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shown better predictability of actual behavioral change over self-reported behavioral intentions (e.g., Falk et al., 2011; Knutson et al., 2007). In Falk et al.'s study, traditional self-reported measures and fMRI sources were combined as complementary data, and were found to have superior predictability when examined together. This suggests that neuroimaging can also complement conventional measures for better accuracy in predicting sport consumers' behavioral outcomes (e.g., health-focused behavior changes such as engaging in physical activity, purchasing sponsor's product/service, etc.). This better predictability, in turn, can advance the sport consumer literature by affording more reliable and pragmatic implications for marketers and public policy makers.

Considerations prior to application to sport consumer research

Despite the advantages, there are some constraints that researchers should consider when applying neuroimaging methods in consumer research. First, neuroimaging is not as cost-effective as the traditional tools (Ariely & Berns, 2010); scanner availability is limited. These issues need to be carefully considered while determining whether fMRI is necessary and appropriate for a particular research question. Second, researchers should realize that neuroimaging information is not exclusive or absolute measurement. Several researchers have contended that utilizing brain activation data alone is of limited value unless it is combined with other behavioral measurements (e.g., self-report, choice, purchase behavior, reaction time, etc.; Ariely & Berns, 2010; Yoon et al., 2009). Therefore, researchers should utilize additional measurements to provide further insights on the predictive role of brain activation.

Conclusion

There is a growing consensus among general consumer behavior researchers that brain imaging (e.g., fMRI) can further advance our understanding of consumer behavior. As such, information from brain activation will allow sport consumer researchers to better understand the dynamic nature of sport consumers and their behaviors. For instance, neuroimaging may provide researchers more accurate information about consumers' cognitive and affective responses than what traditional methods provide. Moreover, neuroimaging will also enable researchers and practitioners to better predict sport consumers' future behaviors. However, neuroimaging is costly; researchers should employ it when research hypotheses have clear merits in using brain scanning data. Researchers should also utilize other various assessments to enrich the usefulness of brain imaging information. In summary, appropriate application of the fMRI, as an additional methodological tool, will afford further chances to advance sport consumer research.