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Consumer Attitudes Toward the Paralympic Games and Purchase Intentions Toward Corporate Sponsors of the Paralympic Games: Market Segmentation Strategy

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Abstract

Despite the significant role of corporate Paralympic Games sponsorship, there has been a lack of empirical research on the impact of sponsorship of the Games in the field of sport marketing. The primary purpose of this study was to examine consumers' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and their purchase intentions toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. The second purpose was to investigate the effect of the demographic and psychographic variables on consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions. Data were collected from 209 college students at two large Midwestern universities. Results revealed that the study participants held relatively positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and had moderate-high purchase intentions toward products of corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. In addition, gender, disability status in the family, and perceptions toward corporate social responsibility had an influence on attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and purchase intentions toward the corporations sponsoring the Paralympic Games. The findings of this study will provide sport marketers of the Paralympic Games sponsors with insights into how to develop effective promotional strategies to reach the college student market.

Consumer Attitudes Toward the Paralympic Games and Purchase Intentions Toward Corporate Sponsors of the Paralympic Games: Market Segmentation Strategy

Introduction

The Paralympic Games provides sport competitions for elite athletes with physical disabilities. There has recently been significant growth in the Paralympic movement. According to the International Paralympic Committee (2011), the number of Paralympic athletes has increased from 400 athletes representing 23 countries in the 1960 Rome Paralympic Games to approximately 4,000 athletes from 146 countries in the 2008 Beijing Games.

Coupled with the considerable growth of the Paralympic Games and enhanced public awareness towards disability issues, people with disabilities have recently become one of the fastest growing markets due to their increasing population in the world and their economic power. The World Health Organization (2003) estimated that approximately 600 million people in the world have various types and degrees of disabilities. According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2010), there are 54 million people with disabilities living in the United States.

In order to reach this important consumer market, many major corporations (i.e., Coca Cola, VISA, and AT&T) that have traditionally avoided sponsoring the Paralympic Games have now started sponsoring the Paralympic Games (Hums, 2001). For example, worldwide partners and sponsors for the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games include VISA, Otto Bock, Samsung, Atos Origin, Coca Cola, McDonald's Corporation,

Volkswagen, to name a few (International Paralympic Committee, 2009).

Due to numerous benefits for both sponsors and events, such as enhancing awareness, improving image, increasing sales, gaining financial support, etc., sponsorship has been considered one of the most effective marketing methods for many companies and organizations (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998). The initial step in realizing sponsorship benefits for companies is to understand the target market (Lough & Irwin, 2001). It is obvious that reaching the target market is an overriding objective for any marketing activity. Thus, it is essential for corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games to have a better understanding of their consumers and behavior. Specifically, sport marketers who are in charge of the sponsorship programs in the Paralympic Games should develop effective market segmentation strategies to develop a better understanding of their target markets.

Despite the significant role of sponsorship in sporting events, only limited academic studies have been conducted on the sponsorship of the Paralympic Games (e.g., Ozturk, Kozub, & Kocak, 2004; Park & Pastore, 2005). Ozturk et al. (2004) investigated the impact of sponsorship on companies that sponsored the 2002 Winter Paralympic Games. Park and Pastore (2005) examined the influences the Paralympic Games sponsorship had on attitudes and purchase intentions

of individuals with disabilities. To date, there has been a lack of empirical studies examining the sponsorship of the Paralympic Games from a consumer's perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine consumers' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and their purchase intentions toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. Additionally, this study was designed to investigate the effect of demographic and psychographic variables on consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions.

Literature Review

An Overview of Paralympic Games Sponsorship

Before the 2002 Salt Lake City Paralympics, the Paralympic Games had struggled to secure sponsorship for their events due to the lack of awareness and support from corporate sponsors and other nonprofit organizations. Traditionally, major corporations in the U.S. have avoided sponsoring the Paralympic Games because the Paralympic Games often are confused with the Special Olympics, which are open to athletes with intellectual/cognitive disabilities, and some corporations fear that they will give an impression that they exploit athletes who have disabilities (Sutton, 1998). Furthermore, the official sponsors of the Olympic Games in the past did not demonstrate their strong commitment to the Paralympic Games (Hornery, 2000). For example, although the majority of the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic sponsors also sponsored the Sydney Paralympic Games, their proportional level of monetary commitment was comparatively very low, as compared to the amount they committed to the Sydney Summer Olympics (Hornery, 2000). Specifically, the Sydney Paralympic Games raised \$48 million from sponsors such as Visa, Coca-Cola, Nike, and IBM; however, this figure was only 2% of the total raised for the Sydney Olympics, which raised \$2.6 billion through sponsorships. Even after the Sydney Paralympic committee reduced their projected operating budget by 20 million, the total gained from sponsorship (48 million) fell short of the reduced target for funds from sponsorship (60 million) by 20%. In addition, the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Organizing Committee had serious problems securing their own sponsors because of a significant lack of financial support from the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Furthermore, the USOC's sponsorship agreements did not allow the Paralympics Organizing Committee to contract with corporations that were competitors of the Olympic sponsors (Byzek, 1999).

However, the financial difficulties of the Paralympic

organizations have lessened since the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games. The improvement was due to the new relationship between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). In 2001, the IOC and IPC signed an agreement securing the practice of "one bid, one city" suggesting that the staging of the Paralympic Games is automatically included in the bid for the Olympics (IPC, 2011). The agreement represented the IOC's significant support for the Paralympic Games. The main part of the agreement allowed the Olympic Organizing Committee to manage both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The agreement called for sharing of revenue for broadcasting and marketing with the Paralympic Games (August 2003). This would result in IOC payments to the IPC of \$9 million for the 2008 Games and \$14 million for the 2010 and 2012 Games. The final agreement (June, 2006) extended these agreements through to 2014 and 2016, increasing funding for the IPC (Gold & Gold, 2010).

Since this joint sponsorship and management has been in place, the Paralympic Committee has experienced significantly less hardship in meeting its projected budgets, in part because there was no longer competition between the two events for corporate sponsors. More importantly, due to the combined organizational structure, the Paralympic Organizing Committees no longer needed to secure sponsors separately, since sponsorship for one event would thereafter imply sponsorship for the other. This new relationship established between the Olympic and Paralympic organizations has contributed to the attraction of a larger number of audiences and greater media coverage. As Fay and Wolff (2002) indicated, the combined organizational structure of SLOC played a significant role in securing sponsors which would ultimately lead to achieving financial goals for the Paralympic Games.

Significant Market Potential of the Paralympic Games and Its Corporate Sponsorship

It has been suggested that the Paralympic Games have a considerable market potential for its corporate sponsors due to the following reasons. First, as indicated before, there has been a significant increase in the number of Paralympic Athletes and countries that have participated in the Paralympic Games. Approximately 4,000 athletes and 146 countries participated in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games which held a total of 472 medal events. In addition, 4,200 athletes and 150 countries are expected to participate in the 2012 Lon-

Table 1

The Paralympic Games Overview (Summer Games)

Year	Location	Number of Countries	Number of Athletes	Shared Venue with Olympics
2012	London, Great Britain	150*	4200*	Yes
2008	Beijing, China	146	3951	Yes
2004	Athens, Greece	135	3808	Yes
2000	Sydney, Australia	122	3881	Yes
1996	Atlanta, USA	104	3259	Yes
1992	Barcelona, Spain	83	3001	Yes
1988	Seoul, Korea	61	3057	Yes
1984	Stoke Mandeville, Great Britain & New York, USA	41 (GBR) 45 (USA)	1100 (GBR) 1800 (USA)	No
1980	Arnhem, Netherlands	42	1973	No
1976	Toronto, Canada	38	1657	No
1972	Heidelberg, Germany	43	984	No
1968	Tel Aviv, Israel	29	750	No
1964	Tokyo, Japan	21	375	Yes
1960	Rome, Italy	23	400	Yes
1952	Stoke Mandeville, Great Britain	2	130	No

Note: * Expected number, Source: *International Paralympic Committee* (2011)

don Paralympic Games (IPC, 2011). Table 1 presents the number of countries and athletes in the past Paralympic Games.

Secondly, the media coverage of the Paralympic Games has been increased immensely in the recent Olympic Games. Previously, one of the biggest challenges of the Paralympic Games was a lack of media

coverage; this situation led to difficulty in securing corporate sponsors. However, due to the recent growth and popularity of the Paralympic Games, the total broadcasting time and the number of viewers have been increased. For example, the broadcasting time of the Beijing 2008 Summer Paralympic Games was 1,810 hours which represented a 200 percent increase compared to the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. Furthermore, the

cumulative audience was 3.84 billion (Gillis, 2011; IPC, 2011). The media coverage of the most recent Paralympic Games is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Media Coverage of Recent Paralympic Games

The Paralympic Games	Broadcasting Time	Cumulative Audience
Athens 2004 (Summer Games)	617 hours	1.86 billion
Torino 2006 (Winter Games)	285 hours	1.42 billion
Beijing 2008 (Summer Games)	1,810 hours	3.84 billion
Vancouver 2010 (Winter Games)	1,560 hours	1.59 billion

Note: Source: *International Paralympic Committee* (2011)

Thirdly, there has been an increase in the number of spectators attending the Paralympic Games. According to the IPC (2011), 1.82 million tickets were sold in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, and 1.2 million tickets were sold in the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games.

Due to the growth and greater exposure of the Paralympic Games, a growing number of corporations have attempted to become associated with the Paralympic Games. For example, the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games Sponsors included Coca Cola, McDonald's Corporation, and Volkswagen, among others. World-wide partners of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) included VISA, Otto Bock, Samsung, and Atos Origin (IPC, 2011). Sainsbury's recent multimillion dollar sponsorship of the 2012 London Paralympics represents a significant growth of the Paralympic movement (Gillis, 2011; Williams, 2010).

Consumer Market for People with Disabilities

Major corporations have started to sponsor the Paralympic Games in recent years due to the increase in the number of people with disabilities and their significant purchasing power (Hums, 2001). According to the

World Health Organization (2003), an estimated 600 million people in the world have disabilities of various types and degrees. There are 54 million people with disabilities living in the United States, and they have \$220 billion in discretionary spending power (Hannah, 2008; U. S. Census Bureau, 2005). With regard to the buying power of people with disabilities, Burks (2001) noted that the disposable income of persons with disabilities might exceed that of the African-American and Hispanic populations combined. More importantly, Hums (2001) suggested that people with disabilities and their families have a strong brand loyalty to corporations that are supportive of individuals with disabilities.

Consumers' Attitudes and Their Purchase Intentions toward Paralympic Sponsorship

In order to measure sponsorship effectiveness, it is essential for sport marketers of corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games to understand consumers' attitudes and their purchase intentions. As noted before, sponsorship has been found to be one of the most effective promotional strategies to affect consumers' attitudes through the sponsor's message, the products/brands of the corporations, and the event (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998). Inducing positive attitudes toward

the company or its products is critical to the success of Paralympic sponsorship because the positive attitudes towards the brand can then be translated into a high level of purchase intention which can lead to increased sales (Laroche & Brisoux, 1989). As Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2001) noted, "holding a favorable attitude toward a product is almost always an essential prerequisite in order for consumers to hold a favorable purchase or consumption intention" (p. 289). The previous literature on sponsorship suggested that typical sponsorship objectives included increasing public awareness, reaching target market, image enhancement, media effect, and increasing sales (Howard & Crompton, 2004; Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000; Sandler & Shani, 1993). In recent years, it appeared that although all of the above sponsorship objectives are considered to be important for corporate sponsors, increasing sales has become the ultimate goal for companies that sponsor sporting events (Howard & Crompton, 2004). For instance, a Kodak executive noted, "as a sponsor, I look to the promoter to come to us with ideas on how the property can, in our case, sell film. Like most other companies today, we are no longer satisfied with enhanced image; give us opportunities for on site sales, well-developed hospitality packages, dealer tie-ins, etc., and we'll listen" (qtd. in Howard & Crompton, 2004, p. 453).

Market Segmentation

Market segmentation is a critical step for developing marketing strategies. Market segmentation is defined as "the process of dividing a large, heterogeneous market to more homogeneous groups of people, who have similar wants, needs, or demographics profiles, to whom a product may be targeted." (Mullin et al., 2000, p. 102). Market segmentation can be an effective way for corporations to accomplish their marketing objectives. More specifically, by focusing on a specific customer base, a company can maximize effectiveness of its business resources (e.g., money or time). Another distinct benefit of market segmentation is that it allows an organization to better understand their customers (Business Link, 2011), and it helps the organization develop effective advertising messages aimed at each target market (LaBarbera, Weingard, & Yorkston, 1998).

Demographic and Psychographic Segmentation

The two most popular techniques to segment customers are demographic and psychographic segmentation (Gladden & Sutton, 2009; Mullin et al., 2000). De-

mographic segmentation involves using demographic data (e.g., age, gender, income, etc.) to segment consumer markets. Psychographic segmentation divides consumer markets according to consumer's preferences or lifestyles including attitudes, beliefs, motives, and habits.

Demographic segmentation has been widely used in sport sponsorship, as reaching target markets is an important sponsorship objective. Among the demographic variables, gender and disability status in the family (whether or not people have a family member(s) in their households who have a disability) can be important in affecting consumers' attitudes toward Olympic and Paralympic sponsorship. Gender was found to be one of the more important variables that were correlated with perception toward corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games can be perceived to be socially responsible (Park & Pastore, 2005). The literature on social responsibility and prosocial behavior suggested that females tend to have more positive attitudes toward social responsibility than males (e.g., Jones & Posnett, 1991; Lämsä, Vehkaperä, Puttonen, & Pesonen, 2008). In addition to gender, family status related to disability can be an important demographic variable that has a significant influence on attitudes toward the Paralympic Games.

Concerning psychographic segmentation, personal perception toward corporate social responsibility (CSR) can serve as an important variable that influences attitudes toward Paralympic sponsorship. Previous literature on Olympic sponsorship suggested that Olympic sponsorship has significant positive effects on consumers' attitudes toward corporate image (Sandler & Shani, 1993; Stipp & Schiavone, 1996). Consumers perceived the sponsors to be socially responsible and to be supporters of worthwhile causes and the Olympics' ideals (Stipp & Schiavone, 1996; Turner, 2004). As in the case of Olympics sponsorship, Park and Pastore (2005), who examined the attitudes of people with disabilities toward Paralympic sponsorship, suggested that the study participants considered the sponsors of the Paralympic Games to be socially responsible because those corporations supported Paralympic ideals and disability causes. Thus, people who put high values on CSR may tend to have more positive attitudes toward Paralympic sponsorship than those who put less value on CSR.

College Students as a Potential Target Market of the Paralympic Games

After developing market segmentation strategies, marketers should select a target market which is a specific customer segment of the overall market that has certain desirable traits or characteristics (Gladden & Sutton, 2009). As indicated before, people with disabilities can be one primary target market for corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. Park and Pastore (2005) found that persons with disabilities had substantial positive attitudes and had high levels of purchase intention toward the corporations that sponsor the Paralympic Games. Along with people with disabilities and their families, college students can be another important prospective target market of the Paralympic Games.

First, college students, due to their significant buying power, have been considered to be one of the key target markets for American corporations. The 360 Youth College Explorer (2004) reported that college students have \$122 billion in spending power. Second, college students tend to have high interest in social issues such as human rights, equal opportunity for minorities, national healthcare, and people with disabilities (Feeley, 2007). For example, Park, Yoh, Choi, and Hums (2009) conducted a qualitative study on college students' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and found that more than 90% of the study participants indicated that it is important for companies to advocate for people with disabilities. Furthermore, college students have recognized the significance of providing equal opportunities for this population. Finally, college students will be future government, business, and education leaders. Thus, they can play a major role in making decisions associated with disability issues and in providing equal opportunities to people with disabilities. Therefore, long-term impressions made upon college students could have far-reaching implications for corporate sponsors.

Purpose of the Study

To date, there has been limited empirical research regarding the sponsorship of the Paralympic Games. Furthermore, there has been a lack of empirical studies examining Paralympic sponsorship from a consumer's perspective. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine college students' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and their purchase intentions toward Paralympic sponsors. The second purpose of the study is to investigate how gender, disability status in the fam-

ily, and perceptions toward CSR influences attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and purchase intentions toward Paralympic sponsorship.

Methods

Sample and Procedure

Data in the preliminary study were collected from a convenience sample of college students enrolled in physical education and sport management lecture classes at two large Midwestern universities. Two hundred-nine college students participated in this study (98 students from one university and 111 students from the other university). The researchers contacted and sought permission from instructors in the sport management programs and kinesiology departments at the two universities. One of the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the study participants before administering the survey, and respondents completed a paper-and-pencil survey. In addition, due to the fact that many college students do not have a clear understanding of the Paralympic Games and corporate social responsibility, the meanings of the two concepts were explained briefly and were also provided in the survey.

Survey Instrument

The instrument for this study was a survey. The survey consisted of three parts: (1) Demographic information, (2) Consumers' perceptions toward corporations' social responsibility, and (3) Consumers' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and purchase intentions toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. In this study, the independent variables included gender, family status related to disabilities, and perceptions toward corporations' social responsibility. Family status related to disabilities was divided into two groups: (1) groups with no people with disabilities in their households or relatives (58%, $n = 123$) and (2) groups with people with disabilities in their households or relatives (42%, $n = 87$). Due to relatively large cell sizes, this grouping helped avoid reducing the power of the test. A single item measure was used to assess perceptions toward CSR. For the purposes of this study, corporate social responsibility was defined as a business decision based on ethical values, compliance with legal standards, respect for communities and the environment, as well as contribution to special causes. The item was measured with a 5-point Likert scale, and this item was adapted from the literature on the effects of CSR on consumer behavior (e.g., Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Webb & Mohr, 1998). The study participants responded to the item, and based on their item scores were cat-

egorized into three groups: (1) Low positive perception (15%, n = 31), (2) Moderate positive perception (39%, n = 81), and (3) High positive perception toward CSR (46%, n = 97).

The dependent variables were attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and purchase intentions toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. The five items measuring attitudes toward the Paralympic Games were taken from the survey of the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics Organization (Dickinson, 1996). The items were measured with a 5-point Likert scale anchored by strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (e.g., “The Paralympic Games will be an exciting athletic event to watch,” or “The Paralympic Games will promote a more positive image of people with physical disabilities”). Purchase intentions were assessed by a single item measure (e.g., “When price and quality are equal, I will switch to brands or buy products from the companies which sponsor the Paralympic Games”). This item was adapted from Maignan’s (2001) validated scale measuring consumers’ support of responsible businesses, which demonstrated high reliability and construct validity. To help establish face validity, the items were reviewed by an expert in the area of sport management. The reliability of the five items was assessed through the computation of a Cronbach’s alpha, and the reliability coefficient for the items was 0.69, which is considered to be acceptable (Nunnally, 1978).

Descriptive analysis was used to measure college students’ attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and their purchase intentions toward the Paralympic Games’ sponsorship. In addition, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to investigate the influence of participants’ gender, disability status in the family, and perception toward CSR on the two dependent variables (attitudes and purchase intentions). Finally, a series of univariate analyses were performed to examine differences in each dependent variable attributable to the independent variables.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

With regard to the demographic information, approximately 90% of the sample was in the 20-35 age range. By gender, 55.5% were male (n = 116), and 44.5% were female (n = 93). The majority of respondents (88.9%, n = 185) did not have individuals in their households who had a disability; 8.2% (n = 17) had one individual with disabilities in their households, and 3% (n = 6) had more than one individual with disabilities in the household. Twenty-four percent (n = 50) had one individual with disabilities and 16.9% (n = 35) had more than one relative with disabilities outside of the household. Approximately 58% of the study participants (n = 122) had individuals with disabilities in neither their households nor extended families, while 42%

Data Analysis Procedure

Table 3

College Students’ Attitude Scores by Item

Item	M	SD
I will watch the Winter Paralympic Games on TV	2.29	1.06
The Paralympic Games will be an exciting athletic event to watch	3.02	1.03
The Paralympic Games will promote a more positive image of people with physical disabilities	4.32	0.95
Because of the Paralympic Games, I will pay more attention to advertising that shows people with disabilities	2.94	1.07
It is important for companies to address the disabled population	3.96	0.94
Aggregate mean score	3.31	1.01

(n = 87) had at least one individual/relative in their family who had a disability.

College Students' Attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and Their Intentions to Purchase Products of Corporate Sponsors of the Paralympic Games

The results revealed that the study participants reported moderate to moderate-high scores on the attitudes scales ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.01$), suggesting that they had relatively positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games (Refer to Table 3). The participants had highest scores on the items that were related to the effect of the Paralympic Games on the image of people with disabilities and corporations' responsibility to take care of persons with disabilities. In addition, the participants had moderate-high intentions for purchasing products of corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.08$).

Multivariate Analysis of Variance

A three-way MANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of study participants' gender, family status related to disabilities, and perceptions toward CSR. The MANOVA results were significant for gender, Wilks' Lambda = 0.941, $F(2, 206) = 6.439$, $p < 0.01$. In terms of family status related to disabilities, Wilks' Lambda = 0.979, $F(2, 206) = 2.200$, $p = 0.113$, indicating that the combined dependent variables did not differ between students who had people with disabilities and those who did not have people in their households or relatives with disabilities. Concerning perceptions toward

CSR (low, middle, and high), the MANOVA results were significant, Wilks' Lambda = 0.785, $F(2, 206) = 13.190$, $p < 0.001$.

A series of univariate analyses were performed to examine differences in each dependent variable attributable to the independent variables. As presented in Table 4, the effect of participants' gender was significant for attitudes toward the Paralympics, $F(1, 207) = 12.256$, $p < 0.01$, and purchase intention, $F(1, 207) = 5.811$, $p < 0.05$. Female students had more positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games than their male counterparts. In addition, female students had a higher level of intention to purchase products of Paralympics sponsors than male students.

Significant univariate effects were found for the family disability status variable on attitudes toward the Paralympic Games, $F(1, 207) = 4.041$, $p < 0.05$. However, it should be noted that the multivariate F pertaining to family disability status was not significant. Regarding this issue, Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) noted, "if the multivariate F is non-significant but some univariate tests are significant, the best one can do is report the non-significant multivariate F and offer the univariate results as a guide to future research." (p.401). Study participants who had at least one individual with disabilities in their household or relatives had more favorable attitudes toward the Paralympic Games than those who do not have an individual with disabilities in their household or relatives (Refer to Table 5).

Table 4

Significant Univariate Effects for Gender

Dependent Variable	Df	df error	F	p	Gender	Means
Attitudes Toward Paralympics	1	207	12.259	< 0.01	Male	3.16
					Female	3.48
Purchase Intentions	1	207	5.811	< 0.05	Male	3.05
					Female	3.41

Table 5

Significant Univariate Effects for Family Status Related to Disabilities

Dependent Variable	Df	df error	F	p	Family Status	Means
Attitudes Toward Paralympics	1	207	4.041	< 0.05	No*PWD among household or relatives	3.23
					PWD among household or relatives	3.42
Purchase Intentions	1	207	2.338	= .128	No PWD among household or relatives	3.11
					PWD among household or relatives	3.34

* PWD: People with disabilities

In addition, univariate tests revealed that perceptions toward corporations' CSR was significant for attitudes toward the Paralympic Games, $F(2, 206) = 24.388$, $p < 0.001$, and purchase intention, $F(2, 206) = 14.059$, $p < 0.001$. Post hoc methods were employed to examine differences attributable to perceptions toward corporations' CSR. Scheffé's method showed that students who had high levels of positive perceptions toward corporations' CSR had more positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.58$) than those who had low positive ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.78$) and moderate positive levels of perceptions toward corporations' CSR ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.58$). In addition, students with moderate positive levels of perceptions toward corporations' CSR ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.58$) differed from those with low positive levels of perceptions in their attitudes toward the Paralympic Games ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.78$). Scheffé's method also revealed that students who had high levels of positive perceptions toward corporations' CSR had higher levels of purchase intentions ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.01$) than those who had low levels of perceptions toward corporations' CSR ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.15$). Additionally, students who had moderate levels of positive perceptions toward corporations' CSR had higher levels of purchase intentions ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.96$) than those who had low levels of perceptions toward corporations' CSR ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.15$). These results are presented in Table 6.

Discussion

The main finding of this study was that college students held relatively positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games. They also had moderate-high purchase intentions toward products of corporate sponsors of the Paralympics Games. Concerning demographic and psychological variables, this study revealed that gender, family disability status, and perceptions toward CSR had an influence on attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and purchase intentions toward its corporate sponsors.

Attitudes Toward the Paralympic Games and Purchase Intentions Toward Corporate Sponsors of the Paralympic Games

The result of this study revealed that college students had relatively positive attitudes toward the Paralympics Games. The finding was consistent with the literature on the perceptions of people with disabilities toward corporations that support disability-related causes (Dickinson, 1996; Hums, 2000). In addition, the results were supported by the qualitative research of Park et al. (2009), which explored college students' attitudes toward the Paralympic Games. One explanation for college students' positive attitudes is that, as in the case of Olympic sponsorship, college students tend to value the ideals of the Paralympic Games, which include cour-

Table 6

Significant Univariate Effects for Perceptions Toward Corporate Social Responsibility

Dependent Variable	<i>Df</i>	<i>df</i> error	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Perceptions toward CSR	Means
Attitudes Toward Paralympics	2	206	24.388	< 0.001	Low positive	2.70
					Moderate positive	3.22
					High positive	3.56
Purchase Intention	2	206	14.059	< 0.001	Low positive	2.39
					Moderate positive	3.19
					High positive	3.49

age, determination, inspiration, and equality (Sandler & Shani, 1993; Stipp & Schiavone, 1996). Another explanation may be that college students are interested in social issues including disability issues, and thus tend to support the Paralympic Games because the sporting events can provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities (Park et al., 2009).

The study showed that college students had moderate-high purchase intentions for products of corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. This result was consistent with the previous studies on corporate sponsorship of the Paralympic Games (e.g., Park & Pastore, 2006; Park et al., 2009). The moderate-high purchase intention can be explained by the theory of planning behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1985), which predicts the link among attitude, behavioral intention, and behavior. This theory asserts that an individual's behavior can be controlled and influenced by attitudes and asserts that there is a positive correlation between attitude and behavioral intention. Thus, the relatively high purchase intentions can be attributed to favorable attitudes toward the Paralympic Games. As the correlation analysis in this study indicated, there was a strong positive relationship between attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and intentions to purchase products related to Paralympic sponsorship.

Effects of Demographic and Psychographic Variables on Consumer Attitudes and Purchase Intentions

Findings showed that there were gender differences in attitudes and purchase intentions. Female students had more positive attitudes and higher levels of purchase intentions toward the Paralympic Games and their corporate sponsors. This finding is consistent with the literature on social responsibility and prosocial behavior which suggested that females tend to have more positive attitudes toward social responsibility than their male counterparts (e.g., Greer, 2000; Jones & Posnett, 1991). In a recent study by Lämsä et al. (2008), who examined the influence of business education on students' attitudes toward corporate responsibility, female college students put more emphasis on corporate ethics and social responsibility than male students. Thus, due to the Paralympic Games' support for disability issues, female college students may perceive the event and its corporate sponsors as socially responsible and tend to have more positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games. In addition, female students' positive attitudes and their high levels of purchase intentions can be explained by the fact that females have shown greater empathic tendency than their male counterparts (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1986). Empathy is defined as knowing or feeling what another person is feeling (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1986; Hoffman,

1984). Thus, female students, more so than male students, tend to deeply experience the emotional states of athletes with disabilities.

Significant univariate tests revealed that college students who had at least one family member with disabilities (in their household or among relatives) expressed more positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games. This finding is not surprising given the previous literature on personal involvement. In the consumer behavior research, involvement is defined as “the degree to which an object or behavior is personally relevant” (Blackwell et al., 2001, p.247). Personal involvement has proven to be an important factor affecting attitude (e.g., Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). Therefore, individuals who have a family member with a disability are likely to highly support disability issues and to have positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games.

College students who had a higher level of positive perceptions toward CSR had the most favorable attitudes toward the Paralympic Games and expressed the highest levels of purchase intentions. This result was consistent with the literature on CSR (e.g., Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001; Webb & Mohr, 1998). As Mohr and Webb (2005) noted, CSR can have an important and positive influence on consumers’ attitudes and their purchase intent. Consumers’ support for socially responsible companies can be attributable to their strong emotional attachment to the brand of those firms (Sutton & McDonald, 2001). Thus, the participants of this study with high levels of positive perceptions toward CSR were more likely to consider Paralympic Games sponsors to be socially responsible and to have emotional connections with those corporate sponsors.

Practical Implications

This current research will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding sport sponsorship by investigating Paralympics sponsorship, which has largely been ignored in the field of sport marketing. There are several practical implications for this study. First, the results of this study implied that college students, who have positive attitudes toward the Paralympic Games, should be considered to be an important target market for corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. However, one of the biggest challenges for the Paralympic Committee regarding sponsorship is a lack of media exposure about the Paralympic Games and lack of public awareness of its corporate sponsors (Park et al., 2009). Thus, it is important for those sponsors to create a number of effective promotional strategies to reach

college students. OnCampus Advertising (2011) presents several effective promotional strategies that can be very effective in reaching college students, including through the Internet, social media (e.g., Facebook), college newspapers, cell phones and mobile devices, as well as face-to-face promotions. In addition, it will also be effective for those sponsors to promote their association with the Paralympic Games through campus disability services, campus rehabilitation and health education programs, special education programs, physical education programs, and student veterans associations.

Second, the consumer demographic and psychographic profiles will be useful marketing sources for corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games whose target market is the younger generation and college students. As Mahony, Gladden, and Funk (2003) noted, the information on their target market profiles will be useful when corporate sponsors develop advertising and promotional messages. Most notably, female college students and students who have a person with a disability in their family were found to have more positive attitudes and high levels of purchase intentions toward the sponsorship of the Paralympic Games. Thus, those sponsors should develop **aggressive** and consistent promotional strategies to reach these two important market segments.

Third and finally, perceptions toward CSR were found to have a significant effect on attitude and purchasing behavior. Mohr and Webb (2005) pointed out “Managers should note that...a substantial, viable, and identifiable market segment exists that considers a company’s level of social responsibility in its purchase and investment decisions.” (p. 69). Thus, it will be beneficial for corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games to focus on consumers who have positive attitudes toward socially responsible firms. More importantly, it will be effective for potential sponsors of the Paralympic Games to develop credible brand messages which show that they care for people with disabilities and continuously attempt to make every effort to provide equal opportunities for those people.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations that need to be addressed. First, this study did not measure attitudes toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games. This factor can be an important antecedent to purchase intentions toward sponsors’ products, the dependent variable of this study. In this study, attitudes toward the Paralympic Games were measured and were found to

be positively correlated to purchase intentions. However, attitudes toward corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games, rather than attitudes toward the Paralympic Games, may prove to be another reliable and appropriate variable that affects purchase intentions. Second, because this study used college students as the subjects, the findings may not be generalized to other populations. The target markets of corporate sponsors of the Paralympic Games might be not only college students but also people with disabilities, adults who have personal involvement in disability, people with high interest in sport, or senior citizens.

In terms of future research, this current study indicated that gender, disability status in the family, and perceptions toward CSR influenced attitudes and purchase intentions toward Paralympic Games sponsorship. In addition to these variables, there may be other demographic and psychographic factors that can affect attitudes and purchase intentions, including age, income, education, empathic tendency (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1986), or other oriented values (Korsgaard, Meglino, & Lester, 1996). Also, there may be additional insight to be gained from studying the difference in intention between people who had viewed the Paralympic Games in the past and those who had not; similarly, a more involved study could track both such groups to analyze whether stated viewership/attendance intentions were manifested as actual viewership/attendance. Future studies should, therefore, examine these other variables to determine the extent to which they influence attitudes toward corporate sponsorship of the Paralympic Games.

Secondly, future research may explore attitudes of different segments of the population other than college students which can be considered to be important target markets for corporate sponsors supporting the Paralympic Games. Thirdly, there is a need for empirical research to develop an instrument that measures attitudes toward Paralympic Games sponsorship. Although several instruments have been developed to assess attitudes toward Olympic sponsorship (e.g., Stipp & Schiavone, 1996), there has been a lack of instruments that specifically measure attitudes toward the Paralympic sponsorship.

Finally, more sophisticated methodological approaches, such as in-depth interviews or observations, can be used to measure consumers' purchase intentions toward Paralympic sponsorship because purchase intention may not provide an accurate prediction of fu-

ture purchasing behavior (Blackwell, Miniard, & Engel, 2001). People tend to provide socially desirable answers for social issues like those investigated in this study. Such tendency can affect the validity of the answers and thus can create a biased response which does not reflect actual purchasing behavior. As Hsiao and Sun noted (1999), there can be discrepancies between purchase intention and actual purchasing behavior.

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