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The influence of Digital and Social Media Marketing on brand loyalty with The mediating role of brand awareness and brand attitude Case: Merooj company

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Abstract

The brand is considered one of the most important invisible assets of organizations. Developing the relationship between the customer and the brand is becoming one of the most important strategies of organizations that bring effective results for them. The aim of this research is to investigate the role and influence of social media marketing on the development of customer and brand relationships in Sports Companies This research was analyzed based on structural equations modelling. The research finding shows digital and SSM has a positive impact on brand loyalty and brand awareness and brand attitude and perceived quality

Keywords: *SSM, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand attitude, Merooj Company, perceived quality*

Introduction

Examining the theoretical foundations indicates that marketing communication strategies are usually considered as a necessity for creating special brand value (Tong & Hawley, 2009).

Companies have realized that in order to maintain brand value compared to competitors and to communicate with their customers and reduce the risk of market loss, they must strengthen their marketing communications, have a suitable promotion mix, and promote and promote activities such as the use of social media marketing and sales promotion as a defensive shield (Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009), The share of marketing social media sales force as sources of brand loyalty is mentioned in cases such as (Buli, Martnez, & de Chernatony 2013), for instance. Other promotional activities, such as relationships (Aaker, 1991); advertising slogans, advertising events Keller, (1993); spending on advertising and the good image of the product offering store (Yoo, Donthu & Lee,20001) have been suggested. In consumer marketing, the positive effects of advertising on equity dimensions the brand has been proven (Yoo & et al,2001). According to Keller (2011), promotional events that have long-term goals can help create brand equity argued. brand awareness and affiliation is gotten by coordinate contact with dealers within the

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commercial advertise. In expansion, kim & Hyun (2010) within too demonstrated the positive impact of advancement on brand dependability and saw benefit quality.

Yoo & Donthu(2001) found that spending large advertising expenses is related to high brand equity. Many studies in the field of brand equity have shown that using a creative and appropriate advertising strategy can increase audience awareness of the brand. And creating a positive feeling in the audience can contribute significantly to the development of the brand (Hawley & Tong, 2009). Advertising can have a significant effect on creating the brand's special value by creating awareness of the brand and creating a suitable mental image, and it can even create human characteristics and intensify emotions. Positive to build

The personality and special value of the brand will help (Behnam, Modiri & Hashimi, 2013). The focus of companies is to use mass communication media such as radio, television and the Internet using techniques and impersonal activities in order to reach a large group of target market with the lowest cost per capita. It is for everyone (Mira & Karimi, 2012). Researches show that social media or commercial marketing can affect all dimension of brand equity (Azadi, Yusefi & Eydi, 2016). Knowing how promoting exercises contributes to brand value or harms it. Empower showcasing directors to create successful promoting programs because managers have to be advance brand building activities and avoid brand damaging exercises (Yoo & et al, 2001). Based on the cases mentioned in this research, the following hypotheses are suggested:

Brand attitude

Brand attitude alludes to a consumer's in general appraisal of a brand (Chernatony,1998). It can be seen as a consumer's state of mind toward a certain brand assessed based on its characteristics. In spite of the fact that client fulfillment and brand demeanor are utilized so also, there's a clear distinction between them.

For occasion, client fulfillment is shaped by a customer's appraisal of a particular exchange for a product/service (Bolton,1991), whereas brand demeanor is shaped through a comprehensive assessment of different items discharged by the brand (Eagly,1993, Holbrook,1985). For this reason brand state mind is brand state of mind is known to be a more prominent concept than client fulfillment [Hwang,2013]. In expansion, it is critical to get it the brand state of mind, which makes a difference set up an item situating procedure [park,1986].

(Chattopadhyay et al., 2010). Also, Keller (1993) A brand knowledge is defined based on two components:

First, brand awareness, which indicates the availability of the brand in memory and suggests that the product remembers and recognizes the brand, and second, image. A brand is a set of associations that consumers form in their minds with a brand (Townsend, 2005). (2008) Keller proposes six dimensions of brand equity presented on four levels; At the lowest level, efficiency

and image at the next, judgment and perception at the last, and harmony at the highest (Kim and Hyun, 2010). Specific brand" includes aspects of perceived quality, brand loyalty and brand awareness/attachment.

Berry (2000) proposed a benefit branding show, which incorporates the brand advertised by the company, outside brand communication, customers encounter with the company, brand awareness and brand meaning and brand value (Vatjanasaregagul, 2007). measured brand value with five measurements, execution, esteem, social media, believe and commitment brand value with five measurements, execution, esteem, social picture, believe commitment. Agarwal & Rao (1996).

Presented five measurements to degree brand value, which are

1. Brand awareness, 2. perception/attitude 3. Inclination 4. Choice deliberate 5. Real choice
Reflecting on the inquire about foundation,

Yoo et al (2001) made demonstrated for the impact of displaying brand components on brand value. utilized the measurements of seen quality, brand devotion, brand association /awareness for brand value. the comes about demonstrate a positive impact of publicizing cost

great mental picture of the store and tall volume of dispersion on brand value. (2001) Yoo & Donthu demonstrated that the YU demonstrate and the unused scale of brand value are dependable and generalizable between distinctive societies and item categories. Yoo & Donthu (2001) conducted another ponder with the point of exploring the cross-cultural generalizability of the Yoo et al. show. The comes about did not appear the same impact between American and Korean tests. As it were brand awareness/association had the same impact on brand and utilized the seen fetched of promoting as a promoting communication variable. The comes about appear that promoting communication incorporates a positive impact and cost advancement incorporates a negative impact on brand value measurements.

As past investigates appears that promoting has an impact on the buying behaviour of clients

(Algesheimer, 2010). Hence, utilizing diverse strategies to make strides in client mindfulness of the brand can make strides in this variable. Different investigations have been conducted in connection to this issue.

in Tabriz city (Langaro, Rita, & de Fátima Salgueiro, 2018). too appeared that support in social systems has an impact on brand mindfulness by customers. According to the inquire about specified within the past area with respect to impact of awareness of promoting on awareness of brand and the impact of brand awareness on brand value, this speculation is proposed in this investigation:

Gholamveisy et al, 2023 in research the effect of social media promoting exercises and they expected to recognize the variables influencing brand dependability in insurance company. The comes about of the inquire about appeared that displaying social media has had a positive and noteworthy impact on brand dependability, brand mindfulness and esteem mindfulness. In expansion, brand mindfulness has had a critical positive impact on brand dependability; at last, the intervening part of brand mindfulness within the impact of social media promoting had a positive and noteworthy impact on brand dependability.

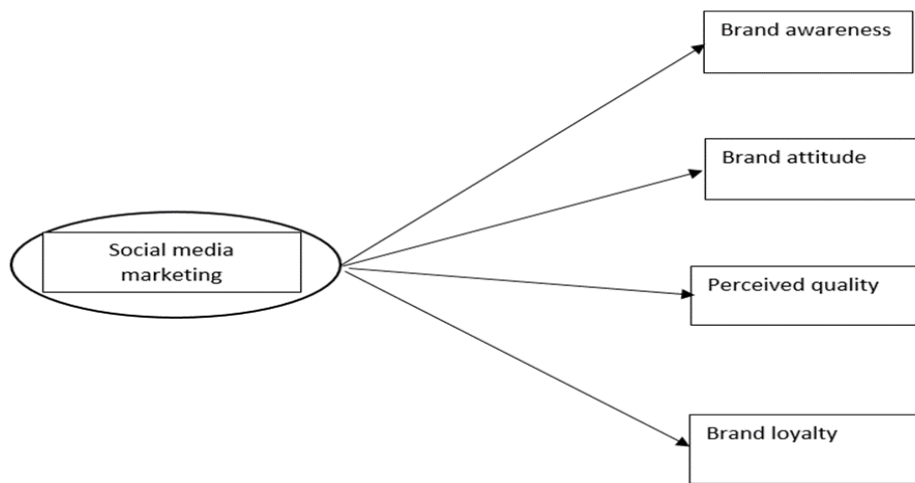


Fig 1: conceptual model

Research method

The research method of the current article was a descriptive survey based on structural equations. It is cross-sectional in terms of time and according to the practical purpose, which was done in the field. The statistical population of the research included all the customers of Meroj brand agencies (Khuzestan, Shiraz, Hamadan, Lorestan, Yazd, Anzali, Amol) in Iran, with at least one year of experience of using this brand.

Considering the limitedness of the statistical population and according to Morgan's table, 453 people were considered as a statistical sample; during which the research questionnaire was distributed and collected in person and online (via social network in the form of an online questionnaire) in the 4 aforementioned agencies. 413 questionnaires were answered, of which the

researcher made 453 as the basis for analysis. Data collection from October 2022 It took place until December 1997

In total, the research questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part is the demographic information of the people and the second part includes a 14-question questionnaire including the brand attitude questionnaire (Yoo & et al (2001) (questions 1 to 4) and brand awareness and (questions 5 to 7)); brand loyalty (questions 8 to 12) and perceived quality (questions 13 and 14). The questions of the questionnaire are in the form of a 5 Likert scale. In addition, Necessary corrections have been made. Reliability of all four questionnaires, social media marketing, brand awareness and brand loyalty, and brand attitude and perceived quality questionnaire was obtained and all questionnaires got an acceptable score (above 0.8) and which means the reliability of the research questionnaire. In order to check the effect Variables and model fit were used from variance-based structural equation modelling using Smart PII-S software

Presuppositions of structural equations

The investigation of the research finding about unitizing the structural equation modelling of the variance-based approach. Utilizing this approach in testing the speculations and the hypothetical demonstration of the investigation makes a difference in the analyst bargain with most factors included within the hypothetical demonstration as latent variables and meddled with the estimation mistakes within the estimation of the parameters related to the demonstrated test, and as a result, the estimations are more exact and dependable. Have more certainty. In arrange to implement basic condition modelling, it is imperative to pay consideration to the fundamental presumptions of this approach and it ought to be inspected sometime recently actualizing the show.

One of these presumptions is the ideal test estimate. To decide the test estimate, Mueller (1999) employments the proportion of the test measure to the free test for estimation.

The proportion is 20 to 1. In any case, within the display ponder, agreeing to the ideal measure of Müller, it was accepted that the test measure of 453 people (for 14 questions) is adequate to implement structural condition modeling. The moment suspicion is collinearity. On the off chance that the collinearity in a relapse condition is tall, it means that there's a tall relationship between the free factors and the legitimacy of the show is addressed. They don't influence the free variable through tall collinearity.

In this case, it can be claimed that there's no collinearity or its impact is exceptionally little and can be disregarded. In this inquire, in arrange to examine the collinearity between the autonomous factors within the models, the basic condition of The values related to two records of change expansion and resistance coefficient, which demonstrate the degree of collinearity between free factors, have been utilized.

Data instrument

In order to gather the data for this study, a questionnaire was used as the measurement.

Instrument Statement items on a 5-point Likert scale are used to measure each variable. From strongly disagree to strongly agree, five. The first of two sections made up the questionnaire. The first part contains some instructions and demographic information about the respondents. Items to measure the five variables. Utilizing scales modified to the conditions of this investigation, Measures of all were taken from reputable, psychometrical reliable instruments

Data collection procedure

In this study, researchers used a closed questionnaire. A selection of potential responses to the question. According to Sugiyono (2018), the questionnaire is a method the respondent is given a list of questions and written statements as part of a data collection process to fill up.

The responses from the online questionnaires were organized properly in a spreadsheet and exported to the SPSS and SmartPLS after the respondents completed them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Description of the case study

Majid brand or Meroj brand is a completely Iranian brand that now competes with well-known brands such as Nike and Adidas in the sportswear market. This brand provides sportswear for many countries of the world. The most famous production of this brand is related. The Iranian brand Merooj now has fixed purchase contracts with 25 countries. It also exports to 35 countries such as Georgia, Azerbaijan, Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Central Asia. Merooj company started in 1967 with the production of soccer balls in Iran worked After a while the aim of producing and providing sportswear with Expanded the highest quality in Iran's activity and with The hub of using the most advanced machines and devices for design and Sewing sportswear in the shortest possible time the competition between the famous brands of the world in the Iranian market. Company Marooj is proud to be the supplier of clothing to more than 63 countries in the world ship's hull Considering that it may be possible to admit that Until now, no Iranian sports production company has been able to achieve this level to present itself internationally and for the first time it was the Majid brand In some sports fields, especially wrestling, the place is possible Gaining attention as an Iranian back brand at the inter-Kord, international level Therefore, the researcher needs to analyze the various issues that this Iranian national brand has It is faced as the subject area of research of interest Contract. Because the managers of the mentioned companies are not identified. It must be acknowledged that managers

of sports companies are attracted to the expansion of public sports. The general public and the development of championship sports, attract athletes and champions. They play an essential role. What is important is that by supporting the exchange effort, Knowledge motivates employees to practice such behaviors. When managing a clear vision with an emphasis on value sharing, knowledge provides increased knowledge and exchange of knowledge finds. It is hoped that the findings of the present research can be used for the sports brand the mentioned help.

Measurement Model

In this research, the figure 1 is showed the structural modelling equation for testing reliability and validity and hemoptysis

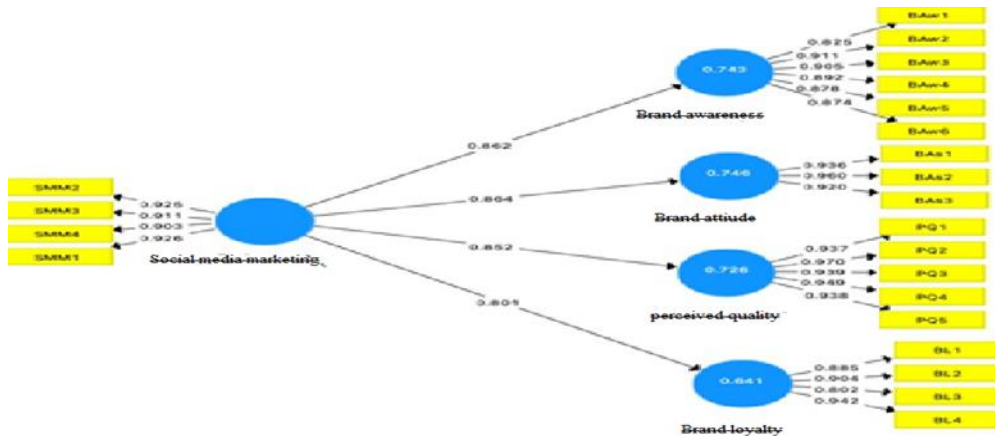


Fig2: measurement of SEM

Table 1: matrix validity by Criterion of Fornell-Larcker

	Brand attitude	Brand Awareness	Brand Loyalty	Perceived Quality	Social Media Marketing
Brand attitude	0.90				
Brand Awareness	0.88	0.79			
Brand Loyalty	0.94	0.90	0.89		
Perceived Quality	0.91	0.91	0.90	0.95	
Social Media Marketing	0.87	0.86	0.80	0.85	0.92

There are three types of validity to confirm the validity of a measuring instrument: content validity (content validity was checked by a survey of experts), convergent validity, which is measured by mean variance, and divergent validity (using Fornell's method and Larcker's method). Was measured in this paper

Based on the findings of the above matrix, the correlation value of the main scale of all brands' attitudes, brand awareness and perceived quality and social media marketing is higher than the correlation value of other brands, which shows the appropriate divergence of validity and the correct fit of the measurement model.

Table 2: reliability of variable

	Cronbach's alpha
Brand attitude	0.955
Brand Awareness	0.912
Brand Loyalty	0.987
Perceived Quality	0.961
Social Media Marketing	0.921

Table 2 appears that all factors have a Cronbach's alpha esteem more prominent than 0.7,

Structural Equation Model

The finding about strutrual modeling show the defined suspicions of this investigate figure 4 appears the auxiliary condition demonstrate of the investigate in a important state, and Table No. 6 appears the entire impacts between the covered-up factors of the investigation.

Table 3: result of SEM

Path	Standard coefficients	assessment	Values	result
SMM -> BA	0.051	21.220	0.000	Significant
SMM -> Ba	0.047	23.563	0.000	Significant
SMM -> PQ	0.033	19.228	0.000	Significant
SMM -> BL	0.043	17.159	0.000	Significant

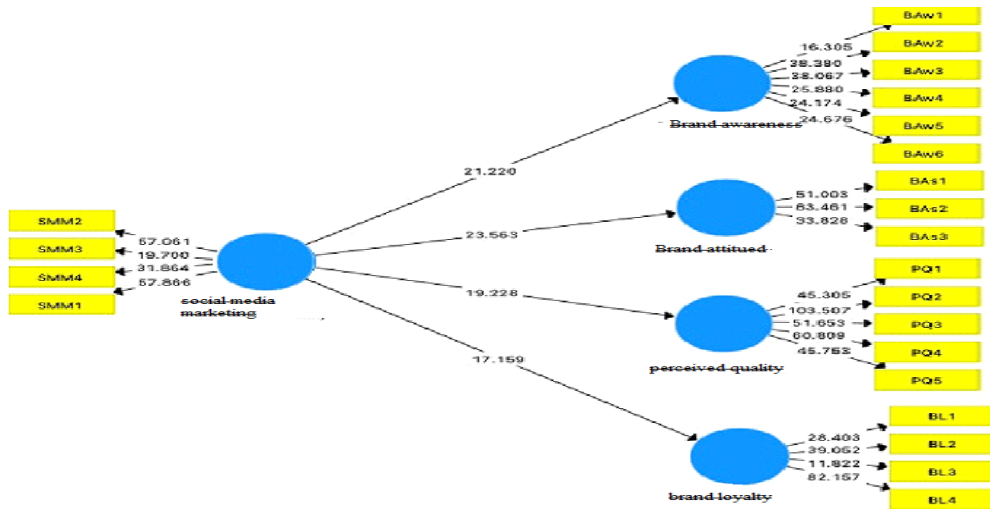


Fig3: standard model SEM

Conclusion

In this research, an attempt was made to evaluate the influence of Digital and Social Media Marketing on brand loyalty with The mediating role of brand awareness and brand attitude and perceived quality in Merooj sport company. The performance of the investigation result about appeared that social media marketing (SMM) has positive and critical impact on brand awareness, brand attitude, perceived quality, brand loyalty.

The results of this survey have shown that the most important drivers of brand loyalty are advantageous promotional campaigns on social media. First, if companies are to conduct effective social media marketing campaigns, they should take into account of the benefits, values and advantages offered by their campaign in terms of consumers' willingness to become loyal to its brands.

Advertising on social media is one of the obvious promotional activities; which has a significant impact and role in creating brand awareness, and when the amount of advertising is high, brand awareness and recall increase. Therefore, in general, it can be said that the awareness of advertisements can affect the awareness of the brand by customers, that is, in the conditions of equal quality of two products, customers, will purchase the product which has an advertisement, and the customer has already become familiar with the product through social media. This evokes the importance of awareness of advertisements because it was stated that awareness of advertisements makes the customer aware of the existence of the brand. Awareness of advertisements leads to the customer being aware of the existence of the brand or reminded of

the existence of the brand Awareness of brand publicizing includes the company's esteem in two ways.

To begin with, it draws in unused clients by creating and centring mindfulness and information, but at that point, it reminds current clients to think around the company and do it in a great way. Within the moment case, the concept of advancing the relationship with the brand gets to be significant. The brand can be depicted as an instrument to commit the buyer and the dealer in a long-term relationship and characterize a basic part of it in making this relationship. In reality, in case a brand has no meaning (value) for shoppers

When there is advertising in social media, this brand unconsciously becomes valuable for the customer; and sometimes even the customer loves this brand, which is because the customer knows the brand well and has comprehensive and complete information about the brand, and this brand reminds the person of good memories. Due to its high reputation in the global markets, Merooj sports brand will gain more fans than before if it is properly introduced in Iran through continuous social media. In fact, it can be said that by increasing customer awareness of the brand and strengthening the brand image in the customer's mind, the value of these brands will also increase for the customer. In addition, this value creation leads to buying the brand. In addition, advertising in social media can improve the brand image by communicating with satisfying the psychological or social needs of customers (Kotler & Keller, 2006). The more advertisements from local sports manufacturing companies are seen and the benefits of using domestic products are more and better known to the customers, the customers will certainly be attracted to it. The SMM of the sports brand Meroj and any other type of sports brand in the producing country should be such that the customers of the country producing sportswear of any brand are the first applicants for those products.

May the customers communicate more with the sports product and the brand image will be well imprinted in the minds of the customers. In order for the customers to have a better image of the brand in their minds and also for the brands of sports products such as Meroj sports brand to be valuable in the eyes of the customers as well as abroad in Iran, companies should attach special importance to the amount of advertising and also the way of advertising their company. As Behnam et al. (2012) stated, advertising can have a significant effect on creating brand equity by creating brand awareness and creating a suitable mental image. Awareness of advertisements can affect customers' awareness of sportswear brands and the brand image of these products. SMM create brand interest and perception among customers and improve strategic management and profitability for sports product sponsors. This shows that advertising and spending money for it can have a double advantage for sportswear manufacturers in merooj because it both improves the organization's strategic management and attracts customers through self-introduction and creating needs. It is very important to pay attention to and emphasize the issue

of brand and its management in sports products, which are supplied by many companies around the world today. A powerful brand brings many benefits to manufacturing companies; Among them, we can mention things such as more customer loyalty, increasing the organization's power in critical situations, more profit margin, more positive reactions of customers to price changes, sales benefits, use of name and logo, and brand development opportunities. It can be said that these image creations in the brand of sports products for each producing country as a standard sports product cause customers to prefer and buy this brand over other well-known sports brands and other lesser-known sports brands; This result can be a very important point for the manufacturers of sports products of any country.

The factors that have created such popularity in the recognition of the superpowers of the world's sports products brand can be a good starting point for the manufacturers of Meroj brand and any other new sports brand and remind them of this point; that creating value for brands such as the Meroj brand can depend on the customers' awareness of the brand and the image they have of the brand; Finally, if the awareness (Maroofi & Amiri, 2016, Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014) and the brand image (Kim & Hyun, 2011, Heinberg & et al, 2018) are done correctly, this will be realized. In fact, advertising leads to the formation of a positive feeling of the customers towards the brand and by intensifying the positive feelings leads to the creation of a special value for the brand. SMM and raising the level of advertising of sports brands causes the brand value to be higher among customers compared to brands that customers have not seen advertising. As (Buil & et al., 2013) state, the share of advertising is considered as a source of special value of the brand. Sportswear manufacturers, especially those manufacturers whose share of foreign sales is greater than their domestic sales, should pay attention to this point, not only paying attention to the quality of the product is the most important selling criterion, but they should also invest more in advertising and introduction of their product.

In this context, as (Keller, 1993) stated, advertising slogans, advertising events; and as (Yoo et al,2001) stated, allocating money for advertising and a good image of the store supplying the product can affect the value creation for the brand. As a result, the domestic manufacturers of sportswear, such as famous brands such as Adidas, Puma, Nike, etc., must first continue their advertising to introduce their products, and especially these advertisements in SMM at the country level. Iran and the world should be wide and wide; to the extent that customers are more and more with Meroj sports brand as a quality brand. Based on the findings of the research, it is suggested that the manufacturers of sports products in order to attract loyal and stable customers in their country should use brand knowledge and related matters. In fact, manufacturing companies should allocate a suitable budget for advertising their products, and on the other hand, the content of these ads should be in a way that properly reflects the brand values; So that the customer, while being aware of the product, also understands its value and can make a connection

between the product and his interests and desires. Therefore, manufacturers of sports products should first introduce their products through effective SMM in such a way that these advertisements create a complete image of the characteristics and value of the brand for the desired sports product and cause awareness in the customer and create value for him so that finally the companies can witness the acquisition of value with their customers. Also, considering that Merooj brand produces products for fans of prominent teams in Iran, it can be said that if this brand uses this method to introduce its products to the general public; It means that he will distribute these products among the fans in the form of advertising, we can hope; that this communication means the use of Merooj products to encourage the popular team, it will evoke the awareness, image and value of the brand among the fans of the teams; And since there are a lot of sports spectators in Iran, especially in the field of football, this brand can take advantage of this advantage, and with such an action, it will gain value from its customers so that, in addition to professional athletes, the general public will become more familiar with this brand, or this familiarity will strengthen and lead to permanent loyalty.

However, there are limitations in this research. The present research community was all the customers of the sportswear brand Merooj in Iran as a domestic brand. It is suggested that other researchers conduct this research on sports brands produced in their own country. Also, this research has not taken into account all the factors affecting brand equity, it is suggested that future researchers measure the effect of factors such as brand loyalty, brand preference and other factors on brand equity. It is also suggested that the researchers focus more on the awareness of advertising and find effective ways to advertise sports products and provide solutions for new manufacturers of sports clothing.

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