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# THE INFLUENCE OF THE NBA STAR ENDORSERS' CREDIBILITY AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASE INTENTION: A CASE STUDY OF TAIWANESE AMERICAN PLAYER JEREMY LIN

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## Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether consumers are influenced by the NBA star endorsers' credibility and brand image on their purchase intention. A questionnaire survey is conducted in this study, and 492 college students in Taoyuan City are taken as research objects. A total of 500 questionnaires are sent out; after the deduction of 8 invalid questionnaires, a total of 492 valid questionnaires are collected. In this study, SPSS20.0 for Window Chinese package statistical software is used as the analysis tool. After the verification of descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, independent sample t test, Pearson product difference correlation analysis, and regression analysis, the results obtained are as follows: 1) the credibility of the NBA star endorsers has a significant impact on purchase intention, in which the influence of professional image is greater than the influence of the reliability on purchase intention; 2) brand image is greater than the effect of functionality in brand image on purchase intention; 3) the credibility, brand image, and purchase intention of the NBA star endorsers are significantly correlated.

Keywords: endorsers' credibility, brand image, purchase intention

# 1. Introduction

# 1.1 Research Background and Motives

Doing exercise is always in style. In recent years, the demand of the public for leisure and sporting goods has increased; and many sports-related companies have sprung up.

With similar and high homogeneity of the product, the brand image has become an important basis for identifying products (Haung, 2010). In major sports brand marketing respect, many Asian players are deliberately cultivated to seize the Asian market under the globalization. Sports brand companies also actively seek outstanding basketball players as endorsers for their corporate brands. Take the NBA as an example, through sports marketing, consumers focus their attention on "idols" and companies sell sports goods and services through their idolatrous attitude (Lin, 2008). In recent years, from the post-Yao era, the NBA has been searching for the next Chinese / Asian celebrity. In February 2012, the first Taiwanese American, Jeremy Lin, became "the second NBA player to graduate from Harvard and the starting point guard for the NBA New York Knicks. Surprisingly, he led the New York Knicks won seven games in a row". Follow after Yao Ming, "Linsanity" let Jeremy Lin become the most representative Asian basketball star, blowing a hurricane in the world of American NBA.

Friedman and Friedman (1979) point out that the product with celebrity endorsement would get more trust, better product and advertising attitude, and higher purchase intention. "Linsanity" causes a wave of fans at home and abroad. VL Sports and ESPN STAR Sports, which fixed broadcast NBA events, hit a ratings record since the broadcast. The economic benefits brought by broadcast and the sports merchandise could not be ignored. In summary, the main purpose of this study is to explore whether consumers are influenced by the NBA star endorsers' credibility and brand image on their purchase intention.

## 1.2. Purpose of Research

Based on the above research background and motives, the following are the research purposes to be achieved in this study:

- 1) Through this study, the consumer motives of purchase intention would be understood.
- 2) Understand the influence of the endorsers' credibility on purchase intention.
- 3) Understand the impact of brand image on purchase intention.

## **1.3 Research Hypothesis**

According to the research purposes, this study is assumed to be:

**H1:** There is significant correlation between endorsers' credibility and purchase intention.

H2: There is significant correlation between brand image and purchase intention.

**H3:** There is significant correlation between the endorsers' credibility, brand image and purchase intention.

## 1.4 Research Scope and Limitations

## 1.4.1 The Limitation of Research Inference

The subjects of this study are the students from National Central University, Chung Yuan Christian University, and Yuan Ze University in Taoyuan area. The students in other counties and cities are not considered, and the results and explanation of the study are also limited to such area. Thus there are limitations on research inference. As for other regions, further discussion and research are needed.

## 1.4.2 The Limitation of Research Methods

In this study, to obtain information on subjects, self-contained questionnaire is used as the research method. Questionnaire distribution and collection is implemented by the researchers themselves. Due to the inability to completely control the standardized scenario of the subjects' response and the subjects' mentality, there is a possibility of untrue answers. Therefore, the research results might have errors.

## 1.5 Glossary

# 1.5.1 Credibility of Sports Endorsers

With well-known athlete's healthy, trustworthy image, as well as charisma, the product endorsement could have a good advertising effect; not only establish the brand awareness, but also enhance customers' purchase intention. Hung (2014) argues that celebrity endorsers are of considerable importance due to consumers' longing for celebrities. Scholars Bower & Landreth (2001) point out that consumers often produce more reliable cognitions on highly appealing endorsers. McCracken (1989) consider that celebrity endorsement is a strategic tool that can communicate effectively with (potential) consumers. The use of such marketing strategy not only enhances corporate brand awareness, but also enables endorsed products produce a positive association with consumers.

# 1.5.2 Brand Image

Brand image is the first impression that the company gives to consumers. Consumers develop brand beliefs for each brand based on the properties of each product; while brand beliefs form brand image. The better the brand image, the higher the cognitive quality of consumers (Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, & Borin, 1998). Consumers and the overall market perception of the brand refer to brand image, which is also the way to collect products with all the information, such as: product properties and functionality (Pang 2017). With positive brand image and brand recognition, consumers would have higher purchase intention (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2003). When the good brand image is built, consumers would consider the products or services with such strong brand image, and then stimulate purchase intention (Park, 1986; Dobni, 1990).

# 1.5.3 Purchase Intention

When consumers select products, they would search for relevant information based on their own experience and external environment. When the information reaches a certain level, consumers would start to evaluate and consider, after comparison and judgment, resulting in consumer purchase behavior (Tsai, & Cheng 2016). According to scholars Schiffman & Kanuk (2000), the possibility of actual purchase behavior of consumers is indicated: the higher the purchase intention, the higher the probability of purchase; the lower the purchase intention, the lower the purchase probability.

## 2. Research Methods

## 2.1 Research Framework

According to the research purposes of this study, the research framework is proposed after the discussion of the related literature review and the reference to the actual situation. There are three variables in this research framework: endorsers' credibility, brand image, and purchase intention. This study first analyzes the collected sample structure, and then conducts causal analysis of endorsers' credibility, brand image and purchase intention. In this study, the motivation and purpose of the research are summarized, and the research framework of this research is derived from the theoretical support of scholars Zajonc & Markus (1982), Biel (1992), and Miciak & Shanklin (1994). The research framework is shown in Figure 1.

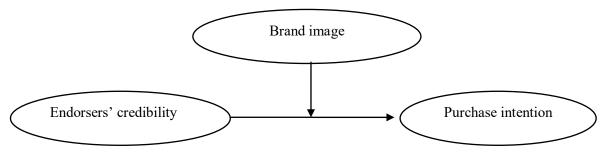


Figure 1: Research Framework

# 2.2 Research Object

The research object of this study is the students in three public and private universities in Taoyuan City. From May 1 to June 30 in 2017, questionnaires are distributed by the researchers in classes. A total of 500 questionnaires are sent out, with a total of 492 valid questionnaires and an effective recovery rate of 98%, after the deduction of 8 invalid questionnaires.

# 2.3 Research Tool

This research collects relevant literatures and theories and designs the questionnaire which is divided into four parts: basic personal information, endorsers' credibility scale, brand image scale and purchase intention scale. The details are described as follows:

- 1) Basic personal information: The questionnaire refers to personal background variables. A total of 5 questions, including basic information of subjects, are included in the questionnaire, in order to grasp the subjects' demographic information and endorsers' endorsement and other information.
- 2) Endorsers' credibility scale: This study used professionalism, attractiveness and reliability of Ohania (1991) and Chou (2011) as the facets of the sports star endorsers' image. This scale is revised according to the needs of this study, with

a total of 12 questions. This part uses Likert's five-point scale to measure consumers' consent for endorsers' credibility.

- 3) Brand image scale: Park, Jaworski, & MacInni (1986) divide brand image into functionality, symbolism, and empiricism to discuss. With a total of 12 questions, this part uses Likert's five-point scale to understand consumers' consent for brand image.
- 4) Purchase intention scale: This study refers to the scale of the study of Lin (2010) and uses Likert's five-point scale. A total of 4 questions are included as a measure of purchase intention to understand the degree of consumers' consent for purchase intention.

# 2.4 Data Analysis

This study uses SPSS20.0 statistical package software to analyze the sample data. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, one-way ANOVA, Pearson's correlation analysis, regression analysis and other methods are used to analyze the data in this study.

## 3. Analysis and Results

## 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

After 500 questionnaires are distributed in this study, 500 questionnaires are returned. After examining the contents of the materials and deleting 8 invalid questionnaires, a total of 492 valid questionnaires are actually collected and the valid questionnaire recovery ratio is 98%. In terms of gender, there are 250 boys, accounting for 50.3%, and there are 242 girls, accounting for 49.2%.

# **3.1.1 Regular Exercise Habits**

A total of 212 people don't have regular exercise habits, accounting for 43.1%. With regular exercise habits, there are 183 people working out once or twice a week, accounting for 37.2%; and there are 97 people doing exercise more than three days a week, accounting for 19.7%.

# 3.1.2 The Most Commonly Participated Sports

The most commonly participated sports are ball games, with a total of 212 people, accounting for 43.1%; followed by jogging, with a total of 111 people, accounting for 22.6%.

# 3.1.3 The Amount of Sports Brand Products Purchased Each Year

When it comes to the amount of sports brand products purchased each year, the majority is the 215 people who spend NTD1,001 to NTD5,000, accounting for 43.7%; followed by the 191 people who spend NTD1,000, accounting for 38.8%.

## 3.1.4 Purchase Channel of Sporting Goods

A total of 254 people go to sporting goods shops to purchase, accounting for 51.6%; followed by a total of 79 people who purchase at shopping centers, accounting for 16.1%.

Name of Variables	Option	Number of	Percentage
	-	people	%
Gender	Male	250	50.8
	Female	242	49.2
Exercise habits	Without regular exercise habits	212	43.1
	Do exercise once or twice a week	183	37.2
	Do exercise more than three days a week	97	19.7
The most commonly	Ball games	212	43.1
participated sports	Jogging	111	22.6
	Exercise walking	39	7.9
	Swimming	44	8.9
	Weight training	39	7.9
	Cycling	23	4.7
	Dancing	10	2.0
	Yoga	9	1.8
	Others	5	1.0
	<ntd1000< td=""><td>191</td><td>38.8</td></ntd1000<>	191	38.8
The amount of sports	NTD1,001- NTD 5,000	215	43.7
brand products	NTD5,001- NTD10,000	67	13.6
purchased each year	NTD10,001- NTD15,000	9	1.8
	>NTD15,000	10	2.0
	Sporting goods shops	254	51.6
	Shopping centers	79	16.1
Purchase channel of	Supermarkets	62	12.6
sporting goods	Outlets	73	14.8
	Internet	24	4.9

**Table 1:** Descriptive Analysis Table of Sample Demographic Variables

## 3.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient is used to measure the internal consistency between endorsers' credibility, brand image, and purchase intention. The higher  $\alpha$  coefficient indicates that the results of each item in the questionnaire tend to be more consistent, indicating that the questionnaire has higher reliability. Nunnally (1987) argues that >0.7 is a high confidence level and  $0.5 < \alpha < 0.7$  is a lower, but acceptable, scale marginal value, which cannot be used if the alpha coefficient is less than 0.5. As can be seen from Table 2 below,  $\alpha$  values of the three measures of "endorsers' credibility", "brand image", and "purchase intention" are all greater than 0.7. Therefore, the questionnaire has good reliability values.

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Table 2: Reliability Analysis Scale						
FacetsCronbach'a valueCronbach'a value of the whole questionnaire						
Endorsers' credibility	0.850					
Brand image	0.966	0.920				
Purchase intention	0.945					

### 3.2.1 Descriptive Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility

In this study, there are three facets in endorsers' credibility: attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism. As can be seen from Table 3, most of consumers tend to agree on source factor of endorsers' credibility; that is, they hold a positive attitude toward the facets of credibility. For consumers, the most important source factor of endorsers' credibility is the reputation of the endorser.

Facets	Variables	Mean	Standard	Cronbach's
			deviation	α
Attractiveness	1. Handsome appearance and popular	3.41	1.004	
	2. Leader temperament in the team is attractive	4.05	0.881	
	3. The enthusiasm for sports is deeply appealing to me	3.89	0.914	
	4. The ambition of the competition attracted me to love	3.96	1.095	
	5. No moral flaws and worth to admire	3.85	0.859	
Reliability	6. The image of sports star is positive	3.79	0.941	0.850
	7. Sports stars have the nature of integrity and honesty	3.56	0.959	
	8. Sports stars endorse brand because of superb skill	3.64	1.023	_
Professionalism	9. Sports stars perform outstanding in the professional field	4.20	0.855	
	10. Sports stars perform quite well on the court	4.15	0.849	
	11. Sports stars show the spirit of fighting on the court	4.21	0.858	
	12. Has extensive expertise in sports	3.93	0.861	

#### Table 3: Summary Table of Descriptive Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility

## 3.2.2 Brand Image

In terms of brand image, it can be seen from Table 4 that most of consumers tend to agree on functionality, symbolism, and empiricism.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Brand Image's Facets					
Facets	Variables	Mean	Mean Standard deviation Cron		
	1. The products of this brand are in good quality.	3.90	0.834		
	2. The product usage of this brand meets standard.	3.37	1.045		
Functionality	3. The purchase of this brand's product could enhance my exercise performance.	3.82	0.856		
	4. The product features of this brand is excellent.	3.32	1.053		
Symbolism	5. The brand could make me different.	3.77	0.914		
	6. The products of this brand are very practical.	3.95	0.864	0.966	
	7. The products of this brand are comfortable to use.	3.47	1.057		
	8. The brand gives me a feeling of extraordinary value.	3.58	1.085		
Empiricism	9. The brand gives me a feeling of spiritual content.	3.80	0.892		
	10. The brand is popular.	3.48	1.036		
	11. The brand could reflect my personal style.	3.51	1.101		
	12. The brand can enhance my personal charm.	3.93	0.861		

## 3.2.3 Purchase Intention

In terms of purchase intention, it could be seen from Table 5 that consumers are positive about whether they would consider purchasing. A good endorser, would not only affect brand image on products, but also have a positive impact on consumers' final purchase intention.

**Table 5:** Descriptive Statistics of Purchase Intention's Facets

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's α
1. I am willing to buy the brand Jeremy Lin endorsed.	4.32	1.053	
2. I am willing to recommend the brand Jeremy Lin endorsed to friends.	4.07	0.914	0.045
3. If there are products of the same nature, I only buy the products endorsed by Jeremy Lin.	3.95	0.955	0.945
4. I am willing to buy the products endorsed by Jeremy Lin again.	4.05	0.856	

## 3.3 Independent Sample T Test and Analysis Of Variance

This section mainly discusses whether there is a significant difference between endorsers' credibility, brand image and purchase intention. The analysis finds out that there is not a significant difference between endorsers' credibility, brand image and purchase intention on gender. As shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6. 1 Test of Gender in Endorsers' Credibility, brand image and i urchase intention						
Facets	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	t value	P value
Endorsers'	Male	250	3.66	1.087	0.392	0.695
credibility	Female	242	3.62	0.953	0.393	0.695
Brand	Male	250	3.88	0.877	-0.333	0.739
image	Female	242	3.91	0.789	-0.334	0.739
Purchase	Male	250	3.53	1.120	1.947	0.052
intention	Female	242	3.34	1.031	1.950	0.052

Table 6: T Test of Gender in Endorsers' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

N=492 ; \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.00

# 3.4 Correlation Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

## 3.4.1 Endorsers' Credibility and Purchase Intention

After Pearson correlation analysis, this study finds that the attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism of endorsers are significantly correlated to purchase intention. It could be seen from Table 7 that p value of attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism are less than .05, which means they are significant for purchase intention. The attractiveness and reliability of endorsers are highly correlated.

Facets		Attractiveness	Reliability	Professionalism	Purchase intention
	Attractiveness	1.000	0.339	0.460	0.229
Pearson	Reliability	0.339	1.000	0.435	0.464
correlation	Professionalism	0.460	0.435	1.000	0.555
	Purchase intention	0.229	0.464	0.555	1.000
	Attractiveness		0.000***	0.005**	0.000***
Significance	Reliability	0.000***		0.000***	0.000***
(two-tailed)	Professionalism	0.005**	0.000***		0.000***
	Purchase intention	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	

# Table 7: Correlated Table of Attractiveness, Reliability,

N=492, \*p<.05,\*\*p<.01,\*\*\*p<.001

## 3.4.2 Brand Image and Purchase Intention

The functionality, symbolism, and empiricism of brand image have a significant correlation with purchase intention. It could be seen from Table 8 that the p value of functionality, symbolism and empiricism of brand image on purchase intention are less than .05, which are related to purchase intention. The functionality, symbolism, and empiricism of brand image are highly relevant to purchase intention.

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	Table 8: Correlated Table of Functionality, Symbolism, and						
Empiricism of Brand Image on Purchase Intention							
Facets Functionality Symbolism Empiricism Purchase intention							
	Functionality	1.000	0.725	0.521	0.507		
Pearson	Symbolism	0.725	1.000	0.420	0.474		
correlation	Empiricism	0.521	0.420	1.000	0.566		
	Purchase intention	0.507	0.479	0.566	1.000		
	Functionality		0.000***	0.000***	0.000***		
Significance	Symbolism	0.000***		0.000***	0.000***		
(two-tailed)	Empiricism	0.000***	0.000***		0.000***		
	Purchase intention	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***			

N=492, \*p<.05,\*\*p<.01,\*\*\*p<.001

# 3.4.3 Correlation Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Endorsers' credibility and brand image have a significant effect on purchase intention. Endorsers' credibility, brand image, and purchase intention are highly correlated; as can be seen from Table 9, p values are less than 0.05.

	Facets	Endorsers' credibility	Brand image	Purchase intention
Endorsers'	Pearson correlation	1	0.452	0.299
credibility	Significance (two-tailed)		0.000***	0.000***
Brand	Pearson correlation	0.452	1	0.507
image	Significance (two-tailed)	0.000***		0.000***
Purchase	Pearson correlation	0.299	0.507	1
intention	Significance (two-tailed)	0.000***	0.000***	

Table 9: Correlation Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

N=492, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## 3.5 Regression Analysis

This section mainly discusses the relationship between endorsers' credibility, brand image, and purchase intention. Multiple regression analysis is used to test the relationship between this independent variable and the dependent variable which is purchase intention.

The results of Table 10 show that through the multiple regression analysis of the facets of endorsers' credibility and purchase intention, there is a significant impact and affects purchase intention.

<b>Table 10:</b> Regression Analysis of Endorsers	5' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Significance
	β estimated	Standard	Beta		
	value	error	distribution		
(constant)	.283	.203		1.394	.045
Attractiveness	.026	.044	.024	.581	.000
Reliability	391	.073	309	-5.337	.000

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.414	.072	.325	5.715	.000
.321	.068	.248	4.706	.000
.470	.041	.455	11.354	.000
.039	.071	.031	.543	.000
	.321 .470	.321 .068 .470 .041	.321         .068         .248           .470         .041         .455	.321.068.2484.706.470.041.45511.354

N=492, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

## 4.1 Conclusion

The main issue of this study is to study the impact of the credibility of NBA players' endorsement on brand image and purchase intention. The verified results are analyzed.

## 4.1.1 Correlation Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility and Purchase Intention

According to the results of the analysis, it is found that there is a significant correlation between endorsers' credibility and purchase intention. According to the study of scholar Chiang (2015), endorsers' credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention, which is consistent with the findings of this study. Therefore, consumers' consideration of attractiveness, reliability, and professionalism of sports stars' endorsement would impact on subsequent purchase intention.

## 4.1.2 Correlation Analysis of Brand Image and Purchase Intention

According to the results of the analysis, the brand image has a significant correlation with the purchase intention of consumers. Aaker's (1996) study confirms that good brand awareness could increase consumer trust in products. The results of domestic scholar Yen (2017) also confirms that the better the brand image of a brand enterprise could meet various needs and deepen the brand's position in the minds of consumers. Therefore, the brand image gives consumers a good evaluation, which in turn enhances consumers' purchase intention.

# 4.1.3 Correlation Analysis of Endorsers' Credibility, Brand Image and Purchase Intention

According to the analysis results, the endorsers' credibility and the brand image are highly correlated with purchase intention of consumers. Amos, Holmes, & Strutton (2008) argue that celebrities have a positive influence on consumer advertising, branding, and consumer willingness to purchase in the process of endorsement. Jeremy Lin has the reputation of "the pride of Taiwan" and a good overall image. It is deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of Taiwanese. He is also the object of learning for the people of Taiwan. Therefore, it is easy to cause consumers' willingness to purchase. This has become a factor for manufacturers to follow in the follow-up.

## 4.2 Research Limitations and Recommendations

Due to human and time factors, this study is based on the college students in Taoyuan area, so it does not represent the consumption characteristics of most college students. It

is suggested that, in the future, when the questionnaire is issued, if the number of abstract samples could be increased, the regionality of the sample expanded, and the verification of different age groups and genders is made for more fair and objective empirical analysis, there might be more discoveries.

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