

Youth Olympic Games Awareness: An Analysis of Parents of Elite Youth Sport Athletes

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Abstract

The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) were established to bolster interest in the Olympic movement among the world's youth. However, several prior studies have documented low levels of YOG awareness among multiple populations. As parents form a primary stakeholder group in the development of youth sport, this study sought to determine the awareness of the YOG compared to other mega-sport festivals, specifically within a group of elite youth athletes' parents. A 24-item survey instrument was developed based upon prior YOG research surveys with additional comparative questions related to the 2012 London Olympic Games (LOG) and the Winter X Games (WVG). The results indicated that the YOG are lesser known than the WVG and the LOG. Despite the high level of elite youth sport engagement of this population, the low levels of YOG awareness and event consumption intent demonstrate a need for additional marketing and promotions for the YOG.

Introduction

A lack of new younger fans is leading to an aging audience for the Olympic Games. For example, median age for U.S. viewers for the Sochi Games in 2014 was 55 while the 2002 Salt Lake City Games was 48 (Duff & Rossingh, 2015). Across the entirety of the Sochi Winter Games, coverage the 18-49 age group viewership netted a record low rating compared to other Olympic Games of 5.5 or just over 21 million viewers in this crucial demographic group (Patten, 2014). Concerns over declining interest in the Olympic Games have resulted in numerous efforts by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to bolster the Olympic brand and to increase engagement of a younger audience. Recent steps to enhance the Olympic movement as a whole have included efforts to streamline sport offerings by dropping some sports (i.e., baseball and softball), adding other sports with specific appeal to younger audiences (i.e., snowboarding, BMX, and beach volleyball), launching a year-round TV channel focused on athletes, and creating the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). The effectiveness of these steps by the IOC to avert a potential crisis for the Olympic brand remains uncertain. Therefore, each of these methods to enhance the Olympic following has come under scrutiny via commentary, dialogue, and debate as well as scholarly research. The scope of this study was delimited to the fourth prong of the IOC's action related to the YOG, and it assessed YOG awareness in elite youth athlete parents as key stakeholders in the youth sport development process (Pankhurst, Collins, & Macnamara, 2013).

Literature Review

The modern Olympic Games (OG) is a worldwide sports festival that has garnered extraordinary amounts of public attention and awareness since their initiation in 1896. Some of the appeal of the Olympics can be tied to its storied history. Ancient Greek athletic games can be traced back to Homer's epic poetry of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of the late eighth or early seventh century BC (Young, 2004). The ancient Olympic Games were held on a quadrennial basis for more than a millennium from approximately 776 BC to 400 AD, and the longstanding history of these ancient contests contributed to the efforts to revive these games in a modern form. The creation of the modern Olympic Games are typically credited to the efforts of Frenchman, Pierre de Coubertin, and were officially approved by the delegates of International Congress of Paris for the Study and the Propagation of the Principles of Amateurism in 1894 that resulted in the inaugural games of Athens contested in 1896 (Spears & Swanson, 1983). Since that inception, the OG have grown significantly in size and scope. While the first modern OG included 241 athletes (men only) from 14 nations, the 2012 London OG boasted 10,568 athletes (5,892 men, 4,675 women) from 204 countries (IOC, 2013). In 1924, the Olympic family of events expanded with the Winter Games hosted in Chamonix, France, including 258 athletes (247 men, 11 women) from 16 countries that grew to 2,781 athletes (1,660 men, 1,211 women) from 88 nations in the 2014 Sochi Games (IOC, 2014a). The success of the Olympic movement spawned numerous multi-sport festivals based upon characteristics such as region (i.e. Pan-American Games and Asian Games both established in 1951), language/culture (i.e. Commonwealth Games established 1930 and Pan-Arab Games established 1963), occupation (i.e. World University Games established 1959 and World Police and Fire Games established 1985), and disability (i.e. Paralympic Games established 1960 and Special Olympics World Games established 1968) (Bell, 2003). Beyond the replication of multi-sport festivals similar to the OG, non-Olympic sporting events also began to develop with specific target audiences, most notably the X Games. As a unique creation of the ESPN television network, the X Games (XG) and Winter X Games (WXG), begun in 1995 and 1997 respectively, were established to appeal to a younger generation connected to sports seen as more individualist and extreme (Pickert, 2009).

Global interest in sport may be high amongst this ever growing landscape of sport festivals, in addition to professional sport leagues and teams, but it is also growing more fragmented. Capturing the next generation's interest and attention in the sporting world has become vital for the Olympic brand, and the Youth Olympic Games were developed in part to reignite the interest in Olympic sport (Judge, Petersen, & Lydum, 2009). In 2010, the YOG became the third sport festival ever introduced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The first Summer YOG were hosted by Singapore in 2010 followed by the initial Winter YOG held in Innsbruck. The YOG were structured with a schedule opposite of the regular Olympics- the summer YOG are the same year as the Winter Olympics, and vice versa. The YOG was limited to youth participants between the ages of 15 and 18 years old (IOC, 2014b). According to Eisele (2014), more than 3,700 youth from around the world participated in the most recent YOG in Nanjing in 2014. He also stated that many Nanjing participants had aspirations to participate in the Olympics in Rio in 2016. These outcomes align well with two of the primary stated goals of the YOG "to reach youth communities throughout the world to promote the Olympic values and to bring together and celebrate the world's best young athletes" (IOC, 2014b). Hanstad, Parent, and Kristiansen (2013) noted that the YOG more closely aligned with Olympic principles than the Olympic Games themselves, although they suggest further analysis. This alignment with Olympic ideals can be attributed in part to the mandatory Culture and Education Program (CEP). Unlike the Olympic Games, the YOG mandates that all athletes remain present throughout the 10 day event and participate in the CEP that seeks to "introduce young athletes

in a fun and festive way, to Olympism and the Olympic values, and to raise awareness of important issues such as the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, the fight against doping, and the athletes' role as sport ambassadors in their communities" (Slater, 2009, p. 40).

These positive attributes connected with the YOG align with prior efforts noted in the positive youth development movement by fostering and enhancing positive values such as discipline, self-confidence, and cooperation by teaching positive values through sport (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998). Many researchers claim that sport influences development by increasing physical skills, improving health and physical wellbeing, enhancing self-esteem and body image, and building character (Fullinwider, 2006). Coakley (2011) discusses the concept of sport providing a fertilizer effect, meaning that sport offers a way for these ideas to be planted in these youth athletes and offers an environment to help these values grow. "This assumption continues to influence policy discussions among teachers wanting elementary schools to sponsor interscholastic sport teams and among urban leaders wanting their cities to prepare bids to host the Olympic Games" (Coakley, p. 3). However, there is not a direct link between sport participation and developmental outcomes (Coakley), but it depends on many factors such as characteristics of the athletes (for examples see Hoffmann, 2006; Laurer, Gould, Roman, & Price, 2010).

Despite some positive outcomes associated with the YOG, their development has not been without controversy or concern. A serious disconnection between the initial YOG ideals and the institutional manner in which the IOC has developed the YOG has led to criticism that the YOG is simply a commercialized promotion of the Olympic brand to the youth (Ivan, 2014). While the YOG gives adolescent athletes the ability to represent their country on a global stage, there is ample discussion and debate about the economic importance of having such an event. Digel (2008) pointed out several practical issues with the games, especially focusing on a lack of appropriate values for the event. He believes that a highly competitive environment like one in the Olympics may not be the best for impressionable young athletes. He also raised issues that could occur around the strict schooling regulations in many countries, especially if the Olympics are preventing young athletes from being in school or vice versa.

Event awareness and interest is another practical concern for the growth, development, and health of any sport festival, and several studies have indicated low levels of YOG awareness in various target audiences. Prior to the 2010 YOG a survey methodology was developed, tested and implemented to study YOG awareness in American youth coaches showing very low levels of personal awareness of the then upcoming YOG (Judge et al., 2009). That same survey methodology was replicated prior to the Singapore games in various populations groups including figure skating coaches (Judge, Petersen, & Bellar, 2010), Greek athletes and coaches (Judge, Kantzidou, Bellar, Petersen, Gilreath, & Surber, 2011) and an international sample of physical education and sport practitioners (Judge & Petersen, 2011), all showing relatively low personal levels of event awareness as well as low levels of perceived public awareness of the YOG. YOG awareness research was continued in the period following the Singapore YOG and leading up to the Innsbruck YOG following a similar survey methodology with a focus on the young adult demographic group and with additional awareness comparisons to the Olympic Games and other sport festivals. One such study of a Millennial generation population found very low levels of YOG awareness in this target audience, but the regression analysis indicated that YOG event awareness was a significant contributor to event television viewing intent (Judge, Surber, Petersen, Lee, Bellar, & Simon, 2014).

Low levels of YOG awareness and interest could make it more difficult for the YOG to find host cities if the Games are unknown to most of the world. According to Appelbaum (2014), a main appeal of hosting the Olympic Games is the draw of tourists to the host city. This type of appeal does not translate to the YOG if the event awareness remains relatively obscure. Another benefit associated with the Olympic Games is the development of new facilities for the event in the host city, which can provide another source of revenue for the city even after the Games are over. Unlike the Olympic Games, however, the IOC has regulated the YOG and its bidding process so that the host city is not permitted to build new facilities for the YOG (IOC, 2014b).

This study sought to determine the level of awareness of the YOG in comparison to two other sport festivals within the same time frame, the 2012 London Olympic Games (LOG) and the 2012 Winter X Games (WXG), specifically within a group of elite youth athletes' parents. This subject pool was selected since these parents have an influential role in the competitive futures of these high performing youth athletes. The current group of parents associated with YOG aged athletes is considered part of "Generation X" (Williams & Page, 2011). By studying awareness of the YOG within this specific population and time period, the research objective was to gain insight among Generation X parents who have a vested personal interest in the topics of elite youth sport, regular physical activity and the health of the global population. For example, Generation X is often motivated by the thought of service-oriented initiatives (Williams & Page). Understanding characteristics of the target demographic group is important in framing the theoretical underpinning and research questions of the present study. The use of parents as key stakeholders in youth sport development in general (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Sie-Pennisi, 2004; Pankhurst et al., 2013) also relates to prior research regarding stakeholder analysis in sport in general and specifically within the YOG (Parent, 2008; Parent, Kristiansen, Skille, & Hanstad, 2013). Because the event awareness was a foundational measure for this study, it was grounded in the awareness, interest, desire, and action (AIDA) model of marketing (Strong, 1925). Although this model can be tracked back for almost a century, it has also been used by more contemporary researchers within the sport setting (Bennett, Cunningham, & Dees, 2006; Lin and Huang, 2006). This model and prior research support a view of event awareness as a precursor to event consumption in many forms.

Research Questions

This research was guided by several research questions as follows:

- 1) What are the levels of personal awareness and perceived general public awareness of the YOG and how do these awareness levels compare to both the LOG and the WXG?
- 2) What are the product consumption intentions for the YOG via actual event attendance, television viewing, and social media following, and how do the YOG consumption intention levels compare to both the LOG and the WXG?
- 3) What is the relationship between personal awareness and product consumption intention for each of the three examined sport festivals?

Methods

Participants

Parents of elite youth athletes were recruited to complete a survey to assess the YOG's global marketing efforts during the USA Swimming's South Texas "A" Championships. Parents of

highly skilled or elite level athletes were determined as an appropriate target population for this study due to the critical role that parents play in the development of youth sport in general and in their influence of their own aspiring elite youth athletes. While stakeholders in the talent and sport selection process have been identified primarily as coaches, parents and sport organizations (Pankhurst et al., 2013), populations of elite coaches have previously been studied in relation to YOG awareness (Judge et al., 2012). Swimming was also identified as an appropriate sport choice as the Olympic Games represent the pinnacle of achievement and recognition in swimming compared to other youth sports that have non-Olympic or professional league aspirations (i.e., football, basketball, and baseball). Additionally, all athletes participating in this meet possessed a required membership in USA Swimming. Thus, these parents were at least minimally aware of the national governing body (NGB) of an Olympic sport.

Instrumentation

The survey included 24-items and was developed based upon prior YOG research surveys (Judge, Petersen, & Lydum, 2009). While the initial YOG awareness survey research only assessed the YOG, this research sought to assess awareness and consumption intentions for the 2012 LOG and the WXG along with the YOG. The addition of scaled questions related to intention awareness and to attend or view the 2012 LOG and WXG in addition to the YOG were added. In order to verify both content and face validity, a panel of experts in youth sport reviewed the instrument.

The survey consisted of four components: demographics, assessment of YOG intentions, social media habits, and logo questions. The demographic component included questions on the following: gender, coaching experience, sport administration/management experience, athletic background, parental status, and nation of residency. The awareness assessment of the events portion consisted of two items (personal awareness and perceived public awareness) for each of the three sport festivals (YOG, WXG, and LOG) rated on a seven-point Likert-scale ranging from 1 being “not at all aware” to 7 being “totally aware and informed.” The reliability and internal consistency of these six items were assessed via determination of Cronbach’s alpha, and the result, $\alpha = .740$, falls in the acceptable range (George & Mallery, 2003). The survey also included three items related to event consumption intent (event attendance, television viewing, and social media following) for each of the sport festivals rated on a seven-point Likert-scale with 1 being “not at all likely” to attend/watch/follow and 7 being “very highly likely” to attend/watch/follow. A good level of reliability and internal consistency was found for these nine items ($\alpha = .808$) (George & Mallery). The researchers obtained the proper Institutional Review Board (IRB) permissions prior to data collection.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and analytical statistics were calculated for the overall variables using SPSS version 21.0 (IBM, New York). ANOVA analyses along with Tukey HSD post-hoc testing were used to examine statistical differences in the mean values for event awareness and event consumption for research questions one and two. Analyses of correlational matrices for each of the three sport festivals utilizing Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients addressed research question three.

Results

A total of 117 surveys were collected from a random in-person distribution of surveys during the USA Swimming South Texas “A” Championship meet that included over 600 athletes. Of the surveys returned a total of 92 were deemed complete and meeting the necessary inclusion characteristic of being a parent of a youth athlete. The survey subject characteristics for this sample of parents included a fairly even distribution of gender (male 44.6%, female 55.4%). Additional demographic data on the parent participants included: coaching background (17.4% youth, 2.2% elite, 81.5% none), athletic background (68.5% former athlete, 6.5% current athlete, 27.2% no athletic background), and sport leadership (13.8% official/referee, 5.4% administrator, 80.9% no leadership).

For research question one, univariate ANOVA analyses revealed several significant differences ($p < .05$) in comparing mean values for both personal awareness and perceived public awareness of the YOG to the WXG and LOG. Table 1 includes a summary of mean and standard deviation values for the awareness data. Significantly different mean values for personal event awareness ($F(2, 266) = 94.25, p < .001$) were identified. Tukey HSD post-hoc testing revealed that the YOG personal awareness ($M = 2.33$) was significantly lower than both the WXG ($M = 4.29$) and the LOG ($M = 6.07$), and that all three means formed statistically distinct groups. The perceived public awareness of the three sport festivals was also determined to form three significantly different mean results ($F(2, 263) = 123.81, p < .001$). The YOG produced the lowest perceived general public awareness value ($M = 2.12$), followed by the WXG ($M = 4.06$) and the LOG ($M = 5.95$).

Table 1: Summary of Event Awareness Data

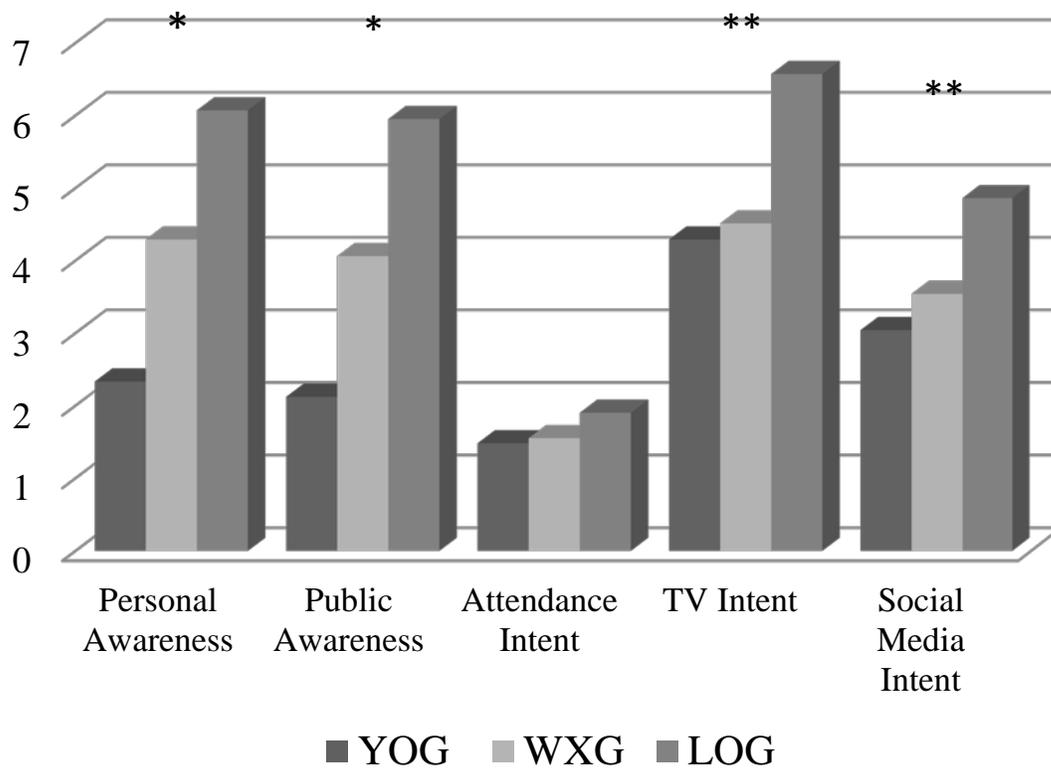
	M	SD	SEM
Personal Awareness			
YOG	2.33	1.86	0.20
WXG	4.29	2.10	0.22
LOG	6.07	1.46	0.15
Perceived Public Awareness			
YOG	2.12	1.56	0.16
WXG	4.06	1.88	0.20
LOG	5.95	1.40	0.15

For research question two, the mean values from the Likert-scaled questions regarding event attendance, television viewing and social media following were determined along with descriptors of central tendency as noted in Table 2. Significant differences in means were found for two of the three variables. First, the intention to watch the event on television differed for the LOG in comparison to the other two sport festivals ($F(2, 267) = 42.61, p < .001$) with the YOG ($M = 4.29$) and the WXG ($M = 4.52$) both lower than the LOG ($M = 6.57$). Additionally, the participants' intention to follow the event on social media was significantly different ($F(2, 267) = 16.16, p < .001$). Tukey HSD post-hoc testing determined that the YOG ($M = 3.54$) and the LOG ($M = 4.87$), but the YOG was not significantly different from the mean for the WXG ($M = 3.04$). However, the assessment of the subjects' intent to attend the events found no significant difference ($F(2, 265) = 2.41, p = .092$) with all mean values on the low end of the scale (less than 2.0). These results for event consumption along with the event awareness factors are graphically summarized in Figure 1.

Table 2: Summary of Event Engagement Intentions

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEM</i>
Event Attendance			
YOG	1.90	1.65	0.17
WXG	1.55	1.22	0.13
LOG	1.48	1.21	0.13
Event Television Viewing			
YOG	4.29	2.07	0.21
WXG	4.52	2.12	0.22
LOG	6.57	1.08	0.11
Event Social Media Following			
YOG	3.54	2.22	0.23
WXG	3.04	2.12	0.22
LOG	4.87	2.29	0.24

Figure 1: Summary of mean values for sport festival awareness and consumption intention



*significant difference between all three groups within the variable, $p < .05$

**significant difference between the LOG and both the YOG and WXG, $p < .05$

The relationship between event awareness and event consumption intention for each of the three sport festivals was assessed via correlation matrices analysis for research question three. First for the YOG, there was a significant but weak correlation ($r = .220, p = .034$) between YOG personal awareness and YOG social media consumption. High levels of YOG social media consumption were strongly correlated with attendance intentions ($r = .430, p < .001$) and with television viewing intentions ($r = .220, p = .034$). An additional significant correlation was noted between YOG attendance intentions and YOG TV viewing ($r = .442, p < .001$). The correlational analysis results are displayed fully in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for YOG Awareness and YOG Event Consumption Variables

	YOG PA	YOG EA	YOG TV	YOG SM
YOG Personal Awareness (PA)	1	.147	.147	.220*
YOG Event Attendance (EA)		1	.442**	.430**
YOG Television Viewing (TV)			1	.573**
YOG Social Media Following (SM)				1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The WXG event displayed significant correlations between all four variables in all of the six relationships examined as shown in Table 4. This ranged from the weakest significant relationship between WXG awareness and WXG attendance intention ($r = .223, p = .034$) to the strongest relationship identified between WXG awareness and television viewing intent ($r = .629, p < .001$). The full correlation matrix is noted below in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for WXG Awareness and WXG Event Consumption Variables

	WXG PA	WXG EA	WXG TV	WXG SM
WXG Personal Awareness (PA)	1	.223*	.629**	.331**
WXG Event Attendance (EA)		1	.310**	.371**
WXG Television Viewing (TV)			1	.605**
WXG Social Media Following (SM)				1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The final correlation matrix for the London Olympic Games is summarized in Table 5. Two of the six relationships demonstrated significant relationships including LOG awareness and television viewing intention ($r = .326, p = .002$) and between LOG TV viewing intention and LOG social media following ($r = .343, p = .001$).

Table 5: Correlation Matrix for LOG Awareness and LOG Event Consumption Variables

	LOG PA	LOG Att	LOG TV	LOG SM
LOG Personal Awareness (PA)	1	.096	.326**	.091
LOG Event Attendance (EA)		1	-.036	.030
LOG Television Viewing (TV)			1	.343**
LOG Social Media Following (SM)				1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Discussion

The results of this study indicate low awareness of the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) within this sample of elite athlete's parents. A simple comparison of YOG awareness from the prior studies using the same scale does show a trend of increasing levels of awareness from the time period immediately prior to the inaugural YOG of 2010 through the time of this study corresponding to the 2012 YOG in Innsbruck. For example, the personal awareness first studied in American youth coaches was 1.56 (Judge et al., 2009), and grew to 2.32 in a study of figure skating coaches (Judge et al., 2010), and continued an upward trend in a Greek sample that averaged 2.56 (Judge et al., 2011). However, that trend of growing awareness was not supported in a more recent study of American college students where the mean awareness level dropped to 1.21 (Judge et al., 2014). The current mean of 2.33 from this study's target population of parents does demonstrate a rebounding level of awareness. Although these trends of YOG awareness were all made utilizing the same survey scale, these cursory comparisons do fall short of a statistical meta-analysis. It would be beneficial to either conduct a longitudinal analysis of a single population over a more sustained period of time or to conduct a meta-analysis of these YOG awareness studies in order to determine statistically significant levels and patterns of change. Event awareness also corresponds to the foundational first step of the AIDA model.

The collection of awareness data for the X-Games and Olympic Games in this present study also provides a stronger basis of comparison of the Youth Olympic Games in order to determine its relative position in comparison to these more established events. Not surprisingly, this sample reported significantly lower personal awareness and perceived awareness of the general public for the YOG when compared to the London Olympic Games (LOG) and the Winter X-Games (WXG). These results showed a distinct three tier level of personal and public awareness for the festivals with the LOG at the highest level followed by the WXG in an intermediate level with the YOG at the lowest level of awareness. As a relatively new global sport festival, this lower awareness would be expected in a general population sample. However, when considering this sample population of parents, they possess a heightened interest in elite youth sport at the regional, if not also national and global, level given their current support of children in elite level sport. These particular parents represent a target population for YOG marketers that should be engaged in efforts to boost awareness and interest in the YOG specifically. The largest group of parents globally is currently considered "Generation X", and in order to target this population who must support their youth in engaging in events such as the YOG, one must understand how messages will motivate them. For example, Generation X is typically skeptical by nature and is often motivated by the opportunity to engage in service-oriented initiatives (Williams & Page, 2011.) Tying the YOG opportunity to parents through this lens, as something that benefits them, their children, and the broader global community, will ultimately provide results that support the YOG mission.

The second research question sought to assess the second step of the AIDA model of interest. The event interest was measured by intent to engage in these three sport festivals by one of three modes: attendance, television viewing, or social media following. As the timing of the data collection was prior to all three events, actual consumption data was not available. The anticipated event attendance was extremely low for all three events (LOG $M = 1.48$, WXG $M = 1.54$, YOG $M = 1.90$). Although the YOG mean for attendance was the greatest of the three, there were no statistically significant differences. While it is not surprising that the expected attendance of any global sporting event might be low for a population not located near the event site, it is interesting that the more established LOG and WXG events did not produce greater

levels of interest in attendance. Interest in engaging in the events through television drew the highest level of interest with the LOG ($M = 6.57$) significantly greater than both the WXG ($M = 4.52$) and the YOG ($M = 4.29$), and intent to follow through social media showed a similar trend with the LOG having a significantly higher mean than both the YOG and WXG. However, there were no significant differences between the YOG and WXG for either television or social media modes of engagement. The Olympic Games drawing the greatest levels of interest in television and social media would be expected given the history and prominence of that event; however, the fact that the YOG and WXG were statistically at the same levels is encouraging from a product positioning perspective as the X Games have more than a decade ahead of the YOG in their start. As previously mentioned, a limitation of this current study was the fact that only engagement intentions were measured as the actual events were still pending. Additional research conducted immediately post-event would be beneficial in assessing actual product consumption rather than projected intent by the participants.

Because the AIDA model of marketing connects the first step of product awareness to the second step of interest, the third research question addressed the relationship between awareness and interest for each of the three sport festivals. The WXG demonstrated the strongest level of correlational relationship with WXG awareness showing significant correlations with attendance, television and social media event engagement. For the LOG event awareness was significantly related only to television viewing intention, and for the YOG event awareness was significantly related only to social media following. As the YOG is indeed the youngest of the three sport festivals examined, it was the only event to produce higher social media to awareness correlations than television to awareness correlations.

According to the AIDA model, it would be expected that increasing awareness would be related to higher levels of interest in event consumption, but this only occurred fully for the WXG. It is of interest to note that the strongest correlational relationships were found for the television viewing variable, and this does provide support for the continued importance of television in the current sport media market. While social media and other alternative methods to follow sport continue to develop, television remains an area of vital concern for the marketer of global sport festivals. The correlation matrices developed for research question three also demonstrated strong relationships between the event consumption modes. For example, in the YOG the strongest of the six relationships was noted between television viewing and social media following ($r = .573$). The LOG also demonstrated its highest correlation between television and social media engagement, while the WXG noted this relationship as the second highest correlation of the six relationships. These relational results between consumption modes demonstrate the pattern of multiple forms of consumption within more highly engaged sport fans. The higher correlations noted between television and social media consumption should encourage further research to explore the relationship between these two media modes in their use either independently or simultaneously.

Despite the high level of elite youth sport engagement of this study population, the low levels of YOG awareness and interest overall, compared to other sport festivals, demonstrate a need for additional marketing and promotion efforts for the YOG. In order for the YOG to continue to be beneficial to the International Olympic Committee and all of the countries involved, event awareness needs to be raised. The YOG is still relatively new especially in comparison to the Olympics Games. Therefore, it may take time for this event to reach the caliber of awareness that follows the Olympics. Strategies need to be implemented by the International Olympic Committee and their staff in order to make the YOG more well-known. The success of the YOG is important not only for their own existence, but perhaps more importantly for securing a

greater audience for the Olympic Games themselves. The YOG's future success also provides the most significant way that the Olympic movement as a whole can contribute to the "fertilizer effect" and help youth athletes develop strong personality characteristics to fulfill the goal of positive youth development interventions (Coakey, 2011).

This study clearly indicates that the LOG has the largest following out of the three events discussed. The Olympics, in general, garner tremendous world-wide attention with the 2008 Games in Beijing gathering the largest global audience in Olympic history (Slater, 2009). However, the initial YOG struggled to attain main-stream media attention. While it was noted that the Singapore YOG boasted 166 networks contracted for global coverage, high levels of coverage on top television networks was lacking (Garekar, 2010). From a media coverage perspective, it will be important for the IOC to leverage existing media coverage of the Olympic Games into additional coverage of the YOG. The tremendous power of association with the iconic five ring logo that the YOG enjoys as a part of the Olympic family should be maximized in both media and sponsorship opportunities. Not only do sponsors provide financial benefits for the sponsored organization, but they can also promote events and help spread awareness of the organization by adding YOG logos and marks on their products and in their products' advertisements. If the YOG wants to have awareness levels rising to that of the Olympics, they need far greater exposure. Advertisements, pre-event media coverage, publicity-related events, and sponsorship tie-ins are all ways that the YOG could gain more public acknowledgement.

Conclusion

The YOG hold tremendous promise in adding a vibrant new component to the Olympic movement. However, the genesis and early history of the YOG shows a great need for improvement in generating product awareness and interest, especially in key target audiences. This present study demonstrated a lack of event interest and awareness in elite youth athletes' parents as a part of a trend already identified in other demographic groups. Indeed, if the AIDA marketing model applies to the development of the YOG, then it is critical for the YOG's success to become more widely acknowledged by the global community. Enhancing YOG awareness and interest must become a priority of the IOC and the national organizing committees of the YOG, if this event is to create a lasting presence and legacy. While the YOG is far too early in its development to accurately predict long-term viability and success, this event's future seems far more tenuous than that of the Olympic Games and X Games. Further inquiry and research of the YOG is needed not only to better understand the development of such an event, but also to inform key stakeholders who are seeking to balance this event between the positive forces of youth development and the negative forces of exploitation through excess commercialism.

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