

A Study on the Structural Relationship between Authenticity of Sportswear Brand Corporate, Brand Image, Brand Attitude, and Premium Payment Intention

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to conduct an empirical study on brand authenticity targeting sportswear brand consumers. Through this, we intend to provide the accumulation and implications of authenticity research. For the research model, first, the authenticity of sportswear brand companies was selected as an independent variable. Brand image and brand attitude were selected as the next parameters. Finally, the dependent variable was the intention to pay the premium. Structural equation model analysis was conducted for the structural relationship between these variables. The subjects of this study are consumers who have purchased sportswear brands within the past year. Convenience sampling was used for the sample survey, and 262 people were finally selected as valid samples. The survey was conducted as a non-face-to-face online survey due to the COVID-19 infection. For data processing, frequency analysis was conducted using SPSS 23 to identify the individual characteristics of the survey subjects. In addition, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis were performed to refine the scale of the survey tool. Next, using AMOS 21, confirmatory factor analysis and correlation analysis were conducted to verify the measurement model. In addition, structural equation model analysis was conducted to verify the hypothesis. As a result of the analysis, all six hypotheses selected from the research model were adopted.

Keywords: *Sportswear Brand Corporate, Authenticity, Brand Image, Brand Attituded, Premium Payment Intention*

1. Introduction

The reason why companies fail to achieve various strategies for communication with consumers is because they lack the authenticity that consumers perceive. Companies should consider authenticity in order to form a true and mutually reliable relationship in consumer experience, and marketing communication based on products with authenticity can be a differentiating factor that other companies can not easily imitate [1]. This authenticity is also gaining importance in academic fields such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, and

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pedagogy, and in social fields such as management, culture, education, and marketing. In particular, corporate authenticity plays an important role due to the authenticity of CSR strategies for corporate social responsibility and the emergence of ESG management paradigms that are emerging for corporate sustainable management.

In this regard, Kim & Park distinguishes authenticity marketing in two ways [2]. The first is 'good product' and the second is 'good company'. In modern society, 'good products' are too difficult to differentiate product quality. In other words, it emphasized that the gap in products is gradually narrowing. Therefore, in an era where quality differences disappeared, consumers became more interested in 'who makes them' rather than 'what products are good'.

As mentioned earlier, even in the case of sportswear brands, the quality gap is reduced, the speed of product obsolescence is very fast, and there is intense competition in the flood of many brands [3]. Therefore, it is necessary to accumulate research on authenticity for corporate sustainability management. Research on authenticity in sportswear has been suggested on brand authenticity [4]. However, as previously claimed by Kim & Park, there is little research on corporate authenticity, so this study aims to conduct research on corporate authenticity of sportswear brands. Through this, this study intends to accumulate authenticity research at the enterprise level and provide theoretical and practical implications.

2. Study Hypothesis

This study established a hypothesis based on the theoretical basis of the existing literature. Company authenticity was selected as an independent variable, and brand image and brand attitude were selected as parameters. And the intention to pay the premium was selected as the dependent variable. The purpose of this study is to investigate the causal relationship of this structural equation model. The following section describes the detailed relationship between these concepts based on the current research model.

2.1 Relationship between Corporate Authenticity and Brand Image

In research related to authenticity and image, studies have been conducted to examine the moderating effect of authenticity in the relationship between corporate image and related variables in various fields. Also, like this study, research on the relationship between corporate image and authenticity has been conducted [5]. Looking at this, in a study on CSV activities of hotel companies, the perception of authenticity about CSV activities had a positive effect on brand image [6]. In a preceding study on outdoor brands similar to the subject of this study, research results are also presented that all three dimensions of brand authenticity for products, employees, and companies have a positive effect on brand image [7]. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been established:

Hypothesis 1. Corporate authenticity will have a significant effect on brand image.

2.2 Relationship between Corporate Authenticity and Brand Attitude

As a result of analyzing the causal relationship by classifying the brand authenticity of the tourist destination into the dimension of 'creativity' and 'authority' in the previous studies on the brand authenticity of the tourist destination, both of the two brand authenticity dimensions had a positive effect [8]. In addition, previous studies on the structural relationship between the authenticity of the fitness center and brand attitude, brand attachment, and intention to continue show that authenticity has a positive causal relationship with brand attitude [9]. In addition, this study conducted a multi-mediated verification of the input parameters. In the relationship between the authenticity of the fitness center and the intention to continue, brand attitude and brand attachment showed a significant mediating effect. In the relationship between the authenticity of the

fitness center and the intention to continue, it was suggested that the brand attitude should be constructed more preemptively. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been established:

Hypothesis 2. Corporate authenticity will have a significant positive effect on brand attitude.

2.3 Relationship between Brand Image and Brand Attitude

The relationship between image and attitude has been made in various fields, and in many previous studies, favorable perception or perception of image has a positive effect on favorable attitude. Previous studies on the relationship between brand-related images and attitudes also show these results. First, we will look at recent studies on the relationship between the image of private label brand (PLB) and customer attitudes for store customers. This study suggests that the price image of PLB has a positive effect on customer attitude toward PLB, while the perceived store image has an indirect effect [10]. In addition, in the study of eco-friendly management activities of food service companies, brand image and brand attitude explain positive causal relationship [11]. Therefore, the following hypothesis was established for the relationship between brand image and continuance viewing intention:

Hypothesis 3. Brand image will have a significant positive effect on brand attitude.

2.4 Relationship between Brand Image and Premium Payment Intention

In the study considering the relationship between airline brand equity factors and premium payment intention, the study was conducted by dimensioning brand equity into three factors. As a result of the analysis, it was found that brand image and perceived quality factors had a statistically significant effect on premium payment intention among brand awareness, brand image and perceived quality factors [12]. In addition, in the empirical study on the coffee package, the premium image according to the color tone of the coffee cup has a positive effect on the premium payment intention [13]. Therefore, the following hypothesis was established for the relationship between brand attitude and continuance viewing intention:

Hypothesis 4. Brand image will have a significant positive effect on premium payment intention.

2.5 Relationship between Brand Attitude and Premium Payment Intention

Research on brand attitude and premium payment intention is relatively insufficient compared to purchase intention or brand loyalty, but recent empirical studies on the relationship between these two are underway. First, in the study of customers who have experience using Shanghai Disney theme hotels in China, brand attitude has a positive effect on premium price payment intention [14]. Lee and Min's study on social enterprise products showed that product attitude indirectly affects premium payment intention through purchase intention [15]. Therefore, the following hypothesis was established for the relationship between brand attitude and continuance viewing intention.

Hypothesis 5. Brand attitude will have a significant positive effect on premium payment intention

2.6 Relationship between Corporate Authenticity and Premium Payment Intention

In order to establish a hypothesis that the authenticity of sportswear brand companies will have a positive effect on brand image, previous studies were examined. First, Jin and Nam's study examined the effects of corporate CSR activities and corporate authenticity on the repurchase intention of college students. The researchers analyzed the causal relationship between CSR and repurchase intention by dimensionalizing CSR into five dimensions and corporate authenticity into three dimensions [16]. As a result of the analysis, CSR

activities had a positive effect on economic activity level, and corporate authenticity had a positive effect on consistency and CEO character. In addition, in a study on Ugly food, it was found that both authenticity and perceived quality had a positive effect on purchase intention and premium payment intention [17]. Therefore, the following hypothesis was established for the relationship between brand attitude and continuance viewing intention.

Hypothesis 6. Corporate authenticity will have a significant positive effect on premium payment intention

Specific hypotheses on the causal relationship between each of the above constructs were set as shown in Figure 1 based on the theoretical basis

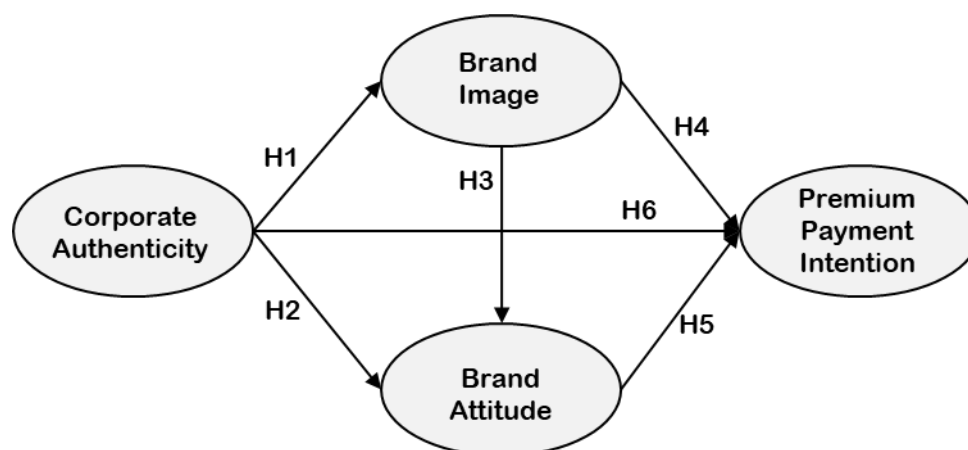


Figure 1. Study model

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Subjects and Sampling Methods

The subjects of this study are consumers of sportswear brands. It is targeted at adults who have purchased sportswear brands within the last year. The convenience sampling method was used, and a non-face-to-face survey was conducted as a survey method. For non-face-to-face surveys, the online survey system of KSDC (Korea Social Science Data Center) was used. The final target was 262 consumers. The personal characteristics of the final subject are as follows. First, there are 145 males (55.3%) and 117 females (44.7%) according to gender. The age is 59 people in their 20s (22.5%), 47 people in their 30 s (17.9%), 90 people in their 40s (34.4%), and 66 people in their 50s and older (25.2%). The average cost of purchasing sportswear brands per year is 26 people (9.9%) less than 100,000 won, 81 people (30.9%) more than 100,000 won to 300,000 won, 55 people (21.0%) more than 300,000 won to 500,000 won, 58 people (22.1%) more than 1 million won to 42 people (16.0%).

3.2 Research Tools

The survey tool used in this study is a questionnaire whose reliability and validity were verified in previous studies. These questionnaires were modified and supplemented according to the purpose of this study. The composition of the questionnaire is as follows. First, the questions on personal characteristics consisted of three items: gender, age, and average purchase cost for a year. Corporate authenticity, an independent variable, was composed of four questions, and the parameters, brand image and brand attitude, were composed of four questions, respectively. Finally, the premium payment intention consisted of four questions. Each questionnaire item was composed of a Likert 5-point scale, and the higher the number, the stronger the degree

of consent.

4. Results

4.1 Validity and Reliability Analysis of Research Tools

The construct validity of the measurement model for the authenticity of sports brand companies, brand image, brand attitude, and relationship with premium payment intention was verified. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the statistical program Amos 21.0. Question 5 about brand image and question 2 about brand attitude appeared to hinder validity, so a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted after removal. Looking at the suitability of the measurement model, TLI is .957 ($\geq .90$), CFI is .966 ($\geq .90$), and RMSEA is .071 (less than 0.1), indicating that it meets the commonly presented suitability criteria [18]. In order to investigate the convergent validity, AVE (average variance extracted), construct reliability and figures were calculated. As a result, all values were satisfied with the general standard (concept reliability 0.70 and AVE 0.50 or more) to ensure concentration validity [19].

The standardization factor load is $p < .01$ it was found to be statistically significant, and both conceptual reliability and AVE exceeded each reference value. The specific results are shown in Table 1 below. Next, the discriminant validity was analyzed whether AVE exceeded the square value (Φ^2) of the correlation coefficient between concepts. As a result of the analysis, the AVE values of the concept were higher than the square values of the 10 correlations existing in the measurement model, indicating that there was discriminant validity. The analysis results on the correlation are shown in Table 2 below [20].

Cronbach's α reliability analysis of the measurement variable for the latent variable whose validity was verified through confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. The reliability factor is brand corporate authenticity .920, brand Image .920, brand attitude .908 and premium payment intention .899. This exceeds the general criterion of .7, so it is judged that the measurement variables have internal consistency [21].

Table 1. Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability of measurement model

Measurement item	B	β	$1-\lambda^2$	<i>t</i>	AVE	C.R.
Corporate Authenticity 1	1	.845	.286			
Corporate Authenticity 2	1.109	.872	.240	17.873***	.744	.921
Corporate Authenticity 3	1.051	.856	.267	17.331***		
Corporate Authenticity 4	1.073	.877	.231	18.036***		
Brand Image 1	1	.841	.293			
Brand Image 2	1.040	.863	.255	17.408***	.714	.929
Brand Image 3	1.058	.881	.224	17.982***		
Brand Image 4	.981	.792	.373	15.210***		
Brand Attitude 1	1	.783	.387			
Brand Attitude 2	.885	.820	.328	14.304***	.677	.893
Brand Attitude 3	.933	.849	.279	14.931***		
Brand Attitude 4	.877	.838	.298	14.681***		
Premium Payment Intention 1	1	.940	.116			

Premium Payment Intention 2	.968	.906	.179	23.437***
Premium Payment Intention 3	.912	.792	.373	17.614***

*** $p < .001$

Table 2. Correlation analysis of measurement model

Factors	Corporate Authenticity	Brand Image	Brand Attitude	Premium Payment Intention
Corporate Authenticity	1			
Brand Image	.664(.441)**	1		
Brand Attitude	.711(.506)**	.796(.634)**	1	
Premium Payment Intention	.594(.353)**	.699(.489)**	.673(.453)**	1

** $p < .01$, () is the square of the correlation coefficient

4.2 Fitness of the research model

TLI, CFI, RMSEA, and indices were used to find out the suitability of the research model. Looking at the specific analysis results, it was found that TLI was .966 ($\geq .90$), CFI was .957 ($\geq .90$), and RMSEA was .071 (less than 1), satisfying the suitability criteria presented above.

4.3 Hypothesis verification result

After verifying the goodness of fit of the model, the individual hypotheses presented in the research model were verified. The verification results are as follows.

Hypothesis 1 is that 'the authenticity of sportswear brand companies will have a positive effect on the brand image.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 1 was adopted. Hypothesis 2 is that 'sportswear brand company authenticity will have a positive effect on brand attitude.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 2 was adopted. Hypothesis 3 is that 'sportswear brand image will have a positive effect on brand attitude.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 3 was adopted. Hypothesis 4 is 'The sportswear brand image will have a positive effect on the premium payment intention.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 4 was adopted. Hypothesis 5 is that 'sportswear brand attitude will have a positive effect on premium payment intention.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 5 was adopted. Hypothesis 6 is that 'sportswear brand corporate authenticity will have a positive effect on premium payment intention.' As a result of hypothesis verification, it was statistically significant, and hypothesis 6 was adopted.

As such, all six hypotheses set in the exploratory model were adopted; the details are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Hypothesis verification result

Hypothesis	Path	B	β	s.e	t	Hypothesis Adoption
Hypothesis 1	Corporate Authenticity→Brand Image	.706	.664	.068	10.354***	Adopt
Hypothesis 2	Corporate Authenticity→Brand Attitude	.294	.326	.059	4.968***	Adopt

Hypothesis 3	Brand Image→Brand Attitude	.491	.580	.061	8.041***	Adopt
Hypothesis 4	Brand Image→Premium Payment Intention	.495	.404	.118	4.216***	Adopt
Hypothesis 5	Brand Attitude→Premium Payment Intention	.351	.242	.150	2.332*	Adopt
Hypothesis 6	Corporate Authenticity→Premium Payment Intention	.201	.154	.10	2.022*	Adopt

*p<.05, ***p<.001

5. Conclusion

The results of this study showed that the authenticity of the company directly affects the intention to pay insurance premiums, and the authenticity of the company indirectly affects the intention to pay insurance premiums through brand image and brand attitude. Indirect effects include: First, there are [corporate authenticity-brand image-premium payment intention] and [corporate authenticity-brand image-brand attitude-premium payment intention]. Finally, the path of [corporate authenticity-brand attitude-premium payment intention] was confirmed. This means that two parameters play an important mediating role in the relationship between a firm's authenticity and premium willingness to pay.

Therefore, it is important for sportswear brand companies to enhance their brand image and form a friendly brand attitude through genuine services and marketing activities for consumers. Through this, it is judged that it will be able to act more effectively on the intention to pay insurance premiums that are more loyalty than the intention to repurchase.

The authenticity of a company is expected to be a significant value factor in all areas of society, including economic activities, such as the relationship between companies and consumers and between companies. In order to have such authenticity, the following factors are emphasized [22]. First, Credibility, communication, consistency, and CEO disposition are important. The company must be sincere and show a consistent appearance. In addition, communication with customers should be emphasized, and the disposition of the CEO should be correctly recognized by the public and consumers.

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