Original Article

Examining culture-specific sport consumption in a host country: The roles of ethnic identity and acculturation

JAE-PIL HA, PHD[1], WAN-YONG CHOI, PHD[2], JAEHYUN HA, PHD[3]
[1]Department of Physical Education, Gyeongsang National University, SOUTH KOREA
[2]University of North Florida School of Leadership, Counseling & Sport Management, USA
[3]Department of Sport Marketing, Keimyung University, SOUTH KOREA

Abstract:
This study examined the moderating effects of acculturation on the relationships between ethnic identity, fan identification, and culture-specific sport consumption behaviours for ethnic minority individuals living in a host country (i.e., United States in this study). To achieve this purpose, two theoretical models were developed: (a) the Ethnic Player Sport Consumption Model and (b) the Native Sport Consumption Model. A total of 394 participants of Northeast Asian descent were recruited from four large cities in the United States. The empirical results supported two hypotheses out of the four. Specifically, the results indicated that ethnic identity significantly influenced culture-specific sport consumption behaviours through fan identification in both models. However, there were no significant moderating effects of acculturation in the theoretical relationships among ethnic identity, fan identification, or culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. Sport marketers can utilize the findings of this study to design culture-based marketing strategies in order to attract ethnic minority individuals to the sport marketplace.
Key Words: **acculturation, culture-specific, ethnic identity, fan identification, sport consumption.**

Introduction

In an effort to survive in a competitive sport market environment, sport marketing researchers have attempted to better understand sport consumer behaviours by examining groupings of various demographic, social, and psychological factors such as gender, income, family size, and ethnicity (e.g., Andrew, Kim, O'Neal, Greenwell, & James, 2009; Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002); socializing agents (e.g., James, 2001); and motivation, fan identification, psychological commitment, and curiosity (e,g., Fink, Trail, & Anderson., 2002; Funk & James, 2001, 2006; Park, Mahony, & Greenwell, 2010; Trail & James, 2001; Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003). Despite the large amount of previous research on the above factors influencing sport consumer behaviours, researchers have paid very limited attention to culture-related factors such as ethnic identity and acculturation. These culture-related factors may have the potential to offer more in-depth explanations regarding the psychological aspects of sport consumption behaviours, particularly regarding ethnic minorities in a host country. According to McCracken (1986), consumer products "…give cultural meaning a concreteness for the individual that it would not otherwise have" (p. 73). In addition, people imbue consumer products with meaning in order to express cultural identities (Cleveland, Laroche, Pons, & Kasto, 2009). In this regard, it is crucial for sport marketers to better understand sport consumption behaviours of ethnic minority individuals by examining culture-related factors.

Culture is regarded as one of the most profound influences on consumer behaviours/patterns (Cleveland et al., 2009). The influence of culture is particularly important in understanding ethnic minorities' consumption behaviour because their consumption patterns are closely associated with cultural values, norms, and identities (Berry, 1980). Particularly, such cultural influences are more prevalent when minorities are away from their home countries (Adekunle, Filson, & Sethuratnam, 2010; Ha, Hums, & Greenwell, 2016). As a result of different values and norms, consumption differences are evidenced across ethnic groups, and these differences are reflected in product and service purchases (Assael, 1992; Cleveland et al., 2009). In other words, a consumer's preferred product/service attributes and characteristics differ according to the consumer's cultural or ethnic background (Rewerts, Hanf, & Wettstein, 2009). This is known as culture-specific consumption behaviour, indicating that people consume products/services reflecting attributes and characteristics of their culture-of-origin (Xu , Shim, Lotz, & Almeida, 2004). There is an abundance of research examining culture-specific consumption behaviours in the marketing literature (e.g., Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 2002; Penaloza, 1994; Xu, Shim, Lotz, & Almeida, 2004; Zolfagharian & Sun, 2010). Most of the work on culture-specific consumption behaviour focuses on two major culture-related factors - ethnic identity and acculturation.

Corresponding Author JAEHYUN HA, PHD, E-mail: jaehyunha@kmu.ac.kr

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Claussen, Ko, and Rinehart (2008) assert that research on sport consumer behaviour should adopt a cultural diversity approach in order to more effectively promote sport consumption to culturally and ethnically diverse consumer groups. In a sport consumption context, several researchers have sought to examine the influence of ethnic identity and acculturation on culture-specific sport consumption behaviours among ethnic minority individuals in a host society (Ha et al., 2016; Harrolle & Trail, 2007; Pon, Laroche, Nyeck, & Perreault, 2001). For example, Pon et al. (2001, p. 232) argued that ethnic minority individuals living in a host culture can adapt to a new or host cultural environment "by maintaining traits of their own culture" through sport consumption. In addition, the selection of a particular sport represents a powerful cultural meaning for an individual in that it allows him/her to identify with a specific culture. From this point of view, "a specific sport can be identified as being ethnically specific" (Pons et al., 2001, p. 235), which eventually leads to consumption of that sport.

In line with this, sport management researchers have found that ethnic identity significantly affects identification with and consumption of some types of sports that reflect attributes of a native culture. For instance, ethnic identity was a significant predictor of identification with and consumption of soccer (i.e., a sport reflecting attributes of Italy) among Italian Canadians (Pons et al., 2001). Based on the fact that fan identification was a key predictor of various sport consumption behaviours (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005), Ha et al. (2013) further attempted to investigate the mediating role of fan identification in the relationship between ethnic identity and sport consumption. In other words, an ethnic-specific sport consumption behaviour (i.e., following a sport that reflects the attributes of a native culture) could be influenced by ethnic identity through identification with the sport. However, prior research has not sufficiently examined the potential role of acculturation in explaining the relationships between ethnic identity, fan identification, and sport consumption.

Previous research outside the context of sport indicated that the consumption of culture-specific products and services varied based on an individual's level of acculturation in his or her host culture (Cleveland et al., 2009; Watchravesringkan, 2011). This implies that acculturation as a moderating variable may aid in explaining the theoretical relationships between ethnic identity, fan identification, and sport consumption. Managers and marketers could benefit from knowing whether acculturation moderates the relationships between the three above variables. If so, marketers can classify ethnic minority fans by level of acculturation. Accordingly, this study mainly attempted to test whether or not acculturation moderates the theoretical relationships between ethnic identity, fan identification, and sport consumption.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

Although there is a growing body of research on ethnic minority sport consumption behaviours, there is still an insufficient understanding of various factors that influence these behaviours when such individuals live in a new/host society (i.e., Asians living in the United States). Prior research found that various culture-related factors affect culture-specific consumption behaviour (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, & Melewar, 2001; Cleveland et al., 2009; Watchravesringkan, 2010; Xu et al., 2004). These factors include, but are not limited to, acculturation, ethnic identity, ethnocentrism, nationalism, patriotism, and country-of-origin (also called culture-of-origin). Of these factors, this study's theoretical framework is grounded in ethnocentrism, country-of-origin (COO), ethnic identity, and acculturation.

Consumer ethnocentrism and country-of-origin (COO)

Ethnocentrism refers to a general attitude whereby an individual holds a strong belief and commitment/loyalty towards his/her own ethnic group (in-group) while rejecting culturally dissimilar groups (otherwise known as out-groups). Consumer ethnocentrism is an application of the more general concept of ethnocentrism to the economic context and was defined by Shimp and Sharma (1987, p. 280) as "the beliefs held by the consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign-made products." From the perspective of an ethnocentric consumer, purchasing foreign products is detrimental to the economic health of the home country, and is thus undesirable, unpatriotic, and even immoral (Klein, 2002). Further, ethnocentric consumers favour products from their own cultural heritage even if the quality is lower than that of foreign products (Wall & Heslop, 1986).

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism intuitively has a close relationship with the concept of country-of-origin (COO) in a consumption setting (Kipnis, Kubacki, Broderick, Siemieniako, & Pisarenko, 2012). The COO literature implicitly assumes that individuals identify with the country where the product originated and posits that favourability of individuals' product evaluations and purchasing decisions are mainly influenced by beliefs held about the country/culture where the product is perceived to belong (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2008). In other words, products perceived as 'local' are preferred since they are regarded as 'our brands,' while those perceived as 'foreign (non-local)' are not preferred because they are viewed as 'their brands' (see Klein, 2002). Thus, based on the concepts of consumer ethnocentrism and COO, individuals feel a sense of identity with, and belongingness to, their ethnic cultures when they purchase products reflecting attributes of their original cultures/countries.

After applying the concepts of consumer ethnocentrism and COO to a spectator sport consumption context, it is suggested that ethnic minority individuals living in a host society tend to consume COO-based sport

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products. Ha et al. (2013) suggested that for ethnic minority individuals in a host country, COO-based spectator sport consumption behaviour can be operationalized in two forms: (a) consumption behaviour for popular sports in a native country through the Internet; and (b) consumption behaviour for a team with an ethnic-specific player (e.g., Chinese fans in the US followed the Houston Rockets when Yao Ming was on their roster). The first form of sport consumption is particularly prevalent due to the ever-increasing advancement of Internet technologies. For example, an international student in the US (e.g., Japanese) can easily follow information on popular sports of his/her native country, such as Nippon Professional Baseball, through the Internet. Thus, it is important for sport marketers in a native country to develop online content meeting the needs of people living outside of the native country (Ha et al., 2013). With regards to the second form of sport consumption, an ethnic minority individual may be likely to attend a certain team's game if there is a player whose ethnic background is the same as him/her.

Ethnic identity and COO-based sport product consumption

Several terms are perceived to be similar to ethnic identity, including ethnicity, ethnic group, and race. These terms are generally defined on the basis of demographic (e.g., culture, national origin) and physical characteristics (e.g., skin tone; Quintana, 2007). While these terms represent one's superficial characteristics, ethnic identity is conceptualized as one's internal characteristics, such as a sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the attitudes, perceptions, and feelings related to that membership (Phinney, 1996). Although ethnic identity has been defined in numerous ways, it appears that ethnic identity refers to "an enduring, fundamental aspect of the self that includes a sense of membership in an ethnic group and the attitudes and feelings associated with that member [ship]" (Phinney, 1996, p. 922). According to Hirschman (as cited in Cleveland et al., 2009, p. 197), the level of ethnic identity is "tantamount to the degree of commitment to the norms of the given ethnic group, and thus, the degree of influence that this group holds on the individual's attitudes and behaviours."

To identify a relationship between ethnic identity and consumer behaviour, numerous studies have been conducted in the context of a host society where ethnic minority individuals reside. These studies all found that ethnic identity significantly influenced various consumption behaviours, including clothes, food, and entertainment consumption, among others (Cleveland et al., 2009; Jun, Ball, & Gentry, 1993; Xu et al., 2004; Zolfagharian & Sun, 2010). By and large, previous research has demonstrated that ethnic identity has a positive relationship with culture-specific consumption behaviours. In a similar vein, ethnic identity also positively affects COO-based sport consumption behaviours (Ha et al., 2013; Pons et al., 2001). Accordingly, it is suggested that ethnic identity has a significant, direct impact on the two forms of culture-specific sport consumption behaviours in a host country. Even though substantial empirical evidence points to a direct relationship between ethnic identity and culture-specific sport consumption behaviour, it was only recently that Ha et al. (2013) suggested that fan identification may play a potential mediating role between the two constructs.

Mediating role of fan identification

Fan identification is defined as one's psychological connection/attachment to various sport-related objects (e.g., teams, players, specific sport; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000). To date, sport fan identification has been seen as a primary factor in influencing various sport consumption behaviours. According to Harney (1985), the choice of a particular sport represents a powerful cultural meaning for an individual in that it allows him/her to identify with a specific culture. From this perspective, Pons et al. (2001) stated that a specific sport can be identified and consumed as being ethnically specific, such as ice hockey to Canadians, soccer to Brazilians/Italians, football to people from the United States, and so on. This suggests that attachment to (i.e., identification) and consumption of a specific sport might vary depending on ethnic group. Similarly, an ethnic minority individual living a host country can be identified with an ethnic-specific player and further be identified with a team in which the player has.

Regarding the relationship between ethnic identity and sport consumption, Pon et al. (2001) first provided empirical support that ethnic identity was a significant predictor of consumption of a sport product (i.e., soccer) reflecting attributes of a specific ethnic group (i.e., Italian Canadians). Further, Pon et al. found that ethnic identity significantly influenced identification with the ethnically specific sport. Later, Harrolle and Trail (2007) also attempted to examine the impact of ethnic identity on fan identification among ethnic minority individuals (Latinos in the US). The study demonstrated that ethnic identity was significantly related to identification with some sports.

As noted above, it is well documented that fan identification was one of the most significant predictors of sport consumption. Based on these findings, Ha et al. (2013) proposed a mediating role of fan identification in the relationship between ethnic identity and culture-specific sport consumption and found that fan identification fully mediated ethnic-identity-to-culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. Specifically, the finding indicates that, although people living in a host country strongly identify with their native country, they may not consume sport products/services reflecting attributes of their native country unless they are emotionally attached to them (i.e., fan identification). Thus, it is critical to examine the potential role of fan identification as a mediator in the relationship between ethnic identity and culture-specific consumption behaviours. Based on the discussion above, the following two hypotheses were proposed with respect to two forms of COO-based sport

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consumption for ethnic minority individuals in a host country: consumption for a popular sport in a native country, and consumption of a team with an ethnic player.

> H1: Identification with an ethnic player (hereafter referred to as "ethnic player ID") plays a mediating role in the relationship between ethnic identity ("ethnic ID") and consumption of a team with the ethnic player (hereafter referred to as "ethnic player consumption").

> H2: Identification with a popular sport in a native country (hereafter referred to as "native sport ID") plays a mediating role in the relationship between ethnic ID and consumption for the popular sport in the native country (hereafter referred to as "native sport consumption").

Moderating role of acculturation

Acculturation is referred to as a response to a host culture and typically occurs when individuals come into continuous contact with the host culture environment (Berry, 1980). Because of the continuous contact with the host culture, their behaviours and attitudes adapt to the ways of the host culture (see bipolar model of acculturation, Nguyen & von Eye, 2002). Based on this concept of acculturation, many researchers have investigated how the degree of acculturation affects consumption behaviours of ethnic minority individuals in a host culture (Cleveland et al., 2009; Maldonado & Tansuhaj, 2002; Penaloza, 1994; Xu et al., 2004; Watchravesringkan, 2011). The prior research indicated that, while acculturation was positively related to consumption behaviour reflecting attributes of the host country (Cleveland et al., 2009; Watchravesringkan, 2011), it was negatively related to culture-specific consumption behaviour (Xu et al., 2004). These findings support the idea that people with high levels of acculturation are less likely to exhibit culture-specific consumption behaviour and vice-versa.

Although some studies in the field of sport management have demonstrated that a positive relationship existed between acculturation and involvement with consuming popular sports in a host country (e.g., American football in the US; Ha et al., 2013), no empirical research has tested for the relationship between acculturation and culture-specific sport consumption behaviour. In a sport consumption setting, the previous literature on ethnic minority sport consumption revealed: (a) ethnic identity significantly influenced culture-specific sport consumption behaviours; (b) ethnic identity significantly affected identification with culture-specific sports; and (c) identification with culture-specific sports was a significant predictor of culture-specific sport consumption behaviours (Pon et al., 2001). However, in the current study, an inquiry was made regarding the following question: Does the strength of the relationships mentioned above always remain the same? Thus, it can be assumed that the degree/strength of the above relationships can be different depending on the levels of acculturation. In other words, the relationship between ethnic identity and culture-specific sport consumption (i.e., a team with an ethnic player, popular sports in a native country) can be greater for people who are less acculturated than their counterparts. The results might also be the same as the other two relationships above. According to this line of thought, it is plausible that the relationships among the three factors can be moderated by the level of acculturation. Thus, the following two hypotheses were proposed with regard to the two forms of culture-specific sport consumption behaviours:

> H3: Acculturation plays a moderating role in the relationships among ethnic ID, ethnic player ID, and ethnic player consumption. More specifically, the strength of relationships between ethnic ID and ethnic player consumption; ethnic ID and ethnic player ID; and ethnic player ID and ethnic player consumption would be greater for lowly acculturated people when compared to highly acculturated people.

> H4: Acculturation plays a moderating role in the relationships among ethnic ID, native sport ID, and native sport consumption. More specifically, the strength of relationships between ethnic ID and native sport consumption; ethnic ID and native sport ID; and native sport ID and native sport consumption would be greater for lowly acculturated people when compared to highly acculturated people.

Combining the mediating role of fan identifications and the moderating role of acculturation, this study proposed two theoretical models based on the two forms of culture-specific sport consumption: the Ethnic Player Consumption Model (Figure 1) and the Native Sport Consumption Model (Figure 2).

Material & methods
Participants and Procedures

The current study focused on the Asian population in the US, particularly on those with a Northeast Asian background, specifically China, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. The study particularly targeted the Asian population because: 1) the Asian-American Consumer 2016 Report (nielsen, 2016) indicated that the total Asian-American population had increased by 25% between 2009 and 2014, which was one of the fastest rates of growth among other ethnic groups; and 2) Asians' current purchasing power is approximately $825 billion and it is anticipated to increase 32% to $1.1 trillion, which is 6.7% of total US purchasing power, by 2020 (nielsen).
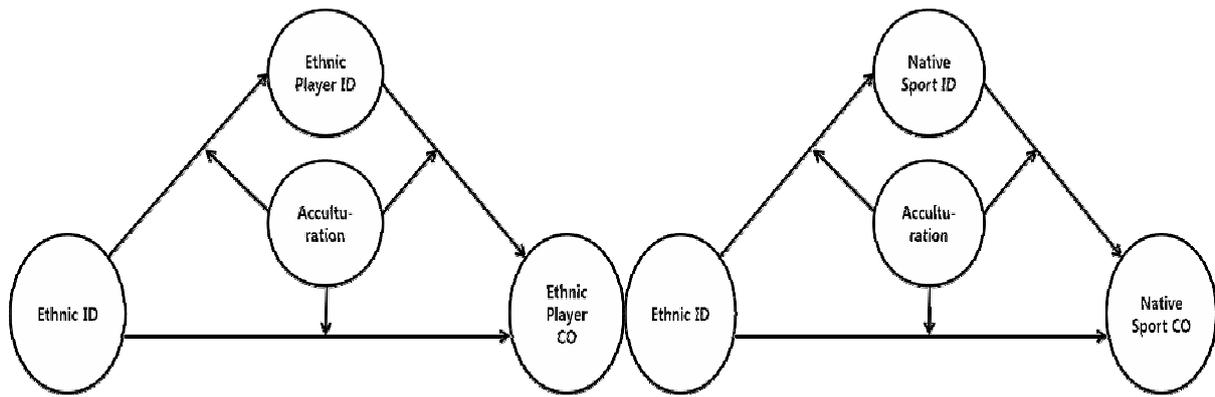
Figure 1. Moderated mediation model for ethnic player consumption

Figure 2. Moderated mediation model for native sport consumption

The Northeast Asian ethnic groups, in particular, enjoy the greatest economic power when compared to other Asian subgroups. In spite of the rapid growth of the Asian market in the US, their sport consumption levels are still relatively low compared to Hispanics and African Americans (Ko et al., 2008). This indicates that the Asian population is regarded as an underdeveloped market segment possessing great growth potential.

Data were collected from Northeast Asian ethnic individuals living in four large cities in the US. The four cities were chosen because athletes from the Northeast Asian played in the cities. A total of 434 individuals participated in the survey. Of the 434 participants, 40 surveys were deleted because of incomplete information. This resulted in 394 usable surveys. With regard to ethnicity, 30.2% (n = 119) were Chinese; 29.4% (n = 116) were Korean; 22.1% (n = 87) were Japanese; and 18.3% (n = 72) were Taiwanese. There were 219 males (55.6%) and 175 females (44.4%). The average age of the sample was 30.00 years (SD = 8.80). The majority of participants regarded themselves as Asians (47.2%; n = 186), followed by 1st generation immigrants (22.3%; n = 88), 1.5 generation immigrants (21.3%; n = 84), and 2nd generation immigrants (and higher [9.1%; n = 36]). On average, the participants had lived in the US for 10.21 years (SD = 8.00).

Instrumentation

The survey using a self-administered questionnaire consisted of four scales to measure the following: ethnic identity, acculturation, fan identification, and sport consumption behaviour. Given that the current study focused on the two forms of culture-specific sport consumption, fan identification and sport consumption included two subscales, respectively: fan identification (ethnic player ID and native sport ID) and sport consumption (ethnic player consumption and native sport consumption). Based on the review of literature, items believed to be the most appropriate for the study and good psychometric properties in prior research were initially selected.

Specifically, three items from the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised (MEIM-R) were employed to measure ethnic identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The MEIM-R originally consisted of two factors: exploration (3 items) and commitment (3 items). Of the two factors, three items for the commitment factor were adopted because they were strongly associated with a sense of belongingness and attachment to an ethnic group, which covers the definition of ethnic identity in the current study. The three items were scaled on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

For acculturation, it was measured with four items adopted from the Asian American Multidimensional Acculturation Scale – European Americans (AAMAS – EA; Chung, Kim, & Abreu, 2004). The four sample items to measure acculturation were as follows: "How much do you feel you have in common with people from American culture?", "How much do you identify with people from American culture?", "How much would you like to interact and associate with people from American culture?", and "How much are you to be a part of American culture?" The four items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*).

For fan identification, two subscales were adopted from the Points of Attachment Index (PAI; Trail et al., 2003) to measure the two forms of fan identification: ethnic player ID and native sport ID. Each of the subscales had three items, which were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Like the fan identification measurement, the study measured two different forms of sport consumption behaviours: ethnic player consumption and native sport consumption. The study adopted seven items from previous studies (Trail et al., 2005). The seven items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7).

Data Analysis

      To test the theoretical relationships among the factors in each of the two proposed models, the researchers utilized a two-step approach. First, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to examine psychometric properties of all constructs in each of the two measurement models. After the CFA was conducted, structural equation modelling (SEM) with bootstrapping procedures was conducted to examine relationships among the factors in each of the two proposed models (i.e., the mediating effect of fan identification). Next, the moderating effect of acculturation on the hypothesized relationships among the factors was tested with a multiple group analysis. For this multiple group analysis, the participants were divided into two groups based on the rating of acculturation using a median split (high group: $n = 199$ vs. low group: $n = 195$). Some scholars have championed the use of midpoint split method rather than the median split since the former approach allows for a more direct approximation of participants' preferred levels (Dona & Berry, 1994). However, the midpoint split would increase the likelihood of generating an unbalanced sample size among four acculturation groups/strategies (Castro, 2003). A comparison was made between a model with cross-group equality constraints on a causal path coefficient and a model without cross-group equality constraints on a path coefficient. This was done for both the Ethnic Player Consumption Model (Figure 1) and the Native Sport Consumption Model (Figure 2).

Results

      Before testing the proposed models, we first checked the multivariate normality of the two models. The normalized Mardia's coefficients of skewness and kurtosis for the Ethnic Player Consumption Model were 37.46 and 32.27 respectively, and those for the Native Sport Consumption Model were 52.24 (skewness) and 46.61 (kurtosis). These results indicated a violation of the multivariate normality assumption. Thus, to alleviate the potential problems related to the non-normality, Satorra and Bentler's (1994) scaled x^2 (S-B x^2) was adopted.

      The means, standard deviations, and correlations among all variables involved in the two proposed models are shown in Table 1. In addition, as previously mentioned, data were collected from four Asian subgroups who have Northeast Asian background (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Taiwanese). For this reason, a series of one-way ANOVAs were completed to determine whether significant differences existed in the six main variables of the two proposed models among the four subgroups. The results indicated that no significant differences were found in the mean scores of the six main variables. Thus, it is possible to merge the four ethnic groups into the suggested models for the current study.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Ethnic ID	4.95	1.49	1.00					
2. Acculturation	4.15	.97	-.04	1.00				
3. Ethnic Player ID	3.68	1.65	.48**	-.04	1.00			
4. Native Sport ID	2.95	1.58	.35**	.05	.63**	1.00		
5. Ethnic Player Consumption	2.86	1.35	.40**	.08	.78**	.67**	1.00	
6. Native Sport Consumption	2.20	1.32	.31**	-.01	.61**	.80**	.71**	1.00

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$

Measurement models

      Two separate CFAs were performed for Ethnic Player Consumption and Native Sport Consumption Models. First, the results of CFA for the Ethnic Player Consumption Model revealed that the model fit the data adequately (S-B x^2/df = 96.461/32 = 3.014, CFI = .97; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05). The three factors showed good internal consistency (□̃□̃□̃₁□□□Table 2̃as well as good construct validity (AVE = .73-.86; Table 1). In addition, no squared correlations between the factors were larger than the AVE value for any factors indicating good discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Second, the CFA results for the Native Sport Consumption Model revealed that the model also fit the data well (S-B x^2/df = 74.783/24 = 3.115, CFI = .98; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .03). The three factors showed good internal consistency (□̃□□-.□□□Table 2̃as well as good construct validity (AVE = .77-.86; Table 2). Like the Ethnic Player Consumption Model, no squared correlations between the factors were larger than the AVE value for any factors. Table 2 displays the factor loadings, means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE values of the all factors in both the Ethnic Player Consumption and Native Sport Consumption Models. AVE and Cronbach's alpha for the acculturation factor were .55 and .83, respectively. In addition, the mean scores and standard deviations for each group of acculturation are as follows: high group ($M = 4.90$, $SD = .65$) and low group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .56$)

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Table 2. Factor loadings (□), Cronbach's alpha (□), average variance extracted (AVE) values of the two measurement models.

Factor	Item	□	□	AVE	*M*	*SD*
Ethnic Identity			.95	.86	4.95	1.49
	I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	.94				
	I feel a strong attachment to my own ethnic group.	.97				
	I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	.88				
Ethnic Player ID			.94	.84	3.68	1.65
	I identify with a specific player from (Country Name) playing on an American team.	.86				
	I am a big fan of a specific player from (Country Name) playing on an American team.	.97				
	I consider myself a fan of specific player from (Country Name) playing on an American team.	.95				
Ethnic Player Consu-mption			.91	.73	2.86	1.36
	I'm more likely to attend the game(s) of an American team having a player from (Country Name).	.83				
	I watch or listen to the game(s) of an American team with a player from (Country Name) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio).	.93				
	I follow the news on an American team with a player from (Country Name) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio).	.93				
	I purchase the team's merchandise from an American team that has a player from (Country Name).	.71				
Native Sport ID			.93	.84	2.95	1.58
	First and foremost I consider myself a fan of a sport that is popular in (Country Name) (Insert Example).	.95				
	A popular sport in (Country Name) (Insert Example) is my favorite sport.	.93				
	I'm a fan of a popular sport in (Country Name) (Insert Example) at all levels (e.g., amateur, professional).	.86				
Native Sport Consu-mption			.89	.77	2.20	1.32
	I watch or listen to a popular sport in (Country Name) (Insert Example) through the Internet.	.98				
	I follow the news on a popular sport in (Country Name) (Insert Example) through the Internet.	.96				
	I purchase the merchandise of a popular sport in (Country Name) (Insert Example) through the Internet.	.65				

Note. Ethnic identity was included in both Ethnic Player and Native Sport Consumption measurement models. Factor loadings of acculturation ranged from .53 to .93. Cronbach's alpha and AVE of acculturation is .83 and .55, respectively.

Tests of mediating and moderating effect

    Ethnic player consumption model. The Ethnic Player Consumption Model, which specifies the structural relationships among ethnic ID, ethnic player ID, and ethnic player consumption, fit the data well (S-B x^2/df = 99.165/32 = 3.098, CFI = .97; TLI = .95; RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .05). The model's path coefficients are reported in Table 3. The direct path from ethnic ID to ethnic player ID was significant (□ = .45, SE = .05), and the direct path from ethnic player ID to ethnic player consumption was significant (□ = .77, SE = .04). In addition, the indirect path from ethnic ID to ethnic player consumption through the ethnic player ID was significant (□ = .35, SE = .04). However, the direct path from ethnic ID to ethnic player consumption was not significant (□ = .06, SE = .04) when controlling for ethnic player ID; this indicated there was a complete mediation from ethnic ID to ethnic player consumption (Support H1). The total effect of ethnic ID on ethnic player consumption was also significant (□□.41, SE = .04). Ethnic ID and ethnic player ID combined to explain 64.8% of the variance in ethnic player consumption (R^2 = .648). Table 3 reports the overall results of the mediating effect in the Ethnic Player Consumption Model.

    Regarding the moderating effect of acculturation, we compared a model with cross-group equality constraints on causal path coefficients to a model without cross-groups equality on the causal path coefficients. The χ^2 difference between the constrained and unconstrained models was not significant (S-B $x^2_{\text{difference [3]}}$ = .962, p = .81). Furthermore, pairwise comparisons between path coefficients across the two acculturation groups

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Table 3. Summary results for the mediating effects in the Ethnic Player and Native Sport Consumption Models.

Model	Parameter		b	SE	CR	□
	Direct Effects					
		Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player ID	.50	.05	9.13	.45***
Ethnic Player Consumption Model		Ethnic Player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.60	.04	15.18	.77***
		Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.06	.04	1.65	.06
	Indirect Effect					
		Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.33	.04	7.84	.35***
	Direct Effects					
		Ethnic ID → Native Sport ID	.42	.06	7.38	.37***
Native Sport Consumption Model		Native Sport ID → Native Sport Consumption	.89	.04	22.43	.83***
		Ethnic ID → Native Sport Consumption	.02	.04	.55	.02
	Indirect Effect					
		Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.46	.05	9.30	.30***

Note. b = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; CR = critical ratio; □ = standardized coefficient.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

showed no significant difference in any path coefficients across the groups (CR < ± 1.96, $p > 0.05$; see CRs in Table 4). More importantly, the results of heterogeneity test using a z-score indicated that the indirect effect difference (ethnic ID → ethnic player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption) across the two groups was not significantly different (CR = .45, $p > .05$). Taken together, the overall results indicate that the moderating effect of acculturation on any of the relationships among the factors in the Ethnic Player Consumption Model did not occurr (Reject H3). Table 4 presents the overall results of the moderating effect of acculturation in the Ethnic Player Consumption Model.

Native sport consumption model. The Native Sport Consumption Model specifying the relationships among ethnic ID, native sport ID, and native sport consumption fit the data well (S-B x^2/df = 76.084/24 = 3.170, CFI = .97; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .04). The model's path coefficients are reported in Table 3. The direct path from ethnic ID to native sport ID was significant (□ = .37, SE = .06), and the direct path from native sport ID to native sport consumption was significant (□ = .83, SE = .04). In addition, the indirect path from ethnic ID to native sport consumption through native sport ID was significant (□ = .36, SE = .04). However, the direct path from ethnic ID to native sport consumption was not significant (□ = .02, SE = .05) when controlling for native sport ID. Total effect of ethnic ID on native sport consumption was also significant (□ □.32, SE = .04). Taken together, the results indicate that there was a complete mediation from ethnic ID to native sport consumption (Support H2). Ethnic ID and native sport ID combined to explain 69.2% of the variance in native sport consumption (R^2 = .692). Table 3 reports the overall results of the mediating effect in the Native Sport

Consumption Model.

For the moderation effect of acculturation, in the mediated Native Sport Consumption we compared a model with cross-group equality constraints on causal path coefficients and a model without cross-group equality constraints on the path coefficients. The χ^2 difference between the constrained and unconstrained models was significant at .10 alpha level, not at .05 alpha level (S-B x^2 [3] = .6.584, p = .086). To further test the moderating effect of acculturation, pairwise comparisons between path coefficients across the two acculturation groups were performed. The results indicate that only one significant difference in path coefficient (native sport ID → native sport consumption) exists across the groups (CR = -2.19, $p < 0.05$; see CR in Table 4). However, the results of the heterogeneity test using a z-score revealed that the indirect effect difference (ethnic ID → ethnic player ID → ethnic player consumption) across the two groups was not significant (CR = 1.39, $p > .05$). Accordingly, there was no moderating effect of acculturation on the relationships among the factors in the Native Sport Consumption Model (Reject H4). Table 4 presents the overall results of the moderating effect of acculturation in the Native Sport Consumption Model.

Table 4. Summary results for the moderating effect of acculturation in the Ethnic Player and Native Sport Consumption Models.

Model	Parameter	Low Acculturation Group			High Acculturation Group			CR
		b	SE	□	b	SE	□	
Ethnic Player Consumption Model	Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player ID	.51	.08	.43***	.45	.07	.46***	-.41
	Ethnic Player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.69	.06	.82***	.67	.07	.73***	-.22
	Ethnic ID→ Ethnic Player Consumption	.09	.05	.09	.04	.06	.04	-.72
	Ethnic ID → Ethnic Player ID → Ethnic Player Consumption	.35	.07	.35***	.31	.06	.34***	.45
Native Sport Consumption Model	Ethnic ID → Native Sport ID	.47	.08	.42***	.38	.08	.33***	-.82
	Native Sport ID → Native Sport Consumption	.89	.05	.86***	.73	.05	.81***	-2.19*
	Ethnic ID → Native Sport Consumption	.02	.06	.02	.01	.05	.01	-.10
	Ethnic ID → Native Sport ID → Native Sport Consumption	.42	.07	.36***	.28	.07	.27***	1.39

Note. CR = critical ratio for differences between path coefficients across the two groups (low acculturation and high acculturation groups). *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study focused on investigating the moderating role of acculturation in the theoretical relationships among ethnic identity, fan identification, and culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. Based on two forms of culture-specific sport consumption, two conceptual models were proposed and tested: (a) the Ethnic Player Consumption Model and (b) the Native Sport Consumption Model. Overall, both models explained a large amount of variance in the culture-specific sport consumption behaviours (64.8% in the former model and 69.2% in the latter model).

As expected, ethnic identity significantly influenced ethnic player consumption through ethnic player ID as well as native sport consumption through native sport ID. These results were consistent with previous literature, which found that the relationship between ethnic identification and culture-specific sport consumption behaviours are mediated by fan identification (Ha et al., 2013). Specifically, in the Ethnic Player Consumption Model, ethnic player ID plays a critical role in compelling ethnic minority individuals to watch or attend ethnic player games. This is conceptually similar to the argument that ethnic minority individuals in a host country tend to identify with players of their own ethnicity playing in the host country in order to maintain ethnic identity (Min & Kim, 2009; Rocha, 2011). These results also support the idea suggested by Ko et al. (2008), who stated that professional sport teams in the US need to more actively recruit high-profile Asian players as a way of building fan-ethnic player identification. With respect to the consequences of the Native Sport Consumption Model, the results indicated that Asians with high levels of identification with their native country were more likely to consume a popular sport in a native country (i.e., native sport consumption) through identification with the native popular sports (i.e., native sport ID). For example, Japanese people living in the US with high levels of ethnic identity were likely to watch Nippon Professional Baseball games through the Internet because they identify with the sport.

One of the key contributions of the current study was identifying the mediating role of fan identification in the relationship between ethnic identity and culture-specific sport consumption behaviours by using the two proposed models. While numerous studies provided evidence on the mediating role of fan identification in the field of sport marketing (e.g., Madrigal & Cohen, 2007; Trail et al., 2003), scant attention was paid to that role when examining ethnic minority sport consumption behaviours. Specifically, the results of this study indicated that even though Asians identify strongly with their native countries, they may not exhibit the two forms of culture-specific sport consumption behaviours (i.e., ethnic player consumption, native sport consumption) unless

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they identify with the sport products. Thus, the mediating role of fan identification would contribute to strengthening the body of knowledge in the area of ethnic minority sport consumption behaviours.

Another focal point of the current study was to examine the moderating effect of acculturation. Against our expectations, in both models, the strength of the associations among ethnic identity, fan identification, and culture-specific sport consumption behaviours did not vary with the level of acculturation, indicating no moderating effect of acculturation. One of the main reasons for the non-significant moderating effects was due to the low variance of acculturation measure (SD = .97). These results can be also explained by the bi-dimensional model of acculturation (Berry, 1997). The bi-dimensional model assumes that individuals are capable of accepting characteristics and attributes of both original and host cultures. In other words, individuals who are less acculturated into the host culture would not necessarily consume culture-specific products/services. Rather, these individuals may consume their original culture, the host culture, or both cultures. Applying this thought to the findings of the current study, Asians living in the US can consume either culture-specific sports (e.g., watching popular sports in a native country via the Internet), popular American sports (e.g., American football), or both. Accordingly, the non-significant moderating effect in the two proposed models was consistent with the bi-dimensional model of acculturation.

Implications

The findings of the current study have several theoretical implications. First, this study serves as one of few research efforts to investigate culture-specific sport consumption behaviours using ethnic identity and acculturation. The application of the two culture-related factors to the two proposed models provided depth to conceptual arguments and empirical support on antecedents of culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. Second, the study of the impact that culture-related factors have on sport consumption behaviours appears to support basic theoretical premises about the relationship between the two cultural factors and consumption behaviours in and outside of the sport context (Cleveland et al., 2009; Ha et al., 2014; Harrolle & Trail, 2007; Pons et al., 2001; Xu et al., 2004; Watchravesringkan, 2011). In addition, this study examined the Asian population in the US, which has previously been overlooked in sport management literature. Thus, the findings of the current study would contribute to expanding the body of knowledge in the field of ethnic minority sport consumption behaviours.

By examining these two culture-related factors, the results of the current study also provided several meaningful implications for sport practitioners. First, when it comes to the Ethnic Player Consumption Model, Asians with high levels of ethnic identity were more likely to consume games where their ethnic players appear. In this regard, US sport marketers should put their best efforts to employ a culture-based marketing approach to effectively communicate with Asian consumers. Today, some US professional sport teams with Asian players are making efforts to attract Asian fans. For example, since the Los Angeles Dodgers recruited Hyun-Jin Ryu, one of the most popular Korean baseball players, for the 2013 season, the team has attempted to broaden its marketing efforts to attract Koreans by developing a translated version of their website, broadcasting the team's games in Korean, making sponsorship contracts with Korea-based companies, and hiring Korean-speaking staff. Additionally, culture-based promotional events for Asians, such as Asian Community Appreciation Days and offering Asian food service, are critical to attract more Asians to a stadium or arena. Although the target population in the current study included only Asians living in the US, the results pertaining to the Ethnic Player Consumption Model imply that US professional sport teams or leagues with high-profile Asian players can secure additional revenue sources by targeting Asians in their homelands. This may include sponsorship contracts with companies in their homelands, broadcasting the Asian players' games, and hosting exhibition games in their homelands.

With regards to the Native Sport Consumption Model, the results of this study provided useful information for sport marketers in native countries. Because of the prevalence of the wireless internet service made possible by the dramatic advancement of mobile technologies, people can easily obtain various sport-related information from their native country anywhere and anytime. This is particularly important for people living outside of a native country either temporarily (e.g., international students) or permanently (e.g., immigrants). As such, sport marketers in native countries may need to develop specific marketing strategies for people living in the US or other countries in order to expand their fan base or maintain the relationship with them. For example, sport journalists in the native country may need to write sport news articles focusing on their ethnic identity.

Limitations

Admittedly, this study has some limitations to be addressed in future research. First, according to Berry (1997), a person's level of acculturation may be influenced by other factors (e.g., length of residence in a host country, living location, generation status), so future research may need to examine those factors using the two tested models in the current study. Second, this study collected data from Asian cultural/community centers and Asian student associations in universities. Given that these people may be already highly involved in their native cultures, the results of the study may be different when using people who are not associated with Asian student centers or Asian cultural/community centers. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings could be improved

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by using broader and wider sampling frames in various contexts. Further, the mean scores of ethnic player consumption (2.86) and native sport consumption (2.20) indicated that the participants of current study were less engaged in culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. This may be due to the fact that data were collected from non-sport consumption settings (e.g., Asian cultural centres). Thus, future research should be conducted nearby actual sport consumption settings, particularly where culture-specific sport products/services are provided, to better explain the two proposed models. For example, data can be collected from a popular community event involving Asian athletes. Lastly, when it comes to sport consumption variables (i.e., ethnic player consumption, native sport consumption), the current study simply measured them using a 7-point Likert-type scale. This may not accurately measure participants' actual culture-specific sport consumption behaviours. Accordingly, future research should consider measuring frequency of consumption and its intensity in order to more accurately assess them.

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