Exploring Attributes of Virtual Advertising in Sport Events: Its Impact on Consumers’ Attitudes toward Advertising and Brands

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Introduction
Sport spectators view numerous advertising while watching sport matches. Although various advertising techniques are used in sports media virtual advertising emerged as a unique form of advertising in the sport industry. Moreover, virtual advertising is made to look like reality by using computer graphics and simulate reality (Tsuji, Bennett & Leigh, 2009). Consumers might have a different attitude toward virtual advertising as compared to general advertising. Considering that effective advertisement can change consumers’ attitude toward advertising message and product brands (Bracket & Carr, 2001; Tsang, Ho & Liang, 2004), it is very important to understand which specific attributes of virtual advertisement positively impact on consumers’ attitude. This domain of research has not been systematically examined in the field of sport management and marketing. Accordingly, the purpose of the current study was to identify key attributes of virtual advertising and examine their differential impact on sport consumers’ attitude toward advertising. We also examined the relationship between advertising and advertised brands. For the purpose of this study the researchers developed a research model that incorporated four specific attributes of virtual advertising (i.e., informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and irritation) as independent variables and consumer attitude as dependent variable.

Methods
Through extensive literature review, the researchers identified four salient attributes of virtual advertisement including informativeness, entertainment, credibility, and irritation. Informativeness refers to the ability to provide consumers with relevant information (Oh and Xu, 2003). Entertainment refers to how exciting the experience was, how interesting the content was, and whether they enjoyed the advertising. Credibility refers to how much they believed the advertising to be trustworthy and believable (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Irritation refers to how much negative feeling is generated when they view advertising (Ducoffe, 1996). Irritation questions asked about how annoying the ad was, how much irritation it caused, whether it was confusing, and whether viewers considered it an interruption. Advertising attitude questions asked about good feelings, likability, and how familiar the ad felt. Brand attitudes include several adjective such as positive, kind, good feeling, and valuable.

The study sample consisted of professional baseball fans in South Korea, and 214 useful cases (150 males) were collected and included in data analysis. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. We conducted descriptive analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling.

Results
A confirmatory factor analysis achieved an acceptable fit for data based on the selected approximation fit indices ($\chi^2 / df = 331.610 / 194 = 1.709$, RMSEA = .058, CFI = .959, and SRMR = .056). Factor loadings for each item were statistically significant, ranging from .639 to .944.

Cronbach alpha coefficients were ranged from .843 to 939. In terms of the model’s convergent validities, the model constructs showed acceptable levels of average variance extracted (AVE), ranging from .670 to .847, and Composite Reliability (CR) was from .859 to .939 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The results of structural equation model (SEM) indicate a good fit of the research model to data ($\chi^2 / df = 281.219 / 189 = 1.488$, RMSEA = .048, CFI = .973, and SRMR = .063), and all items indicated significant factor loadings on their theorized factor (from .616 to .946).
The structural model was analyzed to test the hypotheses:
Regarding H1, the path from the informativeness of virtual advertising attribute to advertising attitude was positive significant (standardized $\gamma = .359$, S.E. = .103, p < .001).
Supporting H2, the path from the entertainment of virtual advertising attribute to advertising attribute was positive significant (standardized $\gamma = .473$, S.E. = .066, p < .001).
Regarding H3, the path from the credibility of virtual advertising attribute to advertising attribute wasn’t significant (standardized $\gamma = .010$, S.E. = .063, p = .846).
Regarding H4, the path from the irritation of virtual advertising attribute to advertising attribute was negative significant (standardized $\gamma = -.182$, S.E. = .040, p = .002).
Regarding H5, the path from the virtual advertising attitude to brand attitude attribute was significant (standardized $\gamma = -.601$, S.E. = .075, p < .001).

The entertainment and informative factors had significant positive impact on attitude toward advertising. Advertising attitude were positively related with brand attitude. However, this research did not show that credibility had an effect. Theoretical and practical implications will be discussed in the presentation.