

**Sport for All: Building an Integrative Model of Sport Consumption among Ethnic Minority Groups through the Lens of Acculturation**

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11:30-10:55 AM, Des Plaines River**

**25-minute oral presentation  
(including questions)**

The size of minority groups within the United States (U.S.) has risen significantly in recent years, and this growth is expected to continue. Staff with the Pew Research Center (2016) estimate there will be no single ethnic majority residing in the U.S. by 2055; the percentage of those identifying as White Americans in the U.S. is projected to decline to 46%. Individuals self-identifying as Hispanic and Asian specifically are driving the shift, and will likely account for 24% and 14% respectively of the entire population in the U.S. in 2055. This demographic shift in the U.S. has provided scholars with a foundation from which to study these minority populations, with an aim of gaining a better understanding of how they consume and behave, specifically examining elements believed to impact their behavior.

Scholars have highlighted many elements believed to impact ethnic minority consumption behavior. Included in these examinations are analyses of cultural dimensions and national culture (Hofstede, 1984), physical activity patterns (Lee & Funk, 2011; Ryska, 2001), and food preferences (Hartwell, Edwards, & Brown, 2011). However, most attention has been placed on the examination of an individuals' degree of familiarity with a culture—level of acculturation (Berry, 1997; Kara & Kara, 1996; Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005). This importance stems from the recognition of culture as a profound influence on consumer behavior (Cleveland, Laroche, Pons, & Kastoun, 2009), with individual personality also receiving attention as a significant predictor of consumption behavior (Balderjahn, 1988; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, & Dowling, 2011).

Understanding acculturation and the impact it has on ethnic minority consumers has led scholars to two major themes; first, that there is more than one method of growing familiar with a culture and there is no strict timeframe when this occurs (Berry, 1997; Korzenny & Korzenny, 2005), and second, those more acculturated to the culture in the U.S. are statistically more probable of consuming in a manner similar to that of a native Caucasian American (Kara & Kara, 1996; Korzenny, Chapa, & Korzenny, 2017). These themes have driven ethnic minority scholarship in the U.S. and have largely been utilized across marketing contexts. However, limited knowledge exists on the impact of acculturation on the consumption of sporting goods and services.

Gacio Harrolle and Trail (2007) and Lee and Funk (2011) sought to fill some of this gap in the literature, extending the significance and impact of acculturation to the consumption of sport-related goods and services. Drawing from these works it is suggested that the more time one spends in and identifies with the culture in the U.S., identification with American football increases (Gacio Harrolle & Trail, 2007), and that recreational sport function can be positively associated with an ethnic minority's assimilation—highest achieved level of the acculturation process (Lee & Funk, 2011). Although informative, such results only provide preliminary evidence of the significance of acculturation and other impactful elements on ethnic minority sport consumption.

Kota and Du (2017) extended the scholarly work conducted on the elements impacting the acculturating individual through the addition of an influential theoretical model used prominently in sport management—the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM; Funk & James, 2001; 2006). Through collection of 600 survey responses, the authors examined the influence of acculturation on the relationship between sport involvement (i.e., pleasure, centrality, and sign—factors used to operationalize the model) and sport consumption behaviors among Asian and Hispanic Americans. Tested models indicated that, holding level of involvement constant, the more acculturated an individual was to the culture in the U.S., the less likely they were to consume American football media and merchandise. These are interesting, yet counter-intuitive results when compared to findings in previous research

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(Gacio Harrolle & Trail, 2007; Kara & Kara, 1996). Given these findings and overall significance of understanding the ethnic minority sport consumer, the authors of the current study argue for a continued and more robust examination into model output from previous studies and ethnic minority consumption behaviors, specifically.

In the current study, the authors propose to extend the models tested by Kota and Du (2017), including elements believed to impact consumer behavior not yet tested in the sport context. We propose the following elements be included. First, the PCM is included as the theoretical framework. The PCM provides a sound foundation to examine an individual's psychological connection with a sport object and associated consumption behaviors (Funk & James, 2001; 2006). Second, the authors propose to include proxy measures of acculturation as validated through the work of Cruz, Marshall, Bowling, and Villaveces (2008) and Geoscape (2014). Third, following the prior literature, the Big-Five personality traits including openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (OCEAN) will be used as controls to examine the contributions of acculturation to sport consumptions (Sato, Jordan, Funk, & Sachs, 2018). Fourth, respondents will indicate their perceptions of culture in the U.S. rather than the researchers defining it for them. Like the best practice of recording the ethnicity of an individual, the authors find exceptional value and insight in allowing respondents to define how they perceive culture in the U.S. along with identifying a brand they view as a representation of the culture (Burton, 2000; Giddens, 1991). Involvement and consumption data will be collected for both American football and the identified brand.

Through collection of 500 total survey responses from those identifying as Asian and Hispanic in the U.S., we will test the impact of acculturation and personality on the relationship between involvement and consumption, comparing results from American football and the U.S. brands identified by the respondents. Two competing models from the work of Kota and Du (2017) will be tested (i.e., examination of involvement as a collective measure, and examination of each individual measure of involvement). Results will be accompanied by a set of fit indices to identify best model fit (Havitz & Mannell, 2005; Kyle & Mowen, 2005).

Study results will generate discussion on the elements most impactful on sport-related consumption behavior among ethnic minorities. Specifically, researchers will have access to an empirically tested and robust model to address elements most germane in the prediction of sport consumption behavior among those identifying as ethnic minorities in the U.S. From a marketing perspective, study results will further contribute to managers' understanding of consumer behavior among ethnic minorities relative to both sport and general consumption, and the most pertinent drivers within each context. Further, results may show how elements of the consumption process can be used as leverage in efforts to expand consumption among unique ethnic populations. Additional implications to theory and practice will fully be addressed in the presentation.

### Selected References

- Funk, D. C., & James, J. (2001). The psychological continuum model: A conceptual framework for understanding an individual's psychological connection to sport. *Sport Management Review*, 4(2), 119-150.
- Kota, R. W., and Du, J. (2017, November). *The role of ethnicity in examining the relationship between sport involvement and consumption behaviors: From an acculturation perspective*. Oral presentation presented at the meeting of the Sport Marketing Association, Boston, MA.
- Lee, Y. S., & Funk, D. C. (2011). Recreational sport participation and migrants' acculturation. *Managing Leisure*, 16(1), 1-16.
- Sato, M., Jordan, J. S., Funk, D. C., & Sachs, M. L. (2018). Running involvement and life satisfaction: The role of personality. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 49(1), 28-45.