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## Examining Public Acceptance of Physical Activity involvement of People with Disabilities (PWD) – A SEM approach



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**Abstract.** Regular involvement in physical activity for PWD has been shown to positively contribute to physical fitness, psychological health, personal development and quality of life. However, social acceptance by people without disabilities has been identified as one of the prominent obstacles faced by people with disabilities in their involvement in physical activity. To further understand this issue, this presentation will discuss the outcomes of an investigation on the factors that influence public acceptance towards people with disabilities involvement in physical activity. An exploratory model of public acceptance was developed using key antecedents identified from previous literature. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach was used to analyze the data collected. The findings revealed the importance of five prominent antecedents that is personality, attitudes, exposure, ethnicity and subjective norms in explaining public acceptance towards physical activity participation of the disabled. Subjective norms were identified as the most important factor in influencing public acceptance. Additionally, Public attitude also depicts a mediating role in the relationship between external factors (ethnicity, exposure) and public acceptance. A pertinent contribution of the study is the introduction of the extended model of public acceptance developed from integrated framework from theory of reasoned action (TRA), social learning theory, and big five model (BFM), which contributed better understanding of public acceptance towards disabled people. Further understanding of these factors towards PWD involvement in physical activity is essential to promote social inclusion in building a better community for the PWD. Implications of the result for future practices and directions of research will be discussed.

**Biography.** Assoc. Prof. Ong is a senior lecturer at the Department of Sport Science, Faculty of Applied Sciences, TARUC, Kuala Lumpur. He has been involved in the development of Paralympic sports since 2001, and has contributed his expertise in various capacities, including the improvement of health and physical education curriculum within the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Assoc. Prof. Ong is an Editorial Board Member for the Malaysian Journal of Sport Science and Recreation. He has also co-authored several books on sports and physical education, and recreational management. Assoc. Prof Ong has been involved in numerous national grant researches in the field of physical education, exercise behavior, sports and recreational tourism. He has published various research papers and had made presentations at the local, national and international conferences in the above fields. In promoting the Olympic movement, Assoc Prof. Ong was an instructor for the IOC Advanced Sport Management Course and a

regular invited speaker for the National Olympic Academy Session for Young Participants organized by Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM). As one of the pioneer for the development of Malaysian Paralympic Sports, Assoc. Prof. Ong has been the National coach for the Malaysian Para Table Tennis team since 2001. He has volunteered and contributed his expertise in assisting international events organized by the Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) such as Secretariat Committee member in Asia Paralympic Committee Conference and APC Sports Awards 2013 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Pre Delegates Registration Meeting for Paralympics London 2012 (Asia Region) and also committee member of Secretariat, Asian Para Games 2014 in Incheon, South Korea. Assoc Prof Ong's experience and expertise in table tennis has been recognised by the International Para Table tennis Federation (IPTTF) and has been appointed as an International senior classifier. For the past 14 years, he has been serving in many international and local para table tennis championship such as Hong Kong Table Tennis Open for the Disabled 2007; 5th ASEAN Para Games, KL' 2009 ; 2009 Gwangju-Korea International Para Table Tennis Championship; Asian Para TableTennis Championship 2011 (Hong Kong, China); 5th AL\_WATANI Championship 2012 in Amman, Jordan; 2013 ITTF-PTT Asian Table Tennis Regional Championships in Beijing, China; 2015 Oceania Para Regional Championships in Bendigo, Australia; 2016 Thailand Para Table Tennis Open in Pattaya and 2017 ITTF-Oceania Para Championships in Suva, Fiji. Assoc. Prof. Ong's current research revolves around physical activity and recreation for the disabled, recreational management and sport tourism.