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# AMBASSADORS IN THE EQUINE SECTOR

USING AMBASSADORS TO PROMOTE NEW PRODUCTS

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## Preface

This past January, I was offered the opportunity to complete my final placement at Onori Fashion & Gifts in Harderwijk, the Netherlands. There, I took part in a project where a plan for the launch of a merchandise collection for the FEI, the international equestrian federation, was written. This project gave me the idea for this thesis: the use of brand ambassadors within equine industry.

Social media is becoming more and more prominent and users with many followers can have a significant influence on those followers. Employing brand ambassadors on social media platforms is a relatively new concept and is even more so in the equine industry. To me, it was interesting to discover what brand ambassadors may contribute when a company decides to launch a new clothing collection and therefore I chose this subject. In this thesis, I outline how companies can discover which traits are valued by their customers, how much they are valued and their influence on consumers' purchasing behaviour. This should provide companies with a clearer idea of what type of brand ambassador might be suitable for them.

I would like to thank all of those who spent time proofreading both my research proposal and the final thesis and giving me feedback. My coach, Teatske Pol, also helped me out so much by asking critical questions and keeping me on my toes. They truly helped me improve this final product.

Michelle Goedhart

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## Summary

Ambassadors are becoming increasingly prevalent across various sectors, including the equine industry. They are used to spread awareness of a product or brand, establish an image, and to increase sales. Little is known, however, about what exactly makes an ambassador successful. Traits are important as they should match both the companies' image and the consumers' expectations but which traits are important and how important they are, is unknown. In this research, the question of how a company can define the correct type of ambassador for an equestrian clothing collection is answered using a case study of the FEI, the international equestrian sports federation. They wish to launch a merchandise collection consisting of higher-end equestrian clothing and may consider using ambassadors to promote this. For this research, the questions asked were the following:

- How can the FEI define the right type of ambassador to promote a higher-end clothing collection to consumers?
  - o Which ambassador traits are important to consumers?
  - o Which ambassador traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers?
  - o In which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?

The research has resulted in the following conclusions:

- To the FEI's consumers, honesty, reliability and focus on welfare are the most important.
- Traits which are important to the FEI are not always equally important to the consumers; only honesty and reliability were valued almost the same.
- An ambassador's influence grows along with their scores on traits but not all traits have an equal effect on this influence;
- To the FEI's consumers, reliability and focus on welfare have the greatest influence on their purchasing behaviour.
- To achieve a situation in which consumers are likely to have their purchasing behaviour affected positively, an ambassador should exceed the consumers' expectations.

Selecting a suitable type of ambassador will contribute to the success of the FEI's marketing campaign revolving around the launch of their clothing collection. Using a method of identifying valued traits as in this research streamlines the ambassador selection process which saves time and provides clarity. There are several aspects which are important to do so:

- Select an ambassador who is publicly known to embrace the traits valued by consumers.
- Select an ambassador who exceeds the consumers' expectations.
- Use either a panel to score potential ambassador on a selection of traits or a public survey to do the same. A combination is possible as well.
- Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of using a public survey versus a panel. Both may produce skewed results and one has the advantage of being rather private while the other has the advantage of the sheer number of potential respondents.
- Make sure potential ambassadors are aware of the process and its consequences.
- Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of an ambassador who adheres more to the company's most valued traits versus one who adheres more to the consumers' most valued traits.

By taking these aspects into account, potential problems can either be avoided entirely or spotted early on in the process. This allows for a smoother selection process can contribute to a more successful outcome.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, more and more companies are using ambassadors to represent their brands and products. An immense variety of products is being brought to the public this way: from skincare products to cars and from running shoes to mental coaching, many different sectors are engaged in this relatively new method of marketing. Within sports, professional athletes are commonly contracted to post content or use a certain product. Athletes are a logical choice for sports brands as they are well known to a specific target group and are likely to have a significant social media following as well as interaction with those followers. The general public looks up to professional athletes due to their performance and attitude, making them role models. As role models are often copied in terms of the products they use, they make good ambassadors. Nike and Adidas, for example, have contracts with several athletes in various sports who wear and promote their collections. Within the equestrian sector, using ambassadors to promote clothing collections is also becoming more common. PK International, for example, has several riders such as Dutch dressage rider Dinja van Liere who are involved in the marketing process. Often, however, this takes place in the form of sponsorship where the company provides the rider with clothing and the rider wears it and can be photographed to promote the collection. If a rider is sponsored it does not necessarily mean they are an ambassador. To be one, there should be a formalised relationship which lasts longer than a one-time sponsorship would (Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). Using ambassadors for marketing purposes shows great potential to reach and convince a specific target group of a company's value (Groeger & Buttle, 2014).

Knowing what ambassador marketing entails within the equestrian sector and how its success is determined can be a significant asset to companies that want to stay up to date. Several different factors come into play such as what platform a company's target group is using, the size and platform of the ambassador, which co-branding structure is used, the risks of employing an ambassador, and the personal traits of the ambassador. Using a case of the FEI, the international equestrian sports organisation, these various factors will be discussed and explained in detail. This will result in a guide on how equestrian clothing companies can use ambassadors to promote a new collection to consumers.

### 1.1 Definition brand ambassador

There are various ways to describe a brand ambassador depending on the exact work the ambassador does. The term "brand ambassador" is often used interchangeably with "influencer" but the difference between the two is that an influencer acts independently from a company while a brand ambassador has a formalised relationship (Post, Preston, & Sachs, 2002). Brand ambassadors are commonly individuals who are passionate about a brand and engage in activities that carry brand meaning to consumers, often through social media. They reinforce a brand's identity with their own and serve as spokespeople. Brand ambassadors give an organisation a face and bring the brand closer to consumers (Ambroise, Pantin-Sohier, Valette-Florence, & Albert, 2014). Marketing using an ambassador is generally considered to be word-of-mouth marketing as it is directly from one person (the ambassador) to another (the consumer). Word-of-mouth marketing as a whole is the fastest growing marketing segment and has the potential of having immense reach due to the personal referrals (Groeger & Buttle, 2014). A brand ambassador can – through their word-of-mouth function – influence consumer behaviour. They can contribute to brand image, spread the brand's presence or encourage purchasing (Ambroise, Pantin-Sohier, Valette-Florence, & Albert, 2014).

### 1.2 Social media platforms

As brand ambassadors are commonly active on social media platforms, the different categories of influence on different platforms should be considered. There are various social media platforms where

the target group and potential ambassadors may be active such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok. Each of these platforms requires specific content and a different approach. Not every platform is equally popular and different target groups may prefer different platforms. Also, some platforms are easier to use for advertising due to their algorithms and usability.

Worldwide, Facebook is the number one platform with 2,7 billion users in January 2021. YouTube is also very popular with 2,3 billion users while the next competitor, Instagram, lags behind with 1,2 billion. TikTok is currently the fastest growing platform with 0,7 billion users. Even though Twitter is very well known, it only has 350 million users which is significantly less than other competitors (Tankovska, 2021). A platform's popularity may vary from country to country which means that specific research is needed when entering into a country's market through social media.

It is important to take into account that WhatsApp is also considered a social medium as it brings people into contact with one another on its platform. As it only focuses on communication on a personal level and not on a larger scale, it does differ significantly from its competitors such as Facebook and YouTube (Wei, 2020). It should therefore not be taken into account regarding ambassadors as communication on a larger scale is required for that.

Not every platform is as popular among demographic groups. TikTok, for example, is especially popular among younger age groups ranging from 18-24 and likely younger as well and has a 60/40 female/male ratio. Twitter is very different with users aged 30-49 and almost 70% male users (Barnhart, 2021). As each platform has their own stars, it is important to consider the target group and what platform they are likely to be using before selecting an ambassador.

According to Arora and her fellow researchers, of the three most well-known platforms, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, Instagram allows for the easiest analysis of a user's influence. The average number of likes on a user's posts correlate strongly with their reach and influence while this correlation is smaller with Facebook and Twitter. Also, the engagement on Instagram posts has shown to be more impactful on the audience. Facebook posts, however, have more visibility in a short time frame. In the first five hours after a post, they are viewed slightly more than Instagram posts and significantly more than tweets. Over the first week after a post, however, Instagram shows more visibility and engagement (Arora, Bansal, Kandpal, Aswani, & Dwivedi, 2019). This may be due to Instagram's Explore page where posts up to 3 days old which may fit a user's interests are displayed.

It is difficult to predict the exact effect of this kind of marketing as it is influenced by many factors such as current events and time zones. On Twitter, for example, it is safer to employ multiple ambassadors with average or slightly less than average influence than one person with a large influence. The larger amount of ambassadors increases the chance of the message reaching the target group and makes a post's success less dependent on smaller external factors (Bakshy, Hofman, Mason, & Watts, 2011).

### 1.3 Categories of social media influence

There are several categories of social media influence. Ambassadors within a category enjoy a certain status, deliver a certain type of content, and have different expectations from the brand they represent.

The smallest group of social media influencers that can act as ambassadors have 1,000 – 25,000 followers on their account. This category is known as micro influencers and enjoys a very close relationship with their followers and are therefore seen as reliable and trustworthy. There are many micro influencers which makes selecting one to act as ambassador a time consuming process and the quality of the content produced may be low. The costs of such an ambassador are also low: some may be satisfied with receiving the brand's products free of charge, perhaps supplemented by a small

monetary reward (Lammenett, 2018). As expected, the majority of equestrian influencers is a micro influencer. This group consists of amateurs and professionals, active in various disciplines and levels throughout the sport. Three-time Paralympian Rebecca Hart, professional photographer Arnd Bronkhorst, and exclusive browband producer Hailey White (White Horse Couture) are all micro influencers.

One step up are the middle influencers with 25,000 – 100,000 followers. They also enjoy much trust but produce more high-quality content than the micro influencers. Also similar is that they expect the same kind of reward, being free products and a branch-dependent amount of money. Middle influencers are less common than micro influencers, making them easier to find while staying low-cost (Lammenett, 2018). Most of the best-known equestrian athletes and professionals fit into this category. The famous racing jockey Irad Ortiz, who obtained his 2,000<sup>th</sup> victory in 2018 after just seven years, falls into this category. So does the Glock Horse Performance Center, which employs dressage riders Edward Gal and Hans-Peter Minderhoud as well as jumping specialist Gerco Schröder. Another equestrian professional who is a middle influencer is Yolanda Delpont, known on Instagram as riderbiomechanicscoach, who teaches riders to use their body correctly through various methods.

Macro influencers have 100,000 to 500,000 followers and produce high quality content. They are significantly more expensive than middle influencers and can usually be approached through agencies. These agencies connect companies and influencers and negotiate deals. Though macro influencers have a large following, they still are perceived as trustworthy by their followers, though this decreases as the number of followers rises (Lammenett, 2018). Within equestrian sports, only the most famous professionals reach this amount of followers. Examples are dressage rider and triple Olympic gold medallist Charlotte Dujardin, showjumping Olympic gold medallist Steve Guerdat, and Dutch YouTube celebrity Feline de Jonge.

The social media stars are the so-called celebrity influencers who have over 500,000 followers each. They charge up to € 25,000 per post, making them the most expensive type of influencer. Celebrity influencers also use agencies to strike deals for them and have a very large reach. They often do not enjoy the same kind of trust from consumers as there is less of a personal connection (Lammenett, 2018). There are very few celebrity influencers among equestrians. Matt Harnacke, YouTube celebrity and model, is one of them.

The return of investment in social media marketing can be increased by correct application of ambassador marketing. Identification of suitable ambassador traits is key in this as it directly affects the consumer's perception of the brand through co-branding (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012).

#### 1.4 Co-branding

Brand ambassadors, due to their social media presence and often through other activities, enjoy a certain celebrity-like status. This results in them representing their own brand as well: the brand of their own public image. The combination of the ambassador's brand and the company's brand can result in a synergy effect through co-branding.

There are two structures that can be used to co-brand a product: the Major-Minor and Equals structures. As the name implies, the Equals structure consists of two equally strong parties who invest similarly and are displayed equally prominently in advertisements. An example of this is the British Airways/Diners Club credit card where the reach of British Airways is combined with Diners Club's established position within credit card industry. The Major-Minor structure has one party that is prominently displayed in advertisements. The Minor party is unable to sell the products themselves and is therefore reliant on the Major party. A Major-Minor structure is more likely to be used in



ambassador marketing as the ambassador often cannot make the products (Lindemann, 1999). This also does depend on the size of the company hiring the ambassador: a smaller company has less power and is more likely to have an Equals structure while a larger, more established company will sooner use Major-Minor.

Authenticity of a co-branding campaign, and especially authenticity of the social responsibility aspect, is becoming increasingly important to consumers. When both company and ambassador but especially the latter are known for their social responsibility, consumers are more likely to buy the product the ambassador is presenting. Especially those who maintain a holistic world view are sensitive to this authenticity. In a co-branding situation, the company, ambassador, and higher cause all benefit from being associated with one another (Illicic, Baxter, & Kulczynski, 2019). As equestrians and equine enthusiasts are becoming increasingly socially aware and perceive their actions within the equestrian community as strongly affecting their identity (Dashper, 2017), they may be very sensitive to an ambassadorship's authenticity.

Ambassadors themselves also highly value recognising their own traits in a company. If they feel a company fits their values, they are more likely to be willing to be an ambassador. Especially lacking activities regarding social responsibility are becoming more prominent dealbreakers for them (Smith, Kendall, Knighton, & Wright, 2018), which may tie into the increased social awareness mentioned in the previous paragraph. They do regularly fear for their credibility and authenticity if their monetary connection to a brand is known. This stems from not knowing if their opinion will be devalued in their followers' eyes if they are paid to post about a product (Smith, Kendall, Knighton, & Wright, 2018).

### 1.5 Risks of ambassador marketing

There are some risks associated with ambassador marketing. In the context of an equine clothing company, this could be the ambassador giving away the brand's products without agreement, the ambassador giving a bad review, or the ambassador becoming involved in legal or ethical problems.

To prevent negative publicity, it is important to assess a potential ambassador carefully before employing them. Especially legal and ethical problems are less likely to occur when the ambassador has appropriate moral qualities. These qualities can be assessed through evaluating a potential ambassador's past image and personal life. If there are indicators toward unethical, immoral or illegal behaviour, it is better to choose another person (Liu, 2019).

In case of a negative event, a certain amount of blame can be assigned to various parties connected to it, such as governments, companies, ambassadors or other private persons. This amount can be classified as being high, moderate or low. Generally, it is best to dismiss ambassadors who have high blame and keep those with low blame. However, having only low blame ambassadors can also have negative impact on a company. As individuals tend to downgrade those with low blame levels, employing moderate blame ambassadors makes for a more accurate and realistic perception of the ambassadors by the public. A mix of low and moderate blame ambassadors often works best as it combines innocence and realism (Louie & Obermiller, 2002).

Also, if a negative event occurs, there should be a contingency plan. This is not only the decision to keep on or fire the ambassador involved but also how to manage consumers' perception of the brand and the information provided. Established brand trust can help balance consumers' opinion but it is integral to provide accurate information. This transparency is appreciated by consumers which means companies should be proactive in providing this. Keeping a watchful eye on social media is also useful as consumers often voice their concerns there first, allowing companies to act quickly. Providing information in case of a negative event should happen through as many channels as possible to ensure

as many consumers as possible receive the message and receive it multiple times so it is reinforced in their minds (Liu, 2019).

### 1.6 Ambassador traits

As mentioned multiple times in the paragraphs above, finding an ambassador with the right traits to suit both the company and the target group is paramount to success.

Which traits are important for the equestrian sector, is unknown. Some guesses can be made following recent trends such as the increasing attention towards the environment and ethics but no clear guidelines are available. The FEI, the international equestrian sports federation, wishes to launch a merchandise collection with a heavy focus on clothing. This collection should serve to take advantage of the equestrian community's appetite for merchandising which the FEI has detected in said community. To this end, they have approached the company Onori Fashion & Gifts to be able to use Onori's expertise in clothing and merchandising (R. Straus, personal communication, September 9 2020). As the FEI, being the international sports federation, focuses on high performance and therefore has an image of high quality (FEI, 2021), the merchandise collection should reflect this. This image can be reflected in the collection by providing higher-end products as the quality of the product will line up with the FEI's high quality image in the consumer's mind. To promote this collection, they are considering using ambassadors but lack the knowledge on how to identify the appropriate ambassador for their situation. The FEI will therefore be used as a case study to identify traits which are important to equestrian consumers to see in an ambassador. There are several traits that are highly important to the FEI besides performance such as sportsmanship and being welfare-focused (FEI, 2021) and how reliable an ambassador is as any missteps may reflect negatively on the federation. An ambassador to the Federation should embrace and represent all these traits. It is not known how important these traits are to the public and what other traits decide how much a consumer will like an ambassador.

Other organisations such as the global soccer association FIFA have already preceded the FEI on the merchandise front but have not yet selected ambassadors for their collection. They do have "FIFA Legends", famous players and coaches who are representatives of FIFA and football in general. They promote the organisation's values and actively take part in social development projects (FIFA, sd). This lack of ambassadors may be due to how new the use of brand ambassadors is – especially on social media. The more risk-averse organisations may decide to wait to employ their own ambassadors so they can see the effect ambassadors have on their competitors without having to employ one themselves.

Specific clothing brands such as Nike and Adidas, however, are known for selecting ambassadors who perform well and/or make statements (Adidas, 2021). Even when ambassadors are involved in a controversial situation, such as Colin Kaepernick who was involved in social justice activism in 2018, the brands sometimes stick with their ambassadors. If the brand feels like the ambassador truly embodies their values and has encountered controversy because of that, they will continue to support their ambassador or even give them more attention than previously (Kelner, 2018). This may also be due to the exposure a brand gains through a spotlighted ambassador, even though this spotlight may be negative.

The lack of information regarding ambassadors in the equestrian sector creates a knowledge gap. It is not known which brand ambassador traits are appreciated by equestrian clothing consumers and how this appreciation affects purchase behaviour. There is some knowledge from outside of the equestrian sector – Ambroise et al. identified how consumers ascertain and interpret certain traits in jeans brand ambassadors (Ambroise, Pantin-Sohier, Valette-Florence, & Albert, 2014). However, there is no literature available on how this applies to the equestrian sector specifically. In the following research,

this will be looked at using the FEI case. This case is suitable for this purpose as the FEI has a strongly defined image of sportsmanship and increasing focus on animal welfare as well as a specific target group of equestrian top sport enthusiasts. Merchandise clothing is also suitable as the FEI's image will directly transfer to the merchandise and it is a product that is widely used by the target group and thus has a low purchase threshold compared to more specific products such as a special kind of leg protection for the horse.

**How can the FEI define the right type of ambassador to promote a higher-end clothing collection to consumers?**

1. Which ambassador traits are important to consumers?
2. Which ambassadors traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers?
3. In which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?

## 2. Material and method

As explained in the previous chapter, it is paramount to an ambassador campaign's success to select an ambassador with appropriate traits. However, which traits are valued by an equestrian audience is not known. With the research performed, this question is answered and companies are provided with a guideline on what they should look for in a potential ambassador.

The FEI has been used as a case to demonstrate how companies can gain insight in how certain traits are regarded by their target audience. The FEI is the international equestrian sports federation and is aiming to launch a higher end, clothing-focused merchandise line. There are several traits that are highly important to the FEI besides performance which are embracing sportsmanship and a strong focus on horse welfare (FEI, 2021), which should be embodied by their ambassadors. Also important to them would be how reliable an ambassador is as any missteps may reflect negatively on the federation. In this research, the subject has been to discover the appropriate type of ambassador for the FEI.

### 2.1 Research question

How can the FEI define the right type of ambassador to promote a higher-end clothing collection to consumers?

#### **Sub questions:**

Which ambassador traits are important to consumers?

Which ambassadors traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers?

In which way does an ambassador influence the consumers purchasing behaviour?

### 2.2 Research method

To answer the question of which traits are important to consumers regarding an equestrian clothing brand's ambassador, a survey has been used. In this survey, the respondents were asked about their disposition towards ambassadors and what traits they value in general. Then, examples of top athletes – who are potential ambassadors in our case study of the FEI – were shown and the respondents shared how these athletes score on a selection of traits. The survey was available in Dutch for Dutch and Flemish respondents and in English for all others. The survey program is SurveyMonkey which allows for the use of photographs and videos to support a question. This was useful for this specific survey as images were used.

#### 2.2.1 Sample group and sample size

The group most likely to purchase equestrian clothing, and especially higher end equestrian clothing are women aged 10-29 who are involved in equestrian sport and especially those who are performance-focused and emotionally invested in the sport (HAS, 2016). They value experience, quality, fit, and trendiness in their clothing. Approximately 26% of persons involved in equestrian sports fit into this category (HAS, 2018). The results from individuals from this group are most applicable to a case with ambassador marketing.

As Europe, and especially western Europe, is the most important geographical area to the FEI. The countries Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands host the highest percentage of (inter)national shows and also house a large portion of all persons involved in equestrian sports (FEI, 2021). The Netherlands and Germany alone have a population of just under 4,5 million individuals involved in equestrian sport (KNHS, 2017) (FN, 2021). Judging by the size of the populations in the aforementioned countries and assuming 3% of the total population is involved in horse sports, there

are approximately 7 million of those individuals in western Europe. Therefore, respondents from this area were most likely to deliver results relevant to the FEI's decision on an ambassador.

To achieve a confidence level of 95% in this population of approximately 7,000,000 individuals, 26% of whom fit into the desired category, 296 respondents are required. All of these respondents should belong to the desired category. Due to time constraints and the likelihood that not all of the respondents will be part of this category, a smaller respondent group has been deemed acceptable. A group of 127 individuals belonging to the desired category will produce results with a confidence level of 80%. This is not enough to draw definite conclusions but does allow for provisional ones.

The respondents have been approached through various channels, being personal and public social media accounts, equine-focused education centres, and notices at livery stables and riding schools.

### 2.2.2 Baseline questions

To establish an overview of who the survey's respondents are, three baseline questions have been asked. These were about which age category the respondent belong to, what their gender is, and which description of an equestrian fits them best. These descriptions are visible in Fig. 1 and follow the four established main categories of equestrians as identified in the Dutch *Hippische Monitor* (HAS, 2016), which performs research in the equestrian sector each year. Not all categories are equally relevant due to the FEI's target group. As the FEI is a sports federation, their target group consists of those who ride to improve themselves and their horse which immediately excludes the blue and light brown categories. As merchandise is an impulse product and is also strongly connected with brand loyalty (Kircova, 2005), both the green and brown categories remained included. These two categories were the most likely to yield relevant results for the FEI.

#### Which description fits you best?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I ride to relax</li> <li>- I enjoy searching for new products</li> <li>- Price, quality, and discounts are important</li> <li>- I spend € 50 or less every month on equestrian products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I ride to relax</li> <li>- I buy only when I need something</li> <li>- Low price, functionality and quality are important to me</li> <li>- I spend €50 or less every month on equestrian products</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I ride to improve myself and my horse</li> <li>- I enjoy searching for new products</li> <li>- Brand, quality, comfort are important</li> <li>- I spend € 50 or more every month on equestrian products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I ride to improve myself and my horse</li> <li>- I have a small number of brands I'm loyal to</li> <li>- Quality, fit, and functionality are important</li> <li>- I spend € 50 or more every month on equestrian products</li> </ul>

Figure 1: category descriptions

### 2.2.3 Core questions

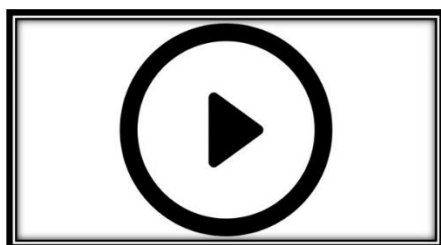
From the results of the core questions, the research question is answered. This means that respondents indicated whether or not they feel like an ambassador influences their purchase behaviour, what traits they value seeing in ambassadors and how they recognise these traits in real-

life persons. From these results, it is possible to evaluate which potential ambassador will be most likely to be received well by the target group.

Whether or not a respondent feels like seeing an ambassador – in this case a top athlete – wearing a certain brand affects their purchase behaviour was asked in a straightforward way. Respondents chose to answer “yes”, “no”, or “in some cases”. The results from this question indicated how influential ambassadors are to the respondents.

Then, the importance of certain traits in ambassadors to the respondents was asked. They were asked to show their valuing of a list of traits using a Likert scale, meaning they indicated a “very high” to “very low” valuing of a trait in five intervals to allow for nuance. These traits were the traits that are very important to the FEI, being performance, sportsmanship and welfare focus (FEI, 2021). Another few, more general traits were also listed, being reliability, honesty, approachability, and uniqueness. These traits have been identified to influence the consumer’s view of ambassadors within the clothing industry and are therefore useful to know the equestrian consumer’s opinion of (Ambroise, Pantin-Sohier, Valette-Florence, & Albert, 2014). Reliability and honesty are also valuable to the FEI as a reliable and honest ambassador is more likely to truly embrace the FEI’s values and to steer clear of controversial situations than a dishonest and precocious one.

To produce comparable results, respondents were shown two pictures of a top athlete’s performance, one of the athlete’s face and one of them during a performance, and asked how they felt the athlete scored on a selection of traits. These were the same traits as in the previous question, though performance will be excluded. This is because the performance has already been professionally judged. A Likert scale will again be used in this question and will be followed up with the question “would you consider buying products this person uses?” where respondents can answer “yes”, “no” or “perhaps”. Each respondent was shown 5 athletes and answered the same questions for each.



Does the person in the video seem:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Welfare-focused	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sportsmanshiplike	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you consider buying products this person uses?

Figure 2: example video question

The last question was an open-ended question, being: “Are there any other traits you require in an ambassador?” This question allowed for the correction of potential oversights in the selection of traits that have been discussed earlier. If a significant amount of the respondents mentioned a new trait here, it may be worthwhile to research this further in another study.

### 3. Results

In total, 174 individual respondents filled in the survey. Of these 174, 91 fall into the target categories and will be used for the results. During the assessment of the results, 27 answers proved unusable due to incompletely filled out surveys. The remaining 64 have been processed and the results are shown in the following chapter. Of the processed results, 28% of the respondents were non-Dutch speaking (therefore not from either the Netherlands or Flemish Belgium) and the other 72% were Dutch speaking. Of these respondents, 1 was male and 63 were female. The average age of the respondents was 34 years old with the age group 18-29 being most prominent with 46,9% of respondents belonging to this group.

The full survey is visible in appendix I. Respondents filled it in completely and scored how much they valued certain traits using a Likert scale. If a respondent answered the question “Does this person seem trait X to you?” with ‘strongly disagree’, the trait would be awarded 1 point. If they answered ‘strongly agree’, the trait would be awarded 5 points. This results in each trait having an average score between 1 and 5, indicating how important the trait is to the respondents. The closer the average score is to 5, the more important a trait is deemed to be while an average score close to 1 indicates the trait is valued little.

The respondents were also asked if they thought an ambassador would positively influence their purchasing behaviour. The answer options here were “Yes”, “Perhaps/in some cases”, and “No”. The option “Yes” was worth 3 points, “Perhaps/in some cases” 2 points, and “No” 1 point. An average score closer to 3 indicates a greater expected positive influence, a score closer to 1 a lesser expected positive influence.

The riders were only introduced to the respondents through a picture of them riding and a picture of their face. The five riders were labelled 1 through 5 in the processing of the results but were Jessica von Bredow-Werndl (1), Carl Hedin (2), Simone Pearce (3), Dinja van Liere (4), and Charlotte Dujardin (5). Responses were collected from June 14<sup>th</sup> to July 22<sup>nd</sup> to prevent some riders’ Olympic performances from influencing the results.

#### 3.1 Importance of ambassador traits to consumers

To answer the question which ambassador traits are important to consumers, the respondents were asked to value seven traits using a Likert scale. These traits were the traits that are very important to the FEI, being performance, sportsmanship and welfare focus (FEI, 2021). Four, more general, traits were also listed, being reliability, honesty, approachability, and uniqueness. Within the clothing industry, these traits have been identified to influence the consumer’s view of ambassadors and are therefore useful to know the equestrian consumer’s opinion of (Ambroise, Pantin-Sohier, Valette-Florence, & Albert, 2014). These traits are not only important to the clothing industry: reliability and honesty are also valuable to the FEI as a reliable and honest ambassador is more likely to truly embrace the FEI’s values and to steer clear of controversial situations than a dishonest and precocious one.



As visible in fig. 3, all seven traits were valued by the respondents to be at least of more than “neutral” value to them, indicated by a score higher than 3. The most valued trait was “focus on welfare”, closely followed by “honesty”. The least valued traits were “performance” and “uniqueness”, implying that both of these may not be deciding factors in an ambassador being accepted by the audience or not.

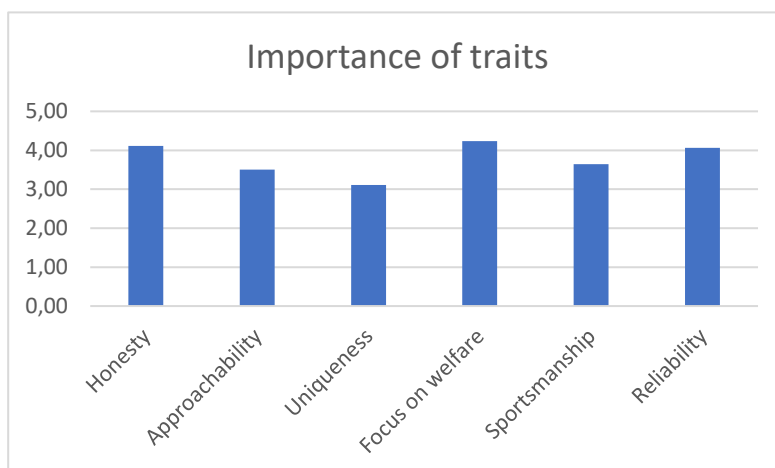


Figure 3: importance of traits

The traits honesty, focus on welfare, and reliability have scored 4,0 or above, meaning that most respondents answered either “agree” or “strongly agree” when asked if they value this trait in an ambassador.

In the open-ended question, 10,9% of respondents mentioned explicitly that focus on animal welfare is the most important factor to them. Another factor which was mentioned multiple times was being able to relate to the rider on a personal level (6,3%), also described as the rider having a “girl or boy next door” image.

### 3.2 Importance of ambassador traits to consumers compared to the FEI

The second sub question, which ambassador traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers, will be answered in the following paragraphs. To do so, the data from fig. 3 can be used again. The scores of the FEI concerning these same traits can be derived from their public statements. This results in approachability, focus on welfare, and sportsmanship scoring a 5 due to how the Federation stresses their utmost importance. The other traits all score a 4 as they are still valued by the Federation. The scores are placed in a graph in fig. 4 to display the differences and similarities.

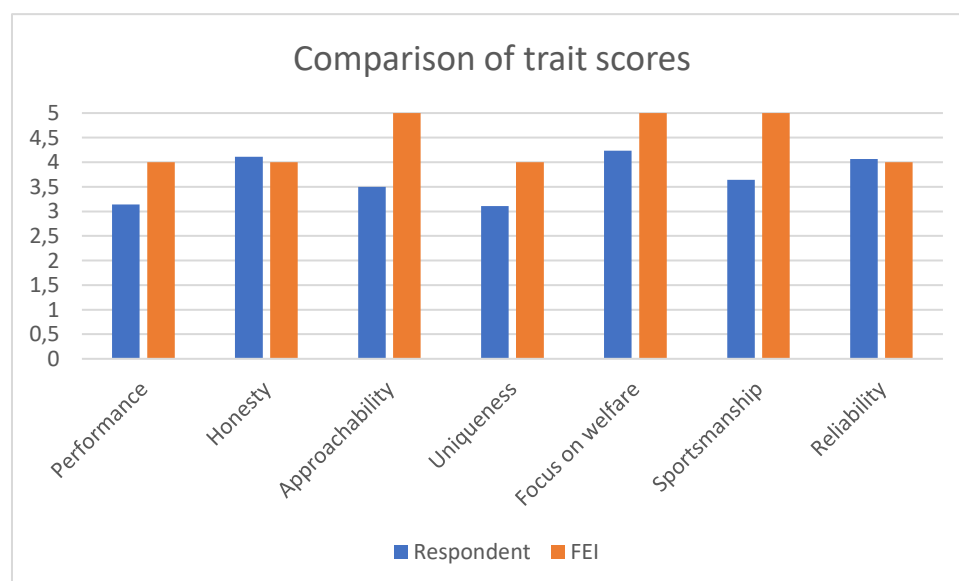


Figure 4: comparison of trait scores

The most striking differences are visible in approachability and sportsmanship with 3,5 to 5 (30%) for approachability and 3,64 to 5 (26,6%) for sportsmanship. The FEI values these highly as they connect

these values to community and sustainability of the sport (FEI, 2021). The respondents put them almost exactly in between “neutral” and “agree” when asked if they value this trait in an ambassador. Reliability and honesty are two factors that are valued almost equally (0,06 points/1,5% difference on reliability and 0,11 points/2,75% difference on honesty). A trait with a relatively small difference compared to some others is focus on welfare: the FEI values this trait at 5 points while the respondents put it at 4,23 (a 15,4% difference).

### 3.3 Influence on the consumer’s purchasing behaviour

To judge in which way an ambassador influences the consumer’s purchasing behaviour, the scores of each rider (labelled with numbers 1 through 5) compared to what the respondents desired in an ambassador, should be considered. A difference between these scores may explain a difference in the influence on purchasing behaviour. This influence is as judged by the respondents and not as measured by actual purchasing behaviour.

In figure 5, it is immediately visible that none of the riders matched the desired pattern. Each rider is indicated by their consecutive number and own colour while the respondents’ desired score is shown in blue. On some traits, they exceeded expectations and on others, they scored lower. Especially focus on welfare scored lower on each rider than the respondents would have liked to see, though it has been judged a key point by the respondents as explained in 3.1. The score which lined up the most with expectations was sportsmanship – it even exceeded expectations with all riders except for rider number 2.

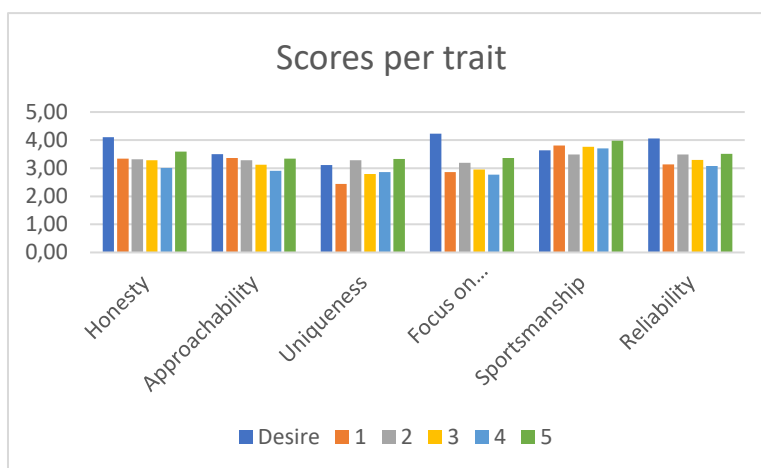


Figure 5: scores per trait

Score deficiency is the difference between the cumulative desired score by the respondents and the cumulative scores awarded to each rider. These scores are displayed in figure 6 as well as a line projecting forwards.

In the graph, each dot represents a rider’s score deficiency (x axis) compared to their influence on consumers (y axis). Using this

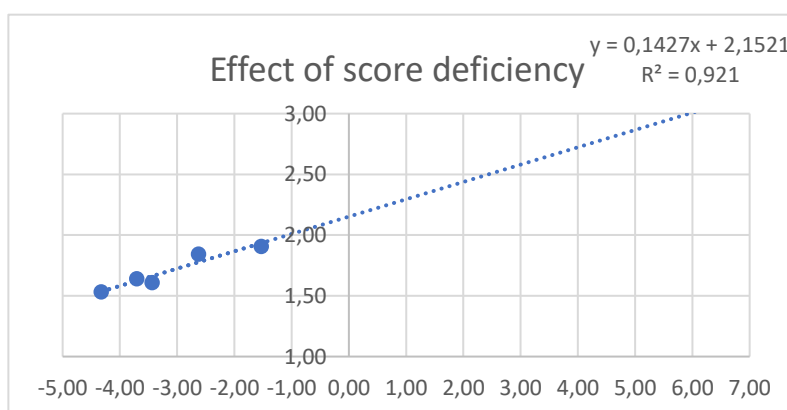


Figure 6: effect of score deficiency

point, a trendline is drawn which represents the expected trajectory if the deficiency decreases. As visible below, the smaller the deficiency is, the more likely the respondents judged themselves to be influenced by the ambassador to buy a product. Interesting to note is that if the ambassador matches the respondents’ expectations exactly, making the deficiency 0, they judge themselves only slightly more than “perhaps” influenced to purchase a product. This is indicated by the score on the vertical axis being more than 2,00. As stated before, a score of 1,00 indicates that the rider would not positively

influence the respondent while a score of 3,00 indicates that the rider would definitely positively influence the respondent. A score of 2,00 indicates a “perhaps” or “in some cases”. The score of over 2,00 when the score deficiency is 0 (meaning the respondent matches the respondents’ expectations fully) means that the ambassador would positively influence the respondents’ purchasing behaviour, simply not in all cases.

There is, however, a clear correlation between the score deficiency and the ambassador’s influence as judged by the respondents. It is interesting to note that if an ambassador has a positive deviation of 5,94, it would result in a situation where all respondents would answer “yes” when asked if they think the ambassador would positively influence their purchasing behaviour.

The effect of each trait has also been assessed as the traits do not have an equally strong effect on the influence an ambassador has. In the following graphs, each dot represents a rider’s score on a specific trait (x axis) in comparison to their influence on the respondents (y axis). Each trendline shows how a rider’s influence may change when their score on a trait changes. If a line trends upwards, a rider’s influence grows when their trait score rises. If the line declines, the rider’s influence lessens when their trait score rises. The  $R^2$  score indicates the strength of the correlation with a score close to 1 indicates a very strong one and a score close to 0 a very unlikely one. Scores between 0,75 and 1,0 are considered substantial correlations, scores around 0,50 as moderate, and around 0,25 as weak (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). For reading the following graphs, it is important to note that the x and y axis intersect at a value of 1,0 instead of 0 as the lowest possible score is 1 (representing either “no” regarding influence or “strongly disagree” regarding the trait).

As visible in figure 7, focus on welfare has a much more significant influence on what effect an ambassador has on consumers than honesty. The strength of the effect is comparable but with an  $R^2$  value of 0,95 compared to one of 0,70, focus on welfare does show a stronger correlation. This is also confirmed by the respondents themselves in the free answer section as discussed in 3.1, where 10,9% of respondents explicitly mentioned that welfare of the horse is highly important to them.

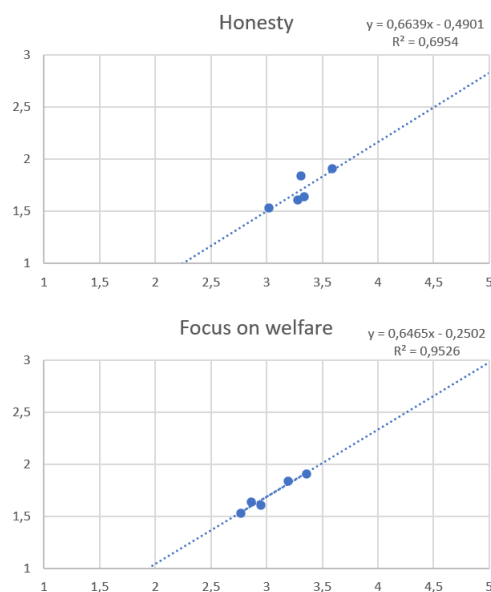


Figure 7: trait influence honesty and welfare

A trait which has strikingly little influence on the consumers, is sportsmanship. Though the  $R^2$  value of this trait is the lowest of this group of traits at 0,014, the influence it appears to have is much lesser than other traits as a higher score on sportsmanship does not seem to produce either a higher or lower influence. Approachability, though it has the second lowest  $R^2$  value at 0,51, does show a positive correlation between the scores and influence. The moderate  $R^2$  value indicates that in practice, results can differ significantly from what is shown in the graphs. As for approachability, the results may be more accurate than they appear since (as mentioned in 3.1), 6,3% of respondents explicitly mentioned that a “boy or girl next door” image is valuable to them and this image is often connected to approachability.

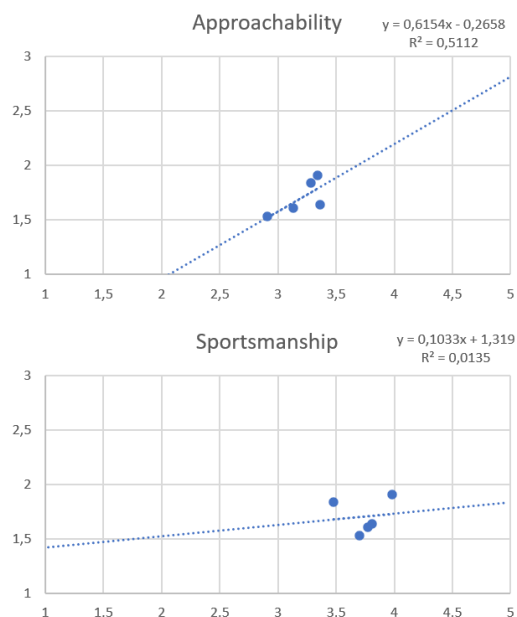


Figure 8: trait influence approachability and sportsmanship

The last two traits to be evaluated are uniqueness and reliability as seen in figure 8. These two traits have moderate and substantial  $R^2$  values of 0,61 (uniqueness) and 0,87 (reliability) respectively. Reliability does have the strongest effect on influence with a coefficient of 0,76 which, paired with the  $R^2$  value, makes it reasonable to expect that in practice, similar results will occur. This is less likely for uniqueness, which both has a lower  $R^2$  value as well as a smaller effect on influence.

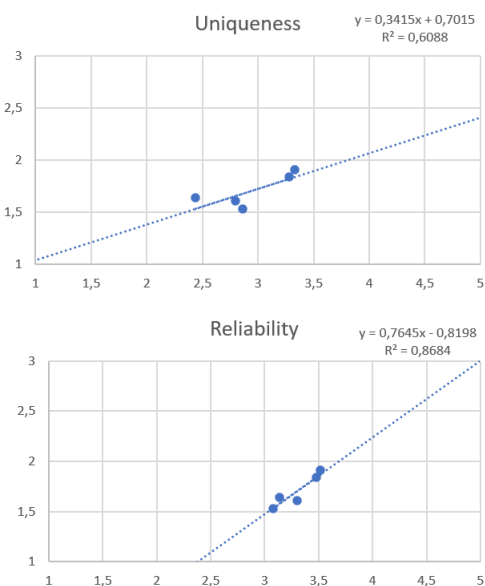


Figure 9: trait influence uniqueness and reliability

It is interesting to note that there is a substantial correlation between the traits “focus on welfare” and “reliability”, which are also the two traits which have shown the greatest effect on an ambassador’s influence. The other traits do not show this amount of correlation: honesty/approachability comes closest with an  $R^2$  value of 0,73 while others such as sportsmanship/reliability has an extremely low  $R^2$  value of 0,0006.

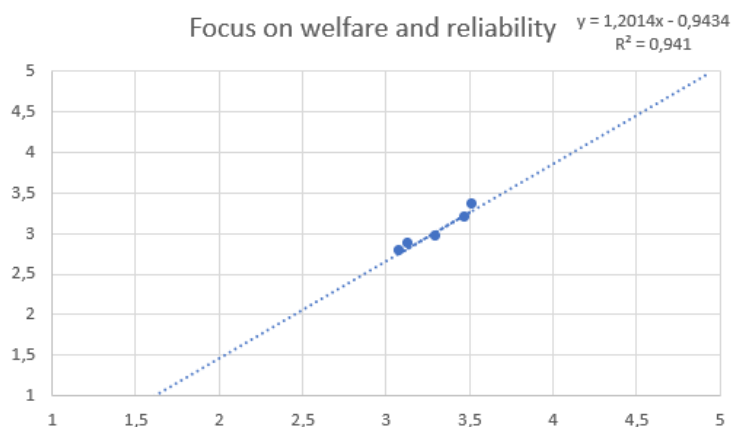


Figure 10: focus on welfare and reliability

As shown in table 1 below, various trait combinations show either a substantial or moderate correlation. All trait combinations result in a positive x-coefficient, with the exception of the combination uniqueness/sportsmanship. Due to the low  $R^2$  value of 0,13, this correlation is unlikely to be observed in practice.

Table 1:  $R^2$  values of trait combinations

	Honesty	Approachability	Uniqueness	Focus on welfare	Sportsmanship	Reliability
Honesty		0,73	0,17	0,70	0,30	0,57
Approachability	0,73		0,016	0,38	0,060	0,32
Uniqueness	0,17	0,016		0,70	0,013	0,71
Focus on welfare	0,70	0,38	0,70		0,037	0,94
Sportsmanship	0,30	0,060	0,013	0,037		0,00060
Reliability	0,57	0,32	0,71	0,94	0,00060	

## 4. Discussion

The goal of this thesis was to provide a method which can be used by equestrian clothing companies to discover which type of ambassador would be suitable for them. The example of the FEI, the international equestrian sports federation, which wishes to launch a merchandise collection, was used to research this. A few questions were asked to achieve this: which ambassador traits are important to consumers? Which ambassadors traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers? And in which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?

Regarding which traits are important to consumers, honesty, focus on welfare, and reliability were the three traits that were rated above the other four. Each scored 4,0 or higher which meant that respondents mostly answered either "agree" or "strongly agree" when asked if they felt this trait is important to see reflected in an ambassador. Respondents also explicitly mentioned that focus on welfare is highly important to them as well as a "girl or boy next door" image.

Two traits were valued almost alike by respondents and the FEI: the scores for honesty and reliability were only a few percent off. Approachability and sportsmanship showed the largest difference in value being 30% and 26,6% respectively.

The question regarding in which way an ambassador influences the consumers' purchasing behaviour cannot be answered as quickly or easily as the other two questions as it is more complex. Generally, when an ambassador scores higher on their traits, their positive influence on purchasing behaviour grows. If a company wants to achieve a situation in which consumers are very likely to have their purchasing behaviour influenced positively, they should select an ambassador who exceeds the consumers' expectations. Not all traits have an equally strong influence, though: focus on welfare and reliability are the two traits which have shown to have the greatest influence. Sportsmanship, however, appears to have very little effect. When an ambassador's focus on welfare increases, many respondents find the ambassador's reliability does as well.

As for the application of the method, many among the respondents fell into the predetermined target group of women aged 10-29 who are involved in equestrian sport and especially those who are performance-focused and emotionally invested in the sport – more than initially expected. 36% of respondents were performance-focused and of that group, 98% was female and 51,6% was aged 10-29.

The majority of respondents (72%) was Dutch speaking which indicates either a Dutch or Flemish respondent. This may create a skewed image if the Dutch and Flemish views differ significantly from others. In a repeat of this research, more non-Dutch speaking respondents should be reached. Regarding the number of responses, it would have been better for the results' significance if there had been more. 176 responses in total were collected, 64 of which were eventually able to be used for data processing. As explained in the methodology, 127 responses were needed for a confidence level of 80%. This has not been reached in this research. If it were to be repeated, more responses should be collected, which could be combined with the desired increase of non-Dutch respondents. A problem which occurred at the end of data collection was the emergence of empty or only partially filled out surveys. The survey system counted every survey which had at least one question answered as a fully filled out survey. This came as a surprise when reading out the data at the end of data collection and eliminated 34% of surveys which could potentially have been used for data processing and would have brought the number of surveys significantly closer to the desired 127. The solution to this is, again,

collect more responses to compensate for the empty ones, and to use a survey system which separates fully filled out surveys from the incomplete ones.

As it stands, the results cannot be presented with the desired confidence level of 80%, let alone the scientifically desired one of 95%. For the results themselves, it means that they may not represent reality as well as they should. It is promising, however, that in various graphs, high correlation coefficients were shown. That indicates that the data collected, however limited, does make sense and might indicate as well that the data may be representative of reality. Of course, the exact trajectory of each graph may differ in practice from what is shown here due to the aforementioned limited amount of responses.

The only unexpected result is how low sportsmanship is valued. This may be due to the way sportsmanship is interpreted by different people. It may be best to first explain all traits and to explicitly give a definition of an ambassador before the start of the survey. In this survey, this was not done as it might have presented an obstacle to potential respondents and prevented them from completing the survey. This is because reading the definitions requires the respondents to invest more time and they may not be willing to do so.

Something which may have had affected the results but cannot be controlled within the research, is the conscious versus unconscious influence on behaviour. Multiple respondents mentioned they are not at all influenced by ambassadors but research in the theoretical framework has shown that they likely are. Apparently, they either do not experience it as such or it is not as prevalent as it appears to be from the theory. The respondents answered how likely they judged themselves to be influenced by an ambassador but this likelihood may be different in practice as the influence could take place more in the subconscious mind of a consumer. If this is to be taken into account, it should be done by using affiliate links or coupons, for example, so individual purchases can be traced back to an ambassador. If a consumer purchases a product through an ambassador affiliate link or coupon, it is likely that they were influenced positively by them. This, however, is only possible with active ambassadors and not with potential ones.

Another factor which may have influenced the results is how familiar the respondents are with each rider shown to them. If respondents have more background knowledge of one rider compared to the others, it might influence their opinions and therefore the results. This, however, does not necessarily need to be a problem: as ambassadors are chosen for their public image, it may be beneficial for respondents to be more familiar with an ambassador as it enables them to judge according to a fuller picture.

As all traits received at least a “neutral” and, in three cases, even an “agree” score on how important they are to consumers, the results do appear to be similar to what is stated in the literature review. One of the general clothing industry traits – reliability – was scored high compared to the others and also showed a relatively high influence on consumers. An FEI-specific trait which scored comparatively was focus on welfare which ties into the rising trend of the importance of animal welfare as also stated in the theory.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

In the following chapter, the conclusion and recommendation of this thesis are listed. To recapitulate: the goal of this thesis was to provide a method which can be used by equestrian clothing companies to discover which type of ambassador would be suitable for them. The example of the FEI, the international equestrian sports federation, which wishes to launch a merchandise collection, was used to research this. A few questions were asked to achieve this: which ambassador traits are important to consumers? Which ambassadors traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers? And in which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?

### 5.1 Conclusions

For this research, the questions asked were the following:

**How can the FEI define the right type of ambassador to promote a higher-end clothing collection to consumers?**

1. Which ambassador traits are important to consumers?
2. Which ambassadors traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers?
3. In which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?

As for sub question 1, which ambassador traits are important to consumers, three traits have been judged to be important to consumers. These traits are honesty, focus on welfare, and reliability. This means that if the FEI decides to use an ambassador to promote their equestrian clothing collection, they should select an ambassador who embodies at least these three traits. Especially the focus on welfare is important to consumers as it was both scored high on the Likert scale as well as mentioned explicitly afterwards. An ambassador who truly cares about animal welfare is therefore paramount to their success.

Sub question 2 considered which ambassador traits are of equal importance to the FEI and to consumers. Only the traits honesty and reliability were scored almost alike which means that most of the values are not as important to the consumers as they are to the FEI. Especially approachability and sportsmanship were valued much less which means that in selecting an ambassador, the FEI may have to choose an ambassador who does not directly embrace the traits and values which are highly important to them but is more liked and relatable for their consumers.

The third last sub question was the most complex and therefore requires the most explanation. Many factors affect the answer to the question "In which way does an ambassador influence the consumers' purchasing behaviour?" When an ambassador scores higher on the selected traits, their positive influence on the consumer's purchasing behaviour will grow. To achieve a situation in which consumers are very likely to have their purchasing behaviour influenced positively, an ambassador should exceed the consumers' expectations of one. Not all traits have an equally strong influence on the consumer: the traits focus on welfare and reliability have shown to have the greatest effect while sportsmanship has very little. The respondents often answered that when an ambassador's focus on welfare increases, their reliability does as well. This confirms the conclusions from sub question 1 where both reliability and focus on welfare also showed themselves to be highly valued by consumers. As a result, the top two traits for the FEI to look out for in an ambassador are these two.



The FEI can define the right type of ambassador to promote a higher-end clothing collection to consumer by adhering to the following:

A suitable type of ambassador for the FEI is a well-performing rider who is publicly known for their focus on welfare, reliability, and honesty. Their performance in sports and sportsmanship in general should not be deciding factors in selecting them: the aforementioned three traits should be. The ambassador should exceed the consumers' expectations of an ambassador regarding all traits discussed in this research (honesty, reliability, uniqueness, focus on welfare, sportsmanship, and reliability) but especially in focus on welfare and reliability.

Selecting a suitable type of ambassador will contribute to the success of the FEI's marketing campaign revolving around the launch of their clothing collection. Consumers will be more likely to purchase a product and will also get into contact with the collection sooner through the ambassador. Using a method of identifying valued traits as in this research streamlines the ambassador selection process which saves time and provides clarity to all stakeholders by being able to rely on facts instead of hunches regarding consumers' preferences.

### 3.2 Recommendations

For the FEI specifically, it is recommended to select an ambassador who is publicly known for valuing animal welfare and being reliable as well as honest. Performance is important as the FEI is a sports federation which means that their ambassadors should embrace performance as well as sportsmanship. It should be kept in mind, though, that these traits are not the ones that are valued most by consumers. To ensure the greatest potential amount of success, an ambassador who exceeds the consumers' expectations of an ambassador should be chosen.

There are several ways that potential ambassadors can be scored on a selection of traits. A panel consisting of a limited amount of selected individuals who fit into the target group can score the potential ambassadors by showing them pictures and footage. Advantages of this method are that the panel members can easily be asked to elaborate on their opinions and that the knowledge of who is considered to be an FEI ambassador is kept in a relatively small circle. If a rider is or is not chosen, it is less likely to offend either the rider or others as the process is less public. A disadvantage is that by selecting individuals, it is possible that mostly those with a close connection to FEI employees or officials are chosen as they are easily approachable. These individuals may, through their close connection, have a different view than those who do not have such a connection.

A second way of scoring potential ambassadors is to do it publicly through a survey. By using this method, a wide range of individuals can respond and conclusions can be drawn based on more balanced data. There is a difficulty, however: potential ambassadors may not want to be exposed to this process, especially if they are not aware that they are being considered or of the aim of the survey. That could be mitigated by pre-selecting ambassadors who fit in with the FEI's wishes for an ambassador and explain the process of the survey and the scoring on traits. If they do not wish to partake, they will no longer be considered for an ambassador. A downside of this public survey is that individuals who are a fan of a certain rider may score that rider very high and all others very low, skewing the results. It is disputable how much of a downside this is: a very popular rider often automatically has a large reach which is beneficial for the FEI's marketing campaign. Having them come out of the survey with the highest value may not be problematic.

A combination of the abovementioned methods could also be used. For example, the FEI could pre-select potential ambassadors, present them to a panel where further selection takes place and then onto the public survey where the eventual ambassador(s) will be selected.

It would be advantageous for the FEI to repeat this research before selecting an ambassador. This is because the riders used as potential ambassadors in this research may not be riders who the FEI would actually consider for that position. In their research, they should introduce the riders who they would offer an ambassador contract. Also, they should take care to have at least 256 respondents within the target group as established in chapter 2 to ensure a confidence level of 95% - necessary to be able to rely on the results.

Of course, other companies in the equestrian clothing industry can use the method of this research for their own campaigns as well. They should then substitute the FEI-specific values with their own before performing the survey. Just like the FEI, they could also choose to use a smaller panel in a more controlled environment where more detailed questions can be asked of the panel members as well.


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## I. Annex 1: questionnaire

### Brand ambassadors within the equine sector

1. What is your age? 

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60 or older

2. What is your gender? 

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other/prefer not to say

\* 3. Which description fits you best? 

- ☐ I ride to relax and I enjoy searching for new products. Price, quality, and discounts are important to me and I spend €50 or less every month on equestrian products.
- ☐ I ride to relax and I only buy something when I need it. Low price, functionality, and quality are important to me and I spend €50 or less every month on equestrian products.
- ☐ I ride to improve myself and my horse and I enjoy searching for new products. Brand, quality, and comfort are important to me and I spend € 50 or more every month on equestrian products.
- ☐ I ride to improve myself and my horse and I have a small number of brands I'm loyal to. Quality, fit, and functionality are important to me and I spend € 50 or less every month on equestrian products.


\* 4. Would seeing a top athlete wearing a certain brand affect your decision to buy that product? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ In some cases

\* 5. Is it important to you to see the following traits in an equestrian clothing brand's ambassador? 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Honesty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uniqueness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sportsmanship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



\* 6. Does this person seem: 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A true sportswoman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 7. Would you consider buying products this person uses? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Perhaps



\* 8. Does this person seem: 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A true sportsman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 9. Would you consider buying products this person uses? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Perhaps





\* 10. Does this person seem: 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A true sportswoman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 11. Would you consider buying products this person uses? 


- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Perhaps





\* 12. Does this person seem: 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A true sportswoman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 13. Would you consider buying products this person uses? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Perhaps



\* 14. Does this person seem: 

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Honest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Approachable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unique	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focused on animal welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A true sportswoman	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reliable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 15. Would you consider buying products this person uses? 

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Perhaps

16. Are there any other traits you require in an equestrian brand ambassador? 

☐ No

Yes,

[illegible]

## Respondents 32-64

32 18-29	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	1	1	5	5	2	5	5	5	4	2	1	3	5	4	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	2
33 40-49	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	1	4	4	2	2	3	4	4	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	2
34 40-49	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	3	5	4	3	4	5	4	4	4	3	2	2	4	3	1	3	2	4	3	2	3	1
35 Jonger dan 18	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	2	3	4	3	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	
36 30-39	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	3	3	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	5	4	2	4	4	3	4	4	2	
37 50-59	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	3	5	3	3	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	2	
38 40-49	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	1	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	
39 30-39	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	2	5	4	3	4	3	5	3	2	2	2	5	3	1	3	4	4	3	4	3	1
40 18-29	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	3	5	3	3	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	1
41 50-59	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	3	4	4	2	5	3	5	3	4	2	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	3	4	3	2
42 18-29	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	2	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	2	4	5	4	5	4	3	
43 Jonger dan 18	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	1	3	4	4	3	5	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	2	2	4	4	4	4	3	4	2
44 18-29	Vrouw	Ik rijd om r	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	4	4	5	4	3	
45 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	4	4	3	4	4	2	
46 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	4	4	3	3	3	3	1
47 Under 18	Female	I ride to im	2	2	5	4	4	4	5	5	3	2	4	5	5	3	2	3	2	2	4	5	4	2
48 50-59	Female	I ride to im	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	
49 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	2
50 30-39	Female	I ride to im	1	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	1
51 50-59	Female	I ride to im	1	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	1	3	4	4	2	5	3	1
52 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	2	5	3	3	5	2	4	3	3	2	3	4	3	1	2	3	4	4	3	4	3
53 50-59	Female	I ride to im	1	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	1
54 40-49	Female	I ride to im	2	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	4	2	4	4	3	3	3	4	2
55 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	4	3	4	4	5	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	3	2	4	2
56 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	2	4	3	1	4	3	4	3	2	2	1	3	2	1	2	3	4	4	2	2	2
57 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	3	4	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	2	3	4	4	2	4	5	4	3	3	4	2
58 18-29	Female	I ride to im	2	4	5	3	3	5	4	4	3	3	2	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	4	3	2
59 18-29	Female	I ride to im	2	3	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	4	2	3	3	4	4	3	3	2
60 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	3	4	2	3	3	3	1	5	4	5	4	5	5	3
61 18-29	Female	I ride to im	1	5	5	3	3	5	4	5	4	2	2	4	5	3	2	5	4	4	4	5	5	2
62 18-29	Female	I ride to im	3	4	5	4	2	5	4	3	4	5	2	3	4	3	2	4	5	4	5	3	3	3

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3	2	2	3	4	3	1	3	2	3	3	4	3	1	4	3	4	3	4	3	1	No	
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