

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PUBLIC'S WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR ELITE SPORT POLICY: ANALYSIS FOCUSED ON PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE

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Keywords

elite sport policy, willingness to pay, contingent valuation method, socio-psychological factor, public acceptance

Aim of the abstract and theoretical background

Public investment for elite sport is usually justified on the basis that the success of elite sport holds a wide range of social and psychological benefits for the population (Grix & Carmichael, 2011; Forrest & Simmons, 2003; Goodwin & Grix, 2011). This storyline, for which evidence is lacking, is unsurprisingly reflected on many official documents. Recent studies on sport management have started to apply the concept of consumer surplus to the socio-psychological benefit derived from elite success, and utilise a contingent valuation method (CVM) to estimate the monetary value of athletic success (Wicker, Prinz, & Hanau, 2012; Wicker, Hallmann, Breuer, & Feiler, 2012; Funahashi & Mano, 2013). Much of the literature has revealed that sport consumption capital and some intangible factors have positive relationships with the willingness to pay (WTP) for the success. However, particular factors affecting the WTP remain largely unexplored. Therefore, the aim of the present research is to analyse the socio-psychological factors associated with the WTP for elite sport policy (which aims for success) by adopting the notion of public acceptance. The outcome of this study could help policy makers promote the elite sport policy with the understanding and support of the public.

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

The present study conducted an Internet-based cross-sectional survey on a sample comprising 1,000 male and female adults aged over 20 years. The survey was conducted via a Japanese Internet research service company. These respondents are stratified by gender and age group (20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, and ≥ 60 years) equivalent to those on the 2010 Population Census of Japan.

Measures

Willingness to Pay. As a dependent variable, the respondent's WTP for elite sport success was measured through an imaginary scenario using the CVM questionnaire (Funahashi & Mano, 2013). The scenario was as follows: 'It has been decided that the government will start collecting "purpose tax" from Japanese adults for ten years from now on for a programme to develop and strengthen top athletes in order to achieve the above purpose (to win the 5th largest number of gold medals at the summer Olympics and the 10th largest number at the winter Olympics). The tax will be used for this purpose only. Would you be willing to pay additional tax of [bid value] JPY (yen) a year for the next ten years? Please choose one from the following, considering the fact that paying this tax would reduce the amount of cash at your disposal'. Respondents had to answer a double-bound dichotomous choice question comprising five first bid values: 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000, and 5,000 JPY.

Socio-psychological factors. Derived from public acceptance research in different fields (i.e. technology, nuclear energy, etc.) and the elite sport literature, we developed the following set of independent variables: Perceived individual benefit of elite sport success with four items (BENEFI), perceived social benefit of elite sport success with five items (BENEFS), perceived risk of the elite sport with five items (RISK), trust of the elite sport policy actors with six items (TRUST), knowledge of elite sport policy with three items (KNOW), athletes' role model scale with five items (ROLEM), and interest in elite sport by a single item (INTERE). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale, and Cronbach's alpha results for each scale were higher than .87.

Demographic variables. The following demographic variables were obtained in order to describe the characteristics of the respondents: sex (SEX), age group (AGE), marital status (MARRIED), presence of children (CHILD), employment status (JOB_{full}), educational status (EDU_{uni}), household numbers (HOUSEN), and income level (INC).

Analysis

The equation of our log-logit model has the following form:

$$WTP = \alpha + \beta_1 \ln BID + \beta_2 BENEFI + \beta_3 BEFEFS + \beta_4 RISK + \beta_5 TRUST + \beta_6 KNOW + \beta_7 ROLEM + \beta_8 INTERE + \beta_9 SEX + \beta_{10} AGE + \beta_{11} MARRIED + \beta_{12} CHILD + \beta_{13} JOB_{ful} + \beta_{14} EDU_{uni} + \beta_{15} HOUSEN + \beta_{16} INC + \varepsilon$$

where WTP has a probability distribution form.

Result and discussion

The empirical results showed that BENEFI, ROLEM, INTERE, AGE, and INC were positively associated with the WTP level. In contrast, ln BID, RISK, and MARRIED were identified as negative factors for accepting a higher bid. This result implies that increasing the individual perceived benefit from athletic success in international competition, reducing the perception of the negative aspect of elite sport, enhancing interest in elite sport, and developing athletes who act as role models for people would be effective in the expansion of elite sport policy with public acceptance.

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