

## **MODERATING EFFECTS OF AFFECTIVE IMAGE ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NOVELTY-SEEKING AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS OF RUNNERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Sport tourism research shows that most tourists who are runners are highly motivated to seek novelty. This inclination towards novelty-seeking causes runners to be less likely to revisit the same event and location on a regular basis. To improve the market sustainability of recurring running events, the negative effect of novelty-seeking should be minimised. This study examined the moderating role of the affective image of a destination to alleviate the effects of novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intentions via online surveys of amateur runners (n=206) who have participated in a running event within the past five years in Korea. Moderated hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the proposed hypotheses. Results indicated that the negative influence of destination novelty-seeking on re-participation intention is not moderated by affective image of destination. Yet, the moderating function of affective image was established in the relationship between event novelty-seeking and re-participation intention. Implications for enhancing destination loyalty and future research are discussed.*

**Keywords:** Affective image; Destination novelty-seeking; Event novelty-seeking; Recurring running events; Repetitive participation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Among leisure travel activities, participation in sport is a fast-growing sector of the contemporary tourism industry (Nowak & Chalimoniuk-Nowak, 2015; Wickramaratne & Kumari, 2016). Of the participation sport travel segments, running event participants has garnered the most attention from tourism practitioners and researchers (Funk & Bruun, 2007; Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Getz & McConnell, 2011; Giampiccoli *et al.*, 2015; Nowak & Chalimoniuk-Nowak, 2015). This is because running events are an effective addition to the economic development mix of communities (Burgan & Mules, 2001; Coleman & Ramchandani, 2010), as the events can attract relatively large numbers of participants, as well as travelling companions, other spectators, and event volunteers (Murphy & Carmichael, 1991; Kaylen *et al.*, 1998; Schwartzhoffová, 2015).

Currently, the economic potential of tourists participating in running events has led to an increase in the number of events, and increasing competition among host destinations for the retention of runners (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Sato *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, as an increasing number of host destinations include running events in their marketing portfolio, it is becoming crucial for destination marketers and running event organisers to predict the economic sustainability of recurring running events by examining the propensity of runners to

revisit locations (Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Concerning the market sustainability of running events, future research is required to examine antecedents (such as destination image) that determine the return of runners on a regular basis to certain events (Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Taks *et al.*, 2009).

In terms of the determinants of re-visitation in recurring running events, recent research has elaborated two different standpoints: the psychological effect model and the novelty effect perspective. The psychological effect view postulates that re-visiting a host destination is strongly affected by psychological engagement with that destination (Chen & Funk, 2010; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Kaplanidou *et al.*, 2012; Filo *et al.*, 2013). Under this view, empirical studies of the revisit intentions of runners have revealed that there are direct, positive effects from destination image (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Chen & Funk, 2010; Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010), destination involvement (Filo *et al.*, 2013) and place attachment (Kaplanidou *et al.*, 2012).

The novelty effect view proposes that there is a large novelty factor, based on an innate personality trait of active sport travellers, which acts against revisiting (Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Getz & Andersson, 2010). Based on typologies of active and passive sport tourism, it could be argued that most distance runners including full or half marathoners are active sport tourists, because they are highly involved in running events at a participatory level, not at a spectator level (Weed & Bull, 2004; Axelsen & Robinson, 2009).

To clarify, sport tourism research shows that most runners as tourists are highly motivated to seek novelty, which causes them to be less likely to travel to revisit the same event and location on a regular basis (Agrusa *et al.*, 2007; Shipway & Jones, 2007; Assaker *et al.*, 2011; Getz & McConnell, 2011). Hence, even though a runner may be very satisfied with the experience at an event and host destination, he or she may deliberately decide not to revisit. Notably, compared with skiers who strongly depend on the facilities (resort, slopes, amenity and so on) of a destination (Filo *et al.*, 2013), runners as tourists are likely to be less reliant on a destination because their ability to participate in the event is not limited to the features of the destination. Thus, to ensure revisitation by runners to recurring running events, novelty-seeking effects should be decreased.

From the academic and practical point of view, these competing standpoints motivated the current study to explore a comprehensive framework that helps to understand a way to mitigate the novelty-seeking effects for the repeated participation in the recurring running events. This line of research not only develops the academic knowledge in this field further, but it is also of significance to host communities and running event organisers, who aim to build the loyalty of runners to their recurring event (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Yet, we know little about the key constructs and their relationships, which may diminish the novelty-seeking effects. Examining the negative effects of novelty-seeking on repetitive participation in recurring running events and further identifying the psychological moderators may lessen the negative impact of novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In terms of testing the psychological moderator effects, the current study pays attention to the role of the affective image of destination as the moderator. Firstly, this is because theoretically, when recurring running events are examined, the function of destination image may be more influential in runners' decisions to attend the event again (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Furthermore, sport tourism studies have identified the function of the affective domain of destination in tourist decision-making processes (Chalip *et al.*, 2003; McGehee *et al.*, 2003; Carneiro & Crompton, 2010; Kaplanidou *et al.*, 2012; Filo *et al.*, 2013). Secondly, the destination is commonly accepted as a crucial aspect in successful sport tourism development and destination marketing, since it impacts on both the supply and demand-side aspects of marketing (Hallmann *et al.*, 2014).

To examine the moderating role of the image of running event destinations, this study focused on the behavioural aspects of the running event participants, who had an experience of traveling to participate in running events within the past five years. Based on the discussed rationale, this study sought to examine the moderator role of the affective image of a destination in mollifying the influence of novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intentions in the context of recurring running events.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Novelty-seeking and repetitive participation

Novelty-seeking is a trait defined as seeking varied and new experiences (Hirschman, 1980; Lee & Crompton, 1992; Jang & Feng, 2007). Novelty-seeking can be characterised as an innate personality trait of travellers (Jang & Feng, 2007) and as a primary component of travel motivation (Jang & Feng, 2007; Agrusa *et al.*, 2011). Tourism studies on switching behaviour have conceptualised novelty-seeking theory as a theoretical framework that provides a strong theoretical foundation for deducing destination choice behaviour (Crompton, 1979; Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; Jang & Feng, 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2008). In particular, the tourism literature has uncovered that novelty-seeking has a diminishing impact on revisit intention (Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; George & George, 2004; Jang & Feng, 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Assaker *et al.*, 2011).

Sport tourism studies have suggested that a large novelty factor exists among active sport tourists, such as non-local runners who are highly involved in a running event at a participatory level (Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; Weed & Bull, 2004; Axelsen & Robinson, 2009; Getz & Andersson, 2010). For example, in a study of the Cyprus International Challenge running event, Shipway and Jones (2007) observed that distance runners have a strong desire to travel and 'collect places (events)'. They concluded that this novelty-seeking motive is closely related to runners' needs for their career path, and can be satisfied through new experiences in prestigious events.

Similarly, in a study of the development of running careers, Getz and Andersson (2010) found that amateur distance runners with high novelty-seeking motives prefer competing in more prestigious events, and that they are likely to change the events they seek as their career develops. In a study of the valuation of experiential event services, Agrusa *et al.* (2007) examined the novelty effect in relation to Honolulu Marathon participants. They found that seekers of high novelty are likely to avoid experiences that are similar to the original event.

Given the literature then, it is likely that certain sport tourists switch event destinations even when satisfied with the services provided at a destination, due to the novelty-seeking factor.

In summary, previous literature supports the expectation that distance runners are likely to seek novelty with regard to their choice of event destination and an event itself, and therefore they are less likely to repeatedly participate in a recurring running event, if it is to be held in a destination they have visited before. Thus, the following hypotheses were put forward for consideration in this study:

*Hypothesis 1:* Destination novelty-seeking will negatively influence the behavioural intentions of runners to participate in the same event.

*Hypothesis 2:* Event novelty-seeking will negatively influence the behavioural intentions of runners to participate in the same event.

### **Moderating role of affective image of destination**

An affective image of destination is represented by the feelings or emotional responses toward the various features of a place (Zhang *et al.*, 2014). Previous literature demonstrated that the affective image formulated by tourists of a destination plays a significant role in their decision-making, destination choice and behavioural intentions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002). A positive perception of the affective quality of the place among event participants has been linked to increased revisit intention and positive word of mouth (Oppermann, 2000; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Kaplanidou *et al.*, 2012; Zhang *et al.*, 2014). In addition to relationships between affective image and revisit intentions, the affective image of destination is also deemed to be associated with novelty-seeking. As discussed, novelty seekers in tourism are inherently interested in things, sights, customs and cultures different from their own (Bello & Etzel, 1985) and thereby they tend to pursue the appreciation of the experience of strangeness and novelty. These dispositions may hinder the development of place attachment and revisit behaviours (George & George, 2004).

It is likely, however, that novelty seekers may be satisfied when they felt positive about the destinations. This is because novelty-seeking is deemed the sum of thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation, and surprise (George & George, 2004), which share major triggers to induce positive affective images of a destination (Russel & Pratt, 1980). This notion supports that an affective image satisfies novelty-seeking and thereby lessens the solidity of novelty-seeking in tourism behaviour.

The authors argue that when a runner participating in an event formulated a positive feeling toward the destination after the event, the negative effect of novelty-seeking, on repetitive participation, will be alleviated. Kaplanidou *et al.* (2012) demonstrated that the positive affective images that marathon participants hold, influence their intention to travel, and further to participate in the event again in the future. In a similar vein, investigating cycling event participants, Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) found that there is a direct effect of affective image on revisit intention. Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) suggested that intention to visit again, or to visit to participate in a recurring sports event, is influenced by destination image when a destination is positively perceived. In addition, service management literature posits that there is a negative association between positive image formation and the probability of changing brand and/or service (Kayaman & Arasli, 2007). Given the empirical evidence, in the absence of a positive affective image towards a destination, sport tourists seeking novel places and events are likely to switch their destination.

Thus, it is considered that affective image toward a destination will serve to buffer the effect of the novelty-seeking factor on repetitive participation in a recurring sport event:

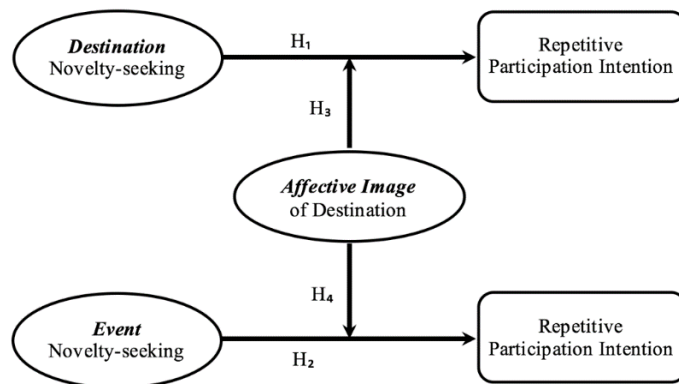
*Hypothesis 3.* The negative effects of destination novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention will be moderated by the affective image of the destination.

*Hypothesis 4.* The negative effects of event novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention will be moderated by the affective image of the event.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

Based on the hypotheses presented, the research model was designed and is depicted in Figure 1.



*Figure 1.* RESEARCH DESIGN

### Data collection

The current study focused on amateur runners who have participated in running events within the past five years in South Korea. Data were collected via dual paths.

Firstly, the study identified running clubs that registered with the regional branches of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee. In addition, via online research, the study gathered contact information from websites of running clubs that were located in the Gyeonggi-province and in the Seoul metropolitan area. Most members of these clubs are amateur runners in Korea. The members run with other club members on a regular basis and train for running events. Given the contact information, club managers were contacted via email to obtain permission for the online survey, including the purpose of the study, confidentiality of the information and the survey link. All identified running clubs were contacted. Of those, only twelve granted permission to share the survey link with their members.

Secondly, to collect a large population of runners in Korea, links for the survey were posted on BANDs, which is a popular online platform in Korea. BAND is a social networking platform that members with common interests can create a social group and communicate with other members in that community. Specifically, BANDs was identified in which Korean runners frequently communicate for information about running goods, training courses and

event schedules. We registered these BANDs and placed the survey link because BAND members who are runners were considered active runners who have a lot of experiences in participating in running events. In this phase, participants were asked to share the link with other runners.

Data was collected from September to November in 2016. Only tourist runners who had experience with traveling to participate in running events within the past five years were included in the analysis. To identify tourist runners, respondents were asked whether they had experience of traveling to the event destinations and lodging for at least a day. Finally, the convenience sample consisted of 206 respondents who satisfied the criteria mentioned.

The sample of running event tourist participants consisted of mainly males (67.5%). They ranged in age from 19 to 65 years with a mean age of 39.5 years. Of all respondents, 66% were married and 51% of them have children. They exercised on average 5.5 hours a week of which 4.2 hours was running. They had also participated in an average of 3.7 half or full marathons within the past five years. In terms of travel behaviour, runners travelled in a group of an average of 3.3 and only 2.3 runners that formed part of the group, participated in the running event. Most respondents participated with club members (61.7%), while others participated alone (13.6%), with friends (9.2%), colleagues (8.3%) or family members (2.9%).

## Measures

In addition to demographic items, the questionnaire consisted of the researched construct items and control variable items. The research constructs included affective image of the destination, destination novelty-seeking, event novelty-seeking, and event revisit intentions. Control variable included running involvement. This is because involvement is one of the predictors that strongly influence behavioural intentions of participation in sport context (Kim *et al.*, 1997; Hill & Green, 2000; Park & Lee, 2009; Beaton *et al.*, 2011). To examine the moderating effect of affective image of destination, therefore, running involvement was controlled. All measures were adapted from prior studies written in English. To generate the linguistically equivalent Korean measures, a translation/back translation method was used (Brislin, 1970). The means and standard deviation are reported in Table 1.

### *Affective image*

Affective image of destination was assessed using a four-item measure adapted from Russel and Pratt (1980). Participants rated perceptions toward affective image of the most recent destination they visited to participate in a running event within the last year. Affective image was measured on a seven-point bipolar scale: pleasant-unpleasant, relaxing-distressing, arousing-sleepy, and exciting-gloomy. Negative poles were assigned to smaller values (unpleasant=1 and 7=pleasant). Internal consistency was computed (Cronbach's alpha=0.86).

### *Destination/Event Novelty-seeking*

The destination and event novelty-seeking scale adapted from Lee and Crompton (1992) was applied. Respondents rated their preferences for both the novel place ('I like to find myself at destinations where I can explore new things') and the novel running event ('My ideal running event involves looking at things I have not experienced before'). Seven-point Likert-type items (strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=7) were utilised. Internal consistency was respectively established (Cronbach's alpha of destination novelty-seeking=0.92; Cronbach's alpha of event novelty-seeking=0.94).

### **Re-participation intention**

Re-participation intention to the event was measured by a single item adapted from Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007). Participants were asked to rate the likelihood of participating again in their most recently attended running event. Intention was measured on a seven-point Likert scales where strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=7.

### **Control variable**

Running involvement was measured using a three-item scale with a single item for each involvement facet of pleasure, centrality and sign (Beaton *et al.*, 2011). Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with three statements: (1) "I really enjoy running" (pleasure), (2) "Running says a lot about who I am" (sign), and (3) "I find a lot of my time is organised around running/walking" (centrality). Seven-point Likert-type items where strongly disagree=1 and strongly agree=7 were used. Internal consistency reliability was computed (Cronbach's alpha=0.71).

### **Analysis of data**

Descriptive statistics and correlations between primary variables of interest were conducted. The moderating effect is typically expressed as an interaction between the predictor and the moderator variable (Kim *et al.*, 2001). To examine interactions within the context of moderated regression, hierarchical moderated regression analyses were conducted with the following steps (Kim *et al.*, 2001). Firstly, the predictor variable (Destination novelty-seeking, event novelty-seeking and destination image) was centred to minimise the possibility of multicollinearity that causes "bouncing betas," in which the direction of the beta terms can shift from previously positive to negative relationship or vice versa (Smith & Sasaki, 1979). Secondly, the interaction terms were computed by multiplying the centred independent variables by the centred moderator (affective image of destination). Thirdly, multiple regression models were produced representing the main effects and interactions. Fourthly, the graphs for significant interactions on re-participation intention were compiled to assist the interpretation of the buffering effects of affective image.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive analysis and correlations**

As shown in Table 1, while event novelty-seeking ( $r=0.16$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and affective image ( $r=0.19$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) correlated highly with repetitive participation intention, destination novelty-seeking ( $r=-0.51$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) was negatively correlated with repetitive participation intention.

**Table 1. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, CORRELATIONS OF CONSTRUCTS**

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
1. Destination novelty-seeking	3.73±0.82			
2. Event novelty-seeking	4.27±0.66	-0.09		
3. Affective image	4.67±1.21	-0.14	0.11	
4. Repetitive participation intention	5.23±1.72	-0.51**	0.16*	0.19**

\* $p<0.05$

\*\* $p<0.01$

### Moderating effect of affective image on relationship between destination novelty-seeking and repetitive participation intention

The current study sets out to find the moderating effect of affective image of destination. As presented in Table 2, running involvement (control variable,  $\beta=0.189$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) predicted repetitive participation intention. Additionally, the results of regression analysis confirmed a direct negative effect of destination novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention ( $\beta=-0.173$ ;  $p<0.01$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1.

To test Hypothesis 3, the destination novelty-seeking versus affective image interaction terms were included in the model predicting repetitive participation intention. The entry of interaction did not account for a significant portion of the variance in repetitive participation intention ( $\Delta R^2=0.001$ ;  $p>0.05$ ), rejecting Hypothesis 3.

**Table 2. REPETITIVE PARTICIPATION INTENTION REGRESSED ON DESTINATION NOVELTY-SEEKING AND AFFECTIVE IMAGE**

Step and variable	Repetitive participation intention			
	$\beta$	Adjusted $R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	F
<i>Step 1</i>		0.031	0.036**	7.502**
Running involvement	0.189**			
<i>Step 2</i>		0.548	0.519**	83.354**
Running involvement	0.063			
Destination novelty-seeking	0.170**			
Affective image	0.627**			
<i>Step 3</i>		0.546	0.001	62.231**
Running involvement	0.063			
Destination novelty-seeking	-0.173**			
Affective image	0.623**			
Destination novelty-seeking x Affective image	-0.010			

\* $p<0.05$

\*\* $p<0.01$

### Moderating effect of affective image on the relationship between event novelty-seeking and repetitive participation intention

Hypotheses 2 proposed the negative effects of event novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention.

As shown in Table 3, in Step 1, running involvement ( $\beta=0.190$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) predicted repetitive participation intention. In Step 2, of the two main effects (event novelty-seeking and affective image), affective image ( $\beta=0.708$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) was a significant predictor of repetitive participation intention, accounting for a significant portion of the variance ( $\Delta R^2=0.504$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Yet, a significant negative effect of event novelty-seeking ( $\beta=0.065$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) on repetitive participation intention was not established thereby rejecting Hypothesis 2 (Table 3).

To test Hypothesis 4, the event novelty-seeking versus affective image interaction terms were included in the model predicting repetitive participation intention. As expected, the entry of interaction term contributed unique variance to the regression model ( $\Delta R^2=0.013$ ;  $p<0.05$ ),



indicating that there is potentially significant moderation between affective image and event novelty-seeking level on repetitive participation intention, providing support for Hypothesis 4.

**Table 3. REPETITIVE PARTICIPATION INTENTION REGRESSED ON EVENT NOVELTY-SEEKING AND AFFECTIVE IMAGE**

Step and variable	Repetitive participation intention			
	$\beta$	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	F
<i>Step 1</i>		0.032	0.036**	7.669**
Running involvement	0.190**			
<i>Step 2</i>		0.533	0.504**	79.103**
Running involvement	0.065			
Destination novelty-seeking	0.082			
Affective image	0.708**			
<i>Step 3</i>		0.544	0.013*	62.119**
Running involvement	0.088			
Destination novelty-seeking	0.065			
Affective image	0.699**			
Destination novelty-seeking vs. Affective image	-0.116*			

\*p<0.05

\*\*p<0.01

To understand the nature of the significant interaction between event novelty-seeking and affective image, the impact of event novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention at other levels of affective image was plotted. As shown in Figure 2, the slope of high affective image is almost flat, indicating that the negative effect of event novelty-seeking on re-participation intention is marginal when runners perceived positive affective image toward the destination. On the other hand, the negative effects of event novelty-seeking on re-participation intention are apparently identified at low affective image level.

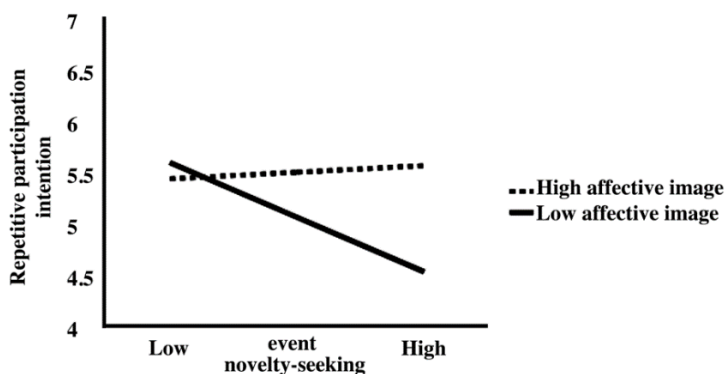


Figure 2. MODERATING EFFECT OF AFFECTIVE IMAGE

## DISCUSSION

Sport destination marketers have to make a greater effort to attract sport travellers to their destinations due to the large number participating in the sport event. Notably, active runners are more likely to exhibit motives seeking varied and new experiences when selecting next running destinations (Shipway & Jones, 2007). For economic sustainability of recurring running events, their desire to seek novelty should be satisfied or minimised to ensure re-participation. The current study examined whether the affective images of destination lessen the negative effects of novelty-seeking on re-participation intention. The following section addresses the findings and implications in more detail based on the hypotheses.

Firstly, the results of this study confirmed a direct negative effect of destination novelty-seeking on repetitive participation intention, supporting Hypotheses 1. This finding was consistent with previous sport tourism research findings, suggesting that novelty-seeking has a diminishing effect on intention to revisit (Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; George & George, 2004; Jang & Feng, 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Assaker *et al.*, 2011). It is not surprising as distance runners would not intend to visit the same event again if they display enough desire to seek new experiences in a destination they have never visited before. As a result, this should be a key issue for destination marketers to mitigate the effect of destination novelty-seeking behaviour. To enhance destination loyalty, one of the effective strategies is to develop activities available at a destination during the planning stage. This allows participants and their companions to have various opportunities to formulate positive impressions toward the place before or after the running event. These activities can be designed to include running-related events, as well as distinct activities pertaining to socio-cultural attributes of destinations.

Secondly, the results yielded different outcomes regarding event novelty-seeking. Unexpectedly, runners that are more likely to seek novelty events did not display a change in their intentions to re-participate in recurring events, rejecting Hypothesis 2. This unexpected outcome could be viewed in terms of the perceptions of experienced runners toward recurring sport events. Regarding experience design in sport events, previous sport tourism studies have stressed the importance of generating experiences based on the creation of environments capable of absorbing participants in a pleasant, memorable and unique way, with services working as stages and products as supports (Costa & Scaletsky, 2010). In the reality of marathon events in Korea, their programmes and services were often projected to offer

optimum experiences. They are occasionally designed and organised with different courses, adding variety in running related programmes and services for the participants, and innovative technologies to offer optimum experience. Given the perception that the content of events will be newly invented, it is possible that runners are more likely to be motivated by health-related needs, psychological well-being or social motives rather than novelty-seeking. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that event novelty-seeking does not necessarily have a negative impact on re-participation intention.

Thirdly, concerning the moderating role of affective images, this study identified the moderating function of affective image of a destination in the relationship between event novelty-seeking and repetitive participation intention, thus supporting Hypothesis 4. This finding is consistent with the previous rationale suggesting that the positive affective images that marathon participants have influence their intention to travel, and to continue participating in the event in the future (Kaplanidou *et al.*, 2012). As discussed, prior experience of events may in reality, create the perception that recurring events will provide new and innovated programmes and services annually. These minor adjustments and the expectations, may work to satisfy the runner's desire for new events, and therefore, barely alter their re-participation intention. Further study is required to determine the effect of feelings of accomplishment and the influence on repeat participation in order to compare the strength of desires for novelty with other desires. As Shipway and Jones (2007) suggested, discussion of past successes was an evident focus of social interaction, and benefits, such as those accrued through basking in reflected glory, are only available when there is a strong connection between the self and the activity. Thus, these durable benefits of shared experience, and connection between self and an activity may encourage repeat participation regardless of desire for novelty.

Interestingly, however, the results revealed that even though runners displayed positive attitudes toward affective images for a destination, the negative effects of destination novelty on re-participation intention was not alleviated, consequently rejecting Hypothesis 3. This unexpected finding provides insights into understanding the environmental characteristics of the destination, which are an inherent factor. Assets, from natural surroundings to socio-cultural infrastructures cannot be easily modified to satisfy the desires of travellers seeking new experiences. This is because with a long-term perspective, the natural characteristics of destinations are fixed assets, compared with events, which are always being developed. Running event tourists are likely to formulate cognitive schemas toward the fixed assets of destinations they visited before. Thus, experiential schema toward a place may stimulate novelty motives when selecting their next event. Finally, this may obstruct their intention to revisit. Therefore, it is reasonable that runners with a desire to visit new destinations will express reluctance to run again in the same event even if they have positive attitudes toward the affective image of destination.

## IMPLICATIONS

The current findings have both academic and practical implications. For the body of knowledge, this study further supports the proposition that intention to re-participate in a recurring sport event might be negatively influenced by destination novelty-seeking, and that the negative effects of event novelty-seeking on intention to re-participate in a recurring running event might be mitigated by destinations affective images. However, this study suggests that the affective image of destination would not reduce the negative influence of destination novelty-seeking on re-participation intention.

With regard to destination marketing, this problem should be rectified. For this, running

event marketers can reduce the negative effects of destination novelty-seeking on re-participation intent by building positive affective image of destination and its effects. In this regard, the findings provide standpoints for running event-related tourism practitioners, given that consumer enjoyment of sport events derives, at least in part, from identification with a subculture of a sport (Green, 2001). Sport participants commonly develop their own subculture and share and use it to enhance their social identity (Green, & Jones, 2005). Running event tourism marketers could develop long-term goals and strategies for subcultures of running events as a method to leverage the destination image. Subculture of the events should reflect runners' cultural norms and values, and allow participants to differentiate themselves from the parent Korean culture. This is because running event tourists are likely to seek to escape from their daily life and a structured modern society. Hence, these strategies to build a distinct subculture of the event need to include processes that can build a social, entertaining and pleasurable value from additional programmes and services that free runners from the fatigue, discomfort and sacrifice that they face during the event (Costa *et al.*, 2010).

There will be a further synergetic effect if such event programmes are incorporated with the overall marketing mix of tourism products and services of a destination. This is because recurring sport events are regularly held at the same place, and thereby become a significant method to enhance place attachment. Again, recurring running events could enhance positive reactions toward a destination by organising them to support cultural elements of destinations and the subcultures of participants. This approach could be a starting point to create a distinctive ritual for an event, which promotes participants' loyalty toward the place and convey positive reactions toward a destination.

In the sport tourism literature, the testing of moderating effects to buffer novelty-seeking is scant. This study attempts to fill this gap by employing the affective image of a destination as the moderator. This study may contribute to expanding the body of knowledge by providing insights into the attributes of novelty-seeking and the functions of affective image of destination in the running event tourism context. In particular, the study postulates two types of novelty-seeking (destination vs. the event itself) as independent variables, which are framed to reflect the real-world situations in running event tourism. This dual approach to conceptualise novelty-seeking will assist destination marketers to segment their markets, and to develop tailored strategies. Furthermore, this may lead to customised strategies to diminish the influence of the novelty factor.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study highlights the value of affective image of a destination in retaining running event participants. While support for the research hypotheses was partially revealed and the methodology used prior studies, this study is not free of limitations that should be noted. Firstly, in the case of an online survey for measuring affective images of a destination, the survey participants only relied on their memory to recall the most recent destination that they visited to participate in an event. Thus, the possible presence of biased responses could have influenced the results. Furthermore, this study involved the gathering of the perceptions of Korean runners who have participated in running events in Korea.

The online survey method employed might not be applicable for runners who do not have access to online facilities or are not registered in Korean SNS communities (that is, Band). This online approach of the study in gathering data may have limitations to reach diverse populations of runners and thereby allow the study to generalise the findings to a larger running event

tourism industry. An effort could be made to conduct a cross-cultural international study to enhance generalisability of the findings and to comprehend behaviours of foreign participants by identifying the nationality of the participants. This would allow running event practitioners to develop strategies to also appeal to international participants.

Other directions for future studies stem from a running event marketing perspective. Further studies focusing on the interaction between event novelty-seeking and destination novelty-seeking are necessary to produce marketable insights for development of running-related programmes and services. In addition, a comprehensive scale for measuring event novelty-seeking needs to be developed, which can be used to segment active sport tourism markets. This would be utilised to develop marketing mix strategies to mitigate novelty-seeking effects. It also would be interesting to examine whether the moderating effects of affective images or cognitive images of destination vary over time in the relationship between novelty-seeking and revisit intention. This is because novelty desires toward the event visited before might diminish over time. Finally, it would also be important to explore the relationships between destination novelty-seeking and nostalgic memory toward an event, and further examine if and how they interplay and influence the intention to revisit in the recurring sport event context.

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