





## Brand Equity in Sports Product Advertisements and Recommending to Consumers

Mohammad Saeid Kiani<sup>1\*</sup> , Leila Nazari<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> PhD Student, Department of Sports Management, Kermanshah Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> PhD Student, Department of Sports Management, Kurdistan University, Sanandaj, Iran.

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research aimed to study brand equity in product advertisements and its recommendation to other consumers.

**Methodology:** The statistical population of the research consists of all physical education students of Kermanshah province who were consumers of sports goods. Four hundred people were selected by random sampling, and the data were analyzed by Pearson correlation and structural equation modeling.

**Findings:** The results showed a direct and significant relationship between the attitude towards advertisements with brand equity and the purchase recommendation. Also, brand equity positively and directly correlates with the purchase recommendation. Considering the importance of brand value and purchase recommendation, commercial organizations can use the strategy of endorsement by famous athletes. In this way, better conveying the concepts in advertising messages can be more successful in attracting customers.

**Originality:** In this research, the researcher has investigated the critical challenges companies face to remain in today's competitive and turbulent world and create and maintain a reliable brand name. We have found that the effect of advertising to reach and maintain this competitive advantage is significant.

### Keywords

Brand Equity  
Competitive Advantage  
Endorsement  
Sports Management  
Word-of-Mouth

### Article type

Original article

**Received:** 2022/09/05

**Accepted:** 2022/11/26

### How to cite this article:

Kiani, M. S., & Nazari, L. (2022). Investigating Brand Equity in Sports Product Advertisements and Recommending it to Consumers. *Sports Business Journal*, 2(2), 169-181. <https://doi.org/10.22051/sbj.2022.41652.1050>



## 1. Introduction

In today's world, the nation's brand is considered a scientific concept in marketing, which includes a wide range of sciences and academic disciplines and different organizations of a country to use branding techniques. It is considered a relatively new phenomenon. However, it is a concept that, despite the increasing global competition that countries face in domestic and foreign markets, more attention has been paid to it. Increasingly, they increase their conscious efforts to develop and improve the branding of their country. The purpose of country branding is to enhance the image and popularity of a country to gain benefits such as attracting foreign investment, developing tourism, and promoting exports. This happens when that actions are responsible and adequately communicated to others.

In a general sense, once a country can have a powerful reputation and image, that takes appropriate and significant actions for the image. It explains and interprets these actions with strength and, of course, carefully notices its feedback. Therefore, a strong and positive country brand provides a significant competitive advantage for countries to understand how it is seen by the public around the world and its achievements and failures. It is essential to how their assets, liabilities, people, and products are reflected in their brand image (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). The brand structure of the country has a multifaceted nature. The critical components of a country's brand identity, such as history, sports, region, signs, and local literature, represent the stable essence of a country (Dinnie, 2008), and sports, like its symbols/signs and visions, are a unique representative and indicator of identity. It is considered a rich source for modernizing the country's brands. In addition, smaller or developing nations and countries with limited financial resources focus on national culture, including music, film, literature, language, and sports, instead of launching expensive advertising programs. They can play an essential role in determining and embedding a country's existing image and mentality (Tie, 2003).

Due to its positive social, cultural and economic impact, the sports industry has become one of the largest industries in the world. For most countries, this industry is one the main source of economic activities is income generation, employment and international trade (Nazarian Madavani et al., 2022). Without exaggeration, sport is a full-view mirror in which nations, societies, men, and women can present and see themselves. This reflection is sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes distorted, and sometimes magnified. This mirror is a metaphor for collective vitality versus depression, security versus insecurity, pride versus humiliation, and alienation. Therefore, participation in sports can be considered a sign of a country's civilization, health, and happiness (Ramzaninejad et al., 2020). Sports are not only a tool to express the national identity or an image of the progress of a country, but in some cases, a positive reputation and reputation in sports can raise that country's position on the world stage. Some researchers also believe that the use of sports in branding the country and as a tool for positioning a country has been neglected (Rein & Shields, 2007).

As an advertising institution that can have an effective role on the opinions and purchase behavior of the audience, the author has always been the focus of the marketers of the companies. Recently, many athletes have spread their influence beyond the field of

competition and sports by participating in social and commercial activities (Bahrami et al., 2021a).

Concerning country branding, there is a fundamental belief that if a country does not actively define and identify itself, others will do so in a harmful and destructive way, mainly with the help of metaphors and legends (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002). If the brand of the country is supposed to have a comprehensive reflection and a deep connection with the whole society, social practices and phenomena related to this concept, of which sport is an important part, should be taken into consideration and its results applied (Tie, 2003). Famous personalities have valued that others cherish, and They respect them. In other words, due to having different characteristics from social norms, such as a unique lifestyle, individual attractiveness, or special skills, these people have the power to attract the attention of others to the category they enter to a high position (Mukherjee, 2009).

With the increase in the number of competitors, they no longer accept any kind of goods or services. Today's customers are looking for a product or service that best meets their needs, desires and tastes and has the right quality and price. One of the factors that can play a role in attracting more customers and using the results, and it is necessary to pay more attention to the manufacturers of sports products, is to pay attention to the environmental characteristics and the quality of the product (Bahrami et al., 2021b).

Most companies tend to use sports stars to validate their brand; Because athletes are more present in the media than other famous people, and because of their extraordinary capabilities and performance, they create a lot of attraction for customers (Doyle et al., 2014). Research shows that a positive emotional response to an advertisement has a positive and direct relationship with brand recognition and a positive attitude toward the brand and customers' purchase intentions (Khosravilagh & shahbandarzadeh, 2015). Before buying a commercial brand, the consumer selects a brand that matches his values. Therefore, the range of products and services should be such that it enables consumers to compare themselves with the symbolic value of the brand (Askariyan & Akbarzadeh, 2016). A strong brand can be considered the most asset of a business organization because it allows higher profit margins, better cooperation channels, and other benefits (Olson, 2008).

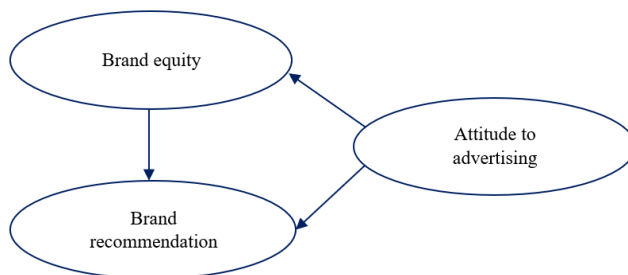
The development of technology and the increase in living standards have increased the expectations of sports products. People expect better durability, design, style, performance and comfort from sports products (Saatchian et al., 2021). The comfort of sports goods and clothing is associated with the increase in people's living standards, so research in this field has attracted both researchers and manufacturers (Ahmadi Bonabi & Javani, 2021).

Recommending a purchase to others is a type of informal communication about the characteristics of a business or a service in a society where customers convey marketing information related to products and services to other customers (Bradlow et al., 2017). Customers need information about that company and organization to choose a product or service. They continuously collect data from mass media, including television, satellite, internet, etc. Although the above sources provide valuable information to the individual, customers prefer to receive a significant part of the information they need from informal sources such as relatives, friends, acquaintances, and other people (Silverman, 2011). (Pasquali, 2022) showed that although word-of-mouth creators can be close friends,

family, or acquaintances, these people may also be strangers or acquaintances with weak relationships. Famous people are welcomed by society because of their fame, popularity, honors, and other achievements, and organizations use these people to encourage consumers to buy their products (Abdolvand & Hoseinzadeh Emam, 2014). Many researchers have also addressed advertising and authentication in the last two decades. Also, Alcañiz et al. (2010) investigated the role of famous sports personalities in advertising and introduced advertising through famous and famous athletes as a suitable tool to attract customers. The more attractive advertisement creates more hedonistic beliefs and more positive attitudes in consumers (Hosseini et al., 2009).

Kotler and Pfoertsch (2007) considered the purchase recommendation to others as one of the most desirable validation results. Also, recommending purchases to others as one of the most effective communication tools has been approved by researchers. Çifci et al. (2016) showed that recommending purchases to others reduces people's risk in purchasing, improves their understanding and mental state/trust, and increases their enthusiasm to buy products and services. Gives. Alexandris et al. (2007) concluded that people with a positive attitude toward the author recommend their products to others. Also, celebrity endorsements increase brand recall and advertising (Smilansky, 2009). Dehghan and Peymanfar (2021) showed that attitude toward advertising significantly affects brand loyalty. Also, Jalilian et al. (2013) showed that Word-of-mouth advertising is effective on the four dimensions of brand equity. Shahhoseini et al. (2011) argued that word-of-mouth advertising significantly affects purchases, brand equity, and loyalty. Loyal customers can attract new customers through word-of-mouth advertising (recommendation to others) and frequent king purchases, leading to increased brand purchases and, as a result, improving the brand's particular value (Gilaninia & Mousavian, 2009).

In addition, research has shown that 15% of advertisements aired on television for the first time use these characters. And 80% of ads with the highest recall rate in the audience's minds are related to advertisements that use famous characters (Amos et al., 2008). Recently, in Iran, we have seen advertisements through sponsors, among which we can mention the advertisement of Roxona through the famous athlete Seyed Mohammad Mousavi. Since the companies seek to understand the customers' needs in the market and seek to know about the consumer products of their customers, validated products can help to understand the valuable and clearness of the customers. Therefore, using a research approach following scientific and logical bases is necessary. To be aware of the interests, tastes, and preferences of consumers and to be able to establish a meaningful connection between the features of advertisements, selected characters, and the message conveyed to the audience because, according to the nature of ads, it is something essential and motivating for the consumer and influences his behavior. Therefore, it is considered necessary to conduct research that connects companies' needs with customers' requirements. This research, which has specifically focused on the product endorsed by Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, will answer the question of what effect there will be on the attitude of the customers regarding the endorsement of athletes on the products by seeking to increase their knowledge and recommending it to others.



**Figure 1.** Conceptual model of research.

## 2. Methodology

The statistical population of the research consists of all physical education students of Kermanshah province in all grades in two national and Azad universities. A random sampling method was used to collect data. Due to the uncertainty of the statistical population, according to Cochran's formula, the sample size was 400 people. Content validity was approved for the questionnaires given to 10 experts to provide their expert opinions on how to write the questions, the number of questions, the content of the questionnaires, and the relationship between the questions and the options. And to declare the coordination of the questions with the objectives of the research and to determine the construct validity of the questionnaires, the confirmatory factor analysis method was used, and the main factors of the questionnaires were confirmed. The following three questionnaires were used to collect data:

Liu (2002)'s advertisement attitude questionnaire consists of 30 questions on a five-point Likert scale and five dimensions of social belief, economic belief, moral belief, legal belief, and personal usefulness. Khosravilaghab and shahbandarzadeh (2015) evaluated its validity and reliability, and it was reported at an acceptable level (0.77). The present study calculated its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90.

Yoo and Donthu (2001)'s brand value questionnaire consists of 14 questions on a five-point Likert scale and four dimensions of brand awareness, loyalty, perceived quality of the brand, and the mental image of the brand. Abedi samakosh and Kalate Seyfari (2017) established the validity and reliability of this tool were evaluated and reported at an acceptable level (0.82). The present study calculated its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to (0.79). Rageh Ismail and Spinelli (2012) purchase recommendation questionnaire has five questions on a five-point Likert scale. The validity and reliability of this tool were evaluated by Soltani et al. (2016), and it was reported at an acceptable level (0.85). The present study calculated its reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to (0.80).

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used for the inferential data analysis, and structural equation modeling was used to determine the relationships between variables in the form of a causal model. SPSS 21 and Amos 22 statistical software were used to perform the above tests.

### 3. Results

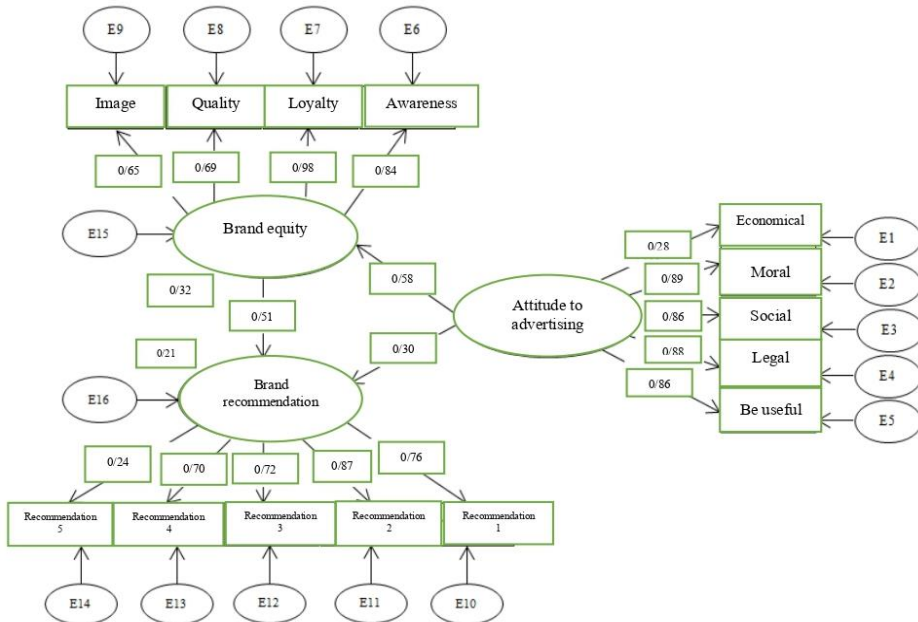
Since the main foundation of structural equation modeling is the correlation matrix, the correlation between research variables is presented in Table 1. As seen in the Table 1, the results of Pearson's correlation coefficient indicate a positive and significant relationship between all the variables of attitude towards endorsement advertisements and brand equity and purchase recommendation. Also, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between the subscales of talent management and emotional intelligence with job satisfaction.

**Table 1.** Correlation matrix of research variables.

Variables	1	2	3
1 Attitude toward authentic advertisements	1		
2 Brand equity	0.61**	1	
3 Recommend buying	0.59**	0.67**	1

.It is significant at  $p \leq 0.01$  level \*\*

The correlation only determines the degree of relationship between constructs, and to better understand the direct and indirect effects as well as the effect of the mediating variable among constructs, the structural equation model was used.



**Figure 2.** Structural equation model.

After running the model Figure 2, the most essential model fit indicators are reported in Table 2. Due to the general and general lack of agreement among structural equation modeling experts on the best estimation fit indices, in the present study, among the



parsimonious fit indices, the relative chi-square index (CMIN/DF) and the root mean square approximation index (RMSEA) were used. And the absolute fit index (GFI) and among the comparative fit indices, the comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the normalized fit index (NFI) were used, which were suggested by Meyers et al. (2012). Is. Non-significant chi-square ( $X^2$ ) with P more significant than (0.05), CFI, GFI, TLI, and NFI greater than (0.90), indicating good model fit and 0.80 to 0.89 indicating appropriate fit. It is a model. Also, RMSEA smaller than (0.08) and relative chi-square ( $X^2/DF$ ) smaller than 3 show a good fit of the model (Meyers et al., 2012). After running the model with Amos 22 software, Table 2 shows the most critical fit indices of the model. CFI, TLI, GFI, and NFI indices are more significant than (0.90), indicating good model fit, and (0.80 to 0.89), indicating appropriate model fit.

**Table 2.** Standard coefficients of the effect of attitude towards authentic advertisements and brand equity on purchase recommendation.

CMIN/DF	RMSEA	GFI	TLI	NFI	CFI
2.01	0.02	0.89	0.88	0.90	0.91

According to the above table, the model is in good condition regarding explanation and fitting, and the indicators indicate the model's suitability with the observed data. The critical values reported in the Table 3 show that all three paths have a significant effect ( $\geq 1.96$ ). The structural equation modeling analysis showed that the attitude towards endorsement ads has a direct and consequential impact on brand equity and purchase recommendation. Also, a significant effect was observed between brand equity and buying advice.

**Table 3.** Standard coefficients and critical values related to all paths.

Critical value	The standard deviation	Standard coefficient	Routes		
10.96	0.05	0.58	Brand equity	←	Attitude toward authentic advertisements
2.79	0.11	0.3	Recommend buying	←	Attitude toward authentic advertisements
7.48	0.15	1.12	Recommend buying	←	Brand equity

In this part, first, the direct effects, then the indirect effects, and finally, the total results are discussed. According to the Table 4, it can be stated that the attitude towards advertising is a validating variable that has a significant effect directly on brand equity and purchase recommendation and indirectly on purchase recommendation. Considering the direction of the path coefficient of these variables, it can be said that these effects are increasing. Also, the brand equity variable directly and significantly affects the buying recommendation. Finally, the results listed in the total effects column showed that the attitude towards the sponsor's advertisements had the most significant effect on the brand value. As can be seen in the research model, respectively, 32% of the variance of the brand equity variable can be explained by the variable of attitude towards the endorser's advertisements. Also, 21% of the variance of the purchase recommendation variable can be explained by the variables of attitude towards the endorser's advertisements and brand equity.

**Table 4.** Direct, indirect, and total effect in the research model.

The coefficient of determination	Effect of variables			Variables		Variables
	Total	Indirect	Direct			
0/32	0.69	---	0.69	Brand equity	<-	Attitude toward authentic advertisements
0/21	0.55	0.17	0.37	Purchase recommendation	<-	Attitude toward authentic advertisements
	0.54	---	0.54	Purchase recommendation	<-	Brand equity Brand equity

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

Advertising is an essential communication tool to achieve important goals of organizations, such as branding and increasing sales of a particular product (Pyun & James, 2011). The expansion of competitive markets and the emergence of new marketing and advertising approaches have exposed consumers to various options and offers. Adopting creative methods and creating exciting and motivating images is an indispensable policy for managers and marketers. From this point of view, organizations turning to famous people to participate in advertising programs requires market knowledge and knowledge of consumer preferences and behavior (Abdolvand & Hoseinzadeh Emam, 2014). Therefore, to be successful in this field, companies should use different methods compared to their competitors to be more successful in competing with others, which is one of the effective methods of using validation. Based on this, the current research investigates the attitude toward authentic advertisements and the brand's unique value by recommending the purchase to others. For this purpose, Seyyed Mohammad Mousavi's character was explored in Roxona product advertisements. The results of the statistical analysis showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the attitude toward authentic advertisements and the unique value of the brand. This result is consistent with the findings of Mahmoudi et al. (2017), who stated in their research that when a brand name is associated with the name of a prominent person, a positive attitude towards the brand and a distinguished personality is created for it. Also, this result is consistent with the findings of Kim et al. (2014). It seems that in the highly competitive conditions of the current markets, advertisements are continuously exposed to the eyes of the audience through television, radio, newspaper, internet, billboards, and other media. They make them towards the desired goods and services, gaining a suitable position in the consumer's mind so that the consumer is loyal to the company, which is very important. One factor that effectively reaches such a position in the customer's mind is the endorsement of athletes. Since the fans or audience of the endorsed athlete has a positive view of him, it transfers positive concepts of performance and personality from the endorser to the product. It causes their favorable attitude toward advertisements; Therefore, it seems logical that they have more value than authentication products. Therefore, the audience's acceptance of the expertise and credibility of the authorized athlete can increase their doubts and suspicions about the advertisement and its unique value.

Perhaps in recent years, many companies have turned to the endorsement of athletes in order not to fall behind their competitors. In general, a validator can create a more practical attitude in customers; Because the people of the society welcome famous people



due to their fame, popularity, honors, and other achievements, organizations can improve the exceptional value of the brand by improving the attitude of customers. When the audience chooses a specific brand under the influence of the author's advertisement, he has acquired a positive attitude towards that advertisement. So, his perception of the value and quality of the company's products affects the brand. Therefore, company managers are advised to use sports endorsements to increase the value and credibility of their brand and, in this way, improve people's attitudes toward their advertisements. A positive and significant relationship exists between the attitude toward authentic advertisements and buying recommendations to others. This result is consistent with the findings of Brenda et al. (2013), Kotler and Pfoertsch (2007) Pitts and Stotlar (2013), Alexandris et al. (2007), and Çifci et al. (2016). Endorsement of the product by a famous person makes customers associate with the famous person before buying it. Customers believe that famous people share essential values with them and want to be like them (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006).

Finally, the research findings showed a positive and significant relationship between brand equity and buying recommendations to others. This result is consistent with the findings of (Jalilian et al., 2013) and (Kim et al., 2014). Today, the focus of new marketing thought. Instead of looking for customers for manufactured products, the practice is to provide satisfaction and create value for the customer so that they are attracted to the manufactured product or the service that can be supplied (Raisifar et al., 2013). In the highly competitive conditions of the current markets, it is imperative to get the proper position in the consumer's mind so that the consumer is loyal to the company. On the other hand, there is an intense psychological relationship between the fans and the sports star. Because once he approves the product, it can effectively convince fans to buy the desired product (Keshtkar Rajabi, 2016). Advertising, as one of the essential communication tools in marketing activities, plays an indispensable role in creating knowledge and awareness among customers. When customers' understanding of a particular brand increase, they will have a better value for that brand. The specific value of the brand is due to the high confidence that customers have in the brand and its competitors. Companies can strengthen the brand's unique value by increasing the quality and variety of products and gaining consumers' trust and confidence. This confidence appears in the form of a positive attitude towards the brand and its recommendation to others for the brand. As a result, when a positive advertising tool is used, it causes a deep value and a positive attitude of customers toward the product. As a result, they recommend using that organization's goods and services for their relatives.

One of the critical challenges facing companies to survive in today's competitive and turbulent world is to create and maintain a reliable brand name. Meanwhile, the effect of advertising in reaching and maintaining this position can be significant. Advertising is a bridge between companies and consumers. When a brand uses a famous person and strengthens its relationship with its customers through this powerful communication tool, it can differentiate itself from other products or services in the market. The authorized person expresses the company's message differently and distinctively, creating a strong and positive attitude and exceptional value towards the brand, which ultimately leads to an increase in the recommendation to buy among customers. Therefore, in line with the research, by better understanding the buying behavior of customers and knowing the way of purchasing current

and potential customers and the factors affecting their attitude, it is possible to provide better services to maintain and satisfy them and provide continuous loyalty. Therefore, it is suggested that the companies provide the necessary conditions to benefit as much as possible from the benefits of certification to attract more customers to buy their products and increase their positive and practical attitude towards their products. And in this way, promote the unique value of the brand and recommend the brand to others.

### Disclosure statement and funding

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest. The present study received no financial support from any organization or institution.

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# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش

آدرس نشریه: <https://sbj.alzahra.ac.ir/>

تابستان و پاییز ۱۴۰۱، دوره ۲، شماره ۲، ص ۱۶۹-۱۸۱

شناسه: 10.22051/SBJ.2022.41652.1050



## ارزش ویژه برند در تبلیغات محصولات ورزشی و توصیه آن به مصرف کنندگان

محمد سعید کیانی<sup>۱\*</sup>، لیلا نظری<sup>۲</sup>

<sup>۱</sup> دانشجوی دکتری گروه مدیریت ورزشی، واحد کرمانشاه، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، کرمانشاه، ایران.

<sup>۲</sup> دانشجوی دکتری، مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه کردستان، سنندج، کردستان، ایران.

### کلیدواژه

ارزش ویژه برند  
بازاریابی دهان به دهان  
صحه گذاری  
مزیت رقابتی  
مدیریت ورزشی

### نوع مقاله:

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف از پژوهش حاضر مطالعه نقش ارزش ویژه برند در تبلیغات محصولات ورزشی و توصیه آن به مصرف کنندگان دیگر بود.

**روش:** جامعه آماری پژوهش شامل تمامی دانشجویان تربیت بدنی استان کرمانشاه که از مصرف کنندگان کالاهای ورزشی بوده‌اند تشکیل شده که از این میان به صورت نمونه گیری تصادفی ۴۰۰ نفر انتخاب شدند. داده‌ها با آزمون‌های آماری همبستگی پیرسون و مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری تحلیل شدند.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد بین نگرش به تبلیغات با ارزش ویژه برند و توصیه خرید ارتباط مستقیم و معناداری وجود دارد. هم‌چنین ارزش ویژه برند ارتباط مثبت و مستقیمی بر توصیه خرید دارد. با توجه به اهمیت ارزش ویژه برند و توصیه خرید، سازمان‌های تجاری می‌توانند از استراتژی صحه گذاری ورزشکاران مشهور استفاده کنند و از این طریق با انتقال بهتر مفاهیم پیام‌های تبلیغاتی، در جذب مشتریان، موفق‌تر عمل کنند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** محقق در این پژوهش به بررسی چالش‌های مهم پیش روی شرکت‌ها به منظور باقی ماندن در جهان رقابتی و پرتلاطم امروز و ایجاد، حفظ یک نام تجاری معتبر است پرداخته و دریافت که در این میان تأثیر تبلیغات در رسیدن و حفظ این مزیت رقابتی می‌تواند قابل توجه باشد.

**تاریخ دریافت:** ۱۴۰۱/۰۶/۱۴

**تاریخ پذیرش:** ۱۴۰۱/۰۹/۰۵

تماس با نویسنده مسئول: محمد سعید کیانی [mohammadsaeidkiani@gmail.com](mailto:mohammadsaeidkiani@gmail.com)