

A Study of Youth's Engagement Behavior in Transnational Media in an Intercultural Context: Taking Volleyball in China and Japan as an Example

Junchen Zhai^{1,a,*}

¹Capital Normal University, Beijing, 100048, China

a. 2645965934@qq.com

**corresponding author*

Abstract: In the era of globalization, intercultural communication studies have emerged as a focal point of research. Analyzing interactions and exchanges across cultures offers deeper insights into the intricate dynamics of cultural and social evolution. Sports, especially volleyball, serve as a bridge between nations, facilitating mutual understanding and cooperation. The significance of volleyball exchanges between China and Japan is unmistakable, representing a crucial aspect of bilateral sports diplomacy. Against this background, it is imperative to delve into the identity sentiments of youth towards their engagement with Chinese and Japanese volleyball media in an intercultural context. This exploration not only provides insights into the values and cultural leanings of the younger generation but also clarifies the intricate influence of these factors on cultural dissemination. The findings reveal that youths' enthusiasm for sports and their individual attributes directly impact their participation in Japanese volleyball media. Moreover, this influence is modulated by a sense of intercultural identity, reflecting a complex interplay between personal attributes, cultural affiliations, and media engagement. Additionally, the widespread use of social media emerges as a key factor, intersecting with intercultural identity to shape youths' engagement with volleyball media. By exploring this topic, this paper can help gain a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships between personal identity, cultural affiliations, and media consumption among young individuals, specifically within the realm of volleyball media in China and Japan.

Keywords: Youth, Intercultural Identity, Chinese and Japanese Volleyball, Media Engagement, Social Media

1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization, intercultural communication has increasingly become a significant field of research. Understanding the interactions and exchanges between different cultures is crucial for promoting cultural and social development. Sports, as a global activity, have strengthened international exchanges and interactions through social media. Chinese and Japanese volleyball, as an integral part of bilateral sports exchanges, carries certain representativeness and influence. Hence, examining the identity sentiments of youth towards their interaction with volleyball media from China

and Japan in an intercultural setting is crucial for comprehending their values and their influence on cultural dissemination.

Drawing upon theories in communication studies and intercultural identity research, this paper takes sports enthusiasm, individual attributes, and social media use as independent variables, intercultural identity as a mediator variable, and transnational media participation behaviour as the dependent variable. The research findings play an important guiding role in promoting the in-depth development of intercultural sports communication, strengthening individual sense of belonging and community in intercultural contexts, and optimizing social media communication strategies.

2. Theoretical Background

Kim criticizes currently prevalent treatments of cultural identity as static and monolithic, and she proposes instead the concept of intercultural identity, “as an opened, adaptive, and transformative self–other orientation” [1] that better suits a pluralistic world of increasing interconnectedness, where “us–other” boundaries are blurred. Such an identity emerges from experiences of intercultural communication that stimulate cycles of stress–adaptation–growth patterns. That is, people experience stress due to challenges arising from exposure to a new cultural environment; this stress is more severe at the initial period of exposure and persists until a satisfactory adaptation is achieved. Kim argues that intercultural adaptation is an advancing, cyclical process. It involves interwoven processes of acculturation, the learning of new ideas, values, practices, and deculturation, and the questioning and rejecting of ideas and practices from the past; the continuous interplay between acculturation and deculturation defines identity development. Through their intercultural experiences, individuals attain “cognitive complexity” and “new cultural aesthetic and emotional sensibilities” [1] with respect to the new cultural environment. Figure 1 is a theoretical pattern diagram based on the above content.

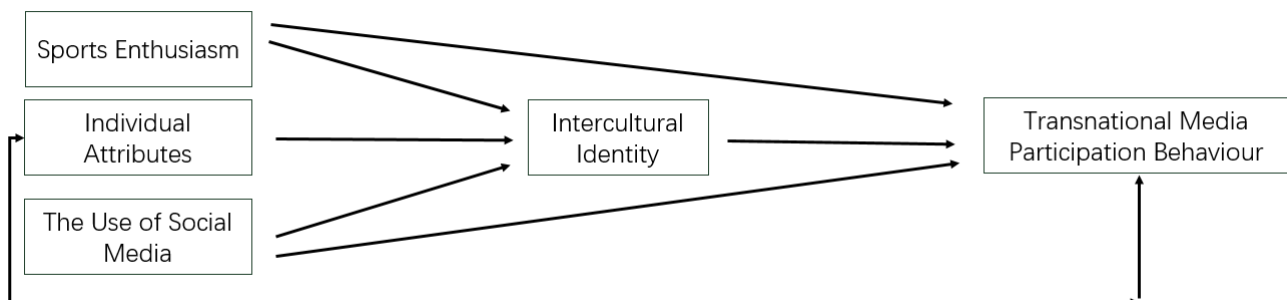


Figure 1: Theoretical pattern diagram

3. Factors that Have Direct Influences on Young People's Transnational Media Participation Behaviour

3.1. Sports Enthusiasm

In the context of globalization, sports enthusiasm has become increasingly influential in shaping cross-national volleyball media participation behavior. As an inherent motivation, sports interest drives individuals to actively seek out sports-related knowledge and engage in athletic pursuits, enhancing their skills and promoting overall well-being. When individuals develop a profound interest in sports, they tend to actively seek and engage with sports-related information [2].

For young people, sports interest is the key factor influencing their participation in Japanese volleyball media activities. Research shows that young people who are passionate about sports are more likely to increase their consumption of sports media and develop stronger emotional resonance

with related events. This emotional connection not only prompts them to watch matches and keep up with news coverage but also prompts them to actively engage in discussions and share their perspectives [3].

Therefore, the level of sports interest has a direct impact on the degree of engagement and attention young people show towards Japanese volleyball media events. Young people who are enthusiastic about sports are more likely to cross national boundaries and deeply engage in volleyball media-related content, contributing to the promotion of Sino-Japanese sports cultural exchanges.

3.2. Individual Attributes

Gender and educational level, among individual attributes, have a significant impact on an individual's participation behavior in Japanese volleyball media [4].

3.2.1. Gender

Gender, being a crucial variable within social culture, holds an important position in impacting cross-national volleyball media participation behavior between China and Japan.

Firstly, gender differences lead to varying audience preferences. Gender is a significant variable within social and cultural contexts. This difference in preferences directly affects their choices of information and focus in volleyball media.

Secondly, gender influences social media interaction patterns [5]. Male users may be more inclined to share technical analysis, tactical discussions, and other deep content, while female users prefer sharing emotionally related content, such as inspirational stories of athletes and teammates.

Furthermore, gender also impacts media consumption behavior. Male audience members might opt to watch matches via television or online live streaming, whereas female audience members might prefer to access real-time updates and behind-the-scenes anecdotes through social media platforms. These different media consumption habits reflect the influence of gender on volleyball media participation behavior.

Lastly, gender involves cultural identity and representation [6]. The success of female athletes not only represents the victory of a team or individual, but it can also serve as a symbol of gender equality and female power, exerting a special appeal and inspiration for female viewers.

3.2.2. Educational Level

An individual's educational background significantly influences their engagement in cross-national volleyball media activities, primarily in the following ways:

Firstly, those with higher educational qualifications tend to utilize a range of diverse channels to participate in volleyball match discussions [7]. They rely on traditional media and are also proficient in leveraging online platforms and social media to access more comprehensive information.

Secondly, regarding cultural understanding and exchange, viewers with higher educational levels typically possess greater intercultural awareness [8]. They possess the competence to deeply understand the cultural disparities underlying volleyball matches between China and Japan, thereby promoting cultural exchange and integration between the two nations.

Lastly, when it comes to critical reflection, individuals with higher educational backgrounds exhibit a heightened level of vigilance towards media information [9]. They concentrate on the matches and are also adept at analyzing the fairness and objectivity of media reports, adopting a critical stance towards potential biases or stereotypes.

3.3. The Use of Social Media

The use of social media has a significant impact on participation in Japanese volleyball media. In modern society, social media plays a pivotal role in sports communication, particularly in terms of cross-national participation.

Firstly, social media has emerged as the preferred avenue for volleyball enthusiasts to promptly access and disseminate information. Both Chinese and Japanese fans can keep abreast of match developments and share perspectives in real time, transcending the constraints of time and space and facilitating the swift dissemination of information.

Secondly, the interactive nature of social media elevates the sense of engagement among viewers. Through online interactions with athletes, coaches, and fellow fans, audience members can become more deeply immersed in volleyball culture, fostering mutual understanding and camaraderie between Chinese and Japanese fans.

Furthermore, social media diversifies the avenues for fan participation. Chinese and Japanese supporters alike can stay up to date on match dynamics and exchange ideas in real time, overcoming the barriers of time and space and speeding up the flow of information.

4. Factors that Have Indirect Influences on Young People's Transnational Media Participation Behaviour

4.1. Intercultural Identity Formed by Sports Enthusiasm

Sporting interest indirectly influences participation behavior in Japanese volleyball media through intercultural identity, manifesting in the following ways:

Firstly, sporting interest deepens intercultural understanding [10]. A keen interest in volleyball encourages viewers to delve deeper into the volleyball cultures of various nations, particularly the cultural collisions and integrations occurring between China and Japan. This, in turn, fosters a strong sense of intercultural identity, driving participation in cross-national volleyball media.

Secondly, interest drives diversified media consumption [11]. To sustain their interest in volleyball matches between China and Japan, viewers not only pay attention to media within their own country but also actively seek out content from the media of the other country. This kind of media consumption further enhances viewers' understanding and identification with the cultures of both countries.

Finally, sporting interest gives birth to intercultural opinion leaders [12]. These leaders share their perspectives on volleyball matches between China and Japan on social media platforms, fostering exchanges and mutual understanding among audiences from diverse cultural backgrounds through their unique intercultural identities. This further enhances the depth and breadth of cross-national volleyball media participation between China and Japan.

4.2. Intercultural Identity Formed by Individual Attributes

4.2.1. Intercultural Identity Formed by Gender

Gender, a factor in individual attributes, indirectly affects one's participation in Japanese volleyball media through intercultural identity. Gender plays a crucial role in intercultural communication, shaping individuals' attitudes and participation patterns towards sports, while indirectly influencing their selection of specific sports media through the reinforcement of intercultural identity.

Firstly, gender roles are closely related to sports identity. In different cultural contexts, gender roles have a significant impact on attitudes and approaches towards sports participation. With the strengthening of globalization trends and the popularity of social media, traditional gender role

concepts are gradually changing. Through exposure to fresh understandings of gender roles across various cultures, individuals may reassess their perspectives towards sports, particularly in the realm of Japanese volleyball, where they observe practices promoting gender equality, thus sparking their interest in participation.

Secondly, gender differences influence the way of intercultural communication [13]. For instance, women may be more prone to seeking out female volleyball enthusiasts with similar interests on social media to share and delve into content pertaining to women's volleyball. This gender-based social network formation enhances intercultural identity, offering individuals a platform to share their passions and exchange experiences, thereby further motivating their engagement with Japanese volleyball media.

Lastly, the promotion of gender equality has a positive impact on participation in Japanese volleyball media. As the idea of gender equality gains widespread acceptance globally, sports organizations and media outlets are increasingly focusing on women's sports, affording women more opportunities to showcase their talents. This shift not only boosts women's visibility in sports media but also fosters communication and mutual understanding among viewers from diverse cultural backgrounds, further augmenting their desire to engage with Japanese volleyball media.

4.2.2. Intercultural Identity Formed by Educational Level

Educational level serves as a core factor influencing individual behavior and cognition. It indirectly shapes intercultural identity by enhancing intercultural sensitivity and openness, as well as strengthening language communication skills, thereby influencing participation in Japanese volleyball media.

In particular, an elevation in educational attainment fosters an individual's intercultural sensitivity and openness, rendering them more receptive and appreciative of diverse cultures. This cultural sensitivity enables individuals with higher educational backgrounds to establish intercultural connections more promptly upon exposure to Japanese volleyball culture, subsequently elevating their participation and intrigue in Japanese volleyball media.

Additionally, education spurs the development of language proficiency and communication skills [14]. Proficient foreign language abilities empower individuals to access information pertaining to Japanese volleyball more directly and efficiently, engage in online discussions, and even communicate with players and other fans across linguistic barriers. This augmentation of language proficiency not only enhances an individual's comprehension of Japanese volleyball content but also fortifies the formation of intercultural identity, thereby fostering their engagement with cross-nation volleyball media.

4.3. Intercultural Identity Formed by the Use of Social Media

The use of social media indirectly promotes participation in Japanese volleyball media by deepening intercultural identity.

Firstly, social media serves as a vital method for intercultural communication, facilitating the eradication of prejudices and fostering mutual understanding and tolerance among Chinese and Japanese volleyball fans [15]. Through frequent engagements and exchanges, fans can discover shared values and interests, thereby cultivating a sense of intercultural affinity.

Secondly, this intercultural affinity spurs Chinese and Japanese fans to combine shared principles in volleyball, including respecting the spirits of the sport and advocating honest competition. These common values not only amplify fans' interest and connection to Japanese volleyball culture but also ignite their enthusiasm for engaging with related media outlets.

Furthermore, social media offers a vibrant stage for fans to showcase their respective cultures. By displaying their cultural allure and volleyball achievements, Chinese and Japanese fans not only bolster their cultural pride but also enhance the global perception of their nations. This cultural exhibition further entrenches fans' identification with Japanese volleyball culture, driving their participation in associated media platforms.

Lastly, the interactions and discussions on social media contribute to building emotional resonance and group identity [7]. Chinese and Japanese fans share joys, losses, and other emotions on social media, strengthening the sense of identification between them.

5. Conclusion

According to the above analysis, it is found that the participation behavior of young people in Sino-Japanese volleyball media is influenced by multiple factors within the context of intercultural identity.

Direct impacts: Sporting interests and individual attributes serve as the primary drivers for young people to engage in Sino-Japanese volleyball media. Those with strong sporting interests and volleyball-related individual attributes are more likely to actively participate in related media activities. Additionally, the widespread use of social media provides a platform for young people to access volleyball information, exchange views, and share experiences, further promoting their engagement with Sino-Japanese volleyball media.

Indirect impacts: Intercultural identity plays a pivotal role. As a bridge connecting sporting interests, individual attributes, social media usage, and cross-national media participation, intercultural identity encourages young people to delve deeper into the understanding and acceptance of volleyball elements from different cultures, thereby increasing their willingness and degree of participation in Sino-Japanese volleyball media.

In summary, this study reveals the comprehensive influence mechanism of sporting interests, individual attributes, intercultural identity, and social media usage on the participation behavior of young people in Sino-Japanese volleyball media. These findings hold significant theoretical and practical value for promoting cross-national exchanges in sports culture, enhancing cultural identity among young people, and optimizing media communication strategies.

However, it is worth noting that this study still has limitations, such as a limited sample size and areas for improvement in research methods. Future studies can further expand the sample size and adopt more comprehensive research methods to delve deeper into the characteristics and patterns of young people's participation in Sino-Japanese volleyball media.

Looking ahead, with the continuous advancement of technology and the development of social media, the media participation behavior of young people will exhibit more new characteristics and trends. So, there is a need to continue to pay attention to research progress in this field, thus providing strong support to better promote the exchange and dissemination of Sino-Japanese volleyball culture.

References

- [1] Tian, M. and Lowe, J. P. (2014). *Intercultural identity and intercultural experiences of American students in China*. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 18(3), 281-297.
- [2] Billings, A. C. and Angelini, J. M. (2007). *Constructing the sports media audience: Exploring gender and genre in televised sports*. *Communication Quarterly*, 55(1), 5-25.
- [3] Russell, M. and Yuan, M. (2001). *Sports lovers, media usage, and emotional responses: A case study of male college basketball games*. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*.
- [4] Mutz, D. C. (2006). *Hearing the other side: Deliberative versus participatory democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Hargittai, E. (2007). *Whose space? Differences among users and non-users of online social network sites*. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 276-297. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00396.x>.
- [6] Hooks, B. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston, MA: South End Press.

- [7] Pew Research Center. (2018). *Social Media Use in 2018: Demographics & Platforms*. Pew Research Center.
- [8] Livingstone, S. (2004). *Media Literacy and the Challenge of Change*. *European Journal of Communication Research*.
- [9] Tichenor, P. J., Donohue, G. A. and Olien, C. N. (1970). *Mass communication research and the study of attitude formation and change*. In F. E. Katz & P. Lazarsfeld (Eds.), *Personal influence: The part played by people in the flow of mass communications* (pp. 138-166).
- [10] Harris, A. J. and Parker, A. (2007). *Crossing cultures through sport: International student perceptions of the impact of sport on their social and cultural experiences at an Australian university*. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 28(4), 399-413.
- [11] Rubin, A. M. (1994). *Television uses and gratifications: The audience adapts to television*. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Responding to the screen: Reception and reaction processes* (pp. 29-51). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [12] Wenner, L. A. (1989). *Who's the fairest of them all? The athlete as celebrity and cultural hero*. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *Media, sports, and society* (pp. 15-30). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- [13] Ting-Toomey, S. (1999). *Communicating Across Cultures*. Guilford Press.
- [14] Lyster, R. and Ranta, L. (1997). *Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms*. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19(1), 37-66.
- [15] Tang, Y. and Isaacs, S. (2013). *Social media and intercultural communication: The impact of social networking sites on young people's perceptions of foreign cultures*. *Intercultural Education*, 24(4), 331-343.