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스포츠매니지먼트 석사 학위논문

# **The Social Impact of Mediated Sport Consumption:**

**Examining the different types of  
sport content consumption on  
bridging and bonding social capital**

**스포츠 미디어 소비의 사회적 효과:  
스포츠 미디어 콘텐츠 소비가 교량적 사회자본과  
결속적 사회자본에 미치는 영향**

2021 년 8 월

서울대학교 대학원  
체육교육과

김한솔

# The Social Impact of Mediated Sport Consumption:

Examining the different types of  
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bridging and bonding social capital

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이 논문을 스포츠매니지먼트  
석사 학위논문으로 제출함

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김한솔의 석사학위 논문을 인준함

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## ABSTRACT

The current study elucidates the potential social impact of mediated sport consumption, in particular the role of social connection and its influence in accumulating social capital. Although, social connection is an important research construct in understanding social capital, previous scholarly attention in sport literature has been limited, especially in the context of mediated sports.

Therefore, this study was conducted to bridge this gap in literature by examining the interrelationships among mediated sport consumption (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news), opportunity for social connection, and social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). More specifically, the role of opportunity for social connection was examined to explain the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital. To test the proposed research model, data was collected through a questionnaire survey from a total of 369 respondents. For data analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was adopted using the statistical program STATA.

Results indicated that opportunity for social connection varied depending on the different types of sport content consumed. While sport events and pre-post sport events both showed positive impact on opportunity for social connection, consumption of sport news did not show any statistical significance. Furthermore, opportunity for social connection indicated a positive relationship to both bridging and bonding social capital with greater impact shown for bridging than bonding social capital.

Findings of this study contribute further the theoretical understanding of the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital. From both a sport management and communication perspective, results of the present study provide statistical evidence to support the social potential of mediated sport consumption and demonstrate how consuming different types of sport content can influence the level of opportunity for social connection and also social capital. With content in the sport media landscape continuously diversifying and growing, understanding the different types of content available for consumers and the associated impact of consuming such content can be beneficial to the sport management and communication literature. Theoretical and practical implications are also discussed.

**Keywords:** mediated sport consumption, sport content, social connection, social capital, bridging, bonding

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1. Research Background

The popularity of mediated sports is undeniable. In 2020, the Superbowl LIV was the most-watched television telecast with an impressive 102.1 million average viewers, which also ranked eleventh as the most watched program of all time (Adgate, 2021). A report by Google in 2018 stated that within one year, searches for football highlight videos increased by over 90%, while watchtime for other sport highlights also grew by more than 80% on YouTube; moreover, video searches on YouTube for greatest sport moments were also reported to have increased tremendously (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020). As such, with the advancements in technology changing the sports culture and media environment, an increasingly large number of people have shown to enjoy and follow their favorite athlete and team across various devices and platforms.

A particularly noticeable change in sport viewing consumption as a result of technological developments is the rise of subscription-based streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video; which provide individuals the opportunity to watch and access more exclusive sport content (Hutchins et al., 2019). In the past, high barriers of access and cost resulted in media broadcasters having monopoly in the sport broadcasting market, however, with the internet and the emergence of Over The Top (OTT) platforms the number of potential producers and distributors available to penetrate the sport media market has increased (Boyle, 2004; Hutchins & Rowe, 2009).

As producers rigorously compete for consumer attention, the diversification in sport content has dramatically increased, providing consumers more options to different types of sport-related content. In 2020, ESPN's sport documentary on basketball legend Michael Jordan, *The Last Dance*, reportedly reached record numbers with an average of 5.6 million viewers watching the series; such records proved to be the network's most-viewed documentary series of all time (Badenhausen, 2020). Additionally, a survey conducted by Google, in 2018, of the changes in consumption for supplementary sport content, showed that over two years, individuals who watched sport 'interviews' increased on YouTube by over 60% (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020). As such, consumers have shown great interest in sport content beyond the typical sport events, especially as such content often provides exclusivity and 'behind-the-scene' footage of their favorite athlete or team. Thus, these changes in sport viewing behavior and mediated sport consumption summon the need to investigate the different types of sport content currently available in the sport media landscape.

Previous literature examining mediated sport consumption have tended to focus on areas such as consumption motives (Kim & Mao, 2019; Paek et al., 2020; Raney, 2012), sport fans level of engagement (Jones et al., 2019; Vale & Fernandes, 2017) and marketing and sponsorship strategies (Ferreira et al., 2008; Inoue et al., 2016; Pradhan et al., 2019), however very little scholarly attention, if any has focused on the potential social impact of mediated sports consumption. Yet, identifying such outcomes can highlight the positive benefits associated with such consumption and more importantly emphasize the value of sport.

Previously, research in examining social values of sport have tended to focus on sport participation, in particular the relationship between sport participation and social capital (Houlihan & Malcom, 2016; Nicholson &

Hoye, 2008). In Australia, Tonts (2005) examined the links between sport and social capital by highlighting its potential as a vehicle in creating reciprocity in rural regions. Perks (2007) investigated the influence of youth sport programs and its ability to influence behavior beyond the program and lead to involvement in community activities, the results showed a positive relationship between the two activities as a result of trust and also indicated that such involvement continued throughout later life. More particular examples typically orient to a specific sport program or social initiative and how it creates impact such as social inclusion, well-being and increase in sense of trust (Kumar et al., 2018; Perks, 2007). These types of research gain particular interest from sport policy makers as identifying such potential can positively impact society socially, culturally and economically (Kim & James, 2019; Mastromartino et al., 2020). However, currently there is little research that identifies and recognizes the social values and outcomes of mediated sports consumption, therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of mediated sport consumption on social capital.

Specifically, the construct of social connection will be adopted to explore its role in facilitating the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital. Seppala et al., (2013) defined social connection as “a person’s subjective sense of having close and positively experienced relationships with others in the social world” (p.412), and as human beings are inherently social, the importance of being connected with others is fundamental and highly recognized in scholarly research (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Holt-Lunstad & Smith, 2012; Lester, 2013). Research also indicates that positive relationships and social networks are essential in accumulating social capital (Clopton, 2010; Glover et al., 2005; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005).

Thus, based on this existing knowledge and also the popularity of mediated sports rapidly increasing, exploring the social values of mediated sport consumption seem highly important in scholarly research. Specifically, understanding the different types of content available for consumers and the associated outcomes of each content can be particularly beneficial to the sport management and communication literature.

## **2. Research Objective**

The main objective of this current study is to investigate the social impact of mediated sport consumption; more specifically its impact on accumulating social capital. Thus, in order to achieve this, the interrelationships between mediated sport consumption, opportunity for social connection and social capital will be examined. Mediated sport consumption will be further distinguished into three different types of sport content as sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news, while social capital will be distinguished into bridging and bonding social capital. In short, based on extant theoretical background, a proposed research model exploring the role of opportunity for social connection in facilitating the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital will be examined.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Mediated Sport Consumption

#### *1.1. Motivations for Mediated Sport Consumption*

Over decades, theoretical theories from media and entertainment literature have provided the groundwork behind the extensive research as to why individuals watch and enjoy mediated content (Biswas et al., 1994; Bryant et al., 1982; Fink et al., 2009; Sargent et al., 1998). Among these theories the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), first introduced in the early 1970's, is an audience-centered approach that has been widely used to understand why and how individuals consume different media content (Blumler, 1980; Clavio & Kian, 2010). UGT implies the notion that consumers of media content are driven by specific psychological and sociological needs and thus actively seek and select media content to satisfy those certain needs at different times (Clavio & Kian, 2010; Severin & Tankard, 2000). Early studies examining uses and gratification mostly focused on the motivation behind media consumption for newspapers, magazines and radio programming (Wimmer & Dominick, 2021). However, with the advancement of technology and development of diverse communication channels, scholars have extended UGT research into media consumption across media such as cable television, the internet and more recently different social media platforms (Billings et al., 2018; Stavros et al., 2014; Watanabe et al., 2017).

From a sporting perspective, previous studies have also explored different factors that motivate the use and viewing of mediated content (Wann & James, 2018). In a study exploring the viewing motives and behaviors associated with televised sports, Gantz (1981), revealed exposure to sport programming via television to be a functional activity which offers a similar

multifaceted experience as live attendance to sport events without the disadvantages that may be associated such as financial burden, bad weather conditions and inconvenience in transportation. Kim and Mao (2019), conducted a qualitative study examining the difference in motivation between live attendance and mediated sport consumption and revealed eight unique themes including multi-game access, multi-tasking, economic consideration, emotional hedge, convenience, programming and storytelling, sociability, and ownership to be associated with mediated sport consumption. While on social media, Witkemper et al. (2012) examined the motives and constraints of Twitter users and found information, entertainment, pass-time and fanship to be positive indicators for sport fans when following athletes online. Also, Devlin and Brown-Devlin (2017) used personality to predict sports media consumption and found that based on the HEXACO Personality Inventory, personality traits and also team identification positively influenced the consumption of mediated sport. As such, extensive research across different sport media reveals diverse motivations in use and viewing of mediated sport. While motives may differ according to the specific media or user, Raney (2012) generalizes the motivations for mediated sport consumption in three general terms – emotional, cognitive and behavioral or social needs.

According to Raney (2012), emotional motivation is a key motive for mediated sport consumption, and individuals who view mediated sport do so in the hopes of receiving positive emotional benefits in return. This idea is strengthened through the disposition theory of sports spectatorship which pose individuals with high involvement or allegiant to a team or athlete will be more likely to be motivated in viewing sports (Raney, 2004; Sargent et al., 1998). The need to be entertained is recognized as one of the main emotional motivations in watching mediated sport (Gantz, 1981; Peterson & Raney, 2008), with the motivation to experience eustress (Wang, 2013) and enhance

self-esteem (Branscombe & Wann, 1992) to also be strong predictors of emotional motivation. Thus, driven by such motives, viewers of mediated sport are expected to experience emotional benefits such as enjoyment, arousal, excitement and also the opportunity to “bask in the reflected glory” (BIRG) of a team or athlete’s success as a result of mediated sport consumption (Cialdini & Richardson, 1980; Madrigal et al., 2011; Trail, et al., 2012). Raney (2012) also mentions how individuals may watch mediated sport to seek ‘escape’ from the stress of daily life.

Alongside emotional motivation, Raney (2012) explains how individuals may consume mediated sport for cognitive simulation. Sport broadcasts often involve sport commentators who provide statistical and trivial information about the team and athletes throughout the contest (Bissell & Duke, 2007; Denham et al., 2002; Desmarais & Bruce, 2010). Such information provides the opportunity for sport fans to learn more about their favorite team and athletes, highlighting the potential learning motive behind mediated sport consumption (Gantz, 1981). Also, according to previous studies, fans are more likely to be motivated to increase their sport knowledge and trivia as such information enables interaction with others even among those who have never met before (Melnick, 1993). Some individuals also reported to view sports due to its artistic and stylistic qualities (Brett, 2017; Grano, 2009; Lines, 2001). This type of motivation is referred to as aesthetic motivation which is also considered cognitive as it assumes individuals who watch do so in order to evaluate and appreciate the different styles embedded in certain sports and also the athletes themselves (Grano, 2009; Sargent et al., 1998).

The last motivation for consuming mediated sport, according to Raney (2012), is behavioral and social motivation. Due to the rivalry nature of sports, mediated sport creates suspense and drama allowing individuals to express

and release emotion throughout the contest alongside the performance of the athletes and teams (Gantz, 1981; Raney, 2012). Previous studies suggest that such behavior is heightened when sports is consumed with others due to the ample opportunities for interaction and socialization (Funk & James, 2004; Hardin & Greer, 2009; Kim et al., 2016; Kim & Mao, 2019). Melnick (1993), refers to this as the “sports encounter” which implies that those who watch mediated sport share a common understanding and enthusiasm towards sports which allow for conversation and engagement to occur even among strangers. For ardent sport fans, a sense of group affiliation and belonging is also a strong social motivation for consuming mediated sport (Gantz et al., 2006; Hedlund, 2014; Wann et al., 2017). Viewing mediated sport is also highly associated as a social activity among family members. In fact, Raney (2012), points out that watching sports is one of the few experiences that can be enjoyed with the whole family.

### ***1.2. Different Types of Sport Content***

Technical developments continue to change the media landscape and how individuals consume media content. Diverse platforms such as cable television, computers, tablets, mobile phones etc., have broadened the outlets available for individuals to consume mediated sport (Elishar-Malka et al., 2020). Also, with the internet and the emergence of Over the Top (OTT) platforms, barriers of access and cost have been significantly lowered, increasing the number of potential producers and distributors available to penetrate the market (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009; Park, 2019). In the past, high barriers of access and cost resulted in media broadcasters having monopoly in the broadcasting market, however, with the availability to digital technologies made easily accessible sport broadcasters, sport organizations, sport clubs, individual athletes and even sport fans themselves are now able

to produce and distribute sporting content; a phenomenon which Hutchins and Rowe (2009) refers to as a “digital plentitude”. From a production perspective, such advancements may have disadvantages as producers must rigorously compete for consumer attention, yet from the consumer perspective the increase in available content means that individuals now have greater choice in their media consumption (Majumdar & Naha, 2020).

Previous research in mediated sport consumption examining sporting content have tended to focus on one type of sport content such as live broadcasts of sport events (Brown & Salaga, 2018; Hu & Tang, 2010; Nesbit & King, 2010; Tainsky et al., 2013), while there has been limited research in identifying the different types of sport content available from a more holistic perspective. Among the few existing studies examining the different types of sport content, Raney and Bryant (2006), analyzed the weekly broadcast of sports on television in the United States revealing 11 types of sports programming which ranged from sport event coverage, past sport events, sport documentaries and sports fiction to name a few. Another study that uniquely addressed the different types of sport content was conducted by Wann et al., (2013), which examined different indicators of viewing time for watching televised sports. The main types of sport programming examined were sport events (game and competition) which was further distinguished into four different scenarios according to which team was playing; sport news (e.g., Sport Center, ESPN News) and sport documentaries (e.g., shows about former teams and players). While these previous studies provide strong groundwork in identifying the different types of sport content available, results are limited to televised sport programming.

In the past, mediated sports were primarily television orientated, however with the expansion of technology, sport has been made available across multiple devices and platforms and alongside the diversification in

media, the range of sport content available has also expanded (Hutchins & Rowe, 2009). While sport events are acknowledged as the ‘core’ product in sports media, the popularity of other sport content such as sport documentaries and sport news have also become more popular. In addition, the emergence of User-Generated Content (UGC) has diversified the available sport content even further (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016). UGC refers to any form of online original content created or produced by the general public (e.g., sport fans) rather than the official brand or paid professionals (Daugherty et al., 2008). Thus, with an increase in popularity for more exclusive, ‘behind-the-scene’ sport content and content being produced both professionally and also in new forms of UGC, the access and exposure to a greater diverse range of sport content has been made available for individuals to enjoy.

### *1.2.1. Sport Events*

The most popular sport content is undoubtedly event coverage, that is broadcasts of sporting events ranging from large scale, occasional events such as the Olympics or the World Cup to coverage of more regular events such as games and competitions of national leagues (Raney & Bryant, 2006). Previous research has examined various determinants of viewership demand for sport broadcasts especially team games, with determinants including but not limited to team quality, superstar effect, high-quality opponents and also factors not necessarily related to the sport such as weather and kick-off time (Foster et al., 2014; Ryu et al., 2019; Sung et al., 2019). A study conducted on examining the determinants for the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) also showed similar results with unique factors such as weight classes and match scheduling also showing as significant predictors (Tainsky et al., 2013). However, scholars argue one of the most prominent reasons for consuming

sport events is due to the element of outcome uncertainty (Su-Lin et al., 1997). Due to the nature of sport events, this element heightens the level of suspense for consumers watching, thus assumed to increase levels of enjoyment (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009).

This level of suspense is greater during live sport events, with research indicating various forms of affective benefits associated with such consumption (Knobloch-Westerwick et al., 2009). In addition, these affective dispositions are assumed to affect highly identified sport fans more than those who identify less with a particular team (Foster et al., 2013; Hartmann et al., 2008). While such effects may be prominent for live attendance at stadiums, studies have also supported similar results for mediated sport consumption, with outcome of uncertainty being significant regardless of the location in which the event was consumed (Kim et al., 2016; Raney, 2012).

On another note, even though watching live sports may be preferred, consuming full broadcasts of sport events can be time-consuming. With modern lifestyles continually encouraging individuals to work overtime and stay busy, time for leisure activities have shown to decrease (Bellezza et al., 2016). In addition, recent research found that the collective global attention span has dramatically narrowed with results showing preference for shorter more condense content (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2019; Volger et al., 2020). As a result, rather than full coverage of sport events, many sport broadcasters produce highlight coverages, thus consumers are able to enjoy the critical elements of the game while efficiently using their consumption time. Additionally, with the advancement of technology, it has become easier to access different sport events regardless of the initial start time. That is, coverage of sport events can now easily be recorded and replayed back depending on the convenient time of the consumer. Not only has this been made possible for recent sport events, but memorable scenes from specific

past sport events can now also be accessible for individuals to enjoy and consume.

### *1.2.2. Pre-Post Sport Events*

In addition to the vast amount of content on sport events, many other types of sport content have become a commonplace in mediated sports. Consumers have shown particular interest in consuming content beyond the playing field and are motivated to get a glimpse of their favorite teams and players behind-the-scenes (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020). One of the prime reasons for this consumption behavior are the changes in consumer viewing habits and the rise of subscription-based streaming services such as Netflix; which provide individuals the opportunity to watch and access more exclusive content (Hutchins et al., 2019). According to Forbes, *The Last Dance*, a sport documentary about the basketball legend Michael Jordan, reportedly accumulated over 2 million YouTube views within the first three months of release for its three-minute trailer, while the actual documentary reported 23.8 million views outside of the U.S in its first four weeks (Bassam, 2020). Sport documentaries are assumed to have such popularity as content offers individuals the chance to engulf the story behind the superstar or a certain event or issue, thus allowing for individuals to connect and gain deeper insights to certain players and teams.

Besides sport documentaries, which provide an element of storytelling, other behind-the-scenes content such as training videos and sport interviews are an opportunity for individuals to gain more information about their favorite players and teams leading up to and, or after a sport event. In a survey with over 5,000 people conducted by Google, respondents were asked about their sports-viewing habits and results indicated that over 57% watched related sport video content before sport events and explained how consuming

content beyond the sport event itself, help to build personal sports knowledge (Gross, 2020).

Sport-related UGC content also allows individuals to consume content that is not necessarily replays of sport events. Additionally, as UGC is any form of online original content created that is not produced by the official brand or paid professionals, the formality and structure of content are less rigid and thus open to wider, more diverse range of content (Daugherty et al., 2008). In fact, sport-related UGC can cover a vast amount of content from sport apparel reviews, fitness videos, instructional videos etc. (Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016; Goh et al., 2012). However, in line with the other content associated with pre-post sport events in this current study, sport-related UGC focuses on content related to sport players and teams. Such examples may include videos sharing facts, strategy analysis videos and performance review videos of certain player, teams or leagues.

### *1.2.3. Sport News*

Sport news is another distinct type of sport content consumed in mediated sports and consists of delivering information about various topical events and issues in sports (Taneja et al., 2012). Previous literature on content analyses of news coverage in mediated sports have tended to focus on gender issues and the amount of coverage (or mostly lack) of women in sport news (Billings & Young, 2015; Cooky et al. 2013; Davis & Duncan, 2006; Eastman & Billings, 2000). With substantial number of studies also examining framing and agenda-setting (Chan & Lee, 2014; Feezell, 2017;). According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), media plays a significant role in shaping an individual's thoughts and beliefs, thus the 'quality' of news content has also received extant scholarly attention (Feezell, 2017, Koivula, 1999). Although, with the advancement of newer technologies and a shift in consumer media

behaviors, more studies have shifted focus on examining changes in behavior for sport news consumption and how across different platforms and social media the levels of retention, recall and trust can differ for sport news (Lewis et al., 2017; Moore, 2018; Witkemper et al., 2012).

The importance of news consumption and its role and influence in shaping individual's behaviors is highly recognized; with studies in civic engagement and political participation showing interest in the impact of news consumption (Ksiazek et al., 2010). As mentioned, existing literature in sport news, however, have mostly focused on analyzing the content of the news while little, if any have examined its potential outcomes. As sport news covers the latest and most influential issues and events in sports, it can be assumed individuals who consume such content are more likely to increase one's sport knowledge. Also, technology has allowed information to diffuse at a rapid pace resulting in convenient and easy access to local, national and international sport news which has increased the possibility to expand one's sports knowledge even further.

## **2. Social Connection**

### ***2.1. Defining Social Connection***

Human beings are social in nature with inherent social needs (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theorize human motivational behavior in five levels and states that a human's primary psychological need is "belongingness and love" which emphasize the significant and fundamental need to connect with others (Taormina & Gao, 2013). In a meta-analysis, Holt-Lunstad and Smith (2012) emphasize the importance and necessity of social connection and the influence it has on mortality, arguing that a poor network of meaningful relationships can be equally risky as smoking up to 15 cigarettes per day. As such numerous

studies across diverse disciplines including psychology, sociology and communication studies have explored human interpersonal behavior and the associated outcomes of being social connected, recognizing the importance for positive social connection and its relation to health, well-being and longevity (Compton, ca. 2005; Correll & Park, 2005; Hart et al., 2005; Pressman et al., 2005; Turner & Noh, 1983).

Defining social connection is important as similar terms have been used to describe interpersonal relationships across different areas of studies. For example, the term ‘attachment’, first posited by Bowlby (1969) in the attachment theory is often used to describe long-term relationships in particular the attachment an infant has with one’s mother and how certain ways of interacting are developed and continued throughout other relationships in life (Seedall, 2011; Young et al., 2017). Additionally, the term ‘social support’ is used in areas such as clinical psychology to assess social connection as a mean of emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support (Cooke et al., 1988; Velando-Soriano et al., 2019). Feeney and Collins (2014), conducted a study focusing on relational support functions and its long-term effects in enabling people to thrive; highlighting that those individuals who receive social support within relationships are more likely to cope successfully with life adversities and actively pursue life opportunities. In more general and social areas of research, terms such as ‘belonginess’ and ‘social connectedness’ is often used, Baumeister and Leary (1995) emphasized the need to belong, proposing that human beings have a fundamental motivation to form and maintain interpersonal relationships. Social connectedness is similar in definition, referring to the feeling of being close to other people, however, the scope of ‘other’ may expand to include people beyond close relationships such as a community or even the society as a whole (Deitz et al., 2020; Haslam et al., 2015; Lee & Robins, 2000).

Subsequently, although different terms such as attachment, social support, belongingness and social connectedness have been used in different areas of research, according to Seppala et al (2013), all terms fundamentally explain social connection while slightly differing in terms of the scale and breadth of connection described. As such, this study adopts the definition and term of social connection postulated by Seppala et al., (2013) defined as “a person’s subjective sense of having close and positively experienced relationships with others in the social world” (p.412).

## ***2.2. Antecedents of Social Connection***

Antecedents are preceded events that prompt a certain behavior or phenomenon to occur (Miltenberger, 2005). For this study, in order to understand how social connection is formed and maintained, identifying key antecedents is essential particularly in the sporting context. Thus, based on extant studies in psychology, sociology, communication and sport studies, distinct antecedents for social connection are identified and discussed.

### ***2.2.1. Sense of Similarity***

One of the key antecedents for social connection is similarity, as individuals with more similar values, attitudes, and backgrounds are more likely to experience positive interpersonal relationships and lasting satisfaction (Galinsky et al., 2005; Seppala, 2013; Trapp & Laursen, 2017; Yang et al., 2016). Similar individuals are able to benefit from common understanding which drives compatibility and enable benefits to be obtained as a result of such affiliation (Cialdini et al., 1997; Compton, ca. 2005; Glover et al., 2005; Wann et al., 2001). Interpersonal attraction is heightened through this sense of similarity with empirical evidence indicating that even when an individual is initially considered an out-group member, a sense of connection

can initiate an interaction or relationship to expand among out-groups (Montoya & Horton, 2012; Seppala, 2013; West et al., 2014).

The notion of sport and its ability to bring people of diverse backgrounds together to share a communal experience is well-recognized (Mastromartino & Zhang, 2020; Melnick, 1993). Extant literature in sport spectatorship (both offline and online) supports this effect on local, national and international level (Doyle et al., 2013; Hahm et al., 2021; Inoue et al., 2017), indicating that the commonality of enjoying sports can have positive benefits (Wann & Grieve, 2005; Watanabe et al., 2020). A strand of literature in media sport studies that focuses on the notion of similarity is sport fandom, in particular team identification (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; Gibson et al., 2002; Wann & James 2018; Wann et al., 2001). That is, the idea that sport fans who identify with a certain sports team are more likely to achieve benefits such as increase in self-esteem and sense of belonging as a result of being associated with a group of like-minded individuals (Mastromartino et al., 2020; Wann and James, 2018). Howard et al., (2016), also found that those who identified with a sport team showed greater perceptions of trustworthiness towards others also supporting the same team.

While previous research has examined different outcomes of team identification such as psychological well-being, vicarious achievement, commitment and loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Normansell & Wann, 2010; Wann et al., 2015; Y.M. Kim & Kim, 2009), few studies have empirically examined whether a sense of similarity (i.e., team identification) can lead to positive social connection. Crawford (2004) stated that sport plays a significant role in shaping one's social and cultural identity, also arguing that identifying as a sport fan can assist in developing and maintaining social networks, however, this study lacked empirical evidence. The Team Identification-Social Psychological Health Model developed by Wann (2006)

is one of the few studies to specifically explore the mediating role of social connection. In addition, Wann et al., (2011) extended the previous study to empirically examine the relationship assessing the degree to which students gain and maintain social connection through their identification towards a university basketball team. Results showed significant correlation between team identification and the accumulation of social connection, suggesting that involvement in sport and identifying with a sport team as a result of a sense of similarity can assist in forming valuable relationships (Clopton, 2008; Wann et al., 2011).

While previous literature in sport have mainly focused on the notion of similarity through team identification, it can be assumed that in the sporting context, sharing similar attitudes and values such as support for the same team or enjoyment of sport in general can lead to establishing and maintaining social connection due to the consensus grounded in similarity (Trapp & Laursen, 2017; Wann et al., 2011).

### *2.2.2. Affective Connection*

Another prominent antecedent for social connection is the level of emotional connection and affective benefits individuals are able to achieve from the relationship (Seppala, 2013). When perspective-taking is considered from the point of view of the other rather than focusing on one's own emotional state, individuals are more prone to forming positive interpersonal relationships (Burns et al, 2005; Healey and Grossman, 2018; Pahl & Bauer, 2011).

Studies in media sports literature have extensively identified affective responses and outcomes of watching sport, both attending live events and through various mediated devices (Kim & Mao, 2019; Yim & Byon, 2018). Majority of these studies focus on group-affiliation based emotions (i.e.,

emotions as a result of sport fandom, thus emotions are reliant on the performance of the team one identifies with) and the associated emotional affects (Boen et al., 2002; Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; Madrigal & Chen, 2008). However, those previous studies measure the affective response as a result of one's connection to a certain team rather than the emotional affects derived from the relationships with others.

A study conducted by Mastromartino et al. (2020) aimed to fill this gap in literature by developing the Sport Fan Sense of Community Scale (SFCS) which explored the factors that would constitute a sense of community for individuals involved in a sport fan community. In a qualitative study carried out prior to the development of the scale, Mastromartino et al., (2019) identified the key indicators for membership in a sport fan community and among the five main themes identified, three of the indications were related to affective benefits gained from the other members in the community. More specifically, themes such as a sense of collective unity was achieved through actions such as showing respect to one another and providing emotional support in times of misery as a result of the teams loss; also positive attitude towards not only the team but other members of the community served as a key indicator for positive communication and synergy among members; lastly members showed inclusiveness for all individuals of different backgrounds regardless of race, gender, religion, and/or sexuality which echo the ability of perspective-taking which leads to better social connection.

As such, studies conducted by Mastromartino et al., (2020) provide the groundwork in support of the idea that social connection can be formed and maintained due to the emotional connection and affective benefits associated with the relationship with other members. In other words, the likelihood for the individual to form or maintain social connection is

influenced by the potential positive emotional connection the individual may be able to obtain as a result of being associated with others.

### *2.2.3. Individuality and Culture*

Lastly, previous literatures have shown that individual differences and culture can act as antecedents for social connection (Roberts & Burleson, 2013; Seppala et al., 2013; Wu & Carter, 2019). Studies indicate gender differences in social connection with research suggesting women benefit from relationships that provide affectionate and emotional support more than men (Baumeister & Sommer, 1997; Lyyra & Heikkinen, 2006). However, Lee and Robbins (2000) emphasized the different type of relationship men and women are more attracted to with results indicating men to connect through relationships that entail reassurance of worth, while women are more likely to connect when emotional benefits such as empathy are obtained. Other individual differences such as personality, age and social class have also been reported as factors that may influence social connection (Ang et al., 2019; Ensminger et al., 2009; Horvat et al., 2003; Parker et al., 2017).

Extant literature in the sporting context shows gender differences in sport consumption, with prior studies indicating the social aspects to be more significant for women spectators than men (Cottingham et al., 2013; Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000) specifically, women enjoy the opportunity to interact with other fans and also enjoy the activity as a means to spend quality time with family and friends (Ridinger & Funk, 2006). Also, in an evaluative study of sport spectators, Macdonald et al. (2002) note social class as a prominent indicator for members to associate with an exclusive country or sailing club.

Cultural differences have also been studied on its influence on social connection with results suggesting that levels of social connectedness to be greater among hierarchical societies in comparison to egalitarian societies

(Boehm et al., 1993). With research supporting the notion that countries in the East are more prone to a collectivist culture while in the West a more individualistic culture, these differences are assumed to influence social connection among the individuals in the rightful cultures (Lim & Richardson, 2016; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Osyerman & Lee, 2008). While, direct examination of cultural influence on the development of social connection as a result of sport consumption is limited, previous literature supports the assumption that cultural differences exist in attitudes and motives for sport spectatorship and team identification (Cunningham & Eastin, 2015; Gau & Kim, 2011; Gordon et al., 2019; Hahm et al., 2021), thus outcomes associated with such consumption such as social connection can also be assumed to differ across different cultures.

Subsequently, previous literature and evidence in the sporting context suggest differences in individuality such as gender and social class can influence social connection. Embedded cultural differences have also indicated different behaviors which can in turn be expected to influence the way social connection is established and maintained.

### **3. Social Capital**

#### ***3.1. Conceptualizing Social Capital***

The conceptualization of social capital has been a contentious concept, with different variations of definitions proposed by a number of scholars over the decades (Bourdieu & Collier, 2021; Burt, 2001; Lin, 2002; Putnam, 2001). Two scholars who have gained particularly extensive attention is Robert Putnam and Pierre Bourdieu. While, both acknowledged the notion that social networks have value, the definitions' part way in that Bourdieu shows greater focus on the role of power and how he believes the wealthy and powerful have greater access to resources as a result of their

status (Siisiainen, 2003). This study focuses more closely on Putnam's approach to social capital and the idea that value derived from social networks has a system of norms and reciprocity (Putnam, 2001). More specifically, Putnam explains how specific benefits are associated with social networks and how these social connections themselves provide individuals and as a community, value.

According to Putnam (2001), there are four ways to gain value from social networks which include information flows, norms of reciprocity, collective action and broader identity and solidarity. The first benefit refers to the information social networks provide, that is by interacting and talking to various individuals, the opportunity to gain information such as a new job and career opportunity may increase as a result of knowing specific individuals (Granovetter, 1973). Thus, social connections allow access to information that may have not been initially available. Another benefit is reciprocity, the notion that people that have relationships and connections help each other and these actions are also returned in favor. A study on community sport networks of volunteers and stakeholders emphasized how social trust and a sense of reciprocity is important and help in better cooperation and collaboration among the community (Doherty & Misener, 2008).

The third benefit is collective action, according to Putnam (2001), as a group a greater impact can be made than one individual's action thus, by working with others and building a foundation of social connections which can be used for future use is seen as a powerful resource. Finally, identities and sense of solidarity is recognized as another benefit that arises as a result of having connections with other people; the notion described by Putnam (2001) as the shift in mentality from an "I" into "we". Ardent sport fans display such effects as members of sport fan communities have been noted to

achieve benefits such as feelings of belonging and increase in self-esteem due to the association to other sport fans (McAlexander et al., 2002; Wann & James, 2018). In essence, social capital is a term that describes the power of relationships, fundamentally the value found and derived from social connections and ties. Putnam (2001) further distinguishes social capital into two major types: bridging and bonding social capital.

### *3.1.1. Bridging Social Capital*

Bridging social capital is described as the value in social networks between heterogeneous groups; that is the social capital which is “between” groups of different sociodemographic or socioeconomic characteristics such as social class, race or religion (Ellison & Vitak, 2015; Phua, 2012; Putnam, 2001). Thus, this type of social capital is inclusive and outward looking providing values such as efficiency in information flows, or access to new resources (Putnam, 2001). The study conducted by Granovetter (1973), emphasize these types of relationships and argue the cohesive power of weak ties, especially in their ability to enlighten new ideas and allow for more efficient access to new information (Ellison & Vitak, 2015; Phua, 2012; Williams, 2006). While bridging social capital lacks depth and in more intimate values such as emotional support, breadth is attained as the opportunity to access information and resources occur from a pool of more diverse individuals from different backgrounds (Williams, 2006).

### *3.1.2. Bonding Social Capital*

Bonding social capital is described as the value in social networks between homogenous groups; that is the social capital which is “within” groups with high level of similarities such as family and close friends (Ellison & Vitak, 2015; Phua, 2012; Putnam, 2001). Unlike bridging social capital,

bonding social capital adopts a more exclusive and inward-looking approach thus exists between close, trusting relationships providing values such as substantive, emotional support (Williams, 2006). Studies have examined the role of sport programs for immigrants and their influence in increasing social inclusion; results showed how both bridging and bonding social capital accumulated as a result in participation, however, it was found that social capital amongst immigrants with the same ethnic background was more profound (Spaij, 2012; Walseth, 2008). While bonding social capital lacks in diversity it is assumed personal connections are stronger as more frequent and deeper interactions occur among each other (Williams, 2006).

#### **4. Interrelationship Between Mediated Sport Consumption, Opportunity for Social Connection and Social Capital**

##### ***4.1. Social Penetration Theory***

Social penetration theory states that communication is key in the development of interpersonal relationships and proposes that relations with others begin and deepen through self-disclosure (Carpenter & Greene, 2015; Tang & Wang, 2012). Altman and Taylor (1973) first developed the theory and explained self-disclosure as the voluntary sharing of information such as personal history, preferences, attitudes, feelings and values to another person. A common framework used to explain the process of social penetration is the onion model as it helps visualize and understand how self-disclosure starts from sharing superficial information about one's self (outer layer) to more intimate information (inner layer) being shared as the relationship deepens; this also includes breadth and depth (Altman & Taylor, 1973). In addition, according to the theory, social penetration occurs over five different stages in order for the relationship to develop, table 1. summarizes the five different stages and highlights the key characteristics associated with each stage. Self-

disclosure about sports often occurs in the exploratory affective stage, a stage where deep personal information is retained, however, individuals begin to reveal more about themselves leading to the development of casual relationships (Carpenter & Greene, 2015).

Another important element to the social penetration theory is reward-cost assessment, that is as the act of self-disclosure results in vulnerability, individuals carefully examine the outcomes of revealing information to the other person (Carpenter & Greene, 2015). As a result, if individuals suspect the rewards to outweigh the costs, they are more likely to share the information.

**Table 1. Five Different Stages of Social Penetration.**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>1. Orientation Phase</b>	Initial encounters where conversations and interactions are heavily tied by social norms.
<b>2. Exploratory Effective Phase</b>	Communication increases, individuals begin to share in more detail information about themselves, becoming more relaxed and friendly.
<b>3. Affective Phase</b>	Close and romantic relationships develop as disclosure of personal and deeper private matters are discussed
<b>4. Stable Phase</b>	Individuals share an open comfortable relationship with rich interaction; exposure of 'core' self.
<b>5. Depenetration Phase</b>	Individuals believes the cost of self-disclosure outweigh rewards thus leading them to withdraw from the relationship.

## ***4.2. Role of Social Connection***

### ***4.2.1. Opportunity for Social Connection via Mediated Sport Consumption***

Accounting for individual and cultural differences, antecedents for social connection includes sense of similarity and affective connection (Seppala et al., 2013). This aligns with the act of self-disclosure as it can be

assumed that rewards are greater when individuals who share information have a commonality, thus allowing for better reciprocity as both individuals have a common ground of interest.

In addition, for the opportunity for self-disclosure to occur and thus lead to social connection, interaction is needed. The motive for social interaction is a significant driving force for mediated sport consumption and has been long acknowledged as one of the most prominent reasons individuals watch sports (Kim et al., 2013; Raney, 2012). Numerous studies confirm this notion highlighting the importance for individuals to engage socially with others when consuming sports (Boehmer, 2016; Byon et al., 2020; Raney, 2012). Research also suggests that watching sports is a communicative behavior as the opportunities for interaction are more prominent than with any other mediated content, this may explain how even strangers who have met for the first time are easily able to discuss about sport action with one another (Gantz & Wenner, 1995; Kim & Mao, 2019). In a study conducted by Eastman and Land (1997), various sites (alternative locations to physical attendance to stadiums) for mediated sport consumption such as sports bars were examined and found that such places provided convenience for people to interact and be entertained. Similar results were shown in the study carried out by Kim and Mao (2019) in which participants mentioned how watching sports at a sports bar facilitated the development of new friends, allowed opportunity to enjoy with existing friends and also provided the time to spend with family. According to Melnick (1993), these opportunities for interaction are unique to sports and explain how such encounters occur as a result of a mutual understanding of the topics allowed for discussion during mediated sport consumption.

These previous studies may suggest that such social interaction can only be facilitated during live sporting events or in a specific location such as

a sports bar. However, studies support the idea that consumers of mediated sports are not restricted to the event itself, that is those who enjoy consuming sports are likely to adopt influences, interests and behaviors that extend beyond the event and into their lifestyle (Park et al., 2010; Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000). Thus, certain behaviors and engagement in activities open up more opportunities for interaction to occur. Gantz and Wenner (1995) explored the different viewing experiences for televised sports and identified that those who were more highly invested into the sporting event also showed interest before and after the event. More specifically, examples of pre-viewing behaviors included discussing with others about the game, reading about the events that might take place beforehand and socially drinking; post-viewing responses were also measured revealing the social nature of the activity as respondents explained reasons why they watched televised sports was because it was “something to do with friends and family” and “gives me something to talk about” (Gantz & Wenner, 1995).

In addition, Mastromartino et al., (2019), studied sense of membership in sport fan communities and found that antecedents of membership were the pursuit for knowledge, a motive to interact with others, a desire to share one’s thoughts and opinion and hope for team success. Such pre motives were assumed to drive a sense of membership which was conceptualized into five main themes; one of which was social opportunities. It was pointed out how relationships within the community allowed for an avenue to make new friends, chance to broaden and learn new information, and provide occasions to engage in fandom activities (Mastromartino et al., 2019). In line with the results of this study, it can be predicted that the consumption of mediated sports can increase these opportunities for interaction leading to potential self-disclosure. Thus, based on the social penetration theory, self-disclosure can help facilitate and maintain social connection (Carpenter & Greene, 2015).

Additionally, as self-disclosure has the potential to strengthen connections based on how similar individuals are with one another, mediated sport consumption can provide such commonality through the interest and knowledge of sports.

#### *4.2.2. Impact of Opportunity for Social Connection on Social Capital*

As noted, social capital refers to the value in social networks and according to Putnam (2001) these values can be different across bridging and bonding social capital which evidently differ on the strength of the ties between the social connections. Thus, it can be assumed that if the opportunities for social connection increases this naturally opens up the chances of social connection to facilitate or for existing relations to be strengthened. Consequently, these social connections can then potentially provide various forms of value for those invested in the relationship.

A strand of literature that support this causal relationship can be found in studies that examine ‘a sense of membership’ and their associated outcomes (Correll & Park, 2005; Mishra, 2020). A number of empirical studies have explored this relationship including the social networks in religious institutions, group therapy and connections at the workforce which indicate potential values such as psychological support, increase in trust and even bridging opportunities for employment as a result of the social connection to the group (Heaney & Israel, 2008; Hopkins, 2011; Waters & Moore, 2002).

Mastromartino et al., (2019), examined such outcomes in the sporting context by studying fan community members for teams in the National Hockey League (NHL) with results showing significant positive relationships between sense of membership and both bridging and bonding social capital. Some studies focused on more exclusive sport fan communities, such as the

“Grog Squad”, an ardent group of South Australian football supporters, who regardless of the presumed aggressive masculinity within the all-male group indicated that members of the group were able to receive a range of social support and access to benefits commonly known as bonding social capital based on their solidarity as a sport fan (Palmer & Thompson, 2007). Other examples of exclusive groups include sport fans for surfing (Moutinho et al., 2007) and sailing (McDonald et al., 2002) in which results support the notion that affiliation to the community strengthens the sense of identity and can lead to affective benefits.

In sum, while these previous sport studies have mostly focused on the concept of ‘a sense of membership’, the results support the notion that individuals with similar interests and those who share common characteristics, are more likely to form social connections and as a result can benefit from values such as emotional support and resources to information by simply being interconnected to one another (Williams, 2006). Thus, in line with this argument, it can be predicted that opportunity for social connection can lead to relations being developed and as a consequence potential value can be derived from these social connections.

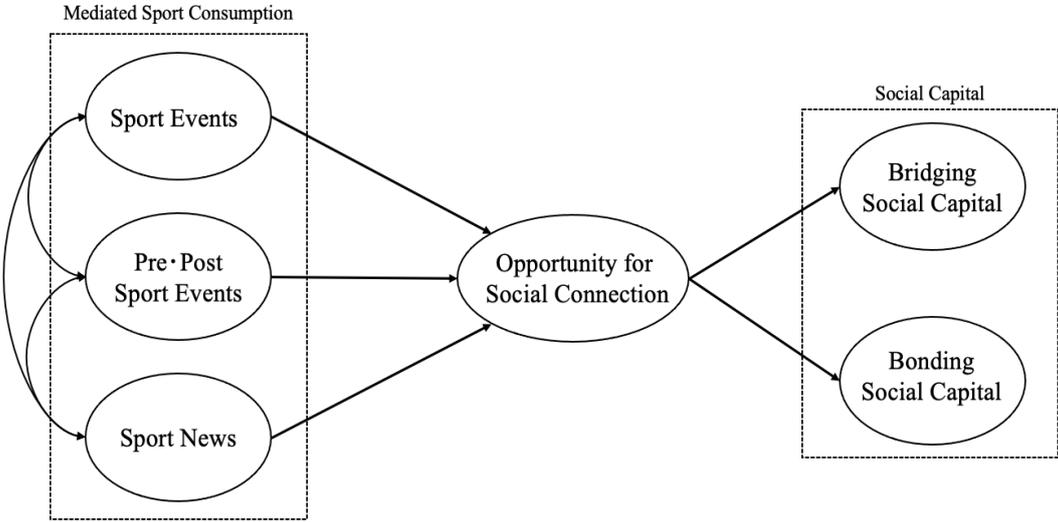
# III. RESEARCH MODEL & HYPOTHESES

## 1. Research Model

Based on extant literature review and empirical evidence discussed specifically in the literature review section, a research model was proposed. The research model depicts the causal relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital, as a result of opportunity for social connection.

More specifically, mediated sport consumption was distinguished into three different types of sport content available and consisted of sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news. Social capital was also further distinguished in bridging and bonding social capital. Figure 1. shows the overall research model of this study in detail.

Figure 1. Research Model.



## 2. Research Hypotheses

To test and justify the proposed research model, research hypotheses were formulated based on the preceding theoretical background and empirical evidence discussed in the literature review section. The following research hypotheses postulate a causal model explicating the relationships among mediated sport consumption (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news), opportunity for social connection and social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). Thus, for this study, the following research hypotheses were proposed:

**H1:** The amount of mediated sport consumption based on the different types of sport content (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news) will have positive impact on opportunity for social connection.

*H1-1: Sport events will have positive impact on opportunity for social connection.*

*H1-2: Pre-post sport events will have positive impact on opportunity for social connection.*

*H1.3: Sport news will have positive impact on opportunity for social connection.*

**H2:** Opportunity for social connection will have positive impact on bridging social capital.

**H3:** Opportunity for social connection will have positive impact on bonding social capital.

## **IV. METHOD**

This section explains the methods used to test the proposed research model and hypotheses. The objective of the study was to examine the impact of the amount of mediated sport consumption based on the different types of sport content (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news) on opportunity for social connection and the resulted impact on social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). To achieve this objective, the following methodological steps were used.

### **1. Participants and Data Collection**

The target population for this study was individuals aged between 20 to 50 years old who have access to sport content regardless of the frequency or amount of such consumption. Other demographic characteristics were not restricted and considered appropriate as the primary objective of the study was to develop an initial understanding of the population and examine the causal relationships among the proposed variables (Calder et al., 1981).

Data collection was obtained using convenience sampling through an online survey. Based on the advantages suggested by Tan and Teo (2000), an online survey was conducted as such sampling technique is inexpensive and can elicit faster responses as the questionnaire can be completed at anytime, anywhere. In addition, participants involved in the study participated on a voluntary basis and completed the survey in a self-administered manner. A total of 380 responses were collected of which 11 invalid responses were detected and eliminated. Thus, the remaining 369 responses represented the final data set and was used to carry out data analysis.

## **2. Item Development**

Survey questionnaire items were developed based on extant previous literature with an iterative procedure of expert and scholarly review to ensure survey questionnaire items accurately represented and measured the proposed variables. All variables were measured on a 7-point Likert scale since seven scale points best accommodate for response error (Krosnick & Fabrigar, 1997) and higher scores represent that the participant showed stronger agreement towards the stated question. The survey questionnaire consisted of four main sections; questions associated with mediated sport consumption, social connection, social capital and demographics.

The first section measured the independent variables for the study and consisted of ten survey questions related to mediated sport consumption. In the previous study conducted by Wann et al., (2013) the different indicators of viewing time for watching televised sports were examined, the televised sporting events were distinguished into three main types of sport content; sporting events (further distinguished according to the team playing), sport new shows and sport documentaries. While, the study carried out by Wann et al., (2013) was restricted to television programs, this study aimed to explore the different types of sport content available in the current media landscape. Therefore, mediated sport consumption in this particular study considered all the different types of mediated content available and focused primarily on sport content in video form (exclusion of other mediated content available online such as sport-related articles, photos, blogs or posts etc.). As a result, three main different types of sport content were identified as sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news, which served as the independent variables. The survey items used to measure mediated sport consumption behaviors in the study conducted by Wann et al., (2013) were adapted and modified, resulting in four survey items used to measure sport events, four

items for pre-post sport events and three items for sport news. Also, as the main objective of the study was to examine the different types of sport content consumed, survey question was worded to specify that device (e.g., television, laptop, mobile phone etc.) and platform (e.g., Youtube, Naver etc.) in which the content was consumed was not significant.

The second section measured the causal variable for the study and consisted of six survey questions related to opportunity for social connection. Survey items were based on question items designed to assess 'social connections gained' in the study conducted by Wann et al., (2011) which asked participants the extent they believed they gained and maintained social connections from their association and identification as a fan with a certain team. While the study carried out by Wann et al., (2011), examined the social connection gained as a result of team identification, this study aims to investigate the social connection gained as a result of the opportunities created from consuming different types of sport content. Therefore, survey items were adapted and modified accordingly (Wann et al., 2011); with higher numbers representing greater levels of establishing and maintaining social connection as a result of the opportunities created from mediated sport consumption.

The third section measured the dependent variables of the study and consisted of eight survey questions related to social capital. Two types of social capital were measured with four survey items measuring bridging social capital and four items measuring bonding social capital. The Internet Social Capital Scales (ISCS), developed by Williams (2006) allows for the measure of bridging and bonding social capital for both online and offline contexts, thus question items were adapted and modified to align with the objective of the current study.

The last section consisted of demographic questions designed to understand the characteristics of the respondents. Survey items included gender, age, educational level and monthly income. In addition, three survey items were asked to address participants' mediated sport consumption behavior. Thus, a total of seven demographic related survey items were included. Item development for each variable measured in the study is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of Item Development.**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>Mediated Sport Consumption</b>	Modified and adapted from Wann et al., (2013)
<b>Opportunity for Social Connection</b>	Modified and adapted from (Wann et al., 2011)
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	Modified and adapted from (Williams, 2006)
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	Modified and adapted from (Williams, 2006)

Lastly, as most survey items were adapted and modified from previous research written in English, survey questions were reviewed by experts, who are native English speakers, in sport management and communication to check English to Korean was correctly translated and to also ensure the original meaning was maintained and well delivered across all survey questions. Furthermore, the survey questionnaire needed to be pre-tested to ensure all survey items were appropriate in measuring the intended variables. Thus, a pilot test was conducted to identify potential problems associated with the questionnaire design and based on the feedback, was further revised and finalized.

### **3. Data Analysis Procedure**

To carry out the objective of the study and to test the proposed research model and hypotheses, the statistical program STATA was employed to analyze the collected data. Data analysis followed four main statistical analyses in a systematic procedure. The purpose and description of each analysis is explained in order.

#### ***3.1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis***

Descriptive statistics summarizes the general characteristics of a given data set, thus descriptive analysis allows for better understanding of each measured variables and also highlights potential relationships among the variables. In this study, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to find means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of each measured variables.

#### ***3.2. Reliability Analysis***

Reliability analysis assesses the reliability of the survey questionnaire and tests whether the survey items used were coherent and accurately measured the variable of interest. In this study Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the survey responses and test scale reliability based on the average inter-item correlation. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) recommended a minimum alpha coefficient of 0.70 to be considered an acceptable level of consistency, while values below 0.5 are often considered unacceptable.

### ***3.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis***

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) tests the reliability and validity of the measurement model, assessing whether the data collected fits the proposed model as intended. More specifically, convergent and discriminant validity tests are used to assess construct validity of the measurement model (Joreskog, 1966). Convergent validity indicates the internal consistency for each variable and how well each variable is explained by its indicators, this can be assessed by Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al., (2009) reliability is obtained when CR values are greater than 0.7 and AVE values greater than 0.5 are considered acceptable. Additionally, discriminant validity compares the amount of variance among each variable to indicate that the different constructs proposed in the measurement model are in fact unrelated. Discriminant validity is considered achieved when the square root of the AVE value is greater than the correlations between each variable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

### ***3.4. Structural Equation Modeling Analysis***

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis is a multivariate, hypothesis-driven statistical technique used to verify the proposed structural model (Bryne, 2011). In this study, SEM is used to evidently test the proposed hypotheses, by showing the causal relationships among the multiple variables proposed in the research model. To achieve this, the structural model is first evaluated for goodness of fit, then individual paths within the structural model are evaluated to examine the degree in which the interrelationships among the variables exist.

## V. RESULTS

### 1. Respondent Demographics

**Table 3. Respondent Demographics.**

<b>Demographic Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	250	67.75
Female	119	32.25
<b>Age [years]</b>		
20 ~ 24	84	22.76
25 ~ 29	123	33.33
30 ~ 34	45	12.20
35 ~ 39	24	6.50
40 ~ 44	18	4.88
45 ~ 50	75	20.33
<b>Education Level</b>		
High School Degree or lower	25	6.77
Undergraduate Student	78	21.14
Undergraduate Degree	129	34.96
Graduate Student	57	15.45
Graduate Degree	80	21.68
<b>Monthly Income [South Korean Won]</b>		
200 Million or less	69	18.75
201 Million ~ 300 Million	80	21.74
301 Million ~ 400 Million	61	16.58
401 Million ~ 500 Million	34	9.24
501 Million ~ 600 Million	34	9.24
601 Million ~ 700 Million	23	6.25
701 Million ~ 800 Million	15	4.08
801 Million or more	52	14.13

The basic demographics of respondents were measured through six major items including gender, age, education level, economic status, average number of days per week spent on mediated sport consumption and type of sport most consumed. In the aggregate sample, 250 (67.75%) of the respondents were male and 119 (32.25%) females. Average age of respondents was 34 years old (SD = ±12.4) and over 70% of the respondents' education level was at undergraduate degree or higher. Economic status was measured by monthly income with approximately 66% of the sample with a monthly income of 500 million won or less, while approximately 14% earned 801 million won or more.

In addition, respondents were asked in the past three months, on average how many days per week they spent on mediated sport consumption. Approximately 15% of respondents stated they spent 0 number of days watching mediated sport, while almost 50% of respondents watched on average 4 or more days per week. Additionally, when asked to state the most watched sport, football scored the highest percentage at approximately 39%, with baseball, basketball and volleyball ranking respectively.

**Table 4. Respondent's Mediated Sport Consumption Behavior.**

<b>Mediated Sport Consumption</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Most Consumed Sport</b>		
Football	146	39.57
Baseball	63	17.07
Basketball	27	7.32
Volleyball	18	4.88
E-Sports	11	2.98
Tennis	9	2.44
Other (Cycling, Figure Skating, Golf etc.)	63	17.07
N/A	32	8.67

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<b>Average No. of Days Spent per Week</b>		
0	47	12.74
1 ~ 2	78	21.14
3 ~ 4	102	27.64
5 ~ 6	68	18.43
7	74	20.05

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## **2. Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive statistics by questionnaire items were acquired including 4 items of sport events, 4 items of pre-post sport events, 3 items of sport news, 6 items of opportunity for social connection and 4 items each for bridging and bonding social capital. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale. The results of means and standard deviations indicated that, for the variable sport events, respondents tended to perceive high levels of agreement on the measurement items with the mean scores over 4.77 (SD  $\pm$ 1.58). For pre-post sport events and sport news mean scores were 3.91 (SD  $\pm$ 1.58) and 3.76 (SD  $\pm$ 1.71) respectively, while social connection measured at 4.92 (SD  $\pm$ 1.53). Lastly, for the construct bridging and bonding social capital, respondents tended to evaluate measurement items very highly with mean scores for bridging social capital over 5.26 (SD  $\pm$ 1.16) and for bonding social capital 5.84 (SD  $\pm$ 0.97).

In addition, the normality of each variable was examined by skewness and kurtosis analysis. For both skewness and kurtosis, the absolute value is recommended to be less than 2 (George & Mallery, 2010) and for each construct all values proved to be less than the recommended value, thus measurement items used in this study suffice data normality. Detailed information on descriptive statistics of measurement items is demonstrated in table 5.

**Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Measurement Items.**

	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
<b>Sport Events</b>	1	7	4.77	1.58	0.00	0.14
<b>Pre-Post Sport Events</b>	1	7	3.91	1.58	0.37	0.00
<b>Sport News</b>	1	7	3.76	1.71	0.63	0.00
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>	1	7	4.92	1.53	0.00	0.98
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	1.3	7	5.26	1.16	0.00	0.06
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	2	7	5.84	0.97	0.00	0.00

In addition, to test the reliability of the measurement items used in the study, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient was adopted. All values were above 0.7, exceeding the standard level of internal consistency proposed by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Values in the study ranged from 0.83 being the lowest for bridging social capital and 0.96 being the highest for social connection.

**Table 6. Reliability Test of Measurement Items.**

	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Fit</b>
<b>Sport Events</b>	4	0.85	Good
<b>Pre-Post Sport Events</b>	4	0.85	Good
<b>Sport News</b>	3	0.84	Good
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>	6	0.96	Excellent
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	4	0.83	Good
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	4	0.87	Good

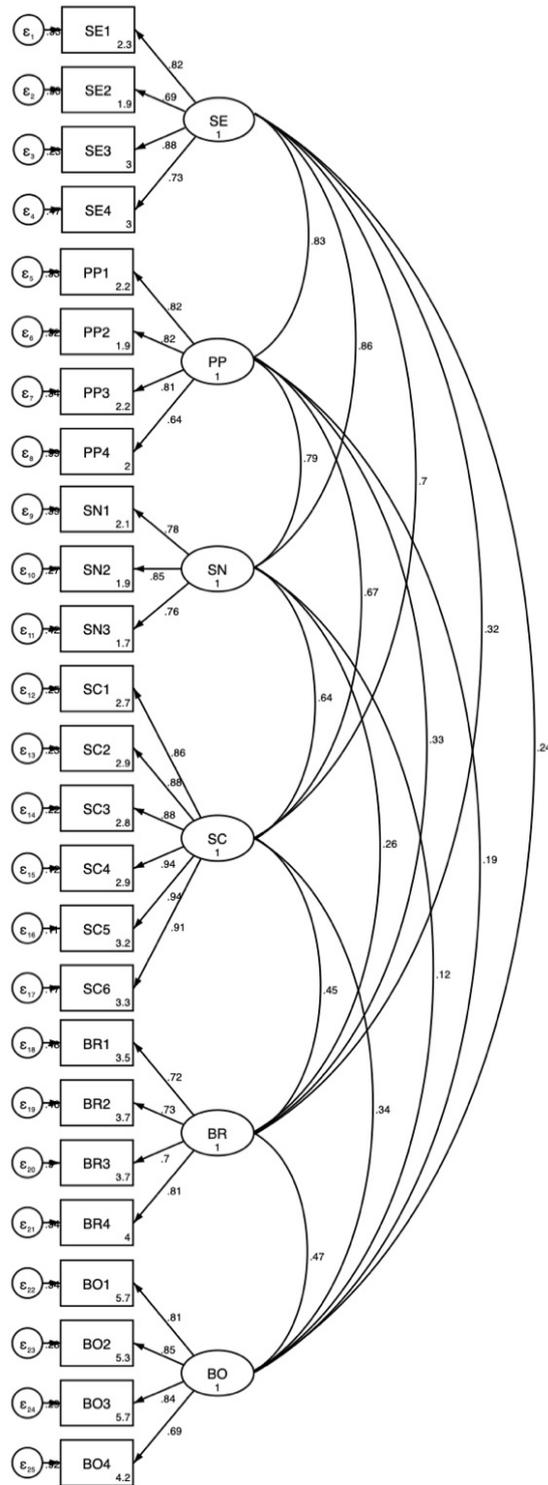
### 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement model, with statistical tests carried out to determine model fit. Absolute fit indices include, but are not limited to,  $\chi^2/\text{df}$ , TLI, CFI, SRMR and RMSEA (Hu and Bentler, 1999). In general, the recommended value for  $\chi^2/\text{df}$  is 3.0 or less; for CFI and TLI 0.9 or higher; while a recommended good-fit for SRMR and RMSEA are values less than 0.1 and 0.08 respectively (Byrne, 2011; Hair et al., 2009; McIver & Carmines, 1981). Results of CFA for this current study confirmed model fit, thus indicating that the proposed model was plausible for analysis. Detailed information on goodness of fit indices for the measurement model is demonstrated in table 7.

**Table 7. Goodness of Fit Indices for Measurement Model.**

<b>Indices</b>	<b>Recommended Criteria</b>	<b>Observed Values</b>
Chi-Square/df ( $\chi^2/\text{df}$ )	$\leq 3.0$	2.08
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$> 0.90$	0.96
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	$> 0.90$	0.95
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$< 0.1$	0.05
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	$< 0.08$	0.04

**Figure 2. CFA of Measurement Model.**



In order to determine liability of the model, reliability and validity tests were carried out. Reliability was estimated using composite reliability, with results showing that all variables were above the recommended 0.7 level (Hair et al., 2009). Convergent validity was achieved as the average extracted variances (AVE) values were above the 0.5 level indicating that more than half of the variances observed would be accounted for by the hypothesized variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). CFA confirmed that all AVE values and factor loadings showed greater values than the recommended 0.5 (Hair et al., 2009) demonstrating all constructs in the measurement model displayed adequate convergent validity.

To establish discriminant validity, the square root of AVE was calculated, as the criterion proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), and tested to confirm the value for each variable was higher than any correlation coefficient with every other variable in the model. Confirmation of discriminant validity demonstrates that all measured constructs in the model are significantly different. Results confirming discriminant validity is outlined in table 8.

**Table 8. Discriminant Validity Test of Constructs.**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Sport Events</b>	<b>0.78</b>					
<b>Pre-Post Sport Events</b>	0.74	<b>0.80</b>				
<b>Sport News</b>	0.74	0.68	<b>0.80</b>			
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>	0.66	0.64	0.58	<b>0.88</b>		
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	0.29	0.30	0.23	0.40	<b>0.74</b>	
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	0.21	0.17	0.11	0.30	0.40	<b>0.78</b>

Note: Correlation coefficients are included in the lower triangle of the matrix, and the square root of AVE is stated on the diagonal.

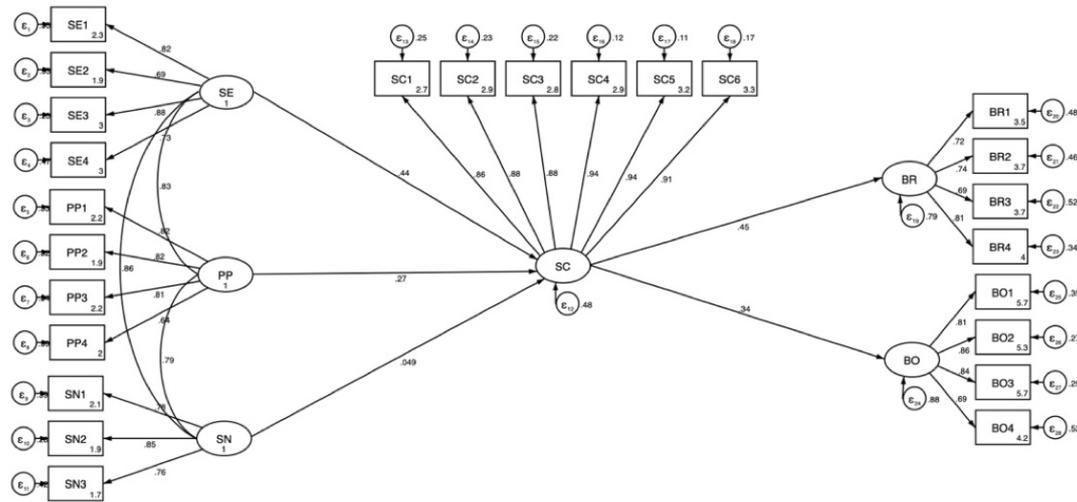
**Table 9. Reliability and Validity Test of Constructs.**

<b>Latent Variables</b>	<b>Indicator variables</b>	<b>Factor Loading &gt; 0.5</b>	<b>Composite Reliability &gt; 0.7</b>	<b>Ave. var. extracted &gt; 0.5</b>
<b>Sport Events</b>	→ SE1	0.82	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.61</b>
	→ SE2	0.69		
	→ SE3	0.88		
	→ SE4	0.73		
<b>Pre-Post Sport Events</b>	→ PP1	0.82	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.65</b>
	→ PP2	0.82		
	→ PP3	0.81		
	→ PP4	0.64		
<b>Sport News</b>	→ SN1	0.78	<b>0.84</b>	<b>0.64</b>
	→ SN2	0.85		
	→ SN3	0.76		
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>	→ SC1	0.86	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.79</b>
	→ SC2	0.88		
	→ SC3	0.88		
	→ SC4	0.94		
	→ SC5	0.94		
	→ SC6	0.91		
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	→ BRI1	0.72	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.55</b>
	→ BRI2	0.73		
	→ BRI3	0.70		
	→ BRI4	0.81		
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	→ BO1	0.81	<b>0.86</b>	<b>0.61</b>
	→ BO2	0.85		
	→ BO3	0.84		
	→ BO4	0.60		

#### 4. Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was adopted to measure the structural model and identify the interrelationships among sport events, pre-post sport events, sport news, opportunity for social connection, bridging social capital and bonding social capital. Results of SEM are shown in figure 3.

**Figure 3. Result of SEM**



**Table 10. Goodness of Fit Indices for Research Model.**

Indices	Recommended Criteria	Observed Values
Chi-Square/df ( $\chi^2/df$ )	$\leq 3.0$	2.20
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$> 0.90$	0.95
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	$> 0.90$	0.95
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$< 0.1$	0.06
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	$< 0.08$	0.06

Overall goodness of fit for the structural model was examined to ensure data adequately fit the proposed model. Results showed that  $\chi^2/df$  was 2.20 which was within the suggested value of less than or equal to 3 (McIver & Carmines, 1981) CFI and TLI both reported 0.95; while values for RMSEA and SRMR both showed 0.06 which all indicated good model fit (Byrne, 2011;

Hair et al., 2009; McIver & Carmines, 1981). As a result, a further detailed evaluation of the structural model could be carried out, identifying the degree of magnitude and significance for each path coefficient within the model.

The results show that among the three variables representing mediated sport consumption (i.e., sport events and pre-post sport events, sport news), two variables showed positive significance on opportunity for social connection. Sport events indicated the strongest positive influence on social connection (0.44\*\*\*), with pre-post sport events also showing a positive significance (0.27\*\*). The relationship between sport news and opportunity for social connection, however, did not show any statistical significance. Also, in terms of the relationship between opportunity for social connection and social capital, both paths were significant indicating a positive relationship for both bridging and bonding, while path coefficient values indicate that the influence on bridging social capital (0.45\*\*\*) was slightly stronger than for bonding social capital (0.34\*\*\*). Detailed information of path coefficient and whether results supported the proposed hypotheses can be found in table 11.

**Table 11. Summary of Path Coefficients for Structural Model.**

	<b>Path</b>	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>	Sport Events	0.44	0.12	***	Supported
	← Pre-Post Sport Events	0.27	0.10	**	Supported
	Sport News	0.05	0.11	0.66	Not Supported
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>	← Opportunity for SC	0.45	0.05	***	Supported
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>	← Opportunity for SC	0.34	0.05	***	Supported

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

In addition, a further analysis was conducted to check consistency of the overall structural model and to rigorously examine the relationship between mediated sport consumption (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news), opportunity for social connection and social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). That is, to verify that the results of the interrelationships among the variables remain significant once control variables were taken into account. By considering control variables, it can be assumed that parameter estimates will better represent and explain the relationship between the variables and also control for any potential bias that may be underlying the results (Bentain et al., 2005; Cheung & Lau, 2007; Singh & Sharma, 2016; Williams et al., 2009). Thus, gender, age and income were treated as control variables and incorporated into the structural model.

**Table 12. Goodness of Fit Indices for Research Model with Control Variables.**

<b>Indices</b>	<b>Recommended Criteria</b>	<b>Observed Values</b>
Chi-Square/df ( $\chi^2/df$ )	$\leq 3.0$	2.26
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	$> 0.90$	0.94
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	$> 0.90$	0.93
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	$< 0.1$	0.06
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	$< 0.08$	0.08

Model fit was tested across fit indices before further interpreting the model and while SRMR was slightly high at 0.08, value did not exceed the recommended 0.08 level suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999), thus it was assumed adequate goodness of fit was achieved. Results demonstrated that path significance shown in the first model obtained the same level of significance in the model with the control variables, indicating that results are consistent and thus causal relationships hypothesized between variables are less susceptible to bias (Scholz & Schoner, 1999). Detailed information of path coefficients of SEM including control variables can be found in table 12.

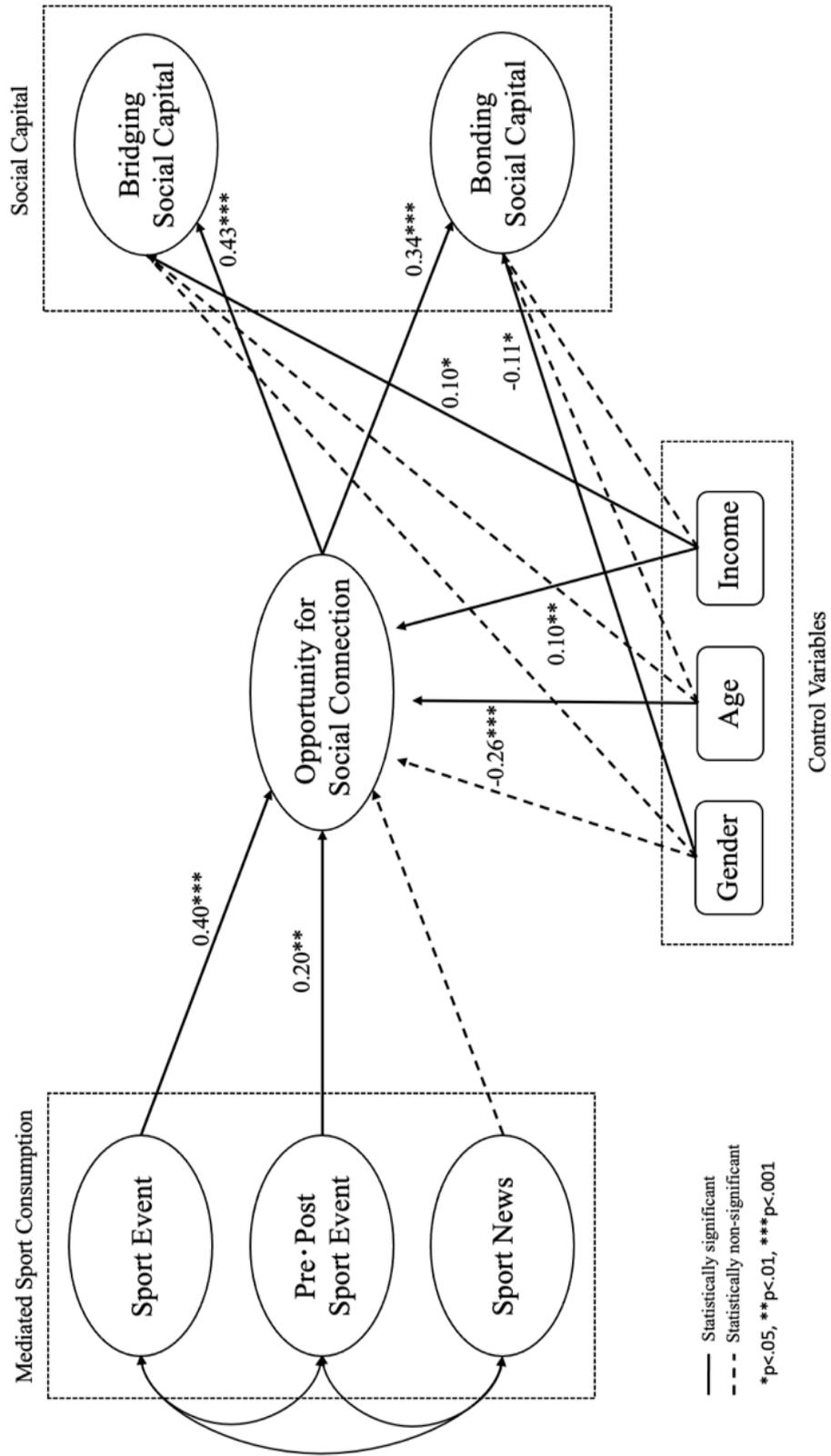
**Table 13. Summary of Path Coefficients for Structural Model with Control Variables.**

	<b>Path</b>	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Hypothesis</b>	
<b>Opportunity for SC</b>		Sport Events	0.40	0.12	***	Supported
		Pre-Post Sport Events	0.20	0.09	**	Supported
		Sport News	0.15	0.11	0.15	Not Supported
	←	Age	-0.26	0.04	***	-
		Gender	-0.43	0.04	0.30	-
		Income	0.10	0.04	**	-
<b>Bridging Social Capital</b>		Opportunity for SC	0.43	0.05	***	Supported
	←	Age	-0.05	0.06	0.33	-
		Gender	0.00	0.06	0.94	-
		Income	0.10	0.05	*	-
<b>Bonding Social Capital</b>		Opportunity for SC	0.34	0.05	***	Supported
	←	Age	-0.08	0.06	0.16	-
		Gender	-0.11	0.05	*	-
		Income	-0.03	0.05	0.48	-

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Analysis of control variables also showed interesting results, both age and income showed statistical significance for opportunity for social connection. Age showed a negative coefficient of -0.26 (\*\*\*) indicating that younger respondents perceived stronger levels of opportunity for social connection than older respondents. Income showed a positive relationship 0.10 (\*\*) suggesting that those with higher income found opportunity for social connection to be stronger. Gender showed no statistical significance. Control variables for bridging social capital portrayed no statistical significance for both age and gender, while income indicated a positive relationship 0.10 (\*). Lastly, among the three control variables only gender showed statistical significance for bonding social capital which indicated a negative coefficient, suggesting females showed greater levels of bonding social capital than males. Detailed information of path coefficients of SEM including control variables is depicted in figure 4.

Figure 4. Result of SEM with Control Variables.



## **VI. DISCUSSION**

An extant amount of literature supports the notion that sport has a powerful social potential which can lead to social impact such as social capital. However, most of these studies have focused on sport participation while very few, if any have addressed the social impacts associated with mediated sport consumption. Therefore, this study examined mediated sport consumption, more specifically the different types of sport content consumed, and its impact on bridging and bonding social capital as a result of opportunity for social connection. Overall findings were consistent with the theoretical predictions demonstrated throughout the study, suggesting that mediated sport consumption can lead to social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). Detailed summarization of the findings from the study are discussed below.

### **1. Opportunity for Social Connection via Mediated Sport Consumption**

While the social motive for consuming mediated sports is well documented (Boehmer, 2016; Hwang & Lim, 2015; Raney, 2012), this current study extended the idea by empirically assessing if mediated sport consumption has social impact such as the ability to provide the opportunity for social connection. Based on theoretical background, antecedents for social connection were derived as a sense of similarity, affective connection and individual, cultural differences. In addition, the social penetration theory posits that for social relationships to develop self-disclosure is crucial and exchange in discussion is more likely to occur when individuals have greater similarities (Carpenter & Greene, 2015).

Thus, based on this theoretical background, it was hypothesized that mediated sport consumption will have positive impact on opportunity for social connection. That is, the commonality of enjoying mediated sports will allow for more opportunities to interact with others and the consumption of different types of sport content will allow for greater sports interest and knowledge which can help facilitate social connection. Mediated sport consumption was distinguished into three different types of sport content (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events, sport news) and was predicted to have positive impact on opportunity for social connection. Findings partially support the hypotheses.

Among the three different types of content, sports events showed the greatest statistical significance, indicating a strong positive relationship on opportunity for social connection. This aligns with previous studies that document the social nature of the activity and also literature in sport fandom that argue more highly identified sport fans can benefit as a result of their identification (Gau & Kim, 2011; Gordon et al., 2019; Lee & Hur, 2019; Thomas et al., 2017). Thus, as majority of sport events consumed through mediated sports are of team sports, it can be assumed the results of this study may mirror the relationship demonstrated for sport fandom. Wann (2011) empirically showed that a positive relationship between team-identification and social connection exists, with other areas of literature in leisure also showing similar findings regarding positive outcomes as a result of social relationships (Glover et al., 2005; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005; Clopton, 2008). Results of this current study align with these previous researches indicating that consuming sport events can allow for the opportunity to facilitate and maintain valuable social connection with others.

While extant literature on sport events exists, studies examining the social impact of other sport content are scarce. In fact, up to date this study was the first to examine content such as pre-post sport events and sport news for its potential social impacts. While sport events initiate emotional connection between consumers, pre-post sport events and sport news were predicated to increase an individual's sport knowledge and interest thus as a result of such consumption would broaden one's knowledge about a certain player, team or league. In line with the social penetration theory this would allow for greater self-disclosure with others with similar interest as one has more knowledge and information to talk about (Carpenter & Greene, 2015). Results of the study indicate that as predicted, pre-post sport events and opportunity for social connection demonstrate a positive relationship, however, for sport news results did not show any statistical significance. Therefore H1-1 was not confirmed.

A reason for this can be that items measuring sport content were restricted to video form (exclusion of other mediated content available online such as sport-related articles, photos, blogs or posts etc.) and as previous research have shown that people do not restrict their news consumption to one medium and are likely to consume news across multiple mediums, it can be assumed that even though individuals may consume sport news it is through different mediums not in video form such as newspapers, social media and sport websites. As a result, respondents of this sample may have shown low levels for sport news when completing the questionnaire, influencing the relationship between sport news and opportunity for social connection.

## **2. Influence of Opportunity for Social Connection on Social Capital**

In regards to the relationship between opportunity for social connection and social capital, results indicated that opportunity for social connection has positive impact on both bridging and bonding social capital. More specifically, while both statistically significant, findings demonstrate that opportunity for social connection showed greater impact on bridging social capital than bonding social capital.

Based on the results of this study, it can be assumed that the opportunity for social connection via mediated sport consumption is more likely to lead to individuals developing greater number of weak ties than the development of intimate and personal relationships. This aligns with the social penetration theory as it suggests that sport is considered a ‘breadth’ topic and such topics are more likely to be perceived as superficial or peripheral (Carpenter & Greene, 2015). Therefore, conversation and discussion around sport topics are believed to be easily talked about and shared with other people regardless of the relationship not being too close. Benefits of developing such weaker ties can be that people of more diverse backgrounds are able to interact and connect as a result of a commonality, that is the consumption of mediated sports.

Furthermore, opportunity for social connection via mediated sport consumption also showed positive impact on bonding social capital. Although, the impact was lower than bridging social capital, findings indicate that positive value such as emotional support can be derived from the more intimate relationships that are developed as a result of opportunity for social connection. It can also be assumed, existing more close relationships are further strengthened and maintained as a result of mediated sport consumption.

### **3. Theoretical and Managerial Implications**

Theoretically, this study provides extension to literature examining mediated sport consumption by exploring the potential social impacts associated with consuming different types of sport content. SEM was conducted to identify the relationships between sport events, pre-post sport events, sport news, opportunity for social connection, bridging social capital and bonding social capital. By adopting such an approach, a novel understanding of the outcomes and causal relationships associated with mediated sport consumption was achieved. Specifically, by identifying the antecedents to social connection and applying such theoretical foundation to the sport context, a clearer understanding of how social connection facilitates the accumulation of social capital was obtained.

In addition, previous research in mediated sport consumption have tended to concentrate on one specific sport content such as sport events and matches (Cummins & Hahn, 2013; Kim et al., 2016; Rowe, 2014), however with new technology proliferating at a rapid pace, new and diverse content are continually being produced for people to consume. Thus, this study adopted a more holistic approach by examining other available sport content and its associated social impacts. As a result, sport content that are conventionally given little scholarly attention, were also examined providing researchers a more comprehensive understanding of the mediated sport environment.

In terms of managerial implications, the current study provides evidence-based results to indicate that mediated sport consumption has potential social impacts. This is particularly significant in terms of sport policy as in the past, sport policy makers have mostly focused on social impacts and outcomes of sport participation. Consequently, the majority of sport policy design and implementation have been concentrated on sport

participation (Chalip, 2006; Kim & James, 2019). Thus, findings from this study can provide groundwork and guidance for sport policy makers in the future to consider the social potential of mediated sport consumption and help better derive social impacts such as social capital from consumption of mediated sports.

Also, results from this study may benefit sport organizations and marketers in better promoting mediated sports. Current emphasis for mediated sport is orientated towards entertainment, marketing and sponsorship (Breuer et al., 2021; Jensen & White, 2018; Raney, 2012), however by improving the perception of such consumption behavior and also advertise its social benefits, sport organizations and marketers may gain better consumer interest and retention.

#### **4. Limitations and Future Research**

Despite the valuable insights and findings derived from the current study, it is not without its limitations and therefore cautious interpretation of the results are required. The study's shortcomings are acknowledged and specified, with directions for future studies also discussed.

First, mediated sport consumption in this study was measured using a general "attitude-based" approach in terms of the amount of sport content watched. Thus, to increase reliability of results, future studies should measure actual usage of mediated sport consumption either through the collection of secondary data or a longitudinal study observing respondent's behavior over time.

Second, in this study opportunity for social connection was measured only in the offline context, missing the opportunity to incorporate social connection in the online context which would allow the comparison between the two different scenarios. With advancement in technology and mediated

sport consumption shifting from a passive to a more interactive behavior, examining the opportunity to facilitate and maintain social connection online certainly deserves further research.

Third, the depth or type of social connection was not accounted for in this study. Wann (2006) recognized two types of social connection (i.e., enduring and temporal) and how they can differ in levels of well-being. As such, researchers in the future should consider the different types of social connection available as findings may provide insightful conclusions on its influence on the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital.

Fourth, as the primary objective of the study was to develop an initial understanding of the theoretical predications and examine the causal relationships among the proposed variables, the sample was collected from the general population across diverse demographic backgrounds. Future research should replicate the findings for specific demographic groups and different types of sport consumers to identify moderating variables that may provide a more comprehensive and robust understanding of the overall hypothesized model.

Lastly, applying the theoretical and empirical practice of this study in cross-cultural studies can provide a better understanding of the role of social connection in explaining the relationship between mediated sport consumption and social capital. As a result, future research across different cultures and individuals offers the possibility to identify unique results that may contribute to the body of existing literature.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The current study examined the potential social impact of mediated sport consumption, in particular the role of social connection and its impact on accumulating social capital. Although, social connection is an important research construct in understanding social capital, previous scholarly attention in sport literature has been limited, especially in the context of mediated sports.

Therefore, this study was conducted to bridge this gap in literature by examining the interrelationships among mediated sport consumption (i.e., sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news), opportunity for social connection, and social capital (i.e., bridging and bonding). Additionally, as previous literature in mediated sports have tended to focus on one type of sport content, this study aimed to examine the social impact of other sport content that are available in the media sport landscape. Based on extant theoretical background and empirical analysis using SEM, findings of the study indicate significant conclusions that contribute to the sport management and communication literature. The overall results of the study are as follows.

First, mediated sport consumption was distinguished into three different types of sport content: sport events, pre-post sport events and sport news. Results indicated that both sport events and pre-post sport events showed a positive relationship to opportunity for social connection, with sport events demonstrating the strongest correlation. This indicates that individuals who consumes content related to sport events and pre-post sport events, perceived such consumption to better facilitate opportunities to establish and maintain social connection. Inconsistent to predictions, however, results for sport news and opportunity for social connection indicated no statistical significance.

Second, results showed the relationship between opportunity for social connection and both bridging and bonding social capital to be significant. While, opportunity for social connection showed greater impact on bridging social capital than bonding social capital. Such findings are consistent with previous studies assessing the social outcomes of being interconnected with others (Clopton, 2008; Glover et al., 2005; Maynard & Kleiber, 2005).

In conclusion, this current study provides empirical evidence to support the social impact of mediated sport consumption. Previously, there has been no research that incorporates social connection as a theoretical construct when examining mediated sports consumption. Thus, this study provides the groundwork for future studies in understanding the potential social impacts associated with mediated sports through the facilitation of social connection. Additionally, this paper examined three different types of sport content and with content in the media sport landscape continuously diversifying and growing, understanding the different types of content available for consumers and the associated outcomes of each content can be beneficial to the sport management and communication literature. As yet, scholarly attention examining these important issues have been limited, therefore, future empirical research is warranted for better theoretical understanding.

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# APPENDIX

## 설문지

### 스포츠미디어 소비에 대한 인식조사

귀한 시간 내어 설문에 응해주셔서 감사합니다.

본 설문조사는 스포츠미디어 소비에 대한 인식을 조사하고자 실시하는 설문입니다.

응답해주신 모든 내용은 연구목적으로만 사용될 것이며, 응답자의 신원 및 응답내용은 다른 어떤 용도로 사용되지 않을 것입니다.

설문문항에 대한 정답은 없으며, 각 조사항목에 성의껏 응답해주시기 바랍니다.

바쁘신 가운데 설문에 참여해주신 점 다시 한 번 감사드립니다.

응답에 소요되는 시간은 5분 내외입니다.

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→ 귀하는 가용한 모든 매체(TV, PC, 핸드폰, 태블릿, 신문, 잡지 등)를 이용하여 다음의 스포츠콘텐츠를 얼마나 소비하십니까?

설문내용	전혀 보지 않는다					아주 많이 본다	
관심 있는 스포츠 경기의 생중계	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 경기의 녹화중계	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 경기의 하이라이트	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 경기의 명장면(월드컵, 올림픽 등)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 선수, 팀, 감독의 인터뷰	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 선수, 팀의 훈련 영상	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 선수, 팀, 리그 관련 다큐멘터리	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
관심 있는 스포츠 관련 창작자 영상(UGC)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
국내 스포츠 뉴스	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
해외 스포츠 뉴스	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠뉴스토크쇼	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

→ 다음은 스포츠미디어의 인식에 관련된 문항입니다.

\* ‘스포츠 미디어’는 다양한 매체( TV, PC, 핸드폰, 태블릿, 신문, 잡지 등)를 통해 접할 수 있는 모든 종류의 스포츠 관련 콘텐츠를 의미합니다.

설문내용	전혀 그렇지 않다					매우 그렇다	
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 친구 및 지인과의 관계를 유지하는 데 도움이 된다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 새로운 사람들과 친목도모를 하는 데 도움이 된다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 친구들과 함께 시간을 보낼 수 있는 좋은 기회이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 다른 사람들과 좋은 인간관계를 유지 할 수 있는 좋은 기회이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 친구들과 유대감을 형성할 수 있는 좋은 기회이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
스포츠 미디어를 소비하는 것은 사람들과 동질감을 느낄 수 있는 좋은 기회이다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦

→ 다음은 사회적 관심, 인간관계와 관련된 문항입니다.

설문내용	전혀 그렇지 않는다	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	매우 그렇다 ⑦
나는 집밖에서 일어나는 일들에 관심이 많다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
나는 평소에 새로운 것들을 시도하고 싶다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
나는 나와 다른 사람들이 어떤 생각을 하는지에 대해 관심이 있다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
나는 세상의 많은 곳들이 궁금하다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
내 주변에는 내가 중요한 결정을 할 때 조언을 구할 수 있는 사람이 있다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
내 주변에는 나의 개인적인 문제를 편안하게 얘기할 수 있는 사람이 있다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
내 주변에는 내가 외로울 때 소통할 수 있는 사람이 있다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	
내 주변에는 나를 위해 희생해줄 사람이 있다.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	

→ 다음은 귀하의 일반 사항에 관한 문항입니다.

1. 귀하의 나이는 어떻게 되십니까? (만 나이)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. 귀하의 성별은 어떻게 되십니까?

- ① 남성
- ② 여성

3. 귀하의 최종 학력은 어떻게 되십니까?

- ① 고등학교 졸업
- ② 대학교 졸업
- ③ 대학교 재학
- ④ 대학교 졸업
- ⑤ 대학원 재학
- ⑥ 대학원 졸업

4. 귀하의 가구 월 평균 총수입은 어떻게 되십니까?

- ① 200 만원 미만
- ② 200 만원 이상\_300 만원 미만
- ③ 300 만원 이상\_400 만원 미만
- ④ 400 만원 이상\_500 만원 미만
- ⑤ 500 만원 이상\_600 만원 미만
- ⑥ 600 만원 이상\_700 만원 미만
- ⑦ 700 만원 이상\_800 만원 미만
- ⑧ 800 만원 이상

5. 귀하는 지난 한 달간, 스포츠 관련 콘텐츠(경기중계 및 하이라이트, 뉴스, UCC 등)를 일주일 평균 며칠 시청하셨습니까?

- ① 시청 안 함
- ② 1 일
- ③ 2 일
- ④ 3 일
- ⑤ 4 일
- ⑥ 5 일
- ⑦ 6 일
- ⑧ 7 일

6. 귀하는 어떤 종목의 스포츠를 주로 시청하십니까?

(여러 종목을 시청하는 경우, 그중 가장 많이 시청하는 종목을 선택해주시기 바랍니다).

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설문이 종료되었습니다.

설문에 응해주셔서 진심으로 감사드립니다.

## 국문 초록

# 스포츠 미디어 소비의 사회적 효과: 스포츠 미디어 콘텐츠 소비가 교량적 사회자본과 결속적 사회자본에 미치는 영향

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글로벌스포츠매니지먼트 전공

최근 연구에서는 스포츠 미디어 소비의 사회적 효과, 특히 사회적 교류의 역할과 사회적 자본에 대한 영향을 밝혀내고 있다. 사회적 교류(social connection)는 사회적 자본을 이해하는 데 중요한 변인이지만, 체육학 분야 그중 스포츠 미디어 분야에서는 이와 관련된 연구가 부족한 실정이다.

따라서, 본 연구의 목적은 스포츠 미디어 소비(스포츠 이벤트, 스포츠 이벤트 전·후 콘텐츠, 스포츠 뉴스)와 사회적 교류, 사회적 자본의 관계를 규명하는 데 있다. 구체적으로, 스포츠 미디어 소비가 사회적 교류에 미치는 영향, 사회적 교류가 사회적 자본에 미치는 영향을 분석하고자 한다. 이를 검증하기 위해 본 연구에서는 설문조사를 실시하였으며, 총 369 명의 응답자로부터 데이터를 수집하였다. 데이터 분석은 통계프로그램 STATA를 이용하였고, 변인 간의 구조적 관계 분석을 위해 구조방정식분석(SEM)을 실시하였다. 본 연구의 결과는 다음과 같다.

첫째, 스포츠 미디어의 콘텐츠 유형에 따라 사회적 교류에 미치는 영향이 달라지는 것으로 나타났다. 스포츠 이벤트와 스포츠 이벤트 전·후 콘텐츠는 사회적 교류에 정(+)의 영향을 미쳤지만, 스포츠 뉴스는 통계적으로 유의한 영향이 나타나지 않았다. 둘째, 사회적 교류는 교량적 사회자본과 결속적 사회자본에 정(+)의 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 그중 사회적 교류는 사회적 자본의 교량(bridging)에 더 큰 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다.

본 연구를 통해 스포츠 미디어 소비와 사회적 자본의 관계를 밝혀낼 수 있었다. 스포츠매니지먼트와 커뮤니케이션의 관점에서 보았을 때, 본 연구의 결과는 스포츠 미디어 소비의 사회적 효과를 뒷받침한다. 스포츠 미디어 콘텐츠가 지속적으로 다양화되고 성장함에 따라, 각 스포츠 미디어 콘텐츠의 특성과 이들이 어떠한 영향을 미치는지 파악한다면 스포츠매니지먼트와 커뮤니케이션 학문의 발전에 이바지할 수 있을 것이다.

**주요어:** 스포츠미디어 소비, 스포츠 콘텐츠, 사회적 교류, 사회적 자본, 결속적, 교량적

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