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# Sports Business Journal

Scientific Quarterly Journal  
of **Alzahra University**

Winter 2023

Vol. 4, Issue. 1, Serial Number 9

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All submissions must include a structured abstract, following the format outlined below. These four sub-headings and their accompanying explanations must always be included:

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**Note that:**

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**References examples:****Journal article**

Memari, Z., Rafei Boldaji, S., & Pouyandekia, M. (2021). How is the Football Schools Franchise Using a Valuable Approach to Revenue-Generating Capacity in Iranian Football Clubs? *Sports Business Journal*, 1(1), 31-44. <https://doi.org/10.22051/sbj.2021.36864.1008>

**Book**

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. SAGE Publications. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0TI8Ugvy2Z4C>

**Book chapter**

Blase, K., Van Dyke, M., Fixsen, D. L., & Bailey, F. (2012). Implementation science: Key concepts, themes, and evidence for practitioners in educational psychology. In *Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education* (pp. 13-34). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139013949.004>

**Conference proceeding**

Schreiner, R., Daniel, J. o., Junginger, C., Hauser, T., & Hoener, O. (2017, 31 May-2 June). *Soccer coaches' education within the German tid program: perceptions of the quality and need for development*. World Conference on Science and Soccer - Rennes, France. [https://wcss-rennes2017.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/Proceedings\\_WCSS\\_17.pdf](https://wcss-rennes2017.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/Proceedings_WCSS_17.pdf)

**Dissertation**

Kim, J. (2008). *An Analysis of Talent Development in Korean and German Football* [Seoul National University]. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-Analysis-of-Talent-Development-in-Korean-and-Kim/5fff3eeafe4f5a4465bc1fbb0714ff7367392d55>



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Grohmann, K. (2014, July 14). Investment, youth planning are secret of Germany success. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-soccer-world-ger-success/investment-youth-planning-are-secret-of-germany-success-idUSKBN0FJ1K920140714>

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Amigone, M. (2015, June 23). Dutch Soccer Coach Jan Pruijn Shares Secrets from His Years Training Youth Players. *ACIS Educational Tours*. <https://acis.com/blog/dutch-soccer-coach-jan-pruijn-shares-secrets-from-his-years-training-youth-players/>

### Report

Chesler, D. (2013). *2001-2013 The Evolution of Youth Academy Programs* (Technical Director Course - International Academy Case Study, November, Issue. <http://resources.usoccer.com/n7v8b8j3/cds/Email/131106-TECHNICAL-SUMMARY-ICS-GERMANY-Chesler-v.1.pdf>

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- **Equations.** If you are submitting your manuscript as a Word document, please ensure that equations are editable.



## Editor-in-Chief Note

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While we published the first **Sports Business Journal** issue, the Journal has found its position among researchers and reviewers and has been accepted worldwide. Although most visitors to its articles are from other countries, its monthly visits exceed 4,000, half of which are from researchers abroad and five continents. By complying with the necessary form and content standards, we can be more successful in increasing the visibility of the articles and be indexed in more specialized databases. The keywords cloud of the articles also shows that we are still required to comply with the Journal's scope, and we have been able to maintain its specialized position. With the continuous cooperation of dear colleagues and authors, we will be more successful in how we have taken. Once again, we thank the esteemed vice president for research at **Alzahra University** and our dear colleagues in this field for their support and guidance. We are also grateful to the honourable managers of the Iranian Journals' Commission of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and we hope that they will continue to support the new English language Journals and continue their technical and material support for publishing such publications until the results are achieved. Also, we hope to continue receiving valuable specialized articles towards the publication of technical articles and other activities for the growth of the field and the improvement of the level of writing articles in English.

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## Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Prestige in the Iranian National Olympic Committee

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Today, sports organizations have recognized the significance of their brand concerning their products and services. This study investigated the association between integrated marketing communications and brand prestige in the national olympic committee of Iran.

**Methodology:** The research utilized a descriptive-correlational approach, employing structural equation modeling as the research method. The participants comprised all the 140 managers and specialists affiliated with the national olympic committee. Questionnaires on integrated marketing communication from Lee and Park (2007) and brand prestige questionnaires from Beak et al. (2010) were employed to collect data. SPSS<sub>26</sub> and AMOS<sub>24</sub> software were used to analyze data.

**Findings:** The findings showed a significant positive relationship between integrated marketing communications and its influence on brand prestige. The path analysis results indicated that the effectiveness of individual communication in delivering a consistent message and creating a favorable impression, as well as strengthening communication with recent customers, had a considerable positive impact on the brand prestige of the national olympic committee. The coefficient of dimensions showed 33.6% of the total variance in brand prestige changes. The structural equation model results further indicated that integrated marketing communications had a significant positive effect on the brand prestige of the national olympic committee.

**Originality:** Sports organizations must employ diverse and innovative communication methods to nurture customer relationships in today's evolving landscape. A well-designed marketing communication program should assist organizations in achieving this objective by reinforcing customer engagement through practical communication activities.

### Keywords

Customer  
Customer Satisfaction  
Structural Equation  
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## 1. Introduction

Today, numerous organizations have recognized that one of their most valuable assets is the brand associated with their products and services. Extensive research has emphasized that the development of a strong brand is crucial for attaining competitive advantage and ensuring long-term survival in the market (Khosravizadeh et al., 2009; Kiani & Nazari, 2022; Mazloomi Soveini, 2022; Nazari et al., 2021). A powerful brand generates value for customers and the organization by establishing a strong emotional connection and fostering trust. Among the various attributes of a brand, brand prestige holds significant importance. Distinction refers to the perception of individuals whose opinions are highly regarded, reflecting their respect, admiration, and remembrance of a particular brand (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Brands perceived as prestigious have a distinct allure and command a certain level of consumer admiration (Bahrami et al., 2021; Saatchian et al., 2021).

Stokburger-Sauer et al. (2012) have classified brands based on their prestige into three types: luxury, premium, and luxury-premium. Luxury brands represent the epitome of exclusivity, often associated with high prices and catering to affluent customer segments. These brands create a sense of aspiration and indulgence, appealing to consumers seeking a high-end experience. On the other hand, premium brands exhibit luxury and offer elevated levels of value and quality, albeit subject to individual interpretations. They balance price and perceived value, attracting customers who appreciate superior offerings. Luxury-premium brands combine elements of both luxury and premium, delivering exceptional quality and performance while maintaining an aura of exclusivity (He et al., 2012). Brand prestige encompasses various aspects, including positive emotions, happiness, knowledge, awareness, and comparing all brands with the one the customer uses (Hwang & Han, 2014). Consumers with a high perception of brand prestige find the company's brand highly attractive, leading to increased customer preference (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Hadavi et al., 2016; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). The positive associations and emotional connections associated with a prestigious brand contribute to customer loyalty and advocacy.

Marketing researchers have concluded that brands with a separate and prestigious identity are more appealing and have a more substantial impact (He et al., 2012; Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012). Peak-performing organizations understand the importance of creating and maintaining a strong brand image and employ an integrated marketing communications system that effectively communicates with intermediaries, customers, and various population segments. Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is a method that ensures coherence and accuracy across all promotional activities, aiming to deliver an integrated and consistent message focused on customers. IMC involves the strategic combination of multiple communication tools, such as advertising, public relations, sales, and sales promotion, to maximize the impact of marketing communications (Abraham & Lodish, 1993; Lion & Azzuhri, 2012). It represents a comprehensive communication program that aligns various communication activities to deliver a unified message targeted toward customers.

IMC is both a concept and a process. It serves as a strategic business process encompassing the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of brands that align with the perspectives of consumers, external audiences, and internal stakeholders (Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). By integrating marketing communications, organizations can ensure consistency and synergy in their brand messaging, enhancing the overall effectiveness of their marketing efforts. Furthermore, IMC has emerged as a critical aspect of organizational success, emphasizing the importance of achieving an integrated marketing process and effectively communicating with the brand and customers (Porcu et al., 2019). IMC contributes to meaningful customer relationships, value creation, and the development of substantial brand equity (Pickton & Broderick, 2012). It provides a framework for organizations to communicate their brand values, benefits, and unique selling propositions to the target market in a cohesive and impactful manner.

Despite the acknowledged significance of IMC, empirical evidence supporting the direct link between IMC and brand outcomes is somewhat limited (Kliatchko, 2005; Lane Keller, 2001; Reid, 2005). However, existing research suggests that IMC positively influences brand equity, consumer perceptions, and brand performance (Duncan & Moriarty, 2006). An effective IMC strategy helps organizations establish a distinctive brand identity, build brand awareness, and foster positive brand associations among consumers. In sports marketing, national Olympic committees face unique challenges in generating revenue and establishing a fantastic brand image (Tekli et al., 2017). These committees, including the Iranian National Olympic Committee (INOC), strive to develop a strong brand identity that reflects the nation's sporting heritage, values, and aspirations (Izadparast et al., 2019; Ramezani, 2016; Tekli et al., 2017). Understanding the relationship between IMC and the brand prestige of such committees can provide valuable insights for sports marketing research and contribute to the development of effective strategies for promoting national sports brands (Khosravizadeh et al., 2009; Kiani & Nazari, 2022; Mazloomi Soveini, 2022; Nazari et al., 2021). The main objective of this study is to explore the relationship between integrated marketing communications (IMC) and the brand prestige of the Iranian National Olympic Committee (INOC).

By examining how IMC strategies impact the perception of brand prestige, this research aims to shed light on the role of marketing communications in shaping the image and reputation of INOC and contributing to its overall brand effectiveness, satisfaction, and loyalty. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights and practical implications for sports organizations and marketers seeking to enhance their brand image and leverage IMC strategies for improved brand performance. Therefore, the main research question is: What is the relationship between integrated marketing communications and the brand prestige of the Iranian National Olympic Committee (INOC)?

## **2. Methodology**

The research methodology employed a descriptive correlational approach aligned with the research objectives. The data collection method utilized was field research. Field research is a data collection method that gathers information directly from the real-world setting where the phenomenon of interest occurs. It typically involves researchers going to the

field, such as a specific location or community, to observe and interact with participants. This approach allows researchers to gather firsthand data, conduct interviews, administer surveys, or engage in participant observation to obtain rich contextual information. Field research is precious for studying complex social phenomena, exploring cultural practices, or investigating specific environments and their impact on behavior. It allows researchers to collect data in real time, gaining insights that might be missed in other research settings (Amiri & Norouzi Seyed Hossini, 2013). The statistical population consisted of all managers and experts within the National Olympic Committee, with a purposive sampling approach resulting in a sample size of 140 employees.

This study utilized two questionnaires to measure key constructs: integrated marketing communication and brand prestige. Lee and Park (2007) developed the first integrated marketing communication questionnaire. A rigorous translation process was followed to ensure its suitability for the study's context and participants. The initial step involved selecting a qualified translator proficient in the original language (English) and the target language (Persian). The translator was provided with the questionnaire developed by Lee and Park (2007) and tasked with translating it into Persian while maintaining the original meaning and intent of the questions. Once the translation was completed, the Persian version of the integrated marketing communication questionnaire was given to another independent translator fluent in Persian and English. This translator was unaware of the original questionnaire's content and was responsible for back-translating the Persian version into English. The back-translated performance was then compared to the initial questionnaire developed by Lee and Park (2007) to identify discrepancies or inconsistencies. Any differences were carefully examined and resolved through discussions involving translators and the research team, ensuring the accurate representation of the original questionnaire's concepts and items.

Subsequently, a final translation was conducted by a third translator proficient in English and Persian. This definitive translation aimed to capture any remaining nuances or subtle language differences that may have been missed in the previous translation iterations. After the iterative translation process and subsequent editing, the resulting version of the integrated marketing communication questionnaire was considered the finalized translated version. This version was used in the successive stages of the research to measure participants' perceptions and attitudes towards integrated marketing communication. The second questionnaire utilized in this study was the brand prestige questionnaire developed by (Baek et al., 2010). Similar to the integrated marketing communication questionnaire, a meticulous translation process was employed to ensure accurate and reliable measurement. The translation process for the brand prestige questionnaire followed the same steps described earlier. The questionnaire was initially translated into Persian by a qualified translator and then back-translated into English by a separate translator who was fluent in both languages. Discrepancies between the back-translated version and the original questionnaire were carefully examined and resolved through collaborative discussions. Finally, a third translator proficient in both languages conducted a final translation, capturing any remaining nuances or subtleties.

After the translation process and subsequent editing, the resulting version of the brand prestige questionnaire was deemed the finalized translated version. The study utilized this



version to assess participants' perceptions of brand prestige. By rigorously following a systematic translation process for both questionnaires, this study ensured the accurate representation of the original concepts and items in the target language. This approach enhanced the reliability and validity of the measurements and facilitated meaningful data collection and analysis within the study's context. By utilizing this questionnaire, researchers can gain insights into how the National Olympic Committee's brand is perceived by its stakeholders, including managers, experts, and employees. The results from the brand prestige questionnaire provide a valuable understanding of the organization's brand equity and reputation, which are crucial factors for establishing a strong and favorable brand image in the eyes of the target audience. The questionnaires underwent rigorous examination by relevant professors to ensure face and content validity. The tool's reliability was also assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as shown in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Internal reliability coefficient of research questionnaires (Cronbach's alpha).

Variables	Components	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Integrated Marketing Communications ( $\alpha=0.883$ )	Single communication for fixed message and image	5	0.739
	Different communication with different customer groups	5	0.855
	Database-based communication for appropriate results	4	0.834
	Strengthen communication with existing customers	4	0.755
Brand prestige	-	7	0.753

The research data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and frequency, with the assistance of SPSS/V 26 software. The AMOS/V 24 software was also utilized to develop a model for the equation. The data was examined and summarized using these statistical tools, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the research findings. SPSS/V 26 facilitated the calculation of frequencies and other descriptive measures, while AMOS/V 24 enabled the construction of a model to explore the relationships between variables. These software programs played a crucial role in the data analysis process, ensuring accurate and reliable results for the research study.

### 3. Results

Based on the findings presented in [Table 2](#), the study included 140 participants from the National Olympic Committee, consisting of 102 males (72.9%) and 38 Females (27.1%). The age distribution of the sample revealed that the highest frequency, comprising 54.3% (76 individuals), fell within the 36 to 45 years old category. Conversely, the lowest frequency was observed among individuals over 55, with only one person representing 2.7% of the sample. Additionally, 12 participants (8.6%) were aged 25 to 35, while 51 individuals (36.4%) fell into the 46 to 55 age range.

Furthermore, the marital status of the research participants indicated that 27 individuals (19.3%) were single, while the majority, 113 individuals (80.7%), were

married. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of the participants, 65.7% (92 individuals), held a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 44 participants (31.4%) possessed a master's degree, and four individuals (2.9%) had obtained a doctorate. Examining the work experience of the sample, it was noted that the highest frequency, comprising 42.9% (60 individuals), had a work experience of 16 to 20 years. Conversely, the lowest frequency was observed among those with 26 to 30 years of work experience, consisting of 8 individuals (5.7%). Overall, 30 participants (21.4%) had between 5 and 15 years of work experience, while 102 individuals (72.9%) had 16 to 25 years of work experience, and eight individuals (5.7%) had 26 to 30 years of work experience.

**Table 2.** The demographic characteristics of the participants in the research study.

Variable	Age range	Abundance	Frequency
Gender	Males	102	72.9
	Females	38	27.1
Age	25 to 35 years	12	8.6
	36 to 45 years	76	54.3
	46 to 55 years	51	36.4
	More than 55 years	1	0.7
marital status	Single	27	19.3
	married	113	80.7
education	Masters	92	65.7
	Master's	44	31.4
	PhD	4	2.9
work experience	5 to 10 years	16	11.4
	11 to 15 years	14	10.0
	16 to 20 years	60	42.9
	21 to 25 years	42	30.0
	26 to 30 years	8	5.7

The descriptive indices of skewness and kurtosis and the mean and median of the research variables are presented in the analysis. Skewness and kurtosis values are valuable indicators for assessing data distribution, indicating whether it follows a normal or non-normal distribution. Based on the skewness values (ranging from -1 to 1) and kurtosis values (ranging from -3 to 3) observed in the research variables, it can be concluded that the data distribution is normal.

**Table 3.** Examining the type of data distribution (normality and non-normality of data).

Variable	Median	Mean	Skewness	Standard Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Standard Error of Kurtosis
Single communication for fixed message and image	3.871	4.000	-0.390	0.205	0.197	0.407
Different communication with different customer groups	4.347	4.600	-0.274	0.205	0.371	0.407
Database-based communication for appropriate results	4.166	4.500	-0.248	0.205	0.340	0.407
Strengthen communication with current customers	4.091	4.000	-0.260	0.205	0.240	0.407

Variable	Median	Mean	Skewness	Standard Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Standard Error of Kurtosis
Integrated Marketing Communications	4.118	4.279	-0.328	0.205	0.295	0.407
Brand prestige	3.321	3.286	-0.189	0.205	0.424	0.407

Based on the t-test results presented in Table 4, a significant difference is observed between the average scores of integrated marketing communications and its dimensions (specific messaging and image for unified communication, tailored communication for different customer groups, data-driven communication to achieve optimal outcomes, and strengthening communication with existing customers). The obtained values indicate that the average scores for integrated marketing communications and its dimensions are higher than the desired average. Therefore, based on the research sample, it can be concluded that the National Olympic Committee's integrated marketing communications are in favorable condition.

**Table 4.** T-test of integrated marketing communications (difference between the observed mean of the variables and the optimal mean).

Variable	Statistics				
	M	DF	t	Difference	sig
Single communication for fixed message and image	3.871	139	16.244	0.871	0.001
Different communication with different customer groups	4.347	139	23.322	1.347	0.001
Database-based communication for appropriate results	4.166	139	16.872	1.166	0.001
Strengthen communication with existing customers	4.091	139	21.026	1.091	0.001
Integrated Marketing Communications	4.118	139	24.129	1.118	0.001

The results obtained from the Pearson correlation test in (Table 5) show a significant positive relationship between integrated marketing communications and the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee (Sig=0.001, r=0.513).

**Table 5.** Pearson correlation (integrated marketing communication and brand prestige).

	Brand prestige		
	Number	Pearson correlation	sig
Integrated Marketing Communications	140	0.513**	0.001

\*= significance at  $P \geq 0.05$  level; \*\*= significance at  $P \geq 0.01$  level

As the indices (Table 6) show, due to the high tolerance values (because it is higher than 0.1 and close to 1) and the low values of the VIF variance inflation factor because they are smaller than 10, there is a possibility of multiple collinearities between the variables. Single communication for a fixed message and image, different communication with different groups of customers, Database-based communication for appropriate results, and strengthening communication with existing customers are lacking. Therefore, according to the above assumptions, it is possible to perform path analysis and multiple linear regression tests.

**Table 6.** Multicollinearity indices between predictor variables.

Variables included in the model (independent variables)	Collinear statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Single communication for fixed message and image	0.726	1.377
Different communication with different customer groups	0.427	2.344
Database-based communication for appropriate results	0.387	2.644
Strengthen communication with existing customers	0.626	1.598

According to the Durbin-Watson statistic (Table 7) of 1.821, it can be inferred that the residuals are independent (errors). Furthermore, examining the values obtained from Table 7, the single communication variables for a fixed message and image ( $B=0.324$ ,  $Sig=0.001$ ,  $t=4.165$ ) and strengthening communication with current customers ( $B=0.201$ ,  $Sig=0.021$ ,  $t=2.315$ ) show a significant positive effect on the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee. However, the results indicate that the impact of different communication with different customer groups ( $Sig=0.254$ ,  $t=1.140$ ) and database-based communication for appropriate results ( $Sig=0.541$ ,  $t=0.611$ ) is not significant concerning the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee.

**Table 7.** The effect of dimensions of integrated marketing communication on brand prestige.

	Path	B	$\beta$	t	sig	Coefficient of determination	Watson camera
Single communication for fixed message and image	→ Brand prestige	0.324	0.340	4.165	0.001	0.336	1.821
Different communication with different customer groups	→ Brand prestige	0.108	0.122	1.140	0.254		
Database-based communication for appropriate results	→ Brand prestige	0.051	0.069	0.611	0.541		
Strengthen communication with current customers	→ Brand prestige	0.201	0.204	2.315	0.021		

The results presented in Table 8 regarding the fit of the integrated marketing communication effect measurement model on brand prestige demonstrate that the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), which serve as primary fit indicators, surpass the threshold of 0.9, indicating a solid fit of the model. Additionally, other appropriate indices, such as the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI), exhibit acceptable values. Lastly, the root means square residual ( $RMR=0.046$ ) and the square root mean estimation error ( $RMSEA=0.090$ ) demonstrate that the model achieves a satisfactory level of fit.

**Table 8.** Communication Model Fit Index (Effect of Integrated Marketing Communications on Brand Prestige).

Fit indices	The desired amount	Indicator values	interpretation
Chi-Square	-	87.499	-
Degrees of Freedom (df)	-	41	-
Chi-square ratio to degrees of freedom( $\chi^2/df$ )	Less than 5	2.134	optimum
Goodness of Fit (GFI)	More than 0.9	0.900	optimum
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	More than 0.8	0.839	optimum
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Less than 0.1	0.090	optimum

Fit indices	The desired amount	Indicator values	interpretation
Root Mean Squared Residuals (RMR)	Less than 0.05	0.046	optimum
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	More than 0.9	0.909	optimum
Normed of Fit Index (NFI)	More than 0.9	0.901	optimum
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	More than 0.9	0.909	optimum

Path analysis of the relationship between integrated marketing communications and the brand prestige of The Iranian National Olympic Committee (INOC) is shown in Figure 1.

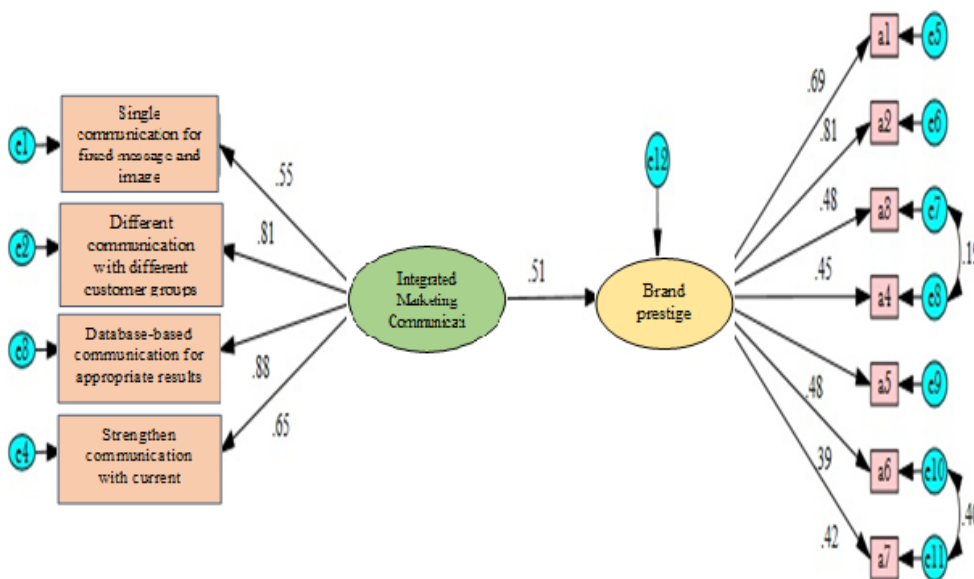


Figure 1. Research communication model (standardized regression coefficients).

Based on the results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis presented in Table 9, it is evident that all factor loadings (standardized regression coefficients) and corresponding t-statistics exhibit acceptable values at a significance level below 0.05. These indicators suggest that the observed variables effectively capture and reflect the underlying constructs of integrated marketing communications and brand prestige. Subsequently, the impact of integrated marketing communication on brand prestige is further investigated based on the obtained results.

Table 9. Standardized regression coefficients and t values of the research communication model.

Path	Factor load	t	sig
→ Single communication for fixed message and image	0.553	-	-
→ Different communication with different customer groups	0.812	6.455	0.001
→ Database-based communication for appropriate results	0.884	6.590	0.001

	Path		Factor load	t	sig
	→	Strengthen communication with current customers	0.648	5.699	0.001
Brand prestige	→	1a	0.694	-	0.001
	→	2a	0.805	7.060	0.001
	→	3a	0.479	4.849	0.001
	→	4a	0.446	4.530	0.001
	→	5a	0.485	4.919	0.001
	→	6a	0.386	3.971	0.001
	→	7a	0.424	4.335	0.001

Based on the findings of the research shown (Table 10), Integrated marketing has a positive effect on the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee (Sig=0.001, t=4.045) with the coefficient of influence ( $\beta=0.505$ ).

**Table 10.** The effect of integrated marketing communication on brand prestige.

	path		operational burden	value of t	sig
Integrated Marketing Communications	→	Brand prestige	0.505	4.045	0.001

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The research findings indicate that unique communication for the message and fixed image has a significant positive impact on the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee. These results are consistent with previous studies conducted by Keshavarz et al. (2020), Kim et al. (2019), Liu et al. (2017), and Lion and Azzuhri (2012). Additionally, Anabila (2020) discovered a positive effect on the relationship between unit communication for the message and image and customer satisfaction in the context of Saturna. Single communication for the transmission and image is considered a fundamental aspect of integrated marketing communications and serves as an early stage in its evolution. This approach focuses on conveying a consistent and unified brand message across various communication channels to establish a distinct brand identity or position in the target market. Keller and Lehmann (2006) referred to this as "continuity" in integrated marketing communications, which encompasses both physical continuity (consistent use of slogans and trademarks across all media) and psychological continuity (ongoing use of specific imagery or themes across all media). Achieving integrated marketing communications requires strategic integration of various messages, precise coordination of message delivery across communication channels (such as advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and promotions), and developing a cohesive communication program tailored to the target market.

The research results indicate a positive correlation between different communication with different customer groups and the brand prestige of the Olympic National Committee. These findings are consistent with prior studies conducted by Keshavarz et al. (2020), Lion and Azzuhri (2012), Ramezani et al. (2021), and Mubushar et al. (2013). The study also reveals a positive relationship between different communications with different customer groups and customer satisfaction. It suggests that tailoring marketing strategies based on target market segmentation, maintaining a distinct brand image, and

implementing marketing communication tactics that align with each stage of the customer's purchasing process contribute to strengthening the organizational brand. Integrated marketing communications necessitate the development and implementation of diverse marketing communication campaigns targeted at multiple customer groups within the target market, each at different stages of the purchase process (Lane Keller, 2001; Luxton et al., 2015; Miraki et al., 2020; Nazari et al., 2019; Reid, 2005).

The study's results indicate a positive correlation between Database-based communication for appropriate results and the brand prestige of the new Olympic brand. These findings align with previous research conducted by Izadparast et al. (2019), Mubushar et al. (2013), and Lion and Azzuhri (2012). Database-based communication emphasizes the significance of customer response to marketing activities and the collection of customer information in databases. International research has shown a positive association between database-based communication and customer satisfaction. This highlights the importance of marketing communication in generating behavioral responses from the target market through direct interaction facilitated by databases. While "integrated communications for fixed message and image" and "different communication with different customer groups" primarily focus on influencing pre-consumer behaviors such as recognition, image, preferences, and attitudes, the specific dimension of database-based communication emphasizes activities that generate consumer behavioral responses and tangible outcomes such as sales and customer retention rates (Jankovic, 2012). Researchers have long recognized the significance of using databases to drive purchase measures (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). Schultz and Kitchen (1997) even argue that the objective of integrated marketing communications is to facilitate direct consumer purchases through selective communication and engagement (Šerić et al., 2013).

A company's database contains all the information it can gather about consumers (Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). The results showed the importance of database-based communication and integrated marketing communications in achieving effective marketing strategies. It emphasizes the role of customer databases in providing valuable information on consumer responses to various communication tools, enabling marketers to determine the most effective media for different stages of the purchasing process. The integration of database-based communication activities within marketing communications has long been proposed by researchers (Duncan, 2002; Jankovic, 2012). Today, databases in direct communication channels, such as the Internet and email, are essential for effective marketing communication. Customer databases contain comprehensive information about current and potential customers, including demographic details such as age, gender, and income. This data is crucial for tailoring marketing communication activities to reach and engage different customer segments effectively. Strengthening communication with current customers through brand commercial communication strategies has been found to positively impact customer satisfaction and long-term relationship management (CRM) (Duncan, 2002; Reid, 2005). Maintaining existing customers is more effective in generating profitability than acquiring new customers (Porcu et al., 2019).

Integrated marketing communications are vital in creating and strengthening cooperation, developing brand-related fields, and maintaining consistent and continuous communication within and outside the organization (Constantinides, 2002). By unifying all marketing communication tools and delivering customer-centric messages, integrated marketing communications aim to maximize positive brand messages, build brand strength, and promote products and services tailored to customer needs (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998; Reid, 2005; Schultz & Kitchen, 1997). The findings highlight the positive relationship between integrated marketing communications and the brand prestige of the National Olympic Committee, as supported by various research findings (Keshavarz et al., 2020; Porcu et al., 2019; Ramezani, 2016). Integrated marketing communications contribute to positive brand perception, desirable brand prospects, and successful consumer behavior. In conclusion, practical marketing communication activities, including database-based transmission and integrated marketing communications, are crucial for organizations to enhance brand prestige and achieve marketing objectives. The National Olympic Committee can benefit from integrating various communication methods, such as media advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and sponsorship, to improve its integrated marketing communications efforts and enhance its brand image. Based on the results showing a significant positive relationship between integrated marketing communications and brand prestige, as well as the impact of individual communication effectiveness and strengthening communication with recent customers, the following management suggestions and practical requirements can be considered:

- The National Olympic Committee needs to ensure that its marketing communications deliver a consistent message across various channels. This includes maintaining a cohesive brand image, tone, and values throughout all communication efforts, such as advertising, public relations, and sponsorship. Consistency in messaging helps build a favorable impression among the target audience and enhances brand prestige.
- Strengthening communication with recent customers is crucial for maintaining and improving brand prestige. The National Olympic Committee should focus on nurturing relationships with its existing customer base through personalized communication strategies. This can include targeted email campaigns, loyalty programs, and providing exclusive content or benefits to loyal customers. The Committee can foster customer loyalty and positive brand perception by prioritizing communication with current customers.
- The National Olympic Committee may benefit from investing in training and development programs for its marketing and communication teams. Providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge in integrated marketing communications can help ensure that the Committee's communication efforts effectively align with brand goals and values. Training programs can cover message consistency, customer relationship management, and various communication channels.
- The National Olympic Committee should encourage collaboration and integration among different departments involved in marketing and communication. This includes fostering communication and coordination between advertising, public



relations, sales, and other relevant teams. By working together towards common goals, sharing insights and data, and aligning strategies, the Committee can create a more cohesive and impactful integrated marketing communications approach.

- Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and implementing tracking mechanisms are crucial for evaluating the impact of integrated marketing communications on brand prestige. The National Olympic Committee should define relevant metrics, such as brand perception surveys, customer satisfaction ratings, or social media engagement, to monitor the effectiveness of its communication efforts. This data-driven approach enables the Committee to make data-informed decisions and optimize its marketing communication strategies.
- The field of marketing communication is ever-evolving, and the National Olympic Committee must stay updated with the latest trends, technologies, and consumer behaviors. Encouraging a culture of continuous learning and adaptation within the organization can help the Committee remain ahead of the curve and maintain a competitive edge in its integrated marketing communications efforts.

By implementing these management suggestions and practical requirements, the National Olympic Committee can enhance its brand prestige through effective and well-coordinated integrated marketing communications.

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# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش

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## ارتباطات بازاریابی یکپارچه و پرستیژ برند کمیته ملی المپیک ایران

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### چکیده

**هدف:** امروزه سازمان‌های ورزشی به این باور رسیده‌اند که یکی از باارزش‌ترین دارایی‌هایشان، برند محصول‌ها و خدمات آن‌هاست. هدف از انجام این تحقیق مطالعه رابطه بین ارتباطات یکپارچه بازاریابی و پرستیژ برند کمیته ملی المپیک ایران بود.

**روش:** تحقیق حاضر توصیفی-همبستگی مبتنی بر مدل معادلات ساختاری بود. شرکت‌کنندگان در تحقیق ۱۴۰ نفر از مدیران و کارشناسان کمیته ملی المپیک بودند. به‌منظور جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از پرسشنامه‌های ارتباطات بازاریابی یکپارچه از پرسشنامه لی و پارک (۲۰۰۷) و پرستیژ برند از پرسشنامه بیک و همکاران (۲۰۱۰) استفاده شد. در بخش تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌های پژوهش از نرم‌افزارهای SPSS نسخه ۲۶ و AMOS نسخه ۲۴ استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد بین ارتباطات بازاریابی یکپارچه و ابعاد آن با پرستیژ برند رابطه مثبت معناداری وجود دارد. نتایج تحلیل مسیر نشان داد ابعاد ارتباطات واحد برای پیام و تصویر ثابت و تقویت ارتباطات با مشتریان فعلی تأثیر مثبت معناداری بر پرستیژ برند کمیته ملی المپیک داشته و بر اساس ضریب تعیین ۶/۳۳ درصد از واریانس کل میزان تغییرات پرستیژ برند به این ابعاد مربوط می‌شود. نتایج مدل معادلات ساختاری نشان داد ارتباطات بازاریابی یکپارچه بر پرستیژ برند کمیته ملی المپیک اثر مثبت معناداری داشت.

**نتیجه‌گیری:** در محیط متغیر امروزی، سازمان‌ها به‌منظور حفظ روابط با مشتریان ناچار به استفاده از روش‌های متنوع و نوین ارتباطی هستند. برنامه ارتباطات بازاریابی باید به سازمان در رسیدن به این هدف به‌وسیله تحکیم روابط با مشتریان از طریق فعالیت‌های ارتباطی کمک کند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** سازمان‌های ورزشی باید از روش‌های ارتباطی متنوع و نوآورانه برای پرورش روابط با مشتری در چشم‌انداز در حال تحول امروزی استفاده کنند. این تحقیق نشان داد که یک برنامه ارتباطی بازاریابی یکپارچه که به‌خوبی طراحی شده باشد می‌تواند به تقویت پرستیژ برند سازمان‌های ورزشی کمک کند. این امر از طریق مشارکت مشتری و فعالیت‌های ارتباطی حاصل می‌شود.

تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۱/۰۱

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۲/۰۴/۰۳





## The Effect of Loyalty and Trust on Word-of-Mouth Advertising in Sports: A Meta-Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research aims to conduct a meta-analysis of the relationship of loyalty and trust on word-of-mouth advertising in sports.

**Methodology:** The meta-analysis method was used to conduct this research. For this purpose, sixteen databases and two search engines analyzed all articles and theses published on the effects of trust and loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising in sports between 2002 and 2022. Finally, 18 articles were included in this study and were analyzed using CMA2 software, and the heterogeneity of the studies was determined by performing the q-value, I-squared, and tau-squared tests.

**Findings:** The results showed that the effect size of trust and loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising was 0.30 and 0.29, respectively. Based on Cohen's interpretive system, this level of influence was evaluated as moderate, although these relationships were significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). Finally, using the tree diagram, the studies with a minor deviation in the effect size of the random model were identified and identified as more valuable research. Also, according to the FSN test regarding the effect of trust and loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising, it can be claimed that loyalty and trust positively affect word-of-mouth advertising. Therefore, it is suggested that sports managers give priority while maintaining the budget to create solutions that develop loyalty and trust in consumer sports products and services and focus on these issues.

**Originality:** In this study, we determine the results of world sports studies regarding the effects of trust and loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising in the form of a general result using the meta-analysis method.

### Keywords

Loyalty  
Sports Product  
Sports Service  
Trust  
Word of Mouth Advertising

### Article type

Review Article

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## 1. Introduction

The sports industry has grown significantly in recent years and has become a significant sector in some countries (Ratten, 2018). It is an industry of great importance and an influencing factor in the economic growth of developed countries (Rostamzadeh et al., 2014). This industry has contributed a lot to the economy of different societies in the international arena, and its expansion has caused people to witness the formation of the sports industry in a comprehensive way today (Meier et al., 2019).

In sports activities, paying attention to marketing is very important and focusing on the needs of customers and audiences is the main factor in the trend of sports marketing (Lin et al., 2006). Sport is a social product and service as it is often marketed within a community of people (Trequattrini et al., 2015). Marketing in sports and organizations is crucial (Hematinejad Toli et al., 2022). Sports marketing is one of the most complex tasks of sports organizations (Tahmasbpour Shafiei et al., 2016), which means sports marketing and using sports as a tool for marketing other products and services. The term sports marketing was first used in the United States in the advertising era in 1978 and has since been used to describe various activities related to sports promotion (Mihai, 2013). Sports marketing is a reference for generating income for sports organizations (Da Silva & Las Casas, 2017). Today's world is competitive, and sports organizations and institutions are not exempt. In the sports industry, the main goal of all activities is to influence the Consumer's purchasing behaviour or, in other words, the Consumer's decision process to purchase (Hemmati Nezhad & Masoomi, 2017). One of the most important ways to introduce sports products and services to consumers is advertising. As one of the essential marketing mix tools, advertising can play a critical role in marketing policies and strategies. Such as communicating with customers, introducing new products or services, and modifying and changing the mentality of customers and audiences towards organizations and their brands' performance. Advertising, promotion, and impersonal presentation of ideas, products, and services by a responsible person (Khan, 2007). Advertising is one of the essential pillars of promotional activities in marketing (Chittithaworn et al., 2011).

Word-of-mouth advertising, which is one of the types of advertising, is defined as the dissemination of information and communication between consumers about any product or service (Pihlaja et al., 2017). The American Institute of Communication also described WOM<sup>1</sup> as sharing information about specific products and promotions among customers (through different sources) (Özdemir et al., 2016). Sports fans frequently spread word-of-mouth advertising after watching sports events to share their opinions and experiences through various channels (Wakefield & Bennett, 2018). Word of mouth is essential in marketing research (Chen-Hung et al., 2017). Word-of-mouth communication is more popular than traditional advertising because it costs much less and spreads faster than other advertising (Li et al., 2018). Taghizadeh et al. (2013) believe that word of mouth is a crucial marketing method transferred from one customer to another with minimal cost. In addition, word-of-mouth advertising is a potent tool for promoting product sales, quickly making unknown products famous (Jung Choo et al., 2009). Word of mouth favours customers due

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<sup>1</sup> Word-of-mouth advertising



to less involvement in advertising and other conventional marketing tools. The communication consumers get with their friends, family members, and colleagues for word-of-mouth advertising is more than the communication that the brand initially creates. This shows the importance of word-of-mouth advertising as a very effective marketing method (Ng et al., 2011).

Meanwhile, one of the most frequent factors affecting WOM is loyalty. Loyalty is defined as a strong commitment in customers to carry out transactions with organizations and purchase goods and services. Also, customers who are loyal to a brand will introduce it to their friends and relatives (Forati et al., 2014). Dedicated people share information they get from members of their peer community through word-of-mouth with others outside of that community (Rialti et al., 2017). Loyal customers have a sense of belonging to the sports organization, product, or service, which creates a greater desire to create word-of-mouth communication and makes them act as fans for it (Shafiee et al., 2019). Marketing activities of competitors are usually continuous. Nevertheless, the loyal customer remains with the same provider, recommends purchasing that product or service to his friends and relatives, and expresses his positive opinion when communicating with others (Benar & Goharostami, 2019). Loyalty is also a factor in creating a competitive advantage and is vital for word-of-mouth recommendations to others (Mohammadi & Mirtaghian Rudsari, 2019).

Apart from loyalty, the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising is significant as one of the essential factors in sports management (Filo et al., 2008; Portal et al., 2019). Trust in a product or service is its ability and capacity to fulfil promises (Ahmadi & Jafarzadeh, 2014). The trust index affects customers' behaviour in interacting with the company (Ebrahimi et al., 2017). Brand trust is one of the variables that significantly affect word-of-mouth advertising by people (Martínez-Cevallos et al., 2020). Also, researchers believe that in addition to trusting the product or service, when people are more confident about the reliability of WOM by consumers, they are more likely to inform others about it due to the possibility of being less deceived by this source (Filiari et al., 2015). Sweeney et al. (2008)'s research showed that word-of-mouth advertising reduces people's mistrust, improves their understanding, and causes them to trust and increase their willingness to buy products and services. WOM helps promote products because it is an informal communication flow that comes from the trust of consumers, friends, and family (Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009).

Research on word-of-mouth advertising in sports shows that customer loyalty and trust are two of the most critical factors concerning WOM. If customers trust the products and services and loyalty is formed from using them, they will probably recommend them to their friends, acquaintances, and family. For this reason, research in this field can help sports clubs and companies better understand the role of customer loyalty and trust in word-of-mouth advertising. Then, use this knowledge to design appropriate advertising strategies. Furthermore, research shows that WOM in sports can be very effective. This type of advertising creates more trust in buyers because it is personally introduced to consumers through acquaintances and friends, as well as the direct experience of someone who has already used the product. Therefore, research in this field can help sports companies implement the best advertising strategies using customer loyalty and trust. As a result, in addition to examining the effect of loyalty and trust, they will experience better sales and agility in the market.

Regarding word-of-mouth advertising in sports, meta-analysis can also be helpful as a quantitative measurement method. By using meta-analysis, the results of previous studies can be compared, and a more accurate result can be reached. In general, meta-analysis can help to make appropriate decisions about the relationship between these three variables by increasing statistical power. Also, this method can permit researchers to compare the results of previous studies and obtain more accurate conclusions by reducing discrimination in sample selection. Therefore, this research examines the meta-analysis of loyalty and trust studies on word-of-mouth advertising in sports.

## 2. Methodology

In this research, secondary studies were used to perform meta-analysis. The Prisma Review Studies Reporting Guide (PRISMA)<sup>2</sup> was used in this study.

### 2.1. Search strategy and data extraction

Searching and selecting studies was such that articles published in internal and foreign databases of the country's scientific data were used to access studies related to word-of-mouth advertising in sports. Internal databases include Sid<sup>3</sup>, Civilica, Magiran, Noormags and foreign databases such as Emerald, Springer, Scopus, Wiley, Sage, Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, Ebescos, Web of Science and Google Scholar search engine, as well as a thesis in the internal scientific database of Irandoc and the external database of ProQuest, Oatd<sup>4</sup> were used. A total of 771,305 articles and thesis were extracted based on the search for the titles "word of mouth in sports" in the Persian language in internal databases and "word of mouth" + "sport" in the English language in foreign databases. The filters of English and Persian, Journal Article, and Date range of 2002-2022 were applied in 16 databases and two search engines, and 68,785 articles were obtained. According to [Figure 1](#), by carefully reviewing the titles and abstracts of studies that only examined the effect of loyalty and trust on word-of-mouth advertising, 45 articles were selected for full-text review. After reviewing the full text and according to the assumptions of the research, 33 studies were selected (thesis and articles that did not mention validity and reliability did not write sampling and the number of samples, studies that had a sample number of fewer than 100 people, did not have a valid questionnaire, did not use the correct statistical tests, journal articles that did not have a proper profile, as well as books and qualitative and conference articles) were considered as the criteria for exiting the research.

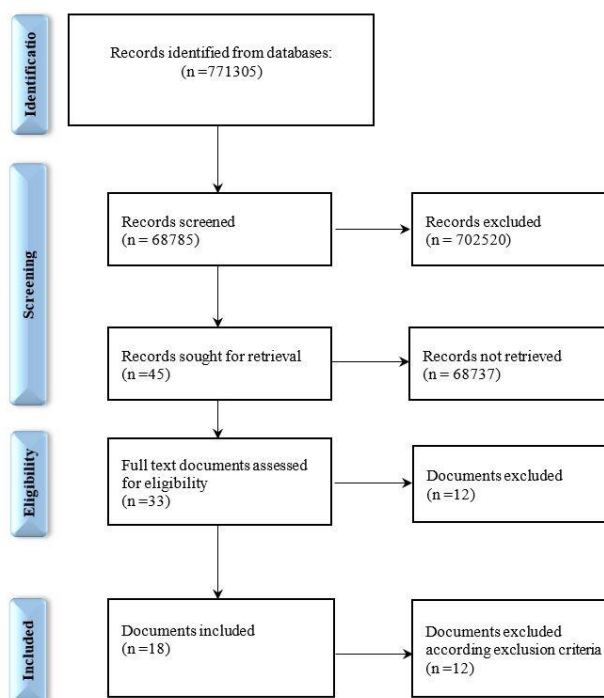
Finally, according to the exclusion criteria, 18 studies were identified as suitable for meta-analysis.

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<sup>2</sup> Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis

<sup>3</sup> Scientific Information Database

<sup>4</sup> Open Access Theses and Dissertations



**Figure 1.** Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA) Study Selection Flow Diagram.

**Table 1.** Summary of included studies.

No	Author(s) year	Type of Research	Journal/ University	Sample
1	Izadi (2020)	Thesis	Ilam University- Faculty of Literature and Humanities Science	400
2	Mohammadi (2017)	Thesis	Payame Noor University- Faculty of Humanities Rasht Branch	384
3	Shafiee et al. (2019)	Article	Sports Physiology & Management Investigations	145
4	Benar and Goharostami (2019)	Article	New Trends in Sport Management	384
5	Pourhoseyn et al. (2020)	Article	Communication Management in Sport Media	386
6	Freydoni and Kalateh Seifri (2018)	Article	Sport Management Journal	381
7	Zeytoonli (2020)	Article	Urban Tourism	374
8	Makizadeh et al. (2020)	Article	Communication Management in Sport Media	324
9	Wong et al. (2015)	Article	Contemporary Management Research	468
10	Alguacil et al. (2018)	Article	Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics	210
11	Elliott et al. (2018)	Article	Journal of Applied Sport Management	138
12	Alguacil et al. (2021)	Article	Heliyon	265
13	Hedlund (2011)	Thesis	Florida State University	113
14	Lotfi Fard Shokroo et al. (2017)	Thesis	Shahid Rajae Teacher Training University- Faculty of Science Physical education and sports science	360
15	Ebrahimi et al. (2017)	Article	Sport Management Studies	250

No	Author(s) year	Type of Research	Journal/ University	Sample
16	Asada and Ko (2019)	Article	Sport Marketing Quarterly	433
17	Asada and Ko (2016)	Article	Sport Management	349
18	Martínez-Cevallos et al. (2020)	Article	Sustainability	195

The data extraction form, which was designed based on the purpose of the research, was used as a research tool to extract the data of each study. The data were analyzed using the CMA2<sup>5</sup> software, and then the effect size was calculated. The primary method of meta-analysis is based on combining the results, which is usually used after converting the statistics into the *r* index and estimating the effect size. In addition, in this study, meta-analysis assumptions were first examined to analyze the data inferentially. With the help of the funnel diagram and FSN<sup>6</sup> method, the distribution error was checked, and the heterogeneity of the studies was checked by using the *Q* test. Then, according to the heterogeneity between the studies, the random effects model was used to combine the results and reach the effect size. Cohen's interpretation model was used to interpret the results. Also, its information has been analyzed to perform calculations using comprehensive meta-analysis software CMA2, and the effect size of each study has been obtained and evaluated based on Cohen's criterion. Cohen's (1992) guidelines were applied to assess effect sizes. Correlations of 0.10, 0.30, 0.50, and 0.70 are considered small, medium, large, and very large, respectively.

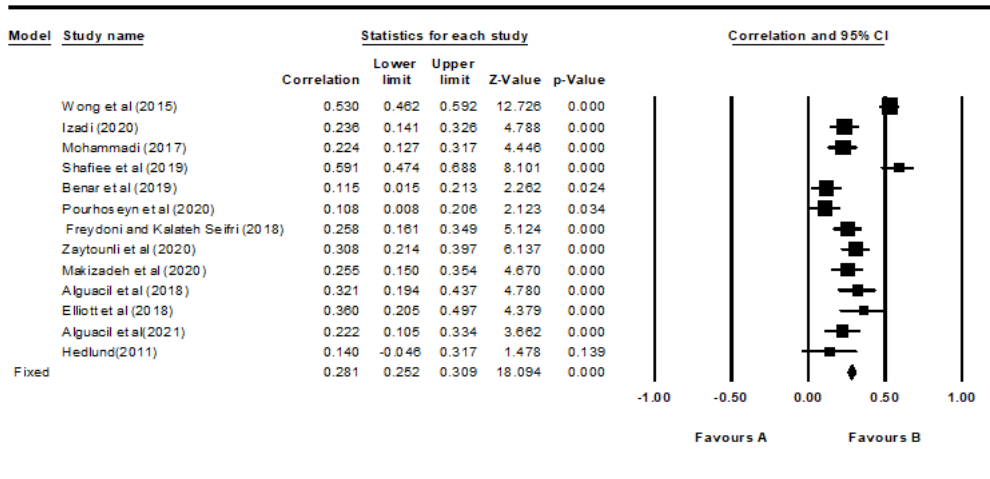
### 3. Results

Nine articles and three dissertations in 2011-2020 and 1 article in 2020 investigated the effect of loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising, of which 8 were internal studies and 5 were external studies.

Also, regarding the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising, six articles and two dissertations were examined in 2011-2020, four internal and four externals. Therefore, the results related to the research hypotheses were entered into the CMA2 software. During each study's statistical analysis, each effect size was obtained. Finally, the results of these studies were aggregated with fixed and random models, and the homogeneity tests of the studies were examined. First, the effect size of all primary studies was reported, and then the average effect size of all preliminary studies was answered in each question.

<sup>5</sup> Comprehensive Meta-Analysis

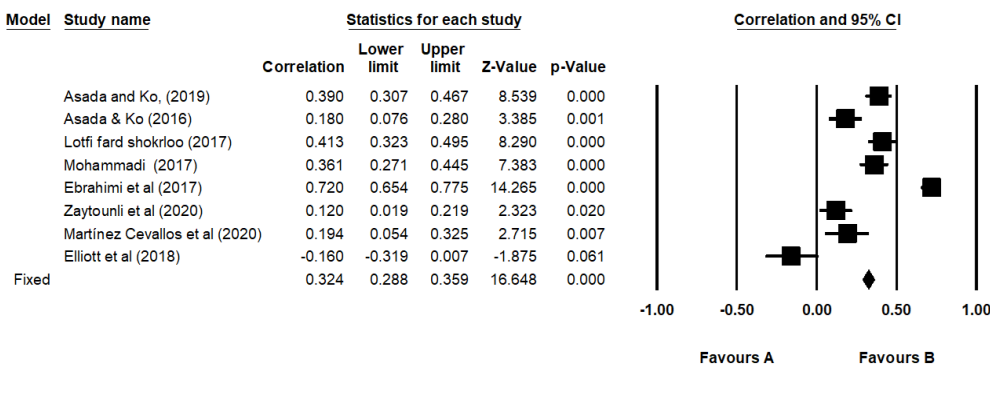
<sup>6</sup> Fail-Safe-Number



Meta Analysis

Figure 2. Effect size tree diagram of studies on the effect of loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising.

As shown in Figure 2, the effect size of all studies on the effect of loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising is medium, large, and enormous. For the significance of effect sizes, P and Z values have been reported, which show that all the effect sizes of These studies, Except for the Hedlund (2011) study, the studies are smaller than 0.05 and more significant than 2.58, so the effect size of these studies in the statistical population is adequate at the 99% confidence level.



Meta Analysis

Figure 3. Effect size tree diagram of studies on the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising.

In examining the tree diagram of the second research question, it was also found that the effect size of all studies is medium, large, and enormous, and all the effect sizes of these studies, except Elliott et al. (2018), are smaller than 0.05 and more significant than 1.96.

Therefore, at the 95% confidence level, the effect size of these research is also essential in the statistical population.

### 3.1. The fixed and random effects model

**Table 2.** Fixed and random effects models for studies of the effect of loyalty and trust on WOM.

Research question	Model name	Effect size	lower limit	upper limit	Z value	P value
Loyalty → WOM*	Fixed	0.28	0.25	0.31	18.09	0.001
	Random	0.29	0.20	0.37	6.46	0.001
Trust → WOM	Fixed	0.32	0.29	0.36	16.65	0.001
	Random	0.30	0.13	0.46	3.31	0.001

**Note:** WOM= word of mouth advertising

After combining the effect size results of 13 existing studies based on the first research question and eight existing studies on the second research question, the results are combined in the form of two models of fixed effects and random effects. As shown in Table 2, in the fixed effects model related to the first and second questions, assuming the homogeneity of the studies, the effect size is 0.28 and 0.32, respectively. By using inferential statistics and generalizing it to the population of studies, they have this hypothesis, and according to the Z, P value of loyalty and trust variables have a positive and significant effect on word-of-mouth advertising. As a result of world studies regarding these two hypotheses, it was concluded that these hypotheses are confirmed.

Also, in the random effects model, assuming the heterogeneity of the studies, the effect size of the first and second questions is 0.29 and 0.30, respectively, and by using inferential statistics and generalizing it to the population of studies that have this hypothesis and according to the Z value The P value of loyalty and trust variables has a positive and significant effect on word-of-mouth advertising, that is, the results of world studies regarding this hypothesis were summarized, and it was determined that this hypothesis is confirmed, so both models have different results in terms of effect size. However, both models have demonstrated the hypotheses analyzed by the researcher. Although both models have provided the same results, the researcher performs tests with two different goals: homogeneity detection tests.

### 3.2. Tests to detect homogeneity or heterogeneity of studies

In these tests (q-value, I-squared, tau-squared), if it is proven that the studies are homogeneous, we use the fixed effects model. The random effects model provides a more accurate answer for heterogeneous studies. Heterogeneity has reasons, one of the most prominent of which is the existence of an unknown moderator variable.

**Table 3.** Results of homogeneity and heterogeneity tests of studies.

Research question	Q value	P value	I squared	Tau squared	Fail-Safe-Number
Loyalty → WOM	95.82	0.00	87.47	0.15	1076
Trust → WOM	150.21	0.00	95.34	0.26	520

Based on the Q value and research hypotheses and their significance, which is less than 0.05, therefore, at the 95% confidence level, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the H1 hypothesis is confirmed, which means that the studies in the first and second hypotheses of the research are not homogeneous. So, the random model is closer to the honest answer. In the I-square test, its value is compared based on three values of 25, 50, and 75, which express low, medium, and high heterogeneity, respectively, as shown in Table 3, the I-square value for the first and second questions It is 87.47 and 95.34 respectively, so the heterogeneity between the studies is very high and this result is in the completion of the previous test and its confirmation. The next test is the homogeneous tau-squared test. Interpretation can be done based on both tau and tau-squared. If we want to make an interpretation based on tau, if the tau value is less than 0.32, the correlation between studies is weak. Between 0.50 and 0.75, it is moderate and above 0.75, a strong correlation. As is evident in Table 3, the tau value for studies related to loyalty and trust in word-of-mouth advertising is 0.15 and 0.26, respectively, which shows that the correlation between studies in the first and second hypotheses is weak. The summary of the heterogeneity tests shows that the studies are entirely heterogeneous, so the researcher uses the random effects model. Funnel charts were used to check publication bias.

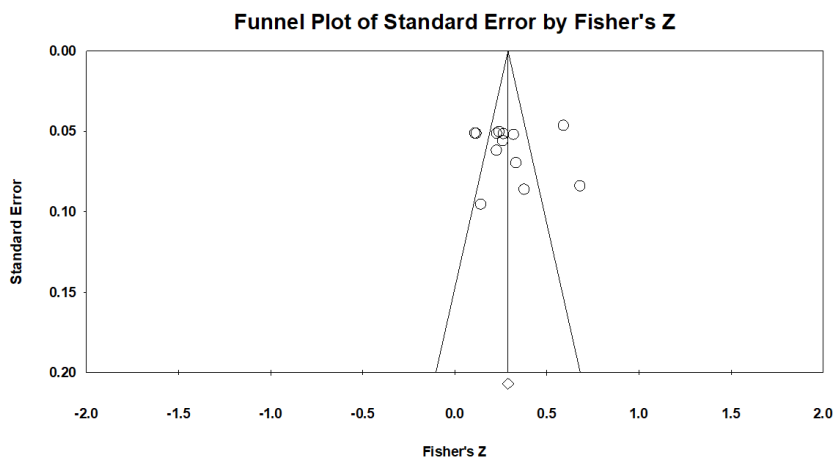
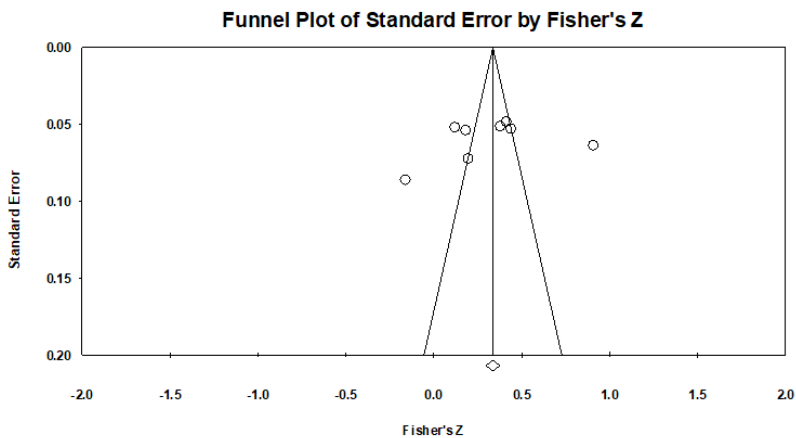


Figure 4. Funnel diagram of the first research question.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, most of the studies related to this systematic review's first and second questions are located at the top of the funnel, and there is no study at the bottom. On the other hand, the accumulation of these studies at the top of the funnel creates the symmetry of studies on both sides of the line that have been established, and this research has no publication bias.



**Figure 5.** Funnel diagram of the second research question.

Finally, if we want to know how much our research is sustainable and will not be harmed over time, we should use the Fail-Safe-Number test. If  $N$  is above 10, meta-analysis is acceptable. However, our theory does not last long, and meta-analysis is of low quality, but if  $N$  is more significant than 1000, it can be claimed that your theory will last for decades. As is evident in [Table 3](#), the Fail-Safe-Number regarding the first and second questions of the research is equal to 1076 and 520 studies, respectively. (FSN) the statistic is needed to estimate the number of unpublished studies to reduce the meta-analytic effect size to a statistically insignificant level. Meta-analysis results are valid if the FSN exceeds its critical value of five times the number of studies plus 10 (Rosenthal, 1991). In this study, FSNs all exceeded their critical values.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

Word of mouth is the verbal or written communication between a sender and a person or a group of receivers to share and acquire information informally (Ishii & Kikumori, 2023). WOM is the least expensive and most productive advertising, and due to its non-commercial nature, it is less suspected than other methods in sports marketing. Also, because the level of loyalty and trust of customers in sports products and services is decreasing daily, the presence of these two factors in the spread of word-of-mouth advertising and sports marketing is significant.

This research systematically searched and reviewed the study investigating the effect of loyalty and trust on word-of-mouth advertising in the last twenty years (from 2002 to 2022). An effort was made to clarify the impact of these variables on WOM. Also, according to the meta-analysis results, trust and loyalty had the most significant effect sizes in the current research.

One of the most frequent factors affecting word-of-mouth advertising is loyalty, an influential precursor to word-of-mouth advertising (Hasangholipour et al., 2013). Loyal customers are more willing to advertise word-of-mouth and may order its use to their friends and acquaintances (Khabiri et al., 2013). Uslu et al. (2013) also considered loyalty



as one of the essential practical factors of word-of-mouth. In other words, loyal sports customers will likely provide more word-of-mouth quotes to others. Also, loyalty to sports products and services may cause customers to act as information channels and create potential customers from other people through informal communication, which is sometimes word-of-mouth advertising.

According to the first question, the research, considering that the following studies have a minor deviation with the effect size of the fixed and random model and are consistent with the average of the studies and by comparing the effect size of these studies with the effect size of the random model (0.29). We conclude that the studies of [Zeytoonli \(2020\)](#) had an effect size of 0.31. [Alguacil et al. \(2018\)](#), with an effect size of 0.32 among all sports studies, confirmed the hypothesis of the effect of loyalty on word-of-mouth advertising. They are strong studies and valuable research. The studies of [Hedlund \(2011\)](#), with an effect size of 0.14, and [Shafiee et al. \(2019\)](#), with an effect size of 0.59, are weak studies and low-value research due to their significant deviation from the average value and inconsistency with the average of the studies.

Therefore, prioritizing effect size also indicates that the studies of [Wong et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Shafiee et al. \(2019\)](#) have substantial effect sizes. [Zeytoonli \(2020\)](#), [Alguacil et al. \(2018\)](#), [Elliott et al. \(2018\)](#) in the category of enormous effect sizes and the research of [Izadi \(2020\)](#), [Mohammadi \(2017\)](#), [Benar and Goharostami \(2019\)](#), [Pourhoseyn et al. \(2020\)](#), [Freydoni and Kalateh Seifri \(2018\)](#), [Makizadeh et al. \(2020\)](#), [Alguacil et al. \(2021\)](#), [Hedlund \(2011\)](#) are in the category of Medium effect sizes.

According to the current research's first question, sports managers should increase their loyalty by periodically receiving customers' opinions about how to provide sports products and services and receiving their suggestions because it is cheaper to retain old customers. From creating new customers, managers should prioritize creating solutions that develop and maintain loyalty to sports products and services for old consumers while maintaining the budget. Also, considering the importance of having loyal sports customers to reward them for their purchases, in this case, their willingness to buy in the following times will not only increase significantly but moreover, implementing such programs, in addition to increasing the loyalty of current customers, also helps attract new sports customers.

Trust is another factor that affects word-of-mouth advertising. [Lin and Lu \(2010\)](#) believe that consumer trust in a product or service plays a significant role in customer word-of-mouth advertising. Furthermore, it is an influential factor in WOM ([Bahrainizadeh & Ziaei Bide, 2013](#); [Hasangholipour et al., 2013](#); [Kassim & Asiah Abdullah, 2010](#)). When the Consumer has complete confidence in a sports product or service, he will likely introduce it to others through word-of-mouth advertising. The trust that causes word-of-mouth advertising can reduce the costs of an organization to carry out advertising. Trust is one of the suitable prerequisites for expanding word-of-mouth advertising. According to the second question of the research, the following studies have a minor deviation from the effect size of the fixed and random models. They are consistent with the average of the studies, and for this reason, they are considered more valuable studies. Therefore, by comparing the effect size of these studies with the effect size of the random model (0.30), we conclude that [Mohammadi \(2017\)](#) with an effect size of 0.36 and [Asada and Ko \(2019\)](#) with an effect size of 0.39 [Lotfi Fard Shokrlou et al. \(2017\)](#) with an effect size of 0.41 respectively are more

robust and more valuable research among all the sports studies that confirmed the hypothesis of the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising.

Also, respectively, the studies of [Ebrahimi et al. \(2017\)](#) and [Elliott et al. \(2018\)](#), with effect sizes of 0.72 and 0.16, due to their significant deviation from the average value and not consistent with the average of the studies, are of the type of weak research and They are of little value. The prioritization of effects size concerning this question also shows that the studies of [Ebrahimi et al. \(2017\)](#) in the category of substantial effect sizes, [Asada and Ko \(2019\)](#), [Lotfi Fard Shokrlou et al. \(2017\)](#), [Mohammadi \(2017\)](#) in the category of enormous effect sizes and [Asada and Ko \(2016\)](#), [Zeytoonli \(2020\)](#), [Martínez-Cevallos et al. \(2020\)](#), [Elliott et al. \(2018\)](#) are in the category of medium effect sizes. According to the second question of the present research, sports managers should increase the transparency in the presentation of the product or service because it has gained the trust of the sports consumer, and the possibility of doing word-of-mouth advertising by that person is very high. It is also suggested that there should be mutual trust between the final consumers and the authorities so that people can encourage others to use that sports product or service through word of mouth.

A critical factor is that sports managers must fulfil their promises and commitments to promote word-of-mouth advertising because it helps to maintain customer trust, pay attention to improving the quality and performance of products and services, its reasonable price in comparison with other organizations, the well-being of consumers, providing regular services, etc., which aims to increase the trust of consumers.

In general, the findings of this study show the high level of loyalty and trust in sports products and services, which are among the most frequent variables affecting word-of-mouth advertising in sports. It causes more people to recommend that product or service to others using the same word-of-mouth advertising, which is unofficial and without any benefits for the advertiser. It should be noted that customers' attention to word-of-mouth advertising is increasing daily because they can more easily trust such advertisements.

Therefore, according to the obtained results, suggestions for future research are presented, such as that future researchers should examine the effect of other practical factors on word-of-mouth advertising, which has had a good history, and its meta-analysis has not been done in sports. Also, due to the use of only quantitative research in this research, it is suggested that in the future, meta-synthesis work should also be done on qualitative research in this field. Another critical point is that the inhomogeneity of this research's studies shows a moderator variable. It is suggested that the researchers investigate and discover the moderator variables in these two research questions. Considering that the research used in this research was in Persian and English language, future researchers can examine other languages in their research. It is suggested that random and fixed effects models be compared based on the type of research, research location, etc. Since the FSN value in the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising was 520 studies, it had a smaller value than loyalty. Because there is less history in this regard, Future researchers can do more research on the effect of trust on word-of-mouth advertising. One of the limitations of this research is the lack of research, especially regarding the impact of trust on the word of mouth advertising. Also, since the research is of the meta-analysis type, the researcher has no role in the accuracy of its results because the reported data is based on primary research. Hence,

the accuracy of this data is the responsibility of the primary research researchers. The quality of meta-analysis depends mainly on the data reported in individual studies. Also, in some studies, there was no reporting of accurate statistical information and mention of correct samples and that they had a valid scientific profile. It did not allow the researcher to calculate the effect size, forcing the researcher to delete those studies.

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## وفاداری، اعتماد و تبلیغات دهان به دهان در ورزش: متاآنالیز

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### کلیدواژه

اعتماد  
تبلیغات دهان به دهان  
محصولات ورزشی  
خدمات ورزشی  
وفاداری

### نوع مقاله

مروری

### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف پژوهش حاضر فراتحلیل رابطه وفاداری و اعتماد بر تبلیغات دهان به دهان در ورزش می‌باشد.  
**روش:** برای انجام این پژوهش از روش فراتحلیل استفاده گردید. برای این منظور، شانزده پایگاه داده و دو موتور جستجو، کلیه مقالات و پایان نامه‌هایی که درباره نقش اعتماد و وفاداری بر تبلیغات دهان به دهان در ورزش، بین سال‌های ۱۳۸۱ تا ۱۴۰۱ منتشر شده‌اند، مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند. از ۱۸ مقاله در این پژوهش استفاده شد که با استفاده از نرم‌افزار CMA2 تحلیل شدند. همچنین با توجه به انجام آزمون‌های q-value، I-squared، tau-squared و همگونی مطالعات مشخص گردید.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد اندازه اثر تأثیر اعتماد و وفاداری بر تبلیغات دهان به دهان به ترتیب ۰/۳۰ و ۰/۲۹ بود. که بر مبنای نظام تفسیری کوهن، این میزان تأثیر در حد متوسط ارزیابی شد که این رابطه ها معنادار ( $P < 0.05$ ) بودند. با استفاده از نمودار درختی مطالعاتی که کمترین انحراف را با اندازه اثر مدل تصادفی داشتند مشخص و به عنوان تحقیقات ارزشمندتر شناسایی شدند. همچنین باتوجه به آزمون N ایمن از خطا در رابطه با تأثیر اعتماد و وفاداری بر تبلیغات شفاهی می‌توان ادعا کرد که وفاداری و اعتماد بر تبلیغات دهان به دهان تأثیر مثبت می‌گذارد. بنابراین، پیشنهاد می‌شود مدیران ورزشی با حفظ بودجه به ایجاد راه‌حل‌هایی که وفاداری و اعتماد را به محصولات و خدمات ورزشی مصرف‌کننده افزایش می‌دهد، اولویت داده و بر این موضوعات تمرکز کنند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** در این مطالعه با استفاده از روش فراتحلیل نتایج مطالعات ورزشی موجود درباره نقش اعتماد و وفاداری در تبلیغات دهان به دهان در قالب یک نتیجه‌ی کلی تبیین گردید.

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## The Role of the Authenticity of Iranian Brands on the Emotional Attachment of Sports Goods Consumers, with Customer Bias as a Mediator

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Domestic sports brands seek to establish consumer relations with the brand to survive and earn continuous profits among foreign competitors. Therefore, this manuscript investigates the effect of domestic brands' authenticity on consumers' emotional dependence on domestic sports goods, including the Daei, Majid, and Momentum brands, with customer bias as a mediator.

**Methodology:** This study was based on a practical purpose and a descriptive correlation data collection method conducted in the field. The statistical population was all consumers of domestic sports goods (Daei, Majid, and Momentum brands), and 191 people were selected as a statistical sample based on the law of structural equations (five times the number of observable variables). The research tools included three [Kadirov's \(2010\)](#) brand authenticity questionnaires, [Lee et al.'s \(2013\)](#) customer bias, and [Thomson et al.'s \(2005\)](#) emotional attachment. Experts confirmed the formal and content validity and the reliability of the questionnaires, estimated to be 0.7, 0.92, and 0.95, respectively. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS/25 and Smart-PLS.3.2.8 software.

**Findings:** The research results indicated a positive and significant relationship between brand authenticity, emotional attachment, and customer bias. However, there was no significant relationship between customer bias and emotional attachment.

**Originality:** So far, no research has investigated the mediation of customer bias in the relationship between brand authenticity and consumer emotional attachment; therefore, this research is original.

### Keywords

Brand Authenticity  
Bias  
Consumers  
Customer  
Iranian Brand

### Article type

Research Paper

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## 1. Introduction

The significant growth of globalization has led to the development of the business world and increased competition among businesses (Fakaubun, 2019). Therefore, in today's competitive world, creating a positive and compelling brand is crucial for companies to profit and gain market share (Ardiana & Wardhani, 2022). Kadembo (2016) shows that a brand is an important marketing tool that helps companies to offer unique products (Nyagadza et al., 2020). The brand is the most asset of any company (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). Brand authenticity is one of the essential elements for companies in product marketing (Saputra, 2018) and one of the critical factors for brand success (Portal et al., 2019). Morhart et al. (2015) define brand authenticity as 'the degree to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful and true to itself and its consumers. According to consumers' understanding, they express the brand's meaning as real, honest, genuine, and accurate (Portal et al., 2019). The brand name is widely used as a basis for consumers and a tool to assess product differences and uniqueness, enhancing customer confidence and trust in their decision-making process (Sasmita & Mohd Suki, 2015). When buying, the brand's authenticity attracts consumers' attention, and this genuine value is often used to distinguish original or imitation products (Saputra, 2018). Authentic brands are committed to fulfilling their promises (Bruhn et al., 2012; Eggers et al., 2013; Morhart et al., 2015; Portal et al., 2019), and consumers trust brands that fulfil their promises (Napoli et al., 2014; Portal et al., 2019).

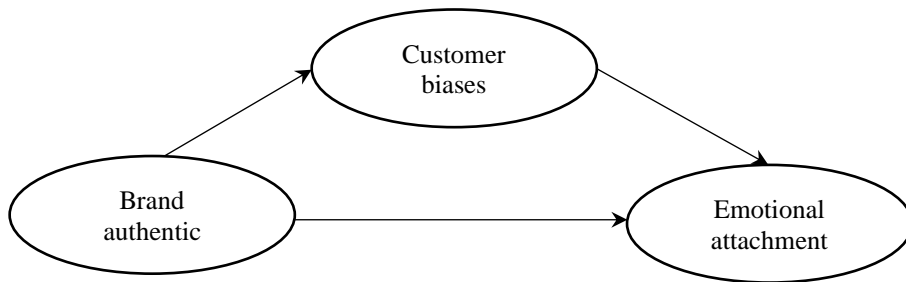
A solid emotional bond with customers is crucial for businesses to establish lasting relationships and foster customer loyalty (Do et al., 2015). There is a belief that the emotional aspects of products are distinctive in the final product choice and the price consumers are willing to pay in a competitive market where goods and services are insufficient for attracting and retaining new customers (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). Brand attachment is a concept developed in psychology called attachment theory, created by (Bowlby, 1969). It states that attachment is a deep and strong emotional bond that connects a person with others in space and time (Saputra, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that the concept of dependence comes from a deep and stable emotional understanding, a bond in interpersonal relationships that gradually enters other forms of relationships (Shabani Nashtae et al., 2017). Our daily lives are entirely of brands constantly competing for consumers' attention. Therefore, creating an emotional attachment to the brand is critical in brand management (Bairrada et al., 2019). Most customers have unique relationships with different brands.

Consequently, estimating the factors related to prolonging and enhancing the consumer's relationship with the brand is essential. In general, the greater the relationship between them, the more this relationship positively affects the company's results (Do et al., 2015). As Priester et al. (2006) stated, the stronger the consumer's relationship with a brand, the more products can be sold at a higher price, which benefits the company (Saputra, 2018). Creating a stable relationship with the brand (Barreda et al., 2020) has been realized by many researchers as consumers develop their relationships with brands to show their relationships with people (Liu & Chang, 2017). Consequently, companies are increasingly looking for strategies to create a strong emotional bond with consumers

(Bairrada et al., 2019). This is the competitive advantage of companies to attract consumers successfully (Ardiana & Wardhani, 2022).

Iglesias et al. (2011) emphasized that unique and memorable experiences trigger strong emotional reactions. Saputra (2018) researched the effect of brand authenticity on brand loyalty and showed that brand authenticity has a significantly positive impact on brand loyalty. In another study, Keshtidar et al. (2020) examined the communication model of the identity, authenticity, love, and social power of the 'Sports Olympiads' brand among students. Their findings demonstrated that the identity and authenticity of the Sports Olympiads brand have a noteworthy measurable impact on how much students love the brand. In other words, students' sense of identity with the brand and its authenticity positively influences their affection and attachment to the Sports Olympiads brand. Auni Asbforoshani (2014) investigated the effect of national identity on perceived product value through perceived product evaluation and customer bias and showed that national identity has a positive and significant impact on customer bias. Barreda et al. (2020) investigated the effect of social media activity on brand image and emotional attachment and showed that brand commitment and brand image positively affect emotional attachment. Aron et al. (1995) studied the relationship between the brand's social mentality and brand love. According to their findings, brand love was reflective of a higher identity.

Customer bias can explain why some customers have a negative attitude towards foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and refer to the customer's evaluation of domestic and foreign products. In the current research, customer bias represents the extent to which the customer prefers the products of their own country and evaluates them favourably. Customer bias provides a sense of national identity and belonging that serves as a guide to purchase attitudes and behaviors. Customer bias makes the customer evaluate the products related to his own country higher, which leads to acceptance of the desirability of a product (Nguyen et al., 2008). Customer bias can explain why some customers have a negative attitude towards foreign products (Shimp & Sharma, 1987) and actually refers to the customer's evaluation of domestic and foreign products. On the other hand, due to the economic and trade sanctions against Iran, the production of more and better Iranian brands and the awareness and encouragement of people to buy them have been reflected in clothing. The Leader of Iran argued that one of the characteristics of consumption in the financial system means that the customer is biased towards the product produced by Muslims and their fellow citizens (Samadi Qurbani & Khalipour, 2018). The conditions of the embargo in the country have caused us to have poor economic conditions. Thus, in alignment with economic development policies, supporting domestic production and domestic goods are at the top of the agenda. As an emerging sector, the sports industry can contribute to the country's economy by promoting domestic production. Based on previous research, there is a pressing need for further investigation. This research addresses the following questions: Does brand authenticity influence emotional attachment to the brand? Does brand authenticity influence consumer buying behaviour? Does brand authenticity affect customer bias? It is hoped that the results of the present research can take an essential step towards improving the conditions of sports brands.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model of the Research.

## 2. Methodology

The present study is descriptive-correlational, designed for practical purposes, and employs a specific data collection methodology. The research population includes all consumers of domestic sports goods brands such as Dai, Majid, and Momentum. Given the unknown population size and the reliance on structural equation modelling for analyzing the conceptual model, a sample size ranging from 5 to 20 times the number of observed variables was considered. This study used a questionnaire containing 38 questions as the measurement tool. Thus, the minimum sample size required for the study was five times the number of observable variables, totalling 191 responses. More questionnaires were distributed to account for the non-return of questionnaires, resulting in the collection of 191 usable questionnaires during the research period.

The data collection instrument was a questionnaire consisting of four sections. The first part collected demographic information, including gender, age, history of sports activity, and education level. The second part comprised [Kadirov's](#) standardized brand authenticity questionnaire (2010), consisting of 14 closed-ended items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 for 'strongly disagree' to 5 for 'strongly agree'). It encompassed seven subscales: real-fake, extreme performance, commerciality, uniqueness, individuality, rich history, community, and empowerment. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed through construct validity, and its reliability, assessed using Cronbach's alpha, exceeded 0.86.

The third part contained the customer bias questionnaire, adapted from [Lei et al.'s](#) study (2013), consisting of four questions employing a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 for 'completely disagree' to 5 for 'completely agree'). The reliability of this questionnaire was estimated to be 0.7 in a previous study by [Auni Asbforoshani](#) (2014). Finally, the fourth part was derived from [Mugge et al. \(2010\)](#)'s emotional brand attachment questionnaire (2005), consisting of ten items categorized into three subscales: kindness, communication, and intense emotions. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 for 'very low' to 5 for 'very high'). The questionnaire's reliability, as established in the study by [Kheiri et al. \(2012\)](#), exceeded 0.7.

Four sports management professors confirmed the face validity of the questionnaires used in this study. The reliability of the mentioned questionnaires in this study was estimated to be 0.7, 0.92, and 0.95, respectively, for the questionnaires of brand authenticity, customer bias, and emotional brand attachment. After collecting questionnaire responses, structural

equation modelling was employed for data analysis. SPSS version 25 and Smart-PLS 3.2.8 software were used for data analysis.

### 3. Results

According to the research findings, out of 191 research samples, 102 (53.4%) were women, and 57 (29.8%) were in the age range of 26 to 30 years. Those older than 36 years had the highest frequency, while the lowest frequency was related to those with bachelor's degrees (77, 40.3%). Those with a master's degree or higher (67 people) were in the next rank.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the research sample.

Variable	Dimensions	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Gender	Man	102	53.4
	Woman	89	46.6
Age	25 years and less	44	23.0
	26-30 years old	57	29.8
	31-35 years old	48	25.1
	36 years and older	42	22.1

Using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach does not require assumptions such as the normal distribution of data, their measurement scale, or having a high sample volume before implementing structural equation modelling with the partial least squares approach, the assumption of non-collinearity of the independent variables should be checked first. The most common method is to check the correlation of independent research variables; correlations higher than 0.80 are the presence of multiple collinearities (Ghasemi, 2012). According to Table 2, the correlation between the independent variables was calculated, which was significant at the 0.01 level, but these values indicate non-collinearity between the independent variables. To assess the fit of the measurement model, convergent validity, divergent validity, and reliability of the instrument were used, which included three criteria: factor loading coefficients, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and composite reliability.

**Table 2.** Correlation matrix of research variables.

Variables	Brands authenticity	Customer biases	Emotional attachment
Brands authenticity	1		
Customer biases	**0.599	1	
Emotional attachment	**0.633	**0.424	1

**Table 3.** Cronbach's alpha criteria, composite reliability, and convergent validity of research variables.

Latent variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Mean-variance extracted
Brands authenticity	0.709	0.808	0.516
Customer biases	0.925	0.947	0.817
Emotional attachment	0.957	0.926	0.921

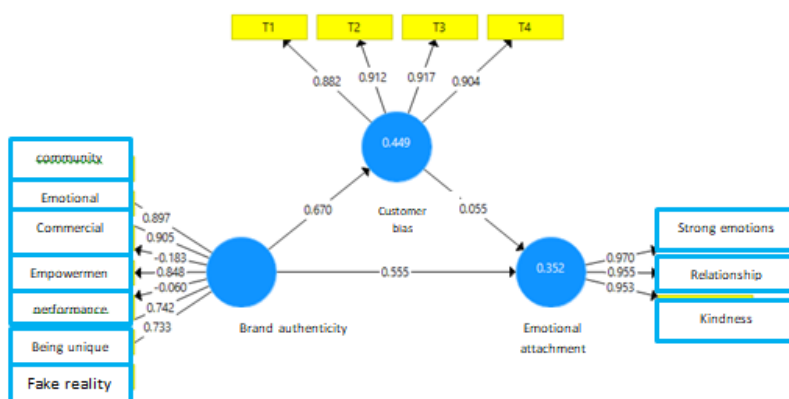
As shown in Table 3, all three research variables have Cronbach's alpha value and combined reliability above 0.7, and the suitability of the reliability situation can be considered acceptable. A convergence validity above 0.5 for the variables indicates the confirmation of the convergent validity of the research variables.

**Table 4.** Correlation between latent variables and AVE values.

Variables	Brands authenticity	Customer biases	Emotional attachment
Brands authenticity	0.704		
Customer biases	0.670	0.904	
Emotional attachment	0.592	0.427	0.959

The results show that the average variance extracted from all variables is more than 0.5, indicating the appropriateness of the convergent validity criterion. The Fronel-Larker matrix was used to check the external validity of the measurement model. Based on the results obtained from the correlations and the square root (AVE) placed on the diameter of Table 4, it is possible to conclude the model's differential validity at the structure level in terms of the Fresnel-Larker matrix. After measuring the validity and reliability of the measurement model, the structural model was examined through the relationships between the underlying variables. The current research used the most widely used criteria to fit the structural model. These criteria include the significant coefficient, the determination coefficient R2, and the prediction power coefficient Q2.

The first and most essential criterion of structural model fit is its path coefficient and significance. Significant coefficients must equal or exceed the significance index of 1.96. If the value of these numbers exceeds 1.96, it indicates the correctness of the relationship between the constructs and, as a result, the verification of the research hypotheses (Mohsenin & Esfidani, 2013). The path coefficients of the implemented model are shown in Figure 2, and their significance is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 2.** Path coefficient and structural model fit using R2.

As can be seen in the drawn model (Figure 2), the exogenous variables of the model have a significant effect on the endogenous variables of the research.

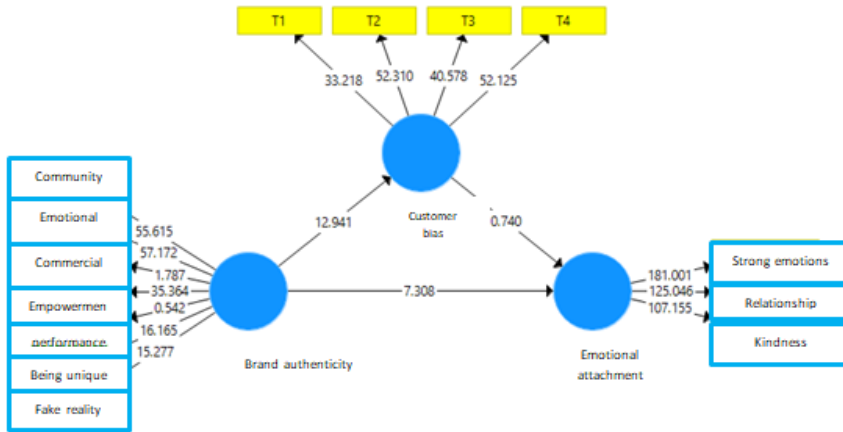


Figure 3. Fitting the structural model using the significance coefficients of T.

According to the significant coefficients in Figure 3, all relationships except the relationship of customer bias to emotional dependence between the variables of the research model are meaningful at the confidence level of 0.99. In other words, all the relationships between the model variables have been confirmed.

R2 is a measure that shows the effect of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable, and three values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 are considered criteria values for weak, medium, and strong values of R2 (Mohsenin & Esfidani, 2013). As shown in Figure 2, the value of R2 for customer bias variables was calculated as 0.44 and for the emotional dependence variable as 0.35. According to the three criterion values, R2 for customer bias and emotional dependence variables is evaluated at an average level.

Predictive Power Coefficient (Q2): The Q2 criterion also determines the predictive power of the model, and if this criterion obtains three values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for an endogenous variable, it indicates the predictive power, respectively. Weak, medium, and firm have corresponding exogenous variables (Mohsenin & Esfidani, 2013). The Q2 criterion for the customer bias variable is 0.34, and the emotional dependency variable is 0.29, so the model's predictive power was evaluated substantially.

Finally, to check the fit of the overall research model, the goodness of fit criterion was used, which is calculated through the following formula. Considering the three values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36, which are introduced as weak, medium, and strong values for the goodness of fit (Mohsenin & Esfidani, 2013), obtaining a value of 0.53% for the GOF criterion, the fit It confirms the general research model very well.

$$\text{Equation (1): } GOF = \sqrt{R_{Average}^2 \times AVE_{Average}} \approx 0.53$$

Table 5. Other fit indices of the model.

Chi-Square	NFI	SRMR
400.97	0.9	0.06

In the following, the table of indirect effects and the Sobel test were used to measure the significance of the mediating effect of one variable in the relationship between two other variables.

**Table 6.** Indirect effects estimation.

Result	t	Path coefficient	dependent variable	Path	Path	independent variable
rejection	0.79	0.04	Emotional attachment	<---	<--- Customer biases	Brands authenticity

$$\text{Equation (2): } Z = \frac{a*b}{\sqrt{(b^2*S^2a)+(a^2*S^2b)}} = 0.99$$

According to Equation 2, it can be said that at the 95% confidence level, the effect of the mediating variable of customer bias is not significant in the relationship between brand authenticity and emotional attachment.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

In today's market, consumers encounter various brands of products and services, and acquiring more customers is the primary concern and priority for brand managers. A strong brand presence in the market is often the distinguishing characteristic that sets a product or service apart from its competitors. In such a scenario, securing a place in the consumer's mind fosters loyalty to the company (Azadi et al., 2015).

Furthermore, consumers seek authenticity to meet their internal and external needs due to the abundance of brands. Research indicates that customers emphasize brand authenticity in all aspects of brands and branding. The growing connection between brand authenticity, marketing concepts, and consumer behaviour has been highlighted recently, making the quest for brand authenticity a cornerstone of contemporary marketing and a key differentiator for businesses.

This equally applies to sports brands, which must establish a solid foothold to thrive in today's competitive landscape. This article aims to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of brand authenticity on emotional attachment to the brand, with customer bias acting as a mediator. The research findings demonstrate a positive and significant influence of brand authenticity on emotional attachment to the brand. These results align with the findings of Foroz Shahrstan and Erfani (2019), Manthiou et al. (2018), and Ghafourian Shagerdi et al. (2020).

Satisfying customers alone is no longer adequate for success in today's competitive market. To explain and predict the desired changes in subsequent consumer behaviours following satisfaction, a new marketing framework called "brand love" has been introduced. It comprises primary and secondary dimensions like interest and lust, such as intimacy, dreams, relationship duration, uniqueness, memories, idealization, and brand enjoyment (Keshtidar et al., 2020). Brand love signifies an emotional attachment to a brand (Zareyi et al., 2022).

According to psychological research, the relationship between brands and consumers resembles human relationships. An example can illustrate the connection between brands



and consumers (Zareyi et al., 2022). The motivations that prompt customers to act are seldom purely logical, predictable, or consciously driven; instead, most of their reactions stem from feelings and emotions, which have been harnessed across various fields (Mohammadian & Khajeh Dehdashti, 2016). Emotional attachment to a brand is characterized by warm and pleasant feelings, excitement, and a sense of brand superiority in the consumer's mind. Consumers seeking authenticity are naturally drawn to sports brands that demonstrate genuine intent, purpose, or a commitment to providing authentic service and quality (Batra et al., 2012).

Sports companies should connect with customers by surpassing their expectations regarding goods and services. Moreover, they should create a pleasant and entertaining yet relaxing environment. The study's findings indicate that the authenticity of national brands, such as Daei, Majid, and Momentum, positively and significantly affects customer bias. Authenticity is fundamentally a perceptual quality, necessitating an appearance of genuineness to the consumer (Banasadi & Naami, 2021). Brand authenticity is a crucial determinant of the consumer-brand relationship (Tran, 2018). In the consumer's perception, brand authenticity invokes personality, presence, and high product and service performance (Pourasadollahi et al., 2019).

Therefore, domestic sports brands must differentiate their offerings from other brands to emphasize their originality. Customer bias stems from the social dimension (Auni Asbforoshani, 2014), and it manifests as customer behaviour reflecting people's natural inclination toward products from their own country. Customer bias leads customers to evaluate products associated with their group more favourably than those unrelated to their group, resulting in a more favourable reception of corresponding products (Nguyen et al., 2008). Differences between domestic and foreign sports brands regarding their influence on Iranian culture and identity within sports and sports-related activities can play a pivotal role in creating customer bias towards these brands. Domestic brands should emphasize their national identity to boost product sales and encourage consumer preference for domestic products. This enables consumers to evaluate domestic sports products more favourably in terms of price, quality, and services compared to foreign products, fostering a negative attitude toward foreign products. In consuming domestic goods, consumers maintain their social and emotional values (Zareyi et al., 2022). Foreign product purchases negatively impact Iran's domestic economy, causing unemployment, capital flight, and loss of national wealth. Understanding these points can influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

The final research findings indicate that the mediating effect of customer bias in the relationship between brand authenticity and emotional attachment is insignificant. This insignificance may be attributed to limited consumer knowledge about domestic brands such as Daei, Majid, and Momentum and the lack of marketing efforts to reach the audience. Additionally, the absence of domestic brands in international competitions and social and cultural events in Iranian society could be contributing factors. Research has demonstrated that customers identify with brands that possess a favourable identity. The country of origin plays a significant role in determining a product's symbolic and emotional perception, providing benefits like pride and dignity. Products associated with a specific country of origin acquire unique personality traits, including psychological and

social characteristics such as power, social status, and style, adding distinctiveness to the product (Adina et al., 2015).

Consequently, domestic brands are encouraged to strengthen the national sense and gain favourable evaluations from Iranian consumers by linking their products to the national identity. Domestic sports brands must work toward building a lasting relationship with consumers to ensure continued profitability and reinforce their brand's authenticity. This approach can cultivate a bias favouring domestically produced goods among consumers, increasing the likelihood of choosing domestic sports brands. Consumers are more likely to form emotional connections in business relationships, and brand attitude and loyalty remain key cognitive predictors of consumer behaviour. Brand loyalty emerges due to the passionate attachment consumers feel towards a brand.

These research results pertain to consumers of domestic sports brands, and their generalizability to other product brands may vary. It is recommended that similar studies on different product categories be conducted and that the impact of national identity and nationalism on consumer bias in the context of sports brands be investigated. Consumers may be more willing to share personal information for exclusive and personalized services, particularly when establishing an emotional connection with a brand. However, certain variables beyond the scope of this research, such as culture, gender, and education level, can influence the research findings.

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# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش

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## نقش اصالت برندهای ملی ایرانی بر وابستگی عاطفی مصرف‌کنندگان کالاهای ورزشی با میانجی‌گری تعصب مشتری

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### چکیده

**هدف:** برندهای ورزشی داخلی برای بقا و کسب سود مستمر در میان رقبای خارجی به دنبال برقراری روابط مصرف‌کننده با برند می‌باشند. لذا، پژوهش حاضر به دنبال بررسی تأثیر اصالت برندهای داخلی بر وابستگی عاطفی مصرف‌کنندگان کالاهای ورزشی داخلی اعم از برند دایی، مجید و مومنوم با میانجی‌گری تعصب مشتری بود.

**روش:** پژوهش حاضر به لحاظ هدف کاربردی و براساس شیوه گردآوری داده‌ها توصیفی از نوع پیمایشی - همبستگی بود که به صورت میدانی انجام گرفت. جامعه آماری کلیه مصرف‌کنندگان کالاهای ورزشی داخلی (برند دایی، مجید و مومنوم) و نمونه‌های تحقیق شامل ۱۹۱ نفر بودند که به صورت تصادفی ساده انتخاب شدند. ابزار پژوهش شامل ۳ پرسشنامه اصالت برند کادیروف (۲۰۱۰)، تعصب مشتری لی و همکاران (۲۰۱۳) و وابستگی عاطفی تامسون و همکاران (۲۰۰۵) بود. رویای صوری و محتوایی آن‌ها به تأیید خبرگان رسید. پایایی پرسشنامه‌ها نیز به ترتیب معادل ۰/۹۲، ۰/۹۵ و ۰/۹۷ برآورد شدند. تحلیل نتایج با استفاده از نرم‌افزارهای SPSS نسخه ۲۵ و Smart-PLS.3.2.8 انجام شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج، رابطه مثبت و معناداری را بین اصالت برند و وابستگی عاطفی و نیز بین اصالت برند و تعصب مشتری را نشان داد. لیکن، بین تعصب و وابستگی عاطفی مشتری رابطه معناداری به‌دست نیامد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** تاکنون پژوهشی میانجی‌گری تعصب مشتری در ارتباط بین اصالت برند و وابستگی عاطفی مصرف‌کننده را مورد بررسی قرار نداده است. لذا، این تحقیق از این جهت دارای اصالت می‌باشد.

### کلیدواژه

اصالت برند  
برند ایرانی  
تعصب  
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## The Factors Affecting the Development of Advertising through Social Media to Influence the Sport Product Customers' Behavior Intentions

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Social media has influenced individuals' need for interpersonal interactions. The study was conducted to identify and prioritize the factors affecting advertising development through social media to control customers' intentions for sports products.

**Methodology:** The research method (in the qualitative part of the Delphi method and the quantitative descriptive-analytical part). The statistical population of the qualitative section included all media management specialists and sports marketers, and in the quantitative section, there were athletes of different sports (N = 1600). Sampling was also purposeful and accessible. The study tool was a semi-structured interview and a researcher-made questionnaire derived. Systematic coding and confirmatory factor analysis with SPSS24 and Amos25 software have been used to analyze the data.

**Findings:** If marketers want to change people's mindsets, advertising messages should be clear about the product's benefits and examine customers' characteristics. This causes consumers to change their existing beliefs. Based on the results of the factors affecting the development of advertising through social media to influence customers' behavior intentions for sports products, priority includes individual factors, branding, accreditation, and structural factors.

**Originality:** In this article, we examine the modeling of advertising development through social media to influence customers' behavioral intentions for sports products using structural equation modeling (SEM).

### Keywords

Awareness  
Branding  
Communication  
Customers' Interactions  
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## 1. Introduction

This feature of social media in communication has made it a suitable platform for conversations, negotiations, and interactions in everyday life. Therefore, most businesses are using social media to market themselves. The advertising industry can play an essential role in modern life. Advertising is a part of the marketing process of services or products. As one of the most critical marketing mix tools, it can be crucial in strategies and policies, such as communicating with customers and changing the consumer mindset (Ebrahimzadeh, 2013). In this regard, media advertising is one of the most well-known and controversial promotional activities and is also considered the only promotional activity of companies over the years (Tustin, 2002). Communicating the message to the target audience only through media tools like television is not targeted and efficient. To obtain an effective advertising tool, special attention should be paid to both the type of target customers and the selection of media tools used in advertising. Therefore, social media platforms are a new place for exchanging information and exhibiting opinions, have changed public opinion and have become a driving force in promoting social media advertising (Dong et al., 2017). The use of social media has gradually altered the advertisement platforms employed by companies, moving from traditional media to social media (Lee et al., 2014). As membership in the SNSs increases, these networks become the most popular medium for advertising. Social media is one of the most important communication and marketing tools globally, implying a significant upward trend in attracting target audiences (Fontaine et al., 1993). Marketers have various online marketing methods that use social media advertising tools. Social media is crucial for marketers to identify users (Motwani et al., 2014). Studies conducted on both online and media advertising have shown that the customers' attitude toward social media for advertising is a decisive factor in its effectiveness.

Marketing tactics, like promotional pricing, mainly have short-term effects. Others, like advertising, have short-term and long-term impacts and are companies' most critical communication methods (Chua & Banerjee, 2013). Therefore, with the growing popularity of social media, physical boundaries have disappeared, and people can use such platforms to search for the information they need and consult with others when making a purchase decision (Hanssens, 2015). In addition, branding can play an essential role in advertising for companies. Strong brands can increase customers' trust in the purchased produce or service, enabling them to visualize better and understand the intangible factors. According to studies, advertising through social media can affect the dimensions of the particular value of the brand (Mira & Karimi Herisi, 2013). Given the novelty and importance of social media in marketing, several studies have been conducted in the country and abroad in this field. Roshandel Arbatani and Mahmoudzadeh (2018) showed that market leadership, customers, banking capabilities, technological factors, advertising methods, and interactive and competitive atmosphere were considered as the factors that could influence advertising through social media. Kim and Ko (2012) found that five dimensions of social media marketing activities, such as entertainment, trendiness, customization, interaction, and word-of-mouth, had significant positive effects on net worth, net relationship net worth, and brand net worth. Ravikumar and Tiwari (2015)



reported that understanding the different types of online advertising and the skills required to sell the products could directly affect the customers' purchase intention. [Godey et al. \(2016\)](#) concluded that social media marketing activities, including entertainment, interaction, customization, and word-of-mouth, had a significant positive direct effect on brand equity and the consumers' response to luxury fashion brands. [Dong et al. \(2017\)](#) demonstrated that social media platforms are a new place for exchanging information and exhibiting opinions, have changed public opinion, and have become a driving force in promoting social media advertising. [Chen and Lin \(2015\)](#) suggested that with an increase in the popularity of the internet, social media has become an essential tool for online marketing events. Both people and companies create fan pages on online platforms and expand the opportunities for their business using social media.

On the other hand, nowadays, social media tools such as blogs (personal websites), the SNSs (Facebook), microblogging services (Twitter), and video-sharing sites (YouTube) could integrate public relations (PR) into marketing to facilitate a two-way communication process ([Wilcox et al., 2015](#)). This combination and participatory approach can play an essential role within the sports industry because creating a fan base via effective two-way communication is considered the core business of sports organizations ([Beech & Chadwick, 2013](#)). The sports industry is expected to offer customers products and services such as sports, health, entertainment, leisure, places, and ideas. Both sports marketing and its application are necessary for the success of the sports industry. Also, marketing is one of the most critical and complex tasks of sports organizations, which should promote products through their marketing activities and offer them to buyers to help them succeed ([Pitts & Stotlar, 2007](#)). [Beech and Chadwick \(2013\)](#) affirmed that sports organizations should emphasize the development of two-way symmetrical communication approaches, including a direct interchange with the organizations' public and considering the growing significance, benefits, and detriments of using social media. [Hopwood et al. \(2010\)](#) hypothesized that the sports industry could provide opportunities to build brand loyalty cost-effectively and efficiently through mass communication tools. [Watson et al. \(2002\)](#) reported that social media reduced costs while increasing target audience reach. According to [Hopwood et al. \(2010\)](#), social media could provide sports organizations with more direct interaction with fans and other stakeholders, help them gain more information about critical issues faced by their audience and stakeholder base, and assist in tailoring messages to support more robust relationships.

Therefore, social media marketing is a new phenomenon and can play an essential role in advertising sporting goods and services, increasing customers' behavioral intentions to purchase. Considering the critical role of sport in world trade and the country's actual and potential economic capabilities, this sector requires more severe attention ([Kim & Ko, 2012](#)). Today, both [manufacturers and sellers of sporting] goods understand the critical role of social media due to its rapid expansion and an increase in the number of legal and natural users and try to use social media platforms to improve the position of their company or brand in the market as compared with competitors and increase their customers' behavioral intentions to purchase. Considering the critical role of the SNSs playing in everyday life and their entry into the small businesses; therefore, the owners of large industries also changed the way of advertising their business and considered social

media platforms as the most potent tool used in influencing their customers (Akbari et al., 2022). Considering the importance of advertising through social media, one of the essential elements of sports marketing, marketers and sports manufacturers use social media to introduce their products and services to influence the customers' behavioral intentions for sporting goods. Given the lack of studies conducted on this topic and the absence of a comprehensive theoretical framework to explain it, as well as due to the novelty of the research topic, which has received less attention so far, the present study aimed to identify and prioritize the factors affecting the design of advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions of sporting goods. The sports industry is one of the world's most diverse and attractive industries. The sports industry is a set of activities related to the production and marketing of sports goods and services that play a role in enhancing added value.

On the other hand, sports are no longer a trivial activity. Still, it has become a prosperous industry, especially in developing countries, as the number of investments made in the sports industry's professional and public sectors is enormous. Sports' material and non-material benefits are because of their immediate benefits to commercial and industrial companies and long-term benefits such as increasing health and well-being, better workforce utilization, and increasing employment in sports and non-sports sectors. It cannot be ignored. Therefore, it is necessary for governments, including the government of Iran, to take advantage of the long-term benefits of sports, consider it a capital good, and its prosperity, especially in the public sector, to pay the necessary attention to its progress. Having said that, since most of the beneficiaries of this research are marketers and manufacturers of sports products, it can be expected to help them by identifying and prioritizing the factors affecting the development of advertising through social media so that they can change the mentality of their customers towards Increase the behavioral intentions to expand sports products.

## 2. Methodology

This was an applied study, and we employed a mixed method. First, the qualitative approach was used, and then the quantitative method was applied to develop the conceptual model for the research using the grounded theory. For the qualitative part, the study population consisted of 15 people (University professors and experts knowledgeable about sports marketing issues) selected using purposive sampling based on a theoretical approach. Data collection continued until theoretical data saturation and 15 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted. Therefore, in this part, the data were collected using semi-structured interviews. To complete the interviews, the researcher referred to the given place by coordinating with the subjects and collecting the data. To assess the interviews, the researcher transcribed them and analyzed their qualitative content. For this purpose, the text of the interviews was reviewed, and critical data were extracted and coded based on the grounded theory systematic approach from Corbin and Strauss (2015) (116 codes were selected). According to grounded theory, the influential factors for advertising through social media were identified, and a researcher-made questionnaire was designed.

The items related to each of the dimensions of the questionnaire were then developed. The descriptive analysis method was used for the quantitative part. After identifying the dimensions of advertising through social media in the qualitative aspect, a researcher-made questionnaire was designed by the researcher. The study population consisted of athletes of various sports. A total of 311 participants, including six fields (football, futsal, cycling, martial arts, athletics, and bodybuilding), were selected using purposive and convenience sampling. The questionnaire used in this study which included 70 items and factors affecting social media, structural factors and creativity in advertising, information, and awareness, communication with customers, customer service, environmental factors, individual factors, usage limitations, applied limitations, branding and credibility, interaction with customer, capacity building, socio-cultural and sociological development, marketing and economic development and purchasing development and competitive advantage. Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Experts, professors, and sports specialists confirmed its face validity by adding amendments. Ten specialists also confirmed its content validity by reducing and changing the questionnaire's items to assess its validity. Also, convergent and divergent validity were employed to measure the validity of the questionnaire.

Given that the mean value for all variables was more significant than or equal to 0.4, and the importance of average variance extracted (AVE) ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ ) for all variables was higher than that of the correlation between variables, therefore, an acceptable level of convergent validity and divergent validity was confirmed. Also, factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were used to assess the reliability. Considering that factor loadings were higher than 0.5 and the value of Cronbach's alpha was more significant than 0.78, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed. Descriptive statistics (such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage frequency, etc.) and inferential statistics (such as structural equation modeling (SEM) and Friedman test) were used to analyze the data. All statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 25.

### 3. Results

In the qualitative part of this study, the interviews were transcribed and carefully reviewed. Also, the critical data obtained from the study participants were noted and summarized using the qualitative content analysis method. In the present study, text received from the transcribed interviews was reviewed and divided into paragraphs, as listed in the [Table 1](#). The transcribed interviews conducted with the study participants in the open coding process are presented in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** An example of codes extracted from interviews conducted with the study participants.

<p><b>R1:</b> The behavioral intentions for an intelligent lifestyle, managing income and expenses, and the type of social media use (diversity, two-way interaction, etc.)</p>	<p><b>R1:</b> Use of Information Technology (IT), lower cost, two-way interactions, choice following the target market, easy access to objectives and groups, advertising through non-print media such as TV and radio are boring and repetitive, while there is a lot of variety along with focus and spending time in social media, increasing people's knowledge level, and income generating.</p>
<p><b>R2:</b> the type of use of social media (diversity, two-way interaction, etc.), appropriate</p>	<p><b>R2:</b> Ease of communication with the customers, the possibility of communicating with the customers at any time and place, getting</p>

marketing, strategy, and the appropriate communication	feedback from the customers, helping marketing research, updating products and services when changing them, and expressing all levels of an organization, ranging from managers to employees, with customers.
<b>R1:</b> The behavioral intentions for an intelligent lifestyle, managing income and expenses, and the type of social media use (diversity, two-way interaction, etc.)	<b>R3:</b> The pervasiveness of social media, the presence of most people in a virtual social space, many people nowadays spend much of their free time purchasing sporting goods and using sports services in virtual space.
<b>R4:</b> Easy access, a unique environment, creativity in advertising, and high relevance	<b>R4:</b> The availability of virtual space, no need to meet physically, decreasing the commuting burden, reduced energy consumption, reduced pollution, and having many contacts
<b>R5:</b> Easy access, using surprise and creating curiosity in ads, type of social media use, and accessible communication	<b>R5:</b> Availability of social media at any time and place, spending less time and money, being online and up-to-date, communicating efficiently with both producers and customers, and using surprise and creating curiosity in ads
<b>R6:</b> Easy communication, cost management	<b>R6:</b> Ubiquitous communications worldwide, reducing commuting costs and face-to-face communication.
<b>R7:</b> Type of social media use	<b>R7:</b> Nowadays, people spend considerable time searching for products and services on social media.
<b>R8:</b> Increased quality of communicating with contacts/ target audience and marketing	<b>R8:</b> Considerable number of contacts, increased traffic, branding, attracting connections, and communicating efficiently with contacts.
<b>R9:</b> Type of social media use, diversity and attractiveness	<b>R9:</b> Spend idle time on social media, have many contacts, be up-to-date, and be attractive.
<b>R10:</b> Type of social media use and appropriate statistical use	<b>R10:</b> Being ubiquitous, high effectiveness, analytical ability, the possibility of measurement, easy access to products, and content sharing.
<b>R11:</b> Communicating with the customers, the type of social media use, and the quality of media use	<b>R11:</b> Considering the customers' perspective, Having or serving a purpose, being ubiquitous, high effectiveness, better communication with the customer, the possibility of content sharing, more long-lasting, capable of being believed, and attractive, interesting, or exciting.
<b>R12:</b> Appropriate communication, the quality of social media, providing valuable information about products and services, and introducing them to the customers	<b>R12:</b> Establishing two-way communication, customers communicate directly with a list of products, round-the-clock availability, communicating effectively with customers, being informed about the products and services available in the market, and increased awareness and providing information.
<b>R13:</b> Type of social media use, updated information, appropriate communication/ interaction, and quality of social media use	<b>R13:</b> Social media has become sources for entertainment, shopping, news updates, and social interactions, informing the latest news, easy access, being attractive, expanding interaction with the target audience/contacts, increasing speed, accuracy, and quality of the promotion, and being enjoyable
<b>R14:</b> the quality of social media, considerable number of target audience, appropriate statistical use, and easy access	<b>R14:</b> Being strategic, high attractiveness, high coverage, high repetition, many contacts, having the benefit of 24 /7 in any place, and the ability to measure advertising accurately.
<b>R15:</b> appropriate interaction/communication with customers, the quality of social media, a considerable number of contacts, and a suitable specialized atmosphere	<b>R15:</b> interactivity, two-way communication, response to ads, multimedia background infrastructure (such as image, video, etc.), high speed, attractiveness, global reach, possibility to accompany the person, exposure, possibility of creating an independent media, the possibility of creating a particular language.

**Table 2.** Main category, components, and concepts extracted from all interviews.

Main Category	Components	Concepts
Designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customer's behavioral intentions	The factors affecting social media.	Diversity, attractiveness, and being enjoyable/amusing
		I can access social media (time, place, advertising tools, and access level).
		It is easy to use social media platforms.
	Structural factors and creativity in advertising	Frequency of advertising (such as number of repetitions, distance between distributions, all products).
		The uniqueness of advertisements in social media
		Creative and unusual advertising in social media
	Information and awareness	Surprising advertisements on social media
		The curiosity of advertisements in social media
		He is providing valuable information about products and services to the users.
	Communication with customers	We are introducing the popular brands to customers.
		To be informed about the products and services available in the market
		We are establishing communication between the customers.
	Customer service	Increased quality of communication with contacts.
		Ease of information sharing.
		Considerable number of social media users and the target audience
Environmental factors	We provide effective communication services that meet people's needs.	
	Two-way communication with customers.	
	You are choosing a specialized/specific environment for business.	
Individual factors	We are updating the communication of contacts on social media.	
	Improving the qWe are improving ournance.	
	Proper marketing.	
Usage limitations	Branding.	
	High-quality advertising.	
	Incentives for using social media.	
Applied limitations	Sociocultural conditions	
	Individual capabilities and interactive environment.	
	Personality traits.	
Branding and credibility	Enthusiasm.	
	Many competitors and numerous advertisements.	
	Unethical environment.	
Branding and credibility	Low knowledge.	
	Information traffic.	
	Unhealthy advertisement.	
Branding and credibility	Existing laws.	
	Costs of Internet usage.	
	The limited number of contacts.	
Branding and credibility	Filtering and limited user access.	
	Insufficient virtual information.	
	Lack of news coverage and fear of disclosure.	
Branding and credibility	Physical appearance of a brand.	
	An illustration of the values of goods and services and the attractiveness of the image.	

Main Category	Components	Concepts
		The use of symbols and signs in social media advertising.
		Marketing management.
Interaction with customers		Creating a suitable virtual work environment.
		Receiving the customers' tastes and improving customer relationship management system.
		Bilateral and multilateral events, Purchase incentives.
		Creating content based on the nature and identity of the customers and gaining the target audience's trust.
Capacity building		Providing a ground for developing international relations
		Increased the quality of providing electronic services to customers and improved their speed, efficiency, and accuracy.
		Updating the software and launching the National Information Network.
		Improving access to multiple channels of communication to perform operations.
Socio-cultural and sociological development		Increasing software and hardware capacity to use social media
		Strengthening the product identity.
		Social cohesion and convergence.
		Role and social image.
		Increasing the satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment.
Marketing and economic development		Promoting the intellectual, cultural, and social levels.
		Shaping the positive attitude of the public towards the goods.
		Advertising in the media market and target sites.
		Using all the capacities of social media in marketing.
		Market segmentation and the selection of target market.
Purchasing development and competitive advantage		Using social media for content marketing.
		Regular purchase.
		Developing the infrastructures, facilities, and equipment for the future.
		Determining the market share of purchasing in different social media platforms.
		Economic utility.
		Increasing investment.
		Designing the advertising campaigns for purchasing.
		Increasing the number of customers.

According to the results, 70 concepts and 15 main components were extracted from the interviews. Also, a second-order factor analysis was employed to assess the construct validity of the questionnaire. In determining the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the instruments and the SEM, primarily when the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) is used, the normality assumption of the variables is one of the presuppositions of performing the test. For this purpose, the distribution of normality of the data was assessed by the values of skewness and elongation of the data. Regarding the absolute value of skewness and extension, the elongation value should not be greater than three, and the skewness value should be between -1 and 1, indicating the normality of the data.

**Table 3.** Factor loadings and t value (second-order confirmatory factor analysis of designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions).

Components	Items	Item expressions	Skewness values	Elongation values	Factor loadings	t value
Factors affecting social media	q1	Diversity, attractiveness, and being enjoyable/amusing	-0.651	0.210	0.560	-
	q2	Having the ability to access social media (time, place, advertising tools, and access level).	-0.694	-0.611	0.579	7.801
	q3	It is easy to use social media platforms.	-0.708	-0.484	0.646	7.379
	Q4	Frequency of advertising (such as number of repetitions, distance between distributions, all products). Providing a unique aspect to ads in social media.				
Structural factors and creativity in advertising	q5	Providing a unique aspect to ads in social media.	-0.741	-0.459	0.398	-
	q6	Being creative ads in social media.	-0.463	0.968	0.332	4.384
	q7	Using the surprise in ads on social media.	-0.452	0.757	0.622	6.063
	q8	Creating curiosity in ads on social media.	-0.797	0.472	0.650	6.156
Information and awareness	q9	Providing valuable information about products and services to the users.	-0.334	0.760	0.619	-
	q10	Introducing the popular brands to customers.	-0.576	0.161	0.548	7.383
	q11	To be informed about the products and services available in the market.	0.305	0.549	0.567	7.566
Communication with customers	q12	Establishing communication between the customers.	-0.329	0.787	0.589	-
	q13	Increased quality of communication with contacts.	-0.131	0.950	0.236	4.010
	q14	Ease of information sharing.	-0.624	0.306	0.554	8.540
	q15	Considerable number of social media users and the target audience.	-0.695	-0.126	0.554	8.544
Customer service	q16	Providing effective communication services that meet the people's needs.	-0.473	-0.276	0.478	-
	q17	Two-way communication with customers.	-0.560	0.374	0.482	6.446
	q18	Choosing a specialized/specific environment for business.	-0.185	0.145	0.640	7.581
	q19	Updating information of contacts on social media.	-0.124	0.686	0.668	7.737

Components	Items	Item expressions	Skewness values	Elongation values	Factor loadings	t value
Environmental factors	q20	Improving the quality of performance.	-0.878	0.182	0.579	-
	q21	Proper marketing	0.137	0.201	0.533	7.948
	q22	Branding	-0.839	0.156	0.577	8.224
	q23	high-quality advertising	0.508	0.285	0.580	8.480
	q24	Incentives for using social media.	-0.911	0.138	0.530	7.919
Individual factors	q25	Sociocultural conditions	-0.840	0.820	0.609	8.795
	q26	Individual capabilities and interactive environment.	-0.207	0.401	0.682	-
	q27	Personality traits.	-0.938	-0.118	0.743	10.08
	q28	Enthusiasm	-0.817	0.277	0.649	9.782
Usage limitations	q29	Many competitors and numerous advertisements.	-0.208	0.171	0.667	-
	q30	Unethical environment.	-0.972	0.515	0.591	9.775
	q31	Low knowledge.	-0.736	0.603	0.601	9.934
	q32	Information traffic.	-0.603	-0.653	0.611	10.085
	q33	Unhealthy advertisement.	-0.263	0.175	0.726	11.772
Applied limitations	q34	Existing laws.	-0.190	0.273	0.559	-
	q35	Costs of Internet usage.	-0.369	0.143	0.733	9.717
	q36	The limited number of contacts.	-0.120	0.475	0.732	9.705
	q37	Filtering and limited user access.	-0.654	0.471	0.502	7.492
	q38	Insufficient virtual information	-0.574	0.192	0.628	8.795
	q39	Lack of news coverage and fear of disclosure.	-0.806	0.959	0.576	8.285
Branding and credibility	q40	Physical appearance of a brand.	-0.189	0.125	0.719	-
	q41	An illustration of the values of goods and services and the attractiveness of the image.	-0.198	0.289	0.653	10.519
	q42	The use of symbols and signs in social media advertising.	-0.723	0.188	0.574	9.276
	q43	Marketing management.	-0.154	0.111	0.601	9.701
	q44	Creating a suitable virtual work environment.	-0.838	-0.300	0.633	10.206
Interaction with customers	q45	Receiving the customers' tastes and improving customer relationship management system.	-0.848	-0.387	0.544	-
	q46	Bilateral and multilateral events.	-0.246	0.336	0.670	8.829
	q47	Purchase incentives.	-0.729	-0.134	0.875	10.195
	q48	Creating content based on the nature and identity of the customers and gaining the target audience's trust.	-0.106	0.795	0.825	9.917



Components	Items	Item expressions	Skewness values	Elongation values	Factor loadings	t value
Capacity building	q49	Providing a ground for developing international relations.	-0.919	0.549	0.790	9.703
	q50	Increased the quality of providing electronic services to customers and improved their speed, efficiency, and accuracy.	-0.603	-0.628	0.656	-
	q51	Updating the software and launching the National Information Network.	-0.244	0.177	0.666	10.290
	q52	Improving access to multiple channels of communication to perform operations.	-0.335	0.126	0.751	11.374
	q53	Increasing software and hardware capacity to use social media.	-0.249	0.479	0.816	12.141
Socio-cultural and sociological development	q54	Strengthening the product identity.	-.0835	0.312	0.618	-
	q55	Social cohesion and convergence.	-0.800	-.3936	0.764	10.881
	q56	Role and social image.	-0.898	0.324	0.601	9.063
	q57	Increasing the satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment.	-0.553	-0.875	0.783	11.069
	q58	Promoting the intellectual, cultural, and social levels	-0.344	0.877	0.744	10.681
Marketing and economic development	q59	Shaping the positive attitude of the public towards the goods.	-0.480	0.739	0.777	11.03
	q60	Advertising in the media market and target sites.	-0.277	0.503	0.747	-
	q61	Using all the capacities of social media in marketing.	-0.597	0.623	0.770	13.905
	q62	Market segmentation and the selection of target market.	-0.669	0.420	0.705	12.603
	q63	Using social media for content marketing.	-0.629	-0.290	-0.706	12.626
Purchasing development and competitive advantage	q64	Regular purchase	-0.109	0.599	0.685	12.220
	q65	Developing the infrastructures, facilities, and equipment for the future.	-0.641	-0.110	0.499	-
	q66	Determining the market share of purchasing in different social media platforms.	-0.686	-0.692	0.589	7.408
	q67	Economic utility.	-0.419	0.316	0.699	8.037
	q68	Increasing investment.	-0.288	0.128	0.628	7.605
	q69	Designing the advertising campaigns for purchasing.	-0.125	0.102	0.522	6.822
	q70	Increasing the number of customers.	-0.493	0.783	0.461	6.289

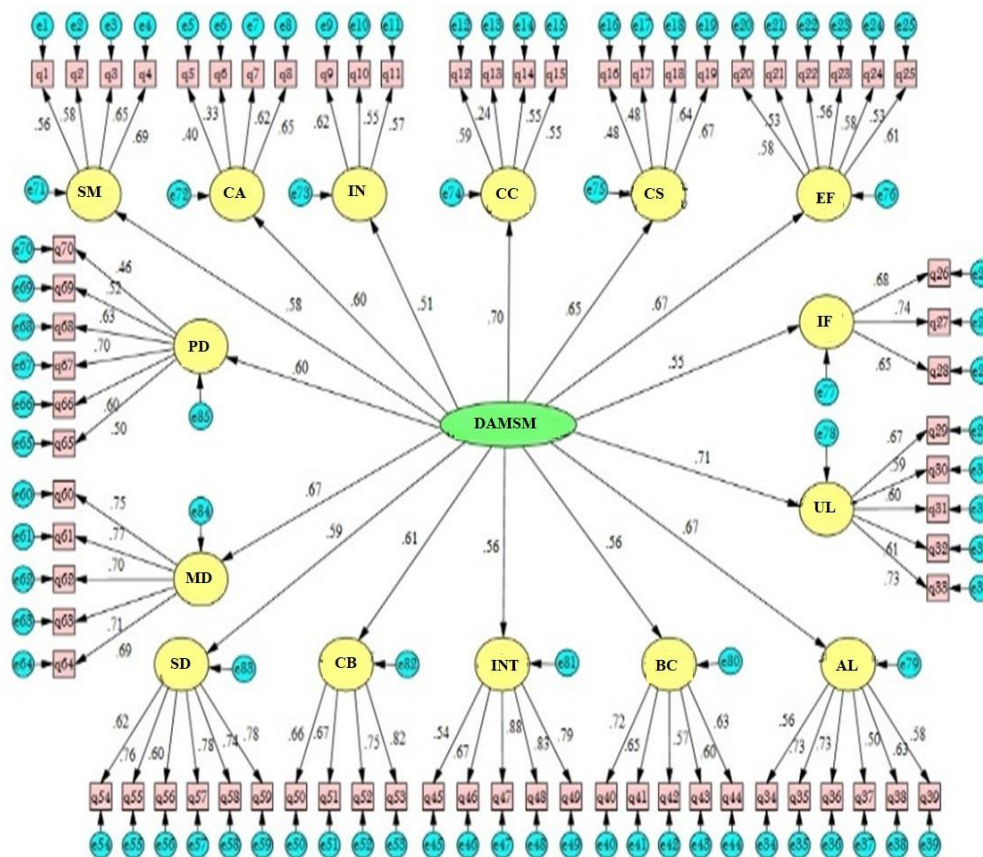


Figure 1. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis of designing and developing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions (standardized regression coefficients).

Table 4. Abbreviations of the development of advertising model through social media.

The social media	SM
creativity in advertising	CA
Information	IN
Communication with customers	CC
Customer service	CS
Environmental factors	EF
Individual factors	IF
usage limitations	UL
applied limitations	AL
branding and credibility	BC
interaction	INT
capacity building	CB
sociological development	SD
marketing development	MD
purchasing development	PD

According to the results, all the skewness values related to the items mentioned above were between -1 and 1, and the elongation values ranged from -3 to 3, indicating that the data obtained from the items were usually distributed. The findings showed that all items contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions had an acceptable t value and factor loading and were considered suitable indicators for measuring these components. According to the data obtained from the study participants, all items could be regarded as the indicators of factors affecting social media, structural factors and creativity in advertising, information and awareness, communication with customers, customer service, environmental factors, individual factors, usage limitations, applied limitations, branding and credibility, interaction with customer, capacity building, socio-cultural and sociological development, marketing and economic development and purchasing development and competitive advantage. Also, the accuracy of measuring the dimensions of the advertising development model through social media was assessed.

**Table 5.** Second-order confirmatory factor analysis of designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' intention

	Path		Factor loading	t value	P-value
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	The social media	0.576	-	-
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	creativity in advertising	0.597	5.621	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	Information	0.513	7.186	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	Communication with customers	0.704	7.896	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	Customer service	0.653	6.682	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	Environmental factors	0.668	7.656	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	Individual factors	0.549	7.873	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	usage limitations	0.696	8.431	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	applied limitations	0.675	7.530	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	branding and credibility	0.564	8.210	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	interaction	0.560	7.145	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	capacity building	0.614	8.028	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	sociological development	0.585	7.738	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	marketing development	0.667	8.817	0.001
Designing an advertising model through social media	←	purchasing development	0.597	6.713	0.001

The results obtained from designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions demonstrated that the second-order model was appropriate, all model parameters had acceptable t-values and factor loading, and a p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Finally, the participants reported that designing an advertising model through social media was an acceptable variable. Also, the results obtained from factor loadings (impact coefficients) revealed that communication with customers ( $\beta=0.704$ ) and usage limitations ( $\beta=0.696$ ) had the highest effect on designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions and information ( $\beta=0.513$ ) and individual factors ( $\beta=0.549$ ) exerted the most negligible effect. Fit indices for CFA were also presented.

**Table 6.** Fit indices for designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions.

Fit indices	The acceptable value	The value of indices	Results
chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ )	-	112.1662	-
Degrees of freedom	-	2330	-
the ratio of the chi-square statistic to the respective degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ )	Less than 5	4.814	good
The goodness of fit index (GFI)	More than 0.9	0.905	good
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	More than 0.8	0.836	good
The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	Less than 0.1	0.094	good
The root mean square residual (RMR)	Less than 0.05	0.040	good
The comparative fit index (CFI)	More than 0.9	0.916	good
Normed fit index (NFI)	More than 0.9	0.903	good
The Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	More than 0.9	0.919	good

The values of fit indices for designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions indicated the appropriateness of the appropriate index and, thus, the fit and desirability of the second-order confirmatory factor analysis of designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions were confirmed. The Friedman test prioritized the factors contributing to developing an advertising model through social media to control customers' wishes.

**Table 7.** Prioritization of the factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions (Friedman test results).

Ranking	Components	The average rating	Number	$2\chi$	df	P value
1	Individual factors	9.44	0.311	266.673	14	0.001
2	branding and credibility	9.16				
3	Structural factors and creativity in advertising	8.94				
4	Information and awareness	8.71				
5	Environmental factors	8.70				
6	marketing and economic development	8.56				

Ranking	Components	The average rating	Number	$2\chi$	df	P value
7	purchasing development and competitive advantage	8.39				
8	The factors affecting social media	8.32				
9	usage limitations	8.14				
10	socio-cultural and sociological development	7.67				
11	Customer service	7.37				
12	Interaction with customer	7.21				
13	capacity building	6.82				
14	Applied limitations	6.44				
15	Combination with customers	6.12				

The Friedman test results demonstrated a significant difference between the participants concerning the factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions (Sig=0.001,  $2\chi = 266.673$ ). According to the average rating, individual factors, branding and credibility structural factors, and advertising creativity were considered the most critical factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions. Also, the participants reported that individual limitations and communication with customers ranked in last place as the factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The use of SNSs for providing fast services, advertising, and attracting customers is one of the most essential strategies employed by sports organizations, sports companies, and sporting goods stores. The beliefs and attitudes of the consumers towards advertising are the vital factors influencing its effectiveness. Understanding the thoughts and attitudes of advertisers towards the target audiences is crucial because they control the consumers' attitudes towards the brand and their purchase intention. In general, beliefs about advertising affect the general attitude of consumers toward advertising, and given that consumers' attitudes are strongly correlated with their behavior, advertising can affect consumers' behavior (Mir, 2012). The results of the present study demonstrated that interaction with customers, individual factors, branding and credibility, communication with customers, structural factors and creativity in advertising, personal limitations, information and awareness, environmental factors, marketing and economic development, purchase development, and competitive advantage, factors affecting social media, usage limitations, socio-cultural and sociological product, customer service, capacity building, and were identified as the factors contributing to the designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions of sporting goods. Also, Friedman test results revealed that individual factors, branding and credibility, structural and creativity in advertising, information, and awareness, and

environmental factors were identified as the most critical factors for designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions.

Nowadays, advertising sporting goods through social media is a valuable source of product information. Advertising provides information about features, properties, and availability of a product. This information enables consumers to make reasonable decisions and improve their purchasing skills (Mir, 2015). Consumers who believe Internet advertising provides the information they need have a more favorable attitude. The quality of advertising could affect the customers' opinion of products offered by companies and organizations (Amjad et al., 2015). Ling et al. (2010) and Wang and Sun (2010) conducted studies on both traditional advertising and online advertising and found that consumers perceive advertising as a valuable source of information. These studies also showed that the consumers' beliefs about advertising, like awareness, could positively affect their attitudes towards it. Wang et al. (2009) and Wang and Sun (2010) investigated the credibility that could affect the customer's attitude toward online advertising, and the results demonstrated that credibility could be considered a positive predictor of attitude toward online advertising. The effectiveness of the potential impacts of social media advertising is one of the factors contributing to the development of advertising through social media. Social media platforms can have the highest efficiency and potential effects when attracting passive customers to products or services. Our results align with James (2011) and Bashar et al. (2012), suggesting that social media's effectiveness is considered an essential factor.

Our results revealed that creativity in advertising was identified as the essential factor for designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions. In their study, Roshandel Arbatani and Mahmoudzadeh (2018) also demonstrated that advertising methods were essential to social media advertising, consistent with our research. Creativity and innovation in advertising are the strategies that can differentiate sports companies and sporting goods stores from competitors and enhance the customers' behavioral intentions. Therefore, paying attention to creativity and innovation in advertising and the appropriateness of identifying benefits focusing on profitability is a process that leads to professionalism, increasing the customers' attraction and reducing the costs of communicating with customers of sporting goods. In other words, by being creative in advertising and differentiating your services from the competitors, you can create a good image of the company and a product in customers' minds and enhance the customers' behavioral intentions. Social media advertising contains a considerable amount of information that can clarify a product for consumers; as a result, it has many capabilities. Therefore, the more informative and creative your advertising, the better the purchase decision of the consumers and the more their behavioral intentions will be.

The use of Information can speed up information processing, reduce the relative cost of services, increase the use of mechanized systems, build optimal information systems, leading to easy access to Information, provide the possibility of calculating and exchanging data at high speed in a large geographic area and joint and concurrent access to information resources and change the life process. In other words, social media platforms significantly increase Information and awareness. If advertising can increase

the customers' awareness about sporting goods and enhance their communication, their behavioral intentions to purchase them will also increase. Advertising can provide Information regarding what you know or want to know. Advertising gives consumers Information about new or available products (James, 2011). According to Kotler, advertising has three primary objectives: to inform, persuade, and remind. Disclosing is one of the most critical objectives. Advertising may include considerable Information to clarify the products for the customers. The more informative advertising, the better customers' purchase decisions (Khodadad Hosseini et al., 2015).

Customer orientation, i.e., communication with customers and customer service, can be regarded as one of the factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions. According to the results, one of the factors contributing to developing an advertising model through social media is paying attention to understanding the customers' perspective, better communication with the customers, establishing two-way communication, and the ability to communicate effectively with customers.

Our results showed that environmental factors were one of the essential factors for designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions. Ecological factors include performance quality improvement, competitive environment and appropriate marketing, globalization and branding, high-quality advertising, incentives, and sociocultural conditions, which need attention to attract customers.

The results of the present study showed that individual factors were identified as the most critical factor contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions. Both sports and commercial companies have no choice but to use this type of advertising if they want to have activity in this field and maintain their position in today's competitive market. Internet advertising and the use of social media have different forms, each of which has its features. Therefore, to attract customers, the best form of advertising should be selected based on the purpose of advertising the type of product; in other words, it should be chosen according to the personal qualities of the target audience. Unique attributes include passion. Our results are consistent with those of Flint (2006); Roshandel Arbatani and Mahmoudzadeh (2018). In their study, Roshandel Arbatani and Mahmoudzadeh (2018) demonstrated that interaction atmosphere could be an essential factor contributing to advertising through social media. Social media used as a promotional tool can play a critical role in the effectiveness of advertising and can effectively reinforce streams of thought and change them if necessary. Also, personal communication would be more effective if the objective is to change people's perceptions.

Also, usage and applied limitations as intervening factors contributing to social media advertising could affect the customers' behavioral intentions for sporting goods. The intervening categories and concepts of using social media for advertising to influence the customer's behavioral intentions are as follows: usage limitations (such as many competitors, unethical environment, low knowledge, information traffic, and unhealthy advertisement) and applied limitations (legal, technological and economic), including existing laws, costs of internet usage, limited number of contacts, filtering and restricted

user access, insufficient virtual information, lack of news coverage. These results are consistent with those of Wu (2016). Therefore, if suitable conditions exist for the intervening factors, these cases will effectively facilitate advertising development through social media. Also, if no appropriate conditions have been paid attention to these cases, they will be an obstacle and a limiting factor.

Branding and credibility ranked in the second place. With the increasing use of social media platforms, one of the topics raised in social media advertising is how to improve brand positioning in customers' minds using this way, which has attracted the attention of many organizations and companies. Our results are consistent with those of Janssens et al. (2014), suggesting that building trust and credibility through social media could be influential factors for social media advertising. Therefore, it is necessary to promote branding and credibility in social media advertising. Branding and credibility include the physical appearance of a brand, an illustration of the values of goods and services and the attractiveness of the image, the use of symbols and signs in social media advertising, creating a suitable virtual work environment, and marketing management. Proper advertising is vital in determining customers' attitudes towards Internet advertising. Suppose customers positively perceive the companies and interact with the customers. In that case, they cause the customers to have a positive attitude towards Internet advertising, and accordingly, credibility and interaction are positive predictors of attitude towards advertising. Customers respond to advertising based on their trust in advertising messages. Belief will influence the customers' attitude toward the advertising message. Confidence in the advertising message can enhance the customers' motivation in processing the advertising message. When Internet advertising is reliable and trustworthy, consumers will favorably respond to Internet advertising (Lee et al., 2014).

Interaction with customers included receiving the customers' tastes and improving the customer relationship management system, bilateral and multilateral events, purchase incentives, creating content based on the nature and identity of the customers, gaining the trust of a target audience, and providing a ground for developing international relations.

The capacity building included increased quality of providing electronic services to customers and improving their speed, efficiency, and accuracy, updating the software and launching the National Information Network, improving access to multiple channels of communication to perform operations, and increasing software and hardware capacity to use social media, which is inconsistent with the study of Natarajan et al. (2013). Due to the competitive nature of business, managers should expand their planning horizon and make decisions under conditions of uncertainty. In this regard, advertising through mass media cannot be ignored in familiarizing customers with sporting goods. Advertising allows all people to have an equal opportunity to become knowledgeable about the products and the benefits they get from purchasing them, leading to the retention and attraction of more customers. Also, social media platforms' interactive and engaging features provide an opportunity to illustrate social messages. Due to the social expectations of consumers, their behaviors may be different based on their attributes, and they perceive social images differently than other consumers (Natarajan et al., 2013). In addition, if the electronic capabilities and infrastructures are improved along with these factors, they can play an essential role in developing strategies.



Moreover, socio-cultural and sociological development, marketing and economic development, purchasing development, and competitive advantage were identified as other practical factors contributing to designing an advertising model through social media to influence the customers' behavioral intentions and were also measured in the form of socio-economic development and beliefs. These results are in line with those of [Wang and Sun \(2010\)](#). [Amjad et al. \(2015\)](#) conducted a study entitled "Examining Beliefs and Attitudes towards Internet Advertising". They identified some aspects of shared beliefs, one of the influential factors being economic and cultural value. The economic utility is one of the most critical dimensions of advertising beliefs. ([Belch & Belch, 2018](#)) reported that economic utility reflects the view that advertising could accelerate the acceptability of new products and technologies, provide a ground for full employment, reduce the average cost of production, promote healthy competition among producers, and increase life expectancy. According to advertising supporters, advertising is the lifeblood of the business. Therefore, advertising provides consumers with information about products and services and helps them increase their standard of living ([Ling et al., 2010](#)). Consumers may like advertising because it contributes to their economic and social health. Social and economic utility refers to the tangible economic and social impacts of advertising for consumers, resulting in development.

This study attempted to advance the existing literature on social media advertising. We carefully reviewed the relevant studies, which led to identifying gaps in the research and the need to design an advertising model through social media. Also, in this study, we tried to identify ambiguous cases, considering the necessity of developing an advertising model through social media and the existing research gap in this field. Based on this, the following practical suggestions are given from the findings of the research:

- If marketers want to change people's minds, advertising messages must clearly describe the benefits of a product and explore the customers' attributes. This causes the customers to change their beliefs about a product, and new beliefs are formed. In other words, customers will have a favorable attitude toward advertising.
- In addition, by informing customers about the benefits of a product compared to similar products and services, its cost-effectiveness, the similarity and appropriateness of the products and offering services following the customers' taste, considering sales discounts, providing free sports services if they buy or use the services, the warranty on after-sales service can increase the customers' behavioral intentions to purchase the sporting goods. Therefore, it is recommended that sporting goods stores and manufacturing companies provide advertisements with more valuable and attractive content to the target audience.
- Additionally, keeping the content up to date on your site helps promote the customers' attitude towards social media advertising because up-to-date information following people's needs can be considered an important factor affecting the customers' attitudes.

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## عوامل موثر بر توسعه تبلیغات از طریق رسانه‌های اجتماعی برای تأثیرگذاری بر نیت رفتاری مشتریان محصولات ورزشی

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### کلیدواژه

آگاهی  
بازاریابی  
برندسازی  
ارتباطات  
تعاملات مشتریان  
توسعه اقتصادی

### نوع مقاله

مطالعه موردی

### چکیده

**هدف:** رسانه‌های اجتماعی بر نیاز افراد به تعاملات بین فردی تأثیر گذاشته است. پژوهش حاضر با هدف شناسایی و اولویت‌بندی عوامل موثر بر توسعه تبلیغات از طریق رسانه‌های اجتماعی و به منظور تأثیرگذاری بر نیت رفتاری مشتریان محصولات ورزشی انجام شد.

**روش:** روش پژوهش آمیخته (در بخش کیفی روش دلفی و در بخش کمی توصیفی-تحلیلی) بود. جامعه آماری بخش کیفی شامل کلیه متخصصان مدیریت رسانه‌ها و بازاریابان ورزشی و در بخش کمی ورزشکاران رشته‌های مختلف ورزشی (N= ۱۶۰۰) بودند. نمونه‌گیری نیز به صورت هدفمند و در دسترس انجام شد. ابزار پژوهش، مصاحبه نیمه ساختار یافته و پرسشنامه محقق ساخته بود. جهت تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از کدگذاری سیستماتیک و تحلیل عاملی تأییدی با نرم‌افزار SPSS نسخه ۲۴ و Amos نسخه ۲۵ استفاده شده است.

**یافته‌ها:** چنانچه بازاریابان بخواهند که ذهنیت افراد را تغییر دهند، پیام‌های تبلیغاتی باید بسیار صریح و روشن مزایای محصول را شرح دهد و ویژگی‌های فردی مشتریان را مورد بررسی قرار دهد. این سبب می‌گردد مصرف‌کنندگان باورهای خود را تغییر دهند. بر اساس نتایج عوامل موثر بر توسعه تبلیغات از طریق رسانه‌های اجتماعی به‌منظور بررسی تأثیرگذاری بر نیت رفتاری مشتریان محصولات ورزشی به ترتیب اولویت شامل عوامل فردی، برندسازی و اعتباربخشی، عوامل ساختاری است.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** در این مقاله به بررسی مدل‌سازی توسعه تبلیغات از طریق رسانه‌های اجتماعی، به منظور تأثیرگذاری بر نیت رفتاری مشتریان محصولات ورزشی با استفاده از مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری پرداخته شد.

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## The Adoption of Virtual Fitting Rooms in Iranian Sportswear Industries: A Mixed-Methods Study Based on TAM Model

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Virtual fitting rooms allow online sportswear consumers to try on clothes before shopping. This technology has recently received much attention due to its many benefits to sports consumers and commercial potential. Still, it has not yet entered Iran, and there is no information regarding its adoption by Iranian consumers. This research investigates the adoption of this technology by Iranian online sportswear consumers.

**Methodology:** This research is applied and developmental in terms of purpose and exploratory in terms of implementation method. In this research, a mixed method (quantitative, qualitative) has been used, in which the Delphi qualitative method precedes the quantitative method. In the qualitative phase, 20 experts in the sportswear industry were selected through snowball sampling. In the quantitative phase, a survey of 394 online shoppers of sportswear products was conducted on social networks. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. SMART PLS and SPSS 23 software were used for data analysis.

**Findings:** The results supported the positive effect of the factors perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment, and fashion leadership, as well as the negative impact of technology anxiety on adopting this technology. The results have practical implications for sports managers, retailers, and sportswear industries regarding adopting the best management and marketing strategies for virtual fitting rooms.

**Originality:** This study examines the innovation of virtual fitting room technology among Iranian sportswear consumers for the first time. Virtual fitting rooms play a significant role in saving time, energy, and money for sports consumers and protecting their privacy. Also, this technology is a fantastic promotional device for sports industries and retailers if Iranian sportswear consumers accept it.

### Keywords

Fashion Leadership  
Perceived Ease of Use  
Perceived Usefulness  
Technology Anxiety  
Virtual Fitting Room

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## 1. Introduction

Online sportswear industries have grown significantly compared to other sectors (Beck & Crié, 2018). Online shopping for sportswear has become one of the most essential activities of Internet users. After understanding their needs, consumers of sports products search online websites for information about their products or services. Many online shoppers of sports products feel satisfied with online shopping and find this method very convenient (Herrero-Crespo et al., 2022).

Despite the many advantages offered by online shopping of sports products compared to the traditional channels (such as time, number of choices, and price), it creates many limitations. One of the most important limitations is its inability to pay attention to the physical fitness of the clothes (Beck & Crié, 2018).

Therefore, the lack of fitness and the costs of returning inappropriate goods are among the most critical obstacles to online shopping. If sports consumers are confident that the apparel, they are shopping for fits them perfectly, they will probably purchase it. The retailers are not obliged to make incentives such as free shipping to solve the problem of returning apparel. Research shows that 30% of clothes sold online are returned; this should be taken seriously (Li, 2019).

If online sports retailers can provide sports consumers with trying the sportswear before shopping for them, their motivation to buy online will increase (Alvarez, 2017). The findings of (Walker Sands, 2015) show that if sportswear shoppers can try on products virtually instead of seeing their images, the probability of online shopping will increase by 35%. For this purpose, some companies and industries have offered virtual fitting rooms on their website to create a close relationship between reality and the shopping environment (Alvarez, 2017).

Through virtual fitting rooms, sports consumers can evaluate the clothes on their bodies without putting them on. These systems facilitate the decision-making process for the shoppers and enhance their shopping experience, or at least limit their choices before physical examination (Lee et al., 2021). Today, there is a variety of virtual systems used in sportswear industries. For example, the technology "Webcam Social Shopper" (WSS) is used in online shopping (Bonetti et al., 2018); "Virtual Dressing Rooms" are used in mobile shopping (Adikari et al., 2020), and the technology "Magic Mirror" is applied to in-store shopping (El-Shamandi Ahmed et al., 2023). In general, the performance of virtual dressing rooms is based on augmented reality (AR) technology, in which real data is applied to computer-generated garments (El-Shamandi Ahmed et al., 2023).

Nowadays, sportswear electronic services are expanding greatly in Iran. The rapid growth of the Internet in Iran has made the consumers of sports products gain more confidence in online shopping. In recent years, after the outbreak of Covid 19, Iranians have seen a 60% growth in online shopping (Rezaeinejad, 2021). According to the statistics, about twenty thousand online sports retail stores have been established in Tehran, the capital of Iran, in 2022 alone. The value of the business activities of these retailers reaches 17.4 billion dollars (Sharei & Zare, 2023). However, some problems are specific to this field. For example, the absence of virtual fitting rooms has caused a sharp decline in the potential growth of online sports retail sales in Iran (Keshkar et al., 2021).



In addition, one of the challenges faced by Iranian online retailers is providing sports consumers with appropriate solutions for clothing sizes and fitness (Najafi et al., 2020). Online sports retailers usually rely on sizing supplied by manufacturers and different sizing rules (Saurav, 2016). To buy sportswear, you can never count only on the sizing provided by the manufacturers and the relevant laws, and the consumers must see the appropriate clothing on their body and try its fit. To solve problems related to sizing, sports product retailers must observe two things: providing sizing with maximum accuracy and creating a good experience (Ishfaq et al., 2016). Some experts in this field refer to more flexible policies for returning sold items and refunding the cost in the store, as well as options for exchanging and replacing items as solutions to this problem. At the same time, many experts suggest investing in virtual fitting rooms as a solution (Ishfaq et al., 2016).

This research is trying to investigate the factors affecting the adoption of virtual fitting rooms in Iran when shopping for sportswear online. According to the technology acceptance model, this study examines the influence of the factors below on the adoption of virtual fitting room technology by online sportswear shoppers in Iran: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. In addition, this research examines the impact of two personality traits related and compatible with this technology, namely fashion leadership and technology anxiety, and the effect of perceived enjoyment on the acceptance of this technology.

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1. Virtual Fitting Rooms**

Virtual fitting rooms are a modern technology in the sportswear industry that helps consumers improve their accuracy in shopping for sportswear by testing clothes virtually. In virtual appropriate room technology, the avatars are created for the users according to the measurements submitted in the simulation process. This technology was born in 2005. After 2010, many sportswear stores switched to this technology (Lee & Leonas, 2018).

As stated, one of the main factors of the public's reluctance to buy sportswear online is the unfitness of the clothes with the people. In addition, consumers like to personally try their favourite clothes on before shopping, ensure their fitness and check the differences in size (Vaccaro et al., 2018). The primary function of virtual fitting rooms is to ensure online shoppers of sportswear regarding size, fitness, colour, etc. (Zhao et al., 2021). Therefore, they provide conditions where online shoppers can see and choose the clothes they want in their desired design and size (Ishfaq et al., 2016).

According to Beck and Crié (2018), virtual fitting rooms arouse the curiosity of online shoppers about the product and increase the probability of their (online and offline) financial support and purchase intention. Moreover, this technology helps online shoppers save time because they no longer need to go to physical stores (Schnack et al., 2021). Also, research has shown that this technology reduces the probability of product returns because consumers can try the product before shopping online (Schnack et al., 2021).

The first step to using these technologies is for the user to enter his body measurements to produce an avatar (virtual body). The user can input his measurements in different

ways. For example, they can manually enter the size of various body parts, such as height, waist, upper body, lower body, and other measurements, so the system creates an avatar (Adikari et al., 2020). In some applications, it is enough for the user to take a full-length photo of his body and upload it to the application. In this way, consumers can try different products virtually and finally choose their desired product (Beck & Crié, 2018).

The use of advanced technologies in virtual fitting rooms creates concerns and worries for the users, as well as the advantages and benefits it offers. For instance, some kinds of this technology change 2D photos to make 3D avatars, which interfere with the measurements (Adikari et al., 2020). Besides, this technology can cause consumers' privacy concerns because, in some cases, they have to enter their photos or measurements into the system (Zhao et al., 2021). Moreover, some researchers have focused on the fact that entering the measurement in the system is time-consuming and have considered it a defect (Beck & Crié, 2018).

## 2.2. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The technology acceptance model is taken from Fishbein and Ajzen's logical action theory (Alambeigi & Ahangari, 2016). Davis (1985) proposed this model. This model explains how external factors affect the behavioural decisions of online sports shoppers to use virtual fitting rooms. Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the two key elements of the technology acceptance model influencing online consumers' behavioural decisions in virtual fitting rooms (Mohammadi & Ghysvandi, 2022). In this model, perceived usefulness refers to the subjective approach of online sports consumers to use virtual fitting rooms to improve performance; perceived ease of use points to the ease of using virtual fitting rooms. These factors affect sports consumers' adoption of this technology (Marangunić & Granić, 2015). Accordingly, I propose these two hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Perceived usefulness affects the attitude of sportswear consumers towards adopting virtual fitting room technology.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Perceived ease of use affects sportswear consumers' attitudes towards adopting virtual fitting room technology.

According to Davis et al. (2006), perceived enjoyment can also be considered an internal factor affecting the acceptance of technologies. In other words, TAM operates through three factors affecting the attitude of sportswear consumers towards adopting virtual fitting rooms.

Perceived enjoyment is "how enjoyable the mere use of a particular system can be without considering any functional consequences of that system" (Köse et al., 2019). According to previous studies, intrinsic stimulations (such as pleasure and amusement) can influence consumers' attitudes towards technologies (Lee, 2018; Xu et al., 2016). Holdack et al. (2022) in their study about the role of perceived enjoyment in assessing the acceptance of AR wearables, stated that perceived enjoyment was very influential on the assessment of AR wearables by sports consumers. Also, Erra et al. (2018) concluded in their research that virtual fitting rooms cause pleasure and entertainment in consumers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed in this context:

- **Hypothesis 3:** Perceived enjoyment affects the attitude of sportswear consumers towards adopting virtual fitting room technology.

### **2.3. Personality traits**

#### **2.3.1. Fashion leadership**

Fashion leadership is concerned with the influence of fashionable topics on people. In other words, fashion affects people in two ways: 1- they are exposed to the fashions introduced in society and follow them, and 2- supporters influence the people and divert their attention towards them. Fashion leadership concerns these two issues (Kim-Vick & Hahn, 2012). The effect of fashion leadership on consumers' decisions about a product has been proved in previous studies (Cho & Workman, 2015; Haluk Koksak, 2014; Quelhas-Brito et al., 2020). Since a virtual fitting room provides virtual experiences related to online apparel shopping, fashion leadership may influence sports consumers' attitudes and decision-making processes. Therefore, the proposed hypotheses are as follows:

- **Hypothesis 4:** Fashion leadership affects (a) perceived ease of use, (b) perceived usefulness, and (c) perceived enjoyment of using virtual fitting rooms by sportswear consumers.
- **Hypothesis 5:** Fashion leadership affects the attitude of sportswear consumers towards adopting virtual fitting room technology.

#### **2.3.2. Technology Anxiety**

Technology anxiety is one of the essential factors for consumers turning to new technologies (Junsawang et al., 2020). Technology anxiety refers to "the anxiety and fear created in the people when using new technologies" (Wilson et al., 2023). This factor focuses on the mental characteristics of consumers concerning new technologies (Yang & Forney, 2013). According to previous research, technology anxiety has a negative effect on consumers' behaviour. Tsai et al. (2020) stated that technology anxiety has made users resist the application of wearable devices in their lives. According to Yang and Forney (2013) technology anxiety is a moderating factor concerning purchase intention through mobile phones. Since virtual fitting room technology is considered new and modern, technology anxiety can be regarded as an essential factor concerning sportswear consumers' acceptance of this technology. In other words, consumers with a high level of technology anxiety are not probably inclined to use virtual fitting rooms when shopping for sportswear. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **Hypothesis 6:** Technology anxiety affects (a) perceived ease of use, (b) perceived usefulness, and (c) perceived enjoyment of using virtual fitting rooms by sportswear consumers.
- **Hypothesis 7:** Technology anxiety affects the attitude of sportswear consumers towards adopting virtual fitting room technology.

**2.4. Attitude towards the adoption of virtual fitting room technology**

Attitude consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural components that show the degree of liking or disliking of a person towards a person, place, thing, event or social group and conducts the general evaluation of people about a specific goal. Attitude refers to a behaviour that expresses a positive or negative assessment of a behaviour. Attitude ultimately leads to the intention to accept technology (Svenningsson et al., 2022). Previous studies have investigated consumers' attitudes towards virtual fitting room technology (Lee et al., 2021). In this article, the researcher examines the effect of attitudes towards virtual fitting rooms on Iranian sportswear consumers' acceptance of this technology. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- **Hypothesis 8:** Attitude towards the use of virtual fitting room technology affects the acceptance of this technology.

**2.5. Theoretical framework**

According to the literature and the proposed hypotheses, the theoretical framework of this research shows the relationship between sportswear consumers' intention to accept virtual fitting rooms and the variables mentioned in the introduction.

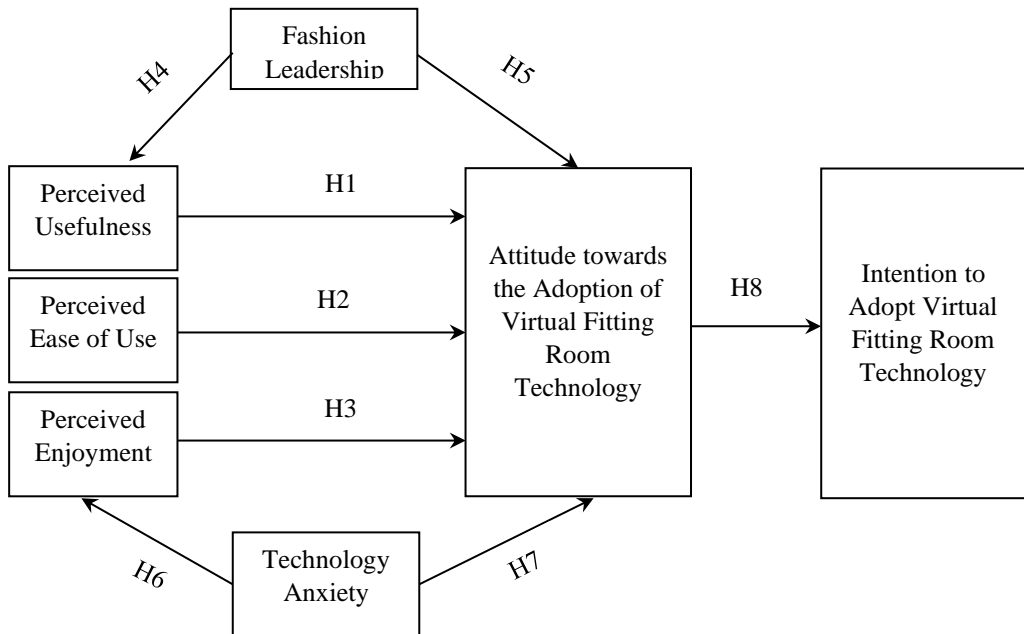


Figure 1. The theoretical framework.

**3. Methodology**

This is practical and developmental research in terms of purpose. A mixed method is used in this research, in which the Delphi qualitative method precedes the quantitative method.

The methodology approach is exploratory and is based on structural equations where SMART PLS software is used to design the model of factors affecting the adoption of virtual fitting room technology in sportswear stores.

### 3.1. Delphi method

The Delphi method was used to examine the views of the experts regarding the factors affecting the adoption of virtual fitting room technology in sportswear stores. Twenty experts in the field of sportswear industries were selected as the Delphi panel through snowball sampling. The Delphi panel consisted of all the professors, specialists and sellers with the entry indicators of having at least a master's degree and a minimum of 10 years of experience in the field of sportswear industries.

The questions of the first questionnaire, which we intended to change using the Delphi method, were extracted from library studies and research literature. Thirty-one indicators were removed, as shown in Table 1. The opinions of the experts have been collected with a 9-point Likert scale.

**Table 1.** Symbolization of open codes in the Delphi technique.

Symbol	Extracted code
Q1	I think virtual fitting rooms help me to be more effective in society.
Q2	I think virtual fitting rooms help me save time.
Q3	Virtual fitting rooms help me achieve my goals faster through fewer steps.
Q4	I think virtual fitting rooms help me be more productive.
Q5	I think virtual fitting rooms make it easier for me to achieve my goals.
Q6	I think virtual fitting rooms can be accessible very easily.
Q7	I think I can quickly learn how to use this technology.
Q8	I think I can easily use this technology.
Q9	I think I can easily remember the process of using this technology.
Q10	I think using this technology gives me a sense of happiness.
Q11	I think using this technology gives me a sense of peace.
Q12	I think using this technology gives me a sense of satisfaction.
Q13	I think using this technology gives me a sense of hope.
Q14	I do not feel tired at all while using this technology.
Q15	I am aware of the new technologies available in the apparel industry, and I want to be one of the first to use these technologies.
Q16	I am one of the pioneers in using new technologies, which is why they call me fashionable.
Q17	I need to be fashionable.
Q18	I am usually one of the first to be aware of the latest developments in the sportswear industry.
Q19	I fear I will lose considerable information by misusing a new technology.
Q20	I hesitate to use new technologies, fearing I might make mistakes I cannot correct.
Q21	Using a new technology worries me.
Q22	The thought of trying to use a new technology makes me nervous.
Q23	I think I like this technology.
Q24	I think I will have a positive reaction to this technology.
Q25	I think I will have a positive feeling about this technology.
Q26	I think This technology will absorb me.
Q27	I think it can be my favourite technology.
Q28	If I can access the Virtual Fitting Room, I will use it.

Symbol	Extracted code
Q29	I will probably use it if I can access the Virtual Fitting Room.
Q30	If I have access to this technology, I will not use it.
Q31	I have a strong desire to use this technology.

3.1.1. The first round of the Delphi technique

The opinions of 20 experts about each indicator are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The first round of Delphi.

Questions	Responses	Non-responses	Mean	Middle	Mode	S.D	Variation range	Result
Q1	20	0	8.2	8	8	0.615	2	Confirmed
Q2	20	0	8.25	8	8	0.550	2	Confirmed
Q3	20	0	8.1	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q4	20	0	7	6	7	0.553	3	Confirmed
Q5	20	0	7.45	8	8	0.944	3	Confirmed
Q6	20	0	7.1	7	6	1.02	3	Confirmed
Q7	20	0	7.15	7	7	1.039	4	Confirmed
Q8	20	0	7.7	7	7	0.864	4	Confirmed
Q9	20	0	7.1	7	6	0.744	4	Confirmed
Q10	20	0	8	8	8	0.858	3	Confirmed
Q11	20	0	7.65	8	7	0.670	2	Confirmed
Q12	20	0	7.6	8	8	0.940	4	Confirmed
Q13	20	0	8.25	8	8	0.638	2	Confirmed
Q14	20	0	7.9	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q15	20	0	7.8	8	8	0.695	3	Confirmed
Q16	20	0	8.15	8	8	0.489	2	Confirmed
Q17	20	0	7.3	7	7	0.801	3	Confirmed
Q18	20	0	7.9	8	8	0.718	3	Confirmed
Q19	20	0	7.35	7	8	1.05	4	Confirmed
Q20	20	0	7.3	7.5	8	0.923	3	Confirmed
Q21	20	0	8.20	8	8	0.695	3	Confirmed
Q22	20	0	7.9	8	8	0.788	2	Confirmed
Q23	20	0	7.35	7	8	1.05	4	Confirmed
Q24	20	0	7.8	8	8	0.695	3	Confirmed
Q25	20	0	7.15	7	7	1.039	4	Confirmed
Q26	20	0	7.3	7.5	8	0.923	3	Confirmed
Q27	20	0	4.7	6	4.5	0.553	3	Rejected
Q28	20	0	8.25	8	8	0.638	2	Confirmed
Q29	20	0	8.2	8	8	0.615	2	Confirmed
Q30	20	0	4.8	7	4	0.744	4	Rejected
Q31	20	0	7	6	7	0.553	3	Confirmed

Any measure whose mean and mode are less than five is removed. In the first round, two values were removed based on the calculated values (27 and 30).

### 3.1.2. The second round of Delphi

Delphi analysis continued for the factors identified in the second round. The criteria were based on the opinions of 20 experts in the second round of Delphi. The results of Delphi in the second round are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The second round of Delphi.

Questions	Responses	Non-responses	Mean	Middle	Mode	S.D	Variation range	Result
Q1	20	0	8.7	8	8	0.615	2	Confirmed
Q2	20	0	8.1	8	8	0.550	2	Confirmed
Q3	20	0	8.25	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q4	20	0	8.05	8	7	0.670	2	Confirmed
Q5	20	0	8.3	8	8	0.944	3	Confirmed
Q6	20	0	8.15	7	6	1.02	3	Confirmed
Q7	20	0	8.35	7	7	1.039	4	Confirmed
Q8	20	0	8.45	7	7	0.864	4	Confirmed
Q9	20	0	8.5	7	8	1.05	4	Confirmed
Q10	20	0	8.30	8	8	0.858	3	Confirmed
Q11	20	0	8.2	8	8	0.940	4	Confirmed
Q12	20	0	8.35	8	8	0.638	2	Confirmed
Q13	20	0	8.45	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q14	20	0	8.35	8	8	0.695	3	Confirmed
Q15	20	0	8.3	8	8	0.489	2	Confirmed
Q16	20	0	8.3	7	7	0.801	3	Confirmed
Q17	20	0	8.33	8	8	0.718	3	Confirmed
Q18	20	0	8.4	7.5	8	0.923	3	Confirmed
Q19	20	0	8.7	8	8	0.695	3	Confirmed
Q20	20	0	8.1	8	8	0.788	2	Confirmed
Q21	20	0	7.15	7	7	1.039	4	Confirmed
Q22	20	0	7.9	8	8	0.718	3	Confirmed
Q23	20	0	8.1	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q24	20	0	7.9	8	8	0.788	3	Confirmed
Q25	20	0	7.45	8	8	0.944	3	Confirmed
Q26	20	0	7.1	7	6	1.02	3	Confirmed
Q27	20	0	7.15	7	7	1.039	4	Confirmed
Q28	20	0	7.7	7	7	0.864	4	Confirmed
Q29	20	0	7.35	7	8	1.05	4	Confirmed

### 3.1.3. The end of the Delphi technique rounds

In the second round, no questions were omitted, which is a sign of the end of the Delphi rounds. In general, an approach to the end of Delphi is to compare the average scores of the last two rounds of questions. The survey process will be stopped if the difference between the two stages of the very low threshold is smaller than 2.

**Table 4.** The difference between the results of the first and second round.

	The result of the first round	The result of the second round	Difference	Result
Q1	8.2	8.7	0.5	Confirmed
Q2	8.25	8.1	0.15	Confirmed
Q3	8.1	8.25	0.15	Confirmed
Q4	7	8.05	1.05	Confirmed
Q5	7.45	8.3	0.85	Confirmed
Q6	7.1	8.15	1.05	Confirmed
Q7	7.15	8.35	1.25	Confirmed
Q8	7.7	8.45	0.75	Confirmed
Q9	7.1	8.5	1.4	Confirmed
Q10	8	8.30	0.3	Confirmed
Q11	7.65	8.2	0.55	Confirmed
Q12	7.6	8.35	0.75	Confirmed
Q13	8.25	8.45	0.20	Confirmed
Q14	7.9	8.35	0.45	Confirmed
Q15	7.8	8.3	0.50	Confirmed
Q16	8.15	8.3	0.15	Confirmed
Q17	7.3	8.33	1.03	Confirmed
Q18	7.9	8.4	0.5	Confirmed
Q19	7.35	8.7	1.35	Confirmed
Q20	7.3	8.1	1.05	Confirmed
Q21	8.20	7.15	1.05	Confirmed
Q22	7.9	7.9	0	Confirmed
Q23	7.35	8.1	0.75	Confirmed
Q24	7.8	7.9	0.1	Confirmed
Q25	7.15	7.45	0.3	Confirmed
Q26	7.3	7.1	0.2	Confirmed
Q27	8.25	7.15	1.1	Confirmed
Q28	8.2	7.7	0.50	Confirmed
Q29	7	7.35	0.35	Confirmed

Based on the results listed in [Table 4](#), it was determined that the difference is less than 2 in all cases so that the Delphi rounds can be completed. Kendall's consensus coefficient was used to calculate the agreement of the experts.

**Table 5.** Kendall's coefficient of agreement (research data source).

	Number of indicators	Number of experts	Kendall coefficient	Degree of freedom	Significance value
First round	29	20	0.860	19	0.001
Second round	29	20	0.887	19	0.001

Based on the results of [Table 5](#), the value of Kendall's coefficient in the first round of the Delphi technique is 0.860, which shows that the consensus among the experts is moderate. Also, a significant value of 0.001 has been obtained, which shows that the obtained results can be trusted with 95% confidence. As a result, ignoring the indicators that scored below 0.7, other indicators have been used in the second round. The Kendall coefficient in the second round was 0.887, which shows that the consensus among the



experts is good. Also, a significant value of 0.001 has been obtained, showing that the results can be trusted with 95% confidence. Also, the average scores of all the items are around 0.7, which shows that the views are close to each other. Therefore, the Delphi technique was stopped, and the identified indicators were used for the final analysis.

### 3.2. Quantitative phase

The current research is based on the online buyers of sportswear in Shiraz. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data from the respondents. After identifying the telegram channels of sportswear stores in Shiraz, the respondents were randomly selected to fill out the questionnaires from each channel. Since the target population in this study were the people who were members of the telegram channels of sportswear stores, the questionnaires were distributed through messages in Telegram channels. Questionnaires were designed online using Google Forms, and a 5-point Likert scale was used to collect data. The participants were assured that all their answers would remain confidential and anonymous. At the end of the data collection period, 420 questionnaires were collected, of which 26 questionnaires were removed due to incompleteness or non-response of users to all questions. This means that 394 complete questionnaires were used for data analysis. The information related to the questionnaires used in this research is given in Table 6. Finally, the Excel file was downloaded and transferred to SPSS software. The opinions of the experts and university professors and convergent validity were used to confirm the validity of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to check the reliability of the questionnaire, both of which confirmed the high reliability of the instrument.

**Table 6.** Convergent validity and reliability of research variables.

Variable	Number of questions	Rho	CR	AVE	Cronbach's alpha
Perceived usefulness	5	0.874	0.919	0.791	0.867
Perceived ease of use	4	0.921	0.938	0.792	0.913
Perceived enjoyment	5	0.913	0.930	0.770	0.897
Fashion leadership	4	0.921	0.934	0.742	0.910
Technology anxiety	4	0.911	0.930	0.770	0.896
Adoption Intention	3	0.955	0.965	0.847	0.955
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	4	0.900	0.930	0.769	0.900

SMART PLS and SPSS 23 software were used for data analysis. Structural equation modelling was used to test hypotheses and evaluate the overall fit of the research model.

## 4. Results

The results of the respondents' demographic statistics in terms of gender, age, and education are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Demographic profile of the sample.

Gender	F.	P.	Age	F.	P.	education	F.	P.
Female	158	40.8	20<	19	4.8	High school	16	4
			20-25	68	17.2	Diploma	70	17.6
			25-30	264	66.9	Bachelor	166	42
Male	236	59.2	>30	43	11.1	Masters	97	24.4
						PhD	45	12

Getting sure about the correctness of the variables measurement model is the first step before testing the hypotheses and the conceptual model of the research. Therefore, confirmatory factor analysis was used to put the measurement models of the variables in order. As one of the oldest statistical methods, confirmatory factor analysis investigates the relationship between latent and observed variables (questions) and represents the measurement model. The factor analysis results (Table 8) indicated that all the measurement models are suitable, and all the numbers and parameters of the model are significant.

**Table 8.** Results of Factor Loadings.

Latent variable	Questions	Factor Load	P value
Perceived usefulness	Q1	0.936	0.0001
	Q2	0.933	0.0001
	Q3	0.938	0.0001
	Q4	0.893	0.0001
	Q5	0.901	0.0001
Perceived ease of use	Q6	0.837	0.0001
	Q7	0.912	0.0001
	Q8	0.932	0.0001
	Q9	0.916	0.0001
Perceived enjoyment	Q10	0.684	0.0001
	Q11	0.929	0.0001
	Q12	0.937	0.0001
	Q13	0.923	0.0001
	Q14	0.699	0.0001
Fashion Leadership	Q15	0.898	0.0001
	Q16	0.874	0.0001
	Q17	0.896	0.0001
	Q18	0.893	0.0001
Technology anxiety	Q19	0.873	0.0001
	Q20	0.873	0.0001
	Q21	0.891	0.0001
Adoption Intention	Q22	0.872	0.0001
	Q23	0.921	0.0001
	Q24	0.834	0.0001
	Q25	0.911	0.0001
	Q26	0.922	0.0001
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	Q27	0.934	0.0001
	Q28	0.923	0.0001
	Q29	0.712	0.0001

As shown in Table 8, all the values of the metrics related to the variables are higher than 0.5. Therefore, it can be said that the measurement models of all variables are suitable, and all the numbers and parameters of the model are meaningful.

**Table 9.** Descriptive analysis of research variables.

Variable	Kurtosis	Skewness	S.D	Mean
Perceived usefulness	0.257	-0.953	0.66	3.76
Perceived ease of use	0.803	-0.013	0.69	3.39
Perceived enjoyment	0.744	-0.120	0.74	4.09
Fashion leadership	0.963	-0.132	0.67	3.98
Technology anxiety	1.062	0.094	0.71	4.14
Adoption intention	0.791	-0.014	0.62	4.17
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.921	-0.084	0.81	3.35

Based on the descriptive statistics of the research variables, the perceived usefulness variable averages 4.46. The variance of this variable is 0.56. Considering that the skewness and Kurtosis of the research variables are between 2 and -2, it can be said that the research variables have a normal distribution.

**Table 10.** Variance inflation factor (VIF).

Variable	VIF
Perceived usefulness	1.950
Perceived ease of use	1.702
Perceived enjoyment	1.652
Fashion leadership	1.471
Technology anxiety	1.535
Adoption intention	1.867
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	1.334

According to the results of Table 10, the VIF value of the research components is less than 3. Therefore, the research components are not linear.

The following relations are established:

CR>0.7

CR>AVE

AVE>0.5

To undertake the measurement of discriminant validity, it was suggested to measure two standards: the Fornell–Larker principle and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). As shown in Table 11, the Fornell–Larker principle has verified the obligations as all the AVEs and their square roots are more than its correlations with other models.

**Table 11.** Fornell–Larker Scale.

	Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Perceived enjoyment	Fashion leadership	Technology anxiety	Adoption Intention	Attitude towards the virtual fitting room
Perceived usefulness	0.890						
Perceived ease of use	0.731	0.890					
Perceived enjoyment	0.793	0.810	0.878				
Fashion leadership	0.681	0.780	0.777	0.861			
Technology anxiety	0.685	0.474	0.580	0.567	0.878		
Adoption intention	0.516	0.700	0.409	0.701	0.762	0.920	
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	-0.522	-0.468	-0.627	-0.620	-0.629	-0.562	0.877

In Table 12, the HTMT ratio outcomes are shown, illustrating that the threshold value of 0.9 is still above the value of every construct, leading to the establishment of the HTMT ratio. These findings help to know the discriminant validity. The results of the assessment show that there were no problems with the validity and reliability faced during the measurement model’s evaluation. Thus, to use the collected data more productively, the structural model can be judged.

**Table 12.** Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

	Perceived usefulness	Perceived ease of use	Perceived enjoyment	Fashion leadership	Technology anxiety	Adoption Intention	Attitude towards the virtual fitting room
Perceived usefulness							
Perceived ease of use	0.722						
Perceived enjoyment	0.645	0.823					
Fashion leadership	0.579	0.725	0.677				
Technology anxiety	0.458	0.558	0.574	0.781			
Adoption intention	0.613	0.771	0.750	0.590	0.671		
Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.538	0.740	0.631	0.626	0.351	0.703	

According to Table 12, the value of the obtained numbers is less than 0.9, so discriminant validity is established.

According to the mentioned issues regarding the analysis of the measurement model, all the investigated indicators have the necessary qualifications and therefore, the model proposed in this research has sufficient predictive power. After analysing the measurement model, the research hypotheses will be examined.

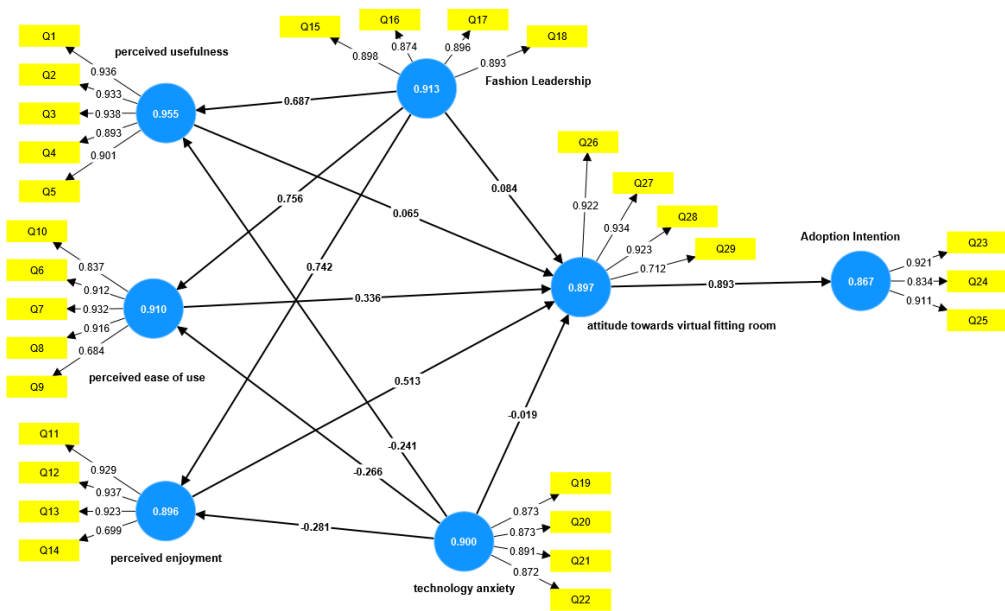


Figure 2. Path coefficients of the General Research Model.

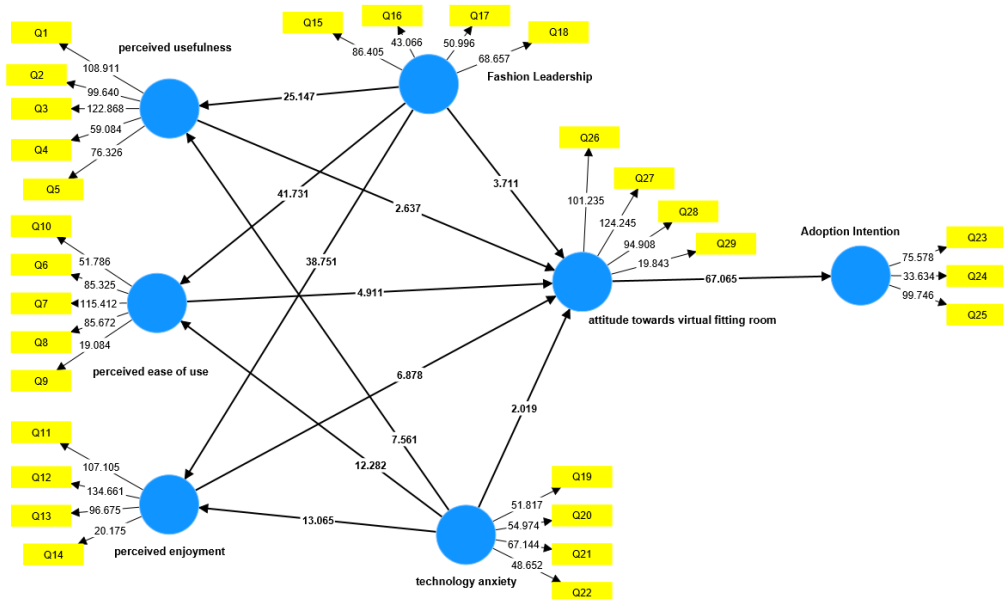


Figure 3. The t-Statistic of the General Research Model.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, considering the path coefficient of 0.065 and the t-statistic of 2.637, it can be said that the t-statistic is more significant than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, the positive and significant effect of perceived usefulness on the

attitude towards virtual fitting room technology is supported. According to the path coefficient of 0.336 and the t-statistic of 4.911, it can be said: Considering that the t-statistic is more than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, the positive and significant effect of perceived ease of use on the attitude towards this technology is supported. According to the path coefficient of 0.513 and the t-statistic of 6.878, it can be said considering that the t-statistic is more than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, the positive and significant effect of perceived enjoyment on the attitude towards virtual fitting room technology is supported.

According to the path coefficients of 0.687, 0.756, 0.742, 0.084 and also the t-statistics of 25.147, 41.731, 38.751 and 3.711, it can be said considering that all the t-statistics are more than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, the positive and significant effect of fashion leadership on the three elements of technology acceptance model and also the attitude towards virtual fitting room technology is supported. According to the path coefficients of -0.241, -0.266, -0.281, -0.019 and also the t-statistics of 7.561, 12.282, 13.065 and 2.019, it can be said considering that all the t-statistics are more than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, the significant and negative effect of technology anxiety on the three elements of technology acceptance model and also attitude towards virtual fitting room technology is supported. According to the path coefficient of 0.893 and also the t-statistic with a value of 67.065, it can be said: Considering that the t-statistic is more significant than 2.57, at the confidence level of 99%, attitude towards virtual fitting room technology has a positive and significant effect on the acceptance of this technology.

It can be concluded that all the proposed hypotheses are supported. The description of the model based on the hypotheses is shown in [Table 13](#).

**Table 13.** Path coefficients, t-statistics and coefficient of determination.

Hypothesis	The effect of the variable...	On the variable ...	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T statistics	Result
1	Perceived usefulness	attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.065	2.637	Supported
2	Perceived ease of use	attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.336	4.911	Supported
3	Perceived enjoyment	attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.513	6.878	Supported
4	Fashion leadership	Perceived usefulness	0.687	25.147	Supported
5	Fashion leadership	Perceived ease of use	0.756	41.731	Supported
6	Fashion leadership	Perceived enjoyment	0.742	38.751	Supported
7	Fashion leadership	attitude towards the virtual fitting room	0.084	3.711	Supported
8	Technology anxiety	Perceived usefulness	-0.241	7.561	Supported
9	Technology anxiety	Perceived ease of use	-0.266	12.282	Supported
10	Technology anxiety	Perceived enjoyment	-0.281	13.065	Supported

Hypothesis	The effect of the variable...	On the variable ...	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	T statistics	Result
11	Technology anxiety	attitude towards the virtual fitting room	-0.019	2.019	Supported
12	Attitude towards the virtual fitting room	Adoption Intention	0.893	67.065	Supported

## 5. Managerial implications

Sports managers should take the necessary measures to set up virtual fitting rooms in sportswear stores and deliver the information required to sports online retailers to motivate them to use this technology. Also, sportswear industries can use virtual fitting rooms to advertise and promote sports products. Despite the great benefits of virtual fitting rooms for sports consumers, there is still the possibility of damage to consumers' privacy. Therefore, those in charge should reduce these risks as much as possible and warn about them.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research is to see what factors affected the adoption of virtual fitting room technology by online consumers of sports products and led to the following results:

The results demonstrated that perceived usefulness positively and significantly affected the consumers' attitude towards virtual fitting rooms. It is consistent with the results of (Noordin et al., 2017). Virtual fitting rooms improve consumers' shopping experience in the online environment. It leads to adopting this technology, provided they consider it helpful. Perceived usefulness includes values such as effectuality, fitness, colouring, and composition. The main benefit of this technology is the ability to provide opportunities for consumers to try different combinations of clothing. Sportswear retailers can upload different types and designs of clothing in this system and provide various services to shoppers and provide them with more information regarding the products.

Based on the research findings, the significant effect of perceived ease of use on the attitude of sportswear consumers towards virtual fitting rooms is undeniable. Most of the participants took it as granted that learning the process of using this technology was easy. (Perry et al., 2019) achieved similar results in their research. They considered this factor to be an essential factor for attitudes towards virtual fitting rooms.

The results show that the attitude of sportswear consumers towards virtual fitting rooms was significantly affected by perceived enjoyment. This indicates that if consumers enjoy using virtual fitting rooms, they will have a positive and meaningful attitude towards this technology. It is consistent with (Boardman & McCormick, 2022) who stated that if consumers consider online shopping enjoyable, they will participate in the process to a large extent.

The results show that all three elements of the technology acceptance model in this study, as well as the participants' attitudes towards virtual fitting rooms, were significantly affected by fashion leadership. Fashion leadership plays a moderating role in this respect. It means that if providing virtual fitting rooms is easy, valuable and enjoyable for the

consumers of sports products, fashion leadership will have a more significant impact on them and attract them to this technology. Shephard et al. (2014) stated that perceived enjoyment was more effective on the consumers' attitude with a low level of fashion leadership. In the same way, for consumers not so willing to buy fashion, enjoyment can be considered a determining criterion. On the other hand, in consumers with a high interest in fashion, perceived ease of use was more effective in adopting this technology.

According to the findings, all three elements of the technology acceptance model in this study and the participants' attitudes towards virtual fitting rooms were negatively and significantly affected by technology anxiety. In other words, if technology anxiety increases, the three elements of the technology acceptance model and the attitude toward this technology decrease meaningfully. It is consistent with the findings of (Li & Xu, 2020). They stated in their research that lower levels of technology anxiety caused consumers to enjoy more of the technology and have a better attitude towards it. Also, it positively affects perceived usefulness and ease of use. They stated that sportswear retailers and industries should have a serious strategy to face technology anxiety and pay special attention to this issue. For example, online sportswear retailers can offer instructional videos to consumers to relieve their technology anxiety. Kim et al. (2017) stated that perceived enjoyment had the most significant effect on the attitude of consumers with more technology anxiety, while perceived ease of use was more effective on the attitude of consumers with less technology anxiety.

This research investigated the adoption drivers of virtual fitting room technology in Iranian online sportswear consumers. The findings supported the idea that personality traits play a significant role in the attitude towards this technology and its acceptance. In all, the elements of the technology acceptance model should be taken seriously. Sportswear consumers will probably select this technology if they consider it easy to use, valuable, and enjoyable.

The more the consumers follow the fashions, the better their perception of enjoyment, usefulness, ease of use, and attitude towards this technology. Besides, the more anxious the consumers regarding this technology, the less positive their attitude towards it, and the worse their perception of enjoyment, usefulness, and ease of use.

This research showed the positive attitude of Iranian sports consumers towards adopting virtual fitting room technology. Also, this research presented a theoretical model for Iranian sportswear consumers' adoption of this technology. Future researchers can refer to this study to investigate the decisions of shoppers and sellers regarding the adoption of other technologies.

Generally, according to the findings, Iranian sportswear consumers have positive perceptions and attitudes towards using virtual fitting rooms. Therefore, this technology can be used as a marketing strategy to attract consumers.

## Limitations and suggestions for further studies

As a limitation of this study, the Iranian sportswear sellers often do not use virtual fitting rooms or have any information in this field, so their idea about this technology may be somewhat imaginary. Second, Lazar et al. (2020) mentioned external variables as



influencing factors. These variables include system qualities, instructions provided, teaching, the involvement level of the users, and the way this technology is to be implemented (Lazar et al., 2020). Therefore, future research can focus on these factors. Thirdly, examining demographic variables such as gender, age, education, income, etc., can add more comprehensive results to the relevant literature. Fourthly, looking at other psychological variables can provide the possibility of a more complex and detailed examination.

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## پذیرش فناوری اتاق پرو مجازی در صنایع پوشاک ورزشی ایران: مطالعه ترکیبی بر اساس مدل TAM

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### کلیدواژه

اتاق پرو مجازی  
آسانی استفاده درک شده  
اضطراب فناوری  
رهبری مد  
لذت درک شده  
مفیدی درک شده

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** اتاق‌های پرو مجازی این امکان را برای مصرف‌کنندگان آنلاین پوشاک ورزشی فراهم می‌آورد تا قبل از خرید پوشاک، آنرا به صورت مجازی پرو کنند. این فناوری اخیراً به دلیل منافع بسیار زیادی که برای مصرف‌کنندگان به ارمغان می‌آورد و همچنین پتانسیل تجاری آن بسیار مورد توجه قرار گرفته است، اما هنوز وارد ایران نشده است و در ارتباط با پذیرش آن توسط مصرف‌کنندگان ایرانی اطلاعاتی در دست نیست. هدف این تحقیق بررسی پذیرش این فناوری توسط مصرف‌کنندگان آنلاین پوشاک ورزشی در ایران می‌باشد.

**روش:** این تحقیق از نظر هدف کاربردی و توسعه‌ای است و از نظر شیوه اجرا اکتشافی می‌باشد. در این تحقیق از روش ترکیبی (کمی، کیفی) استفاده شده است که در آن روش کیفی دلفی بر روش کمی مقدم است. در مرحله کیفی، ۲۰ نفر از طریق تکنیک گلوله برفی به عنوان افراد خبره در صنعت پوشاک ورزشی انتخاب شدند. در مرحله کمی، نظرسنجی از ۳۹۴ خریدار آنلاین محصولات پوشاک ورزشی در شبکه‌های اجتماعی انجام شد. برای آزمون فرضیه‌ها از مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری استفاده گردید. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از نرم‌افزارهای SMART PLS و SPSS 23 استفاده گردید.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج حاکی از تأثیر مثبت عوامل آسانی استفاده درک شده، مفیدی درک شده، لذت درک شده و رهبری مد و همچنین تأثیر منفی اضطراب فناوری بر پذیرش این فناوری بود. نتایج، دارای پیامدهای عملی برای مدیران ورزشی و خرده‌فروشان و همچنین صنایع پوشاک ورزشی در خصوص اتخاذ بهترین استراتژی‌های مدیریت و بازاریابی برای استفاده از اتاق‌های پرو مجازی می‌باشد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** این پژوهش برای اولین بار به بررسی نوآوری فناوری اتاق‌های پرو مجازی در میان مصرف‌کنندگان پوشاک ورزشی در ایران می‌پردازد. اتاق‌های پرو مجازی نقش بسزایی در صرفه‌جویی در زمان، انرژی و هزینه مصرف‌کنندگان ورزشی داشته و همچنین از حریم خصوصی آنها محافظت می‌کنند. همچنین این فناوری در صورتی که مورد قبول مصرف‌کنندگان پوشاک ورزشی در ایران واقع شود، یک وسیله تبلیغاتی عالی برای صنایع ورزشی و خرده‌فروشان در این عرصه می‌باشد.

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## The Effect of Online Advertising of Football Players on Fans' Purchase Intention with the Mediating Role of Players' Popularity

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Online advertising has become a crucial tool for sports teams, marketers, and retailers looking to engage with fans and boost sales of sports-related products. This study examines the effect of online advertising of football players on fans' purchase intention, with the mediating role of players' popularity.

**Methodology:** The research is classified as applied, using a descriptive research method and cross-sectional survey research design. The statistical population of this study includes football fans in Iran. The sampling method in this study was non-probability convenience sampling (200 fans). A four-part questionnaire was used to collect data. Then partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS 3.0) was used for data analysis.

**Findings:** Paying attention to these indicators is of great importance in implementing the model of the impact of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans. Therefore, based on the study's findings, the model of the effects of online advertising on the intention to buy football fans is confirmed. Based on the results obtained from the combined reliability, extracted variance, model fit coefficient, and goodness-of-fit index in the path analysis, the model is consistent with suitable empirical and theoretical assumptions and has a good fit. Therefore, the model of the impact of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans is confirmed.

**Originality:** This research evaluated the mediating role of football players' popularity on fans' purchase intention.

### Keywords

Online Advertising  
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Purchase Intention  
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## 1. Introduction

Given the increasing competition in all industries, the importance of marketing communications for organizations, both for corporate, non-profit, and public sectors, is still on the rise, especially for a unified approach in planning and implementing activities (Jovanovic et al., 2016). Integrated marketing communications represent an effective and efficient way to guide messages coordinated at all touchpoints between the company and the consumer (Popescu et al., 2013). Digital marketing allows companies to reach, interact, and build long-term relationships with their target customers. In this digital age where the internet has access to almost every home, customers use social media platforms to explore and find products regardless of their position in the world. With advances in technology and transportation, the world is becoming a global village with the ability to buy and sell products and services everywhere (Ratten & Thompson, 2021). The rapid development and expansion of online technology turn the internet into a severe asset for businesses to gain competitive advantages. The Internet has become a critical commercial infrastructure that helps marketers understand and meet the various needs of consumers. As a result, the Internet is now considered a cost-effective, efficient, and highly productive marketing platform. Marketing is more than just advertising (Liu-Thompkins, 2019).

The fundamental role of advertising as a marketing communication tool is to potentially inform consumers about the advertiser's products and provide the necessary information to compare them with competing products to create awareness of potential products. Consumers who are sufficiently interested in these products will ultimately purchase an advertised product (Yang et al., 2015). Advertising has become one of the most critical business activities in the modern competitive space. Companies spend a large portion of their budget on producing and executing advertising to share information about their company and products. Technologies are rapidly advancing and helping to renovate and constantly change distribution forms. Among those forms, advertising media are widely used. Advertising is useful for displaying the image of a product (Chukwu et al., 2019). Companies and organizations also widely use online advertising to promote their products and services. This is because online advertising can seize the opportunity to access their consumers through various online platforms to create awareness for their products to guide their future sales. Online advertising is a form of advertising that uses the internet and the World Wide Web to provide marketing messages to attract customers. Online advertising includes text ads on search engine results pages, banner ads, blogs, media ads, unique network ads, interstitial ads, classified online advertising, ad networks, and email marketing, including spam emails. Many of these types of advertising are provided by an advertising server (Busen et al., 2016). The rapid growth in online advertising revenues demonstrates the sustainability of internet advertising worldwide as an alternative to traditional media. Considering the development of online advertising, there is no doubt that the Internet is a powerful and suitable substitute for conventional media advertising. Online advertising is flexible and updates information, making it easier for companies to promote their products (Chaubey et al., 2013). Moreover, social media marketing campaigns have a notable effect on the retail sports product industry. Specifically, these marketing efforts sway consumers' perceptions of brands and alter their purchasing behaviors in measurable ways (Kiani et al.,



2023; Norouzi et al., 2021). Social platforms provide previously unmatched opportunities for brands to engage audiences, analyze data, target messaging, and measure performance (Mohammad Rezaee et al., 2023).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and YouTube connect millions of people in society daily. Therefore, social media provides businesses with an appropriate opportunity to communicate with their stakeholders, such as potential customers (Baena, 2016). In addition, companies' attention to professional sports as a tool for economic and commercial activity has increased in recent decades. As a result, companies have started using the social media of famous sports players and clubs to reach a wide range of customers (potential). Companies are willing to pay a lot for social media posts of players or clubs that contain advertising-related content (Jensen et al., 2015). Companies are eager to pay large amounts for social media posts by players or clubs containing promotional content. Football has a huge global fanbase in the sporting world, with over 4 billion fans worldwide. Football players enjoy tremendous popularity among fans. Fans form emotional connections and deep identities with star players in their favorite teams. Players become celebrities and icons that fans admire and imitate. A player's popularity stems from sporting achievements, skills, charisma, media presence, and perceived attractiveness. Superstar players like Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo each have over 500 million followers on social networks. Fans actively follow news and updates about star players and their lives on and off the field. This degree of loyalty and dedication carries immense commercial value for football players (Liu et al., 2021).

Brands recognize star players' ability to influence fans' attitudes, preferences, and buying behaviour regarding products they endorse. Digital marketing allows brands to leverage star player popularity through targeted online advertising campaigns. Brands sign endorsement deals with players to become brand ambassadors and feature them in online and social media advertising. Popularity shapes consumer behaviour (Hofmann et al., 2019). Therefore, this research aims to examine the impact of online advertising by football players on football fans' purchase intention with the mediating role of player popularity. Specifically, this study examines whether player advertising directly impacts purchase intention and whether this relationship is mediated by player popularity.

## **2. Theoretical background**

This study focuses on three key variables - online advertising of football players, player popularity, and fans' purchase intention. The effectiveness of product advertisers in creating a successful brand image is one of the essential topics in marketing and consumer behaviour. According to Kotler et al. (2015), for the audience to receive the necessary message, advertisers must put some motivational force into the message. This motivational power is attractive. Every advertising attractiveness indicates the attractiveness that motivates consumer desires. Product advertisers are brand representatives who provide important symbols about the brand by presenting consumption experiences. Two main approaches can help product advertisers develop a desirable brand image: according to Rosen and Sanderson (2001), talent and distinctive brand image performance ensure, but Adler (2006) mentions popularity as an essential

criterion. In the context of sports marketing, professional athletes have become highly sought-after celebrity endorsers. Football players exert tremendous influence due to their extreme fame and adoration by fans worldwide. Their status as household names across global markets makes football players prime candidates to act as product advertisers (Šíma, 2021). Online advertising refers to promotional content featuring football players distributed via digital and social media platforms. This includes social media posts, online video ads, branded website content, and other digital marketing campaigns using player endorsements (Busen et al., 2016). Player popularity reflects the level of admiration, recognition, and celebrity status a player holds among fans. The popularity stems from sporting achievements, skills, attractiveness, media presence, and overall prominence in football culture (Hofmann et al., 2019). Purchase intention refers to the willingness and likelihood of fans to buy products endorsed by football players in online advertising. It is a key metric reflecting the persuasive impact of advertisements on consumption behaviour (Sallam et al., 2016). Drawing from source credibility theory, celebrities perceived as credible, attractive and influential can enhance the persuasiveness of advertisements, thus increasing purchase intentions (Hsieh & Li, 2020). Famous players admired by fans can capitalize on their fame and influence to boost perceptions of credibility and trustworthiness regarding endorsed products. Furthermore, identification with prominent players strengthens emotional bonds between fans and brands (Hofmann et al., 2019).

Despite the proliferation of digital marketing campaigns leveraging celebrity athlete endorsements, no studies have specifically examined the impact of football players' online advertising on fans' purchases. This research addresses this gap by investigating how professional football players' online promotions influence fans' buying behaviour for endorsed products, providing novel evidence of advertising effectiveness in the context of the world's most popular sport.

Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

- 1- Online advertising has an impact on football player popularity.
- 2- Football Player popularity impacts football fans' purchasing intentions.
- 3- Online advertising has an impact on football fans' purchasing intentions.
- 4- Online advertising impacts football fans' purchasing intentions with the mediating role of football player popularity.

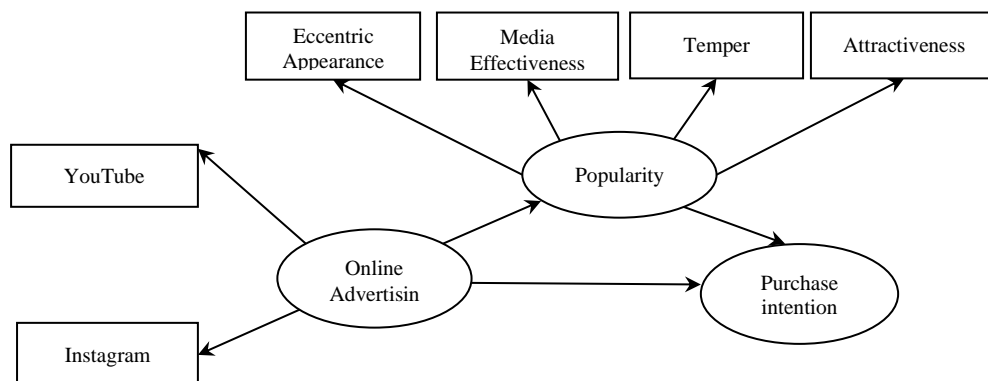


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model.

### 3. Methodology

This study is classified as applied research based on its objectives. In terms of research method, it is categorized as descriptive survey research, and based on the data collection method, it is classified as a cross-sectional survey research. The statistical population of this study includes football fans in Iran. The target community has fans on social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube. The sampling method in this study was non-probability convenience sampling. A four-part questionnaire was used to collect data: 4 questions on personal characteristics, nine on online advertising, 17 on football player popularity, and three on fans' intention to purchase online. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale for measurement. Questionnaires were distributed among individuals in a specific period, and those who received the questionnaire were requested to forward it to others if possible. The sample size was determined to be at least five times and up to 15 times the number of questions. Therefore, the minimum sample size for conducting the research was five times the number of observable variables (items of the questions), estimated to be approximately 200. This study used partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS 3.0) for data analysis. PLS-SEM is a statistical technique that allows the modelling of latent constructs under conditions of non-normality by estimating path models with latent variables. Cronbach's alpha confirmed the reliability of the questionnaire. Confirmatory factor analysis was used for construct validity, and CVI and CVR were used for face validity.

### 4. Results

Demographic information of the participants in this study was examined using three variables: gender, age, and education level. In this study, 71% of the participants were male and 29% were female. About 58% of the sample consisted of individuals under 30. About 64% of the total sample had a bachelor's degree.

Descriptive statistics based on the data collected from the research questionnaire, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values of the research variables, were reported in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1.** Descriptive indices for research variables.

Variable	Variable Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Popularity	Attractiveness	3.20	0.97	1	5
	Temper	3.34	1.00	1	5
	Media Effectiveness	3.48	0.90	1	5
	Eccentric Appearance	3.27	0.97	1	5
Online Advertising	YouTube	3.52	0.91	1	5
	Instagram	3.30	0.95	1	5
Purchase intention	Purchase intention Fans	3.48	0.85	1	5

The results of data analysis were performed using software and are presented in [Figures 2](#) and [3](#). The t-value of the partial correlation coefficient was used to assess the significance of the relationships between the variables.

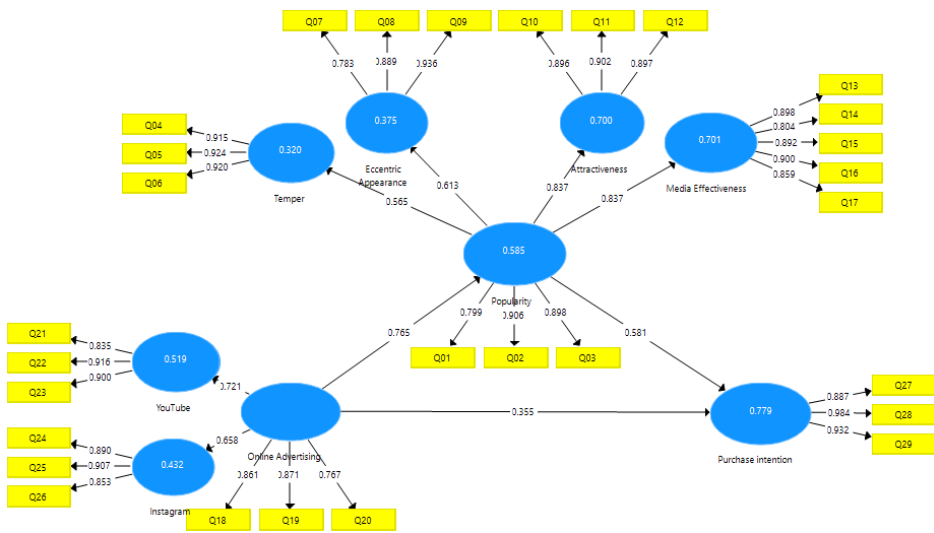


Figure 2. Path coefficients and factor loading of the variables.

In the PLS software, the t-value indicates the significance of the relationship between variables. The t-value is the main criterion for confirming or rejecting research hypotheses. If this value is more significant than 1.64, 1.96, and 2.58, the research hypotheses are confirmed at 90%, 95%, and 99% confidence levels. Values greater than 1.96 are significant at the 0.05 level, and values greater than 2.58 are marked at the 0.01 level.

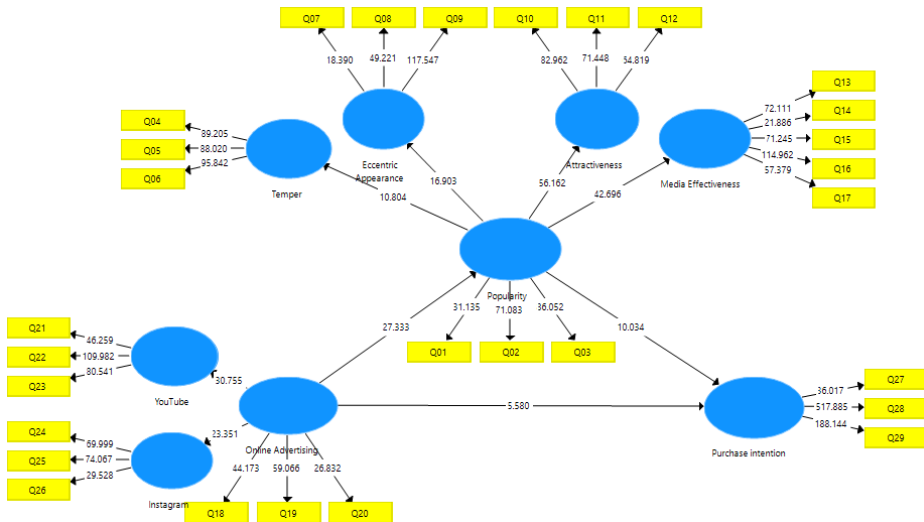


Figure 3. T-values for testing the significance of path coefficients and factor loadings.

The results of the composite reliability of each construct are reported in Table 2. Values greater than 0.70 for composite reliability are acceptable. As observed, all values are more

significant than 0.70, indicating that the composite reliabilities of the constructs are acceptable. The values of the extracted variance of the constructs are also reported in [Table 2](#). Fornell and Larcker proposed this index. A value greater than 0.50 for this index indicates an appropriate validity of the measurement tools. As observed, the extracted variance values for all research variables are more significant than 0.50, meaning that the validity of the measurement tools is confirmed. The goodness-of-fit (GOF) index was used to evaluate the model's overall fit, which was equal to 0.781.

**Table 2.** Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance of Research Variables.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance	R2	GOF
Attractiveness	0.881	0.926	0.807	0.700	
Temper	0.909	0.906	0.846	0.320	
Media Effectiveness	0.920	0.940	0.759	0.701	
Eccentric Appearance	0.839	0.904	0.760	0.375	
Popularity	0.837	0.902	0.756	0.585	
YouTube	0.860	0.915	0.782	0.519	0.781
Instagram	0.859	0.914	0.780	0.432	
Online Advertising	0.780	0.872	0.696	-	
Purchase intention Fans	0.930	0.954	0.875	0.779	

Based on the results obtained in [Figures 2](#), the present study's multiple determination coefficient (R-squared) is 0.780, considered acceptable for the model. According to the values of 0.190, 0.330, and 0.670, considered weak, moderate, and strong for this index, the obtained coefficient is acceptable for the designed model. This means that the independent variables have explained 78% of the variation in the dependent variable. Therefore, based on the results of composite reliability, extracted variance, R-squared, and goodness-of-fit index, it can be concluded that the model proposed in the path analysis is appropriate for the empirical-theoretical hypotheses and has a perfect fit. [Table 3](#) shows the path coefficient, standard deviation, t-statistic value, and significance level associated with each path for the model of the effect of online advertising on football fans' purchase intention.

**Table 3.** Original Sample and T Statistic value.

Variables	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation	T Statistic	P Values
Online Advertising→ Instagram	0.658	0.027	24.56	0.001
Online Advertising→Popularity	0.765	0.028	27.07	0.001
Online Advertising→Purchase intention	0.355	0.061	5.81	0.001
Online Advertising→YouTube	0.421	0.023	31.98	0.001
Popularity→ Attractiveness	0.837	0.014	58.66	0.001
Popularity→ Eccentric Appearance	0.613	0.037	16.51	0.001
Popularity→ Media Effectiveness	0.837	0.020	42.57	0.001
Popularity→ Purchase intention	0.581	0.056	10.46	0.001
Popularity→ Temper	0.565	0.053	10.68	0.001

Based on the results in the table, the path coefficients of online advertising and player popularity are highly significant at the 0.05 level.

#### 4.1. Variable testing

Following the data analysis algorithm, after examining the fit of the measurement models, the research variables are tested based on the path coefficient and the t-statistic, as well as the shapes 1 and 2 (path coefficients and factor loading of variables, significance of path coefficients and factor loadings). The path coefficient indicates the effect of one structure on another. Positive path coefficients indicate a direct relationship between variables, while negative path coefficients indicate an inverse relationship between variables. However, if the significance value of any of the paths is greater than 0.96, the corresponding path is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, and the variable is confirmed.

According to the study's findings, based on the significance of the path coefficients, the online advertising variable with a path coefficient of 0.355 and the player popularity variable with a path coefficient of 0.581 significantly impact the intention to purchase football fans. These paths are significant at the 0.05 level, and the path coefficients are in appropriate conditions, confirming the conceptual model designed.

It can be concluded that paying attention to these indicators is of great importance in implementing the model of the impact of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans. Therefore, based on the study's findings, the model of the effects of online advertising on the intention to buy football fans is confirmed. Based on the results obtained from the combined reliability, extracted variance, model fit coefficient, and goodness-of-fit index in the path analysis, the model is consistent with suitable empirical and theoretical assumptions and has a good fit. Therefore, the model of the impact of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans is confirmed.

#### 4.2. Research hypotheses test results

This paper presents the results of hypothesis testing conducted to examine the impacts of online advertising on football player popularity and fans' intention to purchase. The following sections detail the outcome of four research hypotheses that were developed and tested using quantitative analysis.

- **Hypothesis 1:** Online advertising has an impact on football player popularity.

Based on the results in Table 3, the path coefficient of online advertising on player popularity is equal to 0.780, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it can be concluded that online advertising has a positive and significant effect on player popularity, and hypothesis 1 of the research is confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 2:** Football Player popularity impacts the intention to purchase football fans.

Based on the results in Table 3, the path coefficient of player popularity on the intention to purchase football fans is equal to 0.581, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it can be concluded that player popularity has a positive and significant effect on the intention to purchase football fans, and hypothesis 2 of the research is confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 3:** Online advertising impacts the intention to purchase football fans.

Based on the results in Table 3, the path coefficient of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans is equal to 0.355, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, it can be concluded that online advertising has a small but statistically significant positive effect on the intention to purchase football fans, and hypothesis 3 of the research is confirmed.

- **Hypothesis 4:** Online advertising indirectly impacts the intention to purchase football fans through the mediating role of player popularity.

In this study, the VAF measure was used to determine the strength of the indirect effect through the mediating variable, which is a measure between 0 and 1 and indicates the more vital the value is towards 1, the stronger the indirect impact is, and it measures the proportion of indirect effects in the total effect. VAF is calculated using the formula (1), and the value of 0.556 was obtained in this study. This value indicates that more than 55% of the effects of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans are explained indirectly through the mediating variable of player popularity. Therefore, hypothesis 4 of the research is confirmed based on the impact of online advertising on the intention to purchase football fans with the mediating role of player popularity.

$$VAF = \frac{a \times b}{(a \times b) + c} \quad (1)$$

## 5. Conclusion

This study examines the impact of online advertising of football players on football fans' purchase intention, with the mediating role of football players' popularity. This study makes significant theoretical contributions by demonstrating the persuasive impact of football players' online advertising on fans' purchase intentions, with player popularity acting as a critical mediator. The findings strongly support celebrity endorsement theory, as players with greater fame and public recognition showed enhanced advertising effectiveness and ability to sway buying behaviour. This reinforces source credibility models linking celebrities' perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness to their endorsement influence (Hsieh & Li, 2020).

Online advertising has become essential for athletes and sports teams to build brands and connect with fans. The hypothesis "online advertising affects the popularity of football players" shows that by using social media platforms, targeted advertising campaigns, and other online marketing strategies, athletes can reach more audiences and increase their visibility in the public eye. Goldfarb (2014) states that online advertising can impact exposure. When fans see online advertisements featuring their favourite players, it can help strengthen their loyalty and interest in the player and even encourage them to purchase products or participate in games to show their support. Additionally, online advertising can help shape a sports player's public image and fame.

The hypothesis "the popularity of football players affects fans' purchasing intentions" shows that a player's popularity among fans can affect their intention to buy products or goods related to that player. In other words, fans may have a greater inclination to purchase items such as jerseys, hats, or other products that feature the name or image of a famous player. As Watanabe et al. (2016) suggest, there is a correlation between the popularity of

players and an increase in consumer interest in sports products. Furthermore, current research shows that not only star players, but all team members or roster members can help create consumer demand. In other words, the popularity of a team or roster can positively impact the sale of sports products, not just individual player popularity. This emotional connection that fans may feel with their favourite players is crucial for marketers and sports organizations in developing marketing and advertising strategies.

The hypothesis "online advertising affects football fans' purchasing intentions" shows that online advertising can influence the likelihood of sports fans buying products or goods related to their favourite football teams or football players. In other words, when fans are exposed to online advertisements for sports-related products, their inclination to buy may increase, and they may show support for their team or player. [Ayuningtyas and Sijabat \(2022\)](#) found that online advertising positively correlates with related purchase decisions. One of the critical advantages of online advertising is its ability to create awareness and interest in sports-related products among a wide range of fans. By using social media platforms, targeted advertising campaigns, and other online marketing strategies, sports teams and marketers can reach more audiences and increase the visibility of their products and goods ([Ratten & Thompson, 2021](#)). In addition to creating awareness and interest, online advertising can help foster fans' emotional connection with their teams and favorite players. By developing precise advertising and social media posts highlighting the emotional connection between fans and their teams or players, marketers can help create a more positive and meaningful relationship between fans and the products they advertise.

The hypothesis that "online advertising affects the purchasing intention of football fans with the mediating role of football players' popularity" suggests that the impact of online advertising on fans' purchasing intention is partly due to the popularity of players featured in the ads. In other words, when fans are exposed to online advertisements featuring famous players, they may be more inclined to purchase sports-related products or goods. As ([Maddock, 2018](#)) suggests, various factors influence consumer behaviour, and player popularity is a crucial driver of consumer behaviour when buying sports-related products and goods. When fans emotionally invest in a particular player, they may be more likely to purchase products or goods associated with that player to demonstrate their support and attachment to the player and their team. Therefore, players' popularity can mediate the relationship between online advertising and consumer behaviour.

For advertisers, these findings underscore the importance of partnering with football players who enjoy broad celebrity appeal and fame within the target fan community. Tapping into the most prominent, buzzworthy players will maximize advertising effectiveness. Campaigns can highlight achievements, skills, lifestyle, and other attributes contributing to a player's popularity.

This study concentrated on football, but subsequent research should investigate whether these findings extend to other sports and entertainment domains. The integrative model, which incorporates celebrity, social adaptation, and cognitive processing theories, establishes a robust foundation for scrutinizing the effects of celebrity endorsement in various contexts. Further investigations could delve into demographic and individual variances in fan responses to player advertisements. Factors like age, gender, playing experience, and fan loyalty may potentially influence susceptibility to celebrity



endorsements. Additionally, longitudinal designs could track how the evolving popularity of players and fan perceptions impact advertising effectiveness over time.

By offering more comprehensive theoretical integration and practical insights into celebrity athlete endorsement, this study significantly contributes to sports marketing literature. The implications of the findings are substantial for capitalizing on digital platforms and influential players in persuasive advertising campaigns aimed at maximizing fans' purchase intentions.

For football players contemplating online advertising, endorsing brands they genuinely use is advisable, enhancing their credibility exclusively. Players should also consider the alignment between the partner brand and their public persona when selecting collaborations. For instance, a religious player should refrain from promoting a brand that contradicts their beliefs. Lastly, players can actively share promotional content on their favoured social media pages to enhance visibility.

Similarly, it is recommended for sports brands to select famous players who inherently embody their brand. Engaging these players in creative online promotional activities, such as organizing competitions or producing compelling videos, can be beneficial. Ultimately, providing opportunities to showcase these players in their dedicated fan communities can amplify the effectiveness of advertisements.

Overall, online advertising showcasing football players and their products or services can impact fans' decision-making process, and player popularity can mediate this relationship. These findings suggest online advertising can increase sales and strengthen e-commerce, especially in football and sports marketing.

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## تاثیر تبلیغات آنلاین بازیکنان فوتبال بر قصد خرید هواداران با نقش میانجی محبوبیت بازیکنان

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### کلیدواژه

تبلیغات آنلاین  
قصد خرید  
محبوبیت  
فوتبال  
هواداران

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** تبلیغات آنلاین به ابزار مهمی برای تیم‌های ورزشی، بازاریابان و خرده‌فروشان تبدیل شده است که به دنبال ارتباط با هواداران و افزایش فروش محصولات مرتبط با ورزش هستند. این پژوهش با هدف تاثیر تبلیغات آنلاین بازیکنان فوتبال بر قصد خرید هواداران با نقش میانجی محبوبیت بازیکنان صورت گرفته است.

**روش:** پژوهش حاضر از نظر هدف از جمله پژوهش‌های کاربردی، از نظر روش انجام پژوهش در طبقه‌بندی پژوهش‌های توصیفی و به لحاظ نحوه گردآوری داده‌ها جز پژوهش‌های پیمایشی-تحلیلی است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش شامل هواداران فوتبال در ایران بود. روش نمونه‌گیری در این پژوهش نمونه‌گیری غیراحتمالی در دسترس (۲۰۰ هوادار) بود. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از پرسشنامه چهار بخشی استفاده شد، سپس از مدل سازی معادلات ساختاری حداقل مربعات جزئی (PLS 3.0) برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج تحقیق نشان داد که تبلیغات آنلاین بر محبوبیت بازیکنان تاثیرگذار است. از سوی دیگر محبوبیت بازیکنان و تبلیغات آنلاین بر قصد خرید آنها تاثیر دارد. در نهایت، فرضیه، تبلیغات آنلاین بر قصد خرید هواداران با نقش میانجی محبوبیت بازیکنان تاثیر دارد، تایید شد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** در این پژوهش نقش میانجی محبوبیت بازیکنان فوتبال بر قصد خرید هواداران مورد ارزشیابی قرار گرفت.

تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۰۴/۳۱

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۲/۱۱/۲۸

در حالی اولین شماره **نشریه کسبوکار در ورزش** را منتشر کردیم، که نشریه جایگاه خود را در بین محققان و داوران پیدا کرده و در سراسر جهان پذیرفته شده است. اگرچه بیشتر بازدیدکنندگان مقالات آن از کشورهای دیگر هستند، اما بازدید ماهانه آن بیش از ۴۰۰۰ نفر است که نیمی از آن از محققان خارج از کشور و از پنج قاره جهان هستند. امیدواریم با رعایت استانداردهای فرمی و محتوایی لازم بتوانیم در افزایش دید مقالات و نمایه شدن در پایگاه‌های تخصصی تری موفق‌تر باشیم. ابر واژگان مقالات نیز نشان می‌دهد که ما همچنان ملزم به رعایت محدوده مجله هستیم و توانسته‌ایم جایگاه تخصصی آن را حفظ کنیم. به یاری خداوند متعال و با همکاری مستمر همکاران و نویسندگان عزیز در نحوه برداشت خود موفق‌تر خواهیم بود.

بار دیگر از معاونت محترم پژوهشی **دانشگاه الزهراء(س)** و همکاران عزیزمان در این حوزه به خاطر همراهی و راهنمایی‌هایشان تشکر می‌کنیم. همچنین از مدیران محترم کمیسیون نشریات علمی وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری کمال تشکر و قدردانی را داریم و امیدواریم حمایت خود را از مجلات نوپای انگلیسی زبان حفظ نموده و همچنان به حمایت‌های فنی و مادی خود برای انتشار این‌گونه نشریات ادامه دهند. همچنین امیدواریم در راستای انتشار مقالات فنی و سایر فعالیت‌ها برای رشد این رشته و ارتقای سطح مقاله نویسی به زبان انگلیسی، همچنان دریافت مقالات تخصصی ارزشمند را ادامه دهیم.

- ۲۹ ارتباطات بازاریابی یکپارچه و پرستیژ برند کمیته ملی المپیک ایران  
محمود اشکانی؛ شهرام نظری؛ رسول نوروزی سید حسینی
- ۴۷ وفاداری، اعتماد و تبلیغات دهان به دهان در ورزش: متاآنالیز  
نسیم چیتی؛ رضا اندام؛ مجتبی رجبی
- ۶۲ نقش اصالت برندهای ملی ایرانی بر وابستگی عاطفی مصرف‌کنندگان کالاهای ورزشی با  
میانجی‌گری تعصب مشتری  
رقیه سرلاب؛ ناهید داروغه عارفی؛ مریم سیدلر؛ فاطمه زارع
- ۸۵ عوامل موثر بر توسعه تبلیغات از طریق رسانه‌های اجتماعی برای تاثیرگذاری برنیات  
رفتاری مشتریان محصولات ورزشی  
علی کریمی؛ پیمان اکبری
- ۱۰۹ پذیرش فناوری اتاق پرو مجازی در صنایع پوشاک ورزشی ایران: مطالعه ترکیبی بر  
اساس مدل TAM  
سید ایمان غفاری صدر؛ فرزاد نوبخت ساربان
- ۱۲۴ تاثیر تبلیغات آنلاین بازیکنان فوتبال بر قصد خرید هواداران با نقش میانجی محبوبیت  
بازیکنان  
فرشته آقاجانی؛ وجیهه جوانی

نشریه

کسب و کار

نشریه فصلنامه علمی

دانشگاه الزهراء (س)

دوره چهار، شماره یک، شماره پیاپی ۹

زمستان ۱۴۰۲

در ورزش



طراح جلد:

حمیدرضا عطااللهی

صاحب امتیاز: دانشگاه الزهراء (س)

سردبیر: دکتر محمد احسانی

مدیرمسئول: دکتر ژاله معماری

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## لیست داوران

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مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه کردستان استاد	دکتر سعید صلتقی بیوجری
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- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر ناهید تقیا
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر ژاله معمای
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استادیار دانشگاه زنجان، زنجان	دکتر حسن قره خانی
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دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر مریم مختاری دینانی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه اراک	دکتر زینب منطقی زاده
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه خوارزمی	دکتر محمد حسن پیمان فر
استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس	دکتر مرجان صفلی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه ارومیه	دکتر رقیه سرلاب
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استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد	دکتر سیدمرتضی عظیم زاده
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مریم نبیانی تبار
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- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مریم رهبر
دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر علی ناظمی
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر رحیم خسرومنش

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# نشریه

# کسب و کار

# در ورزش

نشریه فصلنامه علمی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

دوره چهار، شماره یک، شماره پیاپی ۹

زمستان ۱۴۰۲

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آدرس: ایران، تهران، میدان شیخ بهایی، خیابان ده ونک، دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

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