

Analyzing Influential Factors on Reputation of Sports Athlete - Measuring Professional Golfers' Reputational Index -

Ahn, Jai Han¹, Kim, Misuk¹, & Han, Eunyoung^{2*}

¹*Korea Institute of Sports Science*

²*Journalism & Mass communication at the Sungkyunkwan University*

Abstract

This study recounts what influences sports athlete reputation. As social media have become more widespread, athlete's non-sport-related activities can be accessed almost instantly. This change in the media environment requires sports athletes not only to attend to their sporting ability, but also to systematically manage non-sport factors in order to maintain and improve their brand values and reputations. In order to collect factors constructing sports athlete reputation, a pre-study including an open-ended survey based on free association, analysis of media reports, and consultations from sports experts was conducted. The pre-study process resulted in a final number of 44 items for use in the study. In the main survey, 452 panelists were collected through an on-line survey. To verify the 44 items of sports athletes' reputations Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. As a result of EFA, 21 items were finally selected and grouped into six factors: a) game results; b) management of playing capability; c) personal character; d) external appeal; e) sportsmanship, and f) management of privacy. The results from this study also suggest that game results are the most important factor influencing sports athletes' reputations. Management of playing capability and sportsmanship are considered more important than are personal character, external appeal, or privacy management. It is expected that the result of this study would help corporations to develop strategic analysis for sports athletes' reputation.

Key words: Sports athlete reputational, athlete brands, Professional Golfers, media

Introduction

Sport is recognized as a communications channel that culturally combines sports with media (Wenner, 1998). Sports properties, such as sporting events, teams, and athletes, are able to deliver messages to the public through their merger with the media. Many leading corporations

sponsor sporting mega-events, utilizing the communications channel uniquely found in sports in order to reach potential consumers all over the world. The brand equity in sports properties has intangible value similar to that of corporate brands. Sports federations, teams, and athletes establish and develop branding strategies in order to maximize their brand values.

Among the sports properties athletes are emphasized as the main element of talent raising the quality of games, contributing to team success, attracting loyal fans, and

increasing revenue to their leagues and teams (Yang, 2007). As social media has widely spread, sports fans can now encounter in real time athletes' recent activities and opinions regarding certain social issues. Sports athletes have become the face of a new branding environment that is more affected by out-of-stadium behavior than ever before. Therefore, athletes are required to manage their personal reputation, which is formed and evaluated by the public through a combination of out-of-stadium behavior with sports ability.

Despite the fact that athlete reputation is a crucial component influencing a team or sponsor's brand, studies regarding athlete reputations have rarely been conducted. The purpose of this study is therefore to develop factors to measure athletes' reputational index by extracting influential items of their reputations in order of most to least relative importance, then applying these factors to real athletes to verify reliability and acceptability of the index. This study can be used as a guide for researching athlete reputations and provides guidelines that will help corporate sponsors to achieve their marketing and communications goals through utilizing effective athlete endorsement strategy.

Theoretical Review

Reputation

Reputation is not an impromptu judgment, but continuing cognition (Fombrun, 1996) that is a corporation's most valuable intangible equity (Hall, 1992). The personal reputations of CEOs, politicians, and sports athletes have also been emphasized as an aggregate of cognition (DeCremer & Sedikides, 2008). This cognition comes from personal characteristics and behavior, an image that has been accumulated, or an image that is described by others (Zinko, 2007).

An organization or person's reputation is mainly the connection they need with others' interest and support to accomplish social compensation and objectives (Fombrun, 1996). Whether an organization's or a person's, reputation

is an increasingly essential factor in our society (Graber, 1976). Where the quality of products and services are hardly differentiated between competitive corporations reputation impacts consumers' decisions to select and buy a corporation's products or services (Hall, 1992).

Corporate reputation may be defined as customers' entire evaluation of a corporation, made on the basis of its products, services, communication, CEOs, employees, and business activities (Walsh & Beatty, 2007). A corporation is a complex organization that acts like a person in a variety of aspects (Ackerman, 1984). As a long-recognized entity in many countries' legal frameworks, corporations are endowed with the same rights and duties that a person has (Blackston, 1993). Therefore, reviewing and extracting factors of corporate reputation would be meaningful for understanding athlete's reputations.

The Reputation Institute in the United States pinpointed four dimensions (feeling, esteem, admiration, and trust) and seven factors (products/services, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership, and performance) that should be used as criteria for evaluating corporate reputation. Fortune magazine also selects "the most admired corporation" based on eight factors: a) quality of management; b) quality of product/service; c) innovativeness; d) long-term investment value; e) financial soundness; f) ability to attract, develop, and keep talented people; g) responsibility to the community; and h) wise use of assets. As for reorganizing factors of corporate reputation gathered from previous studies, these factors are narrowed down to corporate constituents, corporate customers, corporate products and services, and corporate management and operations.

Personal reputation is an aggregate of cognition about a certain person by others (DeCremer & Sedikides, 2008), resulted from saturated personal characteristics, behaviors, and images described by others over an extended period of time (Zinko, 2007). It is crucial to maintain a positive reputation (Foste & Botero, 2011), because a person with a positive reputation is recognized as more talented, high status, and trustworthy (Gioia & Sims, 1983). In politics, personal reputations are greatly emphasized. Most voters are more interested in a candidate's personality or

characteristics than in their political promises (Miller & Miller, 1976) if a candidate's political promises are not differentiable from others'.

CEO groups recognize "trustworthiness," "ethical behavior," "corporate management capacity," "role model," "communication skills," and "risk-management capacity" as factors contributing to CEO reputation. However, governmental officials, media, investors, and customers indicate "trustworthiness," "suggesting clear vision," and "engagement of talent" as components of CEO reputation; these components, then, are recognized differently by different corporate stakeholder groups (Gaines-Ross, 2000). In addition, previous studies have suggested as components of reputation trustworthiness, risk management, customer management, strategic vision, and human resource management for CEOs (Han, 2005) and morality, economic management, communication, government operation, and global competence for presidents (Shim, 2011).

Sports Athlete Reputation

Sports athlete and personal reputations almost mirror each other. Like the aspects of personal reputation previously mentioned, athlete reputations may be defined as others' aggregate of cognition about a sports athlete resulting from saturated personal characteristics and behaviors shown in or outside the stadium, and images described by others over a long time (DeCremer & Sedikides, 2008; 2003; Zinko et al., 2007). Although research directly related to sports athlete reputation is hard to find, relationships between individual athletes and/or teams and corporate sponsorships have been extensively studied. Sports athlete's endorsements of corporate brands have been relatively well studied. Therefore, reviewing previous studies regarding brand images of athletes will help to deduce the components of athletes' reputation.

Professional teams may scout and recruit star athletes in order to transfer and associate his or her fans' attitude and loyalty toward the athletes' new team. In the past, fans choose to support teams on the basis of their loyalty to that team and its region, but many fans now render their

support to a team based on their favorite athletes, regardless of regional background. A fan's affection and loyalty towards an athlete associated with a particular brand or brands will sustain that brand's image. This information is a crucial factor for a company deciding which athlete and/or team to endorse. As an athlete's brand value increases, so does the numbers of corporations trying to utilize his or her brand to actualize their brand marketing. Tiger Woods, a golf player, secured world level sponsorships in 2000 from more than eleven global corporations such as Nike, and Rolex in the value of \$54 million (Ferguson, 2000). Sports athlete's endorsement influences the increase of stock value for their corporation sponsors. When Michael Jordan came back to the NBA (National Basketball Association), relevant corporations' stock value was increased by the volume of one billion dollars (Costanzo, 2005). Corporations favor sports athletes as an advertising model because of the return on investment. A sports star can generate a better marketing effect than any other celebrity entertainers. The expenditure is rather low for endorsing athletes compared to endorsing TV and movie stars, and sports athletes reach a variety of demographics through sporting content with relatively fewer cultural and lingual barriers.

Many studies regarding brand reputations have focused mostly on products and services rather than personal brands (Yang, 2007). Product and service brands differ from personal brands in that first, the lifespan of a personal brand is relatively short. Secondly, product and service brands are capable of being adjusted through advertisement, public relations, price, manufacturing, or repackaging. Third, personal brands, including sports athlete brands, are susceptible to interdependent influences: team, peer athletes, corporate sponsors, and the media, as well as the person's athletic skill and ability (Yang, 2007).

Factors influencing the brands of teams and athletes in a sport may be classified into individual and environmental factors. Individual factors include athletic ability, technique, personality, playing style, and behavior in and outside the stadium, while league, team, peer athletes, corporations, and the media comprise the environmental factors (Yang,

2007). In addition, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are also viewed as factors affecting athlete's images (Spry, 2009). It is remarkable that athletes' brands are heavily influenced by factors external to the sport, such as personality and private life, in addition to sporting ability, technique, and playing style in the stadium.

Research Methods

Research Design and Procedure

In order to collect factors constructing sports athlete reputation, previous research was reviewed as a pre-study, and an open-ended survey based on free association was conducted of selected sports experts. In addition, sports news articles collected from three terrestrial TV stations and a major newspaper were analyzed to extract additional factors of sports athletes' reputations. As a result of the review, survey, and analysis of news articles, 79 items in total were collected as factors influencing sports athletes' reputations.

As a second pre-study, 30 sports professionals associated with sport-related organizations reviewed these 79 items. Those professionals helped to determine whether the 79 items were acceptable criteria for determining sports athletes' reputations. Those items that this review determined overlapped with others were removed or merged into one. In addition to this narrowing process, four additional items were newly recommended. The process resulted in a final number of 44 items for use in the study.

To test the reliability of these 44 items, 121 sports consumer panelists were surveyed online as a third pre-test. The final 44 items were confirmed as factors influencing sport athletes' reputations, and the main survey was conducted with these items.

In the main survey, 452 panelists were collected through an on-line survey. Panel members were limited to those who regularly play or watch golf in order to minimize the possibility of non-response, which would include panel members who lack information or familiarity regarding the

golf athletes, the research subjects in this study. To verify the 44 items of sports athletes' reputations that were confirmed in the pre-tests Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted, and the finally selected items were applied to measure reputational indices for subjects of analysis in this study.

Subject of Analysis

Factors influencing sports athletes' reputations may vary according to the nature of their sport. Athletes in an individual sport were the target subjects of this research, which analyzed in particular golfers belonging to both the PGA (Professional Golf Association) and LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association). The global popularity of this sport was one reason for this selection.

To determine the criteria for selecting specific athletes as research targets in this study, an open-ended survey was conducted of golf fans asking about the reputations of golf players in the PGA and/or LPGA, whether positive or negative. Golf athletes frequently mentioned on the survey may be regarded as having well-constructed awareness. Next, because it would be difficult to compare reputational indexes when deviation of golfing competence is too wide, golfers were selected who averaged in the top fifty golfers in the PGA and LPGA in terms of amount of awards over two years (2010–2011). Although Tiger Woods was not included on the list due to his scandal, he was included for analysis because of his 73 total PGA wins. Selected research subjects were K. J. Choi, Michelle Wie, Y. E. Yang, Seri Pak, Na Yeon Choi, Tiger Woods, Jyai Shin, and Yani Tseng.

Results

A total of 452 individuals participated in the main survey. The participants consisted of 226 men and 226 women. Participants were all older than 30. Ages 30–39 comprised 32.5%, ages 40–49 comprised 33.8%, and ages 50 and older comprised 33.6% of the total. Sixty-one

percent surveyed played golf, and ninety five percent surveyed watched golf frequently. Most participants were familiar with golf athletes.

Factor analysis

As a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for the 44 items of sports athletes' reputations those were confirmed in the pre-tests, 21 items were finally selected and grouped into six factors in the main study as reported in Table 1: a) game results; b) management of playing capability; c) personal character; d) external appeal; e) sportsmanship, and f) management of privacy.

To verify these six factors and 21 items, CFA (confirmatory factor analysis) was conducted against the responses of the other 226 participants who were not used for EFA. As reported in Table 2, the χ^2 value was 926.580, the degree of freedom was 137, TLI was .949,

CFI was .959, and RMSEA was .067. Goodness of fit for the analysis satisfies the critical value. Thus, the model measured by CFA was deemed acceptable.

In order to measure whether each item properly explains its factor, standardized coefficients were reviewed, as follows: game results were .760–.884, management of playing capability was .834–.865, personal character was .803–.862, external appeal was .763–.875, sportsmanship was .874–.901, and privacy management was .848–.934. Each value was over the critical value of .4; thus, all items selected in this study turned out to well represent latent variables.

In addition, each variable is independent without exceeding the criterion (.85) for latent variables' correlation, as shown in Table 3. As for each factor's reliability coefficient, all the factors' internal consistency and reliability exceeded .8, as reported in Table 4, indicating that the factors are highly reliable.

Table 1. Results of EFA for Factors Affecting Sports Athletes' Reputations

Factor	Item	
Game results	Participates in world events often	.951
	Excellent game record	.859
	Belonging to famous league or team	.834
	High ranking	.733
	Award wins	.667
Management of playing capability	Strives for self-development	-.871
	Confidence in his/her sporting area	-.564
	Devises his/her own exceptional ability	-.539
	Overcomes damage and slumps well	-.432
Personal character	Treads carefully in personal behavior	.829
	Participates actively in social charity events	.740
	Knows his/her own mind	.720
	Being humble	.495
External appeal	Attractive physical condition	.948
	Favorable appearance	.708
Sportsman-ship	Plays responsibly in games	-.978
	Shows a strong sense of fair play	-.827
	Good manners	-.613
Privacy Management	Lack of negative scandals, such as drug abuse	-.947
	Clean private life	-.795
	Conduct exemplary in words and acts	-.614

Table 2. Results of CFA for Factors and Items of Sports Athletes' Reputations

	χ^2	Df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Model for Sports Reputation	926.580	137	.959	.949	.067

Table 3. Results of Latent Variables' Correlation Analysis

	Game Results	Management of Playing Capability	Personal Character	External Appeal	Sportsmanship	Privacy Management
Game Result	1					
Playing Capability management	.719***	1				
Personal Character	.459***	.620***	1			
External Appeal	.240***	.216***	.196***	1		
Sportsmanship	.547***	.658***	.659***	.271***	1	
Privacy Management	.226***	.419***	.750***	.161***	.587***	1

p<.01, *p<.001

Table 4. Reliability of Factors Affecting Sports Athletes' Reputations

Factors	Number of items in factor	Cronbach's α
Game Results	5	.914
Management of Playing Capability	3	.880
Personal Character	4	.900
External Appeal	2	.801
Sportsmanship	2	.881
Privacy Management	3	.923

Importance of the Factors and Items for Athletes' Reputations

Weighted values for the six factors and 21 items were computed from the main survey, which required respondents to rank the factors and items in order of most to least relative importance. The importance of the factors and items were measured using a fixed-sum scale; the total importance scores of both factors and items were converted into a score of 100 points. Of the six factors, game results presented the highest weighted value, followed by management of playing capability, sportsmanship, personal character, privacy management, and external appeal in that respective order from highest to lowest.

As reported in Table 5, of the 21 items, first, among the five items of the game results factor, "participates in world events often" presented the highest item scale, while "excellent game record" was highest for item weight. Second, among the four items of management of playing capability, "Confidence in his/her sporting area" presented the highest item scale, while "strive for self-development" was revealed as the highest weighted item by importance. Third, among the four items of personal character, "Knows his/her own mind" was highest in item scale, while "Treads carefully in personal behavior" was highest in item weight. Fourth, among the two items of external appeal, "attractive physical condition" presented the highest item scale and item weight, followed by "favorable appearance".

Fifth, among the three items of sportsmanship, “Plays responsibly in games” was highest both in item scale and item weight. Sixth, among the three items of privacy management, “Lack of negative scandals such as drug abuse” was highest in item scale and “Clean private life” was highest in item weight.

For each factor, the highest item scale is different from the highest item weight. The item scales reflect the particular research subjects, while the item weights represent the items influential for sports athletes’ reputations regardless of specific athletes. Therefore, it may be meaningful to calculate the item weighted values for application to factor and item scales when computing sports athletes’ reputations.

Sports Athlete Reputational Index

In order to measure Sports Athlete Reputational Index (SRI) for the eight golfers in this study, a factor index is computed by applying the weighted values of items to the athletes’ substantive item scales, as shown in Figure 1.

Management of playing capability’s factor index was highest, with a score of 74.80, and management of playing capability, game results, privacy management, personal character, and external appeal followed in order of descending weight.

$$FI = \sum_{i=1}^{N=\alpha} (Xi \times Wi)$$

N = number of items, Xi = item scale, Wi = weighed value of item

Figure 1. Factor Index for Sport Athletes’ Reputations

Next, the weighted values of the factors are multiplied by each respective factor index, and the sum of the results is considered the average sports athlete reputational index for the research subjects: 73.19 out of 100, as reported in Table 5. The formula to calculate sports athlete reputational index is reported in Figure 2.

$$FI = \sum_{i=1}^{N=\alpha} (fIi \times FWi)$$

N = number of items, fIi = item scale, FWi = weighed value of item

Figure 2. Sports Athlete Reputational Index

Table 5. Importance of Factors and Items for Sport Athletes’ Reputations

Reputational Factor	Items	Item scale	Item weight	Factor index (A)	Factor weight (B)	Reputational Index (A)x(B)
Game results	Participates in world events often	77.27	0.21	74.14	0.42	31.05
	Excellent game record	73.99	0.35			
	Belonging to famous league or team	73.43	0.12			
	High ranking	72.57	0.15			
Management of playing capability	Award wins	72.52	0.17	74.80	0.17	12.52
	Strives for self-development	75.60	0.36			
	Confidence in his/her sporting area	77.21	0.21			
	Devises his/her own exceptional ability	74.97	0.21			
Personal character	Overcomes damage and slumps well	71.17	0.22	68.98	0.11	7.40
	Treads carefully in personal behavior	70.20	0.33			
	Participates actively in social charity events	66.70	0.23			
	Knows his/her own mind	70.49	0.20			
External appeal	Being humble	68.26	0.24	68.28	0.09	6.15
	Attractive physical condition	69.42	0.52			
Sportsman-ship	Favorable appearance	67.06	0.48	74.76	0.12	8.97
	Plays responsibly in games	76.08	0.40			
	Shows a strong sense of fair play	75.80	0.37			
Privacy Management	Good manners	70.81	0.23	71.03	0.10	7.10
	Lack of negative scandals, such as drug abuse	73.12	0.35			
	Clean private life	70.28	0.35			
	Conduct exemplary in words and acts	69.48	0.30			
Sports Athlete Reputational Index						73.19

SRI for Research Targets

The sports athlete reputational indices for the eight golf players are presented in Figure 3. Jyai Shin ranked highest in the reputation index, with K. J. Choi, Na Yeon Choi, Yani Tseng, Tiger Woods, Seri Pak, Y. E. Yang, and Michelle Wie following, respectively.

In order to analyze whether or not the six factors for sports athlete reputation are different for each player, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with posterior analysis also performed using Duncan. All the factors of athlete reputation have a statistically meaningful difference for each player ($p < .001$), as reported in Table 6.

In game results, Tiger Woods ranked at the top, while Michelle Wie ranked the lowest. Regarding management of playing capability, Tiger Woods, Jiyai Shin, and K.J. Choi ranked at the top, while Michelle Wie again ranked lowest among the subjects. In personal character, Jiyai Shin and K.J. Choi ranked at the top, while Tiger Woods ranked at

the bottom. In external appeal, Michelle Wie was top-ranked, while Se Ri Pak and Jiyai Shin ranked lowest. In sportsmanship, Jiyai Shin and K.J. Choi ranked at the top, with Michelle Wie trailing at the end. Lastly, in privacy management, Jiyai Shin was top-ranked, while Tiger Woods came in last.

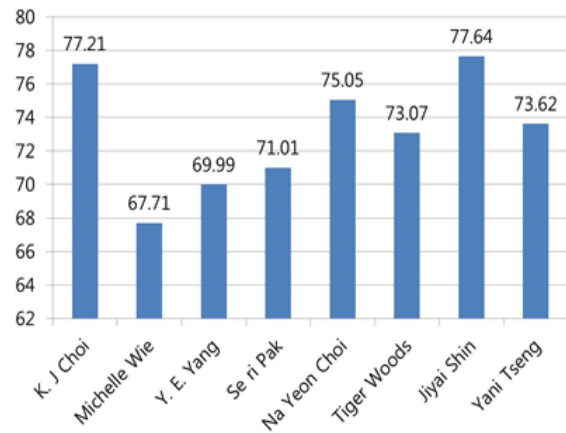


Figure 3. Sports Athlete Reputational Index for Research Targets

Table 6. Differences of Sports Athlete Reputational Factors by Player

Dimensions	Source	SS	df	MS	F	P	Duncan
Game results	between groups	151.542	7	21.649	53.778	.001	B<D<E<A, H, G<F
	within groups	724.610	1800	.403			
Management of Playing Capability	between groups	52.579	7	7.511	17.690	.001	B<C<E<F, G, A
	within groups	764.272	1800	.425			
Personal character	between groups	147.837	7	21.120	49.676	.001	F<B<H<C, E, D<G, A
	within groups	765.261	1800	.425			
External appeal	between groups	196.572	7	28.082	53.606	.001	G, D<C<F<E<B
	within groups	942.945	1800	.524			
Sportsmanship	between group	52.907	7	7.558	16.951	.001	B<F, H, C<D<G, A
	within groups	802.597	1800	.446			
Privacy management	between groups	483.166	7	69.024	147.749	.001	F<H, B<D<E<G
	within groups	840.902	1800	.467			

A(K. J. Choi), B(Michell Wie), C(Y. E. Yang), D(Se ri Pak), E(Na Yeon Choi), F(Tiger Woods), G(Jiyai Shin), H(Yani Tseng)

Table 7. Reputational Index for Research subjects

	K. J. Choi	Mchelle Wie	Y. E. Yang	Seri Pak	Na Yeon Choi	Tiger Woods	Jiyai Shin	Yani Tseng
Game results	32.36	27.27	28.21	29.05	31.22	34.77	33.18	32.33
Management of Playing Capability	13.40	11.44	12.16	12.18	12.59	12.77	13.18	12.45
Personal character	8.19	6.92	7.55	7.56	7.58	6.04	8.10	7.23
External appeal	6.07	6.90	6.17	5.94	6.90	6.40	5.97	6.03
Sportsmanship	9.60	8.34	8.88	9.19	9.35	8.78	9.55	8.80
Privacy management	7.58	6.84	7.01	7.10	7.40	4.31	7.66	6.78
SRI	77.2	67.71	69.99	71.01	75.05	73.07	77.64	73.62

Discussion

Sports have become a general institution in our society due to advances in and the development of communication technologies. Recognizing this, many corporations are trying to utilize sports contents including celebrity athletes by means of endorsements and sponsorships of the individual athlete and/or team. Studies regarding corporate reputation are extensive worldwide. Meanwhile, despite the similarity between the operation of a sports league or its teams and a corporation, sports reputation studies are rare, and few data are available. Thus, the main purpose of this study was to extract the factors of sports athletes' reputations and to develop a measurable reputational index for sports athletes, applying this method to golf athletes who have a certain level of public awareness in order to confirm its reliability and acceptability.

Results from this study suggest that game results are the most important factor influencing sports athletes' reputations. Management of playing capability and sportsmanship are considered more important than are personal character, external appeal, or privacy management. The top-rank factor, management of playing capability, shows that athletes' efforts to improve their ability, competency, and technical refinement, along with proper treatment for injuries, are important factors used in evaluating an athlete's reputation. Sportsmanship, personal character, privacy management, and external appeal followed in descending order. Factors unrelated to game ability—

privacy management, external appeal, and personal character—turned out to have relatively less influence on an athlete's reputation. This result indicates that athletes must invest more attention towards improving sports-related factors than towards factors not related to sports in order to sustain positive reputations.

Put in descending order by reputational index, the eight golf players in this study are Jiyai Shin, K.J. Choi, Na Yeon Choi, Yani Tseng, Tiger Woods, Se Ri Pak, Y.E. Yang, and Michelle Wie as reported in Table 6. To summarize these results, those players who gain a high factor index score for game results, sportsmanship, and management of playing capability generally have high reputational index scores. Although Jiyai Shin and K.J. Choi retained low scores in external appeal compared to the other players, they were ranked first and second, respectively, in the reputational index.

Tiger Woods ranked fifth out of the eight players in total reputational index despite his well-known 2009 sex scandal, which contributed to his low personal character factor index (6.04) and privacy management factor index (4.31), lowest among the eight subjects of analysis, as reported in Table 7. Tiger Woods obtained high scores in the factor of game results which was ranked highly in importance of factors for sports athlete reputation. Woods' reputational index value for game results is 34.77, higher than the 33.18 of Jiyai Shin and the 32.36 of C. J. Choi.

Despite Woods' high scores in the factors of game results, Jiyai Shin and K.J Choi had the top two overall

reputational index scores. Tiger Woods' scandal influenced his scores on personal characteristics and privacy management, which have a seriously negative effect on his reputational index. However Woods' low scores in personal character and privacy management were compensated by the scores from the factor of game results and management of playing capability. Woods' success in the game has saturated the golf scene for so long that it acts as a buffer to criticism and reduces the sting of disapproval from his fans. This result supports the finding of Capelo (2002) that the reputation formulated by a politician's association with his party tends to immunize that politician from the doubts of supporters due to a publicized personal scandal. The result also supports the finding of Fenno (1978) which state that a politician's past positive reputation shields him or her against negative criticism and reduces his or her chance of losing voter support.

Although the sports-related factors were found to be more important than non-sports-related factors to the formation of sports athletes' reputations, athletes should not overlook non-sports-related factors of personal character, external appeal, and privacy management. Social media have become more popular and widespread. Athlete's non-sport-related activities can be accessed almost instantly through social media. This change in the media environment requires sports athletes not only to attend to their sporting ability, but also to systematically manage non-sport factors in order to maintain and improve their brand values and reputations.

Limitations and Future Research

To our knowledge, this is one of a few studies regarding sports athletes' reputations. We believe that applying the developed factors of sport athletes' reputations to real sports athletes confirms the validity of the factors and the calculated reputational index. At the same time, we note that limitations result from the subjects of analysis, which were limited to golfers, who play an

individual sport. If the reputational index developed based on these golfers were applied to popular team sports requiring multiple players, limitations should be expected.

Compared to personal sports, team sports are more commercial and systematic in terms of athlete management and marketing. More potential factors influence an athlete's reputation, such as those related to the team's coach, team brand, and other athletes. Thus, in order to measure athletes' reputations in team sports, more accurate measurable factors and items will need to be developed. For future studies regarding sports athletes' reputations, components comprising of sports properties, such as sports leagues, sports teams, and coaches, must also be considered.

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