdottir, 2007). Therefore, this study will use the secondary data to identify the question that cannot be obtained from organised results; importantly, secondary data and exploration are used to prepare the primary research, which is questionnaire.

Furthermore, the questionnaire design can be difficult, especially in some complicated questions, because multiple answer options may be hard to understand and unclear (Clow & James, 2013). Therefore, it is a challenge for the researcher to design a comprehensive and all-sided questionnaire. If the questionnaire is defective, participants may not answer the questions correctly (Proctor, 2005). Moreover, closed-ended questions are leading questions, which directed the participants who, therefore, cannot give their subjective views (Clow & James, 2013). Also, it is easy to fill in a paper and, if the target population does not understand the issue, they may choose answers randomly; therefore, the behaviour of the target population will reduce the authenticity and reliability of the results (Zikmund & Babin, 2012).

In addition, as for the findings, there are different results from the two groups of participants; the British university students selected digital endorsement, while Chinese students chose celebrity endorsement for sportswear brands. According to the oral reason from participants, this seems to be because of their different lifestyles. The British university students like interesting and creative things, while the international Chinese students prefer to follow celebrities. However, the reasons behind the different results require further in-depth research.

5.2 Recommendation

According to the study findings, there are some recommendations

for brands, which is the value of the study. Firstly, due to the fact that the majority of young people choose to seek information sources from the Internet (Weiler, 2005) and the questionnaire found that the target population preferred to research brand promotional materials and up-to-date product information from the Internet, companies should focus on the application of online advertising. Secondly, in regards to the form of digital endorsement, the majority of the participants selected an image designed by the company rather than a cartoon, computer game or movie character.

According to the oral reasons of participants, digital endorsement designed by a company is unlike celebrity endorsements, because a spokesperson can be shared among many brands while digital endorsement designed by the brand is unique to them. Finally, results showed that different people in different countries have different attitudes to endorsers of sportswear brands. Therefore, companies should use appealing and creative digital endorsement for generation Y in the UK market, while, for generation Y in China, companies should choose celebrity endorsements in their advertising to gain customer loyalty. In summary, sportswear brands should choose different types of endorsement to target different consumers in their advertising.

5.3 Further research

As regards the research question, the study illustrated that the celebrity endorsement of sportswear brand advertising has positive and negative impact on consumers' purchase behaviour and intention and also that digital endorsement is supported by different groups of the target population. However, the study does not give the reasons for the different results between British university students and international Chinese university students; hence, it is an important point to for future research to find what factors lead to different attitudes between two generation Y groups. In addition, the study sampled generation Y as the target population, while further research can focus on other age groups to find their purchase behavior and intention of digital endorsement in the sportswear industry.

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7、Appendixes

Questionnaire

A study to compare the use of real-life celebrity endorsement with digital endorsement in the sportswear industry

1. Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age

Under 18 ☐ 19-24 ☐ Above 25 ☐

3. Education

Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Doctoral student ☐

4. Which is your favorite fashion sports brand? (Please tick in the box, if have not, write down on the line)

Adidas ☐ Nike ☐ New Balance ☐ Others _____

5. Do you know who is this brand's endorser?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Who are you big a fan of movie stars, singers or other real-life celebrities?

Justin Bieber (Adidas) ☐ Michael Jordon (Nike) ☐ Rihanna (Puma) ☐ Others (specify) _____

7. If your favourite celebrities as endorser for some brand, will you buy them?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

8. If the celebrities have some bad behaviors, like taking drugs, divorce and any other negative news, e.g. Kate Moss is a supermodel in fashion industry, she was reported that used forbidden drugs by the Daily Mirror newspaper, in this case, will you still pay attention to your idol?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

9. Did you see digital endorsement frequently in advertising?

So many ☐ Several ☐ Not many ☐

11. If using digital endorsement was used by your favourite sportswear brand, which type you would you like?

Cartoon (e.g. mickey mouse) ☐ Role of Computer game ☐

Role of movie (e.g. Avatar) ☐ Design by brand ☐ Others _____

12. Where do you see the digital endorsement?

TV ☐ Internet ☐ Magazine ☐

Leaflet ☐ Others (Specify) _____

13. If you like the fictional character, but your perception of the sportswear brand is negative due to previous bad behaviour by the brand's celebrity endorsement, would you change your perception of the sportswear brand after the new digital endorsement?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐

14. Do you prefer a real-life celebrity endorsement or a digital endorsement for your favourite sportswear brands?

Real-life celebrity endorsement ☐ Digital endorsement ☐

15. Compare with real-life celebrity endorsement, what do you think the advantages for digital endorsement?

Strong attraction ☐ Creative ☐

Individual brand character ☐ Others (specify) _____

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