

อิทธิพลของคนดังด้านกีฬาที่มีต่ออินฟลูเอนเซอร์บนโซเชียลมีเดีย: กรณีศึกษา ของ Zhu Ting นักวอลเลย์บอลคนดังชาวจีน

The Influence of Sport Celebrities Towards Social Media Influencers: Taking Zhu Ting, A Chinese Celebrity Volleyball Player as An Example

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บทคัดย่อ

จากการพัฒนาด้านเทคโนโลยีและเศรษฐกิจ ส่งผลให้อุตสาหกรรมด้านกีฬากำลังกลายเป็นธุรกิจระดับโลก ด้วยเหตุนี้แพลตฟอร์มโซเชียลมีเดียและการจัดการความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างคนดังด้านกีฬาและนักกีฬาก็มีความจำเป็น ซึ่งนักการตลาดจะต้องพิจารณาในกระบวนการทางการตลาดและดำเนินการโฆษณาออนไลน์ของตนในกระบวนการนี้ผู้บริโภคและพฤติกรรมของพวกเขาจึงเป็นสิ่งจำเป็นที่ต้องสังเกตตั้งนั้นในบทความนี้จึงได้ยกตัวอย่าง Zhu Ting นักวอลเลย์บอลคนดังในจีนและทั่วโลกมาเป็นกรณีศึกษาเพื่อวิเคราะห์ปรากฏการณ์นี้โดยใช้วิธีการวิเคราะห์จากมุมมองของผู้บริโภค ด้วยการสำรวจทัศนคติของผู้ติดตามเกี่ยวกับการใช้แพลตฟอร์มโซเชียลมีเดียของ Zhu Ting ในการโฆษณา และใช้ Likert Scales ในการวิเคราะห์ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภค ผลการศึกษาพบว่าปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพล 4 ประการ ได้แก่ (1) โซเชียลมีเดียเป็นแพลตฟอร์มในการจับประเด็นร่วมของผู้ติดตาม (2) โซเชียลมีเดียมีประโยชน์ในการขยายอิทธิพลทั้งในประเทศและต่างประเทศ (3) การเชิญคนดังด้านกีฬามาร่วมงานสามารถส่งผลกระทบต่อทัศนคติและพฤติกรรมของลูกค้า และ (4) สร้างระบบเครือข่ายที่กว้างขวาง

คำสำคัญ: โซเชียลมีเดีย การตลาดแบรนด์ คนดังด้านกีฬา พฤติกรรมผู้บริโภค

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The Influence of Sport Celebrities Towards Social Media Influencers: Taking Zhu Ting, A Chinese Celebrity Volleyball Player as An Example

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Abstract

Background of the article: with the development of technology and economy, the sports industry is becoming an intergrade worldwide business. Based on this, social media platforms and having awareness to manage the relationship between sports celebrity athletes are necessary, which need to be considered by marketers in the marketing process and conduct their online advertisement. In this process, consumers and their behaviours are necessary to be noticed. Therefore, in this paper, Zhu Ting, a famous volleyball player in China and worldwide is taken as an example to analyze this phenomenon. 2. Methodology: as this essay is analyzed from consumer perspective, a survey about the followers' attitude about using Zhu Ting's social media platform to advertise is delivered. A Likert Scales has been used to analyze the consumer's attitude. 3. The Conclusion of the article is 4 influencing factors have been found: (1) social media being a platform to capture the common points of the followers; (2) social media is helpful to expand the influence both from national and international side; (3) inviting sport celebrity to be endorser could impact customers' attitude and behaviours; (4) build up a broad network system.

Keywords: social media; brand marketing; sport celebrity; consumer behaviours

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Introduction

With the development of and economy, the public is starting to enjoy the life with sports, which is an opportunity for the practitioner of sports industry to promote the sports as a worldwide business (Ehsan, 2013) and to consider this business as an integrated economic phenomenon. Also, as sports industry is an industry that has both international and national impact, and media is becoming a mass social phenomenon which has also both global and national impact, which is a same characteristic for sports (Dugalić, 2018), it is important to consider about the effectiveness of media using as media will have a broader influence. In the meanwhile, the development of technology is also an improving factor that cannot be ignored while conduct marketing process under the situation with the development of technology. From information transferred perspective, the internet and social media platforms are building up a huge network that is convenient for communication and information transfer (Abeza et. al., 2019), and media will have a broader platform to receive more information(Ehsan, 2018), due to this, the development of technology is expanding the scale of the influence of information, which is posted and announced online, for marketing Internet and social media platforms are an opportunity and valuable approach to attract more audiences and potential consumers. As Dr. Gajjar (2013) has mentioned that cultural, social, personal, psychological and society factors are the factors that impact consumer behaviours. Moreover, the fans are a group who expect a closer interaction and communication with the celebrities that they followed, which means they are the group who have patient and a better feeling about content that athletes posted and the opportunity to interact with them and the connection with the athletes who they love. Therefore, in the process of using sports celebrities to advertise, the relationship with fans and their feelings needed to be seen as an important element to be concerned about. According to Hopwood et al. (2010), fans and supporters as the key relationships needed to be concerned in the relationship management process as they are happy to pass their passion about the organization to others, also they are a group who will have stubborn brand loyalty which will be important for the brand. Therefore, for marketers this group is important and powerful to be concerned about. Under this background, not only the sports clubs are using online platform to release relative information and notice, but also be think seriously by brand to use the Internet and social media platforms to promote the process of marketing as most brand used to be. Therefore, it is necessary to effectively using social media platforms and build up the relationship with sports.

Thus, it is necessary to attention to relationship management, especially to manage the relationship between organizations/clubs/athletes and their fans. As this is an opportunity to attract the attention of the target audience for sports players. Social media also could reach international fans which means it covers the fans from broader nations. Sports fans always show their enthusiasm and loyalty to the players and clubs and follow them across local, national, and, increasingly transnational levels(Giulianotti & Numerato, 2017). The Internet as the platform to help international fans to follow the information easier. And

the fans are willing to interact with the players and social media platform provide this platform that can help the fans closer to the players. It can improve the interaction between sports players and their fans. Additionally, the online tool provides an opportunity to attract the attention of the audience. Such as the tags or the topics about the player or the clubs can be made to help attract the attention of the audience easier and create the point about the players impressively to expand the influence of the players easily. Therefore, lots of sports clubs are using social media to contact with their fans. And according to Abeza et al. (2019), relationship management is a process whose central purpose is retaining customers by securing a long-term mutual satisfaction between businesses and customers also it is aiming at build up a collaborative relation via communication and interaction with the stakeholders, it is necessary to build up a communicate, interact and engage dialogue system in order to achieve this target. Therefore, it is a valuable tool for sponsors to use social media platforms to implement a variety of marketing communication elements which is including athletes endorsements, promotions, public relations, relationship marketing etc. to achieve their relationship management goals. In this way, relationship management is a beneficial element in the marketing process and it is a helpful tool to deal with the relationships between customers and brands and social media platforms. Additionally, relationship management is positive for building up the relationship between customers and brand including customer loyalty and securing a long-term profit for brands (Abeza et al., 2018).

In recent years, with the online platform development rapidly, technology has been an element that changed the lifestyle of people in China, also this an impact for marketing process in China. Traditional advertising approaches such as TV advertisement and offline poster are not the most important approach anymore, the influence and importance of online advertisement is increasing to almost the same level of the traditional approaches, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this background, Zhu Ting could be a reasonable example to analyze this problem. Firstly, she is an elite athlete. She used to be the captain of Chinese Women Volleyball Team and came to second place of world women volleyball player in 2019 and 2020, she still at third place according to her previous grades until now¹. And she gained the MVP of women Volleyball Games in 2016 Rio Olympic Games. Secondly, she is an influential athlete in China. Zhu Ting was highest paid professional volleyball player in the worldwide and national-wide male or female, in the 2018/2019 season. Additionally, Zhu Ting came to the first place of the “2019-2020 Chinese Athlete’s Communication Influence List” (Table 1)², as the first female athlete who came to this place. This list was initiated by China Sports Publications Corporation who is attaching to General Administration of Sport which is the official sports department of China. The platform data covers the entire network, and the system

¹ <https://women.volleybox.net/players/ranking>

² 2019-2020 Chinese Athlete’s Communication Influence List: http://www.new-sports.cn/zhuanli/2018jzb/202009/t20200910_83475.html

adds new data daily 80 million to 100 million entries, this list is generated by algorithms, comprehensive athletes' personal information, sports performance, media exposure, business index, public welfare index and other data. Experts from sports, media, academia and other fields are based on fairness. Based on the principle of fairness, the list will be reviewed from a professional perspective. There are many brands invited her as their endorser and using her social media platforms to release advertisements.

Ranking	Name	Gender	Games
1	Zhu Ting	Female	Volleyball
2	Wu Lei	Male	Soccer
3	Yi Jianlian	Male	Basketball
4	Ma Long	Male	Table tennis
5	Zhang Changning	Female	Volleyball
6	Liu Shiwen	Female	Table tennis
7	Su Bingtian	Male	100m
8	Han Cong	Male	figure skating
9	Sui Wenjing	Female	figure skating
10	Fan zhendong	male	Table tennis

Table 1: TOP 10 of 2019-2020 Chinese Athlete's Communication Influence List

According to Sassenberg et. al.(2018), invite a sport celebrity to advertise the items of the brand is beneficial for brand to build up their brand image and achieve commercial value, and the fans is a group that is positive in expanding the influence of the brands, in this process “both sport fans and sport celebrities are engaging more frequently with a wider variety of digital and social media (Phua,2010 as cited in Sassenberg et al., 2018) to increase their level of enjoyment and to boost their brand image (Colapinto & Benecchi, 2014 as cited in Sassenberg et al., 2018).” Therefore, it is necessary to find the factors which affect celebrities to become social media influencers. This study is aiming at discussing the factors that affect brands to consume celebrity athletes to advertise in China from customers' perspective. In this study Zhu Ting is taken as an example on the role of the advertisements, therefore, this research is delivered by a questionnaire which is aiming to analyze the influencing factors from followers' angle which is customers' reflection to this marketing activities.

Methodology

This research is aiming at the factors that affect celebrity athletes becoming a social media influencer. For brands, to consider them as a sponsor character in the sports industry, they are aiming at achieving various goals and reaching target groups of their marketing communication (Lagae, 2005). In this process, sports fans are considered as the customers

which is the group considered as the target group of the brands. Their goals in the process of corporate communication have these points: (1) rising up the loyalty ladder, (2) increasing brand awareness and (3) improving goodwill (Lagae, 2005), therefore, in order to find the factors that affect brands to use celebrity athletes' social media account it is necessary to consider using the influence of celebrity athletes' social media platform need to consider about customers' attitude and feedback about the advertisement expanding activities on celebrity athletes' social media platform.

As this research is taking Zhu Ting as the example to analyze the effect factors, the sample of the questionnaire in this research is from the followers of Zhu Ting on Chinese social media platforms. This questionnaire is delivered by Wenjuanxing platform in Chinese and the link of this questionnaire which gained ethical approval and the participants are over 18, also it has been posted on the Weibo, Wechat and such main social media platforms in China from June 5th to June 17th, and received 551 answers in total, 151 answers are from the audiences who are following Zhu Ting which are active for this questionnaire. In this questionnaire, the basic information about the participants of the followers and users on social media platforms, thereby to collect the information of the followers and potential customers characteristics.

Then, the Likert Scales is one of the most widely used formats for measure the attitude from customers for the products which is available for use in measuring attitudes or components of attitudes a number of different types of scales or scale formats, including the semantic differential, Stapel scale, Likert scale, Thurstone differential scale, and direct rating scales (Albaum, 1997), in this Likert Scale is to work out the customers' attitude about (1) their impression of the brands after viewing the advertisement on Zhu Ting's social media accounts; (2) the impact of the purchase behaviours; (3) cognition of the products that posted by her; (4) using social media platforms to advertise.

Additionally, there is an open-ended question in this questionnaire that is about further expectation from followers. Open-ended questions carry less risk of biasing responses and more chance of unearthing genuine attitudes and views. They provide more valid responses than even carefully constructed closed questions because they allow respondents to reply in their own words. Respondents can state what is more salient and significant to them, without having suggested to them socially desirable answers or being forced to guess the "right" answer, as may happen with closed questions.

Additionally, as this research will focus on the situation on social media platforms, the information and data also will be collected online.

Data analysis

In the questionnaire which is about the attitudes of the audiences about the advertisements and reflection to the brands to figure out the factors that affect celebrity athletes become influential on social media platform. As this questionnaire can be divided into 3 parts by the type of the answers. First is about the audiences' characteristics, social media accounts

following status of Zhu Ting, and how many of them have viewed the advertisements on her platforms. All these questions are descriptive statistics presented through percentages. Then is about the attitudes and reflections from the audiences to the advertisements which is delivered by the Likert Scales whose answers are from “disagree” to “Strongly agree” therefore these parts will be expressed by their average scores. Last is an open-ended question without actual options, therefore, about this part, the result will be summarized about their opinion then to classify them to work out the figures.

Results

Participant’s characteristics

From this research it found that 62.91% of participants are in the 18–25-year-old group (Figure 1), which is fit for the age group from the result about the age group using Internet platform (Figure 2) that main group of people who are Internet for information is in 15–29 this group of age. Based on this age of group, the career situation of most participants are students which also is the main group in this age group.

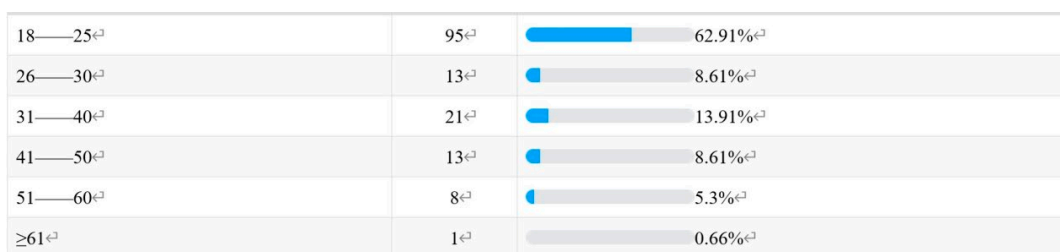


Figure 1: The age group of the users online

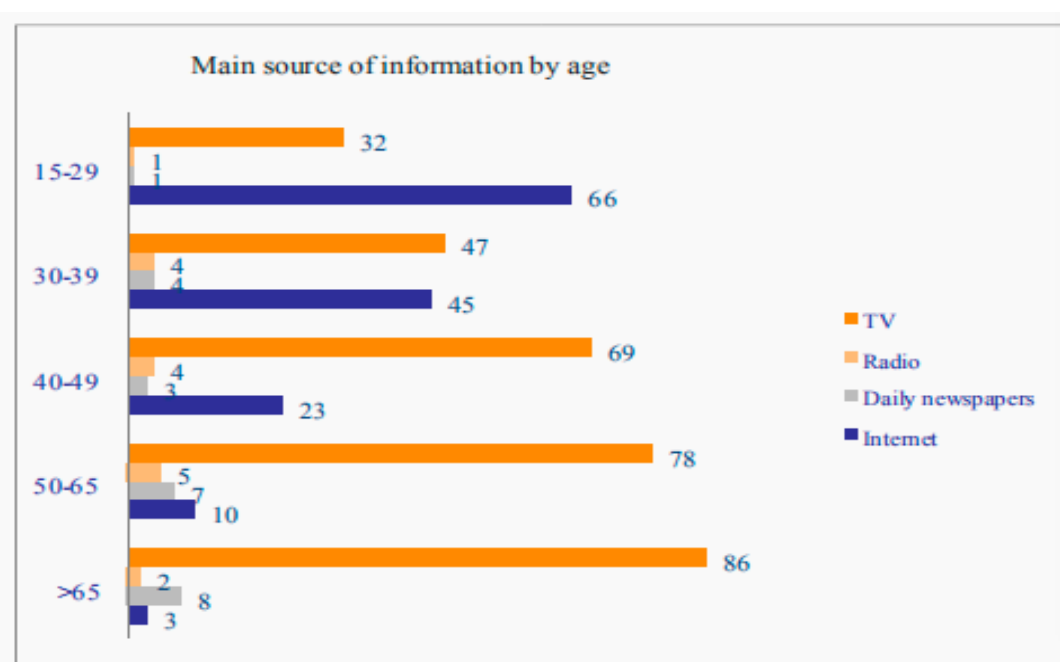


Figure 2: Main source of information – General population, by age (Ipsos Strategic Marketing, 2015 as cited in Dugalić, 2018)

As for the accounts following situation (Figure 3), Weibo and Douyin are the accounts that most people are followed, because of the banner in China it is difficult to followed her social media accounts abroad, however, Zhu Ting is a brilliant player who also played for a Turkish club, thereby, her fans will not only from China, but also from other countries. Because this research only discusses the situation in China, the detailed information on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram will be ignored. However, it is worth to be noticed that even though Zhu Ting is the Top outside hitter in the world, there is no advertisement posted on her Twitter, Facebook, Instagram accounts, thence area is an element which has been concerned by most brands while choosing their marketing strategies.



Figure 3: following status of Zhu Ting's social media platforms

As for the reasons for participants to following Zhu Ting (Figure 4), grades and performance abilities are important for them to follow her, according to Lagae (2005), in sports marketing communication process an integration of advertising has been emphasized which is showing that the grades and performance of the athletes are concerned by the sponsors, they are expect a better performance and victory of the athlete who is been choose by the brand.



Figure 4: Reason of following Zhu Ting

As for the attitude from the participants to the advertisement that she posted, this part of the result will mainly discuss their attitude to the advertisements on social media platforms from 5 perspectives. Additionally, in this questionnaire this part of questions only answered by the participants who have seen the advertisement posted by Zhu Ting, in 151 participants, 97 of them have seen the advertisement that she posted, which is

accounted for 64.24% of the participants, only rest 35.76% of participants haven't seen the advertisements that she posted.

First is about the platform concerning situation, Weibo is the platform that most people have seen the advertisements that she posted, also Weibo is the platform that she posted most of the advertisements. Since January 2020, her posted 17 advertisements 12 of them are videos, 5 of them are pictures. For these 17 advertisements, there are 5700 comments on average and 4537 reposts on average of those advertisements. There is a one-month interval on average between each advertisement, which means the frequency of posting advertisements on her Weibo. As for on Douyin platform, there is only a video notice for her live video rather than brand advertisements. However, there is no advertising on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram yet.

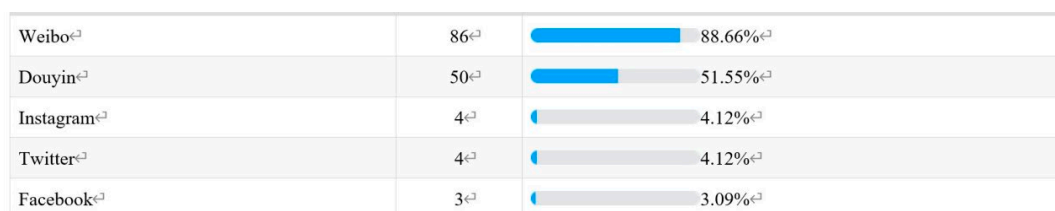


Figure 5: advertisements seen status on each platform

Weibo also is a platform where it is convenient to repost the content that is posted by the brand, which is helpful to find the official accounts of the brands for detailed information, for the accounts of the brands is a drainage process to attract more followers and more potential consumers. Another platform that most people have seen the advertisement that she posted is Douyin which is a platform which is having a huge group of users on this platform by using videos to conduct broadcasting. However, on Douyin platform, she only has some notice for live video, instead of brand advertisement, but for followers this platform gives them a deep impression that she posted some advertisement which means Douyin is the platform providing brand a platform where it can be effective to post the advertisement. Douyin is a necessary platform to be considered in the marketing process and conduct the marketing activities as it is a platform which is becoming more and more important as audiences are having deep impressions of the advertisement on this platform. Then, from the Likert Scales to summarize followers' reflection to the advertisements which are posted on social media platforms in following 4 perspectives: (1) their impression of the brands after viewing the advertisement on Zhu Ting's social media accounts; (2) the impact of the purchase behaviours; (3) cognition of the products that posted by her; (4) followers' attitude of using social media platforms to advertise. All of these four perspectives are divided into several questions and each question is scored from 5 to 1 means the attitude of people who was answer this questionnaire as an audience of Zhu Ting's social media platforms is from agree to disagree about each question. The result of Likert Scales will demonstrate as below:

1. Their brand impression after viewing advertisements. this perspective will be discussed from three aspects. First question is discussing about will they choose to trust the Zhu Ting posted their advertisements? The average score of this is 3.98 which is neutral positive. From this score, it has been shown that because this product is recommended by the athletes that they are interested with, the followers choose to trust the brand. Then the highest average score in these Likert Scales research is 4.01 which is about will they have a deeper impression of the brands which are recommended by Zhu Ting. From this result it has been shown that through posting the advertisement on Zhu Ting's Social media platform is having a positive effect on the brand, none of the participants will not have an impression of the brand because the advertisement is posted by Zhu Ting. Another aspect is about will they change their attitude about the brands whose average score is 3.66 which is also neutral positive. Which shows that after viewing advertisements, most of the followers will be positive to change their attitude of the brands. Above all, the followers' impression of the brands will be mostly positive with an average score of this perspective is 3.89, which means after posting advertisements on Zhu Ting's the customers attitude and impression will be positive, which also is a positive effect to the brands. Additionally, with a deeper impression, followers are having a positive cognition to their products, from this research is showing that the average score of their attitude to products' quality is 3.96, which is a positive cognition to the recommended brands product quality. The average score about their attitude to the design of the products is 3.87 which is also showing a positive attitude to the products design. A comprehensive result for the followers' attitude to the products of the brands posted by Zhu Ting is a positive conclusion, as the average score of the followers' impression to those brands is 3.89 and the average score of followers' attitudes to the products of the brands is 3.87, therefore, followers are having a positive attitude to the brands which are using Zhu Ting's social media platform to advertise.

2. The impact of the purchase behavior of the followers. This research will discuss this in 4 aspects. First about their will of buying the brands which are recommended by Zhu Ting rather than the brands that they used to buy for the same kind of products. The average score of this aspect is 3.53 which is a neutral positive aspect. Furthermore, while purchasing the same kind of products, followers express that they are willing to choose the brands posted by Zhu Ting first, the score of this aspect is 3.61. Concluding from previous aspects, at the situation of customers needing to make a choice while purchasing the same kind of product, customers prefer to choose the brands recommended first, however, less people will change the brands that they used to buy, which is showing that followers will not change the brands they used to by actively. Another aspect in this perspective is their willingness to recommend the brands posted by Zhu Ting to friends, the average score of this is 3.45, which shows followers' attitude to recommend the brands to their friends is neutral but positive. Which means most of them will not actively recommend the brands to their friends. Last aspect is about the price, the average score

of this is 3.87 which is showing a positive attitude to the price aspect. From this result, it has been shown that even though followers are expressing a positive to the brands after posted by Zhu Ting social media platform, while customers facing purchase are active this still be a considered factor. In conclusion of the impact for the purchase behaviours, the average score of these aspects is 3.62 which is showing that after posting advertisements on her social media platform, it is a positive impact on purchase behaviours but from the reflection of participants also shows that customers are having rationality while making the purchase decision. Most customers will not recommend the brand to others actively, they will choose to respect their friends' attitude and preferences, even though they will be positive while needing to make a choice for purchasing, they still have rationality while making choice. However, they still are a group who express positive comments to the brands posted by Zhu Ting, which is a positive effect to the brand and is also the reason for choosing social media accounts of celebrity athletes.

3. The followers' attitude to the advertisements content and format. From the Likert Scale of this perspective, the average score of followers' attitudes of content is 3.68 which is showing that those followers are willing to know the detail of the products and the content of the advertisements. Compared to the content of the advertisements, the average score of followers' attitudes to the advertisements form (eg. videos, pictures, video blog, etc.) is 3.45 which is a neutral but positive attitude. Concluding above, the average score of this aspect is 3.56, which is a comprehensively positive attitude. Compared with customers' attitudes of content and format, it shows that the audience will be concerned about the detail of the products rather than the advertisement using videos or pictures to broadcast.

4. The followers' attitudes to the activities that are using athletes' personal accounts to advertise. From the Likert Scales, it shows that the average score of the question which is about will the followers mind to use social media platforms to advertise is 3.77. This score means that followers are positive to this marketing activity. However, the lowest average score in this research is 3.21 which is about their attitude to repost the advertisement that was posted by Zhu Ting, which means followers are at a neutral attitude to expand the advertisements actively. Concluding about followers' attitudes to the activities which are using their personal accounts to advertise, the average score of this aspect is 3.49 which shows that even though followers do not mind posting advertisements on Zhu Ting's social media platform, they are still not active about expanding the advertisements.

As for the preference of the advertising form on social media platforms (figure 5), 84.77% of the participants prefer the people who post the advertisements by sharing their using experience instead of traditional advertisements. As for video advertisements and picture advertisements, more followers accept video advertisements rather than picture advertisements. Even though online events and live video are popular in recent years, only 30% of participants accept these two approaches to advertise.



Figure 6: preference of online advertisements

As for the open-ended questions (Figure 7), as this part even this part which is a part without any actual answer for participants to choose, most participants still mentioned that as a consumer, the most important elements that they are concerned about are the quality and the reality of the advertisement emphasized about the products. Addition to the products' quality, followers are expecting the advertisements to be related to Zhu Ting's real life rather than an official shooting by the brands.

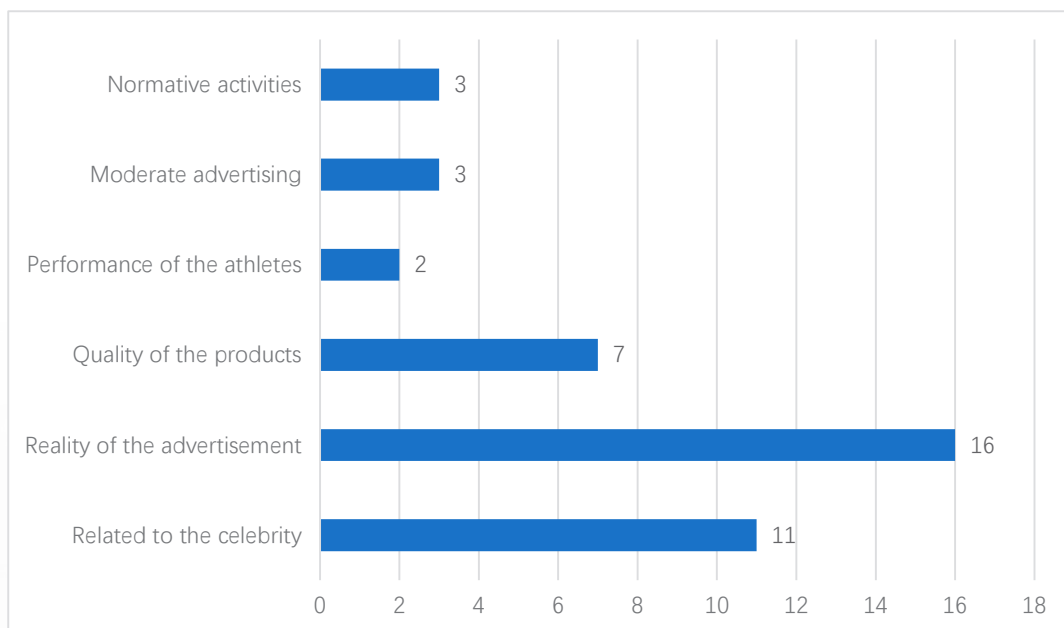


Figure 7: Followers expectation to the online advertising activities

Discussion

Conclude above, the factors that affect using social media platforms are as follows. First, social media platforms are convenient to find the characteristic of the audience which is beneficial for capturing the common point of the potential customers. According to the research, it has been shown that the users of social media platforms are mainly gathered in the 18-25 generation and most of them are students. The reason for the followers to

follow her mainly are the grades, competitive performance, personality, and they also are the fans of volleyball. According to this, social media is a platform which is facing a more specific audience group that is helping brands to find the common interest of the group and design their advertisement which need to attract this group of potential consumers. Apart from this, the effectiveness of using personal social media platforms to post the advertisement have reached over half of her followers, which have the high effectiveness to reach the target group and potential customers. For brands, the cooperation with celebrity athletes is an opportunity to reach their target market as they are choosing the celebrities to broadcast their products. Therefore, in the process of marketing, social media is a convenient platform to connect with the target market, also it is a more flexible platform, also the group that they are facing is more specific which has been shown in this survey, the followers are concern about the volleyball, which is Zhu Ting's sports, they are having a more specific characteristic to capture. In addition, to conduct the marketing process on social media need to notice that the main group on Internet for leisure and concern about the information is the young generation and students, which means in the process to deal with the relationship between customers and brands online need to notice that this group of audience is the main group to face. In conclusion, using celebrity athletes to promote products through the online social network may represent a potential opportunity to face a specific group of potential customers (Fisher, 2009 as cited in Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011). Additionally, compared to the traditional media platform, social media is providing an opportunity to achieve a more specific group of customers, as Leage (2005) has mentioned previously, while companies and brands are selecting the target of this selection is to find an advertising agency which consists of filling the garnered media space with content via TV stations, radio stations, magazines, newspapers and cinemas which are the platforms that are contacting with general public. However, in the meanwhile, social media is a platform that will reach a more specific group which is having more common characteristics to capture. Therefore, conveniently reaching the target group who have an obvious characteristic to capture is one of the influential factors for celebrity athletes to have influence on social media.

Moreover, from the result of the questionnaire, it has been shown that the most important reason is they are the group of people who are concern about volleyball, therefore, those people are following her are not only the fans of her, but also are the fans of the volleyball, which means the followers of a celebrity athlete also can be the fans of the sport that this athlete is playing. Thence, as the followers is not only a fans group of the athletes but also a fans group of the sports, they will have the characteristics of the fans group from both side, for marketers to consider about this, the target group in the marketing process which is using athletes' social media account is not only have the fans of this athletes but also have more people who are concerning this sport, therefore it is necessary to emphasize the elements of the sports more than emphasize the athletes personally. This means the

group that are following the account of the athletes is broader than the fans group of these athletes.

On the other hand, social media as a platform delivered by the Internet, is an opportunity to reach a wider audience rapidly. With the development of the Internet, smart-phones have become an important tool in human's daily life. The availability of smartphones and cheap internet are key in increasing the number of followers on the Internet (Ehsan, 2018). Additionally, the development of media is building up a huge network for sports clubs, athletes, venues, etc. which means the Internet will be able to exchange information conveniently that is necessary for all sports organizations and individuals to network (Dugalić, 2018). Apart from this, according to the data from the survey, the average score about the attitude of the participants' willing to repost the advertisements posted by the celebrity athletes, it has been shown that even though participants are having a neutral attitude to repost advertisements, there still are followers who are willing to repost them which means followers could be part of the expanding process. Also, fans are a group which is active in discuss process (Klassen et al., 2018) which is also a helpful to expand the influential of the advertisements. Additionally, According to (2004), sports is an industry who has wide audience that include both national and international scale of audience (Koković, 2004 as cited in Dugalić, 2018), and the massive scale if interest into sport, especially globally, requires a strategic approach to communications in sport (Pedersen, Laucella, Kian, & Geurin, 2016 as cited in Dugalić, 2018), which is showing that social media platform is an effective platform to reach wider scale of audience with the development of technology. Because of the development of technology which is helping the information to broadcast more rapidly and wider than the traditional approaches. From the research it shows that the attitude from the followers to the activities which are using the social media platform to broadcasting, followers are having a neutral and positive attitude to this process, which means from consumer perspective to consider this question, it will be more effective for brands to receive positive feedback compared to classical approach. Television, billboard and sponsor the competition are facing a boarded audience group, for advertisement, it is difficult to collect the specific feedback from the target group and reflection of potential customers.

Another factor is that fans are a group which is having a comprehensively positive attitude to the brands through this advertising activity. using social media platform of celebrity athletes is an activity conduct by the brands, from this angle they are having their goals and aim to achieve, as they are making this choice need to be supported by Public Release and advertising, aims primarily to achieve cognitive and affective effects which is aiming at influencing the target group's brand knowledge and attitude (Leage, 2005). Which means brands need to make a decision that relies on the reflection and attitude to using social media platforms of celebrity athletes, therefore, the key factor that affects celebrity athletes to become a social media influencer is the positive attitude and reflection of the advertising activity on social media platforms. Even though Zhu Ting now is No. 3 of

women volleyball players in the world, she will be facing injury, defeat, competition state, etc. which are unpredictable negative situations, for brands, these also be negative for them (Lagae, 2005). Then, the advertisements on social media platforms will impact the followers' purchase behaviours. According to Lagae (2005), the main goal for marketers is to increase the quantity and frequency of purchase from customers which is called the customer share rather than market share, which means the aim of cooperation with celebrity athletes is aiming at increasing the sales of the products. Under the development of technology, customers can receive more information than before the development of the technology, thereby, they will have more factors to consider and more option for them to choose while they are making a decision to purchase, however, they still choose to trust the brands that are recommended by the athletes who they are followed, thereby, they also will have a positive attitude and deeper impression to those brands as mentioned previously, which is an advantage for brands, also this is a factor that is positive for the relationship between athletes and the brands. This is a win-win choice for brands and athletes.

Social media platform is a platform that is effective for the communication between fans and clubs/athletes. As mentioned previously in this essay, the development of the Internet is promoting the transformation of information. Apart from this, individuals and groups are using SM as a platform that supports their connection with their fans. This is an opportunity for companies to use their platforms (Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011). Additionally, social media also is a valuable platform to help marketing communication, which is the valuable communication element in the sports industry (Azeba et al., 2019). Sports fans always show their enthusiasm and loyalty to the players and clubs and follow them across local, national, and increasingly transnational levels (Giulianotti & Numerato, 2017). The Internet as the platform to help international fans to follow the information easier. Another advantage is the social media platform and the opportunity for the fans to interact with the players that can help the fans get closer to the players. It can improve the interaction between sports players and their fans. Therefore, social media is a platform which is supporting the communication and connection between individuals & groups and fans groups (Hambrick & Mahoney, 2011).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the acknowledgement of the media as a mass social phenomenon, apart from informing, also is characteristic for sport. With the development of technology, social media platforms benefit sponsors, athletes and their fans. The key influential factors of this process also can be concluded from these three perspectives. From sponsors' perspective, social media platforms are helpful to capture the common points of the athletes' followers in order to find their target market and design the advertisements that can attract the target market. Also, social media platforms can be helpful to impact the market and followers' purchase behaviours in a wider scale of the customers. From

followers' perspective, social media platforms are an opportunity for them to communicate with celebrity athletes. Comprehensively, social media platforms also are beneficial for networking and building up a systematic network. Based on these benefits, even though followers trust athletes, will have a deeper impression of the brand that posted/recommended by the sports celebrities, also they will have a positive attitude to those advertisement and marketing process, some people also is willing to cooperate with the brands to expand the influence of the advertisement and recommend the brands to their friends and relatives, quality of the products and the reality of the advertisement still should be the prerequisites and the basic requirement for conducting the marketing process, design the format and content of advertisements of the products.

Furthermore, it needs to be noticed that grades and sports performance are an intangible, unpredictable and difficult to control factor, which means this is an unpredictable factor that needs brands to have emergency awareness about this, addition to this, this is also an elements that is concerned by the fans which could be impact to the effect of the advertisements. Additionally, area characteristics needed to be considered while conducting the marketing process as the main social media is different in different countries. Target area also is important for considering, Take Zhu Ting as an example, she is a Chinese volleyball player who is also play in a Turkish club, however, the brand invite her to be their spokesperson are still mainly aiming at Chinese Customer, and the main steam social media in China is different with other country and have their particularities, therefore, to consider the marketing process in China it is necessary to consider about these particularities.

And for the athletes, to operate their social media platform will be beneficial for their future, as Jones & Schumann (2000) had argued that the elite athletes such as Michael Jordan and Chris Evert are athletes who have earned the trust and admiration of the public and can have continue to benefit from their role-model status. Zhu Ting is also an intelligent player in Chinese volleyball history, therefore, for brand, she has a high-level image and commercial value to choose, for herself, this will be beneficial for her future. And in the after the COVID-19 pandemic period, we are finding that online is a useful tool to break the boundary, and social media platform in purchase process has be noticed by some researchers. As Mason et. al. (2020) demonstrated in their study, the social media platform is playing an important role after COVID-19 pandemic, such as in product information searches, identifying product needs, evaluating product alternatives and brand marketing. Therefore, it is important for us to notice this new platform and tool.

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