

EFFECT OF DOPING BELIEF ON PURCHASE INTENTION OF SPORTS CONSUMERS (SC) - IN PRESENCE OF ATHLETES' BRAND IMAGE

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ABSTRACT: The main objective of the study was to view the perception of students about doping belief and purchase intention of sports consumers directly and through athlete's brand image regarding doping accused players and also to view the demographic variables as age, gender and interest in sports regarding doping belief, athlete's brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers. This study was limited to students of University of the Punjab. To measure these effects, sample of two hundred (n=200) students were selected from university of the Punjab, Lahore by using survey research method through close ended questionnaire as data collection tool. Major findings of the study were as Athlete's brand image according to doping belief shows that there is a negative relationship ($\beta = -.025$) between doping belief and athlete's brand image, athlete's brand image to purchase intention of sports consumers shows that there is a positive relationship ($\beta = .177$) between athlete's brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers, doping belief according to purchase intention of sports consumers shows that there is a negative relationship ($\beta = -.445$) between doping belief and purchase intention of sports consumers. On the basis of findings, researcher concluded that, majority of the respondents are agreed with that there is negative effect of doping belief on athlete's brand image i.e. the higher the doping belief about athlete, the bad the athlete's brand image which approves hypothesis 1. Whereas athlete's brand image is positively related to purchase intention of sports consumers i.e. the positive the athlete's brand image the high the purchase intention of sports consumers which approves hypothesis 2 whereas, the higher the doping belief about athlete, the lower the purchase intention which was hypothesis 3. Demographic variables of students did not play any significant difference regarding age, gender and interest in sports with reference to doping belief, athlete's brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers. Overall results revealed that athlete's brand image mediates the relationship between doping belief about player and purchase intention of sports consumers. With reference to future recommendation this type of study should be applied to athletes and general population separately in longitudinal pattern to measure the change of perception about sports and doping belief endorser.

Key Words: Doping Belief, Sports Consumers, Purchase Intention, Brand Image, Athlete

INTRODUCTION

Athletes' scandals costs sports market and doping scandals are among the highlighted ones named to them are match-fixing, bribery and betting etc. [1]. It is underlined as abusive content in sports competitions. It harms the sports market by breaching trust and ostracized by sports consumers such as, fans. However, it is argued that top level sportspersons have used performance ornamental stimulants from the time of the ancient games and in last two decades, doping turned out to be extensive. This expansion ran equivalent to other practices in privileged sport, for instance professionalization, politicization and commercialization [2]. New substances are also being used for example; anabolic steroids and amphetamine which caused numerous deaths through sports feats [3]. The highlighted cases of doping shows that it makes not only athlete to bear its cost but also the whole market have to. Hughes and Shank (2008) examined the expenditures of athletic scandals. They discovered that the expenditures of such humiliations involved loss of profits, personnel expenditures, loss of patronages and customer evasion. However, little attention has been paid in the literature to the potential negative effects on brand image when an endorser becomes involved in a scandal [4]. Due to its un-ignorable consequences researchers have measured the reactions of sports consumers expected from multiple stakeholders towards exposed athletes [5]. Now, it is perceived as abuse by the sports consumers is affecting the sports consumers' brand image about athlete that ultimately impacts the purchase intention associated to exposed athlete. Such as, celebrities are generally observed as having an affirmative effect on vending if they are capable to provide their favorable reflection to a product in the course of an approval [6]. Thus sports elite athletes are also said to be the celebrities. Their

image is being utilized as their brand and impacts on purchase intentions of sports consumers. This leads to the question "What are the effects of doping on purchase intention of sports consumer?" Such as, Solberg *et al.*, (2010) argued that their space to contribute in research about the doping and sports consumers (fans).

We aimed to explore the relationship between doping, athlete's brand image and sports consumers' (CS) purchase intentions. Using the theory of planned behavior given by Lucidi *et al.*, (2008), it asserts that deeds are dependent upon the individual's plan of proceedings towards a explicit performance i.e. intentions [7].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Doping is seen as the act of controlling or the substances in any structure outsider to the body in irregular process with the selective point of achieving a fake and out of line increment of execution in rivalry [8] so using prohibited substances for performance enhancement by athlete is a form of cheating behavior which can jeopardize both their health and their careers. The most recent definition of doping has been clarified by WADA: using prohibited performance enhancement substances and/or methods regarding clarified statements in WADA Code (Cited from <http://www.wada-ama.org>) [40]. Sports consumers are directly concerned with doping and these are those persons involved in sports to any extent which are isolated into two classifications as Individuals who are included or have impact in a scene, for example, a sport event or concert are known as sports participants / athletes and Sports Spectators / fans as Individuals who are present and observe a spectacle such as a sport event or concert [9]. Athlete's brand image is said to be the formation of consumer's mental picture of a brand

associated with an athlete which are linked to an offering [11]. Sports consumer are involved in purchase of sports goods while buy expectation implies the probability that a shopper will purchase a specific item; the higher the buy aim, the more prominent the purchase probability [10].

Doping and Athlete's Brand Image

H1: Doping is negatively related to athletes' brand image.

In recognizing the significance of trademark management, numerous athletes have started concentrating on vigorously emerging their particular trademark [12]. For instance, LeBron James is developing the marque of his moniker shoe collection over an exclusive funding contract with the brand of Nike [13]. His shoes engendered \$300 million dollars in income for Nike over widespread mass media exposure and his mounting star eminence [14]. In a sport product promotion such as an individual athlete and a team is 'all about selling a brand image' [15]. Trademark image of an athlete is crucial in evolving a consumer's connection to a sportsperson [16] and in rousing consumption allegiance, such as procuring athlete range and watching/attending sports [17]. These star sportspersons attain superstar eminence amongst followers and, as an effect, sportspersons such as David Beckham, LeBron James, and Novak Djokovic have developed human trademarks, driving trade sales of merchandises linked with their images and forenames [17]. Player trademark management has grown-up in prominence because the conception of stamping is well matched to players as merchandises [12].

Athletes are commonly utilized as endorsers of products due to the celebrity status that they have gained as a result of their performances in sport [18]. Through setting up viable dealings with high profile sportspersons and sporting teams, firms expect to detain some of the sportsperson celebrity's brand name equity. Just like with any other superstar endorser, the effectiveness of using sportsperson to approve a product reclines in the expectation that the favorable reflection connected with the athlete is transferred to the brand name throughout the approval course [19]. Athlete endorsers are expected to help organizations capture the attention of target consumers, change or reinforce brand image and provide message credibility. Further, it is hoped that the attractiveness of superstar endorsers will move to the approved commodity and will result in replicate purchase behavior, future purchase intention and word of mouth recommendations [20].

As Simmers *et al.*, (2009) suggest, "Superstar endorsers supply the gear that customers look for to influence sensing move". By utilizing an icon endorser, marketers are also proficient to provide their commodities human distinctiveness throughout the move of the icon's own trademark individuality [21]. By forming partnerships with athletes that possess high celebrity equity, the sponsoring organization hopes that the trademark knowledge and relations of the athlete are moved to the company and so as to they obtain a burly return of their speculation [22]. Nevertheless, the expediency of finance deals is hindered by unenthusiastic proceedings that athletes turn out to be implicated in, for instance doping [23] which is synchronized by the individual's professed behavioral manage, slanted norms and

approaches. In such manner, reported that "attitudes" were the most grounded indicators for the aim to utilize doping substances [24].

According to Simmers (2009), there has been recent speculation concerning the worth of competitor endorsers to a brand's picture, especially given the negative reputation encompassing such occurrences as the cannabis episode of men's Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps. Further high guilt events likewise US basket-baller Kobe Bryant's rape case have undeniably had some degree of harmful impact on the trademarks of organizations that such athletes endorse [4]. The extent of such damage on brands has not been investigated thoroughly in the literature as most of the extant literature has focused on the positive effects that are associated with using celebrity endorsers. In any case, amid the next decades, doping got to be boundless. This improvement ran parallel to different procedures in world class sport, for instance professionalization, politicization and commercialization [2].

Athlete's brand image is said to be the formation of consumer's mental picture of a brand associated with an athlete which are linked to an offering [11] and Doping is using prohibited performance enhancement substances and/or methods regarding clarified statements in WADA Code (Cited from <http://www.wada-ama.org>) [40] which negatively related to the athletes' brand image i.e. if doping belief of sports consumer increase cause a decrease in Athletes' brand image for that brand associated with those athletes.

Athlete's Brand Image and Purchase intention

H2: Athlete's brand image is positively related to purchase intention.

Sports consumer are involved in purchase of sports goods while buy expectation implies the probability that a shopper will purchase a specific item; the higher the buy aim, the more prominent the purchase probability [10] and if the athlete's brand image declines due to doping, cause a decrease in purchase intention of sports products associated with that athlete who is associated with doping.

For several years drugging cases did not shake the association amongst sport and viable shareholders implicated in sport. Cycling is one of the example can be used in this regard. Inquiries through the Tour de France of 1998 exposed that drugging was extensive, orderly and extremely planned in trained cycling, later it is called the "Festina scandal" subsequently the promoter of the Cycling team of France [25]. The wristwatch producer Festina befitted trapped in the mid of the humiliation after the team's physiotherapist was arrested by French police department, who establish 250 lots of 400 ampoules of erythropoietin (EPO) and anabolic steroids in his vehicle [26]. In subsequent months, both the team and the sponsor resounding its name were the themes of considerable decadent marketing in the media. Through this catastrophe, the proprietor of Festina, Miguel Rodriguez, acknowledged that if an intent to use illegitimate drugs was verified, Festina would stop patronage of the team [27]. Regardless of this, Festina upheld their agreement with the team till its ending in 2001.

Regardless of guarantees from cyclists, teams and race planners to resolve the issue, Festina, doping humiliations

have sustained in cycling. Cyclists sustained to test positive, and indication has exposed that the misappropriation has been planned. Soon earlier the 2006 Tour de France, the civilian police force and Guardia Civil military in Spain invaded clinics and numerous apartments in Madrid. They detained hormones, steroids, the erythropoietin (EPO) stamina enhancing hormone and almost 100 stacks of gear for blood boosting and frozen blood. In excess of 200 prominent players were included in this drugging linkage. As a result, nine prominent cyclists were banned from beginning the Tour de France in 2006 [28].

A sports research enterprise of German origin named IFM, which assesses funding influence, claimed in 2007 that cycling had lunched as a promotion speculation. Declines in live spectators were recorded for the period of early season, pro-tour actions. As an instance, the Ronde van Vlaanderen competition in Belgium found 77 percent (%) decay in TV rankings matched to the preceding year. This droplet condensed the worth of cycling funding, as said by Jens Seeberger, spokesperson for IFM [29]. Skilled cycling is an exceedingly profit-oriented sport and it would not last in its current form without the sustained significant monetary support of patrons [2].

Doping and Purchase intention

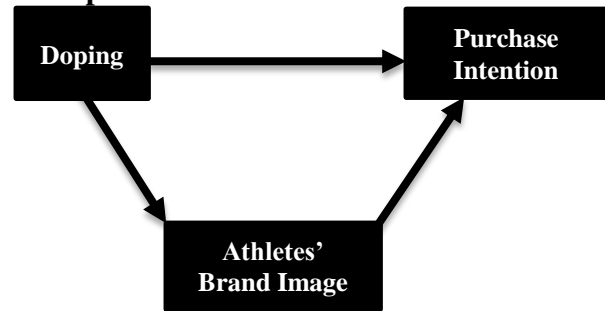
H3: Doping is negatively related to purchase intention.

Doping is seen as the act of controlling or the substances in any structure outsider to the body in irregular process with the selective point of achieving a fake and out of line increment of execution in rivalry [8] so using prohibited substances for performance enhancement by athlete is a form of cheating behavior which can jeopardize both their health and their careers. The most recent definition of doping has been clarified by WADA: using prohibited performance enhancement substances and/or methods regarding clarified statements in WADA Code (Cited from <http://www.wada-ama.org>) [40]. Sports consumers are directly concerned with doping and these are those persons involved in sports to any extent which are isolated into two classifications as Individuals who are included or have impact in a scene, for example, a sport event or concert are known as sports participants / athletes and Sports Spectators / fans as Individuals who are present and observe a spectacle such as a sport event or concert [9]. Sports consumer are involved in purchase of sports goods while buy expectation implies the probability that a shopper will purchase a specific item; the higher the buy aim, the more prominent the purchase probability [10]. Athletes who are associated with doping directly declines the purchase intention of brands associated with those athletes.

There is a great impact of doping on purchase intention of sports consumers as IFM, a German supported games explore organization which deals finance sway, contended in 2007 that cycling sport had forced the same as a promoting speculation. Diminishments in existing group of onlookers were enlisted amid the before time period, professional travel around proceedings. While an illustration, the Ronde van Vlaanderen saw a 77% decrease in Belgium race of television appraisals contrasted with the earlier year. This fall diminished the benefit of cycling financing, as indicated by

Jens Seeberger, representative for IFM [30]. Proficient cycling is an exceptionally marketed game and will not proceed in its current structure devoid of the proceeded with extensive degree monetary support of patrons [2]. Different games have been throughout comparable outrages, with extreme results, amongst them of cross-country skiing. Amid the 2001 Nordic World Ski Tournament in Lahti, Finland, a sum of 6 cross-country skiers of Finland were authorized for infringement of the drugging rules [31]. This title was significantly depicted as a blood solidifying occasion [32]. The outrage diminished the business estimation of Finnish cross-country skiing: one year afterward the embarrassment, budgetary misfortunes of the (FSA) Finnish Ski Association surpassed €3 million [33]. Assistance from funding and communal accomplices of the Finnish Skiing Association for the cross-country skiing branch did not attain pre-2001 competition ranks until 2005 [34]. These cases represent that doping can influence sports contrarily, the following segment talks about a portion of the variables that have been archived to impact the interest for game, and to what degree they can be influenced by doping revelations.

Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

Participants and Procedures

The research type was quantitative research. All the conclusions and results of data collected are shown in numerical form. Data was collected through questionnaires from Punjab University's students. Non-athlete and athlete students of University of the Punjab were the sample population from whom data was collected through survey research by using research questionnaire with close ended questions as data collection tool with sample pattern of convenience sampling. The statements of the questionnaire were designed on Likert scale. These students were fully aware from the effect of doping and doping scandals on sports; however, they were guided well by researcher regarding doping and drug abuse before filling the questionnaire. The sample of population of this study was 200 students from Punjab University from which data of 170 students was usable.

Validity of the research instrument was ensured by pilot study. Reliability of the study was ensured with Cronbach Alpha value as 0.81 which is considered as acceptable value to check reliability of data collection tool. Data was scrutinized on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 16 version. Linear regression was applied for statements and their sub-statements of questionnaire for measurement of

relationship among doping belief, athlete’s brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers.

Measures

Doping belief will be measured by adopting Scale from Drug Use Belief (DUB) measures [35] and the sample items are as “Do you believe that performance-enhancing drugs/methods should be allowed for top level athletes?” for which 2 point Likert scale was used in which 0 means NO and 1 means YES.

Purchase intention will be measured for brands associated with athletes by adopting scale [12] from and the sample items are as “The athlete is a dominating player in his/her sport” for which 7 point Likert scale was used in which 1 means very strongly disagree and 7 means very strongly agree.

Athlete trademark image was assessed by the scale of athlete brand image (SABI) established and verified by Arai *et al.* (2013) [12] and the sample items are as “I would intend to buy products related to my favorite athletes” for which 5 point Likert scale was used in which 1 means very high and 5 means very low.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSES

Table 4.1 reveals regression statistics which was applied to see the relationship between purchase intention and brand image. Table reveals the mean value of purchase intention which is 2.084 and standard deviation is .6364 whereas mean of doping belief is 2.452 and standard deviation is .9201 while the total no. of participants were 170.

Table 4.1: Regression statistics of doping belief and athlete’s brand image

Regression Statistics (N=170)					
Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	β	r^2	Sig.
Doping Belief	2.084	.6364	-.025	.001	.000*
Athlete’s Brand Image	2.452	.9201			

*p<0.05, **Abbreviations:** r^2 = Correlation; β = Beta Value; Sig. = Significance Value; N= No. of participants

Table reveals correlation value of the purchase intention and brand image. Table shows correlation value which is β = -.025, which shows that there is negative correlation between doping belief and athlete’s brand image while on the other hand R- square (r^2) value is .001, which means it can be said with 99% confidence that doping belief have a negative effect on athlete’s brand image. Significance value also reveals that there is a significant difference between respondent’s opinion with values of .000 which is less than .05. Overall regression analysis of athlete’s brand image according to doping belief shows that there is a negative association among doping belief and athlete’s trademark image which accepts the hypothesis 1 which was “Doping belief is negatively related to athlete’s brand image”.

Table 4.2 Reveals regression statistics which was applied to see the relationship between athlete’s brand image and purchase intention. Table reveals the mean value of purchase

intention of sports consumers which is 4.525 and standard deviation is 1.254 whereas mean of brand image is 2.452 and standard deviation is .9201. While the total no of participants were 170.

Table 4.2: Regression statistics of Athlete’s Brand Image and purchase intension

Regression Statistics (N=170)					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	β	r^2	Sig.
Athlete’s Brand Image	2.452	.9201	.177	.031	.021*
Purchase Intention	4.525	1.254			

*p<0.05, **Abbreviations:** r^2 = Correlation; β = Beta Value; Sig. = Significance Value; N= No. of participants

Table reveals correlation value of the athlete’s brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers. Table shows correlation value which is β = .177, which shows that there is positive correlation among athlete’s brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers while on the other hand R- square (r^2) value is .031, which mean it can be said with 97% confidence that athlete’s brand image have a positive effect on purchase intension of sports consumers. Significance value also reveals that there is a significant difference between respondent’s opinion with values of .021 which is less than .05. Overall regression analysis of athlete’s brand image to purchase intention of sports consumers shows that there is a positive relationship between athlete’s brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers which accepts the Hypothesis 2 which was “Athlete’s brand image is positively related to purchase intention”.

Table 4.3 Reveals regression statistics which was applied to see the relationship between doping belief and purchase intention. Table reveals the mean value of purchase intention which is 4.525 and standard deviation is 1.254 whereas mean of doping belief is 2.084 and standard deviation is .6364. While the total no of participants were 170.

Table 4.3: Regression statistics of doping belief and purchase intension

Regression Statistics (N=170)					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	β	r^2	Sig.
Doping Belief	2.084	.6364	-.445	.198	.000*
Purchase Intention	4.525	1.254			

*p<0.05, **Abbreviations:** r^2 = Correlation; β = Beta Value; Sig. = Significance Value; N= No. of participants

Table 4.3 reveals correlation value of the doping belief and purchase intention. Table shows correlation value which is β = -.445, which shows that there is negative correlation between doping belief and purchase intention while on the other hand R- square (r^2) value is .198, which means it can be said with 79.2% confidence that doping belief have a negative effect on

purchase intention of sports consumers. Significance value also reveals that there is a significant difference between respondent's opinion with values of .000 which is less than .05. Overall regression analysis of doping belief according to purchase intention shows that there is a negative relationship between doping belief and purchase intention of sports consumers which accepts the Hypothesis 3 which was "Doping belief is negatively related to purchase intention".

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to measure the effect of doping belief on athlete's brand image and then the effect of that brand image in purchase intention of sports consumer i.e. the mediation effect of athlete's brand image between doping belief and purchase intention of sports consumer and along with that direct effect of doping belief on purchase intention of sports consumers. On the basis of findings, researcher concluded that, majority of the respondents are agreed with that there is negative effect of doping belief on athlete's brand image i.e. the higher the doping belief about athlete, the bad the athlete's brand image which approves hypothesis 1. Whereas athlete's brand image is positively related to purchase intention of sports consumers i.e. the positive the athlete's brand image the high the purchase intention of sports consumers which approves hypothesis 2. whereas, the higher the doping belief about athlete, the lower the purchase intention which was hypothesis 3 and all three hypotheses approved by statistical analysis. Demographic variables of students did not play any significant difference regarding age, gender and interest in sports with reference to doping belief, athlete's brand image and purchase intention of sports consumers. Overall results revealed that athlete's brand image mediates the relationship between doping belief about player and purchase intention of sports consumers.

Certainly, the Spanish Cycling Federation has been steering an intercession plan called "Preventing to Win" subsequently 2009, with the goal of cultivating the cyclists and their coaches of the forthcoming [36]. Information on doping matters should be upheld, but further individual methods to accommodate for explicit personal queries throughout educational conferences should be considered [37]. In this manner, Erdman *et al.* (2007) [38] suggested that singular discussions on nutritional supplement usage may be a more suitable educational policy for mature contestants, while demonstrations given by trustworthy sports medicine and sports science specialists may be well matched for younger contestants. Gender variances concerning the kinds of supplements designated should also be reflected inside these educational plans. These writers, alike to Nieper (2005) [39], consider that the athletes' consultants, together with their coaches, friends and family would also advantage from teaching on nutritional supplements, predominantly in relative to anti-doping rules and allied dangers of supplement usage.

For several years drugging episodes did not disturb the association among sport and the viable investors implicated in sport, such as promoters and TV corporations. Cycling can be taken as a case. Inquiries all through the Tour de France of 1998 discovered that drugging was pervasive, methodical and

very systematized in trained cyclists, later called the "Festina scandal" afterward the backer of the French cycling team [25]. The wristwatch maker Festina befitted trapped in the mid of gossip after the team's massager was detained by French police department, who established 250 consignments of 400 ampoules of erythropoietin (EPO) and anabolic steroids in his vehicle [26]. In the succeeding months, together the team and the sponsor booming its name were the issues of considerable bad promotion in the media. During this calamity, Miguel Rodriguez, the proprietor of Festina, acknowledged that if an intent to practice unlawful drugs was evidenced, Festina would stop funding of the team [27]. In spite of this, Festina kept their agreement with the team until its finishing in 2001. The results of this study shows the same situation as of Festina, as the increase in doping belief cause a decrease in athlete's brand image which becomes the causative agent for the decrease in purchase intention of sports consumers as statistically also showed negative relationship between doping belief and athlete's brand image and then that worst brand image of brand associated with that athlete, make decline in purchase intention of sports consumers for that brand associated with that athlete.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- As this study is limited to Punjab university students only and cross sectional in nature, this type of study should be applied to athletes and general population separately in longitudinal pattern to measure the change of perception about sports and doping belief endorser.
- There should be avoidance of such players who are involved in any doping scandal or case to use as brand celebrity which may hamper the purchase intention of sports consumers.
- Media should not portray as celebrity or brand icon to such a person who is involved or convicted in any doping scandal or drug abuse.
- Sports federations and other management bodies should highlight such persons who are convicted in any drug abuse or doping matter which enables companies to be ware and away from such sports persons which can hamper the purchase intention of sports consumers of company's products.
- Sports federations and other sports management authorities should conduct doping awareness programs from which players and coaches can be benefitted to be aware of being involved in any doping offense.

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