THE EFFECT OF PERSONAL SCANDAL ON CELEBRITY ATHLETES AND SHOPPER’S PURCHASE INTENTIONS AND ATTITUDE FAVORABILITY

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THE EFFECT OF PERSONAL SCANDAL ON CELEBRITY ATHLETES AND SHOPPER’S PURCHASE INTENTIONS AND ATTITUDE FAVORABILITY

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

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Athletes have become more than sports professionals; they are million dollar investments for brand images. Businesses worldwide have transitioned old promotional schemes to athlete endorsements and have experienced positive reactions to the public change. Athletes connected with consumers on a heroic level and translated the brand’s message to purchasers through the theory of transference of affect (White, Goddard, & Wilbur, 2009). Subsequently, there had been an equal rise in the caution businesses exercised as several athletes found occupancy in negative press. Those involved in scandals posed reputational risks for businesses and could reduce positive transference to consumers. The purpose of this study was to test the impact of negative media portrayal (reputation) about athlete endorsers on male consumer’s purchase intentions and attitude favorability towards high or low involvement products. Online surveys were distributed to a Midwestern University, 196 surveys were analyzed. Findings showed purchase intention was affected by reputation for high involvement products; reputation was not an accurate predictor of consumer attitude toward high or low involvement products. Athletes involved in scandals remained effective as endorsers for low involvement products whereas, athletes with positive reputations succeeded when promoting high involvement products.

KEYWORDS: Scandal, Endorsement, Reputation, Consumer Intention to Buy, Attitude
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Chapter One

Introduction

Celebrity endorsements have gained retailers popular vote through numerous benefits created by the marketing tactic (White, Goddard, & Wilbur, 2009). Consumers recognized these trending figures as popular and attractive people whom one could look to for product advice. The growing scene of celebrity endorsers has expanded into athletes. Athletes were no longer just talented humans but sources for product knowledge, “Its drama, its personalities and its worldwide appeal mean sport is the new Hollywood” (Bell & Campbell, 1999, p. 22). The athlete was becoming a distinctive marketing tool that attracted a larger variety of consumers at all ages (Pringle & Binet, 2005). Athletes presented a new advertising approach through their differences to Hollywood celebrities. As the success of an athlete increased, it correlated to a gain in celebrity, the athlete reputation hinged upon being able to meet or exceed their performance expectation (White, 2011). Ultimately the successful athlete was a famous athlete, their triumph on the field in any sport led to positive acceptance in the media, through various forms, public following and product sponsorships.

Athletes featured as endorsers grabbed the audience’s attention, giving a higher probability of communicating the product message to consumers; when matched with a brand it helped the consumer form an image and personality of that label. Advertisers used the theory of transference of affect to shift positive images from the endorser in the ad to the product and eventually to the consumer (White et al., 2009). Transference of affect explained how people developed opinions of others, with an effective brand and
athlete pairing consumers formed positive opinions of the duo, which often increased the probability of shoppers visiting the retailer being endorsed (White et al., 2009, p. 323).

The benefits of athlete endorsements proved favorable to brands looking for a boost against competition; however, companies were beginning to question the use of these advertisement strategies when an overflow of scandalous incidents occurred. When an endorser was involved in a scandal, “actions tarnished by allegations of illicit, unethical, or even slightly unconventional behavior,” it instantly created multiple problems, maintaining not only did the discounted reputation of the athlete cause a lower opinion of the celebrity himself, but the product or brand being endorsed (White et al., 2009, p. 323). Athlete endorsements provided a potential reputational risk to companies, “a good reputation is an intangible asset of immense financial worth,” athletes were testing the boundaries of consumer’s perceptions and company’s profits (Murray, 2003, p. 142). The reputations of athlete endorsers directly affected consumer attitudes toward the endorser and product through negative transference. Negative transference depended on interplay between product, endorser and consumer (White et al., 2009). When a scandal occurred, consumers devalued the reputation of the endorser and carried those feelings onto the product, which caused the entire relationship to be viewed pessimistically (White et al., 2009).

Over the past decade, athlete’s reputations had been altered through scandal in almost every professional sporting league, from the NBA to PGA; athletes were revealing secrets about themselves in unmerited ways (White et al., 2009, p. 323). Recent events from Michael Vick and Michael Phelps have shown powerful examples of how personal problems could cause business woes. These two globally known celebrity athletes were
dropped from multiple endorsement campaigns from fear of gaining a tainted reputation through association (Parent, 2011). Proliferation in media promotions for products had caused athletes to become more visible to the public, and labeled for their negative actions.

Although athletes involved in scandals often gained large press and developed a negative reputation from the open media display, those events might not have predictably altered the purchase intention or attitude discernments from shoppers. Based on product involvement theory, consumers held various levels of relevance to products based on specific needs (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Broken into two categories, high and low, product involvement theory explained how consumers rationalized before making purchases. When buying high involvement products, consumers spent more time researching and evaluating the details of the item; whereas, buying a low involvement product required little thought or concern (Suh & Yi, 2006). Negative reputation of athletes might not have been considered a deterring factor for consumers when buying a utilitarian product, as it was a spilt-second unconscious decision.

New research was necessary in guiding the branding of company images to be adjusted to athlete endorsement styles; ensuring businesses would continued attracting characteristics of various consumers even when scandalous actions were involved (Soomro, Gilal, & Jatoi, 2011). Athletes had rapidly become today’s models for product endorsements, but what happened when the athletes encountered a publicized scandal or stained reputation? Did consumers still hold positive attitude responses to these sports stars even after the publication of their questionable character?
This study focused on the relationship between transference of affect, product involvement categories, endorser reputation, consumer attitude toward an endorsed product, and consumer purchase intention. The variables would be tested to predict how negative reputation of an athlete would specifically impact male consumer’s perceptions towards the endorsed items in different product segments. Male consumers were breaking the mold of their assumed disregard for shopping, over the past two decades; men had shown a larger interest in purchase decisions and increased their spending in the fashion market, which caused advertisers to take an active interest in their concerns (Miller & Washington, 2011).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether a change in reputation of an athlete, from negative media information, had effects on male purchase intentions and attitudes towards athlete endorsed products. Overall analyzing the idea of why shoppers were/were not inclined to buy athlete endorsed products after athletes had a scandal attached to their name. The foundation of this research was based on the theory of transference of affect and product involvement theory, which assessed whether negative or positive perceptions of an athlete could alter the likelihood of purchasing or forming favorable attitudes towards either low or high involvement products through transference cycles. This study could appraise the value of athlete endorsers in regards to male consumer buying habits.
Research Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

1. Determine whether male consumers were influenced by scandal involving athlete endorsers.
2. Determine the relationship between product involvement, endorser reputation, and male consumer intention to buy an endorsed product.
3. Determine the relationship between product involvement, endorser reputation, and male consumer attitude toward an endorsed product.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study include:

1. Will negative reputation of athletes influence male consumer’s intention to buy a product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)?
2. Will positive reputation of athletes influence male consumer’s intention to buy a product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)?
3. Will exposure to negative reputation regarding an athlete influence male consumer’s attitude toward an endorsed product?
4. Will exposure to positive reputation regarding an athlete influence male consumer’s attitude toward an endorsed product?

Justification

With the progression toward athlete endorsed brands, marketing minds had to adjust strategies for proper fit with consumers and connection with the product itself. Sports were a way of life as nearly 100 million people participated in athletics in 2000 (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). Celebrities occupied nearly 25% of advertisements seen on
television screens (Erdogan, Baker, & Tagg, 2001, p. 39; Shimp, 2000) and 10% of 
advertiser’s budgets (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995, p.56); there was a tremendous growth 
rate in the value of athletes outside of the playing fields. In a time where media outlets 
were substantial resources for information, advertising and branding managers benefited 
from the increased knowledge base on consumer thought processes (Kent & Machleit, 
1990). Research was needed for companies pondering the idea of using athlete endorsers 
as the risk involved with hiring sports stars came with a hefty burden.

In 2009, after negative press surfaced about how Tiger Woods cheated on his 
wife with multiple mistresses, his top five sponsors all lost 2-3% of their aggregate 
market value (Knittel & Stango, 2010, p 10). Companies, Accenture, Nike, Gillette, 
Electronic Arts, and Gatorade all felt the aftershock effects, while Electronic Arts, Nike, 
and PepsiCo (Gatorade) lost over 4% in aggregate market value (Knittel & Stango, 2010, 
p. 10). Marketers needed to see how consumer’s perceptions changed after those types of 
negative events occurred, factoring whether the elimination of an athlete contract was 
necessary in order to maintain company profitability.

Athletes opened new ventures for business opportunities and became a prominent 
way to capitalize on different target segments, such as males, through their general appeal 
to diverse consumers. As seen in the study, “To Catch a Tiger or Let Him Go: The 
Match-up Effect and Athlete Endorsers for Sport and Non-Sport Brands,” results 
indicated that an anonymous model identified as an athlete was more effective as an 
endorser when there was a match between the endorser and product (Korenig & Boyd, 
2009). When consumers identified a match they could easily make connections with the 
athletes on a personal level. After viewing an athlete in an advertisement, consumers felt
they could relate to the public figures and formed intrinsic relationships with them by purchasing their products (Carlson & Donavan, 2009). This study addressed whether those intimate connections made in consumer’s minds were broken following a scandal, could males still relate to those figures after negative actions and support purchasing a product they endorsed?

Limited research had been conducted on male consumer opinions of athlete endorsers, with regard specifically to the effects of athlete endorsers involved in scandal. Studies focused on male consumers were sparse and a needed area of understanding for businesses. This research addressed questions concerning whether a change did occur in male decision processes towards purchase intentions or attitudes when scandal was involved. There was a lack of analysis on these variable correlations. This study would bridge a gap in present literature of male consumer shopping behaviors.

**Limitations**

For this specific research conduction a limitation presented was the age and ethnicity distribution of male participants, there was a focused age range of male college students, and a dominant ethnicity of Caucasian respondents, which made the data less generalized for the entire male population. Having a younger, predominantly all Caucasian sample could have created a bias and failed to support the shopping behaviors of the entire male population. Another limitation was the length of the survey. With several pages of repeated questions, participants could have grown tired and uninterested in the study and exited early before completion or answered inaccurately. The survey results collected might not have accurately portrayed the true feelings of the male participants.
Definition of Terms

Definitions vital for the understanding and clarity of this research were:

**Professional Athlete:** “An athlete who plays for pay” (The Free Dictionary, n.d.)

**Scandal:** “Actions tarnished by allegations of illicit, unethical, or even slightly unconventional behavior” (White et al., 2009, p. 323)

**Endorsed Product/Endorsement:** “To express formal support or approval for someone or something,” “if a famous person endorses a product or service, they say in an advertisement that they use and like it” (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, n.d.)

**High Involvement Product:** When consumers “seek information on what they are purchasing and look to the opinions of others before buying the item” (Cho, 2010).

**Low Involvement Product:** “Frequently purchased goods, household merchandise in particular, i.e. toilet paper, paper towels, and detergent” (Suh & Yi, 2006)
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This research concentrated on the effect publicized scandal about athlete endorsers had on male consumer’s opinions. The supportive literature for this study was included in this chapter. The information presented began with an analysis of the consumer type surveyed, male consumers, and their general impact regarding shopping characteristics. The literature then covered the endorser, how the endorser had changed in promotional campaigns and how those advertisements that featured athlete endorsers were effective in terms of congruence with the male consumer. After evaluating endorser effectiveness, the research highlighted different usage levels of athletes as endorsers and the cost-benefit caution brands debated when hiring athletes. The next section examined former applicable theories developed from studies which supported the various aspects of the athlete-consumer relationship, and finally concluded with a review of product involvement theory and how it applied to consumer scrutiny.

Gender and Advertisements

The Male Consumer

Recently the male consumer changed. For decades the idealized gender roles were solidly established as the female equated to a housewife, the male, the household provider. However, this distinction had become hazy. According to Marian Salzman, Chief Marketing Officer for PR Company Porter Novelli, “There’s been a blurring of gender roles over the last decade and we have to think of whom the homemaker is” (Miller & Washington, 2011, p. 192). If you go to the supermarket on the weekend, it’s 40% male and they’re buying comparable goods to women” (Miller & Washington, 2011,
Males became primary consumers for all product types. With 104 million men above the age of 19 in the United States, marketers began to see a large increase in male consumers and directed their focus on the desires of those new shoppers (Miller & Washington, 2011, p. 192). Many apparel manufacturers had specified that the men’s apparel segment had been the area of largest growth in recent decades. According to the Office of Business Economics, US consumer expenditures for men’s apparel and accessories totaled to $38 billion in 1986, up 6.1% from 1985 (Shim & Kotsiopulos, 1991, p. 16). One segment that particularly grabbed the male market was “premium luxury fashion goods, with a 156% increase in spending on this specific apparel segment in 2011” (“2011 Spend Sights Special Reports,” 2011, p. 2). Male shoppers began to spend more time evaluating various product brands offered and showed a larger concern for the garments they actually purchased.

Shopping Characteristics

Men were characterized very differently from female consumers, often interested in getting to the store and not staying long; whereas, women tended to linger and shopped around. Paco Underhill, founder of Envirosell, had described male consumers as hunters, “they want to go in, stalk it, shoot it, and get out” (Miller & Washington, 2009, p. 222). Men were distinguished as faster shoppers; they walked faster through the aisles, spent less time looking, and preferred not to ask where items were located. Underhill says specifically, “If a man can’t find the section he is looking for, he will typically walk around the store in one of two quick circuits and then leave without ever asking for help” (Miller & Washington, 2009, p. 222). Researchers found however, men were beginning to feel more comfortable shopping than previously, stating male shoppers wanted to buy
quality clothes that lasted beyond one season as opposed to women who preferred cheap fashions easily replaced every season. 64% of men said they wanted clothes that would last longer versus 56% of women who preferred less expensive clothes (Miller & Washington, 2011, pg. 223).

Within the male bracket, those under 35 have been compared to their sisters in terms of shopping patterns; they were not fast shoppers, but browsers who used shopping as a community experience (Miller & Washington, 2011, pg. 224). The less than 35 age range was quite different from the typical male shopper but provided new insights on the hunter category.

Male consumers had also accepted the rising popularity of online shopping. The surplus of e-commerce businesses and online ordering alternatives available caused men to gravitate towards the distinct option. On average, US male consumers increased their spending online in the premium luxury category by 41% (“2011 Spend Sights Special Reports,” 2011, p. 2). Innovative shopping methods and imprecise gender roles created a new market segment for retailers to target, those previously lacking direct attention.

Gender and Product Relatedness

With the growth of male consumer impact on the apparel industry, brands had to evaluate their choice of product endorsers, deciding who or what type of celebrity was best suited for their target consumers. Recent research was completed on the relationship between celebrity gender and consumer gender. Klaus and Bailey (2008), investigated whether gender differences caused different responses in consumer attitude toward purchasing celebrity endorsed products. Formerly women responded differently to persuasive messages, being more susceptible to celebrity endorsed products than men.
Subjects were given two booklets, one with an advertisement including Mia Hamm, the other including an advertisement with Landon Donovan, both professional soccer players. The advertisements had similar poses and backgrounds, looking as comparable as possible; the subjects were asked questions on their attitudes towards the advertisements based on a 7-point Likert type scale. Within their results they found gender variances in responses. Women displayed a preference for female endorsers while men perceived the different genders similarly, showing acceptability/favorability for all athlete endorsers. Klaus and Bailey (2008) found the ad featuring Mia Hamm was evaluated more positively than the ad containing Landon Donovan, concluding that female athlete endorsers were having prominent effects on male consumers.

In another study completed by Boyd and Shank (2004), researchers deciphered whether gender had any impact on the evaluation of endorser attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise as well as, if the gender of the athlete endorser influenced the target audiences’ evaluation of endorser attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. The major findings concluded athlete endorsers were most effective when the target market was male, the athlete was male, and the product was sports related. Men were more receptive to athletes as endorsers, and viewed them as more attractive. While women rated sports endorsers as more credible, both genders did however believe credibility was enhanced by perceived expertise when the product was sports related (Boyd & Shank, 2004). Athletes as endorsers appealed to both male and female consumers through their distinctive creditability and trustworthiness, qualities other classifications of endorsers might fail to produce.
Endorser Effectiveness

With decades of success experienced from using celebrities and athletes as representatives of brand images; marketers realized the power of public figures and opened new endorsement ventures. Endorsements were the origin of our cultural obsession with celebrities. Through our globalized and media based societies, those focal groups became the zenith for where to look for what styles and gadgets were popular in the market. Celebrities and athletes were a vital aspect of trendsetting; consumers looked to them in efforts of copying their looks and receiving the same success and appeal. For instance, three of the biggest trends in the past ten years were established by celebrities; bohemian style, famously started by Mary-Kate Olsen, The Rachel, a haircut every woman insisted upon having after Jennifer Anniston was seen on an episode of Friends, and Jordan’s, the highly crazed and sought after sneakers developed by basketball player Michael Jordan (Jones, 2007).

Celebrity Fit

Inspirational looks like The Rachel made their impact well known and paved the way for future strategies in modern marketing. Pringle and Binet (2005) conducted a study which examined the use and effectiveness of celebrities in advertising, the data displayed large growth for companies who used celebrities in an appropriate way, meaning they matched the use of their endorser to what was called the Four F’s: fit, how well did this particular celebrity fit in with the brand, fame, how famous was the star, facet, which facets of this high-profile person could best work for the brand profile, and finance, how much of this could the brand finance. Those who capitalized on this unique model showed success, “when this is done skillfully the celebrity’s stardom accelerates
the brand’s communication, delivers a massive return on investment and hugely increased intangible asset value for shareholders” (p. 203). When all four aspects were matched, the returns were endless; the aura of the celebrity was powerful.

Pringle and Binet (2005) examined males and females from 16-65 and asked each of them to rate their attitude on a statement, “If a famous person who I like used or endorsed a product themselves, I might be more likely to choose it,” at every age level respondents either answered tend to agree or strongly agree (p 208). From their overall analysis researchers saw a heightened level of effectiveness in advertising when celebrities were incorporated in communication tools, especially with personal consumption products or when personal appearance was involved (Pringle & Binet, 2005, p 208).

The most important $F$ for producing success with celebrity endorsements was fit, was it logical that the celebrity was marketing a certain product, and was there congruence in their message and the individual brand personality (Pringle & Binet, 2005)? For an advertisement to be effective, the consumer needed to believe that the endorser truthfully recommended the product (Pringle & Binet, 2005), a large inquiry many consumers had difficulty believing was whether celebrities actually liked the product at hand versus liking the amount of money the company was providing their accounts.

*Correspondence Bias*

While several assumed most celebrities would not accept an endorsement position without being paid, the same for most non-celebrities, participants were found to disregard outside factors such as money as a reason for disbelief in the endorser’s fit or
actual use of the product (Pringle & Binet, 2005). Cronley, Kardes, Goddard, and Houghton (1999), evaluated the idea in terms of correspondence bias, they investigated why consumers did not reject the celebrity endorser’s support of a product if known they were getting paid, and even accepted that payment might have been the main contributing factor to their participation (as cited in Sorum, Grape, & Silveria, 2003). Consumers prejudiced certain information they were exposed to, they assumed the celebrity was promoting something because that was who/how they were, versus acknowledging the influence of external environmental factors (i.e. money) for reasons of endorsing the product (Kamins, & Gupta, 2006). Consumers lacked sensitivity to the environmental factors and concluded that the endorser had a positive fit and purpose with the product.

Kamins and Gupta (2006) examined two separate advertisements with Cindy Crawford as the endorser for an orange juice company. One group was told Cindy Crawford did the advertisement for free and her profits went to charity, while the other group was informed she received a fee payment. The results supported their hypotheses, as all participants believed the endorser (Cindy Crawford) genuinely liked the particular brand of orange juice, even when they knew she was paid. Those tested in the sample displayed correspondence bias, as they upheld Cindy Crawford’s fit with the orange juice brand while openly knowing she received compensation to complete the advertisement (Sorum et al., 2003). Many consumers were able to overlook environmental factors (money) because they felt they could relate to the celebrity through their own personal experiences, *Cindy Crawford and I both drink orange juice because we have children, so we understand as parents that orange juice is healthy for all ages* (Kamins, & Gupta, 2006). These associations largely stemmed from consistent over exposure of celebrities,
which ultimately created a feeling that consumers could relate to celebrities because they felt they knew who they were or believed they had the same lifestyles.

New Face of Products

Historically it had appeared as if marketers and brands only used the typical celebrity, movie stars or musicians, in advertisements. This trend formed in the 1930’s when actresses like Joan Crawford and Jean Harlow exerted strong influence over fashion with their dress in films. The clothes depicted in their movies became the common styles and accessories for women dressing for formal events (Lawson, n.d.). While actresses were a dominant portion of the endorsement arena, athletes were becoming the new popular product promoter. Companies began searching beyond just the stereotypical looks of beautiful actresses and musicians and tapped into psychological perspectives of consumer image perceptions. “Some consumers idealize certain athletes as heroes, and they capitalize on this hero status through endorsement messages”, athletes had become the face of various products because of their laudable actions appreciated by all ages, races, and genders (Peetz, Parks, & Spencer, 2004, p. 141).

The athlete provided a unique credibility and distinctiveness that movie stars and musician’s lacked, and companies were willing to pay top dollar for these well-rounded public figures. Over the past few decades the presence of athletes in advertisements increased rapidly. In 1986, companies paid approximately $100 million for endorsements and advertising schemes, within a 10 year period that number rose dramatically to $1 billion. In between 1996 and 2002, the average outflow for athlete endorsements was near $1 billion (Kluas & Bailey, 2008, p. 53).
There was also a surplus of female athlete endorsers. Through new professional league establishments and successes within organizations such as the Women’s National Basketball Association and the Women’s United Soccer Association, female athletes were notably gaining press (Peetz et al., 2004). With larger acceptance of women’s sports, more athletes were displayed for endorsement campaigns, targeting males and females. In 2004, Nike spent $192 million on endorsement deals including female athletes; Lebron James, Carmello Anthony, Kobe Bryant, Serna Williams, Freddy Adu, and Perdita Felicien (Klaus & Bailey, 2008).

Athletes of both genders had the ability to “resonate with certain demographics at specific conjunctural moments” such as Babe Ruth in the 1920’s and Andre Agassi’s identification with Generation X slackers (Kusz, 2001, p. 51-66). Sports celebrities like Babe Ruth and Jack Dempsey in the early 1900’s elevated the status of skillful figures, their personas helped to simmer public anxieties (Andrews & Jackson, 2001, p. 6). These figures were icons to wide ranges of consumers during unique times; they captured the hearts and admiration of fans everywhere, and built relationships through their public display (Klaus & Bailey, 2008).

Usage Process

The athlete endorser had seen a diverse range of application. According to Schaaf (1995), an athlete endorsement resulted from three interconnected events: 1) the athlete’s accomplishments; 2) recognition of the accomplishments from viewers; and 3) leveraging of the viewer’s recognition of the accomplishments on behalf of a company or brand (as cited in Darnell & Sparks, 2007, p. 162). The framework developed by Schaaf (1995) was designed to show how athletes became positioned in consumer’s minds, largely
through media display, and in turn how this image positioning of the athlete could be used to promote a brand (as cited in Darnell & Sparks, 2007, p.162). Athletes as endorsers were seen as a human brand (Jowdy & McDonald, 2002); their celebrity impacted the entertainment industry, marketing/endorsement industry, communication industry, coaching industry, legal industry, political industry, and the appearance industry (Andrews & Jackson, 2001, p. 4). The appeal sports professionals had on consumers outside of their athletic abilities allowed brands to successfully use a variety of media promotional techniques to pair the athlete and product.

**Lesser-Known Athletes**

Several high-powered and well-known athletes were used not only in the US but internationally, such as Kobe Bryant, whom had a two-year deal with Turkish Airlines (Li, 2010). However, businesses were finding those internationally known faces were not the only athletes who could appeal to consumer’s desires. Endorsement effectiveness had also been seen in lesser known athletes. Jowdy and McDonald (2002) reported that lesser-known athletes had positive effects on brands because they possessed interesting stories that were simple for consumers to find, follow, and understand their past to present history, they became as relatable as the huge icon (as cited in Darnell and Sparks, 2007, p. 162). Basil and Brown (2004) stated a successful endorsement was based upon whether a consumer could identify with the athlete (as cited in Darnell & Sparks, 2007, p. 162). Consumers formed connections with the lesser-known athletes through their personal narratives. Fans acknowledged accomplishments at any professional level, verifying Schaaf’s third step in athlete endorsements, *leverage on the viewer’s recognition* (1995).
Reputational Risk

Athletes as endorsers proved beneficial to several growing and established businesses, but the decision to sign an athlete to a company image has become more than just a simple choice. Businesses had to carefully analyze a cost-benefit trade-off that assessed whether those brand investments were worth the risk involved with public figures (Knittel & Stango, 2010). Media publications faced limited restrictions on what could and could not be published, which often led to over-exposed scandalous events and negative information celebrity athletes wished stayed behind closed doors. The rapid spread of information could quickly tarnish a brand’s reputation. Businesses had to evaluate whether “a celebrity endorsement generates value sufficient to offset its possibly considerable costs” (Knittel & Stango, 2010). According to Kevin Murray, “reputational risk is now considered the single greatest threat to businesses today”, the collected opinion of consumers could damage the status of a brand’s character (Murray, 2003, p. 142).

In the study “Celebrity Endorsements, Firm Value and Reputation Risk: Evidence from Tiger Woods Scandal”, researchers Knittel and Stango (2010), analyzed the stock market effects of Tiger Woods’ scandal on the brands he endorsed. Prior to the 2009 incident, Tiger Woods made nearly $100 million in endorsements, and approximately $80-90 million from five major brands, Gillette, Nike, PepsiCo Accenture, and Electronic Arts. In the ten trading days after the scandal hit newsstands, Nike lost $1.3 million in profits and 105,000 customers, while the entire golf industry lost $6.2 million in profits, which totaled to a shareholder loss of $5-12 billion (Economic value of, 2010, p.1).
Woods lost endorsement sponsorships from several companies after the scandal; brands saw Woods as a reputational risk to their image and profit margins. The association developed between consumers and products are crucial, negative or positive events could have immediate effects on the favorability of the endorser and brand being endorsed. According to Till and Shimp (1998), audience’s attitudes about a company became more positive when they were endorsed by celebrities who equally had a positive image, the reverse happened with negative attitudes (as cited in White et al., 2009, p. 324). Negative attitudes towards a celebrity translated to negative opinions of the brand (White et al., 2009). The lowered popularity of athletes reduced the effectiveness of their branding power and decreased the value of the endorsed products. Reputation was a decisive quality that required careful thought from companies that placed their name in someone else’s hands.

*Meaning Transfer*

The effectiveness, reputational risk or not, of athlete endorsements often relied on the meaning transfer process. With a multitude of directions for marketing possibilities, businesses first had to decide what they wanted their product to verbalize (Peetz et al., 2004). After a route was selected, businesses then found the correct endorser who matched the consumer constructs of the message/image being sold (Peetz et al., 2004, p. 142). The totality of these steps encompassed *meaning transfer*, and can best be described as:

A celebrity is understood to possess a previously developed identity and set of cultural meanings that he/she can impart to a consumer brand by associating him/herself with the brand. (McCracken, 1989, p. 310)
Consumers associated celebrities and athletes with several images because they took on a variety of interconnected or singular meanings through status, gender, class, etc. that provided diversity for marketers (Darnell & Sparks, 2007). According to McCraken (1989), in order for an endorsement to succeed an association must be formed between the cultural meaning of the celebrity world (i.e. gender, race, status) and the endorsed product (p. 312). Meaning transfer is comprised of three stages in which consumers cultural meanings developed and moved from the celebrity (athlete) to the product through purchase (McCraken, 1989).

In stage one, the celebrity within the endorsement was “culturally constructed as a hero,” becoming different from an anonymous person because they “possess qualities and characteristics that have been categorized and influenced by the prevailing culture” (Peetz et al., 2004, p. 142; McCraken, 1989). Celebrities brought significance to advertisements rather than unknown models because they offered cultural meanings with a distinct value; they formed a connection of bonds with consumers (McCraken, 1989). Celebrities identified with consumers in unique ways through the roles and characters they played on screen. Each role portrayed connected the celebrity to new personas and meanings that were transferred to audiences (McCraken, 1989). When consumers saw a celebrity in an advertisement, after playing a specific character, new associations were formed from the character to the celebrity.

Stage two required the company to decide what message they wished to convey. In order for the image/message projection to be transferred from the celebrity to the product, the consumer must see a relation between the pair (Peetz et al., 2004; McCraken, 1989). The creative director of an advertising agency joined those two aspects together.
through all the elements of a picture being shown to an audience, text, scenery, landscape, time of day, clothing, and colors within the visual representation (McCraken, 1986, p. 74). With the precise combination of elements the director brought the “world and consumer goods into conjunction and then suggest their essential similarity”, which caused the viewer to develop an association between the product and celebrity (McCraken, 1986, p. 75). The crucial aspect of this stage was to make consumers believe they would become closer to the performance or image of the celebrity. For example, ideally consumers would not match the performance level of Kobe Bryant, but based on McCraken’s (1986) study, the advertisement was designed to make consumer’s believe or feel closer to Bryant’s image psychologically by wearing his endorsed products (as cited in Peetz et al., 2004, p.142).

In the final stage, meaning transferred from the product to consumer. The celebrity created a self from previous personas played, and when entered into endorsements their meanings became available in material form to consumers (McCraken, 1989). McCraken (1989) stated celebrities determined the final stage because many saw them as super consumers, creating selves that viewers could relate to and seek to mimic (p.318). Consumers imitated the celebrity self by purchasing specific endorsed products to gain or enhance their individual self and feel a sense of belonging (Downey, 2007).

The meaning transfer process was crucial for endorsement efficiency because it highlighted a connection between the consumer, athlete or celebrity, and product. The process allowed brands to differentiate themselves from competitors by resonating with consumers on a more cultural basis (Cornwell, Roy, Steinard, 2001, p. 43). Through a
transfer, the exposure of athletes in advertisements could link the image of the sports star to the brand over time, which could add value, credibility, and position to their name in the marketplace (Darnell & Sparks, 2007).

**Product Involvement**

Product involvement played a crucial role in consumer purchase decisions (Bloch, 1981; Traylor, 1981). Involvement was often regarded as a determinant in purchase decisions as satisfaction, brand attitudes, and loyalty often varied on the level of consumer relevance placed on different items (Suh & Yi, 2006). When consumers were deciding upon what brands or products they wanted to purchase it was an individual decision, depending only on the consumer (Andrews, Durvasula, & Akhter, 1990, p. 28).

Sole emphasis on the consumer required businesses to assess how shoppers formed attachments and loyalties to brands and products in order to capture a specific target market (Naderi, 2011). Product involvement was defined as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests”; it was a consumer general level of concern for certain objects (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). The framework was classified in two main categories, high or enduring and low or situational products (Naderi, 2011; Suh & Yi, 2006; Cho, 2010; Shirin & Kambiz, 2011; Charters & Pettigrew, 2006). When consumers purchased high involvement products they often sought information from resources and peers before buying the item (Cho, 2010). According to Goldsmith and Emmert (1991), when the involvement level increased in regards to personal relevance, the consumer would continue searching for further information before purchasing (as cited in Shirin & Kambiz, 2011). Purchasing a high involvement product could often be linked to consumer personal experiences or
knowledge stored in long-term memories (Suh & Yi, 2006). “Consumers tend to perceive the shopping and consumption activities associated with products as personally relevant”, thus when shopping for high involvement products like electronics, automobiles, or jewelry, consumers experienced high levels of significance to the product (Suh & Yi, 2006, p. 146). High involvement products tended to be more permanent and provided more purpose than utilitarian uses, which connected to the consumer through levels of symbolism (Charters & Pettigrew, 2006).

Opposing, low involvement or situational products were less contemplated. The purchase decisions of those products were less reliant on enduring qualities and more focused on function. With low involvement products, cues or stimuli in the consumer’s environment might act as a source for purchase intention. For example, sales, rebates, coupons, and price reductions might have activated a consumer to buy one product over the other without comparison to alternative brand features or product information (Suh & Yi, 2006). The basic premise for this product category was elimination of cognitive elements, such as values and needs; these items represented a temporary interest with an object triggered by a particular cause (Shirin & Kambiz, 2011, p. 604). Low involvement products were frequently purchased goods, household merchandise in particular, i.e. toilet paper, paper towels, and detergent (Suh & Yi, 2006). Researchers Petty, Cacioppo and David (1983) found high involvement products, brand attitude, and purchase intention had a much stronger correlation with one another than their relationship with low involvement products (as cited in Shirin & Kambiz, 2011). Suggesting when consumers purchased low involvement products they were less likely to
search for information and were less concerned with the brand or even who was sponsoring the brand.

Product involvement was thought to be a mediator between the overall consumer’s goal of the product, utilitarian or symbolic, and the actual purchase decision (Mittal, 1995). The way consumers viewed and processed high versus low involvement products might have altered their purchase decisions. According to Rader and Huang (2008), they found peers played a vital role in young consumers purchase decisions of high-involvement products (as cited in Cho, 2010). If a friend deemed a product negatively, the individual decided not to make the purchase even if they liked the item (Rader & Huang, 2008), finding that purchase decisions were less determined by individual perceptions and more on peer opinion (Cho, 2010). If peers had a negative opinion of an athlete, their endorsements with certain high involvement products might have caused consumers to disregard their favorability of the product and decline purchase.

Conceptual Framework

Transference of Affect

The theory of transference of affect was a social cognitive approach that was critically important in answering how male consumers perceived the relationship between products and product endorsers. Transference of affect was the enhanced learning of how people formed positive or negative opinions of others, which explained how consumers developed perceptions and feelings toward an endorser (White et al., 2009).

Marketers needed frequent updates on the way people thought; information on opinion formulation was a crucial determinant on how consumers felt towards new
relationships. For example, when two people first met, their interactions conducted were linked to past significant ties (Chen & Andersen, 1999; Bunker & Ball, 2005; Berk & Andersen, 2000). New relationships could often mimic or show strong resemblance to interactions from a past relationship, people have stored mental representations of significant others in their memories and when encountering new individuals those past representations were activated (Berk & Andersen, 2000). A person would search for past characteristics until a match was formed between the new individual and the significant other, through traits, roles, resemblance, etc.; these characteristics would trigger cues in the perceiver’s stored knowledge bank (Berk & Anderson, 2000; Chen & Anderson, 1999; White et al., 2009) and determined how the person would respond to a new individual (Baum & Anderson, 1999). Often this transference acted outside of one’s conscious thought, and through intuition generated immediate insightful connections (Berk & Andersen, 2000; Chen & Andersen, 1999).

Sullivan (1953) stated the transference of affect explained how people formed images of a significant person. As children individuals would begin to formulate these images of significant others (Sullivan, 1953). Throughout one’s childhood, significant others shaped a person’s self-image, having equal effects on their memory, perception, responses to others, and behavior (Andersen & Glassman, 1996). The meanings associated with significant others transgressed throughout all stages of life, as they were richer in detail than those of non-significant people (Reis & Downey, 1999, p. 102), and continuously impacted perception development.

According to Sullivan (1953), as a person got older they often encountered new individuals in situations similar to events lived from earlier decades (as cited in White et
Researchers suggested through these interactions a person formed categories in their minds of people based on constructs of past relationships (White et al., 2007, p. 325). Categories were used to classify new people encountered (Heider & Skowronski, 2007). In regards to this study, participants might have perceived the selected athletes in two groups, good versus bad, based on memories or former connections with significant others. Understanding the flow of interactions from person A to person B allowed marketers and brands to see how endorsers could be matched to meet consumer’s feelings and motivations.

**Reputation**

Transference of affect was used to explain how consumers would respond to an endorser and their endorsed product (White et al., 2009). Consumers viewed the products they purchased as more than just utilitarian objects, they were imbued with *bundles of meaning*, or “attributes like sophistication, frugality, and honesty,” with which consumers fashioned their self-identity” (Belk, 1988; White et al., 2009, p. 325). Products held symbolism and significance to the purchaser.

When advertisers developed a promotional campaign they often attempted to instill their product with certain meanings by linking the item to a celebrity who exemplified corresponding representations (White et al., 2009). According to Atkin and Block (1983) consumers held “preconceived images about any celebrity endorser, and this image affect is transferred to the endorsed brand” (as cited in D. Biswas, A. Biswas, & Das, 2006, p.18). By forming a connection between the endorser and product, consumers began the transference movement from the celebrity to the product and from the product to the life of the consumer (McCracken, 1989).
Consumers transferred meanings to each variable through various *rituals* (White, et al. 2009). Defined as “a social action to manipulate cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorization” (McCracken, 1986, p. 78), rituals were a powerful tool for adjusting worldly understandings of defined characteristics (McCracken, 1986, p. 78). Multiple ritual practices could be performed by consumers in order to transfer meaning from the product to individual. For example, possession rituals allowed consumers to draw on the ability of goods to differentiate class, status, gender, age, occupation, and lifestyle, allowing consumers to move the cultural meaning of the good into their lives (McCracken, 1986, p. 79). The goods’ properties were designed to transfer to the qualities and lifestyles of the purchaser (McCracken, 1986, p. 80). Those product attributes were often defined and transmitted through advertising, which acted as a collective idea about the interpretation of the product’s universal meaning (McCraken, 1986, p. 79).

The continual repetition of celebrity and product pairs in advertising caused consumers to automatically associate the duo (White et al., 2009). Through rituals and advertising schemes consumers were able to transfer *bundles of meaning* out of the products and into their lives. Advertisers used athlete endorsers in hopes of transferring a positive image (reputation) to the consumer; however, the transference process could adversely take a negative flow (White et al., 2009).

Athletes involved in scandals became associated or brought into contact with new objects, personas, and contexts, which altered their reputation (White et al., 2009, p. 326). The new circumstances linked to the endorser compromised the previous *bundles of meaning* for the athlete (McCracken 1989). Consumers now connected the *celebrity*
meanings to the scandal, transferring unfavorable impressions to the product being endorsed (White et al., 2009, p. 326). Negative perceptions had a negative effect on purchase intentions and future relationships with customers (Till & Shimp, 1998). Researchers noted the more credible the endorser the more consumers felt the company or brand was trustworthy and believable in terms of their intentions (Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000), “The more credible the endorser, the more positive is his/her influence on consumer’s attitudes and purchase intentions” (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 331).

Transference theory suggests past relationships carry over into future relationships (Bunker & Ball, 2005, Berk & Andersen, 2000); knowledge of prior scandals could tarnish potential purchase intentions. Customers who have experienced negative past interactions with companies might continue to carry their distrust into the current marketing scheme, which would decrease their favorability towards the firm (Bunker & Ball, 2005). Celebrity and athlete endorsers were often known more for their personal lives than the things they did in their profession, presenting reputation as a teetering factor of negative transference

Intention to Buy

The endorsement became one of the most popular forms of retail advertising strategies (Downey, 2007), and businesses had used these powerful figures in order to influence consumer’s purchase intentions (Braunstein, 2006). Highly credible endorsers had been found to produce more positive attitude changes in consumers, which created more efficiency in the translation of the advertiser’s message (Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1998).
Consumers had to develop a feeling of product value before purchase, ultimately deciphering whether the product actually provided the benefits portrayed (Braunstein, 2006). Marketers were attempting to amplify the product’s bundles of meaning and increase their probability of purchase by using celebrities as endorsers. According to Kamins (1989), using celebrities in advertisements increased the effectiveness and performance of the advertisement more than using a non-celebrity as well as, stating the use of celebrity endorsers more positively impacted consumer’s responses to the advertisement and product (as cited in Nuyens, 2011).

Celebrity endorsements were used to increase the likelihood of consumer purchase intention (Downey, 2007); according to Goldsmith et al. (2000) a celebrity in an advertisement had larger influences on shopping decisions (as cited in Downey, 2007, p. 23). Previously, consumers were surveyed about their actual purchases made because of celebrity associations, finding 40% of retailers believed consumers would buy celebrity endorsed products because of the celebrity connection (Liscense!, 2007, p. 50). However, when reputation was tainted, the celebrity image transferred to the product was negatively altered (McCracken, 1986). Through possession rituals, the purchase of those goods endorsed by scandal celebrities could elicit unwanted cultural meanings to consumers, altering the status or meaning of the item (McCracken, 1986). Consumers were classified by the sum of their possessions; those who purchased negatively stigmatized items might be judged or characterized differently from outsiders (Belk, 1998, p. 139). Based on the proceeding literature the following research questions are expected:

R1: Negative reputation of athletes will influence male consumer’s intention to buy a product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)
R2: Positive reputation of athletes will influence male consumer’s intention to buy a product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)

*Consumer Attitude toward the Product*

According to Moye and Kincade (2003) attitude was considered a critical predictor of consumer’s shopping behaviors, consumer’s feelings towards an endorser had distinct effects on the success or failure of a product (as cited in Wu, Huang, Fu, 2011, p. 292).

Advertisers used athletes as a method to change consumer’s attitudes (bundles of meaning) towards products; they convinced them to transfer their positive associations of the athlete to the product (Downey, 2007). Brands used athletes to gain consumer liking. According to Sassenberg and Johnson (2010), “the sport celebrity brand image may consist of certain brand attributes (assigned by the consumer), that may lead to certain benefits (for that consumer),” which could impact the acceptability of a product (p. 1). The positive attributes assigned to the celebrity transferred to the product through reoccurring association in advertisements (Till & Shimp, 1998). The continual constructive relationship led to more favorable consumer attitudes. The more likeable the athlete, the more effective they were in influencing consumer’s attitudes toward a product (Till & Shimp, 1998).

However, negative consumer attitudes had more powerful effects. Researchers noted negative information formed stronger influences on consumer’s evaluations than positive information (Nuyens, 2011). Consumers were more likely to change their opinions of a product when tied to an athlete with a negative reputation than someone with a perfect record (Nuyens, 2011). According to Bailey (2007), when consumers were exposed to negative information they formed less favorable attitudes towards the celebrity, they transferred those unfavorable characteristics to the product and altered the value of the
items cultural meanings (Berk & Andersen, 2000; Bunker & Ball, 2005; Chen & Andersen, 1999). For example, Michael Phelps’ involvement in drug usage linked marijuana or partying behaviors to his endorsed products, which caused consumers to perceive the merchandise negatively. Based on the proceeding literature the following research questions are expected:

R3: Negative reputation of athletes will influence consumer’s attitude toward an endorsed product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)

R4: Positive reputation of athletes will influence consumer’s attitude toward an endorsed product when variation in product involvement occurs (High/Low)
Figure 2.1. Model of Research Questions Framework

Reputation

- High/positive (non-scandal)
- Low/negative (scandal)

Purchase Intention

- High Involvement Products
  - Definitely
  - Never
- Low Involvement Products
  - Definitely
  - Never

Attitude toward product

- High Involvement Products
  - Favorable
  - Unfavorable
- Low Involvement Products
  - Favorable
  - Unfavorable

Theory of Transference

Product Involvement Theory
Chapter Three

Methodology

This exploratory research study was designed to provide new constructive rationalization on the influence of negative reputation of athletes featured in endorsements, whether or not scandal had effected male purchase intentions and attitude favorability for high and low involvement endorsed products. Exploratory research was a “methodological approach to attempt and discover general information about a topic that is not well understood by the marketer”, which provided benefits to researchers through a more formal research method (“Exploratory market research,” n.d., p. 1). The main objective of this study was to discern how athlete’s personal scandals (reputation) could transfer to male consumer decisions. This chapter discussed the research design, sample, instrumentation, and procedures used to collect and analyze data.

Research Design

A quantitative survey design was used to analyze whether or not negative reputation of athlete endorsers had effects on consumer purchase intentions and attitude perceptions of high and low involvement products. The survey was based on athletes rather than celebrity endorsers because of the increased usage of athletes in marketing tactics; their hero persona created stronger connections with shoppers and more personal relationships through advertisements (Klaus & Bailey, 2008). A pre-test narrowed broad ideas and ensured no confusing questions were asked.
Sample Selection and Data Collection

The participants for this study were a convenience sample of undergraduate students between the ages of 18-35 enrolled within the College of Agriculture and College of Business and Economics courses at a Midwestern University in the United States. Marketers often used athlete endorsements to target Generation Y consumers, as they were a highly influenced target segment, given their relevance to the topic; a student sample was an appropriate population for this study (Braunstein, 2006).

Before the survey was distributed, the primary investigator contacted professors with large enrollment classes and assessed their willingness of participation. Only professors with class enrollments of 30 or more students were approached to increase the potential sample size of participants. The investigator then asked the professors if they would provide their students with a minimum of five bonus points for completing the entire survey. Bonus points were provided as an incentive to increase the return rates of completed surveys. Upon agreeing to participate with all requested actions, the quantitative survey was sent to the willing participants through an electronically administered survey created on Survey Monkey. Students were provided a consent form and explanation of the study at the beginning of the survey, which gave them the option to decline participation. Participation was voluntary.

Pretest

A pretest was performed to ensure the questions, athletes, and products were adequate for the experimental data collection. A small sample (n=71), 15 men and 56 women, of undergraduate students within the Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles, and Hospitality and Tourism Management Departments at a Midwestern University were
randomly surveyed on questions regarding athletes and high and low involvement products. The qualitative survey was comprised of five questions 1) Who are your favorite athletes? Please list five. 2) Who is a celebrity athlete that has influenced you to buy a product? Please list three. What products have they influenced you to buy? 3) What celebrity athlete are you disappointed in because of something they did wrong? Please list three. 4) What products do you consider high involvement when it comes to goods? Involvement is defined as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests”, the focus of involvement is how relevant or important a person perceives an object. For example: High-end watch, electronics, or cars (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342) 5) What products do you consider low involvement when it comes to goods? Involvement is defined as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests”, the focus of involvement is how relevant or important a person perceives an object. For Example: Sports drink, food, supplies, or health and beauty products (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342).

The results provided evidence that positive (no scandal) and negative (scandal) athletes used in the survey were well-known amongst the participants. Several respondents had already purchased endorsed items and were familiar with the products promoted from all four sport professionals used in the survey. The data categorized various products participants had labeled as high or low, which identified the three products used in the survey, watches as high and sports drinks and golf shirts as low. By conducting a pre-test the researcher was able to see which products and athletes were relevant and influential to the participants being surveyed and indicated a desired distinction between high and low involvement products. Results of the pre-test were
examined by the researcher to find common responses and evaluated for aspects of confusion (Downey, 2007).

**Instrumentation**

*Product and Athlete Selection*

The researcher sought to test four prominent athletes within two different popular American sports to find variances in athlete endorsers with scandals and athlete endorsers without scandal. The four athletes, two for each sport, were chosen based upon their level of celebrity and endorsement earnings, and were paired against one another (i.e. good/no scandal versus bad/scandal). Golf and basketball were the two sports selected. The Professional Golf Association (PGA), had consistently dominated the sports industry with their total quantity of athlete endorsers (“Economic value,” 2010), and the National Basketball Association (NBA), had been involved in endorsements through athletes like Michael Jordan since 1984 when he signed million dollar endorsement deals with Quaker Oats and Gatorade (Vancil, 1991).

The athletes chosen for this study were all men. Male athletes had typically been more regular in endorsements than female athletes, and male athletics were usually on a grander scale than female professional associations. Using males enhanced the likelihood that participants had seen and were familiar with the athletes before completing the survey (White, 2011). Professionals, Kobe Bryant (scandal) and LeBron James (no scandal) were selected for the NBA, and Tiger Woods (scandal) and Phil Mickelson (no scandal) were selected for the PGA, all based on literature and matched with the researcher’s selection criteria.
Bloomberg Businessweek listed the top 100 power athletes of 2011; all four of the selected survey athletes were in the top 15; Tiger Woods-3, Phil Mickelson-4, LeBron James-11, and Kobe Bryant-15 (Stonington, 2011). Aside from being ranked as the top power athletes, the four professionals were also ranked on Sports Illustrated’s 50 highest earning American athletes, figures were based upon earnings/winnings and endorsements; Tiger Woods- $62,294,116, Phil Mickelson- $61,185,933, LeBron James-$44,500,000, and Kobe Bryant- $34,806,250 (Freedman). Pretesting assured all four athletes were well-known to the target participants and Kobe Bryant and Tiger Woods were identified as athletes with public scandals.

Questionnaire Development

For this study, the questionnaire was designed to examine the impact of negative reputation of an athlete endorser on male consumer purchase intentions and attitude favorability. The experiments were designed to fulfill the stated research questions. Each study was designed to observe whether transference actually occurred when negative reputation of the athlete was paired to consumer purchase intention of the high/low involvement products or when negative reputation of the athlete was paired to consumer attitude of the high/low involvement products. This study used familiar celebrity athletes with high endorsement earnings to increase the validity of the findings. In related studies, researchers had found differences in responses when using familiar versus unfamiliar athlete endorsers, they stated endorser familiarity had been found to influence the effectiveness of the advertisement (Till & Shimp, 1998; Kamins & Gupta, 1994). Often marketers capitalized on expert and known athletes that projected a more
credible image to influence consumers purchase intentions and attitudes (Kamins & Gupta, 1994).

The study was split into four main segments. The negative and positive reputation athletes were placed separately into two main divisions; within these divisions a high and low involvement product endorsed by each athlete was displayed, totaling two products per segment. Positive athletes were defined as those without a scandal, negative athletes being defined as those who had been involved in a scandal within the past decade. All four segments (positive and negative athletes) were identical in research design. Each section was comprised of images of the four athlete endorsers each with a high and low involvement product and questions following that related to the perception of the endorser, attitude toward the product, and likelihood of intention to buy the product. The products used in the study were equivalent in brand relation and function. Kamins and Gupta (1994) summarized that celebrity spokesperson effectiveness revolved around congruence between the product and spokesperson; the researchers suggested utilizing products that fit with the athlete’s image provided a more realistic generalization for data on high and low involvement products (p. 574). Using products deemed more congruent to the athletes improved the effectiveness of the advertisement and potential for purchase intention and positive attitude responses. The conclusion of the survey requested basic demographic information.

The instrument questions used for this study were built upon other researcher’s established research designs (e.g. White, 2011).
Segment One: Negative Athletes, High Involvement

Segment one tested purchase intention and attitude favorability based on the relationship between negative endorser’s reputations and high involvement products. The participants were shown biographies and endorsement images of negative athletes, Tiger Woods and Kobe Bryant. Tiger Woods recently was involved in a cheating scandal with multiple mistresses (Goldman, 2009) and Kobe Bryant was involved in a cheating scandal when he was accused of rape while receiving treatment at a recovery center (“Detective details alleged,” 2003). The advertisements chosen for Woods and Bryant were specifically selected from endorsement deals published after their individual scandals broke.

The first part of the segment consisted of an image of the athletes wearing high involvement products, Rolex and Nubeo watches. High involvement products were those items where consumers sought information about the product before making a decision; the product was more important and relevant to the purchaser (Naderi, 2011; Charters & Pettigrew, 2006). After the image of the endorsement was shown, a short biography on the athlete was presented directly underneath. The biographies summarized their accomplishments within their individual sport and then included an insertion of the scandals they were most recently involved with, which provided the participant with negative information on the athlete. The information presented was designed to create an overall negative image/reputation of Tiger Woods and Kobe Bryant.

After reading the biography and viewing the advertisement, participants were asked to answer questions to test their perceptions of the endorser, attitude of the product, and intention of purchase. Participant’s attitudes toward the endorser were measured on a
3-item questionnaire, rating the athlete on a 7-point semantic scale (1 = strongly dislike/unfavorable/very negative; 7 = strongly like/favorable/very positive) (White, 2011). The items used to measure attitude toward the endorser included 1) Please indicate the extent to which you like (Endorser name), 2) In your opinion, how favorable is (Endorser name), and 3) Please indicate your opinion of (Endorser name) (White, 2011).

Attitude toward the product was tested using a 3-item questionnaire. The participants were asked to rate their attitude toward the product using 7-point semantic scales (1 = strongly dislike/ unfavorable/very negative; 7 = strongly like/favorable/very positive). The three item measure included 1) Please indicates the extent to which you like (product), 2) In your opinion, how favorable is (product), and 3) Please indicate your opinion of (product) (White, 2011).

In order to test purchase intention, the researcher asked a 3-item questionnaire that related to the likelihood of buying the high involvement products. This was measured on a 7-point semantic scale (1 = unlikely/never/improbable; 7 = likely/definitely/probable). The three item measure included 1) Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the (product) in the advertisement (unlikely/likely), 2) Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the (product) in the advertisement (never/definitely), and 3) Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the (product) in the advertisement (improbable/probable) (White, 2011).
All questionnaire items for attitude toward the endorser, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention were established by White (2011) and produced alpha coefficients of ($\alpha > 0.70$).

**Segment Two: Negative Athletes, Low Involvement**

Segment two tested purchase intention and attitude favorability based on the relationship between negative endorser’s reputations and low involvement products. The same negative athletes, Woods and Bryant, were used in this portion of the survey. Participants were given an image of a new endorsement but with the athletes wearing or using a low involvement product, t-shirts and sports drinks. Low involvement products required fewer searches for information about the product and satisfaction came quickly (Suh & Yi, 2006). The image was presented without an accompanying biography. The same 3-item questionnaire set was used for each variable, identical to segment one, but with the new product names in the questions asked (Vitamin Water and Nike), which allowed for a comparison between the scandal athletes.

All questionnaire items for attitude toward the endorser, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention were established by White (2011) and produced alpha coefficients of ($\alpha > 0.70$).

**Segment Three: Positive Athletes, High Involvement**

Segment three switched from negative to positive athletes and tested purchase intention and attitude favorability based on the relationship between positive endorser’s reputations and high involvement products. The researcher chose two positive athletes, those without a scandal, but who were equal counterparts to the negative athletes based on popularity and endorsement earnings. The segment served as the control group to test
perceptions of the endorser and product with the absence of negative information. The positive athletes chosen were Phil Mickelson and LeBron James. The first part of the segment consisted of an image of the athletes wearing high involvement products, Rolex and Audemars Piguet watches. After the images of the endorsement were shown, a short biography on the athletes was presented directly underneath. The biographies summarized their accomplishments within their individual sport and then included an insertion on some of the charitable contributions or community promotion activities the athletes were personally involved with. The information provided was designed to create an overall positive image about Phil Mickelson and LeBron James. Segment three consisted of the same 3-item questionnaire set for all variables, attitude of the endorser, attitude of the product, and purchase intention as used in segments one and two to identify any differences in the attitudes of consumers in regards to high involvement products when negative information was omitted.

Participants attitude toward the endorser was analyzed by having participants rate their favorability levels on a 7-point semantic scales (1 = strongly dislike/unfavorable/very negative; 7 = strongly like/favorable/very positive) (White, 2011). The items used to measure attitude toward the endorser included 1) Please indicate the extent to which you like (Endorser name), 2) In your opinion, how favorable is (Endorser name), and 3) Please indicate your opinion of (Endorser name) (White, 2011).

Attitude toward the product was tested using a 3-item scale. The participants were asked to rate their attitude toward the product using 7-point semantic scales (1 = strongly dislike/ unfavorable/very negative; 7 = strongly like/favorable/very positive). The three
item measure included 1) Please indicates the extent to which you like (product), 2) In your opinion, how favorable is (product), and 3) Please indicate your opinion of (product) (White, 2011).

In order to test purchase intention, the researcher asked another 3-item scale of questions that related to the likelihood and favorability of buying the high involvement products. This was measured on a 7-point semantic scale (1 = unlikely/never/improbable; 7 = likely/definitely/probable). The three item measure included 1) Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the (product) in the advertisement (unlikely/likely), 2) Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the (product) in the advertisement (never/definitely), and 3) Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the (product) in the advertisement (improbable/probable) (White, 2011).

All questionnaire items for attitude toward the endorser, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention were established by White (2011) and produced alpha coefficients of ($\alpha > .70$).

**Segment 4: Positive Athletes, Low Involvement**

Segment four tested purchase intention and attitude favorability based on the relationship between positive endorser’s reputations and low involvement products. The same positive athletes, Phil Mickelson and LeBron James, were used in this portion of the survey. Participants were given an image of a new endorsement with the athletes wearing or using a low involvement product, t-shirts and sports drinks. The image was presented without an accompanying biography. The same 3-item questionnaire set for each variable were asked, identical to segment one, two, and three but with the new
product names in the questions (Sprite, Vitamin Water, Nike, and Callaway), which allowed an evaluation of differences between scandal and non-scandal athletes for high and low involvement products.

All questionnaire items for attitude toward the endorser, attitude toward the product, and purchase intention were established by White (2011) and produced alpha coefficients of ($\alpha > .70$).

Data Analysis

Analysis of the survey was compared through a general linear model for repeated measures with multivariate tests and estimated marginal means that reported the mean differences in purchase intention and attitude favorability for high and low involvement products. A repeated measure was used to properly compare the same 3-item questionnaire set used for each variable in all four segments. Computer statistical program SPSS 19 was used to run analysis for the data.
Chapter Four

Results

The purpose of this chapter was to present data results related to the following research questions: 1) Whether negative/positive reputations of athletes would influence male consumer purchase intentions where variation in product involvement occurred; and 2) Whether negative/positive reputations of athletes would influence male consumer attitudes toward the endorsed product where variation in product involvement occurred. The data was presented in three divisions, the first, reported the descriptive statistics of the tested sample. Within section two, reliability of data scales were reported based on Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha “determines the internal consistency” of survey instruments, which proved the survey tool was reliable when results were stable over testing repetition (Santos, 1999, p. 1). The final sector examined the individual variables (reputation, purchase intention, and attitude) tested in concurrence with high and low involvement products for each athlete. The general linear model results of the estimated marginal means were used to assess interactions of reputation, intention to buy, and attitude toward athlete endorsed products. Three hundred forty online questionnaires were started by participants; only 196 male surveys were completed and deemed appropriate for data analysis.

Sample Characteristics

Table 4.1 reported demographic characteristics of the sample. Male participants were asked questions regarding their age, education level, household income, and ethnicity. Of the 196 respondents, ages ranged from 18-35, which matched the age categorization identified as the new male shopper, those males who showed more interest
in purchase decisions (“Male Consumers”, 2009, pg. 5). The majority of participants were between the ages of 18-22 (53.6%). Forty-one percent indicated they had some college, but no degree, and 32.1% percent had a Bachelor’s degree. Approximately 39.8% of participants reported earnings of $0-$30,000, followed by almost fifteen percent had claimed earnings of $91,000 or higher. Most of the respondents were white, non-Hispanic (88.9%).

Shopping Characteristics

Table 4.2 reported descriptive statistics related to shopping characteristics of the male participants. Respondents were asked to clarify how much money they spent shopping per year and then answered three questions which cataloged them as an impulsive or non-impulsive (rational) shopper. The majority of participants reported they spent $0-$5,000 shopping in one year (61.9%), and approximately twenty-five percent spent $6,000-$10,000. Three final questions addressed whether participants purchased items quickly or spent time researching the product before making a decision. Each question was equivalent in wording but featured a different phrase that captured the shopping habits of the consumer, whether impulsive or rational. When asked, “I often buy things spontaneously”, the majority (30.7%) indicated they did not buy things spontaneously. The second phrase, “Just do it describes my shopping habits”, elicited 36.5% of participant’s who responded disagree. Finally, male shoppers were asked to react to, “I often buy things without thinking”. Forty-nine percent answered disagree, and 22.2% answered strongly agree. The results indicated males in this study were non-impulsive (rational) shoppers.
Instrument Reliability

Scaled reliability was conducted for each individual athlete, where each variable (reputation, purchase intention, and attitude) was tested with its paired coinciding high or low involvement product (High/Low), and then tested for each variable and combination of high and low involvement products (H/L Combination). A final scale was established through testing all high and low involvement products with an amalgamation of every variable (All Variables). Coefficient alpha was based on $\alpha > 0.7$. Table 4.3 reported the individual athlete’s instrument reliability for each variable and each variable while paired with the high involvement endorsed product and/or low involvement endorsed product. The coefficient alphas reported for each variable were above 0.7, which indicated the items within each instrument were used consistently to measure the variables across each athlete (Santos, 1999).

Research Questions Analysis

Reputation and Purchase Intention

High Involvement Products

Table 4.4 reported the results of a general linear model for repeated measures with multivariate tests and estimated marginal means for high involvement products. Based on the results there was a significant difference in the reputation of the four endorsers ($p < 0.001$) for high involvement products. The results also indicated there was a significant difference in the influence of endorser reputation on consumer purchase intention of the products ($p < 0.001$). $R_1$ addressed whether negative reputation of athletes would influence purchase intention when variation in product involvement (High/Low) occurred. $R_2$ addressed whether positive reputation of athletes would
influence purchase intention when variation in product involvement (High/Low) occurred. Participants were asked to rate their perception of the athlete endorser (reputation) on a seven point Likert Scale (1=strongly dislike/unfavorable/very negative; 7=strongly like/favorable/very positive) and purchase intention based on a seven point Likert scale (1 = unlikely/never/improbable; 7 = likely/definitely/probable).

Table 4.4 reported that variation in the importance of reputation could influence the purchase intention of the male consumer ($p < 0.001$). Figure 4.1 provided a visual representation of reputation and how it influenced the purchase intention of male consumers. A Rolex watch endorsement was used for both PGA athletes. Table 4.5 reported Phil (non-scandal athlete) had a higher reputation ($m = 5.39$) than Tiger (scandal athlete) ($m = 4.75$) and produced a higher result of purchase intention (Phil: $m = 3.85$, Tiger: $m = 3.58$).

A second comparison was conducted for the NBA athletes who were pictured in endorsements wearing watches deemed expensive and comparable to the Rolex brand. Kobe was pictured wearing a Nuebo watch and LeBron was pictured wearing an Audemars Piaget watch. Table 4.6 reported LeBron (non-scandal athlete) had a higher reputation ($m = 4.90$) than Kobe (scandal athlete) ($m = 4.46$) and produced a greater potential for consumer purchase of high involvement products (LeBron: $m = 3.61$, Kobe: $m = 3.20$).

Based on the observations of pattern, R₁ and R₂ were supported through high involvement products. Attitude toward the endorser (reputation) influenced the purchase intentions of participants for the high involvement products. The results reported the lower the reputation of the athlete the lower the purchase intention of the high
involvement product, the greater the reputation of the athlete the greater potential for
purchase intention of the high involvement product.

Low Involvement Products

Table 4.7 reported the results of a general linear model for repeated measures with
multivariate tests and estimated marginal means which determined the influence of
reputation on consumer purchase intention for low involvement products. Based on the
results there was a significant difference in the reputation of the four endorsers ($p < 0.001$) for low involvement products. Observation of patterns through estimated
marginal means graphs were used to interpret the data (Figure 4.2).

Tiger (scandal athlete) was pictured in an endorsement wearing a red Nike Golf
Shirt, while Phil (non-scandal athlete) was pictured in an endorsement wearing a red
Callaway Golf Shirt. Kobe (scandal athlete) was pictured in an endorsement drinking
Vitamin Water, while LeBron (non-scandal athlete) was pictured in an endorsement
drinking Sprite. Participants were asked to rate their perception of the athlete endorser
(reputation) on a seven point Likert Scale (1=strongly dislike/unfavorable/very negative;
7=strongly like/favorable/very positive) and purchase intention based on a seven point
Likert scale (1 = unlikely/never/improbable; 7 = likely/definitely/probable).

Based on Table 4.8 and 4.9, endorser reputation did not have an expected
influence on the purchase intentions of consumers when buying low involvement
products. The data reported there was not a predictable pattern between scandal and non-
scandal athlete’s reputations and the purchase intention of low involvement products.
Kobe had a low reputation ($m= 4.43$) but elicited a high purchase intention ($m= 4.73$),
Phil had the highest reputation ($m= 5.32$) but the lowest purchase intention ($m= 3.96$),
and LeBron had a low reputation ($m = 4.82$), related to Phil, but had the highest rate of probability of purchase intention ($m = 5.19$).

Variations shown in purchase intention probability suggested low involvement products were not influenced by athlete endorser’s positive/negative reputations, as the products required fewer thought processing decisions. Based on the results of this study, reputation was not a significant predictor of male consumer purchase intentions towards low involvement products.

**Attitude and Reputation**

**High Involvement Products**

R$_3$ addressed the extent to which consumers exposed to negative reputation influenced a consumer’s attitude when variations in product involvement occurred (High/Low) and R$_4$ addressed whether positive reputation influenced attitude toward the product when variations in product involvement occurred (High/Low). A general linear model for repeated measures based on multivariate tests and estimated marginal means was used to measure the influence of endorser reputation (scandal/non-scandal) on attitude toward a product (high/low involvement). Participants were asked to rate their perception of the athlete endorser based on negative/positive reputation and attitude toward the product on a seven point Likert Scale (1=strongly dislike/unfavorable/very negative; 7=strongly like/favorable/very positive).

Based on the data there was a significant difference in the reputation of the four endorsers ($p < 0.001$) for high involvement products. The results also indicated there was a significant difference in the participant’s attitude toward the product per endorser ($p <$
Table 4.10 provided a comparison of the estimated marginal means for attitude and reputation.

Further observation of the estimated marginal means indicated variation in endorser reputation did not always predict consumer attitude toward a high involvement product. Tiger’s low reputation (scandal athlete) did not negatively influence participant’s attitudes towards the high involvement products. Tiger had a low reputation ($m = 4.75$) but participants still reported a high attitude toward the high involvement product, Rolex ($m = 5.44$). However, Kobe (scandal athlete) supported the estimated outcomes of R3. Kobe had a low reputation ($m = 4.46$) and produced a lower attitude response toward the product, Nubeo ($m = 4.07$).

Phil’s (non-scandal athlete) high reputation ($m = 5.39$) predictably elicited positive influence on participant attitude toward the product, Rolex ($m = 5.22$), which supported the estimated outcomes of R4. However, LeBron had a high reputation ($m = 4.89$) but a low attitude response toward the endorsed product, Audemars Piaget ($m = 4.257$).

Results showed there were unpredictable variations to high involvement products. Reputation of the endorser was not a significant predictor of attitude toward high involvement products. Table 4.10 suggested male consumers did not base or change their attitude toward the high involvement product by the endorser seen in the advertisement. Figure 4.3 showed visual patterns reported from the multivariate tests of estimated marginal means.
Low Involvement Products

Table 4.11 reported the results of a general linear model for repeated measures with multivariate tests and estimated marginal means which measured the influence of reputation on participant’s attitude toward low involvement products. Results showed there was a significant difference in the reputation of the four endorsers ($p < 0.001$) for low involvement products. The results also indicated there was a significant difference in the participant’s attitude toward the product by endorser ($p < 0.001$). Observation of patterns through estimated marginal means graphs were used to view the data (Figure 4.4).

Tiger’s low reputation (scandal athlete) did not negatively influence participant’s attitudes toward the low involvement products. Tiger had a low reputation ($m = 4.83$) but participants indicated a high attitude toward the red Nike Golf Shirt ($m = 6.146$). However, Phil had the highest reputation ($m = 5.32$), but participants indicated the lowest attitude rating toward the red Callaway Golf Shirt ($m = 5.090$). Kobe supported the estimated outcomes of H3. Kobe had a low reputation ($m = 4.43$) and participants indicated a lower attitude toward the product, Vitamin Water ($m = 5.160$), and LeBron produced a lower reputation ($m = 4.82$), however, participants indicated a high attitude toward the product, Sprite ($m = 5.52$).

Results showed there were unpredictable variations to low involvement products. Reputation of the endorser was not a significant predictor of attitude toward the product with low involvement products. Overall, Table 4.11 suggested consumers did not base or change their attitude toward the low involvement products by the endorser in the advertisement.
Table 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-32</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school degree or equivalent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
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<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
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<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$30,000</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31,000-$60,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$61,000-$90,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$91,000 and above</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A; Confidential</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
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### Table 4.2. Shopping Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Money spent shopping per year:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$5,000</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000-$10,000</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$11,000-$15,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$16,000-$20,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21,000 and above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"I often buy things spontaneously" describes the way I buy things:

| Strongly disagree                      | 16 |  8.5 |
| Disagree                              | 58 | 30.7 |
| Neutral                               | 47 | 24.9 |
| Agree                                 | 56 | 29.6 |
| Strongly agree                        | 12 |  6.3 |

"Just do it" describes the way I buy things:

| Strongly disagree                      | 35 | 18.5 |
| Disagree                              | 69 | 36.5 |
| Neutral                               | 41 | 21.7 |
| Agree                                 | 37 | 19.6 |
| Strongly agree                        |  7 |  3.7 |

"I often buy things without thinking" describes the way I buy things:

| Strongly disagree                      | 42 | 22.2 |
| Disagree                              | 93 | 49.2 |
| Neutral                               | 28 | 14.8 |
| Agree                                 | 20 | 10.6 |
| Strongly agree                        |  6 |  3.2 |
Table 4.3. Reliability (Cronbach $\alpha$) of Each Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete</th>
<th>Product Involvement</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Reputation</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Purchase Intention</th>
<th>All Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiger Woods</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>0.887</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td>0.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.919</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.958</td>
<td>0.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H/L Combination</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.952</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Mickelson</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>0.859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>0.919</td>
<td>0.969</td>
<td>0.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H/L Combination</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kobe Bryant</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.936</td>
<td>0.917</td>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H/L Combination</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.959</td>
<td>0.785</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LeBron James</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>0.951</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>0.969</td>
<td>0.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>0.953</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>H/L Combination</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.976</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td>0.922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and High Involvement Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Kobe(2)</th>
<th>Phil(3)</th>
<th>LeBron(4)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5. Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and High Involvement Products for PGA Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Phil(2)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>24.37</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6. Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and High Involvement Products for NBA Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Kobe(1)</th>
<th>LeBron(2)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>10.89</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>16.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and Low Involvement Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Kobe(2)</th>
<th>Phil(3)</th>
<th>LeBron(4)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8. Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and Low Involvement Products for PGA Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Phil(2)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9. Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and Low Involvement Products for NBA Athletes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Kobe(1)</th>
<th>LeBron(2)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>11.92</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal means for Reputation, Attitude and High Involvement Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Kobe(2)</th>
<th>Phil(3)</th>
<th>LeBron(4)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>116.21</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Attitude and Low Involvement Products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Tiger(1)</th>
<th>Kobe(2)</th>
<th>Phil(3)</th>
<th>LeBron(4)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
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<td>4.43</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>15.61</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>42.83</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and High Involvement Products

Estimated Marginal Means: Reputation, Purchase Intention and High Involvement Products

Mean Score

Tiger (1) Kobe (2) Phil (3) LeBron (4)
Athletes

Reputation
Purchase Intention

Figure 4.2. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal means for Reputation, Purchase Intention and Low Involvement Products

Estimated Marginal Means: Reputation, Purchase Intention and Low Involvement Products

Mean Score

Tiger (1) Kobe (2) Phil (3) LeBron (4)
Athletes

Reputation
Purchase Intention
Figure 4.3. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal means for Reputation, Attitude and High Involvement Products

![Graph showing estimated marginal means for reputation and attitude for high involvement products.]

Figure 4.4. Multivariate tests of Estimated Marginal Means for Reputation, Attitude and Low Involvement Products

![Graph showing estimated marginal means for reputation and attitude for low involvement products.]

59
Chapter 5

Conclusions

The foundation for this study was based on the theory of transference of affect, how positive/negative feelings were developed towards a significant person (White et al., 2009; Anderson & Glassman, 1996; Bowlby, 1969; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Sullivan, 1953) and product involvement theory, the level of product significance to consumers before purchase (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Previous research reported celebrity endorsers could have a large impact on product preferences and likability towards advertising schemes (Downey, 2007). The purpose of this study was to determine whether reputation influenced male consumer purchase intention or attitude for high or low involvement products. Support for this study was based on minimal existed research for male shopping behaviors and their perceptions of athlete endorsed products; male consumers had changed from their previous indifferent shopping attitudes and were increasing their interest in product decisions and business strategies (“Male Consumers”, 2009, p.4).

Discussion

The first research question identified whether negative reputation of an athlete endorser impacted male consumer purchase intentions for high or low involvement products. Reputation was based on whether the endorser had experienced a negative situation in their career. The results of the study suggested male consumers were affected by negative reputation of athletes for high involvement products but were not affected for low involvement products. The athletes not involved in scandals elicited higher rates for potential purchase intention than those athletes who were involved in a scandal.
Consumers, through the transference of affect, created a linkage between the endorser and the product, (Atkin & Block, 1983) which formed from repetition of the pair in endorsements (White et al., 2009). Previous research explained that male consumers in the study were impacted by negative transference. When athletes were involved in scandal, the past relationships consumers formed with them were altered negatively which caused consumers to create new unfavorable bundles of meaning (Berk & Anderson, 2000; Bunker & Ball, 2005; Chen & Anderson, 1999). High involvement products were more affected by endorsers than low involvement products because consumers sought more information when buying valuable products (Cho, 2010). An explanation for this being consumers experienced personal connections to the high involvement products, they often linked the product to memories or characteristics of significant others (Celsi & Olsen, 1988). The results suggested male participants contemplated longer and considered more factors towards the endorser and their cultural meanings when deciding whether they would purchase the high involvement watches (Rolex, Rolex, Nubeo, and Audemars Piaget). Males were more influenced by athlete endorsers when a high involvement product was being advertised.

The second research question assessed whether positive reputation impacted male consumer purchase intention for high or low involvement products. The results of the analysis suggested variation in purchase intention as the male participants were not affected by positive reputation for low involvement products but were affected for high involvement products. Advertisers used celebrity and athlete endorsers to transfer their positive image to the product which established a positive relationship between the consumer and product (White et al., 2009). The positive reputation of athletes was
accepted and valued by consumers as they provided credibility to the product and endorsement message, which increased the likelihood of potential purchase intention (Peetz et al., 2004; Lafferty & Goldsmith, 1998; Downey, 2007). Those athletes with a positive reputation might be more supported by male consumers because of positive transference (White et al., 2009).

The positive and negative reputations of athletes might not have affected male opinions of low involvement products because low involvement products were not aligned with cognitive decisions (Shirin & Kambiz, 2011). When male consumers purchased low involvement products there was minimal thought in comparison between brands or even their endorsement ties (Suh & Yi, 2006).

The findings suggested males were more impacted by reputation of athlete endorsers for high involvement products, situations where large amounts of information were collected before purchase. Low involvement products were possibly less affected by reputation because male consumers might not consider the athlete endorser and their distorted bundles of meaning when buying the product. Based on reputation and purchase intention it could be inferred Phil Mickleson was the best athlete endorser for high involvement products. Golf was an expensive sport and was often tied to large endorsements with reputable and valuable brands, such as Rolex. The male participants might have created a stronger fit between the high involvement Rolex and the grandeur of golf (Pringle & Binet, 2005). LeBron James was considered the most effective endorser for the reputation and purchase intention partnership with low involvement products (Sprite). In both the high and low involvement categories, those athletes with positive
reputations were identified as having more potential for purchase intention, which suggested athletes with a positive reputation had more influence on purchase decisions.

Research question three addressed the extent to which negative reputation influenced male consumer’s attitude toward a high or low involvement product. The findings suggested variation in reputation did not predictably influence consumer attitude toward the high or low involvement products. Negative reputation was more detrimental to consumer attitude than positive reputation (Nuyens, 2011), which explained why Kobe (negative reputation) produced a low consumer attitude toward the endorsed product. When consumers were exposed to negative information regarding a celebrity or athlete they transferred negative contextual feelings to the product’s future (Nuyens, 2011). However, disparity occurred with Woods as he produced a high attitude toward the product while maintaining a low reputation. Reasoning could be based on Tiger’s likeability factor. While Tiger did have a negative reputation consumers still pulled for him to make a spectacular return. Endorsers impacted consumer attitude towards brands through their perception of the athlete (Downey, 2007), the more likeable the athlete the more effective they became in influencing consumer attitude (Till & Shimp, 1998). Woods might have preserved connections to previous bundles of meaning with male consumers, as participants continued to transfer their once favorable experiences with the sports star to future events.

The final research question assessed the extent to which positive reputation influenced male consumer’s attitude toward high or low involvement products. The data suggested positive reputation did not have a conventional influence on attitude toward high or low involvement products. The positive reputation athletes demonstrated
variation between high and low involvement products. Phil’s high attitude result for high involvement products was supported by previous research stating positive association through advertising could lead to more favorable consumer attitudes (Till & Shimp, 1998). Mickelson’s constant positive exposure in the media produced a positive reputation to male viewers and a positive attitude toward the high involvement product, Rolex. The data showed LeBron produced a higher attitude for low involvement products, but Mickelson listed the lowest attitude results for the category. This discrepancy could be explained by the age of the sample. Callaway (Mickelson) might attract an older population of male consumers while Sprite (James) might appeal to a younger male generation; the more favorable feelings of Sprite versus Callaway might have influenced attitude rather than the actual athlete endorser and their transference of positive/negative emotions.

Reputation of the endorser was not an accurate predictor of male consumer attitude toward high or low involvement products. The data proposed there was not a clear division between whether high or low involvement products were more affected by consumer attitude. Both showed equal levels of variation. The existing value and status of the brand might not have been affected by the reputation of the athlete, ensuring brand power of a company possibly outweighed reputational risks. Based on the results, Tiger would be the most effective endorser for producing favorable attitudes towards high and low involvement products, which suggested his likeability with consumers still remained even after he was perceived as having a bad reputation. When considering what endorser to use for boosting consumer attitude of a product, those with lower reputations could equally be as successful as those with higher reputations.
Conclusion

The findings demonstrated there was a larger effect on male consumer purchase intention in relation to reputation rather reputation in relation to consumer attitude toward a product. The interaction between reputation and purchase intention displayed more negative consequences toward the product. According to the study, purchase intention was shifted downward when male consumers related reputation to high involvement products. Results highlighted those athletes with a positive reputation were more viable endorsers to use for high involvement products.

In general, the study concluded reputation was not an accurate predictor of male consumer attitude toward a product. Reputation and attitude pairings produced great variation and unpredictable results when analyzing male participant’s decisions. Those endorsers with a negative reputation proved equally if not more effective in regards to creating positive attitudes of the high and low involvement products than positive reputation athletes. Based on the findings it could be inferred that brand equity played a significant role in male consumer attitude values rather than the actual reputation of the athlete endorser. Brand equity emphasized the personal meaning consumers developed for a brand (Crosno, Freling, & Skinner, 2009, p. 95). Male consumers formed their own relationships with a product through previous use, interaction, or former positive feelings accumulated (Brand Equity, n.d.), this suggested the scandal of an athlete endorser might not have changed the perceptions of male consumer’s attitude toward a brand or product.

Within this study; Rolex, Nuebo, Audemars Piaget, Nike, Callaway, Sprite, and Vitamin Water, were used to assess whether reputation factored into attitude and purchase intention. The results suggested Rolex, which was endorsed by a positive and...
negative reputation athlete, might have performed more strongly than Nuebo (Kobe) and Audemars Paget (LeBron) because Rolex was categorized as having stronger brand equity. Branded products possessed different relationships and brand constructions with different male consumers, the power established for certain brands in this study might have outweighed their counterpart and caused attitude to be higher based on brand equity rather than displaying effects from reputation.

This research suggested athlete endorsements could be an effective form of advertising when trying to alter the purchase decisions of male shoppers for high involvement products. Low involvement products were less affected by endorsers as consumers spent minimal effort choosing a product. Athletes of positive or negative reputation categorizations could successfully endorse low involvement products because of the influence of brand equity. Marketers for high involvement product companies should cautiously evaluate the reputation of endorsers for campaigns, as a negative change in reputation was proven to alter the purchase decisions of shoppers and could reduced company profits.

Limitations of the Study

The sample group created limitations for this study. The sample consisted of primarily one ethnic background and did not provide an accurate makeup of the general population. The static sample did not accurately display whether diverse ethnic groups felt differently towards the endorsers, products, or purchase intention decisions. Secondly, the sample size was small.

Another aspect of the demographics that created a limitation was the age range. While this study was specifically looking at the new male shopper’s category (18-35), the
majority of respondents were college students in their younger twenties. Two of the athletes used in the study were PGA athletes, Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson; golf stereotypically attracted an older male categorization. An older age group focus might have produced different or higher results when examining the golf professionals.

A final limitation was the collection method. The survey length for this study was long and could have been exited before the participant had finished. By shortening the survey to a smaller focus, two athletes instead of four, the survey would have been reduced and the final questions could have had a smaller probability of being skipped.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Additional future research on athlete endorsers would provide endless benefits to any company exploring the marketing strategy. Being able to understand the opinions of various target markets in regards to athlete endorsers would allow businesses to assess whether this strategy proves profitable. With high levels of media publication, athletes and celebrities are features on prime time shows whether or not the events are positive, businesses that have hired athletes, or are considering hiring athletes, need to understand the factors involved with consumer opinion.

Future research should be conducted with a larger and more diverse sample size to explore the differences in favorability towards each athlete. More reliable data might be possible by comparing men and women. By not including a female perspective the study was able to gain more information on male consumer shopping habits; however, females remain a dominating factor in shopping decisions.

Further exploration of athlete endorsers and scandals should include female athletes. Female athletes have gained popularity and endorsement space, their imperfect
actions could also be addressed to analyze whether their decline in reputation would 
produce the same feelings from male consumers.

Several scandal athletes considered for this study have recently regained 
endorsements. Future research should include data on why consumers gave those 
athletes another chance, and whether companies should drop or keep those endorsers 
during media explosions of their wrongdoings. Consumers cheer for athletes to make a 
comeback after hitting what seems rock bottom, valuable information could be learned by 
exploring the nature of forgiveness.
Appendices
APPENDIX A

Survey

Consumer Participant Consent Letter

May, 2012

Dear Participant:

You are being invited to take part in a research study that will seek to examine consumer perceptions of athlete endorsers involved in scandals and their relationship to favorability of intent to buy with high or low involved products.

You are being invited to participate in this research study because you are considered to be a consumer located in the University of Kentucky community. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 200 students within the University of Kentucky to participate in this online study.

The person in charge of this study is Dr. Vanessa Jackson of the University of Kentucky. By doing this study, we hope to learn more about your understanding about the endorser effectiveness topic. Based on a pretest taken by graduate students in the Merchandising, Apparel & Textiles Department, this one time survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes, to the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life.

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering. If you take part in the study, you will receive 10 bonus points in your enrolled class. If you do not want to participate in the study, you can still earn 10 bonus points by completing an extra Discussion Board assignment, which is the equivalent of the 10 bonus points. Students will be able to skip questions within the survey without having to quit the entire survey, but those who leave the study early will not receive the 10 bonus points. In order for the extra credit points to be provided, students will have to list their name in the comment box after the survey is completed.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write up the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about this combined information. You will not be identified in these written materials. Only the researchers and a qualified transcriber will have access to the data of the survey results.

If you take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

Please be aware, while we make every effort to safeguard your data once received from the online survey/data gathering company, given the nature of online surveys, as with anything
involving the Internet, we can never guarantee the confidentiality of the data while still on the survey. Data gathering company’s servers or while en route to either them or us. It is also possible the raw data collected for research purposes may be used for marketing or reporting purposes by the survey/data gathering company after the research is concluded, depending on the company’s Terms of Service and Privacy policies.

We will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show information to a court or to tell authorities if you report information about a child being abused or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Also, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky.

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, (859) 257-7776 or (859) 333-2589. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

If you agree to these terms and conditions please click Next and proceed to the survey, if you do not agree to these terms and conditions please exit the survey now.
Athlete Endorsement Survey

Division One:

Athlete 1: Endorsement 1

Tiger Woods

Born as Eldrick Tont Woods on December 30, 1975, Woods began his climb as the world’s greatest golfer from childhood. After studying at the University of Stanford, Woods shortly became the youngest and first African American man to win the U.S. Masters in 1997. After his first PGA victory, Woods went on to win several additional titles; four US PGA titles, three US Open wins, three Open Championships wins, three US Masters wins, PGA Tour Championship, Buick Invitational, held the number one ranking in golf, and was voted PGA Tour Player of the Year for seven years, just to name a few. For a decade Woods dominated the sport of golf. On November 27, 2009 Woods was involved in a car accident outside of his Florida home, statements reported; wife Elin Nordegren broke the back window of the couple’s SUV with a golf club to get Woods out of the car after hitting a fire hydrant. Media then began to publishing stories of affairs involving Woods with several mistresses, claiming this was the cause of the fight that lead to the accident. After the incident Woods remained silent while more than a dozen women came to the press releasing their text, stories, and interviews stating they all had long-term affairs with Woods while married to his wife.
We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed high involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Tiger Woods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is Tiger Woods?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Please indicate your opinion of Tiger Woods.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
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</table>

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Rolex brand.

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<th></th>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Rolex?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
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6. Please indicate your opinion of the Rolex brand.

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<tr>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Improbable</td>
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<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improbable</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improbable</td>
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<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Athlete 2: Endorsement 1

Kobe Bryant

Born August 23, 1978, Kobe Bryant began his rise to basketball greatness from childhood following in the steps of his father former NBA player Joe Bryant. Bryant first took notice from spectators in high school when leading his Philadelphia school Lower Merion High to four straight state championships. After high school Bryant jumped to the NBA and landed with the Los Angeles Lakers. In his second season with the Lakers, Bryant was voted as an NBA All-Star becoming the youngest to do so at age 19. From this point Bryant became one of the top players in the league, winning three consecutive NBA titles, and multiple years’ honors as a NBA All-Star, first team all-NBA member, and finals NBA finals MVP. In July 2003, Bryant was charged with one count of sexual assault on a 19-year old female hotel worker in Colorado after having surgery on his knee. Bryant said he was guilty of adultery but pleaded innocent the rape charge. The case was eventually dismissed and settled out of court.

We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed high involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).
1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Kobe Bryant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is Kobe Bryant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Please indicate your opinion of Kobe Bryant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Nubeo brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>Strongly Dislike</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Nubeo?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Please indicate your opinion of the Nubeo brand.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Nubeo watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improbable</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Probable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Nubeo watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Nubeo watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Athlete 1: Endorsement 2

We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed low involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Tiger Woods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is Tiger Woods?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Please indicate your opinion of Tiger Woods.

1                       2                          3                      4                  5                    6                 7
Very Negative
Unfavorable
Strongly Dislike
Neutral
Like
Favorable
Very Positive

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Nike brand.

1                       2                          3                      4                  5                    6                 7
Very Negative
Unfavorable
Strongly Dislike
Neutral
Like
Favorable
Very Positive

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Nike?

1                       2                          3                      4                  5                    6                 7
Very Negative
Unfavorable
Strongly Dislike
Neutral
Like
Favorable
Very Positive

6. Please indicate your opinion of the Nike brand.

1                       2                          3                      4                  5                    6                 7
Very Negative
Unfavorable
Strongly Dislike
Neutral
Like
Favorable
Very Positive

7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Nike shirt in the advertisement.

1                  2                    3                     4                    5                      6                   7
Improbable        Never          Unlikely          Neutral          Likely         Definitely        Probable

8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Nike shirt in the advertisement.

1                  2                    3                     4                    5                      6                   7
Improbable        Never          Unlikely          Neutral          Likely         Definitely        Probable

9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Nike shirt in the advertisement.

1                  2                    3                     4                    5                      6                   7
Improbable        Never          Unlikely          Neutral          Likely         Definitely        Probable
Athlete 2: Endorsement 2

We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed low involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Kobe Bryant?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is Kobe Bryant?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</table>
3. Please indicate your opinion of Kobe Bryant.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Vitamin Water brand.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Vitamin Water?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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</table>

6. Please indicate your opinion of the Vitamin Water brand.

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</tbody>
</table>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Vitamin Water in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Vitamin Water in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Vitamin Water in the advertisement.

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</table>
Division Two

Athlete 1: Endorsement 1

Phil Mickelson

Born Philip Alfred Mickelson June 16, 1970, Mickelson began his climb to the top of the golf world from playing the sport at a young age. At Arizona State University, Mickelson won three individual NCAA championships and became only the second collegiate golfer to earn 1st team All-American honors all four years of attendance. After college, Mickelson joined the PGA Tour and began winning many tournaments such as, Bryon Nelson Golf Classic, AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro Am, Colonial National Invitation, Buick Invitational, three US Masters wins, PGA Championship, The Tour Championship, held a top 10 ranking in golf, and was named one of golf’s highest paid athletes, to name a few. In 2005, Mickelson and wife Amy launched the ExxonMobil Teachers Academy, taking 600 third-through-fifth grade teachers each summer through a five day course designed to provide teachers with knowledge and skills necessary to motivate students in pursuing careers in math and science. Mickelson is involved in several other charities, such as Birdies for the Brave and Special Operations Warrior Foundation, both supporting the awareness and support of our troops and their families.
We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed high involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Phil Mickelson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is Phil Mickelson?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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</table>

3. Please indicate your opinion of Phil Mickelson.

<table>
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<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Rolex brand.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Rolex?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>

6. Please indicate your opinion of the Rolex brand.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>Definitely</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Rolex watch in the advertisement.

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</tbody>
</table>
LeBron James:

Born December 30, 1984, LeBron James quickly showed how great a basketball player he was through early experiences on the court. In high school, James lead his team, St. Vincent-St. Mary High to two state championships, selected as Gatorade’s Player of the Year, and was also chosen for the USA Today All-USA First Team, the first sophomore ever selected for this award. James left high school and was selected as the first player in the 2003 NBA draft, joining the Cleveland Cavaliers, where James became the first Cavalier member and youngest NBA player to win the NBA Rookie of the Year award. James has been named to several NBA All-Star teams and was the youngest player to ever score 50 points in a game. James is also involved in several charities such as, the LeBron James Family Foundation, which host events like the State Farm “King for Kids” bike-a-thon, the Boys and Girls Club of America and Children’s Defense Fund. James host several events a year raising thousands of dollars for children and families in need.

We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed high involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).
1. Please indicate the extent to which you like LeBron James.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. In your opinion, how favorable is LeBron James?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</table>

3. Please indicate your opinion of LeBron James.

<table>
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</table>

4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Audemars Piguet brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Audemars Piguet?

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<thead>
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6. Please indicate your opinion of the Audemars Piguet brand.

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</table>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Audemars Piguet watch in the advertisement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Audemars Piguet watch in the advertisement.

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9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Audemars Piguet watch in the advertisement.

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We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed low involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

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<tr>
<td>1. Please indicate the extent to which you like Phil Mickelson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Negative</td>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. In your opinion, how favorable is Phil Mickelson?</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Please indicate your opinion of Phil Mickelson.</td>
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<td>Like</td>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>Very Positive</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Callaway brand.

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<td>Very Positive</td>
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</table>

5. In your opinion, how favorable is Callaway?

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</table>

6. Please indicate your opinion of the Callaway brand.

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<td>Very Positive</td>
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</table>

7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Callaway shirt in the advertisement.

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</tbody>
</table>

8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Callaway shirt in the advertisement.

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9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Callaway shirt in the advertisement.

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We would like to learn how you feel or think about the endorsed low involvement product based on the message that you just saw. Please indicate the number that best represents the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Circle your answer).

1. Please indicate the extent to which you like LeBron James.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Very Negative Unfavorable Strongly Dislike Neutral Like Favorable Very Positive

2. In your opinion, how favorable is LeBron James?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Very Negative Unfavorable Strongly Dislike Neutral Like Favorable Very Positive

3. Please indicate your opinion of LeBron James.

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7
   Very Negative Unfavorable Strongly Dislike Neutral Like Favorable Very Positive
### 4. Please indicate the extent to which you like the Sprite brand.

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<td>Very</td>
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<td>Negative</td>
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<td>Positive</td>
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### 5. In your opinion, how favorable is Sprite?

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### 6. Please indicate your opinion of the Sprite brand.

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### 7. Please indicate the extent to which you would consider purchasing the Sprite drink in the advertisement.

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### 8. Please choose the response that best reflects the probability that you would purchase the Sprite drink in the advertisement.

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### 9. Please choose the response that best reflects the likelihood of your purchasing the Sprite drink in the advertisement.

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Demographic Items

The survey is almost complete. We would like to know a little bit more about who you are by having you answer some basic demographic questions.

Please select the response that best describes you.

1. Are you Male or Female?
   - Male ○
   - Female ○

2. What is your age? ________

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Please circle.
   - Less than high school
   - High School/GED
   - Some College
   - 2-year college degree (Associate’s)
   - 4-year college degree (Bachelor’s)
   - Master’s degree
   - Doctorate

4. What is your annual household income? ___________

5. What is your ethnicity? Please circle.
   - White, non-Hispanic
   - African American
   - Hispanic
   - Asian-Pacific Islander
   - Native American

Thank you for your time and participation!!
APPENDIX B

IRB Letter

[Image of IRB Letter from University of Kentucky]

The Effect of Negative Information of Celebrity Athletes and Product Involvement on Shopper’s Purchase Intentions

Approval is effective from April 18, 2012 until April 17, 2013 and extends to any consent/assent form, cover letter, and/or phone script. If applicable, attach the IRB approved consent/assent document(s) to be used when enrolling subjects. [Note: Subjects can only be enrolled using consent/assent forms which have a valid “IRB Approval” stamp unless special waiver has been obtained from the IRB.] Prior to the end of this period, you will be sent a Continued Review Report Form which must be completed and returned to the Office of Research Integrity so that the protocol can be reviewed and approved for the next period.

In implementing the research activities, you are responsible for complying with IRB decisions, conditions, and requirements. The research procedures should be implemented as approved in the IRB protocol. It is the principal investigator’s responsibility to ensure all changes planned for the research are submitted for review and approval by the IRB prior to implementation. Protocol changes made without prior IRB approval to eliminate apparent hazards to the subject(s) should be reported in writing immediately to the IRB. Furthermore, discontinuing a study or completion of a study is considered a change in the protocol’s status and therefore the IRB should be promptly notified in writing.

For information describing investigator responsibilities after obtaining IRB approval, download and read the document “PI Guidance to Responsibilities, Qualifications, Records and Documentation of Human Subjects Research” from the Office of Research Integrity’s Guidance and Policy Documents web page [http://www.research.uky.edu/ori/human/guidance.html#PIorg]. Additional information regarding IRB review, federal regulations, and institutional policies may be found through ORI’s web site [http://www.research.uky.edu/ori]. If you have questions, need additional information, or would like a paper copy of the above-mentioned document, contact the Office of Research Integrity at (859) 257-9428.

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson

An Equal Opportunity University
References


VITA

Mary Adelaide Graham was born January 7, 1988 in Lexington, Kentucky. She received a Bachelor of Science in Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles in 2010 from the University of Kentucky. In spring of 2011, Mary returned to Graduate School at the University of Kentucky where she was awarded both a Teaching Assistantship and Research Assistantship within the Merchandising, Apparel and Textiles Department. Mary worked primarily as a Teaching Assistant for E-tailing and International Retailing courses and investigated Ghanaian fashion design and culture in comparison to Western aesthetics as a Research Assistant.