The Influence of the Paralympic Sponsorship on Consumers’ Purchase Intention

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the influence of Paralympic sponsorship on corporate image and consumer purchase intension, and the mediating role of corporate image between sponsorship and purchase intension was examined. Furthermore, it was to investigate which dimension of corporate image plays as the mediating role in the relationship between Paralympic sponsorship and consumer purchase intention. 400 data were collected from residents of Seoul, Incheon, Busan, and Kwangju, Korea from December 20th, 2010 to January 10th, and 384 data were used. The data were analyzed by using SPSS/PC ver. 15.0 for Windows and AMOS 7.0 program. The mediating effects were tested by using Bootrappping method. The significance level was set at \( \alpha = .05 \), and the results are as follows.

First, promotion and contribution dimensions of Paralympic sponsorship had positive effects on corporate image. Second, Paralympic sponsorship had positive effects on consumers' purchase intention. Third, among corporate image dimensions, only corporate contribution image had positive effects on consumers’ purchase intention. Fourth, corporate contribution dimension was partially mediating in the relationship between promotion dimension of Paralympic sponsorship and consumers’ purchase intention and contribution dimension of Paralympic sponsorship and consumers’ purchase intention.

Key Words: Paralympics Sponsorship, Corporate Image, Consumers’ Purchase Intention, Mediating Role.
Marketers have struggled to make positive connections with consumers via numerous marketing tools such as advertising, diverse promotions, public relations, and sponsorships, while society and businesses have started to realize the importance of corporate image. Mega sport event sponsorship has become one of the most powerful devices to make an efficient breakthrough for a better counter of creating connections with consumers. Understanding that sport sponsorship can play a vital role in the strategic positioning of a corporation or brand has assumed greater importance as the level of expenditures has increased. Maximizing brand equity through sponsorship requires an integrated approach that maintains or strengthens favorable and unique brand associations in consumers’ minds. To sustain competitive advantages and survive in a very competitive industrial environment in the midst of globalization, sport sponsorship is used to support marketing and corporate objectives. Sponsors seek to increase brand, product, and corporate awareness, to acquire media coverage, and to influence opinion leaders, sales, goodwill, and awareness. Moreover, most sponsors try to reach target markets through sponsorship in overpopulated marketing circumstances, and look for market segments and niche markets to target.

People with disabilities can be a great niche market to target. However, marketers rarely recognize the market segment of people with disabilities as a major market. The world famous financial magazine, Bloomberg BusinessWeek (2008), even mentioned that one in five Americans have a disability, representing a $200 billion market of consumers eager to spend on technologies that will improve their lives. The detected prevalence rate of the disabled people in domestic Korea has been doubled from 2.23% of the total population in 1990 to 4.59% in 2005. The estimated number of registered people with disabilities was approximately 2,148,686 in 2005 (Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Family Affairs of Korea, 2009). It must also be considered by marketers that the newly emerged target market of disabled people also includes a wealth of family and friends who would show great interest in supporting a company that support people with disabilities.

The Paralympics attract sponsorship on a different basis than the Olympics and other sport sponsorship. Since people involved with the Paralympics have more interest in companies supportive to the disabled, in marketing point of view, the segment of people can be identified as a differentiated market with ethical integrity. The differentiated market segment would indicate an elevation to reach families, older people and children, and to resent the company as a responsible corporate entity. Most sponsors in the Paralympics are more concerned about corporate citizenship matters, social image in the community, and company profile than immediate commercial benefits. The strength of Paralympic sponsorship seems to be the integrity of image that it offers which has a very high impact on some populations (Kabitsis, Harahousou, & Kostaris, 2002).
Despite the significance of the Paralympics sponsorship for athletes with disabilities, only a handful of studies have been conducted on the sponsorship of the Paralympics (Kabitsis et al., 2002; Park & Lee, 2010). Moreover, there has been a lack of empirical research that has measured the effectiveness of the Paralympics sponsorship in relation to corporate image and consumers’ perspectives. Thus, this study focused on the dynamics of relationships among the Paralympic sponsorship, corporate image, and purchase intention to efficiently develop a sponsorship program.

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the influence of Paralympic sponsorship on corporate image and consumer purchase intention. Specifically, the mediating role of corporate image between sponsorship and purchase intention was examined. The characteristics of Paralympic sponsorship was categorized into awareness, promotion, reliability, and contribution. The corporate image was classified into marketing image, social conduct image, and contribution image. This study was to identify which dimensions of Paralympic sponsorship influence on the corporate image, which dimension of Paralympic sponsorship influence on the consumer purchase intention, and which dimension of corporate image influences on the consumer purchase intention. Furthermore, it was to investigate which dimension of corporate image plays as the mediating role in the relationship between Paralympic sponsorship and consumer purchase intention. It was to provide marketers the body of knowledge of Paralympic sponsorship by extending the understanding of causal relationship and the role of corporate image.

Research Hypothesis

Early research on sponsorship attempted to establish the role of sponsorship on marketing communication (Meenaghan, 1983, 1991) and how sponsoring organizations planned, executed, and measured event sponsorship (Abratt, Clayton, & Pitt, 1987; Crowley, 1991; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). Recent research on sponsorship has incorporated with various theories in an effort to explain the effects of sponsorship on consumer behaviors (Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Johar & Pham, 1999, Pham & Johar, 2001). One of the most frequently mentioned goals of sponsorship is to establish, strengthen, or change brand image (Cornwell & Maignan 1998; Gwinner 1997). According to Gardner and Shuman (1987), sponsorships are undertaken to achieve either corporate objectives (e.g., enhancing corporate image or demonstrating concern for the community or society) or marketing objectives (e.g., increasing brand awareness or entertaining clients). Consistent with this view, several conceptual and empirical research studies on sponsorship have identified these objectives as the primary reasons that
a firm enters into a sponsorship agreement with an event. Specifically, it appears that a sponsor is most interested in shaping or enhancing its corporate image (a corporate objective) and influencing perceptions about specific brands (a marketing objective) including increasing brand awareness and shaping brand image (Gilbert 1988; Marshall & Cook, 1992; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). In the same context, McDonald (1991) has suggested that sponsorship has significant power in altering or boosting corporate image. Javalgi, Traylor, Gross, and Lampman (1994) have also suggested that sponsorships can enhance corporate identity. The rationale behind such enhancement is that each sponsorship activity has identifiable image values that transfer onto the sponsoring firm. Image perceptions increase when sponsor and sponsee share characteristics (Javalgi et al., 1994) and have favorable images and high visibility (Stipp & Schiavone, 1996). Thus, H1. Paralympic sponsorship has a positive influence on corporate image.

There are some of the popular sponsorship options for companies such as sponsoring event, an organization, or the broadcast of an event. Corporations increasingly use sponsorships to reach and influence their target consumers. In previous research, results show a positive relationship between use of sponsorship and achievement of business objectives through influencing consumer's behavioral intentions (Madrigal, 2000, 2001; Dalakas & Levin, 2005). According to Madrigal (2001), sponsorships work differently in the consumer's mind compared to traditional advertising and he mentioned that sponsorships benefit consumers indirectly by providing benefits for activities about which the consumer cares. It has been well established in previous sponsorship literature that, without physical appearance of products or goods, recall and recognition are determining factors in the purchase decision (Singh, Rothschild, & Churchill, 1988). This fact would indicate that awareness of sponsorship affects consumer’s purchase intention. That some events depend on sponsorship funds for their financial statement to survive (Sport Business News, 2004) means the tie between sponsorship and a correlation with consumer’s behavior. It appears in that sport sponsorship results a favorable belief of consumers toward sponsors and a positive relationship with consumer’s purchase intention (Pope & Voge, 2000). That consumer’s belief and attitude towards sponsorships and sponsors are important since they are related to consumer’s knowledge and understanding of marketers' persuasion attempts. It means that individuals have a certain understanding of how different persuasion attempts work, and each person uses this understanding when responding to a marketer’s attempts to persuade (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Thus, H2. Paralympic sponsorship has a positive influence on consumers' purchase intention.

Corporate image is defined as "impressions of a particular company held by some segment of the public" (Johnson & Zinkhan, 1990, p. 347). In previous research, some researchers used corporate image as an indicator of sport sponsorship effect to evaluate or measure consumers' attitude towards
sponsors (Sandler & Shani, 1993; Turco, 1995), and some other researchers suggested brand image to measure corporate image rather than to measure a consumer’s overall attitude towards corporate sponsors (Johnson & Zinkhan, 1990; Otker & Hayes, 1987). Turco (1995) investigated that customers with a more favorable image of a sponsor were more likely to purchase sponsor’s products than those with a less favorable image. Pope and Voges (2000) examined the impact of corporate image on consumer purchase intentions, prior product use and belief that a company sponsors sport events. Even though brand image of a product or event is an important predictor of sport sponsorship measurement, one of main objectives of sport sponsorship is to enhance the overall positive image of corporate sponsors. Therefore, selecting corporate image as a variable to measure sponsorship effect is more suitable than brand image in this Paralympic sponsorship study since corporate image influencing through Paralympic sponsorship would be involved with more than just brand or product image of sponsors. It means that various dimensions of corporate image would affect consumer’s purchase intention. Thus, H3. Corporate image has a positive influence on consumers’ purchase intention.

In the study by Kim (2002), corporate image was analyzed as a parameter between the effect of Olympic sponsorship and repurchase intention, and in the study by Oh (2010), corporate image was studied as a parameter between the title sponsorship for people with disabilities and purchase intention. Yoon, Shin, and Jin (2005) defined corporate image as a mediating parameter between golf player sponsorship and purchase intention. In addition, Beak (2011) studied corporate image as a crucial parameter between cultural art sponsorship and purchase intention. Kim (2009) studied corporate image as a mediating parameter in the relationship between professional basketball sponsorship and purchase intention. Lee (2004) stressed effect of corporate image as a crucial factor in the relationship between types of sport sponsorship and purchase intention. In short, previous research on mediating role of corporate image support the model of this study. Thus, H4. Corporate image will mediate the relationship between the Paralympic sponsorship and consumer purchase intention.

In this study, in order to analyze the mediating effect of sponsoring corporate image on the relationship between the Paralympic sponsorship and consumer purchase, main variables are sponsorship, corporate image, and consumer purchase intention through the review of the literature. Based on the previous studies, sponsorship consists of awareness, promotion, reliability, and contribution, which have been selected as independent variables. As mediator variable, sponsoring corporate image has been selected and it consists of marketing image, social conduct image, and contribution image. Finally, consumer purchase intention has been selected as a dependent variable. The research model is structured as Figure 1.
Method

Subjects

Data were collected from residents of Seoul, Incheon, Busan, and Kwangju, Korea from December 20th, 2010 to January 10th, 2011 for three weeks via personal interviews and using a convenience sampling method. For this study, people completed a written survey questionnaire that was directly administered in open public areas in four cities where high dense population is formed in Korea. The sample was limited to people who understand the meaning of the terms, physical disabilities and sponsorship, with a brief explanation through personal interviews.

Research Instruments

Sponsorship: To analyze and measure Paralympic sponsorship, the questionnaire about sponsorship consists of 19 questions. The sponsorship variable is composed with awareness, reliability, promotion, and contribution factors, based on previous studies of Yook (1993), Kim (1997), Chae (1998), and Ko (2006) with modification for the purpose of the research. There are also five questions related to the awareness factor of sponsorship, five questions related to the reliability factor of sponsorship, five questions related to the promotion factor of sponsorship, and four questions related to the contribution factor of the sponsorship. All the questions are measured with a five-point Likert scale.

Corporate Image: To analyze and measure the Paralympic sponsoring corporate image variable, questionnaire about corporate image was consisted of
nine questions. The corporate image variable is composed with marketing image, social conduct image, and social contribution image with modification developed by Winters (1986) and adapted it to the domestic corporate environment on previous studies of Lee and Shin (2005), and Kim (2010). There are three questions related to the marketing image, three questions related to the social conduct image, and three questions related to social contribution image. All the questions are measured with a five-point Likert scale.

Consumer Purchase Intention: To analyze and measure the consumer purchase intention, questionnaire about consumer purchase intention consists of four questions based on previous studies of Maxham (2001), Sharma and Patterson (1999), Jung (2006) with modification for the purpose of the research. All the questions are measured with a five-point Likert scale.

Reliability and Validity Test

Reliability is the consistency of a set of measurements, which can be estimated when the repeated measurements of the same instrument, or similar instruments give the same measurement (Lee & Kim, 2002). In other words, reliability is the extent to which the same measurement procedure over repeated tests brings out the consistent result under identical condition. Reliability may be estimated through a variety of methods, such as the parallel form method, test-retest, internal consistency method, and Cronbach’s α. This research has employed Cronbach’s α in order to examine reliability. Cronbach’s coefficients is the mean of all possible split-half reliability and calculation of the average of the selected items, when a set of items measure a single concept. Using this method, reliability of each items can be assessed (Noh, 2005). The result of the reliability coefficient of this research is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’ α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>.856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>Marketing Image</td>
<td>.896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Conduct Image</td>
<td>.959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution Image</td>
<td>.863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Purchase Intention</td>
<td></td>
<td>.928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Reliability coefficient of each factors.
To confirm construct validity of collected 382 questionnaires, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was executed. CFA is widely used to examine the adequacy of the measurement relations between measured variables and latent variables in advance based on theoretical knowledge or experience (Kim, 2004) and to control over the specification of indicators for each construct (Ha & Lee, 2010) and to evaluate the fit for confirmatory factor solution (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). In this research, fit indices were used to secure construct validity since $X^2$ test is very sensitive and tends to easily reject the model. Among various fit indices, Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used for this study. Since TLI, CFI, and RMSEA are less sensitive to the sample size than $X^2$ test and especially TLI and RMSEA consider simplicity of a model with property (Hong, 2000), those indices were chosen to evaluate as fit indices for this study. TLI and CFI are to be greater than the recommended .90 threshold (Hong, 2000), and RMSEA is to be less than the upper threshold of .08 to be classified as proper for a model fit (Hair et al., 1998). Two questions (question one and two) related to awareness dimension of sponsorship, and two questions (question seven and ten) related to reliability dimension of sponsorship were removed due to the matter of reliability with each question. One question (question sixteen) related to contribution dimension of sponsorship, and one question (question four) related to consumer purchase intention were removed. The removed questions had lower than .3 recommended threshold of communality value among questions within a factor, thus they were unreliable and removed (Kim, 2004).

Table 2. The results of confirmatory factor analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paralympic Sponsorship</td>
<td>awareness</td>
<td>.744</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reliability</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>promotion</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contribution</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Image</td>
<td>marketing</td>
<td>.519</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social conduct</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td>.119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>contribution</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers’ Purchase Intention</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>.642</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>.647</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>.654</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 62.694$, $df = 32$, $TLI = .947$, $CFI = .962$, $RMSEA = .050$, *** $p < .001$
For the model fit, the model was evaluated using fit indices and individual path coefficients. As for incremental and parsimonious measurements, CFI and TLI were calculated. The reported value of each measure was .962 for CFI and .947 for TLI. RMSEA was also calculated to ensure the absolute fit of the model. The calculated value for RMSEA was .050. The indices indicate that the proposed model fit is adequate.

**Data analysis procedure**

After collecting surveys from residents of Seoul, Incheon, Busan, and Kwangju, Korea using self-administration method, with the exclusion of incomplete data and data lacking reliability, the data was analyzed with SPSS/PC version 15.0 for Window and AMOS 7.0 program. To test validity of questions in the survey, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted by using AMOS 7.0 program. To test the reliability of the factors of sponsorship, corporate image, and consumer purchase intention, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated to measure internal consistency among questions by using SPSS/PC version 15.0 for Window. To the demographic information of respondents, SPSS/PC version 15.0 for Window is used for frequency analysis. AMOS 7.0 is used for correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the structural relationship among Paralympic sponsorship, corporate image, and consumer purchase intention. Then, to analyze the mediating effect of corporate image in the relationship between Paralympic sponsorship and consumer purchase intention, Bootstrapping method was applied.

**Results**

**Multicollinearity**

High intercorrelations among some variables can cause some mathematical operations inoperable or unstable and the existence of multicollinearity can cause a sample covariance matrix to be non-positive definite in structural equation modelling (Kline, 1998). Rockwell (1975) recommended that researchers should consider relationships between variables if a correlation coefficient of a variable exceeds .80. To examine such multicollinearity, Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated (see Table 3). According to the table, the range of correlation coefficients was from .211 to .408, indicating that there is no problematic interdependence among variables.
Table 3. Correlation analysis among variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sponsorship</th>
<th>Corporate image</th>
<th>Consumer purchase intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate image</td>
<td>.211***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer purchase intention</td>
<td>.286***</td>
<td>.408***</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001

Research Model

Path analysis was conducted to explain causal relationships among variables in this study. The basic argument of the study was that Paralympic sponsorship contribute to influencing corporate image and consumer purchase intention. As a result, a path among all latent variables was confirmed and corporate image (marketing image, social conduct image, contribution image) was found to be significantly influenced by Paralympic sponsorship (standardized coefficient = .278, p < .001), and consumers’ purchase intention was found to be significantly influenced by both Paralympic sponsorship (standardized coefficient = .223, p < .01) and corporate image (standardized coefficient = .650, p < .001).

Table 4. The results of structural model fit index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$X^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research model</td>
<td>62.694</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.962</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Diagram](image-url)
Table 5. *The results of path analyses.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Estimates</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paralympic sponsorship → Corporate image</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>3.729</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralympic sponsorship → Consumers’ purchase intention</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.080</td>
<td>3.091</td>
<td>.002**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate image → Consumers’ purchase intention</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>7.066</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01, ***p < .001

Results of the mediating effect of corporate image

To test mediating effect, direct effects from independent variables to dependent variables and indirect effects from independent variables to dependent variables via mediating variables were analyzed. Total effect of Paralympic sponsorship on consumer purchase intention was .393 and direct effect was .213 while indirect effect was .180. In other words, direct effects had 54.20% explanation of total effects while indirect effects had 45.80% explanation of total effects.

Table 6. *The results of direct/indirect effect: Corporate Image.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paralympic sponsorship → Corporate image</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate image → Consumers’ purchase intention</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paralympic sponsorship → Consumers’ purchase intention</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Direct effect 54.20%, Indirect effect 45.80%
To examine the statistical significance of indirect effects, bootstrapping was used which is free from restrictive conditions to follow multivariate normal distribution as a method to estimate sampling distribution of parameter estimates and set up the number of repetition as 1,000 at the significance level of .05. As a result, the confidence interval of indirect effects of corporate image was .105 ~ .258 with the significance level of .05. Thus, the significant and indirect effects were statistically confirmed.

**Discussion**

The paths were analyzed through structural equation modeling and tested for mediating effect of corporate image on the relationship between Paralympic sponsorship variables and consumer's purchase intention. In results, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 predicting that Paralympic sponsorship would have a direct and positive influence on corporate image, that Paralympic sponsorship would have a direct and positive influence on consumers’ purchase intention, and that corporate image would have a direct and positive influence on consumers’ purchase intention were accepted. Thus, hypothesis 4 predicting that corporate image would mediate between Paralympic sponsorship and consumers' purchase intention was accepted as shown in the results.

As Paralympic sponsorship had a direct effects on consumers' purchase intention, corporate contribution image appeared to be partially mediated. Consequently, corporate image plays an important role to interlink Paralympic sponsorship with consumer's purchase intention. This result has a congruency with previous research. Kim (2001) investigated that there is a positive influence of corporate image on consumer's purchase intention through a professional sport league sponsorship. He also mentioned that contribution of an event sponsorship have a positive influence on corporate citizenship image and corporate outstanding image, but promotion dimension have a negative influence on corporate citizenship image and corporate outstanding image. As a result, marketers seeking Paralympic sponsorship to achieve their corporate objectives should have a long-term vision and try to improve corporate contribution image in order to maximize the effect of Paralympic sponsorship.

The current study suggests that dimensions of Paralympic sponsorship directly and indirectly affects consumers' purchase intention. Thus, from a managerial perspective, this result is significant since marketers can specifically apply as a basis of sponsorship strategy. For instance, supporting or sponsoring charitable programs is to make opportunities available in underserved communities. Moreover, based on this result, marketers can decide which factors are more emphasized to consumers. Marketers should focus and consider more with separate dimensions of sponsorship to appeal and
set their sponsorship strategy. In this respects, for an example of contribution dimension, philanthropy, sincerity, and goodwill aspects of supporting people with disabilities activities can practically influence and lead consumers’ purchasing behavior. In this regard, Samsung Electronics and Visa are committed to enabling consumers to create meaningful connections with them through the Paralympics. Not only creating the connections, they are reaching and creating untapped segments. Moreover, companies facing social problems such as BP oil spills and gambling corporations (e.g. Harris, or Jung Sun casino) can create and recover their ruined image by supporting underserved communities through supporting charitable programs, or events for people with disabilities. Marketers should make efforts to educate the public about the Paralympics and physical activities of people with disabilities unless supporting or sponsoring the Paralympics would be considered as a worthless investment. Continuous educating and promoting the Paralympics could be a way to maximize the sponsorship effect. Those continuous efforts could be also considered as a corporate social responsibility activities. As more significance of corporate social responsibility is enlarging, Paralympic sponsorship is a great opportunity to strengthen the corporate competency, not as the social duty cost. Image of corporate social responsibility would generate more of philanthropy, sincerity, and goodwill image of corporate, and those images would influence more positive consumers’ behavior. Moreover, Paralympic sponsorship has a meaningful influence on consumers in that increasing corporate social contribution activity awareness influence positive consuming behavior. Thus, nation-wide recognition education of the disabled should be more promoted.

Limitations and Recommendations

Since the nature of the evaluating sponsorship is different on the objectives of participating sponsor, the measuring instrument must be varied. There is a lack of measuring instrument to evaluate the actual effect of sponsorship for sponsor’s objectives. One or a few measuring instruments of sponsorship may not be fit for all the diverse sponsors’ objectives. It will be more meaningful to develop a measuring tool of sponsorship for an event with people with disabilities by projecting various emotional factors affecting consuming behavior through previous research in future studies. Another limitation of this study is related to the nature of the data collection. Since the subjects of this study are delimited to people who are living in Korea, the results of this study may not be generalizable to other nations.

This study was intended to provide reference for a practical assistance and better understanding of the Paralympic sponsorship and to improve support activities for people with disabilities by informing marketers’ opportuni-
ties and sponsorship effects of the Paralympics. There are several recommendations in the process of executing this study. First, in order to measure sponsorship effectiveness of a global event, a broader sample should be selected from various countries to generalize the results of this study. Second, the findings of this study were evaluated under non-probability sampling, known as convenience sampling. It means that the data used in this study did not cover the whole population of Korean consumers and the collected samples within only Korean geographic location which limits the ability of this study to generalize the findings. Third, this study mentioned demographic and general characteristics of respondents, but it did not analyze sponsorship effect considering with various group based. Each different market segment would have a different point of view to corporate’s sponsorship and respond differently. It would be better to analyze by using multigroup analysis in future studies.

References


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