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## Abstract

Purpose: Regulatory focus theory suggests that regulatory fit influences individuals' decisions. However, little is known regarding the effect of regulatory fit on sports consumers' purchase intention. Accordingly, we extend the concept of regulatory fit to the sports context to understand how advertising claims affect amateur badminton players' purchase intention of badminton rackets.

Design/methodology/approach: A total of 200 amateur badminton players participated in this study. These participants were randomly assigned to the promotion-prime advertising claim or prevention-prime advertising claim condition.

Findings: Our findings demonstrate that the experience fit between personal regulatory focus in the sports context and advertising claims induces higher purchase intention. This finding corresponds with expectations based on regulatory focus theory.

Originality: The present study extends and strengthens knowledge of personal regulatory focus in the sports context and thus shows marketers how to communicate with target customers to precisely sell sports products using the regulatory fit strategy.

Keywords: sports products, regulatory focus, sports consumer behavior, advertising



87 We argue that regulatory focus fit can affect consumers' purchase intention to buy sports  
88 products through the advertising message because the persuasive message involves the goal to be  
89 attained, and once the message communication fits with the needs of consumers (Cesario et al.,  
90 2004), the experience of feeling right would enhance their purchase intention. In the sports  
91 context, there are some sports items that involve attack and defense concepts in the competition  
92 (Plessner et al., 2009; Wegner et al., 2019), which correspond with the promotion focus and  
93 prevention focus for the regulatory focus theory. For example, badminton games involve  
94 offensive and defensive tactics, which means that offensive strategies tend to involve identifying  
95 an opponent's weaknesses and making an attack, while defensive strategies involve avoiding  
96 mistakes and preventing a loss of points (Werner, 1989). Because these sports involve attack and  
97 defense in competitions, variations in the focus of attack and defense strategies of sports  
98 consumers can affect how they process sport-related information. Following this perspective, we  
99 argue that consumers with a promotion focus tend to use sports products that help them adopt an  
100 attacking strategy to gain scores in sports games. As such, when sport-related information is  
101 framed with a promotion focus (i.e., attacking for gain), these consumers are more likely to be  
102 convinced by promotion cues to buy sports products. In contrast, consumers with prevention  
103 focus tend to choose sports products that will prevent loss scores in sports games. When sport-  
104 related information is framed with a prevention focus (i.e., defense perspective focused on not  
105 losing), these consumers are more likely to be attracted by prevention cues to buy sports products.  
106 In other words, considering the idea of regulatory focus fit, we propose a motivational factor that  
107 can affect consumers' purchase intention to buy sports products.

108 We argue that regulatory focus theory focuses on the regulatory fit perspective (Higgins,  
109 2000; Tamar & Higgins, 2006) and can help sports marketers more precisely persuade

110 consumers through advertising claims. Especially for products that have clear features and match  
111 personal chronic tendencies, such as the use of sports products, the use of a regulatory fit strategy  
112 will specifically impact consumers' feelings about advertising claims and influence their  
113 consumption decisions (Higgins et al., 2019). In sports, the goal of the player is to win the game;  
114 that is, players might follow their regulatory focus tendency to either attack or defend against  
115 their opponents in a game. This implies that players will choose sports goods with features that  
116 fit their personal regulatory focus tendency to maximize their performance. Badminton rackets  
117 might represent a typical case that can be employed to understand the features of sporting goods;  
118 two different forms of regulatory focus tendencies can be employed when badminton is played,  
119 i.e., using a badminton racket to attack represents the promotion focus on sports goods, and using  
120 a badminton racket for defense represents the prevention focus on sports goods.

121       Accordingly, we aim to demonstrate that players with prevention tendencies in the sports  
122 context are more likely to be convinced by advertising embracing prevention cues. In contrast,  
123 players with promotion tendencies in the sports context are more attracted by promotion focus  
124 advertising. This information may help sports marketers increase the purchase intention of  
125 consumers; thus, this study contributes to the literature on precision marketing used to  
126 communicate with customers in several ways. First, we investigate players' regulatory focus in  
127 the context of sports rather than their general regulatory focus in life, which helps us more  
128 concretely understand how the regulatory fit or experience of feeling right operates in a specific  
129 consumption context and influences purchase decisions. Second, we highlight the regulatory fit  
130 perspective in a specific context and thus contribute to the literature on precision marketing; this  
131 study may provide sports marketers with more specific information regarding the collection of  
132 customer data (i.e., specific context regulatory focus) and help them persuade consumers by

133 using precise advertising cues to sell products following customers' regulatory focus tendency.  
134 Thus, we replicated regulatory focus research in the context of specific sports goods within an  
135 individual sports program to provide more robust results from which sports marketers can frame  
136 advertising messages through regulatory focus theory.

### 137 **Regulatory Focus Theory**

138 Regulatory focus theory has been shown to contribute to understanding individual goal  
139 pursuit, judgment, and decision-making in different domains (Higgins et al., 2019). According to  
140 regulatory focus theory, people possess two motivational systems that are grounded in distinct  
141 sets of fundamental needs (Higgins et al., 2019), which leads to different chronic tendencies,  
142 namely, promotion focus and prevention focus (Higgins, 1997; Higgins, 2000). Individuals with  
143 a promotion focus tend to focus on achievement, improvement, self-fulfillment, and aspirations  
144 because the promotion system is rooted in the need for nurturance and growth. These individuals  
145 are concerned with the presence (versus absence) of positive end states and are more sensitive to  
146 information about gains or nongains. In contrast, individuals with a prevention focus are  
147 concerned about protection, responsibility, and safety because the prevention system is rooted in  
148 the need for safety and security. Thus, these individuals are concerned with the absence (versus  
149 presence) of negative end states and are more sensitive to information about loss and nonloss.  
150 These characteristics described by regulatory focus theory have been applied in the sporting  
151 context to understand individual behavior in a specific domain, which highlights the applicability  
152 of regulatory focus theory in the sports context.

153 According to Tamar and Higgins (2006), regulatory focus theory suggests that regulatory  
154 orientation is based on individuals' concerns or interests, which guide their behaviors. More  
155 concretely, Higgins et al. (2019) explained that regulatory focus influences several aspects of

156 goal selection and pursuit, such as the desired end states people decide to pursue, preferred goal  
157 pursuit strategies, and tactical flexibility. Especially in the marketing domain, the numerous  
158 effects and consequences of regulatory focus on consumer behaviors have been widely  
159 investigated (Boesen-Mariani et al., 2010). Regulatory focus theory has been applied to the  
160 sporting context, and recently, the effect of regulatory fit between the sports environment and  
161 individual chronic regulatory focus has been identified (Chen et al., 2016; Vogel & Genschow,  
162 2013; Wegner et al., 2019). However, regulatory fit in the sports context seems to often, but not  
163 always, be beneficial for performance in sports (Klatt & Noel, 2020). In other words, more  
164 research is needed to clarify the fit mechanism of regulatory focus in the sports context.

165 In addition, regulatory focus theory has contributed to the literature on sports contexts in  
166 terms of understanding how to improve professional performance, motor learning, and physical  
167 activity participation. Previous studies seem to neglect the specific characteristics of consumers  
168 who engage in sports that can provide marketers with a better understanding of sports  
169 consumers' behavior. For example, players follow their regulatory focus tendency in the sports  
170 context to choose sports goods' features because the regulatory fit might maximize their  
171 performance. To our knowledge, it has not been investigated whether players' regulatory focus in  
172 the sports context that fits with the framing of sports goods' advertising claims might lead to  
173 more purchase intention. As such, the goal of this study is to apply regulatory focus theory to  
174 sports consumer purchase intention to understand how marketers can precisely persuade players  
175 to buy sports products through advertising claims.

### 176 **Regulatory Fit Effects on Sports Consumer Behavior**

177 According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 2000), people experience regulatory fit  
178 when they pursue a goal in a manner that sustains their regulatory orientation, and this



179 experience makes them feel right, which affects how they value their choice or decision outcome  
180 (Tamar & Higgins, 2006). Because regulatory fit affects different types of evaluations that affect  
181 consumer decisions (Higgins et al., 2019), it has been widely applied to explore consumer  
182 choices and opinions in the marketing domain and provides important insights into consumer  
183 behavior. Especially in advertising claims, regulatory fit impacts not only the perceived  
184 persuasiveness of messages in general (Cesario et al., 2004) but also advertising messages in  
185 particular (Lee & Aaker, 2004). That is, creating a fit between consumers' regulatory orientation  
186 and a message might lead them to experience a sense of fluency as they process the information  
187 and strengthen their engagement in the message. Although previous studies have helped  
188 marketers understand that matching individuals' regulatory orientation with advertising claims  
189 might influence the purchase decisions of consumers (Higgins et al., 2019), little is known  
190 regarding the specific effects of regulatory fit on sports consumers' purchase intentions.

191 In a sports context, a sports marketer must identify what needs and wants would be satisfied  
192 through the exchange process with sports consumers and then provide suitable sports products  
193 (Richelieu & Boulaire, 2005; Silva & Las Casas, 2017). Silva and Las Casas (2017) indicated  
194 that a sports product is a problem solver who provides benefits for customers to satisfy their  
195 needs. However, one challenge is that customers often have different personal perceptions of the  
196 elements of sports products, as customers believe that they are experts when they choose  
197 products. Although previous studies have broadly explored the potential antecedent that might  
198 trigger customers' purchase intentions of tangible or intangible sports products (Richelieu &  
199 Boulaire, 2005; Song et al., 2018), there has been a lack of studies on the effects of regulatory fit  
200 in the sports marketing discipline to understand sports consumer behavior.

201 In terms of sports products, the features of sporting goods might indicate whether a product  
202 is more appropriate for consumers with a promotion focus or prevention focus. For example, a  
203 badminton racket used for attacking would highlight the promotion focus, and a badminton  
204 racket used for defense would highlight the prevention focus. A previous study indicated that  
205 promotion-focused consumers are more interested in promotion-focused products, and  
206 prevention-focused consumers are more interested in prevention-focused products (Werth &  
207 Foerster, 2007). Following this perspective, players might follow their sports regulatory tendency  
208 and prefer to either defend or attack their opponents in the game, which might influence their  
209 decisions to choose a badminton racket to either attack or defend to fit their regulatory focus on  
210 strengthening their sports performance. Accordingly, we hypothesize that a badminton player  
211 focused on attacking strategy in a game might have a higher purchase intention for a badminton  
212 racket used to attack when the advertising claim applies promotion focus framing because these  
213 advertising claims fit the goals of the consumer. In contrast, a defensive badminton player might  
214 demonstrate higher purchase intention for a badminton racket used for defense when the  
215 advertising claim applies prevention focus framing. In summary, we predicted that regulatory fit  
216 between sports consumers' regulatory focus in the sports context and advertising claims  
217 regarding badminton rackets would enhance their purchase intention.

## 218 Method

### 219 Participants and Design

220 The study participants were 200 amateur badminton players (49 females and 151 males)  
221 who played at badminton courts in Taiwan and volunteered for the study. Among the 200  
222 participants, the mean age was 32.18 years ( $SD = 7.79$ ), the average period of badminton  
223 experience was 5.04 years ( $SD = 3.49$ ), and 1.79 ( $SD = 0.77$ ) rounds of training were performed

224 per week. A total of 8.5% of the participants had average monthly incomes below NT\$30,000,  
225 38% participants had average monthly incomes ranging from NT\$30,001 to 40,000, 41% had  
226 average monthly incomes ranging from NT\$40,001 to 50,000, and 12.5% made more than  
227 NT\$50,001 (1 US\$ = 29.79 NT\$ as of April 28, 2022). In Taiwan, badminton has gained  
228 popularity with the general public, and numerous badminton courts have been built for amateur  
229 badminton players to exchange and improve their skills. The participants were recruited through  
230 the use of flyers posted around the badminton courts. To prevent gender bias effects on the  
231 results, we adopted a t-test to test the gender differences of variables used in this study. No  
232 gender differences were found for any of the variable measures employed in this study, including  
233 ad manipulation ( $t = .16, p > .05, d = 0.02$ ), promotion focus in the sports context ( $t = .80, p > .05,$   
234  $d = 0.13$ ), prevention focus in the sports context ( $t = -.84, p > .05, d = 0.14$ ), the relative strength of  
235 regulatory focus in the sports context ( $t = .88, p > .05, d = 0.15$ ), and purchase intention ( $t = .03, p$   
236  $> .05, d = 0.003$ ). In addition, to prevent average monthly income bias from influencing the results,  
237 a one-way ANOVA was applied to examine whether different groups of average monthly  
238 income showed significant differences in the variables. We did not find significant variance in  
239 the variables of this study, including promotion focus in the sports context ( $F = .66, p > .05$ ),  
240 prevention focus in the sports context ( $F = 2.17, p > .05$ ), the relative strength of regulatory focus  
241 in the sports context ( $F = 1.12, p > .05$ ), and purchase intention ( $F = 0.87, p > .05$ ).

## 242 **Procedures**

243 The participants were informed that they were participating in an experiment regarding the  
244 advertising of badminton rackets involving sports consumer behavior. The participants were  
245 instructed to read an information sheet, and they signed an informed consent form before  
246 beginning the survey. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. Later, the

247 participants were randomly assigned to either the promotion-prime advertising claim or  
248 prevention-prime advertising claim conditions. The participants first read a brief description of  
249 the procedures and instructions and then were asked to complete a questionnaire that consisted of  
250 demographic items and questions about regulatory focus in the sports context. Next, the  
251 participants were exposed to one of the two badminton racket advertising messages used in this  
252 study. The participants then answered a series of questions about the ads and their purchase  
253 intentions. Finally, all participants received 50 New Taiwan dollars as a token of appreciation for  
254 their participation.

## 255 **Materials**

### 256 **Regulatory Focus in the Sports Context**

257 Huang (2017) slightly modified the wording of the General Regulatory Focus Scale  
258 (Lockwood et al., 2002) to study regulatory focus in the sports context; this scale is used to  
259 assess individual regulatory focus in the sports context. This 18-item scale consists of two  
260 subscales designed to measure promotion focus and prevention focus in the sports context. One  
261 sample item of promotion focus in the sports context is “I frequently imagine how I will achieve  
262 my hopes and aspirations in games.” One sample item of prevention focus in the sports context is  
263 “In general, I am focused on preventing negative events in my games.” The response scale used  
264 for all items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores on the two  
265 subscales denoted a stronger regulatory focus on promotion and prevention in the sports context.  
266 Because promotion focus and prevention focus are not two extremities along a continuum,  
267 individuals may obtain high scores on both subscales. Cronbach’s alpha for promotion focus and  
268 prevention focus in the sports context were .94 and .91, respectively.

### 269 **Advertising Claims**

270 Two versions of an advertisement for a badminton racket were created (see Appendix 2 for  
271 the two advertisements) to be used in the present study. In the advertisement that focused on  
272 using the badminton racket for attacking (promotion-prime advertising), the information  
273 provided about the product indicated that the racket was designed for a player focused on  
274 attacking. The following presents the claims outlined in the advertisement:

275 *“Worrying about your attacking power?”*

276 *Suppress opponents with this powerful racket.*

277 *Improve the strength of the middle tube and make the ball more powerful.*

278 *You can adjust quickly after a strong shot, ready for the next shot.*

279 *Your perfect choice to suppress opponents.”*

280 In the advertisement that focused on using the badminton racket for defense (prevention-  
281 prime advertising), the information provided about the product indicated that the racket was  
282 designed for a defensive player. The following presents the claims outlined in the advertisement:

283 *“Worrying about your insufficient defense?”*

284 *Defend against opponents perfectly with a powerful racket.*

285 *Improve the elasticity of the middle tube, and make the return more stable.*

286 *After a steady return, you can quickly adjust for the next shot.*

287 *Your perfect choice to defend against opponents.”*

## 288 **Purchase Intention**

289 We used a 3-item version, revised by Lee et al. (2013), to evaluate individuals' purchase  
290 intention after they reviewed the advertising claims. A higher score indicated that individuals  
291 exhibited more intention to buy the badminton racket. One sample item is “I am likely to  
292 purchase this product.” The response scale used for all items ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*)

293 to 9 (*strongly agree*). In the current study, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .99.

#### 294 **Control variables**

295 We controlled the amateur badminton players' gender, age, average monthly incomes,  
296 average years of badminton experience, and number of training sessions per week because  
297 amateur badminton players high in these variables tend to have more experience playing  
298 badminton. To prevent varying amateur badminton playing skills from potentially leading to  
299 omitted-variable bias, we controlled this variable.

#### 300 **Manipulation Check**

301 Two items were created for the advertising claims given during the manipulation: "This is  
302 an attacking badminton racket advertisement" and "This is a defensive badminton racket  
303 advertisement". The participants were asked to indicate which of these statements held true for  
304 them after they reviewed the advertising claims. The former corresponded to the promotion  
305 condition, while the latter corresponded to the prevention condition. The participants who failed  
306 to respond correctly to the advertising claims were excluded from the subsequent analysis.  
307 Because all participants responded correctly to advertising claims presented in the present study,  
308 they are included in the subsequent analysis.

#### 309 **Result**

310 Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations of all variables. Gender  
311 (male=1, female=2) and average monthly income (below NT\$30,000=1, NT\$30,001 to 40,000=2,  
312 NT\$40,001 to 50,000=3, and higher than NT\$50,001=4) were used as dummy variables. The  
313 advertising manipulation involved two versions of an advertisement for a badminton racket  
314 (dummy variable: promotion-prime advertising = 0, prevention-prime advertising = 1).  
315 Promotion-focused tendencies and prevention-focused tendencies in the sports context indicate

316 the different types of regulatory focus of the participants in badminton games. Purchase intention  
317 is considered to reflect the sports consumer behavior of the participants. The results demonstrate  
318 that promotion focus in the sports context was negatively correlated with prevention focus in the  
319 sports context ( $r = -.75, p < .01$ ). However, promotion focus in the sports context ( $r = -.03, ns$ )  
320 and prevention focus in the sports context ( $r = .08, ns$ ) had nonsignificant relationships with  
321 purchase intention. We further conducted a series of regression analyses to test our hypotheses.

322 To understand whether regulatory fit in the sports context enhances amateur badminton  
323 players' purchase intention of badminton rackets, we examine the interaction between the  
324 different types of regulatory focus in the sports context and ad manipulation. First, the results of  
325 the hierarchical regression analysis are presented to demonstrate the interaction between  
326 promotion focus in the sports context and ad manipulation and are shown Table 2. Amateur  
327 badminton players' gender, average monthly incomes, age, average years of badminton  
328 experience, and times training per week were included as control variables in Model 1. The  
329 results of Model 1 reveal that gender, average monthly income, age, average years of badminton  
330 experience, and number of training sessions per week had nonsignificant relationships with  
331 purchase intention. Model 2 included the main effects of promotion focus in the sports context  
332 and ad manipulation. Promotion focus in the sports context ( $b = -.06, p > .05$ ) and ad  
333 manipulation ( $b = -.74, p > .05$ ) did not significantly predict purchase intention. Furthermore, the  
334 interaction term between promotion focus in the sports context and ad manipulation was  
335 included in Model 3. This interaction term was significant ( $b = -1.39, p < .01$ ) and explained an  
336 additional 19% of the variance associated with the purchase intention of badminton rackets.  
337 Following the suggestion of Aiken and West (1996), we present an interaction plot in Figure 1,  
338 demonstrating one standard deviation above and below the mean as promotion focus in the sports

339 context. A simple slope analysis was also adopted to further explore the interaction effect  
340 (Dawson & Richter, 2006). Figure 1 demonstrates that the participants with a lower promotion  
341 focus in the sports context had better purchase intention of badminton rackets when they  
342 reviewed the prevent-focus condition ads ( $b = -.74, p < .01$ ). The participants with greater  
343 promotion focus in the sports context produced a higher level of purchase intention of badminton  
344 rackets when they reviewed the promote-focus condition ads ( $b = .65, p < .01$ ).

345 The results regarding the interaction between prevention focus in the sports context and ad  
346 manipulation are presented in Table 3. Amateur badminton players' gender, average monthly  
347 income, age, average years of badminton experience, and times training per week were included  
348 as control variables in Model 1. The results of Model 1 reveal that all of these control variables  
349 had nonsignificant relationships with purchase intention. Model 2 included the main effects of  
350 prevention focus in the sports context and ad manipulation. Prevention focus in the sports  
351 context ( $b = .14, p > .05$ ) and ad manipulation ( $b = -.81, p > .05$ ) did not significantly predict  
352 purchase intention. The interaction term between prevention focus in the sports context and ad  
353 manipulation was included in Model 3. This interaction term was significant ( $b = 1.19, p < .01$ )  
354 and explained an additional 14% of the variance associated with the purchase intention of  
355 badminton rackets. Following the suggestion of Aiken and West (1996), we present an  
356 interaction plot in Figure 2 demonstrating one standard deviation above and below the mean as  
357 prevention focus in the sports context. A simple slope analysis was also adopted to further  
358 explore the interaction effect (Dawson & Richter, 2006). Figure 2 demonstrates that the  
359 participants with a lower prevention focus in the sports context had better purchase intention of  
360 badminton rackets when they reviewed the promote-focus condition ads ( $b = -.51, p < .01$ ). The  
361 participants with greater prevention focus in the sports context produced a higher level of



362 purchase intention of badminton rackets when they reviewed the prevent-focus condition ads (*b*  
363 = .69,  $p < .01$ ). The results support our hypothesis.

### 364 **Discussion**

365 In the present study, we examined the effects of regulatory fit on sports consumers'  
366 purchase intention in a sample of amateur badminton players to understand how advertising  
367 claims affect their purchase intention of badminton rackets. This study applies regulatory focus  
368 theory to the context of sports to determine how the experience of feeling right in the sports  
369 consumption context influences purchase decisions, especially for sporting goods with distinct  
370 features. The findings of the present study can help marketers design advertising claims more  
371 precisely to persuade consumers to make consumption decisions.

372 Research has demonstrated that the experience of feeling right rooted in regulatory focus  
373 theory enhances elite athletes' performance (Plessner et al., 2009; Vogel & Genschow, 2013;  
374 Wegner et al., 2019); however, the ability to generalize this concept is still limited (Klatt & Noel,  
375 2020). Thus, we extend the external validity of this concept into sports marketing and find that  
376 participants have a higher intention to pursue badminton rackets when their focus on the sports  
377 context fits with advertising messages. This study also highlights that a weaker regulatory  
378 orientation (promotion or prevention focus) in the sports context results in an opposite preference  
379 (prevention or promotion advertisement) and increases purchase intention. This might imply that  
380 participants with a weaker promotion focus in the sports context tend to have a stronger  
381 prevention focus in the sports context and vice versa. The present results suggest that the  
382 regulatory focus tendency in the sports context seems to be two extremities along a continuum,  
383 which corresponds with Cesario et al. (2004).

384           However, Haws et al. (2010) indicated that the chronic tendencies of prevention focus and  
385 promotion focus are dichotomous concepts instead of a single dimension. This is because their  
386 study found low to nonsignificant correlations between promotion and prevention focus, which  
387 means that individuals with a stronger promotion focus do not tend to exhibit a weaker  
388 prevention focus. As such, they suggest to researchers that individuals' chronic tendencies of  
389 promotion and prevention focus should be considered separately. The present results highlight a  
390 form of messaging framing, such as prevention advertising, that might influence both weak  
391 promotion and strong prevention focus consumers and their consumption decisions. We suggest  
392 that future studies follow this study to further examine the dimensionality of regulatory focus  
393 tendencies in the sports context to provide more precise suggestions for researchers.

394           Although previous studies have considered the consistency between product characteristics  
395 and advertising cues (Borges & Gomez, 2015; Werth & Foerster, 2007), these studies focused on  
396 how individual exposure to messaging framing from various types of products can increase  
397 message persuasion. The present study considered the presentation of one sports product, a  
398 badminton racket used for attacking coupled with a promotion message, and a badminton racket  
399 used for defense coupled with a prevention message to more precisely understand how to apply  
400 an appropriate advertising claim strategy for the product to persuade sports consumers. By doing  
401 so, the participants might more easily experience the right feeling and be persuaded by the  
402 framing messages. Our study reminds researchers that the distinctive characteristics of sports  
403 products should not be ignored when persuading sports consumers through framing advertising.  
404 In fact, there are many similar cases in sports, such as tennis rackets, table tennis paddles, and  
405 basketball shoes, for which sports marketers can frame the advertising message based on  
406 distinctive characteristics.

407           Moreover, the present results indicated that consumers with different regulatory focuses in  
408 the sports context would have different preferences for advertising messages. However, we did  
409 not examine the strategies for specifically identifying sports consumers' regulatory focus for  
410 sports marketers. Data-driven precision marketing has been regarded as a crucial strategy to  
411 improve marketing effects (Yu et al., 2019), which gives sports marketers a specific strategy to  
412 enhance consumers' purchase intention through data collection. Following this perspective, we  
413 suggest that future researchers collect consumers' information regarding regulatory focus in the  
414 sports context through gamification interaction activities on social media. Then, according to  
415 their sports regulatory orientation to design different versions of advertisements and examine the  
416 persuasive effect. As such, sports marketers could precisely sell sports products for the  
417 promotion or prevention orientation sports consumers.

418           In addition, the present study reminds researchers to consider how they can assess  
419 individuals' regulatory focus more properly to understand human behavior. A previous study  
420 claimed that regulatory focus can be computed as a single categorical variable (Cesario et al.,  
421 2004). However, Haws et al. (2010) suggested that it might be better if researchers avoid  
422 collapsing promotion and prevention orientations into a single dimension because the chronic  
423 tendencies of prevention focus and promotion focus are dichotomous concepts that highlight  
424 different patterns of human thoughts and actions. In light of this concern, we calculated the  
425 chronic tendencies of promotion focus and prevention focus instead of their relative strength  
426 (promotion focus minus the prevention focus). In fact, our additional analysis indicated that the  
427 patterns of the interactions are similar (see appendices) regardless of how the chronic tendencies  
428 were calculated. Thus, the current study addressed an interesting question: What is the most  
429 appropriate way to calculate the chronic tendencies of regulatory focus? Although our results

430 were not affected by the methods chosen, future studies might be needed to explore the debate in  
431 more detail since these results are supported by specific theoretical logics.

### 432 **Limitations and Conclusion**

433 This study involved limitations that are important to highlight. First, we assessed  
434 consumers' purchase intention with self-reported measures. As Morwitz (2012) demonstrated  
435 that purchase intentions are correlated with but are imperfect measures of consumers' subsequent  
436 purchase behavior, we suggest investigating buying behavior in future studies, especially in the  
437 sports context. Second, we follow the manipulation check of previous studies to check the  
438 advertising claims (Bhatnagar & McKay-Nesbitt, 2015; Hsu & Chen, 2014). Although we can  
439 check that the participants pay attention to advertising message framing, we might ignore the fact  
440 that the participants' preference for either advertisement was potentially an explanation for the  
441 difference in purchase intention. For example, we find that the dummy variable of advertisement  
442 manipulation was significantly correlated with purchase intention in table 1, which might hint at  
443 the different preferences for advertisement influencing purchase intention. To address this  
444 concern, future research needs to use a research design to rule out such an influence when  
445 examining the priming effect of an advertisement. Third, we did not identify the brand of the  
446 sporting goods used in our advertisements or examine the effect of the product's brand. This is  
447 because we focused on the regulatory fit between players' regulatory tendency in the sports  
448 context and the advertising cues of sporting goods' features. However, prior research has  
449 indicated that regulatory focus influences individuals' perceived brand value and their  
450 consumption decisions (Love et al., 2010). Accordingly, future research might take brand value  
451 into consideration. Finally, our finding is the first to apply regulatory fit to sports consumer  
452 behavior to understand the purchase intention of amateur badminton players. However, elite

453 players and nonelite sport participants seem to demonstrate that unstable effects of regulatory fit  
454 appear in the sports context (Wegner et al., 2019). That is, it is unclear whether the same findings  
455 will be observed for elite players. As such, research might be able to further explore the effect of  
456 regulatory fit on elite players to provide marketers with more specific information regarding how  
457 to sell sports goods to elite players and nonelite sport participants.

458         In conclusion, we focus on the effects of regulatory fit to understand how advertising claims  
459 affect amateur badminton players' purchase intention of badminton rackets. Our findings indicate  
460 that the experience of feeling right in terms of the regulatory focus in the sports context and  
461 advertising claims of badminton rackets would lead to higher purchase intention. We extend and  
462 strengthen the knowledge of personal regulatory focus in a specific context, namely, the sports  
463 context, and thus show marketers how to precisely sell products to target customers by using the  
464 regulatory fit strategy. In addition, our study reminds researchers conducting studies in the future  
465 to consider more detail when determining the most appropriate way to calculate chronic  
466 tendencies regarding regulatory focus.

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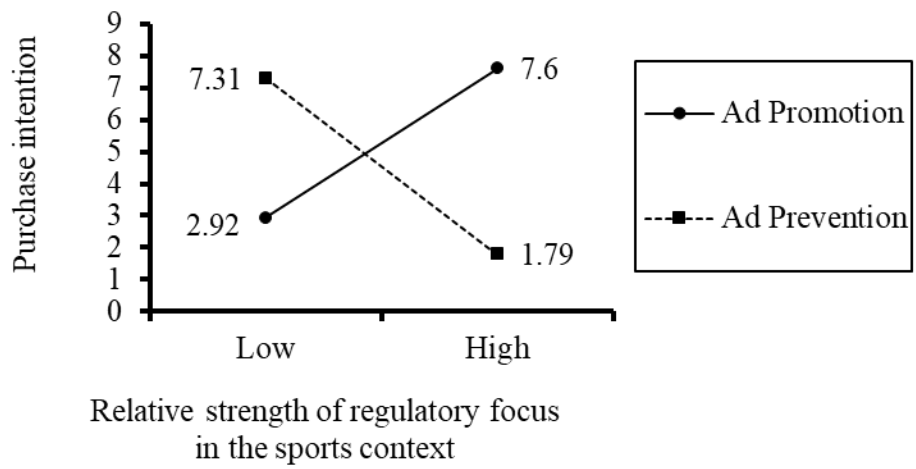
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## Appendices

1. The results indicate that the relative strength of regulatory focus in the sports context ( $b = -.06, p > .05$ ) and ad manipulation ( $b = -.78, p > .05$ ) did not significantly predict purchase intention after controlling for amateur badminton players' gender, average monthly income, age, average years of badminton experience, and number of training sessions per week. Furthermore, the interaction term between the relative strength of regulatory focus in the sports context and ad manipulation was significant ( $b = -.74, p < .01$ ) and explained an additional 19% of the variance associated with the purchase intention of badminton rackets. Following the suggestion of Aiken and West (1996), we present an interaction plot in Figure 1 demonstrating one standard deviation above and below the mean as a relatively high strength of regulatory focus in the sports context. A simple slope analysis was also adopted to further explore the interaction effect (Dawson & Richter, 2006). Figure A demonstrates that the participants with a lower relative strength of regulatory focus in the sports context had better purchase intention of badminton rackets when they reviewed the prevent-focus condition ads ( $b = -.40, p < .01$ ). Participants with a stronger regulatory focus (promotion focus) in the sports context exhibited a higher intention to purchase badminton rackets when they viewed the promotion condition ads ( $b = .34, p < .01$ ).

Figure A. Simple regression lines of the relative strength of regulatory focus in the sports context and ad manipulation in purchase intention

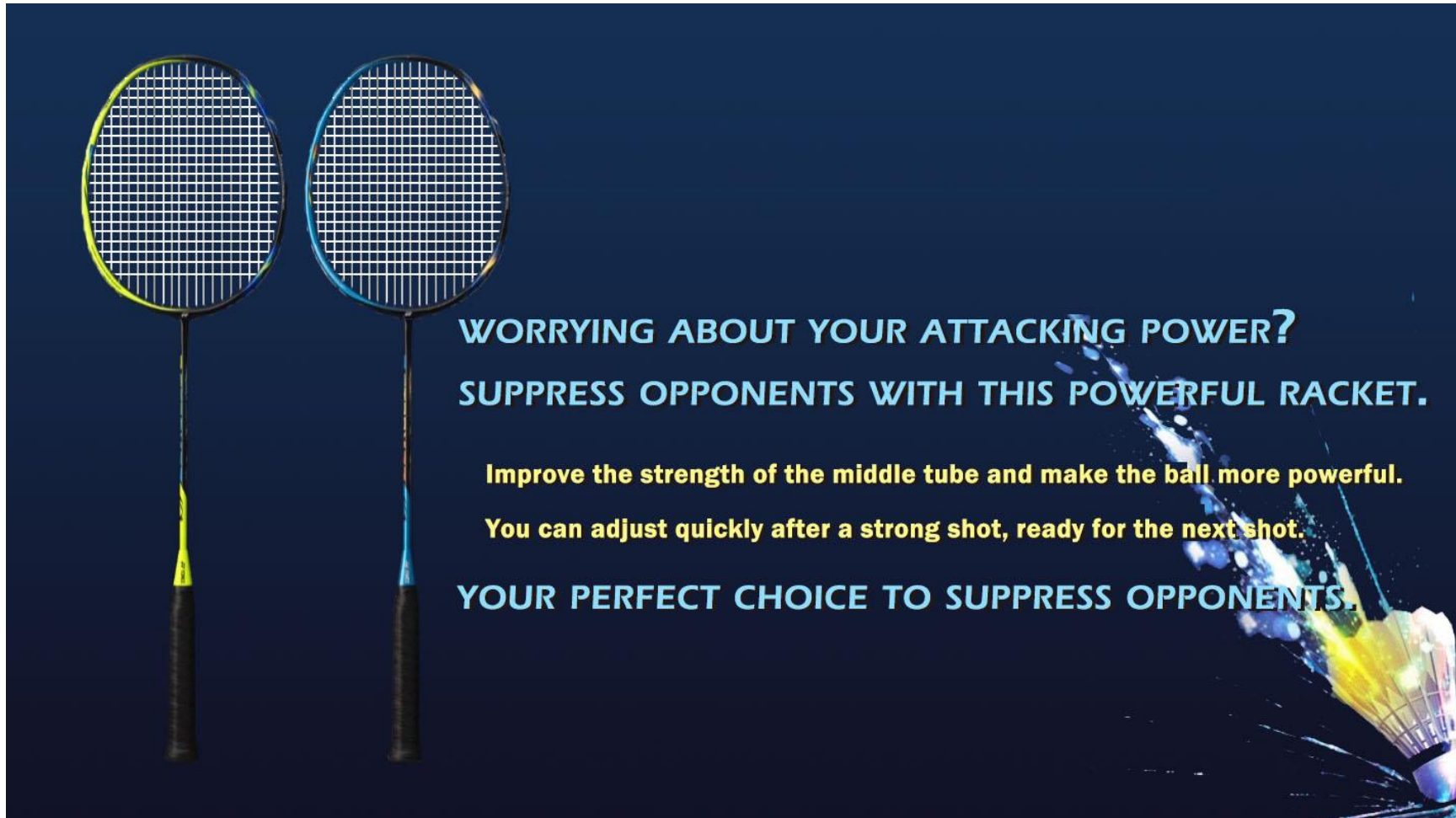


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581 2. Advertisements for a badminton racket used for attacking

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583 Figure B. Advertisement for a badminton racket used for attacking (promotion-prime advertising)



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587 Figure C. Advertisement for a badminton racket used for defense (prevention-prime advertising)

An advertisement for a badminton racket. On the left, two rackets are shown vertically against a dark blue background. The racket on the left has a yellow frame, and the one on the right has a blue frame. To the right of the rackets, there is text in a light blue, sans-serif font. Below the text, a shuttlecock is shown in motion, with a trail of light blue and yellow particles behind it, suggesting a powerful shot. The overall aesthetic is sleek and modern.

**WORRYING ABOUT YOUR INSUFFICIENT DEFENSE?  
DEFEND AGAINST OPPONENTS PERFECTLY  
WITH A POWERFUL RACKET.**

**Improve the elasticity of the middle tube, and make the return more stable.  
After a steady return, you can quickly adjust for the next shot.**

**YOUR PERFECT CHOICE TO DEFEND AGAINST OPPONENTS.**

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593 Table 1

594 Means, standard deviations, and correlation among variables.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1.25	0.43								
2. Average monthly income	2.58	0.82	.06							
3. Age	32.18	7.79	-.04	.49**						
4. Average years of badminton experience	5.04	3.49	-.11	.40**	.52**					
5. Number of training sessions per week	1.79	0.77	.01	.14*	.21**	.46**				
6. Ad manipulation	0.50	0.50	-.01	-.29**	-.16*	.05	-.02			
7. Promotion focus in the sports context	6.45	1.85	-.06	.04	.09	.09	-.01	-.14*		
8. Prevention focus in the sports context	5.82	1.85	.06	.02	.10	-.09	.001	.16*	-.75**	
9. Purchase intention	5.48	2.89	-.002	.06	-.002	-.07	.05	-.15*	-.03	.08

595 \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ 596 Note.  $N = 200$

597 Table 2  
 598 Results of promotion focus in the sports context and ad manipulation in predicting purchase  
 599 intention.

	Purchase intention		
	Model1	Model2	Model3
Constant	4.59	5.80	1.08
Gender	-.18	-.16	-.34
Average monthly income	.39	.24	.27
Age	.001	-.003	.01
Average years of badminton experience	-.14	-.10	-.12
Number of training sessions per week	.42	.37	.25
Promotion focus in the sports context		-.06	.65**
Ad manipulation		-.74	-.69
Interaction term			-1.39**
<i>F</i> test	0.91	1.07	7.01**
$R^2$	.02	.04	.23
$\Delta R^2$		.01	.19

600 Note. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

601 Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$



602 Table 3  
 603 Results of prevention focus in the sports context and ad manipulation in predicting purchase  
 604 intention.

	Purchase intention		
	Model1	Model2	Model3
Constant	4.59	4.67	8.26
Gender	-.18	-.17	-.21
Average monthly income	.39	.20	.28
Age	.001	-.001	-.01
Average years of badminton experience	-.14	-.10	-.09
Number of training sessions per week	.42	.36	.32
Prevention focus in the sports context		.14	-.51**
Ad manipulation		-.81	-.75
Interaction term			1.19**
<i>F</i> test	0.91	1.24	5.26**
$R^2$	.02	.04	.18
$\Delta R^2$		.02	.14

605 Note. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

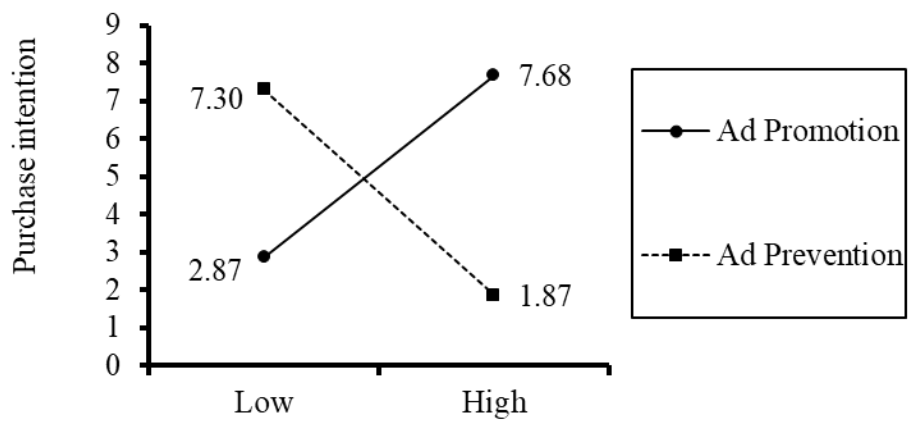
606 Note. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

607

## Figure Captions

608 *Figure 1. Simple regression lines of promotion focus in the sports context and ad manipulation*  
609 *in purchase intention.*

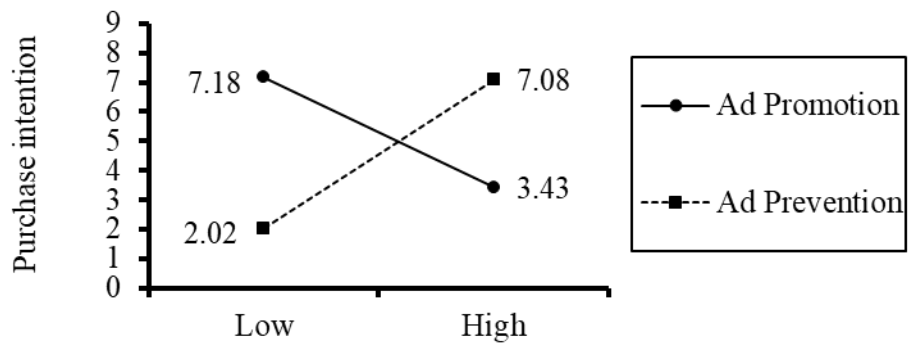
610 *Figure 2. Simple regression lines of prevention focus in the sports context and ad manipulation*  
611 *in purchase intention.*



Promotion focus in the sports context

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Prevention focus in the sports context

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