Disabled athlete activism

: Motivators and Barriers to participation in activism among athlete with disabilities in South Korea

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The research on athlete activism ↑ / Focus upon western elite athletes

Still lack of research on disabled athletes activism

A complete absence of empirical research on social activism among disabled athletes in non-western cultures

Approach with Cultural Sport Psychology [CSP]
- promote understanding in communication and behavior within cultural values
- lead to uncovering new horizons
Introduction

South Korea

➢ Pyeong Chang Paralympic 2018
  : influence the transition and development of activism

➢ Confucianism : communication patterns and modes of behaviour
  in various aspects of daily life in South Korea
  : cooperation and group harmony
  : hierarchy and seniority
The purpose of this study is to identify how disabled athletes participate in activism to alleviate social inequalities in South Korea.

- Explore the *types of activism* that disabled athletes engage in.
- Discover *the motivators and barriers to be activist* from disabled athletes.
- *Make some recommendations* to eliminate some of the barriers and facilitate participation in activism from disabled athletes.
Methods

- 37 disabled people (18 elite / 15 recreational / 4 stakeholder)

- Maximum variation and Criterion-based sampling

- Inclusion criteria for elite disabled athletes:
  (a) Performed at a national or international level disability sport
  (b) Participated in elite talent development programme
  (c) Experienced sustained success at the highest level of their sport

- One-to-one semi-structured interview

- Inductive thematic analysis with semantic approach
<table>
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<th>Types of activism -1</th>
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<td><strong>Political activism</strong></td>
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<td>Types of activism -2</td>
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<td><strong>Sport-based activism</strong></td>
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<td>▪ Run a sport club / local event</td>
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<td>▪ Supporters</td>
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<td>▪ Join a sport association</td>
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<td><strong>Online activism</strong></td>
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<td>▪ Run a online community (sport-based activism)</td>
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## Motivators/Barriers to be an activist

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<td><strong>Society</strong></td>
<td>Develop society</td>
<td>Poor social structure</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td>Other commitment</td>
<td>Other commitment</td>
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1) Parent, 2) Position, 3) Personal connection, 4) Community spirit, 5) Age
Discussion

Five cardinal relationships of Confucianism:

- 父子有親: Children must always listen to their parents (Croll 2006)
- Parents: unconditional care, devotion, and sacrifice (Tagaki 2016)
- Social structure: disability as the results of bad luck or misfortune (Yan et al. 2014)

Stage 1: Emotional adjustment (Poon-Mcbrayer and McBrayer (2014))
- Frustration
- Self-blame
- Sorrow

Stage 2: Behavior
- Home life/work hard
- Parent activist

Stage 3: Motivator Barrier
- Overprotective
- Stigma of disability
- Activist
A position has an influential factor to be an activist in hierarchy society.

“Sports society is more difficult. It is more vertical than normal society. If I provide opposite opinion to stakeholder, I may not be in this society anymore.”

[Recreational athlete, Male]

“Someone complaining and raising a problem are bad for people in administration. So I was excluded a lot in society, and ignored. This gave me a motivation or goal with the spirit of fighting.”

[Retired elite athletes, Male]
Discussion

Personal connection (Factionalism)

- In-group / Outgroup distinction
  : regionalism, school relation, kinship, affective networks
- In-group: ‘tolerance’, ‘flexibility’, and ‘trust’
- Outgroup: ‘non-persons’, ‘subject to mistrust’ and ‘hostility’

“I experienced about the importance of the personal line while I was doing activism....the factionalism. A follow B’s words... so A can come B’s line. Then this person (A) should become an enemy of the other’s line. Also, even if this line have a power, this line can be decadent. Then it will be like a rotten rope.

[Elite athlete, Male, 34]
Community spirit (Collectivism)

- ‘Collectivism’ is extremely strong national culture of Koreans
  - ‘Sense of belonging’, ‘harmony with others’, ‘cooperation’
  - ‘Group obligation’, ‘hierarchy society’
  - Expression such as ‘our; (Woo-ri, 우리)’ country, family, company, even ‘our wife’ comes very natural

When talking, people would say, ‘The damn guys is wrong’ rather than ‘He is wrong’ So, if I do wrong, it is bundled up totally, not persona area. I am an athlete. 
If I do something wrong, people think, “all athlete are in the same way” not thinking it as my problem. It has been rooted into Korea society for a long time. So I try to hide my voice, be far from people, and avoid being around them.

[Elite athlete. Male, 44]
Discussion

**Age (Confucianism)**

- Although disabled athletes wish to participate in activism, **those who are young or middle-aged face significant constraints**
- Five cardinal relationships of Confucianism
  : 長幼有序
  : Old and young have an order or sequence
  : Vertical relationship – different age
  : Horizontal relationship – same age (Hyun 2011)
- Young athlete activist – online activism

*Example*

> the pronoun “You” to the older person as it is considered as rude (Hyun 2011)
> hard for younger to refuse a drink from an elder (Yum 2009)

“Older people tend to think someone who has different or opposite idea is baddy or asshole. They said to me “He is jerk.”, if I had a different idea.

[Elite athlete. Male, 44]
Practical Implication

- **Parents**
  - Support disabled children to adjust to society

- **Athletes / Sport organization**
  - Use their position to have a positive impact to society
  - The approach with social media can be useful for young or modern activists
  - The environment around the athletes should encourage social consciousness rather than put the responsibility solely on the athletes
Theoretical implication

- **Cultural sport psychology / Athlete activism research**
  : First evidence on Para-athletes activism within non-western cultural paradigm

- **Future research**
  : Southeast or West Asian athlete participation of activism / sports environment

  : A comparative study on parent of disabled child to be an activist between Western and Eastern culture
Thank You