

# Testing Leisure Constraint Negotiation Model: An Analysis of Community Sport participants in China

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## Background

Regularly sport participation plays a significant role in improving people's physical and mental health (Wall, Zhang, Pearson, Martin, & Meyers, 1999). Accordingly, a large number of countries and regions have launched various strategies to promote the development of their domestic community sports, such as the *National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework* in Australia, the *Active Communities* in England, and the *Enhanced Participation* in Canada.

The significant achievement in elite sports and economy has not fully translated into the development of mass sport participations in China, leading to the spread of "wealthy illnesses" and unhealthy lifestyle among Chinese people. To promote physical and mental health of residents and form a stronger foundation of sport culture, more attention should be directed to community sports. Since its outset, leisure constraint negotiation model has gained extensive attention and spurred a variety of interdisciplinary research efforts directed toward either utilizing the model as the primary theoretical framework or empirically substantiating the theory. However, contrary to the prevalence of leisure research in general, there was a dearth of research delving into the sport participation in China. Taking community sport in China as an example, this study tested leisure constraint negotiation model.

## Method

The questionnaire used for data collection in this study consisted of four parts (i.e., demographics, community sport constraint, negotiation, and participation). All measured items were based on existing validated scales in previous studies (Carroll & Alexandris, 1997; Hubbard & Mannell, 2001; Son, Mowen & Kerstetter, 2008). All items used were adapted to be suitable for the study context (i.e., community sport). A total of seven items adapted from Hubbard and Mannell (2001) were used to measure intrapersonal constraint (two items), interpersonal constraint (three items), and structural constraints (two items) associated with participating in community sport. Negotiation was assessed with seven items that were adapted from Son, Mowen, and Kerstetter (2008) leisure negotiation scale. The refined scale was rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Community sport participation was measured by a self-designed participation scale, including three questions: "how many years have you participated in community sport", "how many hours per week do you spend on community sport participation", "how much money per week do you spend on community sport participation". Data were collected via an electronic survey. It was sent out to community sport participants by WECHAT. 784 respondents participated in this survey. Data were analyzed with SPSS17.0 and Amos17.0.

## Result and Discussion

Community sport participation were positively related to the negotiation while negatively related to constraints. Constraint was positively related to negotiation. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was run to evaluate the measurement models. The results accepted the modified constraint-effects-mitigation model ( $\chi^2/df = 3.846$ ; CFI = .884; and RMSEA = .060)

which suggested that there was a counteracting process that occurred in the presence of constraints. Although constraints negatively influence participation they also positively influence the utilization of negotiation strategies which mediated the effect of constraints on active community sport participation. In addition, the confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the constraint and negotiation sub-domains were all significant, suggested that these items were useful measures of constraint and negotiation. Differing from the findings of (Hudson, Hinch, Walker, & Simpson, 2010) who found intrapersonal constraints were the principal constraints for Chinese Canadians to take part in leisure activities, the results of current study suggested that interpersonal constraints were perceived as the biggest challenges by community sport participants. Family and friends' opinions played a central role in decision-making process.

### **Conclusion**

This study tested the impact of constraints on participation through negotiation among Chinese community sport participants. The result revealed that leisure constraint negotiation model can examine leisure activities such as community sport. This study accepted the modified constraint-effects-mitigation model, which suggested that the negotiation process played an important role in community sport participation. Interpersonal and structural constraints were the primary factors that prohibit Chinese from participation in community sport. The findings of this study suggest a need to examine the effect of gender, marital status, and participating experience on constraint, negotiation and participation in an effort to better understand community sport participation in China.

### **References**

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