The Influence of Risk Attitudes, Emotions and Life Goals on Intentions to Travel for Sport Events During a Pandemic

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During the Covid 19 pandemic, one of the industries that was significantly hit was the sport event travel industry (Sports Eta, 2020). During times of crisis (e.g., pandemic), sport consumers may respond in different ways depending on a number of factors related to their decision making. Emotional reactions typically manifest during times of crisis and may influence the individual’s perceptions of risk (Conte, Levati, & Nardi, 2018; Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003; Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2012). Since risk is embedded in personality, we have to consider the theoretical functions of the multilevel model of personality (McAdams, 1995). In that model, the first level includes personality traits because they paint the picture of a person’s “dispositional signature” (McAdams, 1995, p. 365). The model’s second level can include domain specific life goals or values elicited by pertinent personality traits (Hietalahti, Rantanen, & Kokko, 2016). During crisis personality aspects include risk aversion or risk seeking (Lu, Wu, & Chen, 2016; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Life goals (Sirgy, 2009) are also relevant here as they could change the trajectory of the final decision regarding an activity such as intentions to travel to attend sport events. As alluded in the personality model, goals follow personality related traits. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to examine the influence of emotions, risk seeking attitudes and relevant life goals generated during a crisis on intentions to travel for sport events during times of crisis (i.e., pandemic).

Method

Survey data were collected from 412 Amazon M-Turk respondents in May 2020.

Independent variables. Risk seeking attitudes were measured with five items adapted by Franken, Gibson and Rowland (1992) anchored by 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. Emotions were measured with the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) which included 20 emotional descriptors and the respondents indicated how much they felt of each descriptor (1=not at all, 5=a great deal). Three goals life goals were generated based on the context of the study (Rapp, 1998; Vincent et al., 2004): have a rich social life, have a healthy life, have a overall good quality of life. The respondents indicated how important these goals were to pursue in the next year (1=not at all important, 5=extremely important).

Dependent variable. Intentions to travel to attend or participate in sport events was measured with one item asking people the likelihood to travel to participate in sport events (1=extremely unlikely, 5=extremely likely) (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2012).

Analysis/results/discussion. Regression was used to test the study’s hypotheses. The results revealed that positive and negative emotions, along with risk seeking attitudes and the goals to be healthy and have a rich social life explained 41.8% of variance in intentions to travel to attend or participate in a sport event. The goal to be healthy had a negative significant influence on intentions to travel while the goal to have a rich social family had a positive significant effect on intentions along with the significant effects of positive and negative emotions and risk seeking attitudes.