

Analyzing the relationship between Brand Trust and Purchase Intention to Sports Products: the Role of Reputation, Commitment, and Brand Loyalty

Abstract

Objective: In a competitive sporting goods market, brands more trusted by consumers are usually more successful in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. The present study examines the interaction between brand trusts and purchase intention among consumers of sports products.

Methodology: The research method was descriptive correlational. The statistical population was all consumers of sports products in Tehran. Data were collected from consumers of sportswear through a standard questionnaire derived from Asad (2024) and Baek (2010). 386 participants participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings: The findings showed that brand trust has a significant effect on purchase intention, commitment, and loyalty to the brand. Brand reputation moderated the relationship between brand trust, loyalty, and brand commitment in a meaningful way. Finally, brand loyalty and brand commitment had a significant effect on the purchase intention of sportswear consumers.

Originality: This study advances the literature on brand trust and consumer behavior, particularly in the sportswear industry. Introducing brand reputation as a moderator validating its role, provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding how trust-based relationships influence consumer loyalty and purchase decisions. In general, to increase customer purchase intent in the sportswear industry, it is essential to strengthen brand trust through high quality, manage brand reputation, and build loyalty and commitment through loyalty programs and effective customer engagement. These actions will attract new customers and retain existing ones.

Keyword: Brand Commitment; Brand Reputation; Brand Trust; Consumer Behavior; Purchase Intention; Sports Consumers.

تجزیه و تحلیل رابطه بین اعتماد به برند و قصد خرید برای محصولات ورزشی: نقش شهرت، تعهد و وفاداری به برند

چکیده

هدف: در بازار رقابتی کالاهای ورزشی، برندهایی که بیشتر مورد اعتماد مصرف کنندگان هستند معمولاً در جذب مشتریان جدید و حفظ مشتریان فعلی موفق تر هستند. مطالعه حاضر به بررسی تعامل بین اعتماد برند و قصد خرید در بین مصرف کنندگان محصولات ورزشی می پردازد.

روش شناسی: روش تحقیق توصیفی همبستگی بود. جامعه آماری کلیه مصرف کنندگان محصولات ورزشی در سطح شهر تهران بودند. داده ها از طریق پرسشنامه استاندارد برگرفته از اسد (۲۰۲۴) و باک (۲۰۱۰) از مصرف کنندگان پوشاک ورزشی جمع آوری شد. ۳۸۶ شرکت کننده در مطالعه شرکت کردند. فرضیه ها با استفاده از مدل سازی معادلات ساختاری (پی.ال.اس) مورد آزمون قرار گرفتند.

یافته ها: یافته ها نشان داد که اعتماد به برند تأثیر معناداری بر قصد خرید، تعهد و وفاداری به برند دارد. شهرت برند رابطه بین اعتماد به برند، وفاداری و تعهد به برند را به روشی معنادار تعدیل کرد. در نهایت، وفاداری به برند و تعهد به برند تأثیر معنی داری بر قصد خرید مصرف کنندگان لباس ورزشی داشتند.

اصالت: این مطالعه ادبیات اعتماد به برند و رفتار مصرف کننده را به ویژه در صنعت پوشاک ورزشی ارتقا می دهد. معرفی شهرت برند به عنوان تعدیل کننده، چارچوب جامع تری برای درک اینکه چگونه روابط مبتنی بر اعتماد بر وفاداری مصرف کننده و تصمیمات خرید تأثیر می گذارد، ارائه می دهد. بطور کلی برای افزایش قصد خرید مشتریان در صنعت پوشاک ورزشی، تقویت اعتماد به برند از طریق کیفیت بالا، مدیریت شهرت برند، و ایجاد وفاداری و تعهد از طریق برنامه های وفاداری و تعامل مؤثر با مشتریان ضروری است. این اقدامات موجب جذب مشتریان جدید و حفظ مشتریان فعلی می شود.

کلیدواژه: اعتماد به برند، تعهد به برند، قصد خرید، رفتار مصرف کننده، شهرت برند، مصرف کنندگان ورزشی.

1. Introduction

In today's competitive world, brands face numerous challenges due to the variety of products and rapid changes in consumer preferences. Among these, sports products require special attention because of their significant impact on people's health and lifestyle. Understanding the factors that influence purchase intentions for sports products is crucial for brands aiming to remain competitive and retain their customers. Brand trust emerges as a key element in this process, as it significantly affects consumers' purchase decisions (Sadeghi Boroujerdi et al., 2020). Brand trust is defined as consumers' willingness to rely on a brand to achieve set goals, as well as their belief in the brand's ability to deliver the promised benefits (Dhurup et al., 2018). Studies have consistently shown that brand trust plays a pivotal role in shaping purchase intentions for sportswear brands (Sadeghi Boroujerdi et al., 2020), as it reflects consumers' confidence in the reliability and quality of the brand (Singh & Pattanayak, 2014). Cuong (2020) highlights that brand trust acts as a precursor to purchase intention, underscoring its importance in consumer behavior.

In addition to brand trust, brand reputation significantly contributes to shaping consumer perceptions. It affects their trust in the brand and, consequently, their purchase intentions (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Research by Filieri and Lin (2017) has demonstrated that brand reputation and popularity influence customers' behavioral intentions and their likelihood of repeat purchases. Furthermore, brand commitment, which signifies the emotional attachment and willingness of consumers to maintain a relationship with a brand, is a strong predictor of purchase intention (Asad, 2024). Similarly, brand loyalty, encompassing consumers' willingness to repurchase and recommend the brand to others, directly impacts their purchase intentions (Shoffian et al., 2021).

However, brand trust and its effects on purchase intentions are not solely dependent on the brand's quality and performance. Other factors, such as brand reputation, commitment, and loyalty, play crucial roles in strengthening this relationship (Asad, 2024). Understanding the interactions between these variables is vital for brands to design effective marketing strategies and improve their communication with consumers. Moreover, since brand loyalty is recognized as a positive outcome of brand trust and consumer commitment, analyzing these factors helps brands better manage their product life cycles and develop sustainable customer loyalty. Therefore this study is important for two main reasons. First, it provides insights into how brands can better engage with consumers and refine their marketing strategies. Second, it highlights how the analysis of brand trust, reputation, commitment, and loyalty can lead to improved purchase processes and increased sales of sports products. By examining the moderating role of brand reputation and the mediating roles of brand commitment and loyalty, this research aims to analyze the interactions between these factors and their collective impact on consumers' purchase intentions for sports products. Ultimately,

this understanding enables brands to perform better in competitive markets and retain their customers over the long term.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a key factor in consumer behavior and can predict actual purchase behavior. The higher the purchase intention, the higher the purchase probability. Purchase intention is the most important predictor of purchase behavior and refers to the evaluation of a person's willingness to purchase from a specific brand (Teng et al., 2007). The intention to repurchase means the intention to repeat the purchase, visit, or make multiple purchases of goods and services from a business in the long term, the main reason for which is the positive experience obtained after the purchase (Hellier et al., 2003).

Purchase intention is influenced by several factors, including brand reputation, brand trust, consumers' previous experiences, and the impact of endorsers. For instance, a strong brand reputation and popularity can enhance consumer trust, thereby positively affecting purchase intention (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001). Additionally, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, such as those from athletes, can significantly attract attention and foster positive associations among consumers (Filieri & Lin, 2017)

2.2. Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

Studies indicate a strong correlation between consumers' trust in a brand and their intention to make a purchase (Soleimani et al., 2023). Brand trust acts as a mediator and influences how consumers perceive and decide to purchase products (Mansouri et al, 2022). For example, one study found that when a sports team performs poorly, it can negatively affect trust and purchase intentions toward the sponsoring brand, especially if the brand is not well known or if the audience has little identification with the team (Yuan & Gao, 2022). Furthermore, when consumers perceive a brand as environmentally friendly, brand trust increases purchase intention. This shows that trust in a brand's environmental commitments can lead to an increase in purchase intention (Punyatoya, 2014).

The concept of trust plays the greatest role in conditions of uncertainty. In fact, trust reduces risk in situations where the buyer doubts or feels insecure because buyers know that they can rely on a reliable brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Also, brand trust is described as the buyer's willingness to depend on the brand because the buyer expects that the brand will create positive results and consequences for them (Cuong, 2020). Some researchers argue that brand trust has a positive effect on purchase

intention (Davali et al., 2023; Haji Babaei et al., 2024; Saragih et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

Hypothesis 1: Brand trust has a significant effect on the intention to purchase sports products.

2.3. Brand Trust and Brand Loyalty

Trust plays a pivotal role in fostering and maintaining relationships between exchange partners (Cardoso et al., 2022). Researchers commonly highlight three key elements of brand trust: "credibility, integrity, and benevolence" (Hussein et al., 2023). These elements significantly influence brand loyalty, both directly and indirectly. Although brand loyalty has been defined in various ways, it is generally understood as the foundation of long-term connections between brands and their customers. Customers who have trust in a brand tend to demonstrate greater loyalty compared to those who lack trust (Alnaim et al., 2022). In addition, Mansouri et al. (2022) argue that when customers trust a brand, they feel assured that it will meet their expectations without posing financial or other risks. Consequently, they not only remain loyal but also frequently act as advocates for the brand (Suhan et al., 2022). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

Hypothesis 2: Brand trust has a significant effect on the brand loyalty of sports products

2.4. Brand Trust and Brand Commitment

Brand trust reflects consumers' belief that a brand will reliably fulfill its promised value proposition (Valette-Florence & Valette-Florence, 2020). This trust plays a crucial role in guiding consumer purchasing decisions. Additionally, consumers who trust a brand perceive minimal risks when choosing to purchase it (Iqbal et al., 2023). Rachmawati et al. (2023) brand trust is not only pivotal in shaping purchasing behavior but also acts as a strong predictor of brand commitment. Arshad (2023) further highlights that a brand's ability to meet consumer expectations enhances trust and fosters brand commitment. Similarly, numerous studies emphasize that trust serves as a foundational element of brand commitment, facilitating enduring relationships between consumers and brands (Arshad, 2023; Nadeem et al., 2020; Parris & Guzman, 2023). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

Hypothesis 3: Brand trust has a significant effect on the brand commitment of sports products.

2.5. Brand Loyalty and Purchase Intention

Loyalty is the customer's attachment to a brand, which may be expressed in the form of the customer's attitude towards that brand or the intention to buy again (Welser, 2023). Brand loyalty significantly affects purchase intention in the sporting goods market. Studies show that brand loyalty can increase purchase intention by creating a strong emotional connection between consumers and the brand (Sadeghi Boroujerdi & Mansouri, 2018). For example, brand loyalty mediates the relationship between brand interaction and purchase intention, which suggests that loyal customers are more likely to purchase because of the relationship established with the brand (Goyal & Verma, 2024; Haji Babaei et al., 2024). In the field of sportswear, brand loyalty has the greatest effect on purchase intention among the components of brand equity (Sadeghi Boroujerdi & Mansouri, 2018). This shows that loyal customers are more willing to buy products from brands they trust and have a positive attitude towards (Hwang & Choi, 2013). Some researchers argue that brand loyalty has a positive effect on purchase intention (Ghafourian Shagerdi et al., 2017; Haji Babaei et al., 2024). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 4: Brand loyalty has a significant effect on the purchase intention of sports products.

2.6. Brand Commitment and Purchase Intention

Commitment signifies a lasting inclination to maintain a relationship with a brand (Suh & Han, 2003). Studies have shown that commitment to a sports team or brand increases the likelihood of purchasing goods and participating in events (Chen & Lin, 2021). Commitment and emotional attachment to a brand are strong predictors of purchase intention. These factors often precede the decision to purchase sports-related products and highlight the importance of establishing a deep connection with consumers (Santini et al., 2013). Customers who are committed to the brand exhibit the behavior of repeated purchases (Erciş et al., 2012). Some researchers argue that commitment to the brand has a positive effect on purchase intention (Gharehgoz et al., 2024; Momen et al., 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

Hypothesis 5: Brand commitment has a significant effect on the purchase intention of sports products.

2.7. The Moderating Role of Brand Reputation

Brand reputation means the public perception and evaluation of a brand and has many effects on consumer behavior and business success, so that consumers expect the brand to meet their needs; the demands that arise due to the reputation of the brand (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). For a brand to be successful and profitable in the

market, it must have a positive reputation (Han et al., 2015). A brand's reputation is a result of the brand identity and the commitments that the company makes and develops, as well as the experiences and achievements that consumers derive from those commitments. Brand reputation plays a key role in determining the quality of products and services related to that brand, especially in areas where potential customers cannot easily evaluate the quality of products and services (Tabatabaee Nasab & Mah Avar Pour, 2016). Research indicates that brand reputation influences the dynamics between brand trust and commitment, as well as between brand trust and loyalty, in distinct ways (Asad, 2024; Burhanudin, 2022; Cuong, 2020). Therefore, a strong brand reputation strengthens the relationship between brand trust and brand commitment and loyalty. Thus, the following hypotheses were designed:

Hypothesis 6: Brand reputation has a moderating role between brand trust and brand commitment.

Hypothesis 7: Brand reputation has a moderating role between brand trust and brand loyalty.

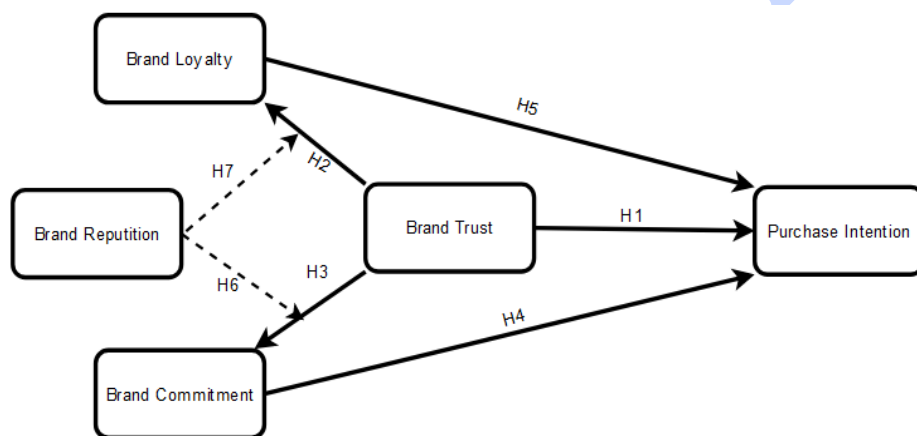


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

3. Methodology

The current research method is of descriptive-correlation type, and in terms of purpose, it is included in the category of applied studies. Also, this research is cross-sectional in terms of execution time and has a quantitative approach in terms of data collection. The statistical population of this research included all sportswear consumers in Tehran. A sportswear consumer is an individual who buys, uses, or intends to use clothing specifically designed for athletic activities. Non-probability sampling and available samples were used. For this purpose, after designing, the questionnaire was distributed among the consumers of these products in Tehran city and in the Monirieh region due

to the concentration of sports stores in this region. It is necessary to explain that along with each questionnaire, the researchers gave a gift to the participants to encourage them to complete the questionnaire, which was given to them after completing it.

In this research, the sample size was estimated based on the goals and assumptions of the study using Sample Power software. Considering the relevant assumptions (alpha 0.05, statistical power 0.9, and effect size 0.05), the final sample size was determined to be 274. Therefore, 450 questionnaires were distributed among consumers, and after screening and discarding distorted questionnaires, 386 questionnaires were analyzed. Therefore, the response rate was approximately 0.86.

The measuring instrument of this research was a questionnaire. The measurement tool of this study was a questionnaire. Given that the questionnaire was translated into Persian for the first time, to validate the questionnaire, the researchers distributed 45 copies among sports consumers, whose reliability coefficient was more than 0.7. Based on these results, the final version of the questionnaire was then distributed among consumers. For this purpose, first, the brand trust questionnaire from (Asad, 2024) included 4 questions (for example: "The brand I use meets my expectations"); brand reputation from (Asad, 2024) with 3 questions (e.g., "The brand I use has a reputation for being good"); brand loyalty from (Asad, 2024) with 5 questions (e.g., "I see myself as I consider the brand I use to be loyal"); brand commitment from (Asad, 2024) with 3 questions (for example: "I have a tendency to praise and defend this brand"); and the purchase intention questionnaire from (Baek et al., 2010) with 3 questions, which were used by the researchers with modifications (for example: "I am seriously thinking about buying this brand"). In addition, the questions related to each of the variables were regulated and valued in the form of a five-point Likert scale from (Option 1) too much to (Option 5) too little.

Data analysis was divided into two parts. In the first part, the demographic characteristics of the statistical sample were investigated using descriptive statistics. In the second part, the data were analyzed by applying inferential statistics and the partial least squares technique (PLS-SEM 4.0). In this section, various indicators were used to evaluate both the external model (measurement model) and the internal model (structural model). These indicators included two criteria, Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) for discriminant validity, and the average variance extracted for convergent validity, as well as Cronbach's alpha and the composite reliability to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items. In addition, the R Square was used to explain relationships; Stone-Geisser was also used to evaluate the predictive power of the model and the effect size of Cohen's.

4. Findings

Descriptive findings indicate that the rate of male participants was 54% and female participants was 46%. In terms of age, individuals in the age ranges of 18-25 and 26-30 years had the highest participation rates. In addition, the educational status of the

participants showed that those with a bachelor's degree had a participation rate of 34%, while diploma and sub-diploma holders had the highest participation rate at 28%. Full details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information.

Age	frequency	Percentage	Education	frequency	Percentage
Under 18	81	21%	Diploma and sub-diploma	106	28%
18-28	120	31%	Associate degree	59	15%
26-30	92	24%	Bachelor's degree	130	34%
31-35	54	14%	Master's degree	82	21%
36-40	32	8%	Phd	9	2%
40 UP	7	2%	Gender	frequency	Percentage
			male	210	54%
			female	176	46%

4.1. Evaluation of the outer model

Composite reliability shows how well the items of a construct work harmoniously with each other (Hair et al., 2019). The combined reliability of all variables above 0.7 indicates the appropriateness of the model structures in terms of reliability. Convergent validity indicates the amount of variance explained by the items of each construct (Hair et al., 2019). The average values of variance extracted in the range of 0.48 to 0.63 indicate the confirmation of convergent validity, in addition to Cronbach's alpha values in the range of 0.64 to 0.75, which show the internal homogeneity of the research variables.

Table 2. Reliability and Convergence Validity.

Latent Variable	Alpha	CR	AVE
Brand Trust	0.64	0.78	0.48
Brand Commitment	0.71	0.84	0.63
Brand Reputation	0.65	0.81	0.60
Purchase Intention	0.69	0.83	0.61
Brand Loyalty	0.75	0.84	0.52

Discriminant validity shows that the different constructs of the model are well separated from each other. In this study, two criteria, Fornell-Larcker and Heterotrait-

Monotrait (HTMT), were used to check Discriminant validity. According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the AVE value of each construct must be greater than the correlation coefficient of that construct with other constructs. As shown in Table 3, all the correlation coefficients of the constructs are lower than their corresponding AVE values. Also, in the HTMT criterion, if the value of this index is less than 0.9 for the constructs, then Discriminant validity is confirmed. According to Table 3, HTMT values for all constructs are less than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2019) ; therefore, it can be said that Discriminant validity is also confirmed.

Table 3. Mean, SD and Discriminant validity.

Latent Variable	Mean	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Brand Trust	2.41	.68	0.69	0.46	0.41	0.51	0.50
Brand Commitment	2.26	.64	0.67	0.79	0.63	0.60	0.59
Brand Reputation	2.73	.67	0.66	0.89	0.77	0.52	0.53
Purchase Intention	2.59	.67	0.74	0.85	0.78	0.78	0.62
Brand Loyalty	2.44	.64	0.74	0.82	0.76	0.84	0.72

NOTE: Upper diagonal of the matrix, Fornell and Larcker criterion; lower diagonal of the matrix, HTMT

4.2. Evaluation of the inner model

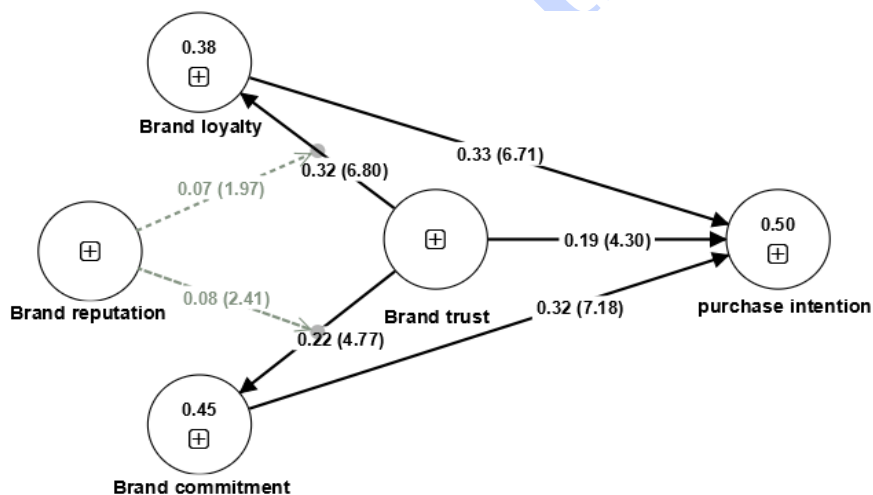


Figure 2. The Output of SEM Includes Standard Values and T-Values.

The R², indicates the explanatory power of exogenous variables over endogenous variables. According to R² values for brand commitment constructs (0.45), purchase

intention (0.50), and brand loyalty (0.38), it can be said that the independent variables explained a significant amount of changes in the dependent variable, and the model is a suitable model in terms of explanatory power.

Considering the Q^2 values that were calculated in the range of 0.19 to 0.30 for the variables of brand commitment, brand loyalty, and purchase intention, it can be concluded that the independent variables predict the dependent variables well.

Table 4. The R^2 and Q^2 .

Latent Variable	R2	R2 adjusted	Q2
Brand Commitment	0.45	0.45	0.27
Purchase Intention	0.50	0.49	0.30
Brand Loyalty	0.38	0.38	0.19

The effect size, or f^2 , is a measure that shows how much the independent variable affects the dependent variable. According to the results of Table 5, all the effect sizes were positive. The range of effect size indicates that the pathways have a weak to medium effect size.

Table 5. Effect size.

Latent Variable	Brand Commitment	Purchase Intention	Brand Loyalty
Brand Trust	0.07	0.05	0.13
Brand Commitment		0.13	
Brand Loyalty		0.13	

The results of Table 6 showed that all the hypotheses were confirmed according to alpha 0.05. The t- Value above 1.96 and the significance level less than 0.05 statistically confirmed the hypotheses. In addition, the moderating variable of brand reputation had a positive role in the relationship between brand trust and brand commitment ($\beta = 0.08$). Also, brand reputation positively moderated the relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.07$). Finally, the fit index of the SRMR model was equal to 0.1, indicating the fit of the final research model. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Evaluation of Research Assumptions and Model Fit Index.

Path Model	β	SD	T	Sig	CI %	
					2.5%	97.5%
H1: Brand Trust \rightarrow Purchase Intention	.19	.05	4.30	.001	.11	.29
H2: Brand Trust \rightarrow Brand Loyalty	.32	.05	6.8	.001	.24	.42
H3: Brand Trust \rightarrow Brand Commitment	.22	.05	4.77	.001	.13	.31

H4: Brand Commitment → Purchase Intention	.32	.04	7.18	.001	.23	.41
H5: Brand Loyalty → Purchase Intention	.33	.05	6.71	.001	.23	.43
H6: Brand Reputation × Brand Trust → Brand Commitment	.08	.03	2.41	.02	.01	.14
H7: Brand Reputation × Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty	.07	.03	1.97	.05	0.1	.13
SRMR			.10			

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study explored the relationship between brand trust and purchase intention for sports products, focusing on the roles of reputation, commitment, and brand loyalty among physical education students. The findings supported the proposed hypotheses and highlighted the positive influence of brand reputation on the connections between brand trust, commitment, and loyalty. The first hypothesis confirmed that brand trust significantly and positively impacts consumers' intentions to buy sports products. This finding illustrates that when consumers have confidence in sports brands, they are more inclined to purchase those brands' products. Prior research has revealed that brand trust alleviates consumer anxiety during purchases, particularly in scenarios involving high perceived risk (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). This issue is particularly important in the market for sports products, where consumers are looking for brands with reliable credibility. Brand trust assures consumers that the target brand meets their expectations and keeps them away from possible risks (Cuong, 2020). In this regard, Punyatoya (2014) states that when consumers consider the brand to be environmentally friendly, they have more trust in it, and this trust leads to an increase in purchase intention. This indicates that non-financial and moral factors also influence brand trust and willingness to buy. Additionally, Yuan and Gao (2022) have shown that the performance of sports brands and their relationship with sports teams can affect brand trust and purchase intention. Finally, it can be said that creating clear and continuous communication with customers through social media and other communication channels can help increase trust in the brand. Moreover, sports brands should actively respond to the needs and demands of active customers and take their feedback seriously. In addition, consumers of sports products are usually looking for quality and performance. Therefore, brands that guarantee the high quality of their products and provide a good user experience for customers can build more trust, as these actions can help increase consumer loyalty and purchase intention.

The second hypothesis showed that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty among sports product consumers. Brand trust plays an important role in enhancing consumer loyalty (Sadeghi Boroujerdi et al., 2020), and consumers who trust a brand are more likely to remain loyal and recommend the brand to others because of their confidence in the brand's quality and services (Alnaim et al., 2022). In this regard, Mansouri et al. (2022) state that trust in the brand leads to a reduction in the feeling of financial risks and other concerns related to the purchase, and this

strengthens consumer loyalty. This loyalty may be expressed in the form of repeated purchases, recommending the brand to others, and even defending the brand against competitors (Suhan et al., 2022). In addition, Han et al. (2015) pointed out that consumers who trust the brand are more loyal to it and play an informal role as brand spokespersons, recommending the brand to others and sharing their positive experiences. Building and strengthening brand trust can improve customer loyalty. Therefore, sports brand managers should focus more on transparency, accountability, and meeting customer expectations because these factors help to create a reliable image of the brand, which ultimately increases consumer loyalty to the target brand and improves market share.

The results of the third hypothesis showed that brand trust has a positive and significant effect on brand commitment among consumers of sports products. The results of this finding were in line with previous studies (Arshad, 2023; Atulkar, 2020; Nadeem et al., 2020; Parris & Guzman, 2023). studies by Atulkar (2020); and Nadeem et al. (2020) show that consumer trust in the brand is recognized as an important prerequisite for brand commitment and can lead to long-term relationships between consumers and brands. In addition, trust in the brand creates confidence in purchasing decisions for consumers (Iqbal et al., 2023), and it also helps to increase their commitment to the brand (Rachmawati et al., 2023). Apart from this, market norms and consumer expectations are also strongly influenced by this trust. If brands are able to meet the expectations of their consumers, they can strengthen trust and create a deeper and more lasting commitment between themselves and their customers. In other words, brand trust plays an important role in forming and establishing an effective and sustainable relationship between consumers and brands. Therefore, brands should focus on trust-building strategies to maximize customer satisfaction and strengthen their loyalty and commitment. These strategies can include improving the customer experience, providing high-quality products and services, and creating transparency in brand communications with consumers.

The fourth hypothesis showed that brand loyalty has a positive and significant effect on consumers' intention to purchase sports products; brand loyalty is one of the key factors in increasing purchase intention among consumers. In this regard, Haji Babaei et al. (2024) pointed out that customers who trust and are loyal to a brand are more likely to buy the products of that brand. This loyalty acts as a mediator and strengthens the emotional connection between the customer and the brand, which, in turn, has a positive effect on the customer's decision to repurchase. Also, Sadeghi Boroujerdi and Mansouri (2018) and Hwang and Choi (2013) have shown that brand loyalty, through positive communication and continuous experiences, can play an important role in customers' willingness to buy sports products. Therefore, it can be said that brands or sports companies can strengthen their loyalty by focusing on providing quality products, positive shopping experiences, and establishing emotional connections with customers. Creating loyalty programs and offering special discounts and benefits to loyal customers can increase the willingness to buy again and prevent

customers from switching brands (Goyal & Verma, 2024). By establishing this stable relationship, sports brands can create loyal and long-term customers who continuously trust the brand and choose its products.

The fifth hypothesis showed that brand commitment has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention among consumers of sports products. This finding was in agreement with other research (Gharehgoz et al., 2024; Momen et al., 2015). Commitment to the brand, as one of the important factors in creating stable relationships between the brand and the consumer, has a significant effect on increasing purchase intention. In this regard, Suh and Han (2003) consider brand commitment to be one of the factors that play a key role in consumers' loyalty and purchase intention. On the other hand, Chen and Lin (2021) show that commitment to a sports team or brand can increase the probability of purchasing goods and attending events. These findings demonstrate the importance of emotional and psychological brand commitment in consumers' purchase decisions. Santini et al. (2013) also emphasize that emotional attachment to a brand is a strong predictor of purchase intention. Brand-committed consumers not only make repeat purchases but are also more likely to participate in brand-related events. This issue becomes more important in sports markets that usually depend on the emotions and loyalty of fans. In addition, Momen et al. (2015) and Gharehgoz et al. (2024) also argue that commitment to the brand is one of the important factors in purchasing decisions, and this commitment can directly affect purchase intention. Therefore, brands active in the field of sports can strengthen their commitment to the brand by creating emotional connections and continuous interaction with customers, and by providing unique experiences and distinctive services, they can increase trust and commitment to the brand, lead to frequent purchases, and become long-term loyal customers.

The sixth hypothesis showed that brand reputation plays a positive moderating role between brand trust and brand commitment. This hypothesis was consistent with some of Asad (2024) findings. In this regard, (Asad, 2024) pointed out that brand reputation can act as a moderating factor between trust and brand commitment. In fact, when the brand has a high reputation, it can help strengthen the relationship between trust and brand commitment among sports consumers. Brand trust is the consumer's belief in the brand's quality and reliability Sadeghi Boroujerdi et al. (2020), and brand commitment indicates the consumer's desire to continue interacting with that brand. Brand reputation not only affects the perception of quality among consumers but also affects their expectations regarding brand performance. In competitive domains, customers trust brands with positive reputations more, and this trust, in turn, leads to higher commitment and loyalty (Cuong, 2020). Overall, the research results show that brand reputation affects brand trust and commitment and positively contributes to this relationship. Consumers who trust brands with a positive reputation show more willingness to commit to that brand, and this commitment can lead to loyalty and positive behaviors (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Therefore, brands should make the necessary investments to maintain and develop their brand reputation in order to

maximize consumer trust and commitment. In addition, for brands to strengthen communication with consumers, establishing continuous and effective communication with them will help improve brand reputation. Managers of sports brands or companies can collect customers' points of view and experiences through customer feedback and social interactions to improve their services and products. Additionally, the continuous activity of brand managers or companies in social responsibility activities will strengthen and develop the brand's reputation within society.

The seventh hypothesis showed that brand reputation has a positive moderating role between brand trust and brand loyalty. In today's world, where markets are competitive and full of many options, customers tend to prefer brands that have a high reputation and are reliable Asad (2024). Therefore, when a brand has a good reputation, consumers are likely to view it with more trust, and this trust will help increase loyalty among consumers. Studies show that brand reputation can act as a facilitator in the formation of brand trust and thus loyalty to it (Asad, 2024; Cuong, 2020). Brand reputation also affects consumers' perceptions and expectations of the shopping experience and product quality, and this factor can play a key role in creating a long-term and loyal relationship between the customer and the brand (Burhanudin, 2022). Overall, this hypothesis showed that brand reputation affects the relationship between brand trust and brand loyalty. Therefore, brands that have a good reputation are able to gain customers' trust and help increase loyalty and positive interactions with the brand (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). Enhancing brand reputation can be considered an effective strategy to increase customer loyalty. Thus, brand managers and sports companies are encouraged to make necessary investments in advertising and marketing activities in order to develop and improve their brand reputation and strengthen the positive image of the brand in the minds of customers. These activities include creating positive relationships with customers, effective advertising, and customer relationship management. Maintaining positive and continuous relationships with customers and responding to their needs and desires can also lead to an increase in brand reputation.

5.1. Practical implications

Sports companies or businesses should build brand trust by creating transparency in advertising, offering quality products, and providing strong customer service to increase the likelihood of customers buying.

In addition, to convert customers into loyal customers, companies should provide a positive and consistent experience at all stages of brand interaction. Shipping products on time, responding to complaints and questions, and creating intimate and personalized communications can increase the sense of trust in the brand. When customers feel that the brand cares about their needs and wants, they are more likely to return and make repeat purchases.

Customer commitment to a brand is formed when there is a lasting sense of trust in the brand's products and services. Companies should reinforce this trust by sending positive and trust-building messages on social media. Customer commitment can also be increased with special offers, such as exclusive discounts or membership in a customer club.

Furthermore, when customers commit to a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchases. To increase this commitment, businesses can strengthen the sense of belonging to the brand in customers by holding promotional campaigns and exclusive events. Additionally, offering special membership programs, such as free shipping, can increase the sense of commitment and, consequently, the intention to purchase.

Brands should offer incentive programs, such as points for repeat purchases and exclusive discounts, to retain loyal customers. Creating a sense of belonging through personalized messages, acknowledging loyal customers, and using storytelling about the brand can also turn customer loyalty into sustainable purchase intention. When a customer feels valued by the brand, they will make more purchases.

Brand reputation plays an important role in strengthening customer trust and commitment. Companies should focus on building a positive brand image through social activities, supporting the environment, and offering innovative products. Partnering with influential people (influencers), publishing positive customer reviews in the media, and offering prestigious awards to the brand can also strengthen reputation and increase its impact on customer commitment.

To turn customers into loyal customers, companies need to build brand reputation in addition to building trust. This can be achieved by managing and responding quickly to negative feedback and by creating a consistent brand image across all communication channels (such as social media, advertising, and websites). The higher the brand reputation, the more confident customers will be in expressing their loyalty to the brand, and this loyalty will play a key role in their future purchasing decisions.

Finally, limitations and suggestions for future researchers are presented. Among other points: 1) this study focused exclusively on sportswear consumers; other researchers could examine different consumer communities and compare their findings with this study; 2) brand reputation was used as a moderating variable in this research; other researchers might consider using it as a mediating variable; and 3) it is suggested that future researchers investigate the roles of trust and brand reputation in verbal recommendations among consumers.

Reference

1. Alnaim, A. F., Sobaih, A. E. E., & Elshaer, I. A. (2022). Measuring the Mediating Roles of E-Trust and E-Satisfaction in the Relationship between E-Service Quality and E-Loyalty: A Structural Modeling Approach. *Mathematics*, 10(13), 2328.
2. Arshad, F. N. (2023). Building Lasting Connections: Cultivating Brand loyalty through Relationship and Commitment. *iRASD Journal of Management*, 5(3), 116-135.

3. Asad, S. (2024). The Effect of Social Media Influencers on Brand Trust and the Moderating Role of. *Market Forces*, 19 (1), 01, 28.
4. Atulkar, S. (2020). Brand trust and brand loyalty in mall shoppers. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 38(5), 559-572.
5. Baek, T. H., Kim, J., & Yu, J. H. (2010). The differential roles of brand credibility and brand prestige in consumer brand choice. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(7), 662-678.
6. Burhanudin, B. (2022). Examining the effect of service value and reputation on customer loyalty with trust and electronic word of mouth as mediation. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen*, 20(3), 514-527.
7. Cardoso, A., Gabriel, M., Figueiredo, J., Oliveira, I., Rêgo, R., Silva, R., . . . Meirinhos, G. (2022). Trust and loyalty in building the brand relationship with the customer: empirical analysis in a retail chain in northern Brazil. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 8(3), 109.
8. Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of marketing*, 65(2), 81-93.
9. Chen, C.-Y., & Lin, Y.-H. (2021). Social entrepreneurship in professional sports: antecedents and outcomes from the consumer perspective. *Sustainability*, 13(3), 1045.
10. Cuong, D. T. (2020). The role of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between brand satisfaction and purchase intention. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(6), 14726-14735.
11. Delgado-Ballester, E., & Munuera-Alemán, J. L. (2001). Brand trust in the context of consumer loyalty. *European Journal of marketing*, 35(11/12), 1238-1258.
12. Dhurup, M., Van Schalkwyk, P., & Tsautse, V. J. (2018). The relationship between brand identification, brand trust, brand commitment and brand loyalty: Evidence from supermarket store food brands. *International Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 10(2), 166-182.
13. Erciş, A., Ünal, S., Candan, F. B., & Yıldırım, H. (2012). The effect of brand satisfaction, trust and brand commitment on loyalty and repurchase intentions. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 58, 1395-1404.
14. Ferdinand, M., & Selamat, F. (2020). Brand personality to predict brand trust, brand attachment and purchase intention: study on cosmetic products in Jakarta. Tarumanagara International Conference on the Applications of Social Sciences and Humanities (TICASH 2019),
15. Filieri, R., & Lin, Z. (2017). The role of aesthetic, cultural, utilitarian and branding factors in young Chinese consumers' repurchase intention of smartphone brands. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 67, 139-150.
16. Ghafourian Shagerdi, A., Daneshmand, B., & Behboodi, O. (2017). The impact of social networks marketing toward purchase intention and brand loyalty. *New Marketing Research Journal*, 7(3), 175-190. [in Persian]
17. Gharehgoz, Z. O., Faryabi, M., & Fatemi, F. (2024). Effective Factors on Brand Fidelity with the mediating Role of Customer Commitment. *Journal of Brand Management*, 11(1), 59-102. [in Persian]
18. Goyal, A., & Verma, P. (2024). The relationship between brand engagement, brand loyalty, overall brand equity and purchase intention. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 32(1), 65-79.

19. Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European business review*, 31(1), 2-24.
20. Haji Babaei, H., Nursharq, F., & Qobadi Lemuki, T. (2024). Modeling of Z Gen purchase intention. *Iran Rubber Industry*, 28(112), 89-107. [in Persian]
21. Han, S. H., Nguyen, B., & Lee, T. J. (2015). Consumer-based chain restaurant brand equity, brand reputation, and brand trust. . *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, (50), 84-93.
22. Hellier, P. K., Geursen, G. M., Carr, R. A., & Rickard, J. A. (2003). Customer repurchase intention: A general structural equation model. *European Journal of marketing*, 37(11/12), 1762-1800.
23. Hussein, A. S., Sumiati, S., Hapsari, R., & Abu Bakar, J. (2023). Bank 4.0 experiential quality and customer loyalty: a serial mediating role of customer trust and engagement. *The TQM Journal*, 35(7), 1706-1721.
24. Hwang, C. S., & Choi, M. H. (2013). The influence of consumers' sports involvement on their attitudes to sports sponsorship of sportswear, brand equity, and purchase intention. *The Research Journal of the Costume Culture*, 21(6), 921-937.
25. Iqbal, A., Anwar, A., Sufyan, M., Salam, A., & Arsalan, M. (2023). Unveiling The Impact Of Brand Commitment As A Moderator In The Relationship Between Brand Trust And Brand Loyalty: Insights From Pakistan's Mobile Phone Industry. . *Journal of Positive School Psychology*,, 737-757.
26. Mansouri, H., Boroujerdi, S. S., & Husin, M. M. (2022). The influence of sellers' ethical behaviour on customer's loyalty, satisfaction and trust. *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC*, 26(2), 267-283.
27. Momen, M., Gharacheh, M., & Ghanbarzade, M. R. (2015). The Role of Affective Commitment and Continuance Commitment on Customer Perception of the Intention to Repurchase. *Journal of Business Management Perspective*, 14(24), 87-101. [in Persian]
28. Nadeem, W., Khani, A. H., Schultz, C. D., Adam, N. A., Attar, R. W., & Hajli, N. (2020). How social presence drives commitment and loyalty with online brand communities? the role of social commerce trust. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 55, 102136.
29. Parris, D. L., & Guzman, F. (2023). Evolving brand boundaries and expectations: looking back on brand equity, brand loyalty, and brand image research to move forward. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 32(2), 191-234.
30. Punyatoya, P. (2014). Linking environmental awareness and perceived brand eco-friendliness to brand trust and purchase intention. *Global Business Review*, 15(2), 279-289.
31. Rachmawati, A., Sutrisno, S., & Saiful, S. (2023). The Effect Of Brand Trust, Brand Identification And Brand Commitment On Brand Loyalty Of Shoes Sports. *Jurnal Ekonomi*, 12(01), 96-102.
32. Razak, N. S. A., Marimuthu, M., Omar, A., & Mamat, M. (2014). Trust and repurchase intention on online tourism services among Malaysian consumers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 130, 577-582.
33. Sadeghi Boroujerdi, S., & Mansouri, H. (2018). Dimensions model detemination of particular Brand equity based on components of sports apparel consumer behavior. *Sport Management and Development*, 7(2), 37-51. [in Persian]

34. Sadeghi Boroujerdi, S., Md Husin, M., Mansouri, H., & Alavi, A. (2020). Crafting a successful seller-customer relationship for sports product: AHP fuzzy approach. *New Approaches in Exercise Physiology*, 2(3), 53-78.
35. Safa, N. S., & Von Solms, R. (2016). Customers repurchase intention formation in e-commerce. *South African Journal of Information Management*, 18(1), 1-9.
36. Santini, F. d. O., Wagner, J., & Clécio, F. (2013). Background of Purchase Intention of Brazilian Soccer Club Fans. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research Marketing*, 7(1), 1-11.
37. Saragih, M. G., Surya, E. D., Rahayu, S., Harianto, H., Harahap, R., & Widodo, S. (2019). Analysis of brand experience and brand satisfaction with brand loyalty through brand trust as a variable mediation. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, [in Persian]
38. Shekhalizadeh, M., & Angori, P. (2023). The effect of brand equity on the perceived value and repurchase intention of customers of Majid brand sports products. *Journal of Innovation in Sports Management*, 3(1), 13-23. [in Persian]
39. Shoffian, N. S. B. M., Salim, N. S. B. M., Razali, N. I. B., Saifu, P. Z. I. B. M., Bakar, S. A. B. A., Rossedi, S. N. A. B., . . . Krishnan, I. A. (2021). Influence of Branding Loyalty on Consumer Sportswear: A Case Study on Adidas. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 6(11), 454-463.
40. Singh, P. K., & Pattanayak, J. (2014). The impact of brand loyalty on consumers' sportswear brand purchase. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 11(4), 40.
41. Soleimani, A., Kazemi, Z., Aghaei, M., & Ghorbani, Z. (2023). The role of brand trust and brand attitude in the impact of social media marketing on purchase intention. *Human Information Interaction*, 10(3), 0-0. [in Persian]
42. Suh, B., & Han, I. (2003). The impact of customer trust and perception of security control on the acceptance of electronic commerce. *International Journal of electronic commerce*, 7(3), 135-161.
43. Suhan, M., Nayak, S., Nayak, R., Spulbar, C., Vidya Bai, G., Birau, R., . . . Stanciu, C. V. (2022). Exploring the sustainable effect of mediational role of brand commitment and brand trust on brand loyalty: an empirical study. *Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 35(1), 6422-6444.
44. Tabatabaee Nasab, S. M., & Mah Avar Pour, F. (2016). Investigating the Interactions between Four Affecting Factors on Brand Reputation and Their Roles on Word of Mouth Advertising. *Quarterly Journal of Brand Management*, 3(2), 37-64. [in Persian]
45. Teng, L., Laroche, M., & Zhu, H. (2007). The effects of multiple-ads and multiple-brands on consumer attitude and purchase behavior. *Journal of consumer marketing*, 24(1), 27-35.
46. Teo, L. X., Leng, H. K., & Phua, Y. X. P. (2019). Marketing on Instagram: Social influence and image quality on perception of quality and purchase intention. *International journal of sports marketing and sponsorship*, 20(2), 321-332.
47. Valette-Florence, R., & Valette-Florence, P. (2020). Effects of emotions and brand personality on consumer commitment, via the mediating effects of brand trust and attachment. *Recherche et Applications en Marketing (English Edition)*, 35(1), 84-110.
48. Veloutsou, C., & Moutinho, L. (2009). Brand relationships through brand reputation and brand tribalism. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(3), 314-322.

49. Welser, C. (2023). *From corporate social responsibility to brand activism and the effect on customer loyalty: a structural equation modelling approach* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University)].
50. Yuan, S., & Gao, Y. (2022). When sports sponsorship incurs brand risk: the roles of team performance, brand familiarity and team identification. *International journal of sports marketing and sponsorship*, 23(4), 767-784.

Article in Press