The Influence of Disability Sport Spectator Motivation on Future Attendance and the Mediating Role of Attitude: The Case of 2018 PyeongChang Winter Paralympics

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The Paralympics is one of the major multi-sport events offered for athletes with disabilities (International Paralympic Committee, 2018). While the Paralympics has continuously grown in popularity and attracts a significant number of spectators, visitors, and media worldwide, the disability sport spectatorship research has largely been marginalized in the sport management literature, particularly on disability mega-sport events (Ekmekci et al., 2013). Previous studies have addressed disability sport spectator motivation, but mainly focused on single-sport events (Byon et al. 2010; Byon et al. 2011; Cottingham et al. 2012).

Motivation and attitude are regarded as the most salient variables that affect sport spectator consumption behaviors (Funk & James, 2001; Trail et al., 2003). Particularly, consumer awareness that a sport event can satisfy their needs can lead to the development of a positive attitude toward that event, which eventually influences spectator behavior (Filo et al., 2009). As spectators have different motivations, fulfilling their needs and helping them develop positive attitude can increase future attendance. Accordingly, this study assessed the relationships among spectator motivation, attitude, and revisit intention in the context of disability mega-sport events.

A convenience sampling method was used to collect the data during the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Paralympics, yielding 350 samples. The survey included 22 items from the Motivation Scale for Disability Sport Consumption (Cottingham et al., 2014) with seven dimensions (inspiration, supercrip, physical skill [PS], acquisition of knowledge [AK], escape, social interaction [SI], and physical attractiveness [PA]), three items measuring attitude (Eddosary et al., 2015), and three items on revisit intention (Brown et al., 2016), using a 5-point Likert scale. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to evaluate the measurement model, and structural equation modeling analysis was followed to test the proposed framework. A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 samples with 90 percent confidence intervals was employed to assess the mediating effect of attitude.

Initial CFA with 28 items showed an acceptable fit; however, one item had a low factor loading of .29. The second CFA with 27 items was also satisfactory ($\chi^2$/df = 2.01, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .046). Reliability and validity estimates fell within acceptable ranges. The fit indices for the structural model indicated a good fit ($\chi^2$/df = 2.03, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .054, SRMR = .053). Path coefficients showed that inspiration ($\gamma = .15$), supercrip ($\gamma = .20$), PS ($\gamma = .18$), and SI ($\gamma = .17$) positively influenced attitude, and attitude positively impacted spectator revisit intention ($\gamma = .17$). Attitude fully mediated the relationships between inspiration and revisit intention and SI and revisit intention, and partially mediated the supercrip-revisit intention and the PS-revisit intention relationships.

While the results align with previous research, a mediating effect of attitude was identified. Disability sport marketers should develop new strategies to shape positive attitudes of spectators by meeting their interests. The results also suggest that future research should consider the unique characteristics of Paralympics and other factors, since these motivations were statistically significant, yet not strong, implying the possibility of other intervening variables.