Feeling Generous for the Good Old Days: The Effects of Nostalgia on Self-Continuity, Pride, and Intention to Donate

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Nostalgia is a tender but powerful driver of consumption behavior (Elliot, 2014; Ju, Kim, Chang, & Susan, 2016). In the sport tourism context, research has indicated sport participants may experience feelings of comfort when they remember their past sport experience, which is called nostalgia (Gammon, 2002, 2004; Fairley, 2003; Fairley & Gammon, 2005). Despite its importance and unique place in consumer behavior literature, nostalgia has not been discussed much in the context of sport management. To address the gap, this study attempts: 1) to develop a theoretical model of nostalgia in sport management context; 2) to empirically examine the relationships among nostalgia, self-continuity, pride, and intention to donate; 3) to further investigate the moderating effects of gender, age, and sport team involvement in the relationships.

Research has indicated a nostalgic message delivers feelings connecting the past and present, so-called self-continuity (Ju et al., 2016). Research has also suggested that evoking nostalgia influences emotions (Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Rouledge, 2008). Among various emotions, pride and prideful feelings can be related to nostalgia because prideful feelings often result from past memories (D’Argembeau & Linden, 2008). The relationship between nostalgia and intention to donate has been supported empirically (Ford & Merchant, 2010). However, no attempt has been made to investigate the effect of nostalgia on self-continuity, pride, and intention to donate simultaneously.

Regarding self-continuity, studies have indicated fans’ pride level can be elevated when fans’ feelings of past self and present self are connected (i.e., self-continuity; Chang, Ju, Connaughton, & Kang, 2016). Other studies have indicated alumni are likely to participate in donation programs when their self-continuity are fostered (Johnson, Thomas, & Peck, 2010). Although previous studies have indicated self-continuity is an important indicator to connect associations among pride, and word-of-mouth intention (Chang et al., 2016a), very little discussion has occurred regarding self-continuity and other components. Thus, this study will examine the mediating role of self-continuity between nostalgia and pride, including intention to donate.

Pride can be defined as fans’ feelings of higher status due to their favorite team’s achievements (Chang, Ko, Connaughton, & Kang, 2016). Regarding the relationship between pride and intention to donate, the existing literature suggests fans participate in donating when they are proud of their favorite sport team (Chang, Connaughton, Kang, Sagas, Park, & Kim, 2016). Previous research has examined relationships regarding nostalgia, self-continuity, pride, and intention to donate separately, but not holistically. It is necessary to describe how the model can be differentiated by gender, age, and sport team involvement. Nostalgia research has suggested age (Sedikides, Wildschut, Cheung, Hepper, Routledge, Arndt, Vail, Zhou, Brackstone, & Vingerhoets, 2016) and gender (Kessous, Roux, & Chandon, 2015) play important roles as moderators. Sport involvement can be defined as psychological attachment between an individual and that individual’s favorite sport team. In particular, the concept included degree of time and money spent for one’s favorite sport team, degree of importance of the team, and degree of knowledge regarding one’s favorite sport team (Kim, Kang, & Kim, 2014). This study will include gender (male and female), age (10s, 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s), and sport team involvement (high and low) as moderators. Based on the discussion above, we developed the following hypotheses:

H1: Nostalgia is positively related to self-continuity.
H2: Nostalgia is positively related to pride.
H3: Nostalgia is positively related to intention to donate.
H4: Self-continuity is positively related to pride.
H5: Self-continuity is positively related to intention to donate.
H6: Pride is positively related to intention to donate.
H7: Gender moderates the relationships.
H8: Age moderates the relationships.
H9: Sport team involvement moderates the relationships.

The analyses will employ statistical approaches such as descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, simultaneous equations model, and multi-group SEM. This study will target professional/collegiate sport fans. We will administer one pre-test (n = 100) to review items and the main test (n = 400).

The results will provide theoretical and managerial implications. First, the results will show the effects of nostalgia on self-continuity, pride, and intention to donate. Previous research has reported nostalgia messages increase the intention to donate. However, no attempt has been made to investigate a theoretical model including nostalgia, self-continuity, pride, and intention to donate. This model can provide a better understanding of sport fans regarding donation. Second, the model can provide useful information about the conditional relationships differed by age, gender, and sport team involvement. The results will provide a more specific understanding in practical ways. Last, this study will also bring more attention to the nostalgia and pride in terms of sport management, theoretically and practically, as a method to encourage participation in donation programs for sport organizations.