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Master's Thesis of Global Sport Management

# **Exploring spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events**

장애인 스포츠 이벤트에 대한 스포츠 관람자의  
관람 동기 및 관람 제약 요인 탐색 연구

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This work was supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism and Sports Promotion Foundation

# Exploring spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events

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## **Abstract**

# **Exploring spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events**

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Spectatorship is a vital component of sports events, as it not only enhances the overall experience for athletes but also plays a significant role in promoting inclusivity and raising awareness about disability sports. While there is a growing body of research on spectator motivation and constraints in mainstream sports, limited attention has been given to understanding these factors specifically within disability sports events. This research aims to provide an overview of a study that explores the motivation and constraints of spectators attending disability sports events, shedding light on their experiences, preferences, and challenges.

The research on spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events emphasizes the significance of inspiration, social connection, and entertainment as significant motivators for audiences. Addressing physical, logistical, and attitudinal constraints can lead to improved accessibility and inclusivity. Focusing on enhancing the spectator experience through various strategies, event organizers can foster a positive and engaging environment that attracts a diverse and enthusiastic audience to disability sports events.

The findings of this research will contribute to a better understanding of the motivations and constraints that shape spectatorship in disability sports events in Sri Lanka.

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**Keywords:** Disability Sports, Spectator Motivation, Spectator Constraints, Qualitative Interviews, Disability Sports Events.

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Study Background**

Performance and enjoyment are both impacted by the presence of spectators at sporting events. The encouragement of the crowd increases the self-confidence of all athletes, whether they are amateur or professional, young or more skilled, disabled or not. As spectators are once again attracted to games, it's time to consider how regular fans' cheers might inspire their favourite athletes to perform better. Physical and mental performance are improved by creating a supportive environment for the players. Especially when it comes to disability sports events, spectators will play a big role by supporting disabled people.

According to the statistics, disability sports and the Paralympics community have made notable progress. As a result of countries' increased awareness of people with mental, physical, and sensory impairments, the number of nations participating in the Paralympics has increased in recent years. More people with disabilities are able to participate in the Paralympic Games every time they are held since there are more possibilities to compete in disability sports and there are more events overall.

### 1.1.1. Growth of Spectators

More nations have become involved in the Paralympics as people become more educated about the importance of accommodating those with physical, mental, and sensory limitations. More people with disabilities are able to participate in the Paralympic Games every time they are held since there are more possibilities to compete in disability sports and there are more events overall.

Looking back at the history of para games, there has been a massive increase in spectator engagement over the past two years. Since Sir Ludwig Guttman's inaugural Paralympic Games in Rome in 1960, the Summer and Winter Paralympics have achieved significant progress. Since its establishment in 1960 and 1976, the Summer and Winter Paralympics have seen a considerable increase in participation.

In several cases, the Rio 2016 Paralympics attracted larger audiences than the Games. 4,11 billion people watched the 2016 Paralympics in Rio. As a result, Rio 2016 became the most attended Paralympics in history. (CyberGhost, 2021) Furthermore, this puts the event on par with several Olympic events.

The Paralympics, which are generally recognized as the world's third-largest sporting event, garnered cumulative television viewership of billions of people worldwide, which helped break down boundaries and create societal change.

#### 1.1.2. Changes in audience

The sporting landscape has changed significantly worldwide during the past two years. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, a variety of recent commentary on *Managing Sports and Leisure* has investigated sports.

There is a lot of uncertainty around the globe while the COVID-19 pandemic is still being fought, and our sports community and Para sports are no different. The majority of para-sporting competitions have been postponed, and both athletes and event organizers are unsure when the regular competition will resume and when they may get back to competing. Living with the virus is the new normal, and with limitations gradually being lifted in some places, one might predict a return to disability sports events.

However, during the pandemic, the use of technology has become an increasingly significant aspect of people's everyday lives. To combat COVID-19 and ensure our safety throughout this challenging period,



technology-assisted individuals in maintaining their distance from one another and communicating with one another.

In this case, using this technology, Tokyo Paralympic 2020 will be able to expand its online audience more effectively than its offline audience. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) estimates that a worldwide TV viewership of 4.25 billion people would likely watch the Games during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, which will establish a new record for the highest number of viewers ever. But on the other way, the live audience has dropped. Toshiro Muto, CEO of the Tokyo Paralympic Committee, announced that the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Paralympics, 2020, in the 68,000 seat National Stadium, will have more than 10,000 people in attendance but will be fewer than 20,000. (Ayano, 2021) However, according to the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic organizing committee's report, the attendance of offline spectators is 15.33 million. (Alexandru, 2021)

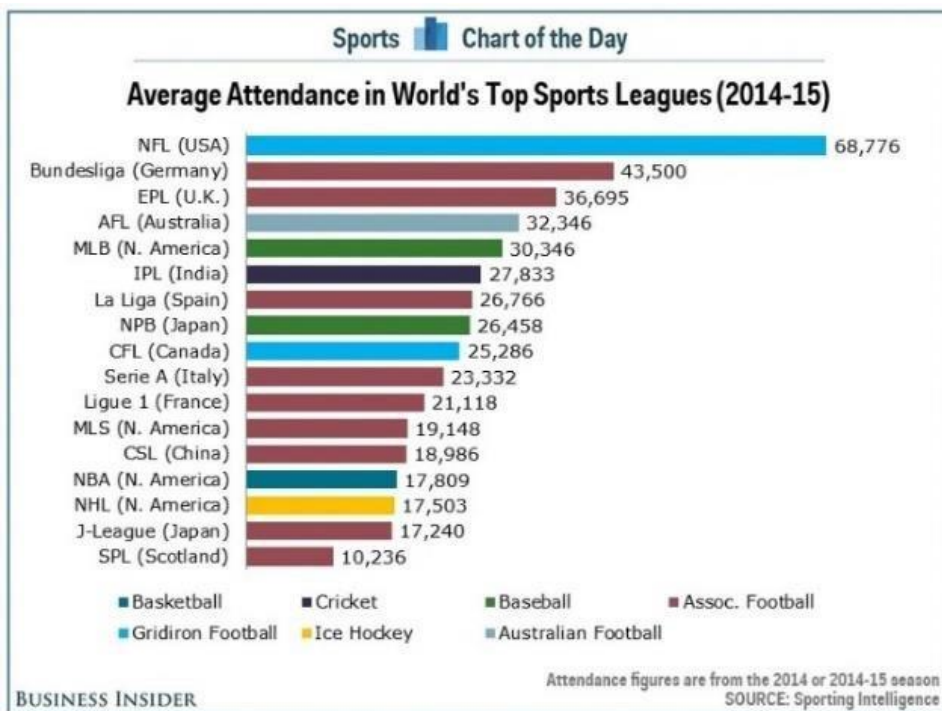
### 1.1.3. Disability sports events with general sports events

In today's society, spectators in attendance at modern sporting events regularly exceed attendance records. For example, in 2014, the average attendance at an NFL game was 68,776 fans, which was more than 25,000

fans per game higher than the attendance at games in the next-highest league Bundesliga in German with 43,500. (Cork, 2015)

Figure 1

*Average attendance in world top sports league (2014 - 2015)*

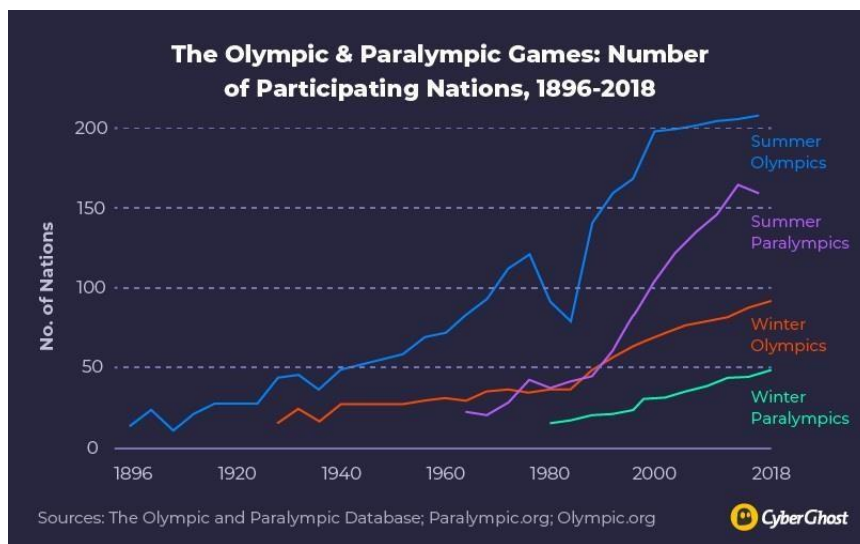


Moreover, the FIFA World Cup in 2018 was attended by 3.03 million spectators who watched the games live inside the stadiums. The average number of spectators at each game of the 2018 World Cup was 47,371. (Statista, 2022)

On the other hand, when we examine disability sports events, we see a significantly less number of spectators. Looking back at the history of para games, there has been an increase as well as a decrease in the number of participating nations several times.

Figure 2

*Olympics and Paralympics Games Number of Participating Nations*



According to the report of the Paralympic committee, ticket sales for the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio are approximately 2 million. Also, the closing ceremony of the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 was attended by only 45,000 spectators. (IPC, n.d.)

## **1.2. Purpose of Research**

The daily lives of disabled sports fans are extremely complicated and for many, going back to the stadium is yet another challenge to being treated fairly in society. Simply there is no sport without spectators. The comparison of disability sports events with general sports events reveals a lower level of participation in disability sports events, as stated in the findings that are presented in section 1.1.3.

The FIFA World Cup is a championship for international association football that is held once every four years. Athletes with intellectual disabilities compete in the Special Olympics World Games, which are sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee. The Paralympic Games are run concurrently with and similarly to the Olympic Games. This competition features athletes competing in a variety of sports. If one looks at the data of the viewers, one can see that even the event that features multiple sports has a lower number of people watching it than the event that features just one sport.

This research, the significance will identify spectator motivations in disability sports events in Sri Lanka, contribute to spectator promotion marketing or management of organizations related to disability sports events

in Sri Lanka and provide a theoretical basis for spectator motivations in disability sports events in Sri Lanka. This study aims to the spectators' motivations in disability sports events in Sri Lanka through comparative analysis using the MSDSC. In addition, try to support disability sports and make them popular and develop the event through motivation. Event Management can follow these motivation factors and it will be really valuable to them.

### **1.3. Research Question**

The analysis of the research will be conducted utilizing these three research questions:

RQ1 - What are the motivation of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?

RQ2 - How do constraints effect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Spectators in Sports**

Sports are a great way for a break from a long week at work, to spend time with friends and family. It makes no difference whether the sport is football, handball, baseball, or cricket. All around us are numerous people who share our sentiments and who watch sports for similar motives. It's simply enjoyable and gives the thrill. Spectators play a significant role in sports as they provide the energy, excitement, and support that contribute to the overall atmosphere of an event. The majority of the time, when the venues are sold out and the atmosphere is incredible. A spectator in sport is marked by the presence of spectators or observers at its events. Their cheers, chants, and reactions lead to the overall spectacle of the game by creating a lively environment. They are typically distinguished from participant sports, which tend to be more leisurely. They are distinguished from sports played by participants, which are typically played for leisure rather than competition. (Kyle et al., 1987)

As a service, sport is an intangible product Sporting events are regarded as naturally containing spectators who are present in the stands as a

necessary element. In addition to the ambience they bring to the game and the vibrancy they bring to the competition, the presence of spectators reflects the sporting event.

## **2.2. Motivation**

The ability to motivate oneself is a powerful asset that may assist one in achieving success in one's life. It will be helpful as a motivator, a means of physical and psychological development, or other things like a target that encourages us to keep going. A little source of inspiration may go a long way for various people in their day-to-day lives.

There are as many different forms of motivation in the world as there are different objectives that people want. As a result of these psychological processes, it is necessary to create a strategy that considers the individuals' requirements and preferences to achieve success. “Inspiring people to perform at their best and breaking through barriers on the path to change” (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012). Whether we refer to it as a need or a drive, motivation is a state of being inside of us that yearns for a change, either in the environment or in the person.

Behavior that is energetic and persistently focused on achieving a goal might be thought of as the essence of motivation. According to Cook &

Artino, 2016, motivation may be defined as the process through which goal-directed behaviours are launched and maintained. It depends on how successful people think they will be and how much value they think they will get out of everything. When we are motivated, we move and take action. It is commonly assumed that several mental states compete with one another to influence behaviour, and only the dominant form can explain the observed behaviour.

In terms of extrinsic motivation, our surroundings and the social setting in which we find ourselves will significantly impact us. In addition, we will be motivated by our goals, beliefs, needs and desires to feel the particular feelings linked with reaching particular end-states.

### 2.2.1. Theories of consumer motivation

The subject of study known as Motivation examines all of the different processes that lead an individual to become aware of a need and then pursue a specified plan of action to satisfy that need. Certain elements affect it, and those factors, in turn, have an effect on the behaviour of customers and the requirements of those consumers.



The study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the behaviours connected to the buying, consumption, and disposal of products and services is known as consumer behaviour. It is comprised of the manner in which the feelings, attitudes, and preferences of the customer influence their purchasing behaviour.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow's study is the basis of the most well-known and widely accepted theory of human motivation. He developed the hierarchy of needs, an approach to mental health based on the idea that people have a natural order of priorities when it comes to their basic needs. He determines that there are five fundamental categories of human need, which can be ranked in significance from lowest to highest, starting with physiological requirements. (Constantin et al., 2010)

According to Maslow, the hierarchy of needs in a person begins with lower-order physiological wants (such as thirst, hunger, and rest), followed by security requirements (such as shelter, safety, and security), social needs (such as affection, friendship, love, and acceptance), and self-esteem needs (such as prestige, success, and accomplishment), and lastly self-actualization needs. Self-fulfilment and enriching experiences can show as examples of self-actualization needs. (Constantin et al., 2010) Research into audience motivation frequently reflects participants' desire to fulfil the demand that is

seen to be at the highest tier of their needs. Self-fulfilment or self-actualization is the need that is considered to be at the highest level. In addition, Morris Hargreaves McIntyre makes use of Maslow's hierarchy, adapting it so that it accurately represents the findings of hundreds of focus groups and significant quantitative research further into the reasons that people attend art galleries and museums in the UK. According to McIntyre, 2007, there are four primary factors that influence attendance: social, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual factors. They mapped Maslow's categories onto their hierarchy to explain how the two models connect to each other, as will be seen in the following.

Figure 3

*Hierarchy of motivations*

**Policies, objectives and needs matrix**

Government/ MLA policy	Museum objectives	Visitors' needs / motives	Engagement with the collection	Maslow's Hierarchy of human needs		
Culture as an indicator of civilisation	Immersion in collection	Escapism	Spiritual	Self actualisation		
		Contemplation				
	Public inspiration	Stimulate activity	Emotional	Aesthetic		
		Aesthetic pleasure				
		Awe and wonder				
	Intimacy with collection	Moving		Cognitive	Esteem	
		Personal relevance				
		Experience the past				
	Collect and conserve	Nostalgia	Intellectual			Social
		Sense of cultural identity				
Academic advancement	Research facility	Academic interest	Intellectual	Safety Physiology		
Lifelong learning		Hobby interest				
Economic development	Public education	Self-improvement	Social	Social		
	Children's education	Stimulate children				
Equal access to culture	Public enjoyment	Social interaction	Social	Social		
	Public attraction	Entertainment				
Combat social problems	Public responsibility	Inclusion, welcome	Social	Social		
	Public space	Access, comfort, warmth, welcome				

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The importance of studying consumer behaviour can be attributed to the fact that it provides marketers with a better understanding of the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions. One of the most significant tasks of a salesperson is to analyse the needs of the target market in order to identify which goods or services will best meet those needs. A consumer who is still in the preliminary stages of the process is likely to be encouraged to examine various products to create a list of options that can later be evaluated. (Mallalieu & Nakamoto, 2008)

The more they understand their target audience, the better they can cater to their wants and needs. Numerous scientists have conducted extensive research on the topic of motivation. Over the years, numerous individuals have developed theories and models in an effort to explain these behaviours in a more streamlined manner.

Attendance motivation can be examined through the viewpoint of self-determination motivation theory. The theory of self-determination was developed by Deci & Ryan, in 1991. The foundation of this theory is that people are creatures whose fundamental or intrinsic functioning can be helped or hindered by the social environment in which they function.

### **2.3. Motivation for Sports Consumption**

Motivation is a significant factor that influences performance in sports. Athletes have a wide variety of constantly shifting motivations for beginning, directing, maintaining, and ultimately ending their efforts, making this a complicated concept to conceptualize. Motivation is the mental process that originates, maintains, or controls the conduct of an athlete. Such as training, approach to the competition, managing adversity, and performance will help. (Clancy et al., 2017). Within the field of sports, it is well recognized that a high level of motivation is one of the most critical factors that must be

present before players can reach their full potential. Athletes and officials can be motivated by either internal or external causes or a combination of both. The exact combination that drives them might change depending on the circumstances and the time.

Sports motivation can be divided into two categories. Two types of motivation are defined as intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. (Clancy et al., 2017) The term "intrinsic motivation" refers to the athletic activity that is driven by internal or personally significant benefits rather than external incentives. Athletes who are intrinsically motivated engage in physical activity for internal motivations, most notably for their sheer delight and fulfilment. These athletes frequently focus on developing their skills. Social factors, such as not wanting to disappoint a parent, and money benefits, such as prizes and college scholarships, can provide extrinsic motivation. A disproportionate focus on extrinsic motivation might give athletes the impression that their actions are being controlled by the rewards they receive for performing well in their sport.

### 2.2.2. Motivating factors to attract consumer

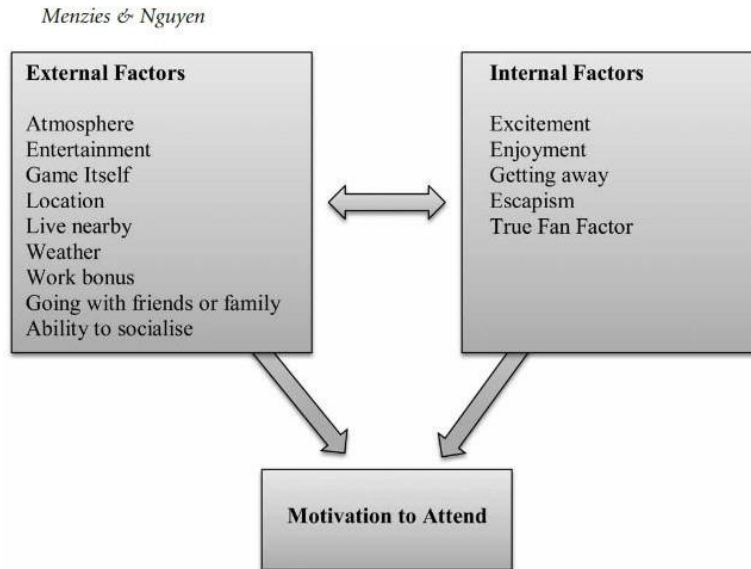
According to the self-determination theory, the process of converting external regulations into internal regulations is known as internalization.

External and internal regulations blend into one's concept of self when this process works optimally. Given the perspective that self-determination theory considers an individual's motivation as being determined by the effect of both internal and external regulations, motivation attend variables were found by Menzies & Nguyen, 2012.

Menzies & Nguyen, 2012 were at the Lexmark Indy 300 Champ Car event in Gold Coast could identify why the spectators attended the sporting event. Internal variables such as excitement, enjoyment, getting away, escapism, and true fan factor, as well as external factors such as atmosphere, entertainment, the game itself, location, living nearby, weather, job bonus, going with friends or family, and the ability to socialize have affected the visitors' motivations to attend the sporting event.

Figure 4

*Influences on motivation to attend the Indy 300, Menzies & Nguyen, 2012*



As a result of motivation, people experience tension or disequilibrium, which is defined as a dynamic process of an internal psychological element. (Crompton & McKay, 1997) When it comes to developing superior goods and services, an understanding of motivating factors is absolutely necessary. Because of the growing number and variety of events leading up to the competition, event organizers will be better positioned to provide relevant services if they have a solid awareness of the current scenario. The reasons that people have for coming to the event are as varied as the visitors themselves because of the different things they require. Each visitor may have

a few requirements, and the organizer of the event ought to be required to take those into consideration. This is due to the fact that people come to the event for a variety of reasons. This study offers three strong arguments in favour of attempting to comprehend the genuine motivations behind festival attendance. A marketing truism, they have a solid connection to satisfaction and have been the subject of extensive research involving many individuals.

Tokuyama & Greenwell, 2011 found that there were differences concerning the levels of participation. According to the study's findings, individuals who had a high level of participation in the activity had quite different patterns of motivation when playing the game compared to those who had a lower level of participation and had a much more passive role in the activity. According to this study, whereas other motivations were typically significant for playing or watching soccer, specific motivations were only important for those activities. In addition, this study identified disparities in motivational patterns between groups with high engagement and groups with low engagement. The study's results demonstrated that each individual who attends an event already does for their own unique set of reasons; the event organizer, therefore, needs to be aware of these motives to assure the event's success.



The results of another study point to significant differences between the motivations of fans of mass-market and elite sports. There were thirteen statistically significant variations found between all fourteen of the different motivations that were examined. These motivations were divided into four categories, and they are social, experiential, factual, and results-oriented. (Malchrowicz-Moško & Chlebosz, 2019)

The way that the "entertainment" is handled by the event organizers, including the way that alcohol is distributed and how the "promotional girls" are used, should be looked into more closely because it might affect how the event is seen. It is conceivable to interpret seeing attractive girls as a secondary or additional motivator that, when combined with other variables such as race itself, stimulates people to participate. Because these entertainment-related motivators have been cited as a technique for creating consumer loyalty in the form of sports attendance, they have an effect on future attendance. Future attendance is affected by these entertainment-related motivators. (Hall & O'Mahony, 2006)

According to the findings of Wafi et al., 2017 attendees were inspired to attend this event in order to gain knowledge and break away from the routine of their daily life. In addition, the findings of this study revealed that

the vast majority of customers are pleased with the accommodations as well as the convenience of the location.

## **2.4. Motivation for Disability Sports Consumption**

The participation of individuals with disabilities in sporting events, which are some of the largest gatherings ever held in the world to develop and foster transformation, is a significant factor in getting people to adopt new perspectives regarding those with disabilities. Along with helping to create a sector of the sports business industry that gives long-term employment prospects, it will also bring about legacy benefits, both short- and long-term investments, tourism revenue, and many other benefits. Therefore, the confluence of disability studies and sports studies to our analysis of the social conceptions of sport. As a result, increasing knowledge of the variables that motivate spectators to attend games involving athletes with disabilities is probably necessary.

### **2.4.1. Motivation factors for Disability Sports Consumption**

The performances of athletes with disabilities are significant in a sporting event. According to Schantz & Gilbert, 2001 disabled athletes are

the most frequently quoted symbols when discussing motivation within the context of having a disability. This is particularly true in the area of sports. According to the study's findings, the media frequently uses the image of the "supercrip" and the inspiration it provides to promote disability sports.

Understanding the motives or factors that impact consumption can provide insight to sports marketers, allowing them to build strategies for promotion, fan recruitment, and fan retention, according to research that was conducted by Cottingham et al., 2015 on the topic of disability sports.

According to research that viewers carried out at the Collegiate Wheelchair Basketball Championships in Arlington, Texas, variables such as learning, escape, and social contact have a more substantial impact on a range of consumption measures than supercrip image and inspiration reasons, which are far less effective at encouraging people to watch sports. Acquisition of knowledge, the need to flee, the development of physical abilities, and social interaction were determined to be the four motivations that were significant predictors of all outcome characteristics (Cottingham et al., 2014). Understanding the motives or factors that impact consumption can provide insight to sports marketers, allowing them to build strategies for promotion, fan recruitment, and fan retention, according to research that was conducted by, Cottingham et al., 2013 on the topic of disability sports.

According to his research, the variables of drama, aesthetics, achievement, escape, social connection, knowledge, and physical competence, as well as the two extra factors of repurchase intentions and media-consuming motives, were all incorporated into the concept of disability sports consumption.

Knowing why people come to an event will help the event planner create a more powerful marketing strategy because the reasons people come are tied to their attitudes and behaviours. The previous finding demonstrates that the visitors who attend the sporting event do so for a variety of reasons, which is indicated by the fact that these reasons are shown above. Even in general sports and disability sports events, the differences can be attributed to the sporting event being competed in, the sport's level of attractiveness, the participant's level of experience, and demographic considerations.

#### 2.4.2. Theory and model of consumer motivation

The Motivation Scale for Disability Sport Consumption (MSDSC) is the first motivation scale that was established expressly for use with people who have disabilities who participate in sports. (Cottingham et al., 2014)

Figure 5

*Indicator loadings for spectator motivation factors. (Cottingham et al., 2014)*

M. Cottingham et al./Sport Management Review 17 (2014) 49–64 59

**Table 6**  
Indicator loadings for spectator motivation factors.

Factors	Factor loadings	CR	AVE	rr
<b>Factor 1 – Inspiration</b>				
Watching wheelchair basketball motivates me to live a more active life	0.73	0.85	0.59	.85
Seeing wheelchair basketball evokes emotions making me want to engage in life in a different way	0.73			
Watching wheelchair basketball makes me feel like there is something bigger than myself	0.74			
I enjoy wheelchair basketball because it inspires me to approach things differently	0.86			
<b>Factor 2 – Supercrip Image</b>				
I enjoy watching wheelchair basketball players achieve more than is expected of them	0.69	0.88	0.72	.87
I enjoy watching wheelchair basketball players overcome their disabilities	0.93			
I enjoy watching wheelchair basketball players overcome social barriers	0.91			
<b>Factor 3 – Physical Skill/Esthetics</b>				
The superior skills are something I appreciate while watching the game	0.66	0.77	0.50	.77
I enjoy watching a well-executed performance	0.63			
I appreciate the beauty inherent in the game	0.70			
I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the game	0.72			
<b>Factor 4 – Violence and Aggression</b>				
I enjoy the rough and physical nature of wheelchair basketball	0.92	0.81	0.56	.73
I like it when the players are knocked to the ground	0.47			
I enjoy watching aggressive play	0.85			
I enjoy the hostility that is part of wheelchair basketball	0.44			
<b>Factor 5 – Acquisition of Knowledge</b>				
I know the names of the player on the team/best players on the team	0.74	0.81	0.58	.87
I usually know the team's win/loss record	0.72			
I know the rules of wheelchair basketball	0.83			
<b>Factor 6 – Escape</b>				
The game provides an escape from my day-to-day routine	0.94	0.85	0.66	.83
The game provides a distraction from my everyday activities	0.85			
The game provides a diversion from "life's little problems" for me	0.62			
<b>Factor 7 – Social Interaction</b>				
I enjoy interacting with other people when I watch a game	0.71	0.87	0.70	.87
I enjoy talking with other people when I watch a game	0.92			
I enjoy socializing with other people when I watch a game	0.87			
<b>Factor 8 – Physical Attractiveness</b>				
I enjoy watching players who are physically attractive	0.51	0.76	0.53	.75
The main reason I watch wheelchair basketball is because I find the players physically attractive	0.82			
An individual player's "sex appeal" is a big reason why I watch wheelchair basketball	0.81			

The MSDSC identifies and analyzes context-specific motivation factors in disability sport, which has been a historically underrepresented area of sport within the body of sport management research. In this way, the MSDSC contributes, at least in theory, to the body of sport management literature. In a practical sense, professionals working in the field of disability sports may use the findings of this study to better understand the motivation factors associated with their prospective audience or fans. As a result, they

may be able to more effectively tailor various aspects of marketing in order to increase their market share.

This thirty-three-item scale has two disability sport-specific consumer motives: inspiration (5 items, for example, "Watching wheelchair basketball evokes feelings that make me want to interact in life in a different way") and the super chip image (5 items, e.g., I enjoy watching wheelchair basketball players overcome their disabilities). (Cottingham et al., 2013) The MSDCSC also includes 9 motives used to examine consumer behaviour in non-adaptive sports contexts: drama (3 things, e.g., I appreciate it when the outcome of the game is not decided until the very end), physical skill/aesthetics (4 items, e.g., I enjoy witnessing a well-executed performance), violence/aggression (4 items, e.g., I enjoy the hostility that is part of wheelchair basketball), escape.

The study also asked respondents about their gender, age, amount of income, and degree of education. Two additional items, initially used by Byon & Carroll, 2010, were added to identify whether participants self-identified as having a disability and whether they recognized close friends or family members with disabilities.

## **2.5. Disability Sport events**

People have the opportunity to interact with one another and strengthen their bonds via the shared experience of participating in sports. People with disabilities have always been a part of society, even though they have historically been excluded and not given the same rights as "normal" people. By enabling people with disabilities to fulfil their full potential and become social change advocates, it transforms the disabled person in an equally significant way. People with disabilities are able to develop crucial social skills, increase their level of independence, and acquire the confidence to take on leadership roles through participation in sports. (United Nations, n.d.) When a person has a biological condition or impairment that prevents them from using particular skills, performing specific tasks, or engaging in certain responsibilities, they are considered disabled regarding physical mobility, sight, hearing, or mental functioning. (Zelenika & Zhao, 2018)

The term "disability sport" refers to any organized physical competition meant exclusively for persons with disabilities. This is in contrast to "able-bodied sport," sometimes known as "mainstream sport," which is organized for people who do not have disabilities. (Misener et al., 2018)

Although the percentage of individuals who participate in sports as a whole is still relatively low, there has been a growing trend over the past

several decades toward more involvement of persons with disabilities in the pursuit of sports at a variety of levels.

Para sport, often known as disability sport, is a type of sport that has been around for more than a century and is played by persons who have both physical and intellectual limitations. Individuals with various disabilities have been active participants in the sporting world for the past one hundred years; nevertheless, these athletes have not been given the credit they deserve and, more importantly, have not been accepted as athletes.

As a milestone in the history of disability sports, the first Sports Club for the Deaf was founded in Berlin in the 19th century. (IPC, n.d.)

### 2.5.1. Paralympics

Sport is typically split into three primary divisions of disability sports, ranging from the earliest organized movements to the most important international sports organizations and competitions for athletes with disabilities. (IPC, n.d.) The three categories of disability sports are Sports for Deaf Athletes, Sports for People with Physical Impairment, and Sports for People with Intellectual Impairment. As an organized movement, sports for deaf athletes boast the most extended history. The International Silent Games, held in 1924, just a few weeks after the Summer Olympics in Paris, were the



first international sporting competition for athletes who are deaf as well as the first international competition for athletes with disabilities in general. (IPC, n.d.)

It wasn't until the 1940s, just a few years after the end of World War II, that the Paralympic movement got its official start. The use of parasport as a form of treatment and rehabilitation was a terrific option for a large number of wounded military personnel and citizens who were rendered unable to work as a result of war. (IPC, n.d.)

The first tournament for athletes competing in wheelchairs took place on July 29, 1948, and was given the name "Stoke Mandeville Games." This event was a significant turning point in the history of the Paralympics. (Pia, 2021) Due to the fact, it turned into the Paralympic Games, this was a significant and historic milestone in the world of disability sports which were initially held in London.

This Paralympics competition took place in 1960, with 400 athletes from 23 countries. But 56 years later, there were 4300 athletes from 159 nations during the Paralympics in Rio. The number of people participating in sporting events around the world has increased as a direct result of several factors, including developments in sports science and training, improvements in assistive technology, and the implementation of a more up-to-date version

of the functional categorization system, which has superseded the medical model. Since the very first Summer Paralympics, which were held in Rome in 1960 and were organized by Sir Ludwig Guttman, a significant amount of development has been accomplished during these competitions. (Mauerberg-deCastro et al., 2016). In 1960, 400 competitors from 23 countries participated in this Paralympics competition.

Figure 6

*Global participation (athletes and countries) in the Paralympic Games, from 1960 until 2012.*

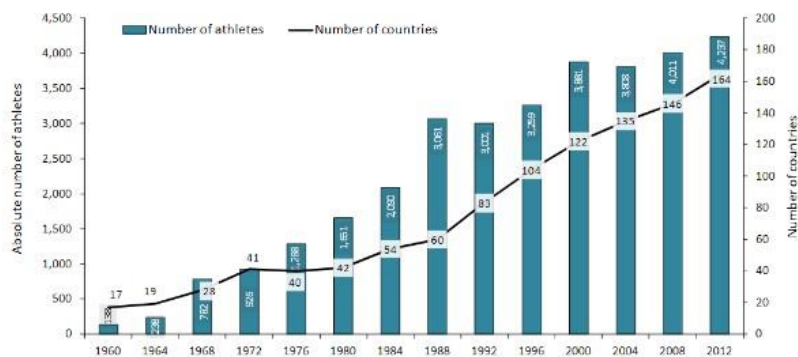


Figure 1. Global participation (athletes and countries) in the Paralympic Games, from 1960 until 2012<sup>2</sup>.

*Matriz, Rio Claro, v.22 n.3, p. 111-123, July/Sept. 2016*

In contrast, 4,300 participants from 159 countries participated in the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, which took place 56 years after

the previous contest. (CyberGhost, 2021) In modern times, the Olympic and Paralympic Games are held together at both summer and winter competitions.

#### 2.5.2. Types of disability sport events

In addition to the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games, there are major sporting events around the world designed specifically for disabled athletes. IPC Athletics World Championship, the IPC Disabled Alpine Skiing World Cup, the Disability Commonwealth Games, the UCI Para-Cycling Track World Championship, the Special Olympics, the International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports Federation (IWAS) World Games, the Invictus Games, the INAS World Football Championship, the IPC Powerlifting World Championship, the ASEAN Para Games, and the World Para Table Tennis Championship, as well as several other events organized at the local, national. (Robert Wood, 2022)

##### 2.5.2.1. *Special Olympics*

The Special Olympics' signature event is the biggest and most prestigious multi-sport competition for people with special needs. The event is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit every day across the globe through the transforming power and joy of sport. People who have intellectual disabilities (ID) frequently experience challenges such as

inactivity, social stigma, social isolation, and unfairness. Special Olympics is working to address these issues by providing programming in the areas of sports, health, education, and community building.

In 1971, the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee awarded them formal permission to use the name "Olympics." However, it has been held since 1968. Soldier Field in Chicago hosted the first-ever international Special Olympics in its history. (1968 Games, n.d.)

Every four years, competitions for athletes with intellectual disabilities take place during the winter and summer seasons. This organization committee has been promoting the idea that persons with intellectual disabilities can succeed if they are given a chance to do so on the appropriate platform for more than 40 years.

The number of people participating in sports worldwide has increased as a direct result of several factors, including developments in sports science and training, improvements in assistive technology, and a more up-to-date functional classification system, which has largely superseded the medical model. These advantages are helpful for the management of essential aspects of the event, including the infrastructure of the event, the audience, the attendees, the organizers, the location, and the media

Regrettably, because of the limits imposed by COVID-19 in 2019, the location will not host spectators during the Olympic competition in 2019. It harmed the global industry of sports event management.

## **2.6. Disability Sports events in Sri Lanka**

The National Paralympic Committee of Sri Lanka is a government-registered sports organisation connected to the Ministry of Sports that offers complete services to people with disabilities, such as information, assistance, training, and counselling.

### **2.6.1. National Paralympic Committee of Sri Lanka**

The National Paralympic Committee of Sri Lanka's (SLNPC) main tasks are sports development, promotions, and representation at the national and international levels.

SLNPC is the sole representative of the Sri Lankan government at international sporting events and is an official affiliated member of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), which has its headquarters in Bonn, Germany. The National Federation of Sports for the Disabled (NFSD), was founded in 1994 and designated as a National Sports Body by the

Ministry of Sports in 1996, is the national sports organisation in charge of sports for people with disabilities.

The vision of the committee is "to enable Sri Lankan Para Athletes to become Excellent to be world recognized," and the mission of the committee is "to promote sports among athletes in all regions of the country and ensure maximum participation at the Paralympics."

The executive council consists of 15 members together with the president and 1 part-time member. These officers will be elected during the AGM.

There are over fifty sports clubs that are members, with approximately thirty- five of those clubs and their officials being actively involved. There are 18 athletes in the High-Performance Pool who are undertaking residential training, as well as around 30 athletes in the Pool A and Pool B groups who are currently representing Sri Lanka. Additionally, each sport discipline has additional coaches and six National Para Athletic Coaches.

The sole representative of the Ministry of Sports in Sri Lanka, providing Sports development and training, Managing and conducting events, selection meets and National meets, Advocacy, Information and Awareness programs, Distribution of mobility devices and sports equipment,

Representing the country and making representations at international events are the chief functionary of SLNPC.

#### 2.6.2. Disability Sports events in Sri Lanka

Currently, the SLNPC is promoting 15 para-sports in Sri Lanka (athletics, wheelchair marathon, badminton, table tennis, wheelchair basketball, cycling, sitting volleyball, standing volleyball, beach volleyball, cricket (blind and deaf teams), power-lifting, shooting, wheelchair tennis, archery and swimming). Behalf of these 15 para-sports the NPC organizes para games (Wheelchair Dancing, blind chess) and other non-para sports (blind cricket, deaf cricket, Physically Challenged Cricket, CP football, Judo) as well.

SLNPC leads all the events and Para Games coming under its purview. Organizing all levels of events for all summer sports existing in Sri Lanka. Also organizing Para Games and Promotional Events at District, Provincial (Regional) and National Levels. Behalf of these games selection/trials also will organize by the SLNPC. (Harknett, 2013)

## **Chapter 3. Method**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter will examine the gathering and analysis of data based on Sri Lankan disability sports events in order to explore the motivational elements that influence fan attendance. The primary purpose is to identify and describe the research model, the participants chosen for this study, the method of data collection, the theory that will be applied, and the analysis of the finding. A brief project outline is supplied to support carrying out this study properly

### **3.2. Data collection**

Qualitative interviews are a method of study that is used to collect detailed information. and insights from individuals or small groups about their experiences, perspectives, opinions, and beliefs. An attempt will be made to encourage learning about individual experiences and viewpoints on a particular set of subjects through the use of telephone interviews.

These interviews are typically conducted in a face-to-face or semi-structured format, allowing participants to provide detailed responses and researchers to explore topics in depth. Only semi-structured interviews will



be used to collect data for the qualitative research project, based on a prepared set of open-ended questions and additional questions that develop from the dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006)

### **3.3. Participants**

To increase specificity and enable exploration of motivating factors influencing fans in disability sports events in Sri Lanka, the research was conducted with spectators who attended disability sports events in Sri Lanka. In total, 14 people who are taking part in chosen randomly for the aim of conducting interviews with the assistance of the SLNPC.

The number of interviews proceeded until a point of saturation was reached. Once this point was reached, previously offered ideas began to acquire further support, and no other ideas were developed. (Arnould & Price, 1993)

#### **3.3.1. Demographics of interview participants**

Table 1 introduces the profile of the 14 individuals who participated in the interviews. I interviewed six females and eight males. The age of the

participants, with the youngest interviewee aged 24 and the oldest 62. The occupation of the interviewee is most related to the disability area.

Table 1

*Demographics of interview participants*

No.	Age	Gender	Career/ Position
P1	56	Male	Disability Consultant and Trainer in Management
P2	38	Male	Forces (corporal) and a coach
P3	52	Female	A principal in a government school (special school)
P4	33	Female	Former Physical Education teacher and swimming coach
P5	45	Male	Program Director, CAMID (NGO - working in the disability sector)
P6	41	Female	Counsellor in psychology
P7	61	Male	Retired - Social service Director of the Services for Empowerment
P8	53	Female	And Rehabilitation of Disabled children and families (SEND)
P9	35	Male	Actor and businessman
P10	50	Female	Former athlete
P11	24	Male	Member of a disability sports club
P12	61	Female	Retired - Steward (food) in a hospital
P13	52	Male	Recovery Manager (Private company)
P14	62	Male	Businessman

### **3.4. Procedure**

Interviews continued until a saturation point was reached, beyond which no new theories could be proposed and only the old ones could be confirmed. (Arnould & Price, 1993). The following questions will be asked in interviews, following the format of the primary research questions.

Why do you go to the event?

What do you hope to get from the experience?

How do you choose what event to go and see?

How do you judge a good play, sport event production or performance?

What do you do before and after seeing a disability sports event?

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

According to (Rubin & Rubin, 2011): "Qualitative study highlights nuanced, context-dependent analysis, which almost by definition rules out a standard and uniform approach." As the main aim of this study was to explore the motivational factors and constraints that influence spectators at disability sports events, a qualitative approach was considered to be appropriate.

The majority of previous studies on consumer behavior at disability sport events tended to be quantitative in nature, so a qualitative investigation

could deliver unique results. The research followed an iterative, inductive methodology in keeping with the ethnographic idea of following the lead of the people being observed. As a result, theories were allowed to develop as the research went on, albeit with a clear context and rationale, as opposed to testing pre-determined, fixed hypotheses.

A thematic analysis will be performed to evaluate the collected data. It involves identifying patterns, themes, and meanings within the data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The purpose of selecting thematic analysis is to discover participant perspectives, opinions, knowledge, experiences, and values from qualitative data. (Kiger & Varpio, 2020) Thematic analysis is primarily used for analyzing unstructured audio, text, video, focus group, survey, journal, social media article, and image data.

The entire audio recording and transcription of the interviews has been got done. Only five of the interviews were conducted in English; the remaining nine were conducted in the interviewees' native languages and subsequently translated. (Suh et al., 2009) After any issues with the English translation of the interview data were fixed, the data were thematically analysed to identify the participants' underlying motivations and constraints. Major codes were separated into subthemes. Based on the feedback from the semi-structured interview, the coding process has started. It will be completed

according to the step-by-step instructions in Braun et al., 2008 (figure 7), and it will be divided into various themes.

Figure 7

### *Phases of thematic analysis*

**Table 1** Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

## Chapter 4. Result

This chapter presents the thematic analysis of the data collected from the interviews conducted with spectators of disability sports events in Sri Lanka. The results of this study are presented starting from the basic information of the respondent, followed by actual responses to questions (Table 2).

Table 2

### *Themes and Sub-themes*

<b>Research question</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-theme</b>
<b>RQ1 - What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?</b>	Sense of belonging	Family ties
		Friendship
		Career
	Social recognition	Raise awareness about disability
		Support social problems (for negative attitudes)
	Education	Learning rules and techniques
		Learning sports environment
		Learning positive life lessons
	Sport skills	Strength
		Athletes' performances and achievements
Sense of accomplishment	Competitiveness	
	Excitement	
Lack of facility	Curiosity	
	Accessibility	

**RQ2 - How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?**

Lack of Marketing	Location Financing Promotions Media
Lack of social support	No interest from others Lack of someone to attend with
Time consideration	Weather Game schedule

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**4.1. Motivation of the spectators**

This section presents the findings alongside the related 1st research question on the motivation of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka.

Through the interviews, participants provided various reasons for attending a disability sports event in Sri Lanka. Based on the findings, the themes that emerged were categorized under the broad concepts of (i) Sense of belonging, (ii) Social recognition, (iii) Education (iv) Sports skills (v) Sense of accomplishment. Each of these main themes had sub-themes. (Table 2)

Table 3

*RQ1 - What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?*

Theme	Sub-theme
Sense of belonging	Family ties
	Friendship
	Career
Social recognition	Raise awareness about disability
	Support social problems (for negative attitudes)
Education	Learning rules and techniques
	Learning sports environment
	Learning positive life lessons
Sport skills	Strength
	Athletes' performances and achievements
Sense of accomplishment	Competitiveness
	Excitement
	Curiosity

#### 4.1.1. Sense of belonging

The three sub-themes concerning Relationships were (i) Family ties, (ii) Friends, and (iii) Career.



Table 4

*Sub-theme of RQ1 - Theme 1*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Sense of belonging	Family ties
		Friendship
		Career

4.1.1.1. *Family ties*

Only two participants identified the family as a primary reason for their attendance.

“My son is a disabled person. He is a swimmer. He is performing as a national athlete. Because of him, I am going with him to every match.”

Likewise, those two interviewees came to watch the event to support their family members competing.

4.1.1.2. *Friendship*

The second subtheme focused on identifying four individuals who attended the sporting event due to their friendship with one another.

“As a disabled athlete, I can maintain dignity and recognition. Also, I can meet my old friends and people in the community after several years.”

“We have a club for disabled people. This club was established by disabled people for disabled people. So if I am going to watch any para-sport event

I am going with the friends who are in the club.”

“As a former athlete, I like to go and watch when my team is playing.”

The friendships that encouraged their attendance appeared to extend beyond spectators and participants, according to discussions with participants. The participants in this survey nevertheless mentioned reuniting with "old buddies" and also their clubmates. Some former competitors have come to watch in the sports community for people with disabilities.

#### *4.1.1.3. Career*

The majority of attendees stated that they were there for career purposes when they attended events.

“The main reason for attending these disability sports events is; that I am representing a school related to disability. That is the main reason I go to watch a match. Working as a special school principal, I try to watch every competition whenever possible.”

Participants in the interview are active in the field of disabled sports in Sri Lanka. Principals, directors, teachers, and coaches were present as spectators.

#### 4.1.2. Social recognition

Table 5

*Sub-theme of RQ1 - Theme 2*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Social recognition	Raise awareness about disability Support social problems (for negative attitudes)

The two sub-themes for social recognition were (i) raising awareness about disability about disability, (ii) supporting social problems. There are some spectators who have come to watch the games with the idea of eradicating the various negative attitudes that society maintains towards disabled persons.

##### *4.1.2.1. Raise awareness about disability*

Another observation made about the audience shows that people came to the event to spread awareness of social issues by supporting and attending to the athletes.

“Now my feeling is it's kind of like an attitudinal change towards disabled people because most of the time in awareness of society, like the grown up with society with more pity and care people know. We can change these negative attitudes about disabled people and disability. I feel that. So people with disabilities need to be cared for and given something to them.”

They said that participating in and supporting a disability sports event can create positive social attitudes in the neighbourhood.

#### *4.1.2.2. Support social problems (for negative attitudes)*

There is a social divide between disabled and non-disabled people, according to many interviewers in Sri Lanka. Persons who are not disabled have a negative attitude toward disabled people.

“I think they might have a disability but still after they are all athletes. So I mean if they must have gone through some kind of qualifying tests or anything like that right to qualify for a particular event. So I think we just look at them as not a disabled person but as an athlete.”

“Yes, because a non-disabled player is more dedicated than a disabled person playing the game. So you must go to see a game like that. Because these disabled persons need more support. That's why I'm going to see it and admire them.”

Because of these social issues of negative attitudes, there were some people who came to see the action without going into it with a negative frame of mind. They attended to cheer on and inspire these athletes.

#### 4.1.3. Education

Three sub-themes concerning education were (i) learning rules and techniques, (ii) learning sports environment and (iii) learning positive life lessons. These two sub-themes were mentioned about learning in sports and the environment.

Table 6

*Sub-theme of RQ1 - Theme 3*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Education	Learning rules and techniques Learning sports environment Learning positive life lessons

#### *4.1.3.1. Learning rules and techniques*

The first sub-theme of education concerned the rules and techniques of the game by seven participants. Some participants discussed their concerns with the rules and regulations of the game.

“Even though I am a spectator, I check if the athlete is performing following the rules and regulations. Because these athletes one day can represent the country. When they go to an international tournament, these rules and regulations must follow by them. So I am checking that when they are performing. That is an important thing that I do while I watch an event.” Additionally, during the interview process, one of the people mentioned that they are trying to concentrate on techniques because of their profession. As a result of learning about the athletes' techniques and methods, that person was motivated to watch a disability sports event.

“Maybe because I'm a coach I like to look, examine the technique. I mean, even as a spectator when my career is related to the disability sports field. I always watch like this..... So, I usually I always focus on the techniques and the methods that they use to win or to participate.”

#### *4.1.3.2. Learning sports environment*

Learning was the second subtheme. Nine participants identified this key element as one of the reasons they chose to go to a disability sports event.

Attending a sporting event motivates spectators to learn about motivation and the environment of their professional background.

One interviewee mentioned that someone is coming to see the game due to their career. One individual who is engaged in the field of disability sports explained that it requires understanding and acquiring knowledge regarding this particular field. Anyone interested in learning more about the handicapped sports community can benefit from attending a game.

“Yes because I'm as my career is disabilities sector. So I need to understand what is going on. Who are disabled people? How that people disabled? How do we need to motivate them? How are they participating in events? Also, to support disabled people, encourage them to be a part of sports, and engage them to be in part of this sport. So yeah, I can say the best reason I attend the events is my career. That's one of the reasons it is from my side.”(P5)

#### 4.1.3.3. *Learning positive life lessons*

Motivation is an important part of turning positive thoughts into action right away. Anyone can benefit from it by achieving desired outcomes such as personal development, improved health, improved performance, or a gain in confidence. Several of those who were interviewed stated that it is

important for both children and adults to acquire the skill of motivation throughout their life and that watching disability sporting events is a great way for people to learn how to motivate themselves.

“some normal children do not go ahead with many things. But these disabled children are not like that. They are trying to move forward with very little things even. So normal kids can see these attitudes to develop self-confidence. They need to think like if they can do this, why can't I do this? These disabled children can give a normal child the self-confidence to think about things like I can do more than this. It is very important if these kinds of things are shown to society and bring more people to the tournaments.”

“When we go to watch a match there are many things can learn to be self- motivated. Because society always looking for something. They are waiting to get something and they are trying to do their action. Without having anything most people don't like to move. But seem these disabled athletes are without anything they are fighting to the end. Seeing these things we always can learn how to be self-motivated in our life too.”(P3)



#### 4.1.4. Sports skills

Sporting skills were subdivided into (i) strength and (ii) athletes' performances and achievements. As a result of these two sporting abilities, fans were motivated to attend the event in order to watch it.

Table 7

*Sub-theme of RQ1 - Theme 4*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Sport skills	Strength Athletes' performances and achievements

##### 4.1.4.1. *Strength*

Two interviewed people indicated that one of their favourite things to do was people who were interviewed indicated that while they were at an event, one of their favourite things to do was to watch the athletes compete and see how well they performed.

“I like wheelchair events Because the people who are in wheelchairs means they got a spinal injury. I am using clutches. So even I can walk getting support from other things, and even I can go by bus. But the people who are in wheelchairs can't do anything like this. They can't use the bus, but they can't even go up a staircase. They always need to travel by their vehicle or

need to hire a vehicle when they need to go somewhere. So our society thinks these people can't do anything. But I know these people have good strength in their hands better than anyone. So I would like to see their performance they are trying to win using their hands.”

The enthusiasm and strength with which impaired athletes compete compel spectators to return to a competition for a second or third time.

#### 4.1.4.2. *Athletes' performances and achievements*

Over the past few years, Sri Lanka has seen great success in the Paralympics. They were successful in both the Commonwealth Games and the Paralympic Games, winning medals in both competitions. Eight participants were motivated to watch these athletes perform as a result of these types of historical accomplishments and their performances.

“There is a tendency to come to see it now because of the last Paralympic games medal and the Commonwealth games medals. Then if we continue to maintain these kinds of achievements and performances of the athletes, people will come automatically”(P2)

“I don't care much about that facilities. But I really liked to see athletes' performance.”(P6)

#### 4.1.5. Sense of accomplishment

The three sub-themes concerning a sense of accomplishment were (i) competitiveness, (ii) excitement, and (iii) curiosity. (Table 8)

Table 8

*Sub-theme of RQ1 - Theme 5*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
What are the motivations of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Sense of accomplishment	Competitiveness
		Excitement
		Curiosity

##### 4.1.5.1. *Competitiveness*

Competitiveness is the game's feature sub-theme. When the game is highly competitive, two spectators are encouraged to watch.

“Most of the time, competitiveness in a sports event is more important. As a spectator, most of the time, attracts us to sporting events because of the competitiveness of the athletes and sports teams”(P7)

Sports competitions are an excellent method to expand an event's audience and draw more people to see it. Competitive sports provide lifelong memories.

#### 4.1.5.2. *Excitement*

In studies of spectators at disability sports events, excitement in the game was found to be the motivating factor. When persons with disabilities participate in on-field activities, it tends to make them more ecstatic and full of excitement.

“That was a tuneful experience. At every event that I watched athletes' performance felt enthusiastic and thrilled. After I went one time next time, I never felt not to participate. Every time I thought that I must participate. Every day there was something new with excitement.”(P9)

Three of the people who were interviewed stated that they were concerned about the excitement of the games, specially while disabled athletes were competing.

#### 4.1.5.3. *Curiosity*

Curiosity has been identified as one of the motivators for spectators to attend a sporting event. The final sub-theme of game features is this. Three people expressed interest in watching performances by people with disabilities.

“I think some kind of curiosity as well like to, because of their despite, the being disabled, whatever. The disabled we think they have, I think I as a, as an as expected, I would definitely go to see like, how they will, you know,

like, do the event do this, the particular sports. So, some kind of curiosity as well to watch such games.”(P10)

When people with physical or mental impairments compete, they attempt to see how they will perform. They had been curious from the moment the event began till it ended. This continued throughout the entire event.

#### **4.2. Constraints affect spectators**

This section presents the findings alongside the related 2nd research question on the constraints that affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka.

Through the interviews, participants provided various reasons for constraints to attending a disability sports event in Sri Lanka. Based on the findings, the themes that emerged were categorized under the broad concepts of (i) lack of facility, (ii) lack of marketing, (iii) Lack of social support (iv) Time consideration. Each of these main themes had sub-themes. (Table 9)

Table 9

*RQ2 - How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?*

Theme	Sub-theme
Sense of belonging	Family ties
	Friendship
	Career
Social recognition	Raise awareness about disability
	Support social problems (for negative attitudes)
Education	Learning rules and techniques
	Learning sports environment
	Learning positive life lessons
Sport skills	Strength
	Athletes' performances and achievements
Sense of accomplishment	Competitiveness
	Excitement
	Curiosity
	Accessibility
Lack of facility	Location
	Financing
	Promotions
Lack of Marketing	Media
	No interest from others
Lack of social support	Lack of someone to attend with
	Weather
Time consideration	Game schedule

#### 4.3.1. Lack of facility

Three sub-themes for lack of facility were (i) accessibility, (ii) location and (iii) financing

Table 10

*Sub-theme of RQ2 - Theme 1*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Lack of facility	Accessibility
		Location
		Financing

4.2.1.1. *Accessibility*

Accessibility was the first sub-theme of the lack of facilities. This sub-theme is concerned with how accessibility impacts spectators negatively. Spectators with disabilities, in particular, expressed their concerns over the accessibility of the venue and venue area. They never enter a competition without determining whether the location accommodates those with disabilities.

“Mainly I’m targeting accessibility. So most of the time, even environment like ground and accommodation is not accessible for a person with disabilities. So they are like specifically useless for blind people. that are struggling. Even the organizing area and the communication method of deaf people’s announcement is not, these kinds of areas I’m considering and then complain about.”

“Yes, we have to. If I am talking about the facilities, we only have Sugathadasa stadium with facilities for disabled people. As a spectator, I don’t care much about facilities. But that place also has some accessibility issues. If a disabled spectator comes to watch the event because of these accessibility issues, they won't be able to enter the stadium without any problem.”

In addition to these accessibility issues, some spectators also expressed concern about other facilities around the arena. They noted that having facilities such as food and beverages as well as other necessities to buy nearby will create a more friendly and comfortable tournament to join.

“Also, we should provide spectators with facilities as well. Like we concerning athletes' facilities, we need to be concerned about the people who come to watch. I think they need to provide things like someplace to buy food and beverages, and a clean and comfortable place to watch.”

#### 4.2.1.2. *Location*

People from outside the metropolitan region brought up the location's issue. As a result, persons living in more remote places sometimes must make special travel to urban centres to attend a disability sports event.



“If I am coming to watch a disability event, I have to go to Colombo. I am in Monaragala District. It's a problematic area. So we have to travel, and we have to arrange travel to come to Colombo. But some people, because of these travelling issues people will not come.”(P11)

It was mentioned that the majority of individuals from outside the area had to go a long way and spend a lot of money to attend a disability event. Therefore data shows that a significant number of individuals couldn't make it because of location difficulties.

#### 4.2.1.3. *Financing*

Finance was another subtheme that was considered. As spectators, they expressed financial concerns during the interview. Because of additional costs, people must consider when participating in the event, even the majority of disability sports events in Sri Lanka are free events without tickets.

“I think because of the economic and political crises that we had in past years it is difficult to hold a competition in Sri Lanka, Specially since it is very difficult to organize a match and find sponsors. So even with the spectators also because of their financial issues people will come to watch an event very rarely. I hope these issues will be solved, and then I think we can attract many spectators for our disabled events as well.”(P14)

People who are travelling outside of Colombo, as well as those with disabilities, consider their transportation, accommodation, and other expenses.

#### 4.3.2. Lack of Marketing

Table 11

Sub-theme of RQ2 - Theme 2

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Lack of Marketing	Promotions Media

Lack of marketing was subdivided into (i) promotion and (ii) media. As a result of these two lack of marketing, fans were de-motivated to attend the event.

##### 4.2.2.1. *Promotions*

The promotion was the first sub-theme of lack of marketing. It was discovered via the interviews that the lack of promotions has an impact on the number of spectators. Numerous players commented on the lack of advertising for Sri Lankan disability sports events.

“Also, there are still communication problems in Sri Lanka. There is not enough communication or publicity about a para-tournament. Better to advertise their events.”(P5)

Likewise, a significant number of potential attendees will be unaware of the event since it was not adequately promoted. As a result, the events were impacted in a negative way by this.

#### 4.2.2.2. *Media*

Media is the other subtheme of the Disability sports event in Sri Lanka that needs the media more than any other event. Three of the participants indicated that they had seen few advertisements on various media outlets on both electronic and social media. However, there is not much coverage of the events in the media.

“If I am going to watch an event, I am going because of what someone told me. Like someone coming and telling me, "Brother, there is a disability sports event in Sugathadasa Stadium. Can we go?" like that. But we have to do something to highlight these para events in Sri Lanka it would be truly nice and good. Even the TV also mentions there is a concert, but about a disability sports event, there is nothing. So I think we need to advertise before the event there is an event with other details. (P11)

### 4.3.3. Lack of social support

Two sub-themes for lack of social support were (i) no interest from others, and (ii) lack of someone to attend with.

Table 12

#### *Sub-theme of RQ2 - Theme 3*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Lack of social support	No interest from others Lack of someone to attend with

#### 4.2.3.1. *No interest from others*

The interest of viewers is first sub-theme under the lack of social support major theme. There are few comments from viewers throughout the event, and the disability sports scene in Sri Lanka is less interest.

“Alone! Alone! Just for me, always alone. I think my family or friends were not much interested to attend a game, but up to now, it's alone” (P6) Participants who were interviewed mentioned that they went to the event alone since no one in their social circle was interested in joining them.

#### 4.2.3.2. *Lack of someone to attend with*

The 2nd subtheme under the lack of social support is the lack of someone to attend with. Two interviewees shared their thought under this sub-

theme. Some people refuse to participate in the event when there is no one to follow. So this became another constraint to participating in a disability sports event in Sri Lanka.

“Mostly, I had to go with the people in the organizing committee. Because my family or friends rarely comes to watch games.”(P7)

“As a disabled person who is using a wheelchair, I need someone's help to travel. So if there is no one to go with me I won't be able to attend.”(P1)

#### 4.3.4. Time consideration

Table 13

#### *Sub-theme of RQ2 - Theme 4*

Research Question	Major Theme	Sub-theme
How do constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka?	Time consideration	Weather Game schedule

The two sub-themes concerning time were (i) weather and (ii) game schedule. Through this major theme, the time discussed how it negatively impacts the number of viewers attending the event.

#### 4.2.4.1. *Weather*

The first sub-theme that emerged throughout this time was the weather. In the process of the interviews, three of the participants brought up the possibility that the weather may discourage casual spectators.

“Time planning is very important when conducting tournaments. No matter how much we like and want to go, we will not go when it rains. We will be too lazy to go. So they have to plan a date considering the weather as well. They want to plan to avoid rainy seasons.”(P12)

#### 4.2.4.2. *Game Schedule*

Regarding the game schedule, two players express their opinions. Under time, the major theme, game schedule, becomes another sub-theme.

“Also, there should be a good opening and ending to the event, reviewing the organizing of the match, whether it's happening in a good flow and if they look at their organized event without any laziness and with the competition.” (P7)

From their point of view, to be successful in attracting spectators, one would need to have a well-balanced game schedule for the event.

## **Chapter 5. Discussion and Conclusion**

### **5.1. Discussion**

The present study explored spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events in Sri Lanka. The results of the thematic analysis revealed that there are five main themes (relationships, social capital, education, sports skills, and game features), each of which is comprised of a total of twelve sub-themes (Table 2)

During the past several centuries, the number of Sri Lankans who attend sporting events has increased dramatically. Nevertheless, spectators in disability sports events also have grown significantly. To continue this growth of spectators, the organizers of disability sporting events need to understand and identify the factors that motivate and constrain affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka.

5.1.1. The motivation of the spectators to attend disability sports events in Sri Lanka

According to the vast majority of research that analyzes spectators at disability sports events, most are athletes attending the event because of

family, friends, or their professional backgrounds. For many spectators, sports activities serve as a relationship. They gather with their families and friends to show their support for members of their families and friends order to show their support for members of their families and friends who are participating in an activity that will lead to the formation of many memories. Regarding influencing sports attendance favourably, other psychological motivations were preferred, such as the opportunity to interact socially with their family and friends through sporting events. (Evaggelinou C. & Grekinis D., 1986), (Hirvonen, 2014), (M. J. Kim & Mao, 2019a)

People who place high importance on a "sense of belonging" may find that the occasional consumption of spectator sports provides them with the opportunity to experience camaraderie. According to (Schwartz, 1996), the sense of belonging, the desire to be accepted by one's family, friends, and community, could be considered a security. Especially in a collectivist society, it might be learned mostly in the family. (Cottingham et al., 2013) noted that providing support or spending time with family members or friends has become one of the reasons to visit to see a divisive sporting event. According to the findings of these studies, a "sense of belonging" (family, friends, or colleagues and career) linkages may encourage attendance, as my data mentioned through the findings.



Through the findings, Social recognition is another motivation to attend a disability sports event in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan society has a negative view of individuals with disabilities and disability sports. The way that disability is inaccurately portrayed has an adverse effect on how others in that social-cultural interact with those who have disabilities. Feelings of pity, fear, unease, guilt, compassion, and respect are some of the outcomes. People with disabilities are one of the oppressed groups in society as a result of these negative attitudes about disability, which cast them into the background. de Haan et al., 2014 pointed out that the fact that the majority of the spectators were from the surrounding region provides evidence that the event has the ability to increase awareness of social recognition. Based on the data collected from the interviews, it was determined that the majority of the Sri Lankan spectators had come to the event to raise awareness of disability and support the social issues being discussed while also watching the event. One may learn about the rules of the game, the meaning of the referee's unique signals, and the strategies or tactics used to win by going to a game. In addition, by observing these disability sports events, one can gain insight into good life lessons. Understanding the sport enhances one's enjoyment of watching it. Malchrowicz-Moško & Chlebosz, 2019 and Cottingham et al., 2013 discovered that knowledge was the most important aspect in affecting

consumer behaviour, and this includes knowing both strategic and environmental details about sports. Through the participants of my study, six participants indicated education as one of the motivations that drive them to attend an event to watch a game. Spectators have a strong desire to broaden their knowledge and pursue their interests further. In order to bring in a more significant number of spectators, education and training may be of the utmost importance to disability sports competitions in Sri Lanka.

Another factor in bringing in more attendees to events is sports skills. Sports fans are drawn to them by a sense of personal accomplishment, self-worth, and public image when they perform well. Previous studies have revealed that a link between attendance and sports skills is a beneficial combination for motivating spectators. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that another strength that is comparable to my results is a powerful predictor of independence for those who have suffered spinal cord injuries. (Hicks et al., 2003). Cottingham et al., 2015 study found that sports skills (strategy, strength, collaboration, and mental skills) were one of the most meaningful events for consumers while watching disability sports events. Similarly, observation of sports abilities has been highlighted as a motivator to recruit disabled and non-disabled people to disability sports. Five of the participants discussed how watching a game was an example of sports skills, and they

brought attention to the achievements and performances of Strength and Athletes.

The vicarious sense of accomplishment draws spectators to sporting activities. Sport spectatorship that emphasizes the sense of success achieved is advised for the viewers' well-being. (J. Kim & James, 2019) The concepts of excitement, curiosity, the closeness of play, degree of play, and happiness have all been established by previous research. (Cottingham et al., 2015), (M. J. Kim & Mao, 2019b) and (Dimitropoulos & Gkatsis, 2018) Through the data collection, seven interviewees mentioned that their sense of accomplishment is what motivates them to the event.

#### 5.1.2. Constraints affect attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka

Lack of facility has been talked about in previous studies. (i.e., arena location, parking, ticket cost, travelling cost, accessibility to the stadium) Seven interviewees have been identified lack of facilities. Especially people with disabilities and people coming from out of the city mentioned their thoughts.

## **5.2. Practical Implementation**

The results of this study add to the growing body of knowledge in the field of disability sports events in Sri Lanka. This will help to identify spectator motivation and constraints that affect Sri Lankan disability sports events. The majority of spectators used to go to the stadium to participate in live experiences, which they find more enjoyable when motivated by a sense of belonging, social recognition, education, sports skills, sense of accomplishment and when there are no constraints. It's a chance to show support for someone important to them or to spend quality time with someone who shares their passion for the game. Sense of belonging have connections to sports in the way that they live their lives. Collecting and analyzing data relating to both motives and constraints offers sports organisers to promote spectator marketing in disability sports events in Sri Lanka.

### **5.3. Limitation**

Even though the sample size for this study was tiny, it is important to remember that less than 40 persons have responsibilities that are comparable to those of the executives in this study globally. Additionally, qualitative research aims to get a deeper knowledge of the phenomena than typical experimental and survey approaches, rather than using huge sample numbers for predictive power (Chalip & Leyns, 2002). Finally, because this study solely focused on the viewpoints of Corporate leaders, the findings cannot evaluate how effective their marketing strategies were.

### **5.4. Future Research**

As a result of the findings of this study, I can offer several possibilities for future research. Future research should examine consumers' perceptions of the image and their short-term and long-term intended and actual behaviours. It will be important for researchers to determine if and how consumers' intended behaviours align with actual behaviours. An additional concern identified by the participants was the efficacy of live attendance. To date, no research exists to examine the effectiveness of attendance in disabled sporting events.

Finally, researchers should examine the perspectives of sponsors and their choices to invest in disability sports, whether solely motivated by corporate social responsibility or other reasons. Researchers could then assist in an intervention plan to develop strategic partnerships with sponsors rather than rely on image and corporate social responsibility. It will be a really good opportunity to promote disability sports in Sri Lanka and attract more spectators.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

The research on spectator motivation and constraints in disability sports events emphasizes the significance of inspiration, social connection, and entertainment as key motivators for spectators. Addressing physical, logistical, and attitudinal constraints can lead to improved accessibility and inclusivity. By focusing on enhancing the spectator experience through various strategies, event organizers can foster a positive and engaging environment that attracts a diverse and enthusiastic audience to disability sports events. There should be future studies to develop and promote disability sports in Sri Lanka and to seek the limitations of this research.

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## Appendix. Interview Questionnaire

Interview questions for spectators who were attending disability sports events in Sri Lanka

- i. Spectator Background (fma%lallhkaf.a miqiu)
- ii. Gender (ia;%S mqrel Ndjh)
- iii. Age (jhi)
- iv. Career (jD;a;Sh)
- v. Education (wOHdmk uÜgu)

### RQ1

- i. What is the best reason to come to see a disability sports event?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla keröug meñKSug m%Odk;u fya;=j l=ulao@
- ii. What are the other motivation reasons (factors) to go for a disability sports event?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla keröug meñKSug\$hdug we;s fjk;a lreKq fya;= ^idOI& fudkjdo@
- iii. When do you watch these sports?  
Tn iukHfhka merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla krUkafka ljr Èklo@
- iv. Who do you watch them with?  
Tn ;rÖ krUkafka ld iuÖo@
- v. Which attributes increase your willingness to attend a disability sports event?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla keröu i|yd iyNd.S ùug Tff leue;a; jeä lrk .=Kdx.\$ fya;= fudkjdo@
- vi. What are you attentive to while Watching the event?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla krUk úg úfYalfhka Tnf.a wjOdkh fhduq lrkafka l=ulgo@
- vii. How were your feelings while you watched the event?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla krUk w;r;=r we;s;jk yeÖSi ljr wldrhlaolao@

- viii. What are your favourite parts of going to or watching games? Why do you like these things?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla keröug hdfi\$ fyda keröfi\$ Tnf.a m%sh;u fldgia\$ wxY fudkjdo@ Tn fi foaj,aj,g leu;s wehs@
- ix. What things are important to you when you watch a game? Why?  
Tn merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla krUk úg Tng jeo.;a jk lreKq fudkjdo iy thg fya;= fudkjdo@

## RQ2

- i. Do you feel that you do not attend as many tournaments as you would like to watch disability sports events?  
Tn merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,sh leu;s;rī keröu i|yd wjia:d u.yeí hk nj Tng yefÖkjdo@
- ii. What do you do when you are faced with the challenges of not being able to watch a disability sports event as a spectator?  
merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla fma%lalhl= f,i keröug fkdyeys ùfi wNsfhda.j,g Tn uqyqK fokafka flfiao@
- iii. Do you feel you can easily face these challenges and overcome them? How and why?  
Tng fuu wNsfhda.j,g myiqfjka uqyqK \$ tajd ch.; yels nj Tng yefÖkjdo@ flfiao iy wehs@
- iv. Is there anything else that you think I should know to better understand spectating and challenges faced in a disability sports event?  
by; i|yka lrk ,o lreKqj,g\$wNsfhda.j,g wu;rj merd l%Svd ;rÖdj,shla keröfi\$ fma%lalhl= f,i Tng" ud fj; i|yka lsíug fjk;a lreKq ;sfio@

국 문 초 록

# 장애인 스포츠 이벤트에 대한 스포츠 관람자의 관람 동기 및 관람 제약 요인 탐색 연구

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스포츠 관람자는 스포츠 이벤트의 필수적인 요소로 스포츠 선수들에 대한 전반적인 경험을 향상시킬 뿐만 아니라 장애인 스포츠에 대한 인식을 높이고 포용력을 고취시키는 데 중요한 역할을 한다. 일반 스포츠 분야에서 스포츠 관람자의 동기 및 제약 요인에 대한 연구는 증가하고 있지만, 장애인 스포츠 이벤트 분야에서는 이러한 요소를 이해하기 위한 연구가 제한되어 있는 것으로 보인다. 이 연구의 목적은 장애인 스포츠 이벤트에 참여하는

스포츠 관람자의 경험, 선호도, 요구 등을 이해하기 위한 동기와 제약 요인을 탐구하는 것이다.

장애인 스포츠 이벤트 관람의 중요한 동기로는 자극(Inspiration), 사회적 결속(Social Connection), 오락(Entertainment)이 있으며, 물리적, 수송적, 태도적 제약 요인 해결이 접근성과 포용성을 개선할 수 있는 것으로 나타났다. 장애인 스포츠 이벤트 주최자는 관람자의 경험을 향상시키는 데 초점을 맞춘 여러가지 전략을 통해 다양하고 열정적인 관객들을 장애인 스포츠 이벤트에 끌어들이는 긍정적이고 매력적인 환경을 조성할 수 있다.

이 연구의 결과는 스리랑카 장애인 스포츠 이벤트 관람자의 관람 동기와 제약 요인에 대한 이해를 높이는 데 기여할 수 있다.

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주요어 : 장애인 스포츠, 관람 동기, 관람 제약 요인, 질적 인터뷰, 장애인

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