

ENHANCED MARKET VALUE OF AMERICAN ATHLETES WITH
INTERNATIONAL TEAMMATES

BY

YILUN ZHOU

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Recreation, Sport, and Tourism
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013

Urbana, Illinois

Adviser:

Professor Scott Tainsky

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is three-fold. First, to identify Chinese consumers' feelings of attachment to American NBA players who have a distinguished Chinese teammate; second, to examine the relationship between Chinese consumers' attachment level to the American NBA players and the players' credibility as product endorsers; third, to examine whether Chinese consumers' evaluation of athlete endorsement would differ for sports products and non-sports products. By using scenario design, the author found that Chinese international students felt more attached to the American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate compared to the one with a distinguished American teammate. Moreover, the results of canonical analysis revealed that there was correlation between the attachment level and the credibility level. Furthermore, when the American NBA player endorsed a sports product, Chinese international students showed a higher purchase intention to buy.

DEDICATION

If we experience the unutterable, it is unwise to try to utter it.

To my father Yong Zhou and mother Yili Fei.

To my advisor Dr. Scott Tainsky.

To Ming Zhao.

To Myself.

致青春两年

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is not only this thesis itself. When I read through the lines, my memories flash.

I have my deepest respect for my advisor Dr. Scott Tainsky. He helps me a lot and always encourages me to go one step further. As his student, I have learned not only how to be a better researcher, but also how to become a better person in every aspect. Great advisors are core-shapers. He is one of them.

I want to thank my other committee member, Dr. Monika Stodolska. Whenever I think of her, I feel I am deeply inspired. She passes her ocean-like knowledge to students in a soft, gentle, yet strong and impressive way. I was deeply touched by her comments and suggestions for my thesis.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, from whom I could always receive support and courage. My memories of the past two years will go on and on.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLE & FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Scope and rationale	4
1.2 Research approach.....	6
1.3 Setting and population.....	7
1.4 Statement of Purpose.....	8
1.5 Objectives.....	9
CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND INFORMATION.....	11
2.1 Historical development of the sports industry in China.....	11
2.2 The globalization of the NBA	15
2.3 The NBA’s development in China	18
2.4 Chinese NBA players	20
2.5 Endorsement with NBA players.....	25
CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW	27
3.1 Human Brand	27
3.2 Athletic Talent Migration and Diversity Management	31
3.3 Meaning Transfer Model and Brand Alliance Theory	34
3.4 Cultural Similarity Theory	36
3.5 Source Credibility studies	37
3.6 Celebrity Endorsements in China.....	42
CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY	44
4.1 Data collection.....	44
4.2 Pre-test.....	47
4.3 Sample characteristics	47
4.4 Questionnaire design.....	49
4.5 Data analysis	50
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS.....	52
5.1 Feelings of attachment of Chinese international students.....	52
5.2 Feelings of attachment and endorser’s credibility level.....	60

5.2.1 The correlation between the feeling of attachment and the endorser’s credibility level	61
5.2.2 The differences between a sports and a non-sports product	73
CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION	80
6.1 Review of Findings and Implications.....	80
6.2 Limitations	85
6.3 Suggestions for Future Research.....	87
Appendix A: The Scenarios and The Survey Questionnaire	89
Appendix B: University of Illinois’s Institutional Review Board’s Approval Letter.....	99
Appendix C: Consent Form for College Student Participant.....	101
REFERENCE.....	103

LIST OF TABLE & FIGURES

Table 1 The Related Statistics of the Chinese Sports Industry 2006-2008.....	14
Table 2 Categories of the Chinese Sport Industry 2006-2008.....	15
Table 3 Year-by-year percentage of international players in NBA	17
Table 4 Characteristics of the Respondents	48
Table 5 Differences in Means of the feelings of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players.....	55
Table 6 Independent-samples t test for differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players	56
Table 7 Differences in Means of the feelings of attachment for the American basketball players described the same way in two scenarios.....	59
Table 8 Independent-samples t test for differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the American basketball players described the same way	60
Table 9 Canonical correlation analysis for the typical American NBA player endorsing a sports product.....	64
Table 10 Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Sports Product	67
Table 11 The Interpretation of the Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Sports Product ..	68
Table 12 Canonical correlation analysis for the typical American NBA player endorsing a non-sports product	69
Table 13 Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Non-sports Product.....	72
Table 14 The Interpretation of the Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Non-sports Product.....	73
Table 15 The means of difference of source credibility level for sports and non-sports products.....	76
Table 16 Paired t test for means of difference in source credibility level for sports and non-sports products.....	77
Table 17 The means of difference in purchasing intention for sports and non-sports products	78
Table 18 Paired t test for means of difference in purchasing intention for sports and non-sports products.....	79
Figure 1. Number of television broadcasters showing NBA games in China	20
Figure 2. Meaning Movement and Endorsement Process	35
Figure 3. Measurement Model for the Celebrity Endorsers' Credibility Scale	40

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

With the improvement of technology and transportation, big companies are actively seeking opportunities to globalize their business; sports organizations are no exception. For example, when Yugoslavia won the World Basketball Championship in 2002, the achievement was largely attributable to its National Basketball Association (NBA) players. It is widely acknowledged that teams in American sports leagues such as the NBA and Major League Baseball (MLB) have been mining the talent base of international players, through which they have also been building a global fan base over the past decades.

The NBA has witnessed a tremendous increase in its global business. In 1984, there were 23 teams competing in the league, yet 17 of them were on the brink of bankruptcy. According to Forbes, the league's 23 teams were collectively worth around \$400 million. Just three decades later, the average NBA team is valued at \$393 million, with the collective value of the NBA's 30 teams more than \$12 billion. The successful transformation of the NBA is due to a number of reasons, among which its globalization strategy.

The NBA has been introduced to countries outside of the US primarily through TV broadcasts. The 2011 NBA Finals between the Dallas Mavericks and the Miami Heat was televised in a record of 215 countries in 46 languages (Rossman, 2011). Besides using TV and the Internet, the NBA also reached the previously untapped fan base by welcoming international players. The same 2011 Finals featured 8 foreign players from 6 different countries. In that year, 86 international players from 40 different countries played in the league (Rossman, 2011). Compared to the fact that there were merely 12 international players

in 1990, nowadays around 19% of the total players in NBA are from foreign countries (Schachtel, 2011). Fans in other countries are pleased to see basketball players from their own countries competing in the world's premier league. Thus, NBA teams with international players were welcomed in other countries, and the interest has grown accordingly. According to Forbes's annual report for the year 2008, Houston Rockets owner Leslie Alexander's wealth was valued at 1.2 billion dollars, 15 times more than the previous year. Alexander explained, "Yao brought me a fortune of 1.2 billion dollars due to the fact that exploring the Chinese market gave me a unique business opportunity. I used to be the boss who earned the least in the NBA, but now I am ranked at the 9th place among the owners in the league" (Beijing Morning Post, 2006). Thus, NBA executives have increasingly manifested their preference for players born in another country (Papile, 2011). A total of three foreign players were selected in the 1995 draft, with only one among those three chosen in the first round. By contrast, the 2011 draft featured four international players out of the first 7 with 14 international players drafted in total.

As the NBA has gradually emerged as a global brand, there has been increased research interest examining the topic of the migration of athletic talent since the early 1990 (e.g., Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 1999; Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, & Bradley, 2002; Maguire & Pearton, 2000a, 2000b; McGovern, 2000, 2002; Moorhouse, 1999; Szymanski, 1999). In research on sports athlete migration, significant attention has been paid to the culture rather than to the economic significance of athlete mobility (Takahashi & Horne, 2006). They further claimed that the data used in past literature have been mainly derived from print and other forms of mass media. Thus, to date, much remains to be

explored regarding the subject of athlete migration, especially with reference to non-western sports elites (e.g., those from Asia and Africa). Moreover, among those articles examining the impact of migrant athletes, very little research has been conducted on the topic of the impact of international players on their teammates. In other words, research has mainly focused on the effect of the arrival of international players to the team, to the host and native countries and to the players themselves. However questions such as the interrelatedness of foreign and domestic athletes have yet to be posed by researchers.

Given the need to build more knowledge on athlete migration and to understand more about the emerging generation of young Chinese sports fans, this study is designed to contribute to the current literature by offering insight into how Chinese NBA players might impact their American teammates. Specifically, I aim to produce new knowledge as to how the value of American athletes is impacted in the Chinese market when a Chinese athlete joins the team. This topic is of high importance, not only because of the lack of information in academic literature, but also due to the business value, as athletes are often signed by companies as product endorsers. In order to tap an international market composed of foreign sports fans, it is common for companies to pursue international athletes as endorsers. However, for the athletes migrating to another country for higher level of sports competition, they are often elite players in the native countries, thus the endorsement fee is likely to be relatively high. American teammates of the superstar native athlete may provide a low-cost alternative to the same companies. Given the lack of previous examination of the subject, I currently have limited idea of how foreign sports fans feel about the teammates of the international players and whether such feelings will impact that player's value as a product

endorser. Additionally, more and more companies are eager to acquire assets in foreign markets. Potentially reducing the endorsement fees by employing the athlete who has a distinguished international teammate may provide a suitable alternative to the relative scarcity of the international star.

In this research I adopt Liu, Huang, and Minghua (2007) definition of typical and distinguished as follows.

Typical American player: Mr. A

Mr. A is an outstanding, successful, professional NBA player. He usually devotes himself to public and non-profit charity activities. Mr. A has a body shape typical of an NBA athlete. He looks normal. Moreover, he is a good mannered and well-educated person with decent behavior.

Distinguished NBA player: Mr. B

Mr. A has a distinguished teammate Mr. B, who is chosen by fans as an NBA All-Star. Mr. B is the best player on the team. Both Mr. A and Mr. B are in the starting line-up. Mr. B has balanced muscle tone and nice body shape. He smiles often and almost all fans feel excited from the bottom of their hearts when they see him.

1.1 Scope and rationale

The increasing trend of sports athlete migration has drawn academic attention in the past 20 years (Maguire, 2004), in which the world system theory has brought a global perspective in explaining how local and global interests intersect in migration processes. The theory argues that the hegemonic powers in developed countries where sports has become a well

developed industry exploit other nations for new markets to sell different varieties of sport. Aimed at understanding such dynamic process, much research has focused on the impact of international athletes endorsing American companies and enabling them to open new foreign markets. This area of study has also proven to be attractive to journalists. However, there have been limited studies examining the influence the international players brought to local teammates. As Maguire (2004) pointed out, although it is hard to deny that there has been some literature on athlete migration, much more work needs to be done, both at a conceptual level and with respect to empirical inquiry.

Among international markets, Asian countries have emerged as an attractive sports product market since Asia holds over three-fifths of the world's population and a strong interest in sports (Manzenreiter, 2004; Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). NPD Group, a leading market research company, reported that central and south Asia enjoys the fastest-growing sports equipment, apparel and footwear market, with a faster sales growth at the rate of 13% annually compared to 2% in Europe. Since the inception of China's open door policy in the late 20th century, the country has gone through a rapid growth period. Furthermore, after successfully hosting the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games and the 2011 Shenzhen Universiade, it is likely that there will be more and more world-class sports competitions held in China. In 2010, the central government of China emphasized the importance of developing cultural and sports industries. According to the governmental document, "Guidance on speeding up Chinese sports industry" published in the same year, the government aimed at extending more financial resources in order to develop the sports industry. It is estimated in the document that in 2020, the sports industry in China will grow

to be a 2 trillion RMB market size compared to 300 billion RMB in 2007. Consequently, this project is set in the context of one of the most popular foreign sports in China, the NBA, to gain insight into the emotions and behaviors of Chinese sports consumers regarding athlete migration. The specific purpose is to examine the influence of distinguished Chinese NBA players on their average American teammates in terms of endorsement value among Chinese international students.

1.2 Research approach

Companies sign international sports players to endorsement contracts based on the assumption that consumers in the countries of origin are drawn to the hometown athlete and such support will be transferred to the products and companies the international athletes endorse. Thus, ultimately, people in the native countries would be more likely to purchase such products. Nowadays athlete migration is well recognized at the high performance level. Major sports leagues around the world are increasingly mining talented sports athletes from other countries in well-known sports disciplines (Erick, Perez, & Siegler, 2004). Like their counterparts in Western countries, distinguished Chinese sports athletes are commonly seen as idols or heroes and are very influential as product spokespersons (Liu, Huang, & Minghua, 2007). The endorsement fee of signing those elite athletes is oftentimes high. For example, Yao Ming, the world renowned Chinese basketball player, amassed personal wealth in excess of \$100 million, over \$20 million coming from endorsement fees from companies such as Reebok, Apple, VISA, TAG Heuer, McDonald and Gatorade. On the other hand, it seems pretty clear that Chinese sporting goods brands such as PEAK have targeted players

alongside the highly visible stars that Chinese fans follow most. NBA players such as Ron Artest and Dikembe Mutombo, who enjoyed added publicity thanks to teammate Yao Ming both signed endorsement deals with the PEAK company. However, in contrast to their high-profile Chinese super star, both of them had relatively lower endorsement fee. It is said that signing Dikembe Mutombo cost PEAK less than \$600,000.

However, no existing literature has ever examined the influence of international athletes on their American teammates. Will Chinese sports consumers feel more attached to American NBA players if they have a distinguished Chinese teammate? What other feelings do they have for American NBA players? Would Chinese sports consumers perceive American players as reliable endorsers? Will Chinese people buy the products they endorse? Does the type of product (i.e. sports-related and non-sports-related) make a difference? By answering these questions, we may gain a better understanding of the influence of the distinguished international players on their American teammates in terms of market value. Moreover, such information would not only be a supplement to the existing literature on athlete migration and athlete endorsement; it will further benefit marketers to know how to make an effective investment on athlete endorsement.

1.3 Setting and population

The research was done at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. According to the statistics from the office of International Student and Scholar Services in 2013, there are a total of 8203 international students on campus. Based on *U.S. News and World Report* for the year 2013, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has the second largest number of

international students around the country. Influenced by its friendly attitude towards international students, the university is given a sobriquet of “Heartthrob University” in China. As of 2013, there were currently 2092 undergraduate and 1601 graduate students from Mainland China recorded in the enrollment document.

Chinese undergraduate students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign were selected as the sampling frame for this study. Firstly, Cui and Song (2009) indicated that the size of China’s middle class (\$6K to \$25K annual income) is slated to increase from 130 million to 340 million by 2016. Chinese undergraduate students are generally financially secure and come from families that represent the middle class in China (Nara Schoenberg, 2012). With a good financial background and an overseas education, it is highly likely that the current Chinese undergraduate students would comprise a large percent of product purchasers. Furthermore, Chinese undergraduate students in this study were born and raised in mainland China before they came to the United States for higher education; hence their psychological status is similar to most of the Chinese college students. Thus it was logical to take them as representatives of the growing middle class in China. In addition, Chinese undergraduate students studying in the United States tend to be homogenous in aspects of age, income and education level.

1.4 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the study is to better understand the attitude of young Chinese students towards distinguished Chinese athletes’ American teammates, and opinions about such teammates as product endorsers. One of the reasons that the NBA was chosen for this paper

is because the NBA is now regarded as the most popular sports league in China, according to the former director of the Chinese Basketball Management Sector in 2005. A better knowledge of young Chinese generation's attitudes regarding the sport and its athletes may provide ideas on how to better market athletes and potentially secure effective endorsement deals within an undervalued group of athletes.

1.5 Objectives

The major goal of this study is to investigate the market value of distinguished Chinese NBA players' American teammates to Chinese consumers. This study has three objectives, which are listed as follows:

1. To identify Chinese consumers' feelings of attachment to American NBA players who have a distinguished Chinese teammate.
2. To examine the relationship between Chinese consumers' attachment level to the American NBA players and the players' credibility as product endorsers.
3. To examine whether Chinese consumers' evaluation of athlete endorsement would differ for sports products and non-sports products.

The hypotheses are further listed as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Chinese international students will have stronger attachment to an American NBA player who has a distinguished Chinese teammate compared to the one who has only distinguished American teammates.

Hypothesis 2: Chinese international students who are more attached to the American NBA player will have more positive opinions about his being a product endorser, as a result

of source credibility.

Hypothesis 3: The purchase intention of Chinese international students will be higher if the American NBA player endorses a sport product compared to a non-sport product.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Historical development of the sports industry in China

During the period from 1949, when People's Republic of China announced its establishment, until 1978, when China introduced the "Open door" policy, Chinese sports was developed under a planned economy. Although China witnessed a recession after the onset of the "Cultural Revolution" in the 1960s, a highly centralized planned economy acted as an important influence in Chinese sports during this time. For example, the planned economy enabled the government to allocate limited social resources in order to foster economic effectiveness and target certain social outcomes. With respect to sports, the government developed the Chinese sports structure in accordance with the planned economy, recruited sports professionals, and built sports arenas. It also reinforced physical education curriculum at schools and trained athletic elites.

However, toward the end of the 1970s, the disadvantage of developing Chinese sports under a planned economy gradually revealed itself. In 1978, as China initiated the "open door" policy, the planned economy in China would be replaced by a market economy. Chinese sports at the same time became an industry after the economic reform. There have been three development phases for the Chinese sports industry according to commonly agreed upon literature and actual conditions (Li, 2013), as outlined in the following sections.

Period one – Enlightening phase (1978-1992)

Economic reform led China into a fast growing period, and the sports industry was no

exception. The conflict between swift sports development and the shortage of financial support from the government emerged. In order to solve this problem, Chinese sports revolutionists devised two major approaches in order not to rely solely on financial resources from the government. The first approach was to let capable sports commissions lend facilities and arenas to other businesses when there were no sports activities and to encourage local sports commissions investing money into companies which provided sports-related services in order to gain profit. Another approach was to attract social capital by encouraging companies to become sponsors or co-managers for professional sports teams. These two approaches helped deepen the commercialization and modernization process in Chinese sports and assisted in solving the financial obstacle of sports development during that period.

Period two – Starting phase (1992-1997)

In October 1992, the policy of establishing a “market economy under socialism,” initially announced by Chinese reformist leader Deng Xiaoping, was adopted during the 14th Communist Party Congress. This act opened the possibility of letting the market instead of the government to distribute social resources (Liu, 1993). The development of the Chinese sports industry during that period experienced an average growth rate at 5.1% with the cost of national sports consumption (sports goods not included) around 17 billion dollars in 1998.

Soccer became the first sport to be professionalized in China in 1994, followed by basketball, volleyball and table tennis (Gao, 2009). According to China’s Yearly Sport Business Statistics (1998), the three most popular professional leagues in China during that time were the National Soccer Major League A, the National Male Basketball Major League

and the National Volleyball League. Total ticket sales were respectively 12.12 million dollars, 1.7 million dollars and 1.45 million dollars. Moreover, for the sports goods market, it was reported that the capital came to around 17 billion dollars in 1998 (National Council of Physical Education and Sport, 1998) and sports goods were rated as the No. 6 primary expenditure just after other categories which provided basic needs of living for Chinese people at that time.

Similarly, a number of sports professional management service companies thrived along with the rapid growth of Chinese professional sports. For example, IMG (USA), IDEA (Italy), ELITE (HK) and domestic sports PR companies started launching their bases in large Chinese cities. The professionalization led to the commercialization of Chinese sports when sports associations were transformed into profit-making entities. This has moved Chinese sports one step further from their traditional origin (Gao, 2009).

Period three – Developing phase (1997-- present)

During the 15th Communist Party Congress in 1997, President Jiang Zeming emphasized the importance of building “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” which means to deeply develop a market economy in China. Chinese sports industry began to go through an even faster growing period. According to People’s Daily, during the five year period from 2006 to 2011, the growth rate of China's sports industry kept up a pace of above 16%, emerging as a new bright spot in national economy. Moreover, on the 24th of March, 2009, the State Council of China promulgated “Guiding Opinion on Accelerating the Development of Sports Industry in China,” which indicated that the sports industry in China was elevated to an

unprecedented height of a strategic position at the national level, according to Liu Fumin, director-general of the Department of Finance of the General Administration of Sport in China. A comprehensive sports industry research project conducted by the State Statistics Bureau and the State General Administration of Sports from May 2006 to April 2010 with the most recent official statistical data for the Chinese sports industry. According to the data in Table 1, although the sports industry in China had been enjoying a rapid growth due to years of reform and openness, it could be concluded that the sports industry only took up about 0.5% of the entire GDP, which was still far behind developed Western countries. On the other hand, the gap also indicates that the Chinese sports industry has a great opportunity to develop.

Table 1

The Related Statistics of the Chinese Sports Industry 2006-2008

Year	Employee (ten thousand)	Eva (A hundred million)	% of GDP
2006	256.30	982.90	0.46
2007	283.74	1265.23	0.49
2008	317.09	1554.97	0.52

Source: The Report of the National Working Conference of Sports Industry

The statistics from Table 2 show the development of different sectors within the Chinese sports industry from 2006 to 2008. Sports product manufacturing has the highest degree of openness to competition, and is regarded as the most mature sector within Chinese sports industry.

Table 2

Categories of the Chinese Sport Industry 2006-2008

Categories	2006		2007		2008	
	Eva (A hundred million)	Employee (ten thousand)	Eva (A hundred million)	Employee (ten thousand)	Eva (A hundred million)	Employee (ten thousand)
Sports Association Management	74.8	18.71	89.36	18.98	117.56	20.87
Sports Arena Management	18.24	2.58	23.04	2.41	30	2.62
Fitness	46.98	11.78	58.79	13.32	74.49	15.03
Sports Agency	2.02	0.87	3.00	0.96	4.46	1.35
Sports training and Consulting	4.64	1.91	7.91	2.21	13.48	3.56
Sports Lottery	21.47	11.11	29.63	13.37	35.27	17.64
Sports Goods Manufactories	705.12	195.44	898.10	214.00	1088.31	234.13
Sports Goods Sales	76.45	11.13	110.77	15.20	141.79	18.54
Stadium Construction	33.17	2.77	44.63	3.29	49.61	3.35
Total	982.89	256.30	1265.23	283.74	1554.97	317.09

Source: The Report of the National Working Conference of Sports Industry

Global sports companies seek opportunities to expand their brands to Asian markets (Henderson, Cote, Leong, & Schmitt, 2003). With the stable growth of the Chinese sports industry and anticipated future growth, China may play a pivotal role in the future sports market. In the following section, the author will discuss the globalization of the NBA and its development in China.

2.2 The globalization of the NBA

In the past years, the NBA's increasing global interest and business opportunities were inseparable with its international TV broadcasting contracts and international athlete recruitment. From a global perspective, the value of the NBA TV rights is largely based on a

country's financial condition and the popularity of basketball. Early contracts in other countries were valued much lower than US television rights. For example, the right to broadcast NBA games for a season only cost a TV company in Mongolia 10,350 dollars, Namibia 22,500 dollars and Kuwait 52,375 dollars. NBA commissioner David Stern asserted that the goal of broadcasting is to create potential NBA fans (Gunther, 1997). Case in point, prior to 1998, the NBA not only provided games to Chinese Central Television (CCTV) for free, but also paid additional fees for CCTV to broadcast the NBA All-Star game and NBA Finals (Yang & Liu, 2012). In the 2008-09 season, NBA games were broadcast in 215 countries in 41 languages.

The first international player came to the league in 1970, when the Atlanta Hawks picked Mexican player Manuel Raga in the 10th round and Dino Meneghin from Italy during the 11th round (although neither of them ever played). By the 1980s there were a number of international players known to NBA audiences. Most of these players were drafted into the league following outstanding NCAA careers (e.g., Hakeem Olajuwon from Nigeria and Patrick Ewing from Jamaica, both later inducted into the Hall of Fame). The league also sought international players directly from foreign leagues (e.g., Georgi Glouchkov from Bulgaria, who played for the Phoenix Suns during the 1985-86 season), but the number of international players in the league was still limited. At that time, only amateur athletes were permitted to play in international matches per Federation Internationale de Basketball (FIBA). Thus international basketball players would lose the chance to play for their home countries if they played for the NBA as professionals. After this policy was abandoned on April 8th, 1989, the increase in number of international players has been commonly recognized. During the

2000-01 season, the percentage of international players in the league exceeded 10% for the first time. Moreover, compared to the 1996-97 season, the number of international players enjoyed an increase over 250% in the 2006-07 season. According to NBA.com, at the beginning of the 2012-13 season, there were 84 players from 37 countries and territories playing in the NBA. The presence of a large number of international players is beneficial to the expansion of the league's recognition around the world (Eisenberg, 2003). The following table presents the percentage of international players since the 1999-00 season.

Table 3

Year-by-year percentage of international players in NBA

Seasons	International Players/Total	Percentage
1999-00	35/419	8.35%
2000-01	45/422	10.66%
2001-02	51/418	12.20%
2002-03	62/406	15.27%
2003-04	66/416	15.78%
2004-05	78/440	17.73%
2005-06	77/430	17.91%
2006-07	80/428	18.69%
2007-08	76/421	18.05%
2008-09	77/435	17.70%
2009-10	83/434	19.12%
2010-11	84/437	19.22%
2011-12	78/442	17.65%
2012-13	84/445	18.88%

Based on the table above, we can see that an increasing number of international players are joining the league throughout the years. Moreover, some of those international athletes also broke down historical barriers in the NBA. For example, Yao Ming was the Houston Rockets' first pick in the 2002 NBA draft. Prior to him, no international player had ever been

taken with the first pick of the NBA draft without first having played collegiately in the United States.

2.3 The NBA's development in China

With the trend of globalization, American sports commodities have been exported to Asian countries since the late 1980s. Different from other successful global American products, such as McDonald's or Hollywood films, the NBA's diffusion into the Chinese market encountered China's own basketball history, dating back to late 1950s. After The People's Republic of China announced its establishment in 1949, basketball, among a number of other sports, was utilized by the Chinese government for building the nation's reputation. To better prepare for international basketball competition, the State General Administration of Sports and a number of local sports commissions established basketball teams at every level.

The effort of a national training and selection process of basketball also pushed forward amateur basketball development, resulting in making basketball the most played sport in new China (Huang, 2013). Moreover, the former director of the Chinese Basketball Management Sector announced in 2005 that basketball had become the No.1 sport in China. Similarly, based on a survey done by Sina.com in 2006, more than 60% of the participants voted for basketball as the most popular sports nowadays in China.

As a potentially lucrative sports market, China has been attracting well-developed Western sports leagues since the late 1970s. On the one hand, with the implementation of the "Open Door" policy, China started to emphasize the Sino-US relationship, in which sports

acted as an effective bridge for the communication between the two countries. After the well-known Ping Pong Diplomacy in the early 1970s, the former Vice Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping was invited to watch a basketball exhibition by the American government during his visit to the US. His favorable attitude towards American basketball emboldened the Chinese people to welcome NBA in the future.

Following David Stern's appointment as league commissioner in 1984, the NBA opened offices outside the US and further promoted the brand of the NBA by holding NBA preseason games, regular season games, and both professional and non-professional basketball activities around the world. The NBA first touched the Asian market in 1990 by organizing a regular NBA competition between the Phoenix Suns and Utah Jazz in Tokyo, Japan. After that, various NBA events began to appear in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea.

The NBA penetrated the Chinese market with the aid of the Chinese media network, sporting goods companies and Chinese NBA players. With the development of the Chinese sports industry, sports in China transformed from merely a national symbol to be more of a leisure pursuit in the mid 1990s. In 1994, China Central Television (CCTV) broadcast all NBA finals for the first time. Moreover, after establishing itself as the first sports channel, CCTV-5 signed a long-term contract with the NBA to start broadcasting NBA events, including regular games, playoffs, finals and All Star games beginning in 1996. It is estimated that more than 250 NBA games were broadcast during the 2005-06 season. Figure 1 indicates that in addition to CCTV-5, which broadcast for an average of four games per week, the total NBA television partners in China totaled 54 in the 2010-11 season.

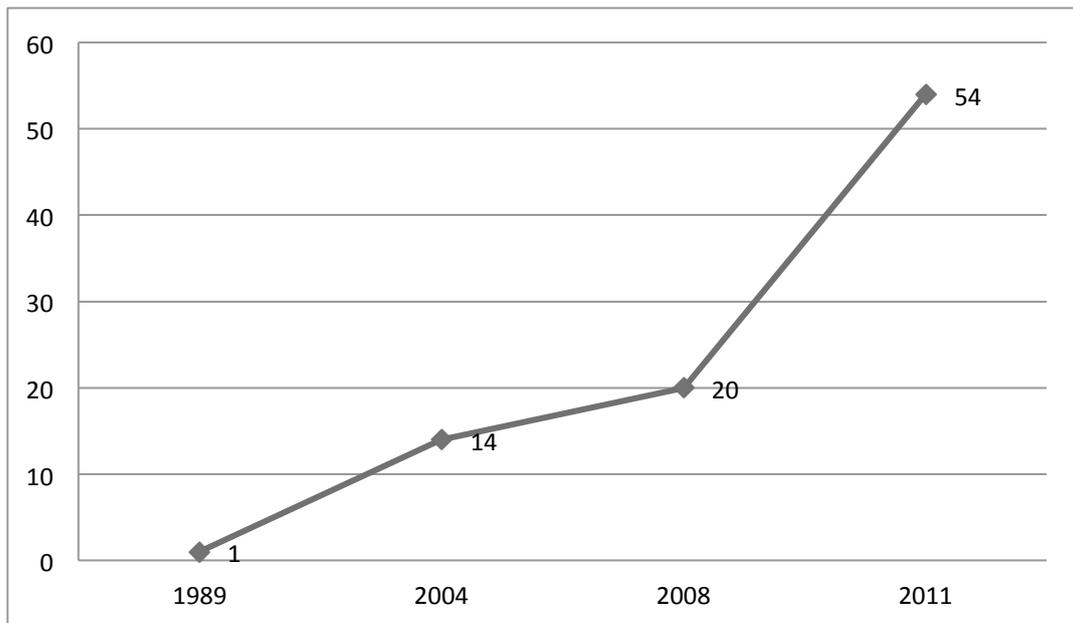


Figure 1. Number of television broadcasters showing NBA games in China (Huang, 2013)

Today, the NBA in China has grown to be one of the most popular spectator sports with the support of a survey result conducted by NBA.com in 2005:

- 83% of Chinese males aged 15-24 perceived themselves as NBA fans and four of their top five sports athletes play for NBA;
- More than 30 million people per week watch NBA games in China;
- NBA merchandise locations have expanded to more than 20,000 sites in China.

2.4 Chinese NBA players

There has been an increase in the number of international athletes playing for the four preeminent American professional sports leagues: Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Football League (NFL), the National Hockey League (NHL) and the National Basketball Association (NBA). Masteralexis (2004, p. 275,) indicates that sports can be viewed with “improved international communication combined with the increased demand

for cable sports programming that has moved North American professional sports into markets abroad and brought international sport into the North American market.” Up to now, five Chinese NBA players have assisted in expanding the influence of the NBA to Chinese audiences.

First Chinese NBA Player—Wang Zhizhi

Wang Zhizhi was born in 1977. The 214 cm center became an Olympian in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. His average of 11.1 points and 5.6 rebounds helped China finish eighth. Four years later in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, he led the Chinese team with an average of 13.5 points, 5 rebounds and 1.3 blocks.

In 1995, when the Chinese Basketball Association was established, he joined the star-studded army team Bayi Rockets. He helped build the Bayi dynasty by winning all CBA finals until he left for the NBA in 2001. In the summer of 1999, the Dallas Mavericks selected Wang Zhizhi in the second round of the NBA draft with the 36th pick. However not until two years after he was drafted was Wang finally permitted to realize his NBA dream that began with the Army club and Chinese basketball. During his stay in the US, Wang was expelled from the Chinese team for failing to return to China to train in 2002, and therefore he missed the 2004 Athens Olympics. Wang played for the Dallas Mavericks for the 2001-02 season, and later played for the Los Angeles Clippers and the Miami Heat. The CBA star played a limited role in the NBA, averaging 4.8 points, 1.8 rebounds, 9.9 minutes. At the end of the 2005-2006 season he became a free agent. One year later, Wang Zhizhi finally returned to China and publicly apologized for his mistakes and expressed his willingness to represent

China in international competition again. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, Wang and Yao led China into the top eight. Since his return to China, he continues to play for the Bayi Rockets.

Second Chinese NBA Player—Mengke Bateer

Three years after Wang Zhizhi signed with the Dallas Mavericks, Mengke Bateer, who previously played for the Beijing Ducks, joined the San Antonio Spurs. Although he played only occasionally, Bateer was a member of the Spurs' 2002-2003 championship team. Before gaining a spot on the Spurs roster, Bateer joined the Denver Nuggets in the team's preseason training camp in October 2001 and was traded to the Detroit Pistons in the summer of 2002. Therefore, Bateer holds another notable distinction in that he is also the only Chinese basketball player in the NBA not selected in the NBA draft.

Third Chinese NBA Player—Yao Ming

The best-known Chinese basketball player, Yao Ming, played for the Houston Rockets in the NBA for eight seasons beginning in 2002. Born in 1980, this talented athlete joined the Shanghai Sharks' junior team when he was thirteen years old. Four years later, Yao was accepted by the senior team, and in his fourth season, he helped the Shanghai Sharks to win their first championship in the CBA.

In the summer of 2002, after overcoming huge barriers between the Chinese Basketball Association and America's National Basketball Association, Yao started his NBA life in Houston with an agreement that he would have to return to play for the national team. Despite the difficulties, Yao was selected by the Rockets with the first pick of the draft,

becoming the first international basketball player ever to be chosen first overall in the NBA, without having been played in the NCAA.

The first three years witnessed his growth and adaptation in the NBA. Yao averaged 13.5 points and 8.2 rebounds in his rookie season, which increased to averaging 17.5 points and 9.0 rebounds the following season. In the 2003-2004 season, the Rockets made the playoffs for the first time in his career, claiming the seventh seed in the Western Conference. Moreover, based upon his excellent performance for the Rockets, Yao obtained respect and recognition from his teammates and even his opponents. Yao was also voted by fans as the starting center for the Western Conference in three consecutive NBA All-Star Games.

Thereafter, Yao suffered osteomyelitis in the big toe on his left foot and had an orthopedic surgery on December 18, 2005. Soon after his recovery, Yao had two more injuries in 2006 and missed many games during this season. Although he maintained his high performance when available to play and was voted to participate in the NBA All-Star Games, Yao was limited in playing time due to his injury. On July the 20th, 2011, Yao announced his retirement from basketball in a press conference in Shanghai. Yao has also taken part in many charity events during his career, including the NBA's Basketball without Borders program. In 2004, he wrote an autobiography with an ESPN sportswriter describing his professional basketball career in the NBA as a Chinese player, entitled *Yao: A Life in Two Worlds*.

Fourth Chinese NBA Player—Yi Jianlian

As a teammate of Yao Ming in the Chinese national basketball team, Yi Jianlian also determined to continue his professional basketball career in the NBA after achieving the

championship in the CBA. Unlike Yao, however, Yi played for four different NBA teams, namely the Milwaukee Bucks, the New Jersey Nets, the Washington Wizards and the Dallas Mavericks, from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012. On June 28, 2007, Yi was selected by the Milwaukee Bucks with the sixth overall pick in the 2007 NBA draft and then signed with the team. In his rookie season, Yi played in 66 out of a possible 82 games with averaging 8.6 points and 5.2 rebounds per game. In one particular game, on November 9 that year, Yi played against Yao for the first time when the Houston Rockets hosted the Bucks. Yi scored 19 points and grabbed 9 rebounds in that game, while Yao had 28 points and 10 rebounds bringing a victory to the Rockets. Over 200 million people in China also watched the game, making it one of the most-watched games in NBA history.

Suffering from a knee injury, Yi was traded to the New Jersey Nets on June 26, 2008. In the new team, Yi progressed over the previous season by averaging 10.5 points and 6.2 rebounds in his first 37 games. However, the broken little finger on his right hand and a six-week recovery period led to a dramatic drop off in his play. Therefore, Yi was signed with the Washington Wizards in the summer of 2010, followed by the final trade to the Dallas Mavericks in January 2012.

Fifth Chinese NBA Player—Sun Yue

Sun Yue became known to the public when he played for the Beijing Olympians, the only private club in the CBA in 2002. The team then moved to play in the American Basketball Association (ABA) in 2005-2006 season. After having improved his numbers in that team, Sun participated entered the 2007 NBA draft and was selected by the Los Angeles

Lakers in the second round, 40th overall.

During his NBA career, Sun played in ten games obtaining a total of 6 points in 28 minutes. On March 6 of 2008, Sun was assigned to the Los Angeles D-Fenders, the Lakers' National Basketball Development League affiliate, followed by a left ankle sprain in that season. After his recovery, the Lakers won the 2009 NBA finals and Sun became the second Chinese basketball player to win an NBA championship ring. Sun was waived by the Lakers in the next summer.

2.5 Endorsement with NBA players

With vast media exposure, high profile athletes become endorsers for global products. Research indicates that a successful endorser could provide a high return on investment. For example, consumers' preference for the brand would be increased (Khandai & Agrawal, 2012). Past research has confirmed that using an endorser, especially distinguished athletes, seems to be a basic and effective arrangement for sports marketing (Asker, 1996). Research showed that one-fourth of total advertisements aired use celebrity endorsement (Roy & Moorthi, 2012). Chinese advertising is in accordance with the global trend of using celebrity endorsement.

Upstart Chinese athletic apparel and footwear companies have signed contracts with aging NBA stars to expand their market (Tschang, 2009). For example, a Quanzhou-based company PEAK signed Jason Kidd after he left Nike. Baron Davis joined Shaquille O'Neal in endorsing China's largest sportswear manufacturer Li-Ning. "By collaborating with NBA stars or other international athletes, not only do we benefit in the international market, more

importantly, these top-level athletes are very influential to Chinese consumers,” said David Wang, a Li-Ning spokesman.

Former Houston Rockets basketball star, Yao Ming was regarded as not only a distinguished basketball player, but also the richest and most influential athlete in China before he retired. Yao Ming was selected as one of the “100 most influential people worldwide” by *Time Magazine* two years in a row (2004, 2005), and was also ranked 45th among “Most influential 100 athletes worldwide in 2005” by *The Sporting News*. Yao Ming is arguably the most famous Chinese celebrity athlete endorser. He has earned over 20 million dollars endorsement deals with Reebok, Apple, VISA, TAG Heuer, Gatorade, McDonald and so on (Liu, Huang, & Minghua, 2007). As summarized previously, Chinese basketball players who have competed in the world’s highest level sports leagues are top, widely-recognized players in China.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is organized into three major parts. The first section will examine the extant research associated with the concept of human brands and how the meaning, especially cultural meaning, within a human brand could be transferred to another person with close association. The second section will cover the literature related to two major streams of celebrity endorsement theories -- source credibility theory and congruence theory. The last section will review the literature on Chinese consumers and athlete celebrity endorsements.

3.1 Human Brand

The term “brand” originally comes from “brandr,” the Nordic word for fire. It refers to burning the mark of the producer onto the product which they made. It is now commonly applied to firms, products, and services, and is also used to describe terms of perceived quality, and image (Thomson, 2006). In the recent past, the definition of “brand” in the brand management literature has been broadened to include anything that deals with emotional relationships with consumers (Bayley, 2005). Keller (2003) stated that brand theory could be extended to people. Similarly, Thomson (2006) claimed that celebrity can be regarded as brand because that celebrities can be professionally managed and also have additional features of a brand.

According to Parmentier and Fischer (2012), the definition of human brand could be better understood by distinguishing it from brands for products or services. First, human

beings, although possibly regarded as brands, are not produced purely to serve markets.

Second, compared to brands for products and services, one single human brand has more competing brands. For example, prior research revealed that the average number of brands for products or services in a well-developed category is eight, whereas for a human-being, as many as hundreds or thousands of people might share a similar level of recognition and features. Third, human brands can benefit themselves by endorsing products, services or causes, but general brands could not.

Past literature relating to human brands has focused mainly on two approaches. The first one addresses the issue of how people build their personal brands in order to distinguish themselves from others. This approach is mainly discussed in books written for general audiences (e.g., McNally & Karl, 2002; Rein, Kotler, Hamlin, & Stoller, 2005); however none of the books on human brands have analyzed the question of how people in a profession (i.e., athletes) can create their human brands to enhance equity (Parmentier & Fischer, 2012). Moreover, the empirical research existing in the marketing or consumer literature is limited.

The other approach of human brands has focused on varieties of feelings and relationship people have with human brands, for example, idolatry (Houran, Navik, & Zerrusen 2005), fandom (Leets, De Becker, & Giles 1995) and celebrity worship (Dietz 1991). According to Thomson (2006), much of this kind of research originates from attachment theory. Attachment theory proposes that people first build up strong relationship with their parents at an early age and gradually divert attention and develop attachment to other targets during their life, such as celebrities as one kind of human brands (Leets et al., 1995). Attachment to human brands, according to Horton and Wohl (1956), is described as

“intimacy at a distance” and the brand is seen as “secondary object.” The next section will describe the attachment to human brand.

Attachment to Human Brands

Academic researchers and practitioners’ interest in studying consumer relationship has flourished in the past decade (Thomson, 2006). One of the approaches examining consumer relationships pays attention to feelings of attachment and love (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006), which seem to be “at the core of all strong brand relationships” (Fournier, 1998, p. 363). According to Thomson (2006, p. 104), consumer attachment to human brands refers to “any well-known persona who is the subject of marketing communications efforts.”

Two psychological theories, Attachment Theory (Bowlby 1979, 1980) and Self-Determination Theory (LaGuardia, Ryan, Couchman & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000), have been applied to examine the relationship between human brands and consumers. The premise underlying attachment theory is that the feeling of attachment would vary according to the degrees of strength, in which strong attachment would lead to strong feelings of connection, affection, love and passion (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Self-determination theory, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), states that innate human needs related to motivation include autonomy, relatedness and competence (A-R-C). LaGuardia et al. (2000), and Ryan and Deci (2000) concluded that if the social contexts in which different individuals are embedded are able to fulfill those individuals’ basic psychological needs, they could develop people’s active, assimilative and integrated nature. In their study about human needs and self-determination, Deci and Ryan (2000) defined the three basic needs as

autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Autonomy refers to a person's need to feel that his or her activities are chosen, governed, and endorsed by themselves. Relatedness refers to the feeling of being close with others and a desire to belong to a social sphere. Competence points to an innate tendency to seek effectiveness and achievement through one's life.

Although the concept of A-R-C (autonomy, relatedness, and competence) in Ryan and Deci's (2000) research is examined in the context of interpersonal relationships, Thomson (2006) examined the A-R-C needs in another context, seeking the possibility that human brands qualify as responsive relationship partners. The results confirmed that the satisfaction of autonomy and relatedness could predict strong attachments. Specifically, with regard to human brands, if people are made to feel capable of self-expression, self-governance and a feeling of closeness and intimacy, they will have strong attachments to human brands. Although autonomy and relatedness play important roles in the creation of such strong attachment, competence was found to be insignificant in the results.

Furthermore, Thomson (2006) believed that although past literature suggests that the attachment strength is independent from trust, satisfaction, and commitment, the correlation among these terms indicates that it would be beneficial to building stronger marketing relationship if people could understand how to develop or intensify attachment. This statement is consistent with previous research findings that attachment is fundamental to strong brand relationship (Fournier, 1998), connection, affection, and willingness to pay (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park 2005).

In this study, I examine attributes of distinguished international athletes and their American teammates as human brands. I use concepts of "relatedness" and "autonomy" to

measure people's attachment level to sports athletes.

3.2 Athletic Talent Migration and Diversity Management

The globalization of sports is one element of the larger picture of the entire process of globalization (Donnelly, 1996). According to Robertson (1990), the take-off period of the globalization of sports took place between 1880 and 1925. Nowadays, the significant shifts and exchanges in global economy have been providing the global sports industry with vast opportunities (Pike & Fay, 1994). Important features include the emergence and diffusion of sports, the establishment of international sports organizations, the global standard of rules for sports competition, and the development of global competitions such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup. Maguire (1999) demonstrated how interconnections of globalization are intertwined with sports by using an NBA example:

Citizens of countries spread across the globe regularly tune in by satellite broadcasts to National Basketball Association (NBA) games. In these games perform the best male players drawn from North America and Europe. The players use equipment—balls, shoes, uniform, etc.—that is designed in a range of European and North American locations, financed in the USA and assembled in the Pacific Rim. This equipment is then sold on to a mass market across the globe...Several other transnational corporations are also involved in the production and consumption phase of this global cultural product. The product is itself provided by a global media sport production complex and is viewed on a television that was itself manufactured as a part of a global telecommunications network (p.14).

Furthermore, along with this process, the international movement of elite-level coaches, athletes, and sports teams has increased. Athletes from Germany, China, Spain, Mexico and other countries have been pushing forward sports development around the world (Eisenberg, 2003). The idea of athletes moving to other countries to compete in professional sports is described as international labor migration (Bale & Maguire, 1994; Falcous & Maguire, 2005; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield, & Bradley, 2002), which is seen as a profound feature of sports development in the late twentieth century. According to Takahashi and Horne (2006), sociologists and social historians, among others, have been examining the implications of athletic talent migration for different kinds of sports. Research has mainly focused on three questions. First, the impact of athletic talent migration on host countries and native countries, by examining the roles such as sports agents, sports fans and the migrated athletes. Second, the reaction and responses of national sports governing bodies and other sports association to the issue of athlete migration. Third, the implication of athlete migration on conceptions of regional and national identity.

In the book *The Global Sport Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Independent World*, Bale and Maguire (1994) systematically explored the topic of athlete migration. According to the authors, the idea of sports labor migration is associated with a variety of theories such as modernization theory, dependency theory and world system theory. They further attributed the migration of sports labor to the connections of the world economy and globalization. Specifically, Maguire (1999) indicated that during the process of sports labor migration, less developed nations tend to lose the talented sports players who oftentimes move to more powerful nations in the global sports configuration, thus strengthening those powerful

countries' premier sports leagues when, at the same time, "deskilling" the athletes' countries of origin.

Globalization by American companies has caused a need for diversity management. Cultural diversity reflects the fact that different individuals possess unique sets of beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations as well as symbols, customs, languages and behaviors, while at the same time, sharing some commonalities (Adler, 1991; Cox & Beale 1997; DeSensi, 1994; Hofstede, 1980; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). According to Friedman (2005), the role of national culture in business organizations and managing diversity has been studied in the business context for more than 30 years. Managing diversity effectively could "create a climate in which the potential advantages of diversity for organizational or group performance are maximized while the potential disadvantages are minimized" (Cox & Beale, 1997, p. 13).

Based on a review of past literature on diversity management, research has mainly focused on demographic aspects such as gender, race, ethnicity, and social class (Fink, Pastore and Riemer, 2001), while national cultural differences are yet to be examined (Xu & Jiang, 2009). If the diversity of athletes led by the global sports labor migration creates a unique set of values in American sports leagues, it is necessary, therefore, to examine how such unique values could benefit the whole team and international players' teammates. Following is a review of literature on the meaning transfer process, which exists between celebrities and products.

3.3 Meaning Transfer Model and Brand Alliance Theory

A number of scholars (e.g., Atkin & Block, 1983; McCracken 1986, 1988, 1989; Mick 1986; O'Guinn, Faber, Curias, & Schmitt 1989; Sherry & McGrath 1989; Stern, 1988) have indicated that celebrity endorsers involuntarily carry symbolic properties. According to McCracken (1989), those symbolic properties include status, class, gender, age, as well as personality and lifestyle types, which could be transferred from celebrities to consumer goods and from goods to consumers. Moreover, several instruments are typically involved with this transfer process: whereas advertising and fashion systems facilitate the movement of meaning from the endorser to the consumer good, the movement of meanings from consumer goods to individual consumers is accomplished by the efforts of consumers themselves. However, according to Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010), no necessary or motivating relationship exists between the meanings and the product. Rather, the general meaning transfer process begins when the cultural meaning intended for the product is identified. After that, advertisers search for objects, persons, and contexts that already have these meanings in order to turn these meanings into visible and concrete forms through advertisement. During the process, advertisers should pay close attention, emphasizing the core meaning of the objects, persons and contexts, and make them irresistible to the viewer.

McCracken (1989) provided a figure to describe the meaning transfer process in the celebrity endorsement as follows:

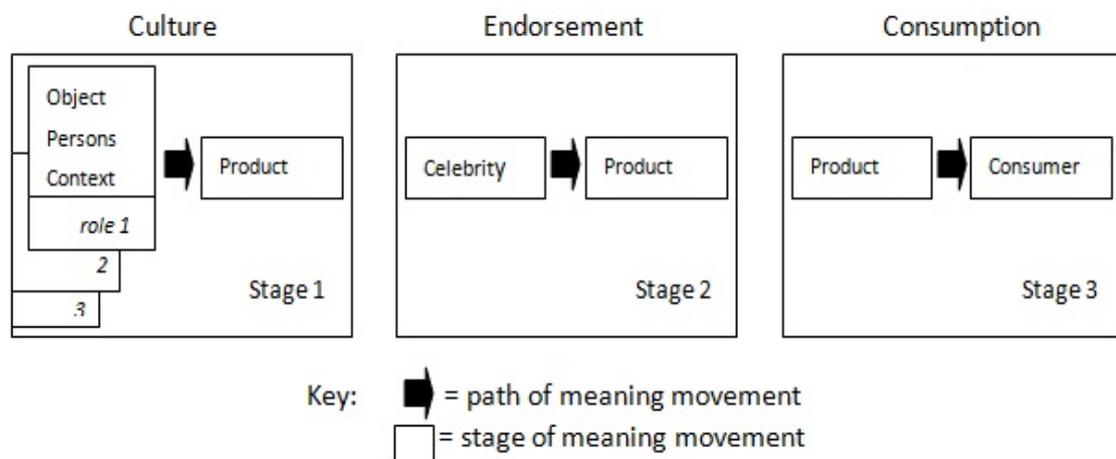


Figure 2. Meaning Movement and Endorsement Process (adopted from McCracken, 1989)

The meaning transfer model shows how the symbolic meaning carried by the celebrities can be passed to the products they endorse, and further, be passed from products to consumers. In addition, Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010) suggested that the meaning transfer model is one form of brand alliance, since both definitions and underlying processes are found to be similar for celebrity endorsement and brand alliances.

Brand Alliance Theory

According to Aaker and Keller (1990), meanings and associations that are embedded in one brand can be transferred to another in a co-branding alliance. A co-branding alliance is defined as “a process of linking the identities, brand equities and attributes of the partners to leverage the associations linked to each brand to enhance their image and reputation” (Halonen-Knight & Hurmerinta, 2010, p. 453). Co-branding is aimed at providing a new and improved perception of the product (Cooke & Ryan, 2000) or to gain benefits which are derived from the alliance partners’ complements (Bucklin & Sengupta, 1993). Moreover, whether brand alliance could influence consumers’ perceptions in a positive way relies on

consumers' pre-existing attitude toward the brand partnership and the perceived fit. If the brand alliance is perceived as favorable to consumers, the brand alliance would enhance the brands in partnership (Simonin & Ruth, 1998).

Both the meaning transfer model and brand alliance theory cover either brand leverage between endorser and brand or between two brands, but neither of them includes human brands. According to Halonen-Knight and Hurmerinta (2010), the strength of both celebrity endorsement and brand alliance is based on the association connected to them, in which their brand equity and leverage power are created. Thus, I can assume that in well-organized sports teams, positive human brand equity could be developed among players.

3.4 Cultural Similarity Theory

The similarity-attraction paradigm, which was first developed by Byrne (1971), argues that leaders and their followers find each other more attractive if they belong to a similar cultural background, since both of them might have common life experiences, beliefs and values. Generally speaking, according to Wu and Jiang (2009), cultural similarity creates an attraction dynamic in which individuals who are culturally similar would pay attention to the positive attributes of each other and derive positive social identity with others having a similar social background.

Similarly, within the American professional sports context, sports fans might be more attracted to the players who share the similar cultural background. According to Thomson (2006), although past literature suggests that the attachment strength is independent from trust, satisfaction, and commitment, the correlation among these terms indicates that it would

be beneficial to building stronger marketing relationship if people could understand how to develop or intensify attachment. This statement is consistent with previous findings that attachment is fundamental to strong brand relationships (Fournier, 1998), connection, affection, and willingness to pay (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park 2005).

3.5 Source Credibility studies

To examine the effectiveness of an endorsement, a variety of models have been developed with the aim of appropriately selecting celebrity endorsers. Based on the literature review on celebrity endorsement over the last three or four decades, Roy and Moorthi (2012) ascertained that two streams of research on celebrity endorsement are apparent. The first is the source credibility stream, while the second covers congruence studies, popularly known as “match-up” studies.

Source credibility, which is based on social psychology literature (Hovland & Weiss, 1952), operates with several dimensions, such as trustworthiness, expertness, dynamism, objectivity, safety, competence, attractiveness, authoritativeness, believability and sociability. Most of these studies did not evaluate the reliability and validity of their scales to measure source credibility and various operations made it difficult to compare results among studies (Pornpitakpan, 2003).

Past literature identified source credibility with three main dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (Ohanian, 1991; Baker & Churchill, 1977; Giffin, 1967; Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; Joseph, 1982; Kahle & Homer, 1985; Maddux & Rogers, 1980; Mills & Harvey, 1972). Expertise was defined as “the extent to which a communicator

is perceived to be a source of valid assertions” (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953) and trustworthiness was referred to “the consumer’s confidence in the source for providing information in an objective and honest manner” (Ohanian, 1991). Attractiveness posits that the effectiveness of a message depends on the source’s physical attractiveness (Pornpitakpan, 2003).

Despite the fact the three dimensions are consistently employed, there have been conflicting opinions about the impact of the three dimensions on consumer behavior (Roy & Moorthi, 2012). Thus, some past research has examined one single dimension of the source credibility, other research has combined two while still another has taken the three dimensions all together. Among these studies, Ohanian (1990) developed the only instrument for measuring the credibility of a celebrity endorser considering all three dimensions at the same time (Roy & Moorthi, 2012). This scale was validated using participants’ self-reported measures of purchasing intention and perception of quality for the products being tested. It has been further tested to confirm its reliability and nomological, convergent, and discriminate validity (Ohanian, 1991; Pornpitakpan, 2003).

In her study, Ohanian (1990) created the measure of celebrity endorsers’ credibility from two exploratory and two confirmatory American samples. The scale consists of 15 semantic differential items encompassing the dimensions of (1) attractiveness (attractive/unattractive, classy/not classy, beautiful/ugly, elegant/plain, and sexy/not sexy), (2) trustworthiness (dependable/undependable, honest/dishonest, reliable/unreliable, sincere/insincere, and trustworthy/untrustworthy), and (3) expertise (expert/not an expert, experienced/inexperienced, knowledgeable/unknowledgeable, qualified/unqualified, and

skilled/unskilled).

However, the scale developed from respondents of one nation/culture may not possess equivalent psychometric properties for people from another nation/culture, especially for two cultures vastly differently from each other as in the case of American and Asian cultures (Pornpitakpan, 2003). Based on Hofstede's power distance dimension, the extent to which people accept the unequal distribution of power in society and organizations is different among various cultures. People in high power distance cultures are more likely to follow the advice of an authority figure. As such, Schaefer, Parker, and Kent (2010) claimed that compared to people living in low power distance cultures (e.g., the US), people in high power distance cultures (e.g., China) appear to be more tolerant of hierarchies and autocratic leadership and are more willing to receive clear directions from leaders. Pornpitakpan (2003) followed Misra and Beatty's (1990) suggestion and carried out research to assess the generalizability of the findings across different populations and context. The results verified that the celebrity endorsement scale developed by Ohanian (1990) based on American samples fits the Singaporean data well with the sincere/insincere item being excluded due to the fact that this item was found in a pilot pretest to be very difficult to evaluate.

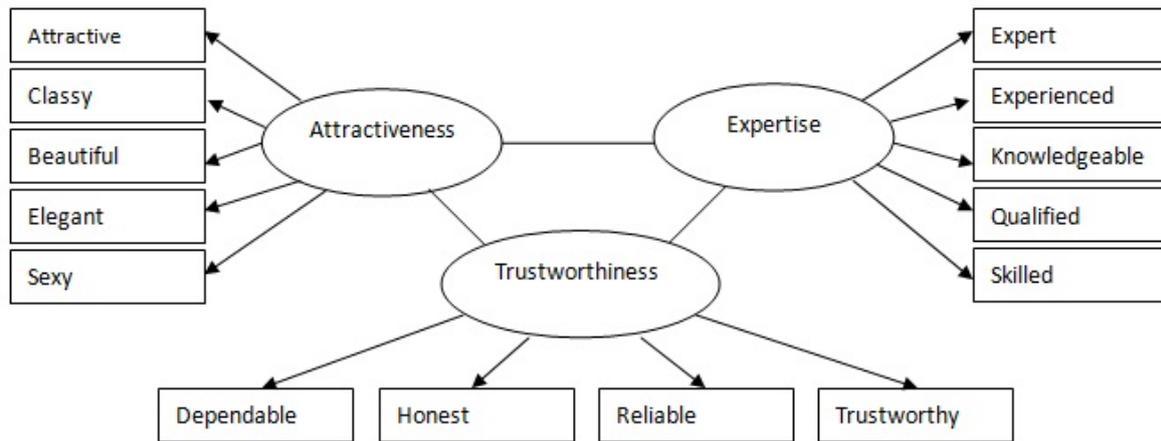


Figure 3. Measurement Model for the Celebrity Endorsers' Credibility Scale (Pornpitakpan, 2003).

Congruence studies

According to Roy and Moorthi (2012), the celebrity-product congruence hypothesis refers to the influence of the congruence or “match-up” between the celebrity and the product advertised with a celebrity endorsement. Particularly, a celebrity endorser may enhance product and advertisement evaluations if the characters of the product match with the image presented by the celebrity (Pornpitakpan, 2003).

Misra and Beatty (1990) found that when the endorser was congruent with the brand, people's recall of the brand information was much higher compared to endorsers who were incongruent with or irrelevant to the brand. However, past research also came with contradictory findings. Research indicated that consumers having positive feelings about a brand are more likely to embrace a brand extension (Yeung & Wyer, 2005). This result would occur even if there were a poor fit between the brand and the consumer, suggesting a high degree of fit between an endorser and brand was not necessary (Thomson, 2006).

Similar to the congruence theory, there are two other theories explaining how an athlete might affect the evaluation of the endorsement (Martin, 1996). One refers to assimilation and contrast effects (Sherif & Hovland, 1961). According to Martin (1996), these effects explain that consumer's evaluation of the new stimuli could be compared to the existing knowledge base. Within respect of athlete endorsement, consumers evaluate the information about the athlete, including the kind of sport he or she plays. If the information matches the prior information consumers have about the product, then the advertisement would be accepted or assimilated into consumers' knowledge paradigm. Additionally, schema congruity theory (Fiske, 1982; Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989; Sujan & Bettman, 1989) may impact endorsement value. A schema is people's expectation of a given domain (Bettman, 1979) and consumer's evaluation of stimuli is organized by the structure of the schema. In the case of an endorsement, Martin (1996) suggested that consumer's evaluation process is based on a comparison between the schema for the product and the schema for the spokesperson. Based on his finding, the perceived degree of congruence between product and athlete would significantly affect the evaluation of the endorsement.

Although the two major endorsement approaches, source credibility theory and congruence theory (Roy & Moorthi, 2012) have been largely studied within the American context, to date, there is little to no research or literature on Chinese populations. In the following section, I will discuss briefly the celebrity endorsement literature in general highlighting studies related to Chinese consumers.

3.6 Celebrity Endorsements in China

One of the most popular advertising strategies used in today's global market is celebrity endorsements (White, 2004). According to McCracken (1986), a celebrity endorser is defined as any individual who enjoys wide recognition in public and uses his or her recognition to promote consumer good by advertising it. Moreover, Stafford, Spears, and Hsu (2003, p.13) provided definition of a celebrity sports endorser as "a famous (athlete or coach) who uses public recognition to recommend or co-present with a product in an ad."

Past literature has examined benefits of using celebrity endorsement (Atkin & Block, 1983; Bush, Martin, & Bush, 2004; Friedman and Friedman, 1979; Spielman, 1981). Benefits included enhancing the chance of ad recall, product desirability and product glamour; capturing and holding attention, even to low-involved products; increasing purchase intention, developing brand loyalty and impacting word-of-mouth in a good way.

The prevalence of global advertising strategies including athlete celebrity endorsers underscores the need for marketing managers and scholars to have knowledge about consumers' perception of celebrity endorsement among different cultures (Schaefer, Parker & Kent, 2010). Moreover, given the high cost of using celebrity endorsement, global marketing managers would take great financial risk without sufficient knowledge and understanding about their consumer in the targeted countries.

Although China is considered to be one of the world's fastest growing sportswear markets (Tong & Hawley, 2009) with annual sporting goods sales revenues of 30-40 billion Chinese yuan (approximately 4.4-5.9 billion U.S. dollars) and a sporting goods market growth rate of 10% in recent years (Business Wire, 2007), little knowledge exists related to

Chinese consumers' perceptions of athlete celebrity endorsement. An exhaustive literature research uncovered only two recent studies about Chinese consumer's attitude toward athlete celebrity endorsers.

Through an experimental design, Liu, Huang, and Minghua (2007) investigated the relationships among attractiveness of endorsers, match-up, and purchase intention in sports marketing in China. They found that high endorser-product match-up could lead to higher purchase intention than the low match-up regardless of the attractiveness of the endorser. Moreover, high-attractive endorser with low endorser-product match-up would cause stronger purchase intention than low-attractive endorser with high match-up level.

Another study by Schaefer et al. (2010) compared American and Chinese consumers' general attitudes toward athlete celebrity endorsers. The findings suggest that under a high power distance culture based on Hofstede's (1980) power distance dimension, Chinese consumers tend to more willingly rely on suggestions from athlete celebrity endorsers when compared to consumers from America. They also suggested future research on this topic to narrow down product types, for example the difference between sports products and non-sports products in order to gain specific insight about Chinese consumers.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Data collection

To capture young Chinese consumers' attitude towards the American teammates of the distinguished Chinese NBA player and the distinguished American NBA player, quantitative survey was used to collect information. A 2×1 between subjects factorial design was employed to manipulate the nationalities of the distinguished NBA players. Two experimental conditions were generated: an American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate and an American NBA player with a distinguished American teammate. The American NBA player in both two conditions was designed to endorse a sports product and a non-sports product in order to test the third hypothesis.

Before carrying out the experiment, special products being used in the experiment were determined through a pre-test among 30 Chinese students. The author gave the student panel three minutes to list both 10 sports products and 10 non-sports products ever endorsed by an athlete as they remembered. The products were later ranked based on the frequency of mention. The two most mentioned products were sports shoes and pharmaceuticals, which represent the types of sports product and non-sports product for this design.

As to the endorser and his distinguished teammate, a scenario design was used. There are several benefits of using a fictitious figure with respect to experimental control. First, well-known celebrities could cause significant amount of variation in subjects' knowledge and attitudes toward that person. Second, unintended spurious confusion could be minimized by using a fictitious endorser (Till & Busler, 2000). By sacrificing some ecological validity,

construct validity is improved by minimizing spurious confusion and statistical conclusion validity attributable to minimizing within-group variation. Furthermore, in order to eliminate the preference (and bias) to a specific sports category and various levels of expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness, these variables are all controlled by using the same description except for the nationalities of the endorser's distinguished teammates (see Appendix A). The two scenarios were modified from those used by Liu, Huang, and Minghua (2007) in a research experiment to examine relations among attractiveness of endorsers, match-up, and purchase intention in sports marketing in China. Guided by Smith and Bolton's (2002) study, all scenarios were further pre-tested for validity by using the Chinese student panel mentioned above. Based on the response of the students, the scenarios were seen to be realistic and trustworthy.

A convenience sample of Chinese international students was drawn for both experimental groups. Although using student samples has been criticized with regard to generalizability, according to Calder, Philips and Tybout (1981), these two samples could be seen as appropriate for this study since they provided homogeneity in participants for the two scenarios (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Moreover, Cui and Song (2009) indicated that the size of China's middle class (\$6K to \$25K annual income) is predicted to increase from 130 million to 340 million by 2016. Chinese people who are college students today attract the attention of marketers due to their future earnings potential (Schaefer, Parker, & Kent, 2010) and young adults are also more susceptible to celebrity endorser influence (Kaikati, 1987). Furthermore, they also pointed out that, even today college students in China and the US may be a highly desirable target market segment for products endorsed by athletes (e.g. sporting goods,

financial services, soft drinks).

The content and format of the questionnaire had been approved by the University of Illinois' Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B.) The two types of survey were distributed to Chinese undergraduate student subjects after pilot testing. The survey was conducted between March 20th and May 12th. Students were mainly reached during classes, Chinese student activities and libraries to take part in the survey questionnaires in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before the survey, consent forms were given and explained. Students who consented were able to participate later. Those who demonstrated a reading disorder were excluded from the study. Moreover, students from Taiwan, Hongkong, Macao and those who were born in other countries outside of China but perceived themselves as Chinese were excluded from the study due to the background difference with students who were born in mainland China. To further avoid repetition, student were asked whether they had taken the survey before they started. Each survey questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

A total of 362 questionnaires were distributed with half serving as controls. Questionnaires were sent to participants through email and delivered in person. Students were asked to confirm that they were undergraduates born in mainland China before they started answering the questionnaire. They were further provided with the cover letter, which explained the goal of the study and required that each student participated in this study voluntarily (see Appendix C). For the first scenario containing a distinguished Chinese NBA player, 157 completed questionnaires were analyzable. For the second scenario which included a distinguished American NBA player, 164 questionnaires were completed and

analyzable, thus the response rate were 86.7% and 90.6%, respectively.

4.2 Pre-test

The pre-test was administrated to 30 Chinese international students in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The sample consisted of 16 males and 14 females. Responses to the survey were coded and entered into a statistical analysis program (SPSS). Content validity was assessed on the basis of a literature review and expert opinions as described in the development of the measurement in the preceding paragraphs. The Cronbach's alpha for the original construct was 0.936. Based on the result, the item "I feel controlled and pressured to be certain ways" in the first model was deleted due to its negative correlation. Correspondingly, the Alpha value increased from 0.936 to 0.941.

4.3 Sample characteristics

The characteristics of the samples are shown in the table below based on the 321 completed questionnaires. The sample consisted of 223 males (69.5%) and 98 females (30.5%) in total. There were 111 males (70.7%) and 46 females (29.3%) for the first scenario and 112 males (68.3%) and 53 females (31.7%) for the second. Moreover, a large portion of the participants were freshman (43.0%) and the rest of the subjects were in their second (20.9%), third (15.9%) and fourth year (20.2%). When speaking about participants' interest in sports, there were similarities in the number who perceived themselves as fans (47.0%) and non-fans (53.0%) for the two scenarios in total.

Table 4

Characteristics of the Respondents

Questionnaire	Characteristics of the respondents		Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Total	Gender				
		Male	223	69.5%	
		Female	98	30.5%	
	Year in college				
		Freshman	138	43.0%	
		Sophomore	67	20.9%	
		Junior	51	15.9%	
		Senior	65	20.2%	
	Sports Interest				
		Fan	151	47.0%	
Non-fan		170	53.0%		
Scenario One	Gender				
		Male	111	70.7%	
		Female	46	29.3%	
	Year in college				
		Freshman	61	38.9%	
		Sophomore	47	29.9%	
		Junior	28	17.8%	
		Senior	21	13.4%	
	Sports Interest				
		Fan	71	45.2%	
Non-fan		86	54.8%		
Scenario Two	Gender				
		Male	112	68.3%	
		Female	52	31.7%	
	Year in college				
		Freshman	77	47.0%	
		Sophomore	20	12.2%	
		Junior	23	14.0%	
		Senior	44	26.8%	
	Sports Interest				
		Fan	80	48.8%	
Non-fan		84	51.2%		

4.4 Questionnaire design

The survey consisted of 10 questions designed to measure the three hypotheses (see Appendix A). The survey instrument consisted of three parts. The first part measured respondents' level of attachment toward the distinguished basketball player and his teammate. In order to assess the level of attachment Chinese consumers have toward featured basketball players, a scale was drawn from Thomson (2006). Thomson examined the A-R-C needs as related to attachment and confirmed autonomy and relatedness as significant. Both needs were measured with four items adapted from Thomson (2006). To verify the effectiveness of endorser strategy, the source credibility model and the match-up hypothesis model are commonly-used. Thus, the second part of the survey measured the relationship between attachment to the endorser and the endorser's credibility.

The second section included questions designed to measure the differences in consumers' purchase intention with regards to differences in product types the basketball player endorses. Moreover, with respect to purchase intention, the measure was taken directly from Liu, Huang, and Minghua's (2007) research on Chinese students. Respondents were asked their purchase intention by indicating their level of agreement with the statements as "I'm glad to buy this product," "I will not consider buying this product" and "I'm glad to recommend this product to others." The three-item scale was verified to be of high reliability. The last part of the survey included questions aimed at collecting socio-economic information about the subjects.

A 6-point Likert scale, excluding the neutral rating, was employed to measure each of the dependent variables in the present survey. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent

of their agreement (anchored by “1” being “extremely disagree”, “2” being “strongly disagree”, “3” being “somewhat disagree”, “4” being “somewhat agree”, “5” being “strongly agree” and “6” being “extremely agree”). The author prefers to have respondents choose either the positive or negative end of the scale since the only manipulation the author makes for the two scenarios is to change the nationality of the endorser’s distinguished teammate. Thus the author preferred the absence of a neutral answer choice under such a condition. For all variables in the current study, each variable has one item phrased in the reverse meaning by adding a negative prefix to the original item used and verified in previous studies (Benson & Hocevar, 2005). By doing this, it would benefit author to detect acquiescence bias, the tendency to respond in an indiscriminately positive way and to improve the understanding of the construct by forcing participants to think about its opposite (Altermatt, 2013). Lastly, because English fluency is required for admission of Chinese students to U.S. institutions, all participants receive the same questionnaire, written in English.

4.5 Data analysis

All data were entered in MS Excel by the author for analysis in software programs. Forms of frequency distributions and percentages were applied whenever appropriate. Specifically, for the first hypothesis, the author used the independent-samples t-test to compare the differences in people’s attachment to distinguished basketball players (Chinese and American) and his American teammates under the two scenarios. For the second hypothesis, the author used the SAS software to conduct canonical analysis to examine the relationship between the level of attachment and how valuable people perceive the person as

a product endorser. For the third hypothesis, the author compared the difference in the endorsers' credibility and people's purchase intention when the athlete endorsing a sport product and a non-sport product by using paired-samples t test.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the author presents results based on the results of the survey. These findings are organized into two sections; the first section corresponds to the first hypothesis and the second section corresponds to the second and third hypotheses. In the first section, the author presents the result for the hypothesis as to whether the existence of a distinguished Chinese NBA player would increase Chinese international students' feeling of attachment to his typical American teammates. In the second section, the hypothesis about whether Chinese international students' feeling of attachment to the typical American teammate would affect the athlete's credibility level in terms of being a product endorser was examined. Moreover, the results of data analysis further showcased whether such credibility levels and people's purchasing intentions would be different if the typical American NBA player were to endorse a sports product and a non-sports product.

5.1 Feelings of attachment of Chinese international students

In the first part of the two questionnaires, Chinese international students were asked to rate responses on a scale used to measure people's feeling of attachment to a human brand. In the seven item scale of the current study, "relatedness" and "autonomy" were further measured by four items and three items, respectively.

Table 5 shows the differences in means for each item measuring people's feeling of attachment from the two groups. For the survey describing a scenario of a distinguished Chinese NBA player, the lowest rated item ("I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity")

received a mean of 3.344 and the highest rated item (“I feel that my choices express my ‘true’ self”) received a mean of 4.268. On the survey describing a scenario of a distinguished American NBA player, the lowest rated item was “I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for” with a mean of 3.360; the highest rated item was “I feel that my choices express my ‘true’ self” with a mean of 3.787. Moreover, the mean of all seven items measuring the feeling of attachment for the distinguished Chinese NBA player and the distinguished American NBA player were 3.822 and 3.566, respectively. As is shown in Table 5, among the seven items, except for one (“I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity”), in which the mean for the distinguished American NBA player (M=3.476) was slightly higher than the distinguished Chinese NBA player (M=3.344), the means for the distinguished Chinese player were all higher than for the distinguished American player.

Furthermore, the author examined whether the means of the two sample distributions differed significantly from each other through an independent-samples t test. The results are shown in Table 6. This independent-samples t test analysis indicated that five out of 7 means for the two distinguished NBA players differed significantly at the $p < 0.05$ level, from which the author can infer that Chinese international students’ feelings of attachment for the distinguished Chinese NBA player and the distinguished American NBA player were significantly different. The two means that did not show a significant difference between the two groups were for the options “I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity” and “I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me.” Based on the data presented in the two tables, the findings were consistent with previous literature that cultural similarity creates an attraction dynamic in which people who are culturally similar will generally pay more

attention and derive positive social identity to the others with a similar background (Wu & Jiang, 2009). Specifically, for the four items describing the construct “relatedness,” two of them were significantly different between the two scenarios while all three means of items describing the construct “autonomy” were significantly different. The author thus could further infer from the above findings that compared to a distinguished American NBA player, Chinese international students felt more attached to a distinguished Chinese NBA player, and within the two concepts that described the feeling of attachment, the difference for “autonomy” was more significantly different than “relatedness.” Hence the major reason for the fact that Chinese international students had a higher feeling of attachment to the distinguished Chinese NBA player rather than the distinguished American NBA player was due to the fact that the former one provided subjects with a strong sense of autonomy.

Table 5

Differences in Means of the feelings of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players

Construct	Statement	Scenarios	Responses	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Relatedness	I feel loved and cared about	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.860	1.0219	
		Distinguished American player	164	3.488	.9431	
	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.344	.8895	
		Distinguished American player	164	3.476	.8541	
	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.758	.9634	
		Distinguished American player	164	3.360	.8854	
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.688	1.0306	
		Distinguished American player	164	3.482	1.0823	
	Autonomy	He makes me feel free to be who I am	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.828	.8487
			Distinguished American player	164	3.616	.9554
		I feel free to do things my own way I	Distinguished Chinese player	157	4.006	.8125
			Distinguished American player	164	3.750	.9488
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self		Distinguished Chinese player	157	4.268	.8426	
		Distinguished American player	164	3.787	1.0436	

* Based on a six point Likert scale in which 1 = extremely disagree; 6 = extremely agree

Table 6

Independent-samples t test for differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players

Construct	Statement	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference
Relatedness	I feel loved and cared about	3.392	319	.001*	.3721	.1097
	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	-1.353	319	.177	-.1317	.0973
	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	3.858	319	.000*	.3982	.1032
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	1.746	319	.082	.2062	.1181
Autonomy	He makes me feel free to be who I am	2.100	319	.036*	.2122	.1010
	I feel free to do things my own way I	2.604	315.147	.010*	.2564	.0985
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	4.552	310.256	.000*	.4809	.1057

Note: * significant at $p < .05$

Moreover, the primary goal of the first hypothesis was to examine whether Chinese international students' feeling of attachment to a typical American NBA player would be different in situations when he has either a distinguished Chinese teammate or a distinguished American teammate. As shown in Table 5 and Table 6, Chinese international students felt more attached to a distinguished Chinese NBA player than they felt to a distinguished American NBA player, which can be attributed to the fact that people are more likely to feel attachment to another person if they are culturally similar. Subjects were further asked to rate their feeling of attachment to a typical American teammate of the two distinguished NBA

players. The typical American players were described exactly the same in the two questionnaires. Table 7 shows the differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the typical American basketball players described the same way. For each item, the mean of the typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate was higher than the mean for the one with a distinguished American player, which implies that participants tended to feel more attached to the typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate than the one with a distinguished American teammate. Of the means of the typical American player with a distinguished Chinese teammate, the lowest rated mean was 3.312 for the item “I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity” and highest rated mean was 4.382 for the item “I feel that my choices express my ‘true’ self.” Of the means of the typical American player with a distinguished American teammate, the means of the items “I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity” and “I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for” were the lowest at 3.311, while the mean of the item “I feel that my choices express my ‘true’ self” was the highest at 3.829. The average mean for the seven items for the typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate was 3.715 and the average mean for the one with a distinguished American teammate was 3.482.

The author further carried out an independent-samples t test analysis to examine whether the means for each item differed significantly. Based on the results shown in Table 8, four out of 7 means differed significantly at the $p < 0.05$ significant level. Compared to the differences in means for the two distinguished NBA players, the differences in means for the same typical American NBA player were not as large.

The author then further compare the differences between the feeling of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players and the differences between the two typical American NBA players. Based on Table 6 and Table 8, the differences in means for the distinguished Chinese NBA player and the distinguished American NBA player were more significant than the differences in means for the two typical American NBA players under the two scenarios. Specifically, for the four items describing “relatedness,” two means out of four were significantly different with each other, both in Table 6 and Table 8. However, for the three items describing “autonomy,” all three means were significantly different in Table 6, while only two of three showed a significant difference in Table 8. The results indicated that even though the feeling of attachment of Chinese international students to the typical American NBA players were significantly different, the difference was slightly less significant than the difference for the two distinguished NBA players and such difference was resulted from the difference in autonomy. The author further interweaved the four tables above together into a bigger picture. For the four items describing “relatedness,” two out of four were significantly different between the two distinguished NBA players and still two of four were significantly different between the two typical American NBA players, the author thus could infer that during the meaning transfer process, the power of relatedness was not diminished. However, for the three items describing “autonomy,” all three items were significantly different between the two distinguished NBA players; however when it came to the two typical American NBA players, the items that were significantly different decreased from three to two, which means that during the meaning transfer process, the power of autonomy declined.

Table 7

Differences in Means of the feelings of attachment for the American basketball players described the same way in two scenarios

Construct	Statement	Scenarios	Responses	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relatedness	I feel loved and cared about	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.662	.8130
		Distinguished American player	164	3.439	.9541
	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.312	1.0306
		Distinguished American player	164	3.311	.8762
	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.529	.9972
		Distinguished American player	164	3.311	.9943
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.522	.9713
		Distinguished American player	164	3.280	.9691
Autonomy	He makes me feel free to be who I am	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.790	.9060
		Distinguished American player	164	3.524	.9935
	I feel free to do things my own way I	Distinguished Chinese player	157	3.809	.9617
		Distinguished American player	164	3.683	1.0016
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	Distinguished Chinese player	157	4.382	1.0161
		Distinguished American player	164	3.829	.9883

* Based on a six point Likert scale in which 1 = extremely disagree; 6 = extremely agree

Table 8

Independent-samples t test for differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the American basketball players described the same way

Construct	Statement	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error difference
Relatedness	I feel loved and cared about	2.253	319	.025*	.2234	.0991
	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	.011	319	.992	.0011	.1066
	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	1.958	319	.051	.2177	.1112
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	2.232	319	.026*	.2418	.1083
Autonomy	He makes me feel free to be who I am	2.498	319	.013*	.2654	.1063
	I feel free to do things my own way I	1.149	319	.252	.1260	.1097
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	4.939	317.379	.000*	.5529	.1119

Note: * significant at $p < .05$

5.2 Feelings of attachment and endorser's credibility level

Having established that Chinese students felt more attached to a teammate of a distinguished Chinese NBA player rather than to a teammate of a distinguished American NBA player, in the following two sections, results for Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 will further explain whether such feelings of attachment are correlated to the athlete's credibility level as a product endorser, and whether the types of products endorsed would affect the athlete's credibility level as well as people's purchasing intentions. Moreover, due to the fact that the goal of this research was to examine the influence brought by a distinguished Chinese

NBA player to a typical American teammate, the analyses for the last two hypotheses were carried out mainly under the first scenario. Next, the author will first show whether there is a correlation between the feelings of attachment and the typical American NBA player's credibility level when endorsing both a sports product and a non-sports product through a canonical correlation analysis. Lastly, the author will compare the means of the difference in the athlete's credibility level for sports and non-sports products and the means of difference in Chinese international students' purchasing intention for the sports and non-sports products endorsed by the typical American NBA player. This will in turn allow us to decipher whether the types of product would affect the typical American NBA player's credibility level as an endorser as well as Chinese international students' purchasing intentions.

5.2.1 The correlation between the feeling of attachment and the endorser's credibility level

As mentioned in the first section, the scale used to measure Chinese international students' feeling of attachment was comprised of seven items. After finishing the first part of the questionnaire, participants were further asked to rate responses on a scale which measured the typical American NBA player's credibility level when he endorsed a sports product and a non-sports product. The scale used to measure endorser's credibility level contained 15 items. The rating was done on a six-point scale, with a score of 1 indicating extreme disagreement and a score of 6 indicating extreme agreement. Canonical correlation analysis has been used to study the correlation between two sets of variables (Anderson, 2003). In the current study, the feelings of attachment and the endorser's credibility level were the two sets being

analyzed.

Canonical correlation analysis for a sports product

Table 9 shows the result of the canonical correlation analysis for the case when the typical NBA player endorsed sports footwear. Footwear was chosen by a panel of Chinese international students to represent a kind of sports product during a pre-test. The data to be analyzed came from a random sample of $n=157$ Chinese undergraduate students in the first scenario. There were $p = 7$ variables in the first group leading to attachment level and $q = 15$ variables in the second group leading to credibility level. The very first thing to be determined is if there is any relationship between the two sets of variables at all. To test for independence between the attachment level and the credibility level first consider a multivariate multiple regression model where the author is predicting, in this case, attachment variables from the credibility variables. There are p multiple regressions, each multiple regression predicting one of the variables in the first group from the q variables in the second group. The author has multiple regressions predicting the $p = 7$ attachment variables from the $q = 15$ credibility variables. The author wishes to test the null hypothesis that these regression coefficients are all equal to zero, which means the first set of variables is independent from the second set of variables. SAS reported that the Wilk's lambda $\Lambda = 0.135$; $F = 3.05$; d.f. = 105; $p < 0.0001$. Wilks' lambda is ratio of two variance matrices. Here the author rejected the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between the two sets of variables due to the fact that value of the statistics was too small, hence the two sets of variables as attachment level and credibility level were dependent. Note also that the above null hypothesis is equivalent to

testing the null hypothesis that all p canonical variate pairs are uncorrelated. Since Wilk's lambda was significant, and since the canonical correlations are ordered from largest to smallest, the author can conclude that at least $\rho^*1 \neq 0$. Moreover, based on data presented in Table 9, first five canonical variate pairs are all correlated at $p < .05$. Specifically, the first three pairs showed high significance as $p < 0.0001$. Thus, the author could conclude that the canonical correlation between the two concepts was found in most cases to be significant when the typical American NBA player endorsed a sports product.

Once the hypotheses of independence between the two sets have been rejected, the next step is to obtain estimates of canonical correlation. As presented in Table 9, the first "canonical correlation" had a value of 0.7191. Moreover, the squared values of the canonical variate pairs, found in the last column, can be interpreted much in the same way as r^2 values are interpreted. If the author defines U and V as the first and second set of linear combination, the author sees that 51.71% of the variation in U_1 is explained by the variation in V_1 . The first canonical correlation in our study appeared to be substantially larger than any of the between-set correlations and implies that the first canonical correlation is of great importance.

Table 9

Canonical correlation analysis for the typical American NBA player endorsing a sports product

Canonical Correlation Analysis					Test of H0: The canonical correlations in the current row and all that follow are zero				
	Canonical Correlation	Adjusted Canonical Correlation	Approximate Standard Error	Squared Canonical Correlation	Likelihood Ratio	Approximate F Value	Num DF	Den DF	Pr > F
1	0.7191	0.6685	0.0387	0.5171	0.135	3.05	105	873.42	<.0001*
2	0.5703	0.4735	0.0540	0.3253	0.280	2.33	84	764.4	<.0001*
3	0.5027	0.3977	0.0598	0.2527	0.415	2.05	65	651.38	<.0001*
4	0.4597	.	0.0631	0.2113	0.555	1.83	48	533.63	0.0008*
5	0.4075	0.3771	0.0668	0.1661	0.704	1.57	33	410.22	0.0255*
6	0.3054	0.2108	0.0726	0.0933	0.845	1.23	20	280	0.2250
7	0.2619	.	0.0746	0.0686	0.931	1.15	9	141	0.3293
Multivariate Statistics and F Approximations									
Statistic		Value	F Value	Num DF	Den DF	Pr > F			
Wilks' Lambda		0.135	3.05	105	873.42	<.0001			
Pillai's Trace		1.634	2.86	105	987	<.0001			
Hotelling-Lawley Trace		2.535	3.22	105	597.27	<.0001			
Roy's Greatest Root		1.071	10.07	15	141	<.0001			

Note: * significant at $p < .05$

The standardized canonical coefficients presented in Table 10 show that the first canonical variable for the Attachment group is a weighted sum of the 7 variables. Based on the result, the author can see the variable “I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me” (0.6047) and “I feel that my choices express my ‘true’ self” (0.5936) were important. The variable “I feel loved and cared about” was near 0. Thus, a person who feels close and connected to an important athlete and who feels his or her choices express the ‘true’ self would rate a high score on the attachment level. The coefficients for the credibility level

showed that the degree of first five variables which described an endorser's attractiveness weighed more than the second five variables which described reliability and the third five variables describing expertness, even though the difference among the three was not significant. Thus, the author could infer that when a typical American NBA player endorses a sports product Chinese university students' feeling of attachment to him would enhance his attractiveness as an endorser slightly more, compared to reliability and expertness.

Further interpretation based on the data from SAS output is presented in Table 11. The first "canonical correlation" mostly explained the relationship between the two attachment variables as "I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me" and "I feel that my choices express my 'true' self" and the credibility variable as "Classy". As stated above, the first three canonical pairs showed high significance, thus the author further examined the next two canonical correlations. The second "canonical correlation" manifested the relationship between "I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity" and items as "Reliable," "Trustworthy (-)" and "Expert." Lastly, the third significant canonical pair indicated a relationship between "I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for," "I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me (-)," "I feel free to do things my own way" and items "Ugly," "Sexy." Thus, people with higher level of attachment to the endorser tended to see the endorser as "Classy," "Reliable," "Trustworthy," "Expert," "Ugly (reversed meaning)" and "Sexy," in which there were three variables describing "attractiveness," two variables describing "reliability" but only one for "expertness." The results indicated that, when a typical American NBA player endorses a sports product, his attractiveness would be more related to Chinese international students'

feeling of attachment to him, and his reliability would be related less and his expertness would be the one that relates least to people's feeling of attachment to him.

Table 10
Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Sports Product

Standardized Canonical Coefficients for the Attachment Variables							
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
I feel loved and cared about	0.0554	0.4557	0.3511	-0.5398	-0.74	0.2078	0.2112
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	-0.2355	0.7684	0.2458	0.2841	0.4854	-0.0603	0.026
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	-0.1145	-0.3449	0.7296	-0.2955	0.4196	-0.9062	-0.1386
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	0.6047	0.2151	-0.7742	0.2451	0.1124	-0.2304	0.6157
He makes me feel free to be who I am	0.2653	0.1756	-0.4047	-0.5048	0.5056	0.8564	-0.2603
I feel free to do things my own way	-0.2343	-0.4897	0.5769	0.387	0.1106	0.4174	0.6839
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	0.5936	0.1649	0.3413	0.4556	-0.1318	-0.204	-0.7608
Standardized Canonical Coefficients for the Credibility Variables							
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Attractive	-0.1129	0.3107	0.0764	-0.2666	0.3135	0.2203	0.3794
Classy	0.4109	-0.3838	-0.2911	0.1304	0.1364	-0.0812	-0.3075
Ugly	-0.1305	-0.0443	0.517	0.3777	0.4519	-0.5537	0.4823
Elegant	0.3224	0.0308	-0.17	-0.2524	0.2777	0.0893	-0.3262
Sexy	0.1385	0.0449	0.7263	-0.3237	0.1153	0.36	-0.0696
Undependable	-0.0869	0.1076	-0.3543	-0.7301	-0.1689	0.2609	-0.5002
Honest	-0.0755	-0.2282	-0.0984	-0.3557	0.1654	-0.1088	0.2417
Reliable	0.0088	0.5724	0.3484	0.4	-0.3378	-0.3447	0.1573
Sincere	0.2429	-0.368	0.2892	0.0334	-0.7977	0.3526	0.232
Trustworthy	-0.2664	-0.595	0.4216	-0.2285	0.2228	-0.3854	-0.5092
Expert	0.2901	0.7162	-0.0341	0.3083	0.5304	0.5933	0.6898
Experienced	0.009	-0.4881	-0.2731	0.2224	0.1117	-0.6492	0.0467
Knowledgeable	0.2311	-0.1512	-0.105	-0.7015	-0.0186	-0.3106	0.5106
Qualified	0.0149	0.3668	0.2325	-0.1082	-0.5577	0.3619	-0.0282
Unskilled	-0.1878	-0.4095	0.1796	-0.0852	0.0654	0.4884	0.6142

Table 11

The Interpretation of the Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Sports Product

	V	W	Corr (V, W)
1	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	Classy	0.7191
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self		
2	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	Reliable, Trustworthy (-), Expert	0.5703
3	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	Ugly, Sexy	0.5027
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me		
	I feel free to do things my own way		
4	I feel loved and cared about (-)	Undependable (-), Knowledgeable (-)	0.4597
	He makes me feel free to be who I am (-)		
5	I feel loved and cared about (-)	Sincere (-), Expert, Qualified (-)	0.4075
	He makes me feel free to be who I am		
6	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for (-)	Ugly (-), Expert, Experienced (-)	0.3054
	He makes me feel free to be who I am		
7	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	Undependable (-), Trustworthy (-), Expert, Knowledgeable, Unskilled	0.2619
	I feel free to do things my own way		
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self (-)		

Canonical correlation analysis for a non-sports product

Table 12 presents the canonical correlation analysis which examined the relationship between the attachment level and the endorser's credibility level when the typical American NBA player endorsed a non-sports product. Based on the value of the Wilk's lambda reported by SAS, I rejected the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between the two sets of variables. However, unlike the results shown in Table 10, only three out of 7 canonical correlations were significant at or below the .05 level. Compared with the results when the typical American NBA player endorsed a sports product, the canonical correlation between

the two concepts was less significant when the same person endorsed a non-sports product. Specifically, as shown in Table 10, the first “canonical correlation” has a value of 0.7131 and the second one has a value of 0.5358. Since the first and second canonical correlation had a $p < .0001$, these two pairs were of great importance.

Table 12
Canonical correlation analysis for the typical American NBA player endorsing a non-sports product

Canonical Correlation Analysis					Test of H0: The canonical correlations in the current row and all that follow are zero				
	Canonical Correlation	Adjusted Canonical Correlation	Approximate Standard Error	Squared Canonical Correlation	Likelihood Ratio	Approximate F Value	Num DF	Den DF	Pr > F
1	0.7131	0.6626	0.0394	0.5085	0.170	2.65	105	873.42	<.0001*
2	0.5358	0.3905	0.0571	0.2871	0.346	1.91	84	764.4	<.0001*
3	0.5079	.	0.0594	0.2580	0.486	1.65	65	651.38	0.0015*
4	0.4576	.	0.0633	0.2094	0.655	1.29	48	533.63	0.0972
5	0.2959	0.1489	0.0731	0.0875	0.829	0.82	33	410.22	0.7522
6	0.2511	.	0.0750	0.0630	0.908	0.69	20	280	0.8336
7	0.1758	0.0969	0.0776	0.0309	0.969	0.50	9	141	0.8730
Multivariate Statistics and F Approximations									
Statistic		Value	F Value	Num DF	Den DF	Pr > F			
Wilks' Lambda		0.170	2.65	105	873.42	<.0001			
Pillai's Trace		1.444	2.44	105	987	<.0001			
Hotelling-Lawley Trace		2.245	2.85	105	597.27	<.0001			
Roy's Greatest Root		1.036	9.72	15	141	<.0001			

*Note: * significant at $p < .05$*

The coefficients were reported in two sections in Table 13. The first is for the attachment variables and the second is for the credibility variables. According to the results,

“I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me” (0.602) was an important factor, meaning a person who feels close and connected to an important athlete would rate a high score on the attachment level. Thus, combining the results presented in Table 11 and Table 13, I could draw a conclusion that the item of “I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me” was the most important indicator for the feeling of attachment in both scenarios. Moreover, the first canonical variable for the credibility variables showed a relatively small difference among items describing attractiveness, reliability and expertness.

Moreover, the author also made further interpretation based on the results presented in Table 13 and Table 14. Since the first two canonical correlations were of great importance, I will focus on the first two pairs. As we could see from the first canonical correlation, it showed a strong relationship between the items of “I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity,” “I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me” and “Sincere.” Interestingly, when the typical American NBA player endorsed a sports product, the feeling of attachment was strongly related to the item “Classy,” which was used to describe “Attractiveness,” however when it came to endorsing a non-sports product, the feeling of attachment became a stronger indicator for “Reliability.” The author further combined the results for the second canonical correlation with the first canonical correlation. The author found that the feeling of attachment was a strong indicator for “Sincere,” “Attractive,” “Elegant,” “Honest” and “Qualified,” in which two were used for describing “Attractiveness” and two were used for describing “Reliability” and the last one was used for describing “Expertness.” The overall patterns for indicating the credibility level for the sports and non-sports product were similar: For both types of product, the feeling of attachment was

related to “Expertness” the least. However, for the sports product, the attachment level was a strong indicator for “Attractiveness,” whereas for the non-sports product, the attachment level was a good measure for “Reliability.”

Table 13

Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Non-sports Product

Standardized Canonical Coefficients for the Attachment Variables							
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
I feel loved and cared about	0.125 2	0.291	0.2127	-0.7416	-0.446 5	0.596 3	-0.102
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	-0.575 9	0.2367	-0.3107	0.4632	0.061 2	0.566 3	-0.060 9
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	-0.148 3	0.693	0.4095	0.4604	0.000 5	-0.481 6	-0.808 9
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	0.602	-0.0174	-0.6443	0.4552	-0.449 6	-0.019 6	0.5732
He makes me feel free to be who I am	0.210 9	0.0839	-0.6703	-0.4948	0.857 6	0.180 1	0.2511
I feel free to do things my own way	-0.488 1	0.3367	0.6362	0.0213	0.026 6	-0.265 6	0.7768
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	0.424 7	-0.3205	0.4591	0.5271	0.337	0.533	-0.414 8
Standardized Canonical Coefficients for the Credibility Variables							
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
Attractive	0.2893	-0.6288	0.365	-0.1711	1.0626	0.0376	-0.6671
Classy	0.3904	0.2127	-0.3261	-0.1526	0.0597	0.4247	-0.3022
Ugly	-0.1727	-0.1324	-0.2567	-0.1986	-0.1975	0.7809	-0.1397
Elegant	-0.1686	0.6608	-0.02	0.0452	0.5259	0.0525	-0.0152
Sexy	-0.006	-0.4684	0.3406	0.6784	-0.7894	-0.2164	-0.5316
Undependable	-0.3368	0.0234	0.2096	0.2405	0.4666	-0.9511	0.2433
Honest	-0.3661	0.6665	-0.2667	-0.2776	-0.0086	-0.1111	0.1418
Reliable	-0.1861	-0.0832	0.7179	-0.4729	0.0348	0.8217	-0.7774
Sincere	0.4839	-0.6586	-0.7736	0.083	0.3065	-0.3476	0.0222
Trustworthy	-0.0114	-0.2326	0.6643	0.5752	-0.6071	0.0729	0.966
Expert	0.2336	0.4882	-0.3777	-0.4863	-0.5603	-0.8623	0.0647
Experienced	0.2073	0.0539	0.4538	0.0874	0.7019	0.4679	1.0019
Knowledgeable	0.1938	0.2372	0.1855	-0.4473	-0.1671	-0.0301	0.3216
Qualified	-0.323	0.5502	-0.0517	0.9826	-0.284	-0.3228	-0.4072
Unskilled	-0.0571	0.1771	0.6979	0.2827	0.4268	-0.4443	-0.3267

Table 14

The Interpretation of the Standardized Canonical Coefficients for Non-sports Product

	V	W	Corr (V, W)
1	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity (-)	Sincere	0.7131
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me		
2	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	Attractive (-), Elegant, Honest, Sincere (-), Qualified	0.5358
3	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me (-)	Reliable, Sincere (-),	0.5079
	He makes me feel free to be who I am (-)	Trustworthy,	
	I feel free to do things my own way	Unskilled	
4	I feel loved and cared about (-)	Sexy, Trustworthy, Qualified	0.4576
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self		
5	He makes me feel free to be who I am	Attractive, Elegant, Sexy (-), Trustworthy (-), Expert (-), Experienced	0.2959
6	I feel loved and cared about	Ugly,	0.2511
	I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	Undependable (-),	
	I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	Reliable, Expert (-)	
7	I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for (-)	Attractive (-), Sexy (-), Reliable (-), Trustworthy, Experienced	0.1758
	I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me		
	I feel free to do things my own way		

5.2.2 The differences between a sports and a non-sports product

Hypothesis 3 proposed that the source credibility level and Chinese international students' purchasing intention would be different when the typical American NBA player endorsed a sports product and a non-sports product. A paired-samples t test, which is usually based on groups of individuals who experience both conditions of the variables of interest, was applied

to test Hypothesis 3. In the current study, the typical American NBA player endorsing a sports product and non-sports product were regarded as two conditions.

Differences in the endorser's credibility level

Table 15 first shows the means of difference for endorser's credibility level for sports and non-sports products. For 13 out of 15 items measuring the endorser's credibility level, the means of the sports product were all higher than that of the non-sports product. The exceptions were the items "knowledgeable" and "unskilled." These results indicate that when the typical American NBA player endorsed a sports product, Chinese international students found his credibility level to be higher compared to the situation when he endorsed a non-sports product. Specifically, since the two exceptions were both in the category of "expertness," the author could further conclude that the type of products would not affect the typical American NBA player's expertness as an endorser for Chinese international students. In order to further examine whether the differences between the two types of product were significant or not, a paired-samples t test analysis was presented in Table 16. In total, 13 pairs of means were significantly different at the $p < .05$ significant level. Moreover, for the 13 pairs in which means of the sports products were higher than the non-sports product, 11 pairs of them were significantly different at the $p < .05$ level. The results indicate that for a typical American NBA player endorsing a sports and a non-sports product, there are not only differences between the two conditions, but, in most cases, the differences are also significant. Additionally, all five items describing "attractiveness" were significant between the two types of sports and four out of five items depicting "reliability" were also significant between

sports product and non-sports product. For the five items describing “expertness,” even though two of the means for sports product were lower than non-sports product, one of the other three items was not significant between the two types of products. Thus, the author is able to conclude that the types of sports would affect the typical American NBA player in the dimensions of “attractiveness” and “reliability” and the difference for “expertness” was not significant.

Table 15

The means of difference of source credibility level for sports and non-sports products

Statement	Sport product and Non-sport product	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attractive	Sport	3.911	157	.6541	.0522
	Non-sport	3.248	157	1.0042	.0801
Classy	Sport	3.720	157	.8073	.0644
	Non-sport	3.293	157	1.1890	.0949
Ugly	Sport	3.656	157	1.1135	.0889
	Non-sport	3.439	157	1.2265	.0979
Elegant	Sport	3.809	157	.9482	.0757
	Non-sport	3.287	157	.9809	.0783
Sexy	Sport	3.535	157	.8953	.0715
	Non-sport	3.268	157	1.1733	.0936
Undependable	Sport	3.522	157	1.0836	.0865
	Non-sport	3.344	157	1.1250	.0898
Honest	Sport	4.051	157	.7909	.0631
	Non-sport	3.459	157	.9371	.0748
Reliable	Sport	4.166	157	.7147	.0570
	Non-sport	3.586	157	.9544	.0762
Sincere	Sport	4.210	157	.7513	.0600
	Non-sport	3.624	157	.9158	.0731
Trustworthy	Sport	3.943	157	.6626	.0529
	Non-sport	3.420	157	.9208	.0735
Expert	Sport	3.936	157	.8140	.0650
	Non-sport	3.210	157	1.0980	.0876
Experienced	Sport	3.758	157	.9962	.0795
	Non-sport	3.363	157	1.0869	.0867
Knowledgeable	Sport	3.369	157	1.0146	.0810
	Non-sport	3.490	157	1.1244	.0897
Qualified	Sport	3.892	157	.7973	.0636
	Non-sport	3.204	157	1.0299	.0822
Unskilled	Sport	3.248	157	1.0106	.0807
	Non-sport	3.669	157	1.1896	.0949

* Based on a six point Likert scale in which 1 = extremely disagree; 6 = extremely agree

Table 16

Paired t test for means of difference in source credibility level for sports and non-sports products

		Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	Attractive	.6624	1.0412	.0831	7.972	156	.000*
Pair 2	Classy	.4268	1.2517	.0999	4.272	156	.000*
Pair 3	Ugly	.2166	1.0938	.0873	2.481	156	.014*
Pair 4	Elegant	.5223	.9713	.0775	6.738	156	.000*
Pair 5	Sexy	.2675	1.2929	.1032	2.593	156	.010*
Pair 6	Undependable	.1783	1.1849	.0946	1.886	156	.061
Pair 7	Honest	.5924	1.1091	.0885	6.692	156	.000*
Pair 8	Reliable	.5860	1.0380	.0828	7.073	156	.000*
Pair 9	Sincere	.5223	.7973	.0636	8.208	156	.000*
Pair 10	Trustworthy	.7261	1.1244	.0897	8.092	156	.000*
Pair 11	Expert	.3949	1.2898	.1029	3.836	156	.000*
Pair 12	Experienced	-.1210	1.1399	.0910	-1.330	156	.185
Pair 13	Knowledgeable	.6879	1.1539	.0921	7.470	156	.000*
Pair 14	Qualified	-.4204	1.2358	.0986	-4.262	156	.000*
Pair 15	Unskilled	.5796	1.0008	.0799	7.257	156	.000*

Note: * significant at $p < .05$

Differences in purchasing intentions

In the current research, the willingness to pay for sports and non-sports products were further examined in order to get a better understanding of the differences between the two conditions. In the final part of the questionnaire, Chinese international students were further asked about their purchase intentions regarding the sports and non-sports products. Such purchase intentions were measured through three items. Participants were asked to rate responses on a six point Likert scale for each item. Similar to the process for examining the differences in the endorser's credibility level, Tables 17 and 18 specify the means difference paired-sample t test respectively.

As shown in Table 17, of the three items indicating people’s purchasing intention, the means for the sports product were all higher than the means for the non-sports product. In Table 18, results further show whether the differences in Chinese international students’ purchasing intention for the sports and non-sports product were significant or not. The means for the items “I’m glad to buy this product” and “I’m glad to recommend others to buy this product” differ significantly at the $p < .05$ level. Based on the findings presented in these two tables, the author can conclude that Chinese international students showed a stronger purchasing intention for the sports product rather than the non-sports product when both were endorsed by the same American NBA player.

Table 17

The means of difference in purchasing intention for sports and non-sports products

Statement	Sport product and Non-sport product	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I’m glad to buy this product	Sport	3.911	157	.6541	.0522
	Non-sport	3.248	157	1.0042	.0801
I will not consider to buy this product	Sport	3.720	157	.8073	.0644
	Non-sport	3.293	157	1.1890	.0949
I’m glad to recommend others to buy this product	Sport	3.656	157	1.1135	.0889
	Non-sport	3.439	157	1.2265	.0979

* Based on a six point Likert scale in which 1 = extremely disagree; 6 = extremely agree

Table 18

Paired t test for means of difference in purchasing intention for sports and non-sports products

		Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	I'm glad to buy this product	.4968	1.2069	.0963	5.158	156	.000*
Pair 2	I will not consider to buy this product	.1592	1.2584	.1004	1.586	156	.115
Pair 3	I'm glad to recommend others to buy this product	.4140	1.1715	.0935	4.428	156	.000*

Note: * significant at $p < .05$

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the author will discuss the current research examining the market value of an American athlete with a distinguished Chinese teammate. This chapter will be comprised of three parts. In the first part, the author will discuss the implications of the findings. In the following part, the author will further investigate the limitation of this study. Lastly, based on the findings of the current study, the author will provide suggestions for potential future research.

6.1 Review of Findings and Implications

In this section, implications are provided and discussed based on the results of testing the three hypotheses. The first purpose was to identify Chinese consumers' feelings of attachment to American NBA players who have a distinguished Chinese teammate. Hypothesis 1 predicted that Chinese international students would have a stronger feeling of attachment to a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate compared to the one with a distinguished American teammate. Based on the results for the first part of the survey, it was found that Chinese international students felt more attached to a distinguished Chinese NBA player rather than a distinguished American NBA player. Furthermore, in confirmation of Hypothesis 1, results of the survey showed that Chinese international students were more attached to a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate rather than a distinguished American teammate. Meaning transfer model and brand alliance theory both state that a bond could be created between two

products or between an endorser and a product through advertisement. Once bonded, the process of meaning transfer between the two ends could begin. For example, McCracken (1989) proposed that it is the celebrity's cultural meaning and the transfer of that meaning that lead to the outcomes of endorsement. The finding implies that attributes could also be transferred between two human brands. Thomson (2006) claimed that celebrity can be regarded as brand, for example, a distinguished NBA player and his typical American teammate in the current study. According to the results, the nationalities of the two distinguished NBA players not only affected international students' feeling of attachment to themselves but also had influence on their teammates. Teammates in the NBA, as human brands, are more likely to be bonded with each other through numerous on-site cooperation and media exposure. Thus, these activities make it possible that attributes of one player could be passed onto his teammate. This assumption of meaning transfer between two human brands is also confirmed by participants' answers to an open-ended prompt in the questionnaires. After rating scales measuring attachment levels for a distinguished NBA player and his typical teammate, participants were further told to give answers to an open-ended question aimed to explore other feelings the students might have for the typical American NBA player. Students in the first group whose questionnaire contained a distinguished Chinese NBA player and a typical American player, gave answers such as "When I think he is a teammate of a Chinese player, I feel excited"; "Compared to other American players, he might know more about the Chinese culture, which I prefer"; "He is special since he is Mr. Wang's teammate"; "I feel warm and close to him" etc. Hence, the hypothesis that Chinese international students would feel more attached to a typical American

NBA player who has a Chinese teammate was further confirmed through these open-ended questions.

Moreover, between the two concepts, which were used to define attachment in the current study, it was found that autonomy was a more influential than relatedness in leading Chinese international students to have a stronger feeling of attachment to the distinguished Chinese NBA player than the distinguished American NBA player. It might be attributed to the fact that distinguished NBA players, regardless of his nationalities, could gain a great amount of media exposure in China, where basketball has become the most popular sport. Therefore, Chinese international students could have an impression that both distinguished Chinese player and distinguished American player are close to them. On the other hand, the reason why Chinese international students' feeling of autonomy for the two distinguished NBA players were significantly different may be partly due to the fact that it is difficult for international basketball players to compete in the NBA, however distinguished Chinese NBA players turn the impossible to the possible, which makes Chinese student feel they, as Chinese, could also make it possible to become the person they want to be.

Furthermore, as shown in the data, the differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the two typical American basketball players in the two scenarios (with either a distinguished Chinese or a distinguished American teammate) were not as significant as the differences in means of the feelings of attachment for the two distinguished NBA players. Specifically, the change of the degree of significance from two distinguished NBA players to two typical American players occurred only in autonomy. Accordingly, the author could further infer that even the attributes of one human brand could be transferred to another, some

degree of the power of attributes might be lost during the process. In the current study, the power of relatedness seemed to be static when transferred from the distinguished Chinese NBA player to the typical American teammate however the power of autonomy seemed to be declined. However, based on a review of past literature about meaning transfer model and brand alliance theory, there has been no research ever examined the change of power for different attributes after the meaning transfer process. Even though the mechanism behind it is still unclear, the author could infer based on the current study that different attributes might be transferred differently between two human brands.

The second purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Chinese consumers' attachment level to the American NBA players and the players' credibility as product endorsers. The second hypothesis predicted that Chinese international students who were more attached to the typical American NBA player would have more positive opinions about his being a product endorser. To gain a comprehensive view, such relationships were further examined under two separate conditions in which the typical American NBA player endorsed sports and non-sports products respectively. The results revealed that there exists a correlation between Chinese international students' feelings of attachment and the typical American NBA player's level of credibility no matter what kind of product he endorsed. However the correlation was stronger when the player endorsed a sports product.

Additionally, the author found out that when the typical American player endorsed a sports product, the feeling of attachment affected the level of attractiveness the most. Thus the author could infer that when there is a match between the endorser and the product, Chinese international students' feeling of attachment would increase the endorser's attractiveness. On

the contrary, when the typical American player endorsed a non-sports product, the attachment level was a strong indicator for reliability. Hence the author is able to further infer that when there is no match between the endorser and the product, the feeling of attachment would enhance the endorser's reliability.

The third purpose was to examine whether Chinese consumers' evaluation of athlete endorsement would differ for sports products and non-sports products. The third hypothesis predicted that the purchase intention of Chinese consumers will be higher if the American NBA player endorses a sport product compared to a non-sport product. In confirmation of this hypothesis, the findings showed that Chinese international students were more willing to buy sports products rather than non-sports products endorsed by the same typical American NBA player. The author thus can infer that the types of products will affect the endorsement effectiveness. The findings based on Chinese international students also revealed that the celebrity-product congruence hypothesis (Roy & Moorthi, 2012) also applies to this group of people.

The results of this study are likely to have significant implications for sports marketers seeking to better understand Chinese young generation's attitudes towards athlete endorsement. First, it was found that Chinese students felt more attached to a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate compared to the one with a distinguished American teammate. Moreover, the average means of attachment for the distinguished Chinese player and his teammate were similar. This suggests that Chinese students are likely to have a strong feeling for a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate. In addition, according to the findings, the power of

autonomy decreased through the meaning transfer process. Thus in order to make Chinese students well attached to typical American NBA player, sports marketers should focus on arousing Chinese students' feeling of autonomy through various marketing strategies. Second, the findings of the study point out that there exists a correlation between Chinese students' feeling of attachment and the endorser's credibility level for both sports product and non-sports product. However, the correlation is much stronger for sports products compared to non-sports products. Therefore, the author recommend that companies producing sports product would have a better return on investment for endorsement contract with a typical American NBA player in Chinese market. As it was further suggested by the findings of the study, for a sports product company interested in signing endorsement contract with a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate, the importance of the appearance of that player could be weighed less. On the other hand, if the company produces non-sports product, but also tries to sign a contract with a typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate, the importance of attractiveness and expertness should be emphasized. Third, the study revealed that the purchase intention of Chinese consumers will be higher if the typical American NBA player endorses a sports product compared to a non-sports product. The results thus indicated that the typical American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate would have a more convincing influence for sports product companies.

6.2 Limitations

The participants of this study were Chinese international students, and thus the results of

this project cannot necessarily be extrapolated to other groups. Even though Chinese international students are representative of the rest of the Chinese young generation, differences may yet exist. Moreover, the limited sample size cannot guarantee the generalizability of the results from this study.

Furthermore, the author examined the feelings Chinese international students had for athletes within the context of the NBA. The results could potentially be used as a reference to examine the market value of athletes in other professional sports leagues. However, due to the fact that each sport and league has its own characteristics and business strategies, the outcomes of this study may not be an exact guide for other sports. Moreover, according to the research done by Martin (1996), for a given product, some sports are better than other sports at producing positive endorsement evaluations.

In addition, because China is rapidly growing in nearly all social aspects, being aware of how the young generation of Chinese feels and thinks would be of great benefit to sports marketers aiming at this substantial market. However, the case of China and its people is unique in many ways, and thus there is no guarantee that the insight we gain from this study can benefit companies' global strategies regarding targeting consumers from countries other than China.

Lastly, based on the results of a pre-test, sports shoes were chosen to represent sports products and medicine to represent non-sports product. However, one specific product might not well explain all other products in the same category. Therefore, it is possible that people might have different feelings for athletes endorsing other sports or non-sports products.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

With the sports industry is becoming a global business, athletes are also on the move. Researchers and journalists have focused on the influence brought to professional sports leagues by international athletes for several years. However, only a limited number of researchers have examined the influence these international athletes bring to their teammates. The current research attempted to fill this gap and provide further information for sports industry marketers by examining the market value of an American athlete with a distinguished Chinese teammate and has also raised a number of important questions and suggestions for future research.

First, although the findings provided a certain amount of information, the choice of survey design indicates that some of the affective richness evident in consumers' attachment to human brand as athlete was lost (e.g., Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Hence, it would be helpful if future researchers first utilize qualitative research methodology to identify the concepts explaining the feelings of attachment before administering a large number of quantitative questionnaires. The use of qualitative procedures may be well suited to research on attachments (Belk, 1992) due to the fact that they could richly describe different feelings people have.

The questionnaires designed for this study were based on two scenarios, one of which described a distinguished Chinese NBA player and his typical American teammate, while the other presented a distinguished American NBA player and his typical American teammate. The benefits of using a scenario design were discussed in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, in using the scenario design, some drawbacks were also present: scenarios could only offer the

participants vague approximations of real athletes. Thus, the ratings for the scales measuring Chinese international students' feelings of attachment to the two distinguished NBA players and their typical American teammates can only provide us with estimated outcome, with implications for actual athletes. If the future researchers prefer to have a more precise picture of international sports fans' feeling of attachment to an international athlete and his teammates, descriptions of hypothetical athletes should be replaced by descriptions of real-world athletes.

Moreover, the findings revealed that meaning transfer process also exists between human brands, but the power of attributes might be lost differently for different attributes. For the future study, it is suggested to first find out what other needs are important in reference to developing attachment to human brands besides autonomy and relatedness, especially within the context of Chinese consumers. Additionally, no matter for a typical product brand or a human brand, what kind of attributes are static and what kind of attributes are not during the process of meaning transfer.

The author closes with several questions that future researchers might find useful: do the different roles of typical American teammates on the team make a difference? What makes international people feel more attached to distinguished international players' teammate? If the feelings of attachment are not due to the athlete being a teammate of a distinguished international player, would other close association with that international player have a similar effect?

Appendix A

The Scenarios and The Survey Questionnaire

The Scenarios

Scenario 1: the endorser with a distinguished Chinese teammate

Mr. A is an outstanding, successful, professional American NBA player. He usually devotes himself to public and non-profit charity activities. Mr. A has a body shape typical of an NBA athlete. He looks normal. Moreover, he is a good mannered and well-educated person with decent behavior.

Mr. A has a distinguished Chinese teammate Mr. Wang, who is chosen by fans as an NBA All-Star. Mr. Wang is the best player on the team. Both Mr. A and Mr. Wang are in the starting line-up. Mr. Wang has balanced muscle tone and nice body shape. He smiles often and almost all fans feel excited from the bottom of their hearts when they see him.

Scenario 2: the endorser with a distinguished American teammate

Mr. A is an outstanding, successful, professional American NBA player. He usually devotes himself to public and non-profit charity activities. Mr. A has a body shape typical of an NBA athlete. He looks normal. Moreover, he is a good mannered and well-educated person with decent behavior.

Mr. A has a distinguished American teammate Mr. Johnson, who is chosen by fans as an NBA All-Star. Mr. Johnson is the best player on the team. Both Mr. A and Mr. Johnson are in the starting line-up. Mr. Johnson has balanced muscle tone and nice body shape. He smiles often and almost all fans feel excited from the bottom of their hearts when they see him.

The Survey Questionnaire (A)

The first section of the survey focuses on questions about your feeling of attachment for two NBA basketball players. Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your knowledge. Thank you for your help.

Scenario: an American NBA player with a distinguished Chinese teammate

Mr. A is an outstanding, successful, professional American NBA player. He usually devotes himself to public and non-profit charity activities. Mr. A has a body shape typical of an NBA athlete. He looks normal. Moreover, he is a good mannered and well-educated person with decent behavior.

Mr. A has a distinguished Chinese teammate Mr. Wang, who is chosen by fans as an NBA All-Star. Mr. Wang is the best player on the team. Both Mr. A and Mr. Wang are in the starting line-up. Mr. Wang has balanced muscle tone and nice body shape. He smiles often and almost all fans feel excited from the bottom of their hearts when they see him.

- Please indicate your feeling of attachment with the **distinguished Chinese NBA player Mr. Wang** describing the degree to which you feel for him. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewh at agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
When I see, hear, think about or interact with Mr. Wang						
I feel loved and cared about	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
He makes me feel free to be who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel free to do things my own way	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	1	2	3	4	5	6

- Please indicate your level of attachment with **Mr. A, the teammate of the distinguished**

Chinese NBA player describing the degree to which you feel for him. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
When I see, hear, think about or interact with Mr. A						
I feel loved and cared about	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
He makes me feel free to be who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel free to do things my own way	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. What other feelings you have for Mr. A?

The second section of the survey focuses on your attitude towards Mr. A being the endorser of products no. 1/no. 2.

Product1: A **sports shoe company** invites Mr. A to be the endorser of its product.

4. What's your perception of Mr. A being the endorser for this product. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Classy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elegant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6

Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Qualified	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. Please indicate your intention of purchasing this product endorsed by Mr. A. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I'm glad to buy this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not consider buying this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm glad to recommend this produce to others	1	2	3	4	5	6

Product2: A **medical company** invites Mr. A to be the endorser of its product.

6. What's your perception of Mr. A being the endorser for this product. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I think Mr. A is						
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Classy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elegant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Qualified	1	2	3	4	5	6

Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	---

7. Please indicate your intention of purchasing this product endorsed by Mr. A. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I'm glad to buy this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not consider buying this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm glad to recommend this produce to others	1	2	3	4	5	6

The last section of the survey asks questions about you. This information will be used for statistical purpose only and will be kept in strict confidence.

8. Do you perceive yourself to be a sports fan? Please \checkmark one.

Yes No

9. Are You? Please \checkmark one.

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

10. Are You? Please \checkmark one.

Male Female

Do you have any comments you wish to share?

The Survey Questionnaire (B)

The first section of the survey focuses on questions about your feeling of attachment for two NBA basketball players. Please read each question carefully and answer to the best of your knowledge. Thank you for your help.

Scenario: an American NBA player with a distinguished American teammate

Mr. A is an outstanding, successful, professional American NBA player. He usually devotes himself to public and non-profit charity activities. Mr. A has a body shape typical of an NBA athlete. He looks normal. Moreover, he is a good mannered and well-educated person with decent behavior.

Mr. A has a distinguished American teammate Mr. Johnson, who is chosen by fans as an NBA All-Star. Mr. Johnson is the best player on the team. Both Mr. A and Mr. Johnson are in the starting line-up. Mr. Johnson has balanced muscle tone and nice body shape. He smiles often and almost all fans feel excited from the bottom of their hearts when they see him.

11. Please indicate your feeling of attachment with the **distinguished American NBA player Mr. Johnson** describing the degree to which you feel for him. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewh at agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
When I see, hear, think about or interact with Mr. Johnson						
I feel loved and cared about	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
He makes me feel free to be who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel free to do things my own way	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. Please indicate your level of attachment with **Mr. A, the teammate of the distinguished**

American NBA player describing the degree to which you feel for him. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
When I see, hear, think about or interact with Mr. A						
I feel loved and cared about	1	2	3	4	5	6
I often feel a lot of distance from this celebrity	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel like I am in contact with someone who cares for me and who I care for	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel close and connected to a person who is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
He makes me feel free to be who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel free to do things my own way	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel that my choices express my 'true' self	1	2	3	4	5	6

13. What other feelings you have for Mr. A?

The second section of the survey focuses on your attitude towards Mr. A being the endorser of products no. 1/no. 2.

Product1: A **sports shoe company** invites Mr. A to be the endorser of its product.

14. What's your perception of Mr. A being the endorser for this product. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I think Mr. A is						
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Classy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elegant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6

Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Qualified	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6

15. Please indicate your intention of purchasing this product endorsed by Mr. A. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I'm glad to buy this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not consider buying this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm glad to recommend this produce to others	1	2	3	4	5	6

Product2: A **medical company** invites Mr. A to be the endorser of its product.

16. What's your perception of Mr. A being the endorser for this product. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I think Mr. A is						
Attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6
Classy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Ugly	1	2	3	4	5	6
Elegant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sexy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Undependable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sincere	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6
Expert	1	2	3	4	5	6
Experienced	1	2	3	4	5	6
Knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Qualified	1	2	3	4	5	6

Unskilled	1	2	3	4	5	6
-----------	---	---	---	---	---	---

17. Please indicate your intention of purchasing this product endorsed by Mr. A. *Please circle one number for each statement.*

Statement:	Extremely disagree	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Extremely agree
I'm glad to buy this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I will not consider buying this product	1	2	3	4	5	6
I'm glad to recommend this produce to others	1	2	3	4	5	6

The last section of the survey asks questions about you. This information will be used for statistical purpose only and will be kept in strict confidence.

18. Do you perceive yourself to be a sports fan? Please \checkmark one.

Yes No

19. Are You? Please \checkmark one.

Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

20. Are You? Please \checkmark one.

Male Female

Do you have any comments you wish to share?

Appendix B

University of Illinois's Institutional Review Board's Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of Vice Chancellor for Research
Institutional Review Board
528 East Green Street
Suite 203
Champaign, IL 61820



March 12, 2013

Scott Tainsky
Recreation Sport and Tourism
104 Huff Hall
M/C 584

RE: *Understanding the market value of American sports athlete with a distinguished Chinese teammate*
IRB Protocol Number: 13668

Dear Dr. Tainsky:

Thank you for submitting the completed IRB application form for your project entitled *Understanding the market value of American sports athlete with a distinguished Chinese teammate*. Your project was assigned Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Number 13668 and reviewed. It has been determined that the research activities described in this application meet the criteria for exemption at 45CFR46.101(b)(2).

This determination of exemption only applies to the research study as submitted. **Exempt protocols are approved for a maximum of three years.** Please note that additional modifications to your project need to be submitted to the IRB for review and exemption determination or approval before the modifications are initiated.

We appreciate your conscientious adherence to the requirements of human subjects research. If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me or the IRB Office, or visit our website at <http://www.irb.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

Dustin L. Yocum, Human Subjects Research Exempt Specialist, Institutional Review Board

Appendix C

Consent Form for College Student Participant



Consent Form for College Student Participant

Purpose and Procedures: This study, conducted by Yilun Zhou, a graduate student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is intended to assess Chinese undergraduate students' attitudes toward the issue of sport athlete endorsement. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be asked to complete a one-time survey questionnaire. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire today in this University of Illinois campus location. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete.

Voluntariness: Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, discontinue participation, or skip any questions you don't wish to answer at any time without penalty or loss of the benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on your grades at, status at, or future relations with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Risks and Benefits: You may experience some mild, temporary discomfort relating to taking the questionnaire, as the questions asked concern your feelings and attitudes, but this research does not otherwise involve risks beyond those encountered in everyday life. You will probably not receive any direct benefits from participating in this research. However, your participation may help researchers and managers understand certain traits of sports athlete endorsement.

Confidentiality: Only the principal researchers will have access to consent forms that indicate your identity. There will be no personally identifying information such as name on the questionnaire. In the event of publication of this research, no personally identifying information will be disclosed. To make sure your participation is confidential, please do not provide any personally identifying information on the questionnaires.

Who to Contact with Questions: Questions about this research study should be directed to the primary investigator and person in charge, Dr. Scott Tainsky, Assistant Professor of Sport Management. He can be reached at (217)244-1857 or emailed at tainsky@illinois.edu. You are welcome to call collect if you identify yourself as a research participant. Questions about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the UIUC Institutional Review Board Office at 217-333-2670; irb@uiuc.edu. You will receive a copy of this consent form.

REFERENCE

- Aaker, D. A., & Keller, K. L. (1990). Consumer evaluations of brand extensions. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(1), 27-41.
- Agrawal, J., & Kamakura, W. A. (1995). The economic worth of celebrity endorsers: An event study analysis. *Journal of Marketing*, 59(3), 56.
- Atkin, C., & Block, M. (1983). Effectiveness of celebrity endorsers. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 23(1), 57-61.
- Baker, M. J., & Churchill Jr., G. A. (1977). The impact of physically attractive models on advertising evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 14(4), 538-555.
- Baker, M. J., & Churchill Jr., G. A. (1977). The impact of physically attractive models on advertising evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 14(4), 538-555.
- Bayley, S. (2005). Of human branding. *New Statesman*, 134(4760), 40-42.
- Bobby J. Calder, Phillips, L. W., & Tybout, A. M. (1981). Designing research for application. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8(2), 197-207.
- Boon, S., & Lomore, C. (2001). Admirer-celebrity relationships among young adults. *Human Communication Research*, 27(3), 432-465. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2958.2001.tb00788.x
- Bucklin, L. P., & Sengupta, S. (1993). Organizing successful co-marketing alliances. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(2), 32-46.

- Burnett, J., Menon, A., & Smart, D. T. (1993). Sports marketing: A new ball game with new rules. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 33(5), 21-35.
- Bush, A. J., Martin, C. A., & Bush, V. D. (2004). Sports celebrity influence on the behavioral intentions of generation Y. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(1), 108-118.
- Carison, B. D., & Donovan, D. T. (2008). Concerning the effect of athlete endorsements on brand and team-related intentions. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 17(3), 154-162.
- Carroll, B., & Ahuvia, A. (2006). Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love. *Marketing Letters*, 17(2), 79-89. doi:10.1007/s11002-006-4219-2
- Chia-Chen Yu. (2005). *Athlete endorsement in the international sports industry: A case study of david beckham* International Marketing Reports Ltd.
- Cooke, S., & Ryan, P. (2000). Brand alliances: From reputation endorsement to collaboration on core competencies. *Irish Marketing Review*, 13(2), 36.
- Costanzo, P. J., & Goodnight, J. E. (2005). Celebrity endorsements: Matching celebrity and endorsed brand in magazine advertisements. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 11(4), 49-62. doi:10.1300/J057v11n04-05
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.
- Desensi, J. T. (1994). Multiculturalism as an issue in sport management. *Journal of Sport Management*, 8(1), 63-74.

Dietz, P. E., Matthews, D. B., Van Duyne, C., Martell, D. A., Parry, C. D. H., Stewart, T., . . .

Crowder, J. D. (1991). Threatening and otherwise inappropriate letters to hollywood celebrities. *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, 36(1), 185-209.

Donnelly, P. (1996). The local and the global: Globalization in the sociology of sport. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 20(3), 239-257.

Eschker, E., Perez, S. J., & Siegler, M. V. (2004). The NBA and the influx of international basketball players. *Applied Economics*, 36(10), 1009-1020.

doi:10.1080/0003684042000246713

Falcous, M., & Maguire, J. A. (2005). Globetrotters and local heroes? labor migration, basketball, and local identities. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22(2), 137.

Fink, J. S., Pastore, D. L., & Hiemer, H. A. (2001). Do differences make a difference? managing diversity in division IA intercollegiate athletics. *Journal of Sport Management*, 15(1), 10.

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 343-373.

Friedman, V. J., & Antal, A. B. (2005). Negotiating reality: A theory of action approach to intercultural competence. *Management Learning*, 36(1), 69-86.

doi:10.1177/1350507605049904

Giulianotti, R., & Robertson, R. (2004). The globalization of football: A study in the globalization of the 'serious life'. *British Journal of Sociology*, 55(4), 545-568.

Halonen-Knight, E., & Hurmerinta, L. (2010). Who endorses whom? meanings transfer in celebrity endorsement. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6), 452-460.
doi:10.1108/10610421011085767

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. R. (1994). Attachment as an organizational framework for research on close relationships. *Psychological Inquiry*, 5(1), 1-22.

Henderson, P. W., Cote, J. A., Leong, S. M., & Schmitt, B. (2003). Building strong brands in asia: Selecting the visual components of image to maximize brand strength. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 20(4), 297-313.
doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2003.03.001

Henderson, P. W., Cote, J. A., Leong, S. M., & Schmitt, B. (2003). Building strong brands in asia: Selecting the visual components of image to maximize brand strength. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 20(4), 297-313.
doi:10.1016/j.ijresmar.2003.03.001

HORTON, D., & WOHL, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction; observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215-229.

HORTON, D., & WOHL, R. R. (1956). Mass communication and para-social interaction; observations on intimacy at a distance. *Psychiatry*, 19(3), 215-229.

- Houran, J., Navik, S., & Zerrusen, K. (2005). Boundary functioning in celebrity worshippers. *Personality & Individual Differences, 38*(1), 237-248.
doi:10.1016/j.paid.2004.04.014
- Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 15*(4), 635-650.
- Huang, F. (2013). Glocalisation of sport: The NBA's diffusion in china. *International Journal of the History of Sport, 30*(3), 267-284.
- Jennifer Edson Escalas, & James R. Bettman. (2005). Self - Construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of Consumer Research, 32*(3), 378-389.
- Jennifer Edson Escalas, & James R. Bettman. (2005). Self - Construal, reference groups, and brand meaning. *Journal of Consumer Research, 32*(3), 378-389.
- Kahle, L. R., & Homer, P. M. (1985). Physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser: A social adaptation perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research, 11*(4), 954-961.
- Kaplan, S., & Langdon, S. (2012). Chinese fandom and potential marketing strategies for expanding the market for american professional sports into china. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 14*(1), 7-21.
- La Guardia, J. G., Ryan, R. M., Couchman, C. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Within-person variation in security of attachment: A self-determination theory perspective on

attachment, need fulfillment, and well-being. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 79(3), 367-384. doi:10.1037//0022-3514.79.3.367

La Guardia, J. G., Ryan, R. M., Couchman, C. E., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Within-person variation in security of attachment: A self-determination theory perspective on attachment, need fulfillment, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(3), 367-384.

Leets, L., de Becker, G., & Giles, H. (1995). Fans: Exploring expressed motivations for contacting celebrities. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 14(1-2), 102-123. doi:10.1177/0261927X95141006

Liu, M. T., Huang, Y., & Minghua, J. (2007). Relations among attractiveness of endorsers, match-up, and purchase intention in sport marketing in china. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 24(6), 358-365.

Louie, T. A., & Obermiller, C. (2002). Consumer response to a firm's endorser (dis)association decisions. *Journal of Advertising*, 31(4), 41-52.

Maguire, J. (2004). Sport labor migration research revisited. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 28(4), 477-482. doi:10.1177/0193723504269914

Maguire, J. (2004). Sport labor migration research revisited. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 28(4), 477-482. doi:10.1177/0193723504269914

- Manzenreiter, W. (2004). Japanese football and world sports: Raising the global game in a local setting. *Japan Forum*, 16(2), 289-313. doi:10.1080/0955580042000222664
- McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and consumption: A theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1), 71-84.
- Mccracken, G. (1989). Who is the celebrity endorser? cultural foundations of the endorsement process. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(3), 310-321.
- Meyers-Levy, J., & Tybout, A. M. (1989). Schema congruity as a basis for product evaluation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(1), 39-54.
- Mick, D. G. (1986). Consumer research and semiotics: Exploring the morphology of signs, symbols, and significance. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(2), 196-213.
- Mills, J., & Aronson, E. (1965). Opinion change as a function of the communicator's attractiveness and desire to influence. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 1(2), 173-177.
- Mills, J., & Harvey, J. (1972). Opinion change as a function of when information about the communicator is received and whether he is attractive or expert. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 21(1), 52-55.

- Misra, S., & Beatty, S. E. (1990). Celebrity spokesperson and brand congruence: An assessment of recall and affect. *Journal of Business Research*, 21(2), 159-173.
doi:10.1016/0148-2963(90)90050-N
- O'Guinn, T. C., Faber, R. J., Curias, N. J. J., & Schmitt, K. (1989). The cultivation of consumer norms. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 16(1), 779-785.
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52.
- Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31(1), 46-54.
- Parmentier, M. -, & Fischer, E. (2012). How athletes build their brands. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 11(1-2), 106-124.
- Pornpitakpan, C. (2003). Validation of the celebrity endorsers' credibility scale: Evidence from asians. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 19(1), 179-195.
- ROY, S., & MOORTHI, Y. L. R. (2012). Research paper investigating endorser personality effects on brand personality: Causation and reverse causation in india. *Journal of Brand Strategy*, 1(2), 164-179.
- Rubin, R. B., & McHugh, M. P. (1987). Development of parasocial interaction relationships. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 31(3), 279-292.

- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68.
- Schaefer, A. D., Parker, R. S., & Kent, J. L. (2010). A comparison of american and chinese consumers' attitudes toward athlete celebrity endorsers. *Journal of Sport Administration & Supervision*, 2(1), 31-40.
- Schaefer, A., Parker, R. S., & Haytko, D. (2011). Chinese and U.S. consumers' perceptions of the effectiveness of celebrity athlete endorsers. *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 6, 1-9.
- Sheldon, K. M., Elliot, A. J., Kim, Y., & Kasser, T. (2001). What is satisfying about satisfying events? testing 10 candidate psychological needs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80(2), 325-339.
- Simonin, B. L., & Ruth, J. A. (1998). Is a company known by the company it keeps? assessing the spillover effects of brand alliances on consumer brand attitudes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 35(1), 30-42.
- Smith, A. K., & Bolton, R. N. (2002). The effect of customers' emotional responses to service failures on their recovery effort evaluations and satisfaction judgments. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 30(1), 5-23.

- Stafford, M. R., Spears, N. E., & Chung-kue Hsu. (2003). Celebrity images in magazine advertisements: An application of the visual rhetoric model. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising (CTC Press)*, 25(2), 13-20.
- Stern, B. B. (1988). Medieval allegory: Roots of advertising strategy for the mass market. *Journal of Marketing*, 52(3), 84-94.
- Sujan, M., & Bettman, J. R. (1989). The effects of brand positioning strategies on consumers' brand and category perceptions: Some insights from schema research. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 26(4), 454-454.
- Takahashi, Y., & Horne, J. (2006). Moving with the bat and the ball preliminary reflections on the migration of japanese baseball labour. / se deplacer avec le baton et la balle : Reflexions preliminaires sur la migration de la main d'oeuvre japonaise en baseball. / bewegung mit dem schlag und dem ball: Vorlaeufige reflexionen in bezug auf die migration von japanischen baseballspielern. / moviendo el bat y la pelota: Reflexiones preliminares sobre la migracion de mano de obra japonesa del baseball. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41(1), 79-88;134;136;138;140;142.
- Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., & Park, C. W. (2005). The ties that bind: Measuring the strength of consumers' emotional attachments to brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 15(1), 77-91.
- Thomson, M. (2006). Human brands: Investigating antecedents to consumers' strong attachments to celebrities. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(3), 104-119.

- Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., & Whan Park, C. (2005). The ties that bind: Measuring the strength of consumers' emotional attachments to brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 15*(1), 77-91. doi:10.1207/s15327663jcp1501_10
- Thwaites, D. (1995). Professional football sponsorship -- profitable or profligate? *International Journal of Advertising, 14*(2), 149-164.
- Till, B. D., & Busler, M. (2000). The match-up hypothesis: Physical attractiveness, expertise, and the role of fit on brand attitude, purchase intent and brand beliefs. *Journal of Advertising, 29*(3), 1-13.
- Till, B. D., & Shimp, T. A. (1998). Endorsers in advertising: The case of negative celebrity information. *Journal of Advertising, 27*(1), 67-82.
- Tong, X., & Hawley, J. M. (2009). Measuring customer-based brand equity: Empirical evidence from the sportswear market in china. *Journal of Product & Brand Management, 18*(4), 262-271. doi:10.1108/10610420910972783
- Wertheim, L. J. (2004). The whole world is watching: With renowned stars like yao ming who transcend borders, the other U.S. major leagues are banking on big help from abroad to generate growth. *Sports Illustrated, 100*(24), 72-77;79-80;83-84;86.
- Xinquan, S. Y., Sparks, R., & Li, M. (2008). Sports sponsorship as a strategic investment in china: Perceived risks and benefits by corporate sponsors prior to the beijing 2008 olympics. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 10*(1), 63-78.

Xu, Q. J., & Jiang, J. (2010). The moderating role of cultural similarity in leadership training effectiveness. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 34(3), 259-269.

Yeung, C. W. M., & Wyer Jr., R. S. (2005). Does loving a brand mean loving its products? the role of brand-elicited affect in brand extension evaluations. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 42(4), 495-506. doi:10.1509/jmkr.2005.42.4.495