

## A Model Examining the Relationship Between Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Sport Attitudes and Team Identification

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Team identification is recognized as an important phenomenon in sports spectatorship but little is known about how it is related to cultural values and sports attitude. Previous research has examined the relationship between culture and a person's cognition, emotion, and motivation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), the influences of the cultural values of individualism and collectivism on job attitudes (Probst & Lawler, 2006), the impact of personal values on sports consumption behaviors in different cultural settings (Shao, 2002), team identification and attitudes toward buying from sponsors (Dalakas & Kropp, 2002; Madrigal, 2001), the unique behavior, attitudes, and buying patterns of Chinese sports consumers (Geng, Lockhart, Blakemore, & Andrus, 1996). These prior studies investigated the relationships between cultural values and attitudes and focused on the influences of values, attitudes, and team identification on buying behaviors in sport settings, but no work to our knowledge has investigated the relationships between cultural dimensions, sports attitudes, and team identification simultaneously. Thus, the current study proposed a model, which predicted that team identification could be explained by Hofstede's cultural values and sport attitudes.

The present study relies on Hofstede's dimensional framework of culture to develop hypotheses in the model. All five value dimensions were expected to have influences on sport attitude while two of them were also expected to impact team identification. First, Hofstede (1985) suggested that the dimension of Individualism versus Collectivism affect the person's self-concept relevant to team identification. People with an individualistic cultural value tend to initiate behaviors independently of others (Roth 1995, cited by Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel, 1999) and they are expected to look after only themselves and consequently may not be integrated into cohesive groups (IRIC, 1994, cited by Ko & Pastore, 1998). Therefore, people with higher scores in individualism may not use cohesive groups such as extended family but identify with a team for their social needs. Meanwhile, because one core feature of sports is competition, the emphasis of collectivist cultural values on reciprocity, avoidance of conflict, and harmony may negatively influence attitudes toward sports. Second, people who are comfortable in a hierarchy environment may tend to accept another feature of sports, discipline and have a more positive attitude toward sports. Third, the cultural values of masculinity emphasize achievement and material success (Hofstede, 1985), likely leading to a positive attitude toward sports because sports provide a chance to meet the needs of self-achievement through vicariously experiencing the competition. Fourth, people with high uncertainty avoidance feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity, and they may try to avoid uncertain situations. Since the outcome of any sporting event is uncertain, people who like to take risks may tend to have a more positive attitude toward sports. Finally, long-term oriented values are primarily derived from the principles of Confucian teaching (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). In Confucian teaching (Confucius, n.d.), the long-term relationships of - wu lun- (five relationships) (Hofstede & Bond, 1988) might be extended to develop a long-term relationship with a team. In addition, the value of perseverance emphasized by a long-term orientation is similar to sportsmanship. Players usually need to endure a long period of time in training. Thus, people who tend to be long-term oriented are likely to have more positive sport attitudes.

Data were collected by a self-administered online survey questionnaire (N = 3001) from respondents 18 years of age and older throughout the United States. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to assess the fit of the data to the model. The results showed that the model fit the data well (Chi Square = 18.107, df = 8, p = 0.02; SRMR = 0.0131; TLI = 0.998; RMSEA = 0.029). Approximately 46% of the variance of Team Identification was explained by sport attitudes and cultural values; approximately 8% of the variance of Sport Attitudes was explained by cultural values. Three (Power Distance, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance) out of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions were found to have a significant impact on sport attitudes. Long-Term Orientation and Individualism did not significantly influence sport attitudes. Meanwhile, Individualism was significantly associated with levels of team identification. Long-Term Orientation was not significantly related to levels of team identification.

The results highlight the importance of understanding the effects of cultural values on sport attitudes and team identification. Cultural values can be implied in the marketing plan and positioning strategy to appeal consumers. Also, sport marketers should pay attention to different sport attitudes in different cultures when they design marketing programs.