Every year, numerous sport events are held and thousands of volunteers involve in those various events. However, most of researchers have often considered sport-event volunteers at those various events in a similar manner although the characteristics or size of sport events that volunteers involve are so diverse. Without a few studies focusing on unique volunteer motives of mega sport events (e.g., Bang, Alexandris & Ross, 2010, Bang & Chelladurai 2009; Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998; Williams, Dossa, & Tompkins, 1995), most researchers in volunteer studies have not differentiated volunteers or their psychological characteristics based on various types of sport events such as international multi-sport events, international single sport events, domestic mega events, participant-based events, sport events with a special cause or sport events for a special group. Also, many practitioners or volunteer managers at sport events have not realized the differences of volunteer characteristics or psychological aspects of volunteers at the different types of sport events. As an example, the organizing committees for PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games and PyeongChang Special Olympics World Winter Games do not consider the possible differences of volunteers at two different events, Winter Olympic Games and Special Olympic World Winter Games, because both of them are international mega sport events held in winter. However, especially in the area of volunteer management, volunteers at the different types of sport events should be treated differently. The majority of volunteers at international mega events are those with high patriotism or community identity and those who volunteer because it is a life time experience (Farrell et al., 1998; Williams et al., 1995) while volunteers at sport events with a special cause or for a special group are more likely volunteering for their friends or family or with special memories or personal belief related to the cause or the special group. Thus, it is necessary to understand and manage volunteers at various types of sport events differently.

One approach often used to understand volunteers is measuring volunteer motivation. However, most of volunteer motivation scales are not appropriate to identify the unique characteristics of volunteers at Special Olympic World Games. Generally, volunteer motivation scales (Clary et al., 1998; Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Knoke & Premsky, 1984) do not distinguish specific values or humanistic purposes (e.g., Olympic spirits, sport development, and a concern for a special group) and just categorized them as one sub-dimension. Also, although mega event volunteer scales (Bang & Chelladurai, 2009; Farrell et al., 1998; Williams et al., 1995) include such unique sub-dimensions as patriotism, community attachment, or life-time experience, it is hard to catch the distinctiveness of volunteers at such events like Special Olympic World Games which is an international mega event but is with a special cause and for a special group. That is, information about motivation of volunteers is not sufficient to identify the uniqueness of volunteers nor practical enough to enhance the effectiveness of volunteer management at Special Olympics World Games.

In this situation, investigating the level of different identification foci (e.g., sport, community, individuals that volunteers serve, volunteering) might be an effective way to explore the distinctive characteristics of volunteers. According to social identity theory, individuals are likely to create their social identities based on the significant groups/organizations where they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, 1987). Also, individuals with strong social identity with the organization/group tend to be more motivated in the organization/group-related behaviors (Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004) and perform cooperative and supportive behaviors and group-oriented behaviors (Tyler & Blader, 2001, 2002, 2003). Indeed, within the notion of social identity theory, a few researchers have investigated different identification foci of volunteers in sport-related events (Kim, 2010; Kim & Trail, 2007). According to their studies, identifications with sport, community, and team were strongly related with volunteering intention for sport events (Kim, 2010; Kim & Trail, 2009) while identification with volunteering was the main predictor of volunteering intention for non-sport events (Kim & Trail, 2007).

In line with the previous research presented above, volunteers’ different identification foci will be explored with volunteers at the pre-games of Special Olympic World Winter Games in the current study (two related-studies). The specific purpose of Study 1 is to explore the different levels in different identification foci of volunteers (winter sports, community, special group – individuals with intellectual disabilities & volunteering) and the changes of the identification levels in those different foci through volunteering experiences at the event. For this purpose,
identification with 4 different foci of volunteers will be measured prior to the event as well as after the event. The purpose of Study 2 is to explore how identification with 4 different foci and volunteer experiences will influence the intention for group-supportive behaviors. For the purpose of Study 2, the influences of volunteers’ identification with 4 different foci and volunteering experiences on future volunteer intentions for 2013 Special Olympic World Winter Games, 2018 Winter Olympic Games, and domestic Special Olympics will be measured.

The participants of the study will be volunteers at the pre-games of 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in late February, 2012. The pre-games will be held at PyeongChang, the host city of 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games and 2018 Winter Olympic Games. Approximately 400 individuals will be selected for the volunteers of the pre-games, all of whom will be the subjects of the study. The survey of the current study will be administrated by the research team of 2013 Special Olympics World Games. Data will be collected through both online and offline methods based upon volunteer administration schedules of the host committee. Data collection will be held at two different times, prior to volunteering (during the volunteer training period) and after volunteering (after the event is completed).

The survey at the pre-event includes two sections to measure the identification levels in different foci (winter sports, community, special group & volunteering) and demographic information. Identification with winter sports and community will be measured with the modified scale of the Points of Attachment Index (Trail et al., 2003, 3 item each) while identification with volunteering will be measured with Callero et al. (1987, 5 items). Three items to measure identification with special group will be created based on Trail et al. (2003) and Callero et al. (1987). The survey at the post-event includes the three sections to measure the identification level in 4 different foci, volunteer experiences, and intention to volunteers in three different events (2013 Special Olympic World Winter Games, 2018 Winter Olympic Games, and domestic Special Olympics). Identification levels will be assessed with the same scales used in the pre-event survey. Volunteer experiences will be measured by 12-item measure of environmental affordance (Stukas, Worth, & Clary, 2009) and one item of satisfaction measure (Stukas et al., 2009). Volunteer intentions will be assessed by items directly asking their intention for 3 different events (one for each).

Data analysis will be done through SPSS and AMOS. First, the validity and reliability of the scales will be examined through Cronbach’s alpha test, inter-factor correlations, a confirmatory factor analysis, and ABE tests. For Study 1, the differences of identification scores between pre- and post data will be examined through t-tests. For Study 2, the structural equation modeling test will be applied to explore the relationships among the variables. The results of the study will be discussed at the conference.