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Consumer Behavior & Loyalty Toward Endorsement Livestrong and the Lance Armstrong Scandal: An Analysis of Consumer Behavior & Loyalty

Abstract

Celebrity-athlete endorsement is a popular and growing resource for current marketing strategies among many corporations. In this respect, there are various questions regarding the worth of celebrity-athletes as a means of marketing and generating consumer loyalty. Corporations and brands must take into account the possible consequences that can be associated with these individuals, specifically when they fall under scandal that leads to a misrepresentation of the corporation or brand that they endorse. In addition, they must consider how these associations affect consumer behavior and loyalty intentions toward their brand or products. This paper will address the following question: When an endorsed celebrity-athlete falls under scandal resulting in negative publicity, how is there an impact on consumer behavior and loyalty toward the corporation or brand that was represented? This question will target the cheating scandal of Lance Armstrong in the sport of cycling and his admittance. This pertains to his prior endorsement of the Livestrong Foundation and brand. From the existent literature that has been examined, it has been found that previous relationships with the brand and its emotional connection with consumers could give reasoning for how Livestrong has withstood this incident. It is expected that this research will reveal the conclusion that Livestrong and other corporations or brands that have created strong ties with its consumer base, have the ability to retain equity and popularity within the market under negative celebrity-athlete associations.

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Celebrity-athlete endorsement is a popular and growing resource for current marketing strategies among many corporations. In this respect, there are various questions regarding the worth of celebrity-athletes as a means of marketing and generating consumer loyalty. Corporations and brands must take into account the possible consequences that can be associated with these individuals, specifically when they fall under scandal that leads to a misrepresentation of the corporation or brand that they endorse. In addition, they must consider how these associations affect consumer behavior and loyalty intentions toward their brand or products. This paper will address the following question: When an endorsed celebrity-athlete falls under scandal resulting in negative publicity, how is there an impact on consumer behavior and loyalty toward the corporation or brand that was represented? This question will target the cheating scandal of Lance Armstrong in the sport of cycling and his admittance. This pertains to his prior endorsement of the Livestrong Foundation and brand. From the existent literature that has been examined, it has been found that previous relationships with the brand and its emotional connection with consumers could give reasoning for how Livestrong has withstood this incident. It is expected that this research will reveal the conclusion that Livestrong and other corporations or brands that have created strong ties with its consumer base, have the ability to retain equity and popularity within the market under negative celebrity-athlete associations.

Consumer Behavior & Loyalty Toward Endorsement

Livestrong and the Lance Armstrong Scandal:

An Analysis of Consumer Behavior & Loyalty

Introduction

Consumer behavior and loyalty intentions have been examined and researched thoroughly in their own context in terms of brand equity (Folkes, 1988; Johnson, Herrmann, & Huber, 2006; Netemeyer, Krishnan, Pullig, Wang, Yagci, Dean, Ricks, & Wirth, 2004). In addition, there has been work conducted to look at and discuss the endorsement of corporations and brands (Berens, Van Riel, & Van Bruggen, 2005; Brown, & Dacin, 1997). In light of these past studies, there has not been as much in depth analysis of consumer behavior and loyalty in regards to the connection between corporate and brand endorsement, when such fall under crisis and receive negative publicity (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant, & Unnava, 2000; Pullig, Netemeyer, & Biswas, 2006). These overlying concepts will be evaluated in order to develop a clear understanding of the relationship, which appears to exist. The goal of this research study is to gain a greater understanding for consumer behavior and loyalty intentions, specifically when a corporation or brand is faced with negative publicity due to the endorsed individual.

This study will first be aligned by looking into reasoning for consumer behavior patterns and the factors that influence loyalty and commitment in the consumer market. In addition, past literature and studies will be evaluated to define the elements of corporate identity, as well as their ability to create a positive image and brand equity. The concept of endorsement will be explored and meshed into the previous topics of discussion in order to comprehend the affects that it has on both consumer behavior and corporate identity. This will then lead to the influence that crisis or negative publicity from an endorsed individual can have on the market, thus altering

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the viability of the corporation and or its brand. This study will incorporate an original data collection based on the occurrence of a recent scandal in the sport world, and be analyzed to help support or establish differences with previous findings of this context. The aim of this work is to advance the knowledge of this specific subject and build on earlier reports.

The overarching research question that is being addressed is: When an endorsed celebrity-athlete falls under scandal resulting in negative publicity, how is there an impact on consumer behavior and loyalty toward the corporation or brand that was represented? This question will specifically look at the confession of Lance Armstrong as a cheater in the sport of cycling, as it pertains to effects on the Livestrong Foundation and Livestrong brand. By assessing this incident, results will be gathered from a recent issue that does not have published data or answers in terms of consumer behavior and loyalty. This study will precisely relate to how people altered their views or support for the Livestrong Foundation or brand, if at all, after Armstrong admitted to breaking the rules. The significance of this research is to justify if brands are able to stand above their association with professional athletes or if they fall in times of turmoil. Precisely, the research will focus on the Livestrong brand, and the connotations that have been made with the brand since the Armstrong scandal. It is necessary to clarify that the study is relating to the connection of the brand and foundation to Armstrong, which he created and endorsed, while not focusing on the sponsorship of Livestrong by Nike. This angle will be taken since the goal of the study is to gain further understanding of the impact of negatively conceived endorsement on consumer behavior and loyalty. The Nike brand will not serve as a focal point in this research; however its presence must not be overlooked. Under these circumstances, it should be considered that Nike has a strong influence as a brand, and this could contribute to the reasoning of some of the results within the study. This research will be

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beneficial to the academic community because it will provide more insight to consumer behavior and loyalty, and if it can be easily effected. Furthermore, this recent issue has not received much attention from a research study perspective. This research also has a practical application because it can provide corporations with a deeper understanding of market response to negative publicity. This can serve as a guideline for celebrity-athlete endorsement as well, providing examples of the benefits and disadvantages that are tied to this form of marketing communication. Businesses are able to use this to their advantage in order to alter their marketing techniques and create a more positive image. Upon the completion of this research study, the answers to the developed question should be warranted.

Literature Review

Consumer Behavior/Brand Loyalty

Consumer behavior is influenced and persuaded based on a number of varying reasons. In order to understand consumer behavior and purchasing patterns, we can first look at this construct in the form of a relationship. Based on the published work of Robert Hinde in 1979, Fournier (1998) has described this conceptual foundation by stating, “For a relationship to truly exist, interdependence between partners must be evident: that is, the partners must collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship” (p. 344). In this sense, the partners mentioned on this statement include the consumer and the corporation or brand. Just as consumer behavior is a reaction to the corporation or brand, so is the corporation or brand impacted by the response of the consumer. In another assertion, provided by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), it is held that the strongest consumer and company relationships are formed due to the consumer identification with corporations that contribute to the fulfillment of crucial self-definitional needs. Moreover, this relates to identifying or categorizing one’s self beyond personal identity, to form a social

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identity through behaviors as a consumer (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Thus far, it is realized that consumer behavior and intentions rely on the relationship that exists between the market and the business. Based on this initial assessment, we can move forward to examine the factors that play a part in consumer behavior.

One of the major facets of consumer behavior lies in the concept of customer loyalty intentions. Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006) have examined the evolution of loyalty intentions through ideas such as perceived value, affective commitment, and brand equity. This loyalty of consumers derives from the attitudes that they perceive of a corporation or brand. There is no defined measurement of attitudinal loyalty, but it can be evaluated based on measures of attitude toward a brand or measures of attitude toward purchasing a brand (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). Additionally, Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2002) noted that it has been proposed more recently by researchers that attitudinal loyalty be measured by determining the consumer's propensity or inclination to be loyal. The authors found however that measures of an individual's propensity to be brand loyal and attitude towards the act of purchasing a specific brand are two separate concepts; results concluding that the attitude towards the act of purchasing a brand can help explain purchasing behavior (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). These results can be additionally supported by the findings of Foxall, Oliveira-Castro, and Schrezenmaier (2004). The evidence from their research suggests that consumers choose their range of brands based on the informational and utilitarian level of reinforcement programmed by the brands, which relate to the propensity to be brand loyal and attitude towards the act of purchasing a specific brand (Foxall et. all, 2004). A study conducted by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), evaluated purchase loyalty in addition to attitudinal loyalty, as aspects of brand loyalty through their study. The study used 107 brands as the units of observation for three

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separate surveys of consumers and brand managers, with cumulative results. The authors found that brand trust and brand affect determine purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty when the variables are controlled. Furthermore, purchase loyalty results in higher market share, and attitudinal loyalty results in a higher relative price (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Given prior findings, we can look at elements that help shape attitudes leading to consumer behavior. Perceived value plays a role in the link between attitude and behavior. Value, in relativity to the consumer, has been examined under various relations pertaining to utility (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), quality (Holbrook, 1994), values (Lai, 1995), and benefit (Monroe, 2003). Bolton and Drew (1991) developed a longitudinal model that examined the effect of service and quality as a part of perceived value. The results of the researchers' study suggested that both of these elements of perceived value pertain to customer attitudes and the purchasing decisions that consumers make (Bolton & Drew, 1991). Based off of Bolton and Drew's previous literature, Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006) described perceived value as the total consumer assessment of what is received in relation to what is given or paid for in return. Therefore, if consumers believe that they have earned something significant for costs, they will generate a stronger commitment and positive attitude for a particular corporation or brand. On the contrary, if the quality of the outputs does no resonate with the inputs, a polar effect will take place. More recently, through the work of Chang and Dibb (2012), value has been studied in connection to the elements of satisfaction and beliefs. The authors claim, "The products and services that consumers purchase are the outcomes of the consumer buying process, during which individuals assess the benefits and costs of acquiring the required products and services" (Chang & Dibb, 2012, p. 253).

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Another component to consumer behavior and purchasing decisions is affective commitment. Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006) define affective commitment as a "...more emotional factor related to the degree to which a customer identifies and is personally involved with a company and the resulting degree of trust and commitment" (p. 123). This point is extremely important considering the conducted study that will be presented. The Livestrong Foundation has established emotional and personal connections as it works to raise funds, develop research, and fight against the disease of cancer (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008). Results of Filo, Funk, and O'Brien (2008) revealed that "intellectual, social, and competency motives along with the motives of reciprocity, self-esteem, need to help others, and desire to improve the charity contribute to attraction...the charitable component influences social and competency motives and contributes to the development and attachment..." (p. 501). Again, Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos (2005) provide support of the notion of affective commitment as an emotional aspect that develops through the level of reciprocity or personal involvement that a customer has with a corporation or brand. Affective commitment, based on the definitions from prior literature, can be seen as an element that has made the Livestrong Foundation and brand renowned among the world. Understanding this piece of information can reveal a lot about the market and its response. Tied into this psychological factor is the notion of brand love. Authors, Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012), have determined that brand love can be seen as a stronger bond that falls under the subject of affective. Furthermore, they have investigated the nature of brand love and its results as it appears as a recent phenomenon (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Through a grounded theory approach, they have developed seven core elements contributing to the theory of brand love, including self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviors, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, positive overall attitude

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valence, attitude certainty and confidence, and anticipated separation distress (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Due to the previous evidence, affective commitment can be regarded as a strong influencer in determining the loyalty intentions and behavior of consumers.

Corporate Identity/Brand Equity

Further examining the literature, corporate identity and brand equity can be evaluated from a marketing perspective. Corporate identity relates to the impressions, image, and personality that are presented to the stakeholders of an organization (Schmitt & Pan, 1994). The stakeholders represent those who are affected by the corporation, or have an effect on the corporation, in part consisting of consumers. Simões, Dibb, and Fisk (2005) have gone on to conclude that corporate identity management refers to the dissemination of mission and values, consistent image implementation, and visual identity implementation. A study by Melewar, Karaosmanoglu, and Paterson (2005) consisted of in-depth interviews with 32 people from twenty different organizations in varying industries. The researchers chose to use a grounded theory approach as a part of their methodology, in order to provide deep analysis of the data and establish new theories. Concluding their study, they found that all respondents believed that corporate design, behavior, communication, and strategy are components of identity (Melewar, Karaosmanoglu, & Paterson, 2005).

Brand equity thrives on the success of corporate identity in the market. To begin, Kotler (1991) has established the definition of a brand as "...a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (p. 442). According to Keller (1993), one of the reasons for studying brand equity is to improve marketing productivity, which in return will increase consumer response and lead to stronger corporate identity. Additionally,

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brand equity can be distinguished through the marketing techniques that feature the brand (Keller, 1993). In this work, the marketing technique that is being studied is the use of celebrity-athletes as endorses of corporations and brands. Later on, previous literature and research relating to endorsement will be analyzed in this extent. In another sense, brand equity can be connected back to affective commitment, which was previously touched on. Brand equity can be perceived in this light based on the level of personal identification with a brand, as well as how applicable it is to the situation of the consumer (Keller, 2003). This provides addition support for the theory of affective commitment as a moderating factor of consumer behavior and intention.

Corporate Reputation/Credibility

Another major facet regarding the responses and behaviors of a consumer toward a company or brand relies on the ideas of corporate reputation and credibility relationships (Bromley, 2001; Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000). Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000) conducted a study by surveying 152 adult consumers who watched a fictitious ad for Mobil Oil, and rated the credibility of the ad's endorser, the credibility of the company, attitude toward the ad and brand, and purchase intentions. The research suggested that corporate credibility plays an important role in consumers' reactions to advertisements and brands, independent of the equally important role of endorser credibility (Goldsmith et al., 2000). This is significant in my research for understanding the position that Lance Armstrong played as the figure behind the Livestrong Foundation and brand. It is important to recognize that corporate credibility has its own influence apart from the endorser or spokesperson.

Another process in this relationship is to understand what consumers really care about. Page and Fearn (2005) tested the concept that corporate reputation matters to consumers by

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comparing consumer perceptions of companies to the consumer equity of brands owned by those companies through international studies of brand equity and corporate reputation. Results revealed that the elements of corporate reputation that mean the most to consumers are perceptions of fairness toward consumers and perceptions of corporate success and leadership, over public responsibility (Page & Fearn, 2005). In addition, Keh and Xie (2009) have made claims that the functions of identification, commitment, and trust that are connected with corporate reputation have a profound impact on customer behavioral intentions and their response to a company or brand. These claims branch from the work of Garbarino and Johnson (1999) who defined the varying roles of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in customer relationships as the mediators between attitudes and future intentions. Thus, this information can help explain the possibility that if a corporation still holds a strong reputation with consumers, it will be able to outlast negative associations, such as that with Lance Armstrong. This work has been challenged by that of Madrigal and Boush (2008) who looked into the importance of social responsibility. Madrigal and Boush (2008) examined the extent to which consumers are willing to reward brands for their actions and socially responsible behavior. They determined that social responsibility is a distinct personality dimension, and the willingness to respond regulates the impact of social responsibility on attitudes toward the product, advertisement, and brand (Madrigal & Boush, 2008). This has significance to the decision of the Livestrong Foundation to drop Armstrong as a sponsor in response to his scandal.

Further extending the ideals of corporate social responsibility, Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig (2004) have evaluated theory and recent research that suggests that a corporation's social responsibility and behavior can positively influence consumer attitudes toward the corporation. The results of their studies provide support for the notion that corporate social

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responsibility behavior can result in a variety of corporate benefits and increased non-profit benefits in the form of consumer donations to corporate supported non-profit organizations (Lichtenstein et al., 2004). This is a key ingredient to the analysis of the Livestrong Foundation, which is a non-profit corporation, in that it provides evidence as to how consumers respond to the behavior of a corporation, specifically in response to the Armstrong case. Continuing, a large part of social responsibility centers on the responses of a corporation to brand crises or negative endorsement. A study by Dutta and Pullig (2011) evaluated three different response strategies, which include denial, reduction of offensiveness, and corrective action; finding that there is not a single strategy that works the best in all scenarios, but the relative efficacy of responses depends on a number of factors. Specifically, this research will highlight the effectiveness of corrective action, which was sought out by the Livestrong Foundation in response to Armstrong's admittance of cheating. This response strategy can be supported by the work of Louie and Obermiller (2002) who investigated the paths that companies should take when celebrity endorsers should be blamed as the root for causing negative events and poor publicity. Through their research, it is noted that the stage of the company-endorser relationship influences the pattern of finding and the type of endorser decisions that companies should make, resulting that companies are better off dismissing existing endorsers with high blame and keeping those with low blame (Louie & Obermiller, 2002).

Endorsement

The "Use of celebrities as part of marketing communications strategy is a fairly common practice for major firms in supporting corporate or brand imagery" (Erdogan, 1999, p. 291).

Uggla (2009) explained the development and concept of endorsement as the following:

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As the market matures and brand strategies become more complex and abstract to manage, brand managers must search for more cost effective solutions for their marketing problems in every respect and dimension of brand management. In the new situation, many companies have focused on brand endorsement as a potential strategy option for the future. The reason for this is simple, the attractiveness of an endorsement strategy is that it both conserves and innovates at the same time. (p. 24)

Today, this is clearly an evident part of everyday life and a major component of the marketplace for businesses. Erdogan (1999) claimed that the effectiveness of celebrity endorsers is found to be moderated by several factors; celebrity attractiveness and credibility, product-celebrity match, message and product type, level of involvement, number of endorsements by celebrities, target receiver characteristics, and overall meanings attached to celebrities. More recently, Rindova, Pollock, and Hayward (2006) provided insight to the concept of the celebrity from both the level of the individual and the firm, arguing that high levels of public attention and the positive emotional responses that define celebrities increase the economic opportunities of a firm. Taking from the idea that celebrities increase economic opportunities, other works can be used to support this assertion. Jaiprakash (2008) conducted a study of current and relevant literature about celebrity endorsement as a part of the framework of integrated marketing communication. Through his literature survey of theoretical and empirical research, he has determined that celebrity product endorsement is a form of co-branding, and celebrity-product correspondence has a positive influence on brand image and brand equity (Jaiprakash, 2008).

Nonetheless, there is still an ethical question regarding the use of celebrities as endorsers (Miller & Laczniak, 2011). Miller and Laczniak (2011) point out that as product endorsers, celebrity athletes have the ability to influence brand attitudes and sales, yet they contain

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extensive societal implications for a corporation; suggesting that management consider the connections between their core company values, the athlete endorser, and the impact of these decisions on the brand if something negative occurs. The influence of endorsement can be further supported by the research of Hakimi, Abedniya, and Zaeim (2011). Their study collected 150 questionnaires from students from the Multimedia University of Malaysia, between the ages of 18 and 33 years old, which evaluated the match, attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, and congruence or fit between the celebrity and the brand (Hakimi et al., 2011). Conclusions revealed that these elements have a significant relationship with celebrity endorsement, which can reflect either a positive or negative image of the brand based on the perception of the endorser (Hakimi et al., 2011). This evidence suggests that celebrities are questionable means to marketing communication strategy, especially under the probability of negative publicity.

Negative celebrity publicity has a profound effect on the perceived image of endorsed products, brands, and corporations (Ohanian, 1991). Zhou and Whitla (2011) have explored consumer reactions to negative celebrity publicity through the bridging component of moral reputation. The two conducted a questionnaire that used a real life celebrity scandal from Hong Kong, with participants consisting of 328 individuals from the region who answered the survey on a 7-point Likert scale. Results of the study displayed the significance of moral reputation in examining the connection between the attribution process and consumer reaction to celebrity endorsement when facing negative publicity. In summary, negative celebrity publicity influences the reputation of the associated brand or company (Zhou & Whitla, 2011). In another manner, Huber, Vollhardt, Matthes, and Vogel (2010) used an empirical study to examine the influence of brand misconduct on consumer-brand relationships, particularly on repurchase intention. The study consisted of a questionnaire, which drew 219 responses from participants in

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Germany, selected randomly from the telephone directory. From the analysis, conclusions suggested that the importance of the history of brand relationship quality and the influence of brand relationship quality on repurchase intention is independent from brand misconduct. Nevertheless, brand misconduct can lead to negative consequences and hurt a company's economic situation (Huber et al., 2010). Celebrities as communicators has also been recently examined in the non-profit sector by de los Salmones, Dominguez, and Herrero (2013) who developed hypotheses that were contrasted with a causal model, which tests and analyzes a system of relationships. Their study found that the celebrity's credibility depends on the fit perceived, motivational factors, celebrity image, and the general attitude towards celebrity involvement. In addition, the right celebrity can have a strong influence on attitudes toward advertisements and an indirect influence on behavior (de los Salmones et al., 2013). With this evidence, it is apparent that celebrities have a pull on consumers and their implementation can certainly result in undesirable associations with a brand or corporation.

The Livestrong Foundation & Brand in Association with Armstrong

The Livestrong Foundation, formerly known as the Lance Armstrong Foundation, helps those with cancer through their battle, focusing on education, community programs, national advocacy, and scientific and clinical research (Hoover's Company Records, 2013). The foundation was developed by pro cyclist Lance Armstrong, during his own personal fight against the disease in 1997 (Hoover's Company Records, 2013). Following the admittance of his cheating in the sport of cycling, Armstrong stepped down as chairperson of the foundation on October 17, 2012 (Goldman, 2012). In the wake of the Armstrong cheating scandal, the cancer fighting charity claims that its donations have increased 7% since August 23, 2012, when the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) announced that Armstrong would be stripped of his seven

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Tour de France titles; donations are up 15% since October, when USADA revealed major evidence displaying that Armstrong used banned drugs and blood transfusions during his career as a cyclist (Schrotenboer, 2012).

The effects of the scandal on the Livestrong Foundation and brand can now be analyzed to determine the impact of association with Armstrong. Dawar and Lei (2009) developed a framework for the study of brand crises and an understanding of the impact of brand crises on consumer behavior. Two experiments were conducted by the researchers to determine that the effect of a brand crisis depends on whether the crisis is relevant to the brand's core propositions and familiarity, and that product-harm crisis depends on the level of association hierarchy at which the crisis occurs as well (Dawar & Lei, 2009). In this respect, it can be interpreted that since the nature of the scandal involved cheating in cycling, and the core ideals of the Livestrong Foundation are set on the battle against cancer, these are two separate concepts so the crisis is not directly relevant to the brand's core propositions and familiarity. Thus, based on these findings, it is possible that the foundation and brand were not placed under the same scrutiny as Armstrong himself. In another study, Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) evaluated trust as a key element of brand equity and the relationship between brands and consumers. A quantitative method was used and data was based on a survey conducted in southeast Spain, totaling 271 surveys; findings showed that brand trust is rooted in the result of past experience with the brand and it is positively associated with brand loyalty, which helps maintain a positive relationship with brand equity (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). The previous image of Livestrong and its positive associations can serve as contributors to the possible continued approval and support of the brand, allowing it to maintain its equity in the market.

Methodology

In order to approach the proposed research question, an original study has been conducted to evaluate consumer behavior and loyalty toward endorsement of the Livestrong Foundation and brand following the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal. This research has been developed to gain a further understanding of the true impression that the endorsement and negative publicity of Armstrong left on the consumer population as well as what changes, if any, have been made regarding the behaviors, intentions, and loyalty toward the Livestrong corporation. The aims of this study were to provide a stronger overall understanding of consumer behavior and loyalty amidst current issues regarding endorsement, and relationships within the found data.

Research Tradition

The research that has been conducted in this study was exploratory, as it relates to a recent incident that has not been investigated in terms of consumer response. In addition, this research is specific to an individual incident, the Lance Armstrong scandal, but the findings can also be applied to other similar occurrences since it relates to consumer behavior. The data that has been collected consists of peoples' thoughts and reactions on both a personal and consumer based level. The data coming from this study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature because it has questioned the participants' feelings toward the incident and the Livestrong brand and foundation following it. However, the design of this study and survey has generated responses in a quantitative form, and the responses were calculated through yes/no questions as well as on a Likert scale. It is believed that this layout has made the statistical analysis more effective and given the opportunity to reveal stronger relationships through the data. Due to the interest of collecting data from both feelings and behaviors of participants, it was determined that

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the research tradition that would be implemented into this study would consist of the interpretivist approach. The data that has been gathered and revealed through the research in this study relates to this tradition most significantly because it involves peoples' perceptions and emotions, along with purchasing patterns and behaviors. Gratton and Jones (2010) state, "Interpretive approaches...allow the researcher to explore and uncover explanations, rather than deduce them from measurements" (p. 28). Interpretivism contains the characteristic of describing, explaining, and investigating. Another trait of this approach is that the data needed for interpretivism usually takes much longer to get and relies on more sources since it does not contain hard numbers as data. Williams (2000) refers interpretivism to be a "moderatum generalisation," in that measurements are made based on what is expressed by the subjects and what is examined by the researcher. Furthermore, this tradition is associated with thoughts and feelings, which relate to the characteristic of subjectivity (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Kelliher (2005) discusses that subjectivity and generalizations are a part of this research tradition as data is interpreted by the researcher and associations must be made while analyzing results. In this respect, this study has been established to understand the participant's feelings and impressions that are associated with the Livestrong Foundation and brand following the Armstrong scandal. It was determined that interpretivism would provide the strongest approach for this research study in order to comprehend the emotional responses of consumer behavior.

Conceptual Framework

As a part of this research study, there are specific concepts that must be addressed. The concepts that have been measured within this study are loyalty intentions and behaviors of consumers toward Livestrong, following the negative publicity that Armstrong created. Customer loyalty is considered as the strength of the relationship between an individual's

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relative attitude and repeat purchasing. This relationship is persuaded by social norms and situational factors that lead to deeper connections (Dick & Basu, 1994). For this study, loyalty intentions and behaviors have been defined as a consumer's willingness to continue supporting the Livestrong Foundation and brand following the Armstrong scandal. Continued support relates to similar or increased spending patterns and disposable income put toward Livestrong products and the foundation. Specifically, measures have taken the form of support or non-support, levels of purchases, how these consumers feel about celebrity-athlete endorsement, and if they have an association to the concepts that the Livestrong Foundation stands by.

In addition, there are confounding and intervening variables that must be taken into account with this study. The major variable in this investigation was the association of Nike with the Livestrong Foundation and brand, which has been termed in this study as the Nike factor. For this study, the Nike factor was defined as a consumer tie with products that are represented by this brand, in this case, the Livestrong brand and its association with Nike. Nike has a strong sense of brand identity and loyalty on a global stage. The Nike factor had to be taken into account throughout this study due to its association with Armstrong and its continued representation of the Livestrong Foundation, after Nike decided to end its endorsement of Armstrong. This study was aiming to define the connection that consumers have with Livestrong as an individual brand, separate from its ties with Nike. This has been an evident challenge, as results could have possibly been skewed based on peoples' perceptions of Nike, rather than Livestrong itself. Branching off this concept, another variable that had to be taken into consideration was the concept of current consumer brand loyalty. As mentioned before, the fact that Nike sponsors Livestrong probably has an overall impact on the consumer market. In this case, it was important that this study was formatted with questions that asked participants if

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they would contribute to Livestrong through purchases or donations if its major sponsor were a different brand, such as Under Armour, Adidas, or Reebok. For example, a question that was asked in the survey included “If Livestrong was associated with another brand, such as Under Armour, Adidas, or Reebok, would you purchase Livestrong products?” This question was implemented to help justify results that are dealing with Livestrong as a single entity. This was used to help account for any preconceived notions that individuals might have held. Final variables are the facts that those who contributed to this study may not have had knowledge of the Armstrong incident, nor they may not have had a connection to the products and services that Livestrong provides. For the purpose of this study, those who were participants of this study had to be aware of the Livestrong Foundation and brand, the products and services that they provide, as well as the Lance Armstrong scandal. This variable had the possibility to skew the data that was gained and have an influence on the results that were found. Each of these variables presented has had an influence among this research and they had to be accounted for within this study.

Theoretical Framework

Theories had to be considered in order to help explain the expected results that would be revealed through this research study. One prevalent theory that had to be taken account for in this study was the emotional connection to the Livestrong Foundation and its purposes as a motivator for consumers to continue their support and loyalty, which can be known as an emotional attachment theory. Consumers can become emotionally attached to consumption objects as well as brands through a strong sense of personal connection (Thompson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Furthermore, the legitimacy of a brand and its position within the consumer market has the ability to establish an emotional bond with consumers (Fournier, 1998). Considering this

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theory, some people will continue to support the foundation and brand based on the facts that it is contributing to cancer research and a cure for the disease. This consists of emotional facets that were touched on within the literature of this study. In addition, the Livestrong brand is widely known and has established a strong name and connection with its consumers. This prior view of the brand has helped it withstand the Armstrong scandal. Another theory that had to be recognized and could explain continued loyalty is through the Nike factor, as previously defined, or what would also take the definition of brand loyalty theory. More specifically, brand loyalty derives from elements of brand trust, brand affect, and brand performance, which induce purchase loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). This strong sense of brand loyalty causes consumers to support those products through times of scandal or trouble. Although it was necessary to recognize this theory as a part of this research, it has served as a main intervening variable that comes into play concerning the actual intent of this study. Both of these theories, emotional attachment theory and brand loyalty theory, were used in order to interpret the results generated from this study.

Design

This original study has consisted of a survey questionnaire in which participants have answered questions based on their support of the Livestrong Foundation or brand, purchasing behaviors, and loyalty amidst the recent admission of cheating by Armstrong. This study has taken the form of a cross-sectional design. The cross-sectional design is popular within the social sciences and uses a cross-sectional sample from the whole population (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The characteristics associated with this design are singular data collection, no manipulation of the independent variable, and convenience, making it is easier to perform under time restrictions (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

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Procedure

The data for this study was collected through the use of an online survey. A copy of the survey that was used for the study can be found in the Appendices of this paper, labeled as Appendix A. An initial pilot test was conducted in order to ensure that the developed survey was easy to follow and that all content was correct. Following the pilot test, the survey was ready to be sent out to the sample. The survey and request for participation for this study were sent out to undergraduate students of the St. John Fisher College community through the St. John Fisher College email system. This survey was sent out by initially contacting the Sport Studies Department Chair, Dr. Todd Harrison, and gaining his approval. After receiving the consent of Dr. Harrison, the email for request for participation was sent to him. This email message can be seen in the Appendices as Appendix B. Dr. Harrison then forwarded this message along with a brief intro, which can be found in Appendix C. This made the survey available to all current undergraduate students of St. John Fisher for the fall 2013 semester. This form of data collection took a local sample in terms of participants. This allowed for a more controlled distribution of the survey, in hopes to generate a greater response from potential participants. In addition, this was much more convenient to conduct given the time restrictions within this research study. With this form of sampling, it was believe that this would allow for a greater response rate, as opposed to reaching out to local consumers. A concern with this method of data collection is that the participants were restricted to the St. John Fisher College community. In addition, the survey could be completed by individuals who may not have answered truthfully, which could have caused the data to be skewed. The benefits and reason for using this form of sampling were the convenience and ability to reach out to a larger target in a short period of time. The participants of this study should have had knowledge of the incident, and should legally have

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been considered an adult. This provided the results of individuals who were able to take part in making their own purchasing decisions with their own discretion.

The data that was collected through this research study derived from questions based upon if participants supported the foundation or brand prior to the confession, if they still support the foundation or brand, and how they previously or continue to support. The questions for this survey took a quantitative format, given the arrangement from which the data was gathered. Since the study asked for responses from individuals through online sources, this was determined to be the most probable layout in order to get people to participate in full. Through a quantitative approach, with the use of yes/no questions and Likert scale for responses, it was determined that response rates were higher. In addition, the quantitative structure led to results that were more concrete and direct. Quantitative research relies on the use of numbers as data, which are measured and used to draw conclusions on a study. This form of research generates results that are counted and analyzed using statistics (Gratton & Jones, 2010). This has provided data that could be evaluated more precisely and produce stronger trends and answers to the proposed research question.

The analysis of the gathered data in this study had to associate with the format that the data collection process followed. Since the questionnaire that was utilized for my study contained questions that resulted in quantitative responses, it was more effective to group the data into different categories. The analysis of the quantitative data has consisted of statistical tests, including independent samples t-tests, to reveal relationships and comparisons from this quantitative data. The data has been processed using axial coding in order to group results and draw conclusions based on these tests. Information was also coded into different sub categories to include the factors of support, motivation, and loyalty from the consumer perspective.

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Through the analysis of prior literature, I was able to establish these factors as prominent codes for my specific study. These codes had the ability to reveal more defined results and conclusions to the overarching question. Furthermore, the quantitative data produced in this study allowed for correlations using SPSS. The statistical tests that were implemented to analyze the provided responses were independent samples t-tests, since the data that was collected was nominal and non-parametric in nature. The use of the independent samples t-tests allowed for the revealing of the significance of the difference between the means of independent samples. In terms of this study, the independent samples included individuals who have purchased products of the Livestrong brand, and individuals who have not purchased products of the Livestrong brand. Additionally, the other independent samples included those who purchased Livestrong products after the scandal and those who have not purchased Livestrong products since the incident. This analysis showed the differences in perception and consumer behavior attitude toward the brand, given their connection or disconnection with the Livestrong brand. By dividing this study between the independent samples, it is believed that this study generated more useful results that could be connected to the theories of emotional attachment and brand loyalty. These tests were believed to produce the answers that this research was looking to solve, as well as provide further knowledge on the subject of consumer behavior and loyalty intentions regarding celebrity-athlete endorsement when coupled with scandal.

Results

Analysis

The sample that was surveyed for this study consisted of the undergraduate student population of St. John Fisher College. The number of individuals that took part in the survey totaled 326 participants. The majority of these participants fell within the age range of 18 and 22

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years, being a mixture of males and females. These participants were then divided into separate groups in order to run statistical tests to reveal the results for this study. This first divided the sample into those who have purchased products of the Livestrong brand and those who have not purchased products of the Livestrong brand. Those who have purchased products of the Livestrong were then broken down further. This divided this portion of the sample into groupings of those who have purchased Livestrong products since they became aware that Lance Armstrong was involved in cheating and those who have not purchased Livestrong products since finding out about the incident. This changed the size of the sample being used to run the second test. Based on these breakdowns, independent samples t-tests were run on the data in order to analyze the relevance of the data and what statistical significance could be present.

From the total data that was collected through this study, some of the data had to be removed. This included surveys that were not completed entirely by participants. The data was removed because if portions of the data were used in generating an analysis, this would have had the potential to skew results and it would not have been an accurate assessment without the full response of participants. It must be noted that the overall sample from this study was divided between the first and second set of tests that were run on the data. This is important because the sample size used for the second set of tests was much smaller than the size from the first set. Respecting these differences in sample sizes, it must be remembered that the tests that were run are specific to those samples and they do not overlap one another.

Findings

The data that was collected from the survey produced some results that can help explain reasons for consumer behavior and intentions toward a brand endorsed by a celebrity-athlete. The analysis that was used to compare the data from participants of the survey was independent

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samples t-tests. For the purpose of this study, an alpha of .05 was used to check significance.

The first set of independent samples t-tests was run between those who have purchased products of the Livestrong brand and those who have not purchased products of the Livestrong brand.

This sample was a total of 326 participants; 205 who have purchased Livestrong products and 121 who have not purchased Livestrong products.

The first area that was looked at was if participants believe that the Nike association with the Livestrong brand has a strong impact on the success of the brand. Based on the t-test that was run and Levene's Test of Equality of Variances there was a significance of .015 found, making responses statistically significant between those who have and have not purchased Livestrong products. Based on this question, equal variances are not assumed and $p = .001$ for the t-test for Equality of Means. In addition, those who have purchased before were more likely to "Agree" that the Nike association with Livestrong has a strong impact on the success of the brand, compared to those who have not purchased. When looking at the numbers, the strongest response for both purchasers and non-purchasers was "Agree," at a 53% total between the two groups. Additionally, when adding in the response "Strongly Agree," these two responses make up 75% of the participant answers. Separately, those that have purchased Livestrong products and fall within "Agree" and "Strongly Disagree" account for 82% of answers. This is an important statistic to consider because it proves that Nike must be viewed as a significant variable of this study.

Another area that was examined was if participants agree that the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal has had a negative impact on the Livestrong brand. The results from Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed a significance of .442 so equal variances were assumed. Also, the t-test for Equality of Means revealed that $p = .557$. Given this information the

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responses provided between both groups of participants do not present statistical significance. It was found that the majority of individuals between both purchasers and non-purchasers of Livestrong “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that the scandal has had a negative impact on the Livestrong brand. Of the total respondents, 66% of individuals fell between the category of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree.” The findings between purchasers and non-purchasers were similar for this content area. Of those who have purchased products of the Livestrong brand, 65% fell between either “Agree” or “Strongly Disagree.” In addition, the percentage for those who have not purchased Livestrong products, but fell between “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” was slightly higher at 68%.

The next area that was addressed was whether or not the athlete involved in the endorsement of a brand has a strong influence on your purchasing decision. Under this, a significance of .099 was revealed from Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. Equal variances were assumed for this test and $p = .001$. This shows statistical significance because the p value was .001 within the t-test for Equality of Means. Although the responses for this question varied, the most common answer was “Agree,” with a rate of 34%. In addition, it is notable to look into the responses from those who have purchased Livestrong products, which stand out in this data set. Within this group of individuals, 36% “Agreed” that the athlete involved in the endorsement of a brand has a strong influence on purchasing decision, as the highest percentage in the data set. From this data, it is shown that the celebrity-athlete does have a contribution on purchasing decisions for consumers and it can be attributed to their intentions.

The final area that was looked at among these groups was whether or not celebrity-athlete endorsement is beneficial to a brand. When running the t-test, a significance of .770 was found for Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances. Again, equal variances were assumed, while the t-

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test for Equality of Means provided that $p = .026$. This indicates a statistical difference between the responses of those who have purchased products of the Livestrong brand and those who have not since the p value was less than the alpha of .05.

The second set of independent samples t-tests was run between those who have purchased Livestrong products since becoming aware that Lance Armstrong cheated and those that have not since they found out. This sample consisted of 206 participants; 42 have purchased Livestrong products since becoming aware of the scandal and 164 have not purchased Livestrong products since finding out about the scandal. The first area that was looked at for this sample was if participants believe that the Nike association with the Livestrong brand has a strong impact on the success of the brand. The test showed a significance of .085 for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and equal variances were not assumed. Based on the t-test for Equality of Means, a p value of .548 was produced, resulting in no statistical significance in difference between the two groups of participants.

The next area that was examined within these groups was whether or not the participants agree that the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal has had a negative impact on the Livestrong brand. From the analysis that was run the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances revealed a significance of .663 with equal variances assumed. In addition, based on the t-test for Equality of Means there was a significance of .220. As a result, there was no statistical significance found among the responses for this observed question.

Another piece that was evaluated for this grouping was whether or not the athlete involved in the endorsement of a brand has a strong influence on the purchasing decision of participants. The data that was run through the independent samples t-test displayed a significance of .279 for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. Within the test of this question

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equal variances were assumed and this led to a significance of $p = .023$ under the t-test for Equality of Means. Since this significance was less than the alpha of .05, this created a statistical significant difference between the data. This is important to note because it reveals that responses were not the same and for this study the finding contributes relevance.

The last area that was covered between these groups was whether or not celebrity-athlete endorsement is beneficial to a brand. Once again, equal variances were assumed as the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances produced a significance of .793. When moving forward to the t-test for Equality of Means, the significance found that $p = .762$. This generated no statistical significance for the question that was evaluated.

Discussion

By examining the findings through this study, it can be determined that celebrity-athlete endorsement does play a role in consumer behavior and the decision making process. As noted in the literature, endorsement is a concept that can be used to enhance a brand or product (Erdogan, 1999). In addition, Louie and Obermiller (2002) have claimed that endorsement can make a brand or product more appealing to the consumer. Nonetheless, during time of scandal or negative publicity, celebrity-athlete endorsement can be damaging and even harm the endorsed brand or product. Through the study of Pullig, Netemeyer, and Biswas (2006) it has been shown that negative brand publicity has the ability to harm the brand and turn consumers away from it. The Livestrong brand and its association with Lance Armstrong is a recent example of how this takes place in the modern day market. The literature of this study revealed a number of components to celebrity-athlete endorsement and pieces of these have been tested through this research.

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Based on the findings that were drawn from this study, aspects can be related back to the literature and theories presented in this research. The Nike association was found to be a factor in the purchasing decision of consumers who have bought products of the Livestrong brand. In addition, both purchasers and non-purchasers of Livestrong agreed that Nike has an impact on the success of Livestrong. This relates back to the brand loyalty theory, in which the elements of brand trust, affect, and performance play a role on the behavior of consumers (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). What was considered as the Nike factor within this study, it can be seen that this theory holds relevance to the study that was conducted. The other theory that was believed to have influence on this study is emotional attachment theory, which Fournier (1998) discussed as the ability of a brand to create an emotional attachment with consumers and hold its position within the market. The results of this study did not reveal whether or not the emotional attachment theory had significance among those who purchased products of the Livestrong brand. Given the data and levels of significance, it was determined that the individual of the endorsement does have some influence pertaining to the reasons why consumers purchase brands.

Through this study and previous literature, the reasoning behind the nature of celebrity-athlete endorsement can be further clarified in relation to consumer behavior and loyalty intentions. This is significant for marketers to understand how endorsement works with the consumer and the connections that are made from using it. Endorsement is used as a strategy to help establish relationships with consumers and maintain their loyalty as purchasers (Miller & Laczniak, 2011). This study offers insight to the purpose of celebrity-athlete endorsement and it begins to develop results as to how consumers perceive endorsement in the market. Practitioners can evaluate the other elements that are a part of endorsement in order to gain more depth on this

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subject. Potential connections could be found by testing the various elements discussed within the literature of this study as they relate to celebrity-athlete endorsement.

Future recommendations have been implemented for practitioners and researchers who look into this topic. As previously mentioned, a major limitation that is relevant to this area of study is the association of a brand with another brand. The association of the Nike brand has the ability for consumers to develop preconceived notions about a brand just because of its ties with something else. This can disrupt connections that are thought to have been created based on the endorsement of the celebrity-athlete. Considering this limitation, it is recommended that this variable be accounted for in future studies and that it be limited as best as possible. This can be done better by developing questions that are directed toward the brand and celebrity-athlete that is being evaluated or looking into a brand that does not have a connection to another brand.

Another limitation to this study is that it did not create a cause and effect relationship that could be analyzed. This would have allowed for an understanding of how consumers actually reacted to the Armstrong scandal and how their behaviors evolved as a result of it. A recommendation for future research is to survey a greater population that consists of a more diverse group. The sample that was used for this study was a limitation because it did not capture the views of the consumer market as a whole. By accessing a sample that is larger and more diverse this will allow for a better sense of what is generally suggested from the market. This study that was conducted can be used as a basis to understanding celebrity-athlete endorsement and consumer behavior. Studies conducted in the future that evaluate celebrity-athlete endorsement will have the ability reveal deeper answers, which can help further understand this topic.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey



CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Endorsement Impact on Consumer Behavior & Loyalty: An Analysis of Livestrong and the Lance Armstrong Scandal

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Purpose and Description: The reason for conducting this study is to develop a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, specifically in the realm of celebrity-athlete endorsement. This study has used the Lance Armstrong cheating incident as a means of interpreting consumer loyalty and perceptions when a brand is involved in scandal. Through participation in this research, you are being asked to complete a survey that focuses on your level of consumer behavior and reactions toward the Livestrong brand and its association with Lance Armstrong. This brief survey should take no more than three minutes to complete.

The information you provide could help with the understanding of consumer behavior, more specifically regarding the Livestrong brand and its prior endorsement of Armstrong. Risks associated with participating in this survey are that your peers could be aware of your participation through observation of you taking the survey or conversation among one another. However, the responses to this survey will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of this research study. Names or contact information will not be included in the presentation of the results.


Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participating you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions please complete the survey if you would like to participate in this research.

Through the completion of this survey, you have granted me permission to use the results that you have provided. You may print this form for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact my research advisor or me.

Please indicate your agreement to voluntarily participate in this survey: (Agree, Disagree)

- Agree
- Disagree





Have you ever purchased products of the Livestrong brand?


Yes

No

>>

* If the response was “Yes,” the participant was directed to the following questions, labeled “Question Set A.” If the response was “No,” the participant was directed to the questions that are labeled “Question Set B.”

Question Set A:



From the following choices, what is/was your top reason for purchasing Livestrong products?

Visual appeal

Performance aspects

Association with Nike

Supporting the Livestrong Foundation

What is/was your next closest reason for purchasing Livestrong products?

Visual appeal

Performance aspects

Association with Nike

Supporting the Livestrong Foundation

>>

Have you purchased Livestrong products since you became aware that Lance Armstrong was involved in cheating?

- Yes
- No

Do you believe that the Nike association with the Livestrong brand has a strong impact on the success of Livestrong?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If Livestrong was associated with another brand, such as Under Armour, Adidas, or Reebok, would you purchase Livestrong products?

- Yes
- No

Has the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal had an influence on your view of the Livestrong brand?

- Yes
- No

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Do you agree that the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal has had a negative impact on the Livestrong brand?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Does the athlete involved in the endorsement of a brand have a strong influence on your purchasing decision?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

As a whole, do you believe that celebrity-athlete endorsement is beneficial to a brand?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

>>

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Question Set B:



Have you purchased products of the Nike brand?

- Yes
- No

>>



Do you believe that the Nike association with the Livestrong brand has a strong impact on the success of Livestrong?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

If Livestrong was associated with another brand, such as Under Armour, Adidas, or Reebok, would you purchase Livestrong products?

- Yes
- No

Has the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal had an influence on your view of the Livestrong brand?

- Yes
- No

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Do you agree that the Lance Armstrong cheating scandal has had a negative impact on the Livestrong brand?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Does the athlete involved in the endorsement of a brand have a strong influence on your purchasing decision?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

As a whole, do you believe that celebrity-athlete endorsement is beneficial to a brand?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

>>

* Upon completion of the survey, participants will be prompted with the following response.



We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Appendix B

Message to Department Chair

from: Jason, Brandan <bj06349@sjfc.edu>
to: Todd Harrison <tharrison@sjfc.edu>
date: Tue, Nov 5, 2013 at 9:23 PM
subject: Senior Thesis Survey
mailed-by: sjfc.edu

To undergraduate students,

It would be greatly appreciated if you would be willing to participate in a brief survey to assist me with my senior thesis project. The survey is related to consumer purchasing behavior, specifically looking at the Livestrong brand. The survey should take no more than three minutes to complete. A link to the survey can be found below. Your support will help me draw results and conclusions for my study. I thank you for your time and consideration to participate.

Survey Link: https://sjfc.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4MYzL7BnrCDkOt7

Thanks,

Brandan Jason
St. John Fisher College
Sport Management

Appendix C

Forwarded Message of Request for Participation

from: Harrison, Todd <tharrison@sjfc.edu>
to: Undergraduate Students <undergraduatestudents@sjfc.edu>
date: Wed, Nov 6, 2013 at 7:41 AM
subject: Senior Thesis Survey
mailed-by: sjfc.edu

This email is sent on behalf of Brandan Jason, a senior sport management student completing a senior thesis in SPST 495.

To undergraduate students,

It would be greatly appreciated if you would be willing to participate in a brief survey to assist me with my senior thesis project. The survey is related to consumer purchasing behavior, specifically looking at the Livestrong brand. The survey should take no more than three minutes to complete. A link to the survey can be found below. Your support will help me draw results and conclusions for my study. I thank you for your time and consideration to participate.

Survey Link: https://sjfc.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4MYzL7BnrCDkOt7

Thanks,

Brandan Jason
St. John Fisher College
Sport Management