

**Cultural influences on Chinese parents' selection of sports activities for
their children**

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

In spite of ample of research on parental influence on children's sports participation, our understanding in this area is limited due to the fact that most of the research to date has been conducted in Western cultures. Thus how parents from other cultures are involved in their children's sports participation remains unknown. The purpose of the current study was to develop an understanding of the cultural influences that affect Chinese parents' selection of sports activities for their children. Constructivist grounded theory methodology was adopted. Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with 15 participants in Mainland China. Open and focused coding, and memo writing were used during the data analysis. The participants' responses revealed that a dramatic change has taken place in China's sports culture, and Chinese parents progress through a three-phase process when selecting a suitable sport for their children. The three phases include, the cultural influence (e.g., influence from the social environment), the development of understandings of perceived benefits (e.g., benefits in psychological domain), and the consideration of sport factors (e.g., popularity of a sport). The current study also discovered that cultural consonance and social capital played important roles in this process, not only by shaping Chinese parents' understanding and attitudes of sports activities but also by facilitating the identification of the ideal sports that meet their needs. This study advanced current youth sport research by identifying a dynamic Chinese sport culture and the resultant transformation in people's perception of sport that coincided with it. Recommendations for future research and practical implications are suggested.

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1.0 Introduction

The importance of physical activity (PA) for children (age between 6 to 12 years) has been well documented. In fact, participating in physical activity has been identified as being beneficial for children's development, and their physical and mental health. After a systematic review of 850 articles, an expert panel in the United States concluded that (i) "Physical activity has beneficial effects on adiposity (within overweight and obese youth), musculoskeletal health and fitness, and several components of cardiovascular health. (ii) Physical activity has beneficial effects on adiposity levels in those with a normal body weight, on blood pressure in normotensive youth, on plasma lipid and lipoproteins levels, on non-traditional cardiovascular risk factors (inflammatory markers, endothelial function and heart rate variability), and on several components of mental health (self-concept, anxiety and depression)" (Janssen & Leblanc, 2010, p. 3). Sport, a popular form of physical activity, can bring great benefits to children. For example, basketball has been found to effectively promote children's speed, strength, power, flexibility, and motor coordination. Thus, children are able to improve their fundamental movement skills by playing basketball, and as a result are able to achieve "lower levels of overweight, higher levels of physical activity, cardiorespiratory fitness, and self-esteem" (DiFiori et al., 2018, p. 2055). Despite the aforementioned benefits physical activity and sport participation can bring to children, children in mainland China have been found to participate in low levels of physical activity and engage in more sedentary behaviours (Huang, Wong, & Salmon, 2013).

Children's PA participation has been found to be related to a "combination of individual

characteristics, parent and peer influences, and home and neighborhood environmental factors” (Huang, Wong, & Salmon, 2013, p.1). Among these determinants, parents are the people who spend the most time with children during their formative years (Lau, Quadrel, & Hartman, 1990) and thus play a vital role in their involvement in PA. Research has identified that the level of children’s sport and PA is positively related to their parents’ sports engagement, social-economic status (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010), attitude towards sport (McEloy, 2002), emotional (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010), and instrumental support (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011). In other words, children who are more physically active and participate in sport at a higher level (i.e., duration, intensity and frequency) tend to have parents who value sport, have habits of playing sports themselves or with their children, encourage their children to participate in physical activities, and usually make a respectable income with high educational backgrounds. Moreover, research has also suggested that children are very likely to inherit and practice their parents’ class-based sports preferences by learning and observing from them (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010; Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007). This phenomenon can be explained through many factors, and cultural influence is an important one that has been used often in research. Culture does not have a finalized or unified definition, but it can be interpreted as the recurring pattern of behaviors (Brislin, 1990) or behaviours, values, and beliefs that shared by a group and can be transmitted between generations (Keith, 2011) in the context of leisure. One cultural concept explains well about why children inherit their parents’ class-based sports preferences is cultural capital by Bourdieu (1978). Bourdieu conceptualized those intangible elements that are needed to consume any cultural objects as cultural capital. In the case of sport participation, parents tend to teach their skills, tastes and knowledge of a certain sport (or sports), therefore their children

could possess the cultural capital to consume this specific sport(s).

While ample findings have been concluded through years of examining children's participation in sport and physical activity, research gaps still exist. First, the previously discussed association between parental influence and children's physical activity and sport participation were all discovered in studies conducted in Western countries. The relationship between parental influence and children's physical activity and sport participation in nonwestern cultures could be different, such as the one found in China. For example, Chinese parental style is more authoritarian and less supportive, and thus could impact children's participation in sport and physical activity. Second, multiple studies have identified that children's sport and PA is related to parental influence, but relevancy was not assessed (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010). Additionally, the previous studies have given greater attention to parental influence on children's PA level, while less is currently known about parents' influence on children's participation in sport. Also, even though cultural capital has been utilized to explain individual's preference for different sports in western countries (Bourdieu, 1978), the role of cultural capital in children's sport participation within China remains unknown. Thus, how the cultural context and cultural capital influence parents' choice of participation in sport for their children remains unknown and warrants exploration.

China has the largest population in the world, and 16.7 percent (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2019) of the total population are children and youth (under 14 years of age). Further, China has a distinct culture and living style. In Chinese culture, Chinese parents are authoritarian, which is "more controlling, restrictive, and rejecting of the child" (Zhao, 2016, p.12). Active leisure activities are not popular in Chinese society. Thus, it is reasonable to assume

that it is parents who impede children's sport and physical activity participation even though children have shown a desire for more physical activity in their leisure life. But for those parents who do allow their children to participate in sport, the role that culture and cultural capital play in the selection of sports activities for their children remains unclear. Thus, studies of Chinese children's sport and physical activity participation are needed as it will assist in developing understandings of the influence of culture and cultural capital on Chinese children's sport and physical activity participation. As a result, in the current study, I intend to explore the cultural and cultural capital influences on Chinese parents' selection of sports activities for their children.

Theoretical Frameworks used in the examination of Asian's leisure

Researchers have examined Asian ethnic group's leisure, specifically Asian North Americans. Four major theoretical frameworks have been employed frequently in these previous studies, including assimilation and acculturation-based frameworks, ethnicity-based theories, self-construal and leisure constraints (Lee & Stodolska, 2017). Six studies on Asian North American's leisure were informed by assimilation and acculturation frameworks by Gordon (1964) and Berry (1997). Gordon (1964) asserts that immigrants go through seven stages of assimilation, and cultural or behavioural assimilation (or acculturation) is the first one immigrants will experience. In this stage, a "change of cultural patterns to the host society" (p.71) will occur for immigrants, with the host society referring to the "middle-class white Protestant Americans" (p.74). Berry argues that acculturation is a "dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (2005, p. 698). This theoretical framework has been adopted by many researchers examining the impact of assimilation on Asian North Americans' leisure and

the framework has been well-suited (Lee & Stodolska, 2017). However, Lee and Stodolska pointed out that this theory has a limitation of discounting “considerable intragroup variations” (2017, p.527). They criticized that Gordon’s (1964) assimilation theory overlooks the sophistication of the contacts among intergroup and the difference both within immigrants and the host group. For example, when studying Asians’ leisure, the assimilation theory tends to put all Asians into a single category regardless of the great cultural difference between Chinese, Korean, Japanese and many other Asian ethnicities (Lee & Stodolska, 2017).

Another popular approach to the examination of Asian North American’s leisure has been ethnicity-based theories. This approach was mainly adopted to investigate how Asian North Americans’ special cultural qualities shape the unique characteristics of their leisure participation (Lee & Stodolska, 2017). For example, it has been contended by some researchers that collectivism is an important cultural trait that influences Asian North American’s leisure patterns (Liu & Li, 2016). Many researchers have also used the concept of self-construal (i.e., a person’s perception of himself or herself with others) frequently to examine Asian North American’s leisure behavior. Two types of self-construal (individualistic and collectivistic) have been mainly used in making comparisons between Asian North Americans and White North Americans regarding their leisure motivations (Lee & Stodolska, 2017). The fourth theoretical framework that has been very popular in studying Asian North American’s leisure is leisure constraints (Jackson, 2000). This work has mainly focused on the role of race and ethnicity and their impediment on leisure activity. In addition to these four frameworks, researchers have also applied some others to examine Asian North American’s leisure, such as multiple hierarchy stratification perspective and transnationalism.

In this study, I applied cultural consonance by Dressler (2005) to understand how the alliance of personal belief and prevailing cultural models affects Chinese parents' selection of sports activities for their children. Cultural consonance concerns the level at which one's belief and behavior are consistent with prevailing cultural models, and as a result, influences various aspects of one's life. The main reason why this theory was selected for the current study is that Chinese people, including Chinese parents, are highly concerned about the fit between their public images and the cultural model due to the collective culture that exists in China. Ultimately, this collective culture strongly influences Chinese peoples' behaviours and beliefs. This phenomenon could be explained through the theory of cultural consonance. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to examine how and why perceived cultural consonance and cultural capital in mainland China influence parental choices of sport participation for children.

Although the focus of this study is sport, in the literature review I examine the broader literature related to physical activity, as the research directly related to cultural influences on sports is limited. Further, the literature examining the relationship between culture and physical activity can offer a strong background for this study.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Parental Influence on Children's Sport and Physical Activity Participation

Since children spend a large portion of their time “within the context of the family during their formative years”, the family plays a vital role in their socialization process (Lau, Quadrel, & Hartman, 1990, p. 522). It is also usually the family's role to teach skills and norms to children which helps to shape their attitudes and behaviours related to physical activity (PA) (McEloy, 2002). Snyder and Spreitzer (1976) concluded that encouragement from children's parents or important family members has a significant impact on their socialization throughout their childhood and adolescence. Furthermore, compared to siblings, parents prove to be more important agents in this socializing process for both sexes. Parental influence has received special attention in the literature in recent years when examining factors that affect youth sport participation. In some studies, parents have been found to be a highly vital factor in motivating children to sign up with sports organizations and keep active within these organizations (Light, Harvey, & Memmert, 2011). Researchers have also pointed out that parents are of great importance in giving their children chances to experience sports activities as they provide the needed funds and instrumental support (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011).

It is commonly believed that parents' influence on children's physical activity participation is positive, however, some recent studies indicated that parents' language and behaviours could also exert negative effects on their children's sports life (Bowker et al., 2009). To be more specific, research suggests that parents exert social influence over their child's physical activity in multiple forms which include beliefs and attitudes towards physical activity,

role modelling, instrumental and direct support, and emotional support (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010).

2.1.1 Beliefs and attitudes. Children's sport and PA involvement can be heavily influenced through socialization embedded in the parental belief system. Ample educational literature has studied the association between parents' beliefs and children's motivation and participation (e.g., Collins & Barber, 2005; Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). According to the parental socialization model of Eccles and her colleagues (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004), parents' patterns of interaction with the child are determined by their beliefs that they hold for their children. For example, the degree to which they are willing to encourage their children, and to provide opportunities and experiences for them, can impact their child's motivation. Ultimately, parents who value sport and PA for their children will invest more resources (i.e., time, money, energy) into their children's sport and PA. For parents, there is a clear set of goals, strategies, and practices employed by the parents to promote their children's sport and PA participation. Researchers have indicated, "in play, games and sport, children are brought into contact with social order and the values inherent in society, and are provided a context within which desirable social behaviours are developed" (Roberts, Treasure, and Hall, 1994, p. 631). The parents who hold this kind of proper motivation increase the chance for success and long-lasting performance for young athletes (Weinberg, 1981). However, parents' motivation to encourage children's sports involvement varies, some just hope to increase children's physical activity, some expect their children to achieve accomplishments that they are no longer able to achieve (Kidman et al.,

1999). Cote (1999) stated that the variation of parents' motivations is as per children's sports participation level.

Parents' beliefs and perceptions also directly influence the value children attribute to sport and their perceived physical competence, which ultimately affects their willingness to engage in sport or physical activity. Parent's belief systems guide children to evaluate the importance and the relative value of various achievement domains (e.g., academics, art, music, sport). Their belief systems also lead them to assume their children's competencies and the extent to which they will be successful in these domains, (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004). As proposed by Eccles and colleagues (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) , parental belief systems are factors that determine children's perceptions of their physical competence and how they value different activities, consequently, shaping their selection of activity. According to Eccles and colleagues (Fredericks & Eccles, 2004; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) theoretical perspective, parental socialization influence happens when parental beliefs about children's potential make an impact on children's self-perceptions, motivation, and behavioural patterns.

2.1.2 Parental role modeling. In addition to parents' belief in sporting activities, their behavior is also a crucial factor that influences children's participation. Parental role modeling is a frequently studied construct when investigating a child's involvement in PA. Rhodes and his colleagues (2013) identified role modeling as one type of support which encourages children's PA. Role modelling has been examined across youth health behaviours including PA and suggests that observational learning partially explains the transmission of health-promoting or

risky behavior (Tinsley, 2003). According to the family socialization model, athletes start to engage in learning when they are exposed to the sport (e.g., actually participating in a sport or playing with other athletes) and receive reinforcement from people around them, including their parents (Mead, 1934). Eighteen studies have identified correlations between parents' involvement in a sports activity with children's physical activity degree (Beets et al., 2010). A study conducted by Pyper and his colleagues found that if parents are involved in a sports activity with their children, the children have a greater possibility of achieving pre-determined physical activity goals (Pyper, Harrington, & Manson, 2016). This type of co-activity behavior with a child has been termed conditional support (Beets et al., 2010). Some other research that investigated social system also proved that parents' involvement is related with child sport participation, demonstrating that children's sports involvement is severely influenced by parents (Coakley, 1993; Power & Manire, 1992).

According to the Youth Physical Activity Promotion Model by Welk (1999), a child's physical activity behavior could be directly enhanced by being involved in active family activities. The model indicates that child behavior is affected indirectly through role modeling (Welk, 1999). Moreover, various research has found a positive association between parental perceived PA and children's participation in organized sports (Erkelenz, et al., 2014; Schmiade & Mutz, 2012). Additional research conducted by Orlick (1972) found that physically active boys also had parents who were involved in sports activities. Parents were identified as role models for the child and the family enhanced the son's participation in sports activities. Importantly, parental modeling only functions when children are still in their early developmental years (i.e., 5 to 12 years), which also happens to be the time children form their health-related behaviours

(Institute of Medicine, 2004; A. M. Thompson et al., 2003). Once they mature, the influence of parental modeling loses its power gradually (Yao & Rhodes, 2015). Interestingly, even if parents just show their presence or watch their children playing sports or games, children's physical activity level can be influenced (Duncan et al., 2005; Heitzler et al., 2006; Prochaska et al., 2002). Thus, while actual participation in sport can be beneficial in terms of impacting children's involvement in sport, just the mere presence of parents while children are participating can be influential in their continued involvement.

Not all researchers agree however, that parental role modeling has an impact on the PA of children. Some have demonstrated little correlation or no correlation between parental modeling and children's PA (Trost & Loprinzi, 2011; Bauman et al, 2012; Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007). Therefore, it remains unclear concerning the extent to which parental role modeling influences a child's PA. Important to note is that the majority of research that has examined the influence of parental role modeling's influence on sport and PA participation has been conducted in the western cultural context. Only a few studies have examined the eastern cultural context, and thus it remains unclear as to whether the cultural difference could modify the relationship between these two constructs. Additional research is needed to further develop understandings of the impact of parental role modelling and given the differences that exist between western and eastern cultures, cultural factors should be taken into consideration.

2.1.3 Emotional support and instrumental behaviours. Both emotional support and instrumental behaviours (e.g., providing transportation, paying the admission fee or equipment costs) have also been found to be related to children's and adolescent's sport and PA

participation (Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007). Support and direct help from parents have consistently been associated with children's and adolescents' PA. Biddle and Goudas (1996) identified the strong link between emotional support, such as encouragement and praise, and children's competency and behavioural intentions when studying social cognitive models. In fact, in a study by Pugliese and Tinsley (2007), these relationships surpassed all other parent behaviours and showed the strongest correlations with child and adolescent PA. Research has identified that support, such as encouragement from parents before sports participation, serves as a means to motivate children to be more involved in sport and PA, whereas when support is provided during the activity is taking place it helps to cement the behavior (Beets et al., 2006). Encouragement can also increase multiple dimensions of activity involvement, for example, intensity (Bauer, Nelson, Boutelle, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2008), frequency (Sharma et al., 2008), number of activities (McGuire et al., 2002), and willingness to be active (Biddle & Goudas, 1996). In a literature review by Beets and colleagues (2010), the authors pointed out that encouragement was a very effective "intangible supportive behavior" in children's physical activity (p. 13). Another contribution that encouragement from parents can make is to increase children's enjoyment and reduce their anxiety (Anderson et al, 2003). It is possible that the increase in the enjoyment of children adds more satisfaction for them, which in turn, stimulates more sports involvement.

Praise is another support behavior from parents that could intensify children's motivation to participate in sport and physical activity by expressing the appreciation of children's performance. Praise differs from encouragement in its timing as it only occurs after an activity, thus it is difficult to test its influence on children's activity level (e.g., Garcia, Pender,

Antonakos, & Ronis, 1998; Trost et al., 2003a). Only a few studies have identified the positive association between praise and activity level, and thus more research is needed in this area (Beets et al., 2006).

In terms of instrumental behaviours, parents have reported that they provided opportunities for PA mainly through giving a ride to the child, paying for fees, as well as buying needed equipment (Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007). Multiple studies have identified that children's physical activity level could be increased if parents provided transportation for children to places where they can be active (Beets et al., 2006). Transportation has also been found to be an important indicator of the condition of cardiovascular fitness (i.e., mile run/walk time; Sallis et al., 1992). Further, a lack of financial support has been found to be the top reason that caused nonparticipation both in sport and nonsport activities in settings of school and community (Hultsman, 1993). In an earlier study, Orlick (1972) had indicated that parents were providing instrumental support in their son's participation in organized sports. It is reasonable to believe that without these facilitators children may not have the opportunity to cultivate an interest in sport or PA, and the chance to truly experience it, or to the same degree. Important to highlight is that the positive influence of parental support on children's PA and sport participation has only been found in high-income countries, with limited work examining middle and low-income countries. Additionally, cultural difference plays a crucial role in supporting children's play. In some cultures (e.g., East Indian, Mayan, and Mexican) where play is not considered culturally appropriate behavior, parents will not likely engage in children's play or provide much support. But, American and Turkish parents who regard play as an important approach for their children's development, will not only offer support but also play with their children (Vandermaas-Peeler,

2002). However, the extent to which differences in cultures impacts parental support for children's sport participation remains unclear. Thus, additional work needs to be conducted to examine whether support is also an important factor in children's sport and PA participation in other contexts and cultures.

2.2 Cultural Capital and Sport and Physical Activity Participation

Research has identified that members of the upper classes tend to be more active in sports, regardless of the form of their involvement (Bourdieu, 1984; Coakley, 1998; Curtis & Milton, 1976; Hughes & Peterson, 1983; Leonard, 1998; Nixon & Frey, 1996; Scholsberg, 1987; Yergin, 1986; Young & Willmott, 1973). Further, it has been demonstrated that low income (Johansson, Rosengren, Tsipogianni, Ulven-stam, Wiklund & Wilhelmsen, 1988), low education (Fletcher & Hirdes, 1996; Yusuf et al., 1996; Sternfeld, Ainsworth & Quesenberry, 1999), and low socioeconomic status (Blanksby, Anderson & Douglas, 1996) usually indicate low leisure-time physical activity. The positive relationship between status and PA also applies to children raised in a high-status family. These children tend to have their parents present more often when participating (Duncan et al., 2005) which thus leads to a higher level of PA and sport participation. This may be attributed to the fact that children from higher SES families have resources to participate in sports and/or that parents with higher SES status have more free time, which allows them to watch their child's sport participation (Beets et al., 2010).

Further, highly educated people may be inclined to live in an environment where they can receive better social support or share similar values for being physically active because they have a better understanding of the benefits of an active lifestyle. Independent from willingness and

knowledge to participate in sport and physical activity, the accessibility of sport and PA resources for people in different SES is not equal. It is believed that individual income affects one's accessibility to recreational facilities and opportunities (McNeill et al., 2006). People who have more disposable income have the luxury to live in environments that enable physical activities to be easily integrated into daily life. Additionally, they can more easily reach social and material resources that facilitate the opportunity to maintain physical activity even without support from family. Additionally, living in higher SES areas also ensures residents enjoy better safety and aesthetics (Wilson, Kirkland, Ainsworth, & Addy, 2004), and freer physical activity resources (Estabrooks, Lee, & Gyurcsik, 2003). The positive relationship between status and physical activity and sport participation can be explained through a cultural perspective.

According to Bourdieu (1978), cultural capital refers to the intangible elements that are needed to consume any cultural objects such as preferences, tastes, skills, and knowledge. Thus, sports activity participation, as one form of cultural consumption inevitably requires these elements. Individuals obtain their cultural capital through the process of growing and education. Thus, due to the difference in various social class's upbringing and education, cultural capital differs accordingly. Often, different social classes can be distinguished by their tastes and preferences toward cultural consumption. Most sports have been favoured and practiced by upper classes generally for a considerable period. Some have argued that it is because they enhance values or norms that the upper classes advocate, or it is simply because upper classes pursue them for their own sake with no intention to make it useful in other areas of their life or career (Bourdieu, 1978; Lamont, 1992).

However, not all sports are welcomed by the upper classes (e.g., boxing, wrestling) because some of them are against upper-class tastes (Bourdieu, 1978). Upper classes reject these sports for different reasons, it may be because the specific sport requires skills that depart from the upper-class' value system, or because it employs the body for an instrumental purpose (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu also argues that people group themselves into a certain class and separate from other classes based on their education, profession, as well as the objects they possess and their experiences, which include sports. Further, the taste and norm to favour a certain type of sport can be transmitted to the next generation. This transmission happens through the function of role modeling performed by parents, and thus children inherit and practice their parents' class-based sports preferences by learning and observing from them (Edwardson & Gorely, 2010; Pugliese & Tinsley, 2007).

2.3 Cultural Consonance

The theory of cultural consonance, developed by Dressler (2005), asserts that the degree to which individuals, their beliefs and behaviours are consistent with prevailing cultural models, influence various aspects of their lives. The theory was developed to study the relationship between culture and individual beliefs and behaviours (Dressler, Balieiro, & Dos Santos, 2017). This approach enabled researchers to investigate how different levels of uniformity between individuals' beliefs and behaviours with their cultures affect some aspects of their lives, such as an individual's health and stress level (Chick et al., 2018). Dressler and his colleagues have demonstrated that greater cultural consonance in domains of lifestyle, social support, family life, national identity, and food predict the increased condition of both physical and mental health

(Dressler, 2017; Dressler et al., 2017). Moreover, it is proposed that cultural dissonance (i.e., when an individual's belief or behavior conflict with their cultural environment) will produce stress and can occur in two ways. First, people may encounter cognitive dissonance when they recognize that they are unable to behave as the relevant culture expects. Second, sanctions from others may fall on individuals when they do not act according to prevailing cultural models (Dressler, 2017).

Cultural consonance has mainly been used to study individuals' mental and physical health problems such as depression, distress, and high blood pressure. Dressler and his colleagues (2007) have conducted research both in Brazil and the United States and found that psychological distress was negatively associated with cultural consonance in the cultural domains of lifestyle and social support. Additionally, Dressler and his colleagues also studied the relationship between cultural consonance and body mass, and their findings suggest that "As individuals, in their own beliefs and behaviours, more closely approximate shared cultural models in socially salient domains, body composition also more closely approximates the cultural prototype of the body" (Dressler, Oths, Balieiro, Ribeiro, & Santos, 2012, p. 1).

In recent years, some leisure researchers have started to utilize this concept to study the effect of culture in the leisure domain. Specifically, Chick and his colleagues (2014) investigated the influence of culture consonance on leisure satisfaction and leisure constraints. Chick et al. (2014) found that cultural consonance in leisure is positively associated with leisure satisfaction and self-rated health in Mainland China. Two years later, they analyzed data from six large cities in Taiwan and concluded that "cultural consonance in leisure activities partially mediated the relationship between leisure constraints and leisure satisfaction for activities judged to be high or

medium in importance to a good leisure life” (Chick et al, 2018, p. 3). Finally, the most recent study by Chick et al. (2018) found that the leisure activity that is culturally believed to be more important to a good leisure life has a greater influence on leisure satisfaction than those that are regarded as being less important. The authors explained that the reason behind this phenomenon is because an individual’s leisure satisfaction is reduced due to the stress caused by “individual divergence from shared models of the importance of particular leisure activities” (Chick et al., 2018, p.18).

Cultural consonance theory is still a relatively new concept in leisure studies. So far, it has not been employed to study the relationship between cultural factors and sport participation and the selection of sports activities. As cultural factors are still infrequently studied in the sports domain (Bauman et al., 2012), cultural consonance theory could be a powerful tool to develop further understandings of the role of culture in sport participation.

2.4 Chinese Leisure Under the Influence of Chinese Culture

Chinese culture differs from Western culture in values both at a personal level and societal level. (Naisbitt, 1995; as cited in Ap, 2002). A value is a goal of changing significance that guides people’s behaviours (Schwartz, 1992). Therefore, values adopted by culture are vital in guiding leisure behavior patterns (Hofer, Schmid, Fries, Kilian, & Kuhnle, 2010). Two major philosophies in Chinese culture, Confucianism and Taoism, have been used in the literature when explaining the leisure behaviours of Chinese North Americans (Liu et al., 2008; Walker & Wang, 2008; Wang & Stringer, 2000). Confucianism and Taoism and their respective doctrines are

widely considered as foundations of Chinese culture (Fan, 2000; Hudson, Walker, Simpson, & Hinch, 2013; Tsai & Zhou, 2014).

2.4.1 Confucianism. Confucianism emphasizes “formalism, a collective work ethic, respect for scholarship, and a belief in the natural dominance of men over women” (Stodolska & Lee, 2007, p. 528). Moreover, according to Confucianism, there are three ideal achievements: “(a) establishing virtue (li de), which means to create and bequeath to posterity a model of behavior or to leave benevolence and grace for eternity; (b) establishing deeds (li gong), which means to render meritorious service; and (c) establishing words (li yan), which means to attain scholarship” (Deng et al., 2005, p. 243). These three objectives indicate that attaining wealth, reputation, longevity, and morality are regarded as top goals for most Chinese. For an ordinary Chinese person, obtaining a higher education is the only way to climb from a lower social status to a higher social status (Walker et al., 2007), thereby, Chinese people highly value education and believe a good education is a prerequisite to achievement (Wen, 1989).

On the other hand, leisure can be viewed as the opposite concept of pursuing education and personal achievements. Consequently, the Chinese hold a derogatory attitude toward leisure. In China, there are two Chinese terms used to refer to leisure, yeyu and xiu xian (i.e., free and rest). Though some argue xiu xian is closer to the Western concept of leisure (Liu & Li, 2016), the term is also interpreted as “idle” or “lazy”, which reflects the negative sides of it (Yu, 2005), and it is completely different from its original meaning in Latin licere (i.e., “to be free”; Kelly, 1996). Wang and Stringer (2000) contend that Chinese people rarely prioritize leisure in their lives compared with Euro-North Americans because they tend to have a stronger work ethic.

Secondary data analysis from the World Values Survey (2005) identified that more than half of the Chinese respondents reported that work was very important, but only 13% of Chinese respondents reported that leisure time was very important. Confucianism also exerts strong collectivism value in sports in China. In this core value, self-sacrifice and prioritizing the interests of bigger groups are especially emphasized. This can be reflected in the distribution of sports-related resources in China. Since the birth of New China, its government has been investing significant resources into the elite sport to develop the most competitive elite athletes who can win medals in international games to showcase the mother country's pride and power. In contrast, very few resources were left for mass sport and school sport. There are a large number of sports training schools founded by the government particularly dedicated to training elite athletes to start at the age of 6, and the training hours per day could be over 7 hours. The goal for these young athletes is not achieving a personal dream but to win glory for China (Tsai & Zhou, 2017). Sport probably should not be classified as a leisure activity in this situation, and due to the influence of the traditional culture, it is more like a profession or work.

2.4.2 Taoism. Taoism, as another primary guiding philosophy in Chinese culture, has been teaching Chinese people how to live a life in all aspects for over 2,500 years (Ching, 1993; Day, 1962; Li, 1978; Zhang & Fang, 1998). Compared to Confucianism, which is primarily concerned with how people should behave in a society, Taoism focuses more on an individual's life (Majka, 2000). A core creed in Taoism is wu wei, which means "action by inaction, passive achievement, doing nothing, and effortless" (Wang & Stringer, 2000, p. 35). Taoism also advocates "the proper mode of human conduct, a mental state with maximum efficiency and self-reward, harmonious relationship between humankind and nature, moderation, softness, slowness,

and balance” (Stodolska & Lee, 2007, p. 528). Due to the effect of Taoism, self-harmonization (i.e., “the desire to maintain a conception of self as part of a harmonious relationship”; Mascolo et al., 2002, p. 387) is a primary goal in Chinese culture. Wang and Walker (2007) indicated that culture plays an important role in the appraisal process, thus determining goals and influencing not only emotions experienced but also the type and style of leisure activity engaged in to achieve it. As a result, in traditional Chinese culture, free time is regularly connected to inactive, calm, and ideally singular activities, instead of strenuous and physically requesting diversions (Walker & Deng, 2014). Traditional leisure activities and styles are still prevailing among modern Chinese people. Thus, family-oriented or learning focused, and quieter and inactive activities are commonly favoured rather than fun-or pleasure-oriented (Liu & Li, 2016). Thus, sports or other forms of physical activity are in opposition to traditional Chinese leisure values.

2.4.3 Chinese people’s leisure style. Interestingly, research has also identified that even contemporary Chinese immigrants in North America still prefer passive leisure in a relaxing style and engagement in traditional Chinese leisure activities (Allison & Geiger, 1993; Kim, Kleiber, & Kropf, 2001; Walker et al., 2011; Yu & Berryman, 1996). For example, Walker and his colleagues (2011) found that Chinese Canadians participated mostly in media activities and regarded relaxation as the most vital aspect of leisure satisfaction. Also, passive leisure, home-oriented, and a significant focus on Chinese-language media and music were found to be prevalent among young Chinese immigrants. Allison and Geiger’s (1993) study identified that tai chi, mah-jongg, gardening, traditional Chinese cooking, and sewing were the mostly practiced leisure activity for Chinese Americans. Some other characteristics related to Chinese leisure life are: (a) Chinese people tend to be spectators rather than participants in active leisure and

recreation activities, (b) Chinese people are less involved in activities outside the home, they prefer to read books, write poems, listen to music, and talk to friends at home, and (c) Chinese leisure activities are more solitary (Wang & Stringer, 2000). All of the discussed characteristics are closely aligned with Taoism's principles.

Based on the previous discussion of Chinese culture and its influence on Chinese leisure it is evident that Confucianism and Taoism are the two primary philosophies guiding Chinese leisure attitudes and patterns. Chinese people overall tend to have a negative attitude toward leisure, and instead, they place a high value on education and hard work. Additionally, they prefer passive leisure activities over active activities. Sports and physical activity are opposed to Chinese traditional leisure values and not favoured by the general public. However, interestingly sport has been utilized as an approach to glorify the nation's pride with a large investment from the government to develop elite athletes. The public only receives a few resources from the government to practice sport activities.

2.5 Leisure in China for Children

Children's (i.e., 6-12 year olds) leisure life has been widely studied in the Western context, however, only a handful of researchers have given attention to non-western raised children's leisure life, such as children from China. Malina (2008) suggested that individual, familial, and cultural factors affect behavior patterns (i.e., PA and sedentary behavior) among children. As there is a profound difference in culture and parental styles between Western countries and China, it is not surprising to find that leisure for Chinese children differs greatly from Western children's leisure. In western academia, leisure is depicted as freedom, a state of

mind, non-work, free-time activity, consumption, and relaxation (Goodale & Godbey, 1988; Rojek, 2010; Searle & Brayley, 1999; Schor, 2007). Of these dimensions, freedom is the most frequently mentioned in the literature. Letting children enjoy their spare time doing whatever activities they would like based on their interests is regarded as a normal and advocated leisure philosophy for western children. Also, among children, leisure time activities are more likely to occur with friends and with less supervision from their parents in Western cultures (Larson & Verma, 1999). Ultimately, this means that Western children have the freedom to choose who to play with, and how they spend their spare time. This freedom to choose leisure activity is also a form of self-expression, the primary goal in Western cultures, with America being the archetype (Kim & Sherman, 2007; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

2.5.1 The lack of autonomy. In contrast, Chinese children do not have this luxury of freedom to control their leisure time. Moreover, children's leisure activities are often supervised by adults and are family-oriented in China and other Asian countries (Larson & Verma, 1999). This lack of freedom can be explained through Chinese culture, rooted in Confucius's philosophy, which typically exhibits a patriarchal family structure, respect for elders, and group/collective orientation (Fan, 2000; Liang, Yamashita, & Brown, 2013). In light of this cultural characteristic, children are more controlled and trained by parents' principles in Chinese families (Chao, 1994). Normally, in a Chinese family, children have very little autonomy in making decisions on their own, even in their leisure life, and instead, their time is scheduled by their parents. In fact, a survey of Chinese children identified that one major complaint of leisure

life is the lack of self-decision-making (Ying, 2003). Specifically, 27.3% of children said they could not do what they wanted to do (Ying, 2003).

Not only do Chinese children have little autonomy to choose their leisure activities, but they also have little time for leisure activities. Traditional Chinese parenting emphasizes training, which focuses on helping children learn socially desirable behaviours and performing well in school (Chao, 1994). Thus, most of the Chinese children's time is dedicated to schoolwork or other forms of study. The China Youth and Children Research Center conducted a survey that examined the development of Chinese children and youth and identified that children's time spent on homework and other studying activities takes a rather large share of their spare time (Ying, 2003).

In terms of sport participation for Chinese children, since traditional Chinese culture does not advocate active activities, it is not common to see many parents themselves participate in sport. Further, considering the tremendous influence and control Chinese parents have on their children it is reasonable to assume that children are not encouraged to participate in sports. According to the survey on Chinese children's physical activity level conducted in Shanghai, 70% of primary school students were physically inactive (i.e., they engaged in less than 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per day) and only 14.9% of young people (age from 5 to 17 years) reported participation in organized sports activities in the past 12 months (Liu et al., 2016).

2.5.2 Leisure and education. While some parents encourage their children to participate in some leisure activities, their initial intention is to provide a favourable context for their

children to learn appropriate behaviours. Shared time spent on leisure activities between parents and children has been found to enhance the effects of parents' guidance and other socialization efforts (Zhao & Chen, 2018). For example, parental influence on children's sport and PA participation in China can be seen as one form of parental "training" (guan), which is a more controlling parenting style stressing hard work and self-discipline (Lau & Ransdell, 2007). Additional research has also suggested that Chinese parents are using leisure activities as a context to educate their children. For example, researchers have found that Chinese families often define leisure expenditures as educational spending for their children (Veeck, Flurry & Jiang, 2003).

2.5.3 Parental influence on Chinese children's physical activity. Chinese children's physical activity participation is closely related to parental influence. One research that specifically studied Chinese overweight children found that father's role modeling and mother's encouragement are positively related to Chinese overweight children's attraction to physical activity (Lau, Lee, & Ransdell, 2016). Comparing to mother, the Chinese father was found to be a more dominant role in influencing children's attraction to physical activity. The researchers explain that it is because in Confucian philosophy a traditional Chinese father is expected to be a model to educate desirable behaviours to his children (Lau, Lee, & Ransdell, 2016). As a consequence, if a father participates in sports regularly the child has a bigger chance to be more physically active as well. However, the participants of this research are all middle-class Hong Kong Chinese children and their parents, considering Hong Kong's 100 years colonial history by Britain, the findings have limitations representing a bigger population of China. Another research showed that Chinese adolescents' sedentary behaviours can be reduced if familial supports are

provided. The effective familial supports include verbally encouraging, observing, and involving, among which, family members' involvement in the children's physical activity demonstrated the most significant influence (Wang, Liu, Ren, Lv, & Li, 2015). For Chinese adolescents, they could have already formed their habits of participating in physical activity and sports a long time ago, it cannot be proved that parental influences are the factors lead them to physical activity participation.

2.5.4 Modern China and children's leisure life. Chinese children's preference for leisure activities nowadays is diversified and reflects the tone of China's modern society. This change to a preference for diversified leisure is most likely due to the influence of Westernization in the last 20 years. Chinese children in modern times have a strong desire for self-expression, which their elder generation did not have (Yin, 2003). In fact, Chinese people are continually becoming more exposed to and welcoming of Western lifestyles, largely due to economic reforms (Fan, 2000; Yin, 2005). For example, the importation of Western brands such as McDonald's and KFC exemplify Westernization and penetrate it into the cultural fabric of the country. This is especially true for the youths of China who have "absorbed and manifested the lifestyle characteristic(s) of Western capitalist nations" more so than other age groups (Knight, 2006, p. 10). Consequently, some Western values, including freedom and self-expression, are gradually being adopted by Chinese youths, and resultantly affecting their leisure preferences. According to the results from the survey of Chinese urban only-children's development, on average Chinese children have 9.6 hobbies, and 67.7% of subjects reported a special interest in sports, which ranked first of all 19 hobby options (Sun & Pu, 1997). Further, they enjoy

engaging in sports either as spectators or participants. Some other activities reported by a large proportion of children in the same survey included watching film and TV shows, singing, playing musical instruments, dancing, science and technology, plants and animals, and environmental protection. Based on these findings, it is evident that Chinese children are more diversified than ever in their leisure life and sport is becoming more prevailing among them. Thus, Chinese children's desire to express their individualities via their leisure activities is rapidly growing. However, their parents are still guided by Chinese traditional culture in providing care and education for their children. To date, limited research has examined Chinese children's leisure activities. As a result, it is unclear how the culture clash between westernization and Chinese traditional culture influences parents' selection of sports activities for their children.

Thus, additional research is needed to examine how Chinese culture influences parents' sport choices for their children?

3.0 Method

3.1 Grounded Theory

The grounded theory study was developed to generate or discover a theory, or a “unified theoretical explanation” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 107) to explain or understand a process, an action, or an interaction. The main principle of grounded theory is that the theory should be grounded in the data collected from participants who share experiences of the process (Charmaz, 2006). The process is the focal point of grounded theory. As a result, the goal of a researcher is to develop a theory or an explanation by putting related theoretical categories together to explain how they function in the process. The data is regarded as the foundation of the grounded theory study, and the major way to collect data is through interviews with a number of participants. The interview with the same participants could happen multiple times, as the researcher evolves their analysis based on the earlier data, they are likely to go back and conduct the second or third interview to gather more data to refine their analysis. The theory is developed through constant data collecting and data analysis, thereby, the researcher’s thinking could also change accordingly.

There is a typical pattern for grounded theory researchers to organize and analyze the data and then develop their theories. After data is collected, the researchers will need to code the data word-by-word, line-by-line, incident-to-incident. While doing different types of coding, researchers can identify multiple categories, and one of them will become the focus of the theory. In the next step, researchers will employ a technique named axial coding, which allows them to determine the properties and dimensions of a category, reorganize the data in a whole, turn data

or text into concepts, gather them into a larger category, and consequently, discover the relationship among them (Charmaz, 2007). In addition to data collecting and coding, memoing is another important component of developing the theory. Researchers will record their ideas when collecting and analyzing the data, in the meantime, they can notice the process and identify the stream of the process. While repeatedly doing these works until no new ideas occur to their minds, researchers can form a theoretical model to explain the intersection of the categories, which is also the theory generated from the study. Once the theory is formed, researchers come to the final step of the study, to present the theory. Various forms can be chosen to present the theory, including diagrams, hypotheses, or discussions.

3.1.1 Constructivist grounded theory. Constructivist grounded theory is one of two grounded theory approaches, first developed by Charmaz (2006). Differing from objectivist grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) which derives from positivism and emphasizes systematical theory development, the constructivist approach on the other hand is rooted in interpretive tradition and focuses on “phenomena of study” (Charmaz, 2006, p.130). This approach involves the study of how and why participants act in a certain way and formulate meanings under specific conditions. Theory is a result of the interaction of researchers with participants and fields. Data and the analysis are created from “shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 130). The constructivist grounded theory approach also asserts that the theory is an interpretation that depends on the researcher’s view, values, experiences, and priorities. As a result, Charmaz (2006), stated that all conclusions generated in a grounded theory study are “suggestive,

incomplete, and inconclusive” (Creswell, 2018, p. 154). In terms of the research procedure, it is not limited to a single systemic process or core category, instead, it gives more attention to “views, values, beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and ideologies of individuals” (Creswell, 2018, p. 154). Due to the belief that data and analysis are all contextually and socially created, the constructivist approach encourages researchers to be reflexive in the research process and think about how their theories change (Charmaz, 2006).

3.2 Participants and Recruitment

Fifteen parents of children (ages from 5 to 12 years) in Mainland China were interviewed as participants in this study. All of them were living in China’s cities and raised in Chinese culture, which means participants were not someone who grew up in another country. Participants were equally recruited from households from three different levels of SES in China. To be specific, 5 people from lower social class (annual household income under 60,000 RMB, education level below bachelor degree), 5 people from the mass middle class (annual household income from 60,000 RMB to 106,000 RMB, with bachelor degree), and 5 people from the upper-middle class (annual household income from 106,000 RMB to 229,000 RMB, with a master degree or Ph.D. degree) were recruited. I used the convenience sampling method to recruit these 15 participants. Specifically, I contacted the young parents I knew from first-tier cities, second-tier cities, and third-tier cities (in China, a family’s SES is closely related to their place of residence) and asked if they would be interested in participating in the study (See Appendix A). For the individuals who agreed to participate we arranged a time that was convenient for them to conduct the interview. After I secured my first participant I connected with other parents who

also wanted to participate in my study by using the method of snowball sampling. A sample size of 15 parents was used as a baseline, and theoretical saturation was the criterion used to determine the final sample size. Data was continually gathered until no new information or categories emerged from the interviews.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with participants. Since face-to-face interviews were not possible during the covid pandemic phone interviews were conducted. These interviews were conducted in a semi-structured interview format and guided by an interview guide (See appendix B). The interview guide was initially written in English and then translated into Chinese. When conducting the interviews I used the Chinese version because the participants did not speak any English. To avoid any difference in translation, the Chinese version of interview guide was translated back into English by a third party who knew both Chinese and English. The interviews were flexible enough to allow participants to digress and give long narrative answers. The purpose of using the interview guide was to provide non-leading questions to be asked during the interview and keep the interview in a logical order. Further, the questions were developed based on the literature reviewed previously. The interview guide and the questions were adjusted when necessary to allow for the discovery of more detailed individual experiences and relevant context. In doing so, the researcher fully examined how and why participants constructed their actions and meanings and under what conditions. More specifically, I probed into the cultural factors affecting their selection of sports activities for their children, how they perceived their cultural identity, what affected their perceptions of

sports, what they thought about sport spending for their children, and so forth. All these questions were intended to seek answers to the research questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in Chinese, however, the quotes that were utilized in the thesis were translated into English.

3.4 Data Analysis

Several steps were taken to analyze the data. First, the transcription of the interviews were initially coded which involves naming each word, line, or segment of data. Second, a focused coding followed the initial coding to sort, synthesize, integrate, and organize the large amounts of data by using the most significant or frequent initial codes. The initial coding kept the researcher open to all potential theoretical directions, while the focused coding allowed the researcher to identify and develop the most salient categories. The third step involved axial coding, which served to relate categories to subcategories and specifies the properties and dimensions of a category. In this phase of coding, the text were converted into concepts that specified the dimensions of a larger category (Charmaz, 2006). Also, the linkage between categories and subcategories were built in this phase to explain how they were related, and it was the initial theoretical model. Throughout the process of data collection and data analysis, I kept writing memos to record my ideas and questions that came to my mind. These memos reflected my evolving analytic progress and specify the gaps and holes in this research that I filled. Moreover, I strengthened my categories by studying my earlier memos. In the next step, theoretical sampling was employed to elaborate and refine categories in the emerging theory

through seeking and collecting pertinent data of core categories. Data were continually collected until no new theoretical insights, and no new properties of the core categories emerged.

3.5 Memoing During Data Collection and Analysis

Throughout the data collection and analysis, I kept writing memos to better develop my ideas, to be actively engaged in my materials, and to lead my later data-gathering. To write a high-quality memo, two phases took place. First, I wrote early memos, which means I wrote down what I observed happening in the data and sought the answers to some basic questions like what were participants' actions, what was the context, and how did the context impact participants' actions. More importantly, I made comparisons between data and data, codes and categories, and category and concept, which helped to identify some relationships in the data. Then I moved to the phase of advanced memos (Charmaz, 2006). I traced and categorized data subsumed by my topic, kept track of how my categories emerged and changed, listed the beliefs and assumptions about emerging categories, described the topic from various vantage points, placed it within an argument, and made the comparison at various levels. In short, I defined every code and category with empirical evidence and discovered the patterns among them. While writing my memos, two techniques were used, including freewriting and clustering. Freewriting allowed me to liberate my thoughts and feelings and sharpen my mind. Clustering enabled me to understand and organize my material in a visual format (Charmaz, 2006). It also made it easier to specify the relationship between categories.

3.6 Rigor in Qualitative Research

Rigor and quality could simply mean that qualitative research is good. Only good research can provide sufficiently authentic findings and allow the researcher to have confidence in acting on the implications of the findings (Tracy, 2010). The importance of criteria to distinguish rigor and quality has earned great attention from researchers. Researchers believe that developing criteria is necessary as they offer “rules and guidelines to help them learn, practice and perfect” (Tracy, 2010, p. 838). Some concepts that have been referred to as criteria include: catalytic validity (Lather, 1986), empathetic validity (Dadds, 2008), crystallization (Richardson, 2000b), tacit knowledge (Altheide & Johnson, 1994), transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), among others. There was no agreeable definition of quality or rigor in qualitative research until Tracy (2010) raised an eight-point conceptualization of qualitative quality. According to Tracy’s eight criteria of quality in qualitative research “high quality qualitative methodological research is marked by (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence” (2010, p. 840). Tracy asserts that this method is unique, and provocative as it features eight universal characteristics of high-quality qualitative methods (Tracy, 2010). Further, she indicates that researchers are able to meet the eight criteria of qualitative quality via different skills which are based on the purposes of the study (Tracy, 2010).

The current study was designed to be rigorous and it fit all the criteria in Tracy’s eight-point conceptualization of qualitative quality. Explanations are provided below to demonstrate how this study fit each criterion.

Worthy topic. Good qualitative research ought to be “relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840). Worthy topics sometimes emerge from timely societal or personal events. As this study concerns Chinese children’s current PA problems, it is highly relevant to the large Chinese youth population and their parents. In addition, the results provided guidance for Chinese youth sports industry practitioners to better develop their marketing strategies. Thus, the topic in this study is also significant.

Rich rigor. Researchers have identified that high-quality qualitative research should possess the quality of complexity and rigor (Tracy, 2010). That is to say, the researcher will utilize multiple theories, appropriate procedures and vast data to investigate a complicated set of events. This criterion assists in ensuring the validity of high-quality qualitative research. This study employed cultural consonance theory and the concept of cultural capital to understand the influence on parental choices of sport for children in mainland China. Moreover, the results were generated from 15 interviews which supplied sufficient data. Considering the complexity of the phenomena this research intended to study and the abundant data that were gathered, this research fit the criterion of rich rigor.

Sincerity. This criterion can be interpreted into “honesty and transparency about the researcher’s biases, goals, and foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research” (Tracy, 2010, p. 841). I achieved this goal through self-reflexivity and transparency. I explicitly disclosed my authentic intention of doing this research, my subjective feelings, my presence’s impact on participants and the challenges of the study. My disclosures were put into my research notes as well as my positionality statement.

Credibility. To be simple, credibility refers to the trustworthiness of a report that readers can fully rely on when they need to make decisions. My study fit this criterion by using means of thick description, crystallization, and multivocality. For thick description, I described enough concrete details in my findings to reflect the complexity of the context and situation, giving readers sufficient resources to have their own outcome. As for crystallization, I used multiple data sources and lenses to “open up a more complex, in-depth, but still thoroughly partial, understanding of the issue” (Tracey, 2010, p. 844). Similar to crystallization, multivocality is another means to show the complexity and variety of the issue. Various voices were shown in the research and analysis by analyzing social action from the participants’ point of view. In this analysis, I provided a “thick description of participants’ performance and their local significance to interpret meaning” (Tracey, 2010, p. 844).

Resonance. Tracy suggests that high-quality qualitative research can “meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience” (Tracey, 2010, p. 844). My research could have a great impact on Chinese parents and their children as the story of the research overlapped with their personal situation. It is also possible that readers will find similar emotions and experiences depicted by the participants. After learning the story of these participants readers may gain a better understanding of their own situation, and as a result, improve their practice and bring more enjoyable sport experiences to their children. Through this process, this study achieved resonance.

Significant contribution. To evaluate the research’s significant contribution, three questions were asked, if the study increased knowledge? If the study inspired further exploration or research? If the study improved practice? (Tracey, 2010, p. 846) This study in particular

assisted in identifying factors that influence Chinese parents' selection of sports for their children. As a result, the findings provided bases and guidance for practitioners in the youth sports industry to better develop their marketing strategies. In doing so the study achieved practical significance.

Ethical. Ethics are both a means and an end goal of qualitative quality (Tracey, 2010, p. 844). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), researchers should constantly assess the rightness or wrongness of their actions to participants, and other stakeholders of the research. This study achieved ethics through the means of relational ethics. I as the researcher was mindful of my role, actions, and consequences on others. I also showed respect to participants and invited them to jointly design the rules of the research to avoid any harm to them.

Meaningful coherence. Tracy suggests that meaningfully coherent studies “(a) achieve their stated purpose; (b) accomplish what they espouse to be about; (c) use methods and representation practices that partner well with espoused theories and paradigms; and (d) attentively interconnect literature reviewed with research foci, methods, and findings” (2010, p. 848). All parts of this study were integrated as a whole. The research questions were grounded from the findings obtained from a thorough review of the extant literature. The methods and theories utilized were chosen based on the research questions and the presentation of the findings were closely connected with the literature and the data. Hence, meaningful coherence has been ensured in this way.

3.7 Positionality

I, the researcher am the tool of this research, and all data passed through me as water goes through a filter. In grounded theory, a relative paradigm, the control for bias is considered impossible and undesirable. Thus, I cannot separate my bias, experiences, or myself from this qualitative research. I intend to unpack or disclose my bias and past experiences to the reader to maintain rigor and the trustworthiness of the research. My positionality statement will reveal my social positions, experiences, and bias to fulfill my wish to be transparent and reflexive. In doing so, the reader can be aware of how this research is grounded within a certain perspective, historical regime, or cultural moment.

At the time I conducted this study, I was a 30-year old Master candidate at the University of Waterloo. I was raised in a middle-class family in China. My father is a self-employed businessman and my mother is a middle school teacher. I spent my first 14 years in a small city in northwest China. When I turned 15, my family moved to Beijing, the capital city of China. Throughout my childhood, my biggest interest was always playing sports like Ping-Pong, basketball, and swimming. My parents are very traditional Chinese parents who put academic education above everything else and constantly checked up on my school performance. In terms of my leisure life, my parents had a strong interest in Western classical music, and consequently, they bought me a piano and hired a teacher to train my piano skills. Even though I was pretty resistant to playing the piano, my parents forced me to practice for more than 5 years. In contrast, they did not spend any time or money for me to participate in sport. It was understandable for me at that time, since no family would invest money in sports for their children in China back then.

Based on my impression, sport was purely regarded as play for fun, which can bring no benefit to child'en's development. My parents did not encourage or dissuade me from playing any sports during my childhood. But I can tell that my parents do not think sport is an important component in a child's life. Further, my elementary school did not organize many sports events or games and instead held one sport meet a year. I believe that participating in sport keeps me healthy both physically and mentally. I also believe that I enhanced my relationship with some friends and have enjoyed some good times with them because of sport participation.

4.0 Findings

In this section, a theoretical model is presented to demonstrate the process in which Chinese parents select sports for their children and the cultural influences that impact these decisions.

4.1 Overview of Theoretical Model

The culture surrounding sport participation in China has changed profoundly in the past three decades. The culture in which the current parents grew up is more tied with Chinese traditional culture which neglects and is against sport participation. As a result, most current parents in China have no sport skills or have not accepted sports training. However, the present culture from top to the bottom is highly supportive of sport participation. The principle cause for this change could be the Economic Reform and Open Up policy, which opened China's gate and encouraged communicating with foreign cultures in China. Sport, as an important part of western culture, was gradually introduced into China and Chinese families. Even though Chinese parents lack sport skills and knowledge, they reported a strong desire to offer their children high-quality sport education and to place great importance on sports participation. This indicates that their beliefs and behaviours are closely consistent with prevailing cultural models.

Chinese parents' process of selecting sport activities for their children consists of three phases: cultural influence, development of understandings of perceived benefits, and consideration of sports' factors. The cultural influence comes from three levels of the environment, namely, organizational environment, social environment, and family environment. Parents reported that their perception and knowledge about sports are mainly influenced by these levels of environment. Parents develop understandings of the perceived benefits of sport based

on the information gathered from their environment. The benefits can be categorized into psychological domain, physical domain, social domain, and educational domain. Once the parents develop an understanding of the perceived benefits of sport, they start to consider all the factors about a particular sport to evaluate if it fits their children's needs as well as the parent's expectations.

4.2 Chinese Culture

The participants suggested that there has been a tremendous change in Chinese culture related to sport in the past three decades. Generally speaking, the Chinese culture parents grew up in was more against sports when they were kids, however, is now very friendly towards sports. The cultural change took place in the period when the Economic Reform and Open Up policy was implemented. It is possible that the shift in Chinese culture was caused by embracing foreign cultures which was advocated by the Economic Reform and Open Up policy.

4.2.1 The Prevailing Culture in the Past

The participants reported that when they were children, the society and their families all had negative attitudes towards sports participation and were unwilling to provide support for their sporting interests. The principle belief in society at this time was centred around the importance of academic study and the value of sports was not placed in high regard. For example, Mary indicated that the whole society did not place importance on sports when she was a child:

We put great focus on the curriculum study and did not realize the value of sports, and as a result, our peers became lazier and lazier, and more reluctant to do sports, that is a big influence since you are not likely to have a sporting environment.

Sherry identified that gender stereotypes was another obstacle that stopped children from participating in sports in Chinese culture in the past:

When I was in middle school, I studied taekwondo, but my 'om's colleagues always spoke that it was wrong for a girl to learn taekwondo, an unsuitable activity for a girl, and reminded my mom many times that the instructor was a man.

Mara pointed out the perception of sports her parents and other elders had was very negative. She further indicated that her family was not willing to invest in her sports hobby at all:

My parents would not spend one penny on my sports activities, because they lived in the countryside, they perceived that sports players were very stupid and only had big muscles. They believed that it was unreasonable to spend on running or rope skipping. Sports in their eyes were useless and not purposeful for a per'on's success or growth, instead, could only cause injuries and degenerate peo'le's thinking ability.

4.2.2 *Prevailing Culture at Present*

All the participants cited the favourable culture for advocating sports in modern society and the willingness to invest in sports. One reason for this shift is that elderly people changed their attitudes towards sports. Jack (parent of a boy) reflected that his parents: “are all supportive for sports participation for children now, not as opposed to sports as they used to be when I was a child.” He further explained that the reason for the change was mainly because of the development of the society:

This change is happening along with the development of the sociI...their thoughts can follow the pace of this society now. You can imagine my mom, a person who used to

hate my sports interests now encourages my kid to do more sports. I assume even a countryside housewife can be influenced by the society.

More broadly, current parents all recognized the importance of sports for children, for example, Lora specified:

I feel like that parents now attach great importance to ch'ldren's sports activities, which is different from our childhood. Parents back then did not pay attention to ch'ldren's sports life. It was very rare for a family to sign up for a program to offer children an opportunity to receive sports training when we were still in school. Nowadays, every kid I know has a sports hobby and develops at least one sports specialty.

Additionally, participants reported that people are spending more on sport-related equipment.

Pan claimed:

People have raised their awareness of sports since I noticed that most people around me have purchased smartwatches or smart wristbands to monitor their running performance and share their data on social media platforms. Every parent I know requires their kids to sign up for a sports program to develop one sport hobby. To participate in these sports activities, regardless of the ch'ldren's skills and performances, parents definitely will buy the professional equipment for their kids.

4.3 Sports Selection Process

4.3.1 Phase One: Cultural influence

The first phase of the sport selection process for parents begins with the cultural influences on parent's perception of the sport, and these influences are imposed from the institutional environments, social environments, and family environments.

Institutional Environments. The positive attitude and perception of sport associated with China's institutional environments were reported by the participants. The two major institutional environments mentioned by the participants were government and schools. For example, Lora recalled,

The government is taking sports seriously, it puts great emphasis on children's sports participation, aiming at improving the whole country's overall physical quality. This will benefit this country's economic development and cultural industry. Also, since sports could bring people positive energy, I believe this is a beneficial strategy for the entire country.

To efficiently increase elementary school students and middle school students' time participating in sports, the government has generated well developed policies. The major policy they have created is to add sports tests into the senior high school entrance examination. Marry explained:

Generally speaking, the nation is very supportive of sports, as it published a physical quality test standard for all elementary schools to follow and included sports test into the senior high school entrance examination. Take my child for example, his sports

score will account for forty points in this exam. Also, the government is adding more and more sports facilities in schools and communities. We have to say all these policies are very supportive of promoting sports.

The parents highlighted that these policies are pushing parents to let their children practice sports. As Sherry cited:

The government is using its policies to stimulate you to do more exercises. For example, according to the senior high school enrollment policy, students will receive fifty points if their sports performance meet a certain requirement, which motivates them to start doing sport exercises. The Ministry of National Education has already realized that it is time to strengthen children's physical exercises, in fact, we as parents all have desires to let our children exercise more.

Cici also commented on the pressures that have resulted from these policies:

Now sports have become a major subject at school, thereby we have to give enough importance to it. Take me for example, I have to send my child to learn swimming since the senior high school entrance examination will test swimming. When my son was in first grade I signed up for a rope skipping class for him, because to pass the first grade successfully he was required to master the skill of rope skipping. This is all because of the pressure brought by society.

Following the development of these government policies, schools developed serious measures to monitor and influence children's sport participation daily. As Lora described:

All the people in this country, including every elementary school teacher takes sports seriously. Every day, after school, my children's teacher will send messages to parents

informing the advised activities for children to practice such as sit-up, rope skipping and jumping. It has become a common thing here. Besides, all parents have to record the activities their children participate in every month and hand the record over to their teacher once a month.

Additionally, in order to cultivate children's interests in sports, the schools provide time and resources, both in class and outside of class, for them to experience all kinds of sports activities.

Lora explained:

One physical education class is guaranteed every day, not like when we were kids, only one or two physical education classes were allowed in school weekly. Furthermore, schools organize taekwondo, football, basketball, and badminton interest-oriented classes for students to experience.

Similarly, Lily commented,

Schools in our city have been promoting campus soccer for several years...and the first-grade students are able to participate in badminton games regularly hosted by the schools...games are happening within sports clubs every week, and students are free to play the activity they like.

Social Environment. The social environment is another cultural influence that was found to impact parents' perceptions of sport. In particular, city sports heritage, other parents, and the media were found to impact parents' perceptions.

City Sports Heritage. Participants often identified that 'heir cities' sports heritage is a big factor that leads to their interests in a specific sport. For instance, Sherry recalled:

One time when I was shopping in a mall, I saw several kids playing ice hockey on a big ice rink, and that really raised my interest in this sport, since I felt like ice hockey really fitted the environment of a northern city, as you know very cold.

Susan also expressed her special love for soccer due to her city's soccer history:

Dalian people are crazy about soccer, and this sport is very popular in this city. It was very common to see kids playing soccer on the road everywhere twenty years ago. As you know, Dalian has won many championships in China's top-level soccer league, and that is the glory that belongs to this city. In that way, I also wish my kid as a Dalian boy can inherit this city's soccer tradition, even if he cannot be a professional player, at least he knows how to play soccer.

Another parent, Shawn claimed:

I especially want my child to learn basketball because we are living in Dongguan, the city of basketball. We have plenty of basketball training institutions in this city. I love basketball as well, plus this city gives great importance to basketball, even kindergarten here offers basketball class, during the break you can see students all bouncing balls on playground.

Other Parents. Communication and interaction between parents were cited as being influential for parents' knowledge about a particular sport or motivation to experience that sport.

As Wang reported:

One of my colleagues has a boy who was accepted by Tsinghua University last year.

This boy started to play go since he was in second grade. His mom had a very good feeling about TI activity... she always educated me on what activity my kid should study, for example, she convinced me that go was good for children's thinking ability because her boy had great thinking ability. My other colleagues have created an atmosphere in which they all actively share educational information, such as which teacher is good at which subjects. I also heartily introduce the go teacher that I recognized to my friends and other colleagues if their kids are still very young.

Additionally, some parents identified that they let their children try a sport just because other parents referred it to them without first seeking further information about that sport. Marry described: "Normally, I would learn what kind of 'ctivity my boy's classmates or other parents have signed up for then pick the most popular program or the most recommended one to try."

Wendy also attributed her decision to try basketball to her neighbours' advice. She recalled:

In a conversation with my neighbours, a parent said that his boy has signed up for a basketball class, and I thought playing basketball might help my son to grow taller, then I decided to take my son to a trial class.

Media. Participants also identified that the media played a positive role that triggered their interests in a particular sport. The media in China has been promoting sports from a variety of

angles including international sports events, health benefits, education, and entertainment. For example, Lora commented,

The first time I learned about fencing was from an Olympic game broadcast, at that time I had no idea at what age children were able to practice fencing and what basic requirements were expected to be met to be a fencing player.

The reports about world championships won by Chinese players on local media were influential in getting people's attention. Lily stated, "You can see reports about China's players constantly winning world championships in Ping-Pong games on media all day, therefore we are often immersed into this kind of information. It is almost impossible for children not to know about Ping-Pong." Participants identified that they often give attention to sport-related information on media because of health concerns. Cici commented,

You can always find reports about concepts of sports, as well you will discover which sport is more popular and which one is less popular... Sometimes, you will notice that elderly people are also doing sports, then you will follow that news which stresses the positive influence on elderly people's health condition from sports. All of these news and cultural environments would have an impact on you and remind yourself to regularly do sports.

Social media has become an important tool for spreading sport-related news to a broader audience group, especially related to entertainment and education. Participants spoke about the influence of this type of media on their sport perceptions. For example, Fei recalled:

Tennis first came into my world was when Li Na won her first title in WTA. At that time, the top search on Weibo [Chinese Twitter] was her name, since then I started to

give my attention to tennis and add tennis into my everyday vocabulary list, before that I have never talked about tennis. In terms of the go, I do not know about go until I read a news saying that Kejie, the go player who played against Alpha Go years ago, was recommended for admission to Tsinghua University. It is funny that I first got familiar with Kejie from an entertainment TV program named Tucaodahui [Chinese Roast].

Family Environment. Lastly, the family environment was found to influence how parents' perceptions of sport are shaped. Specifically, the family's acceptance of western culture, gender stereotypes, and socioeconomic status (SES) were found to be influential.

Acceptance of Western Culture. Multiple participants reflected that the acceptance of western culture has impacted their understanding of sport and education. For example, Wang recalled:

Years ago, I took my son to Northern Europe and we were touched deeply. During our trip, one day we happened to see a marathon competition going on. It was raining at that time, if we were runners in that marathon competition, giving up would be a reasonable outcome due to the heavy rain or the exhaustion. However, in that city, in a weather like that, no matter male runners or female runners were all running in the rain. I had the same feeling as my son that they were so into this competition, or we could say they have true loves for the sport. A friend of mine, who used to live in Germany right now, told me that his kid only had classes in the morning in kindergarten, and the rest of the day was for all kinds of sports training.

Shawn similarly attributed her focus and perceptions of sports to the influence of western culture:

I have attended some education forums, mainly about why Westerners give so much attention to sports, and I do think that makes sense. In my parenting my kid, I also would implement some western ideas. Probably because of the influences from western countries, China is giving more and more importance to sports.

Many of the participants identified themselves as westernized parents. Cici claimed, “I am a very open-minded person, in another word, you will see a less traditional mark on me, I regard myself as a parent influenced more by the western culture.” Sherry also stated,

I have the habit of reading.... if I have a glimpse of my bookshelf most of my books are still foreign books. I am also more accepting of the western kind of parenting philosophy, and truly believe that their educational readings are more advanced, such as children’s picture books.

Gender Stereotypes. Gender stereotypes in a family were also found to be related to participants’ perceptions of sport and expectations for their kids’ level of sport involvement. Specifically, participants reported higher sport involvement expectations for boys because they believed sports were positively associated with study, masculinity, and attraction. Lora’s disclosure illustrated this when she said, “I am not hoping to have a boy who is bad at sports because I think only by being physically active a boy could have positive energy in his life and study, and be more optimistic.” Sherry reported a similar idea when she said, “My family believes that a boy should exercise more and have a strong body, which will benefit their study.”

Sports were also identified as being used as a tool to develop a boy’s masculinity. As Faye stated,

I encouraged my son to learn climbing for a particular purpose. I considered that my son lived in a single-parent family including me and my mom, two females. He is a boy, I feared that he could grow up like a girl in such a family. I always want him to be braver. I learned that one of his classmates was practicing climbing, then I thought why not let him have a try.

Finally, some participants identified that in China, sports were believed to make a male more attractive. Susan claimed, “If a guy plays soccer well, he has more masculine which means he is more attractive to a girl.”

SES. Participants reflected that a family’s SES impacted the perceived importance parents placed on sport and their understanding of the hierarchy of sports. For example, Faye claimed, “Most families below middle class have no interest in sports, they are spending most of their time to make a living, their life pressure is significant.” Susan commented on the difficulty of the working class to participate in sports:

In China, it is still not easy for the working class to play sports as sports is not an easily accessible activity especially in financial perspective. You have to have a stable income to pay for the training fees. To learn a sport is very expensive.

Marry on the other hand identified the influence of educational background on parents’ understanding of a sport:

I believe that to what degree a person understands a sport is related to his educational level. There is a clear classification. For those who have a higher education background, they tend to have a deeper understanding of a sport. For example, fencing as a less popular sport often perceived as a boring sport by some parents.

Multiple participants claimed that they had recognized a hierarchy that ranked different sports and the ability to participate based on SES. Cici stated,

There is a chain of contempt in sports. On the top level of that chain are sports like equestrian and golf, and my current SES does not support me to consume this kind of sport. We can only choose more suitable ones for our class, like those very common ones.

Sherry also commented on the perceived hierarchy (based on SES) of sport which ultimately impacts parents perceptions of particular sports. She stated, “Golf is not something I should play. That atmosphere on golf court and the frequency rich people play golf...those are not something we can afford.”

4.3.2 Phase Two: Develop Understandings of Perceived Benefits

Following the cultural influence on the process of Chinese parents’ sport activity selection for their children, parents developed an understanding of the perceived benefits of sport participation. Participants’ responses suggested that their understandings of the perceived benefits of sport were developed in the physical domain, psychological domain, social domain, and educational domain. In addition, families’ understandings of the same sport varied based on their social classes.

Physical Domain. All of the participants recognized they developed understandings of the benefits of sport in the physical domain. That is, participants identified the role that sports can have in protecting vision, losing weight, improving the immune system, and overall physical fitness. Sherry recalled,

My husband and I both have myopia. After running a medical test, I was notified by the doctor that my son had a high possibility of getting myopia as well. Our doctor suggested we make our son do outdoor sports and exercises which will benefit his vision.

Wendy, on the other hand, suggested that she developed an understanding of how sports could be helpful for weight control: “I think my son is a little bit overweight. By playing basketball my son could get a chance to jump more, grow taller, lose weight and build some muscles.”

Strengthening the immune response was reported most frequently by participants when they reflected on the benefits of sports. Nancy commented:

I always believe teenagers should spend more time on sports, at least it makes positive contributions to their bodies. Considering they are still growing their bodies, their immune systems will be in better shape, in that way they are less likely to be ill, which saves a lot of trouble.

Some participants also reported that they developed understandings of the positive influence of sport on physical fitness. For example, Maggie commented, “The main reason why I want my boy to practice soccer is that it increases his physical capability.” Cici stated, “My purpose to let my kid do more sports is to improve his physical capability and elevate his coordinate ability.” Lastly, Nancy explained, “There are some kicking moves in Taekwondo which will increase kids’ flexibility and enhance the strength of their legs.”

Psychological Domain. Participants also identified that they developed understandings of the multiple psychological benefits they believed were attributed to participating in sport. These psychological benefits included increased confidence, emotional stability, being strong-minded,

being more tolerant and open. Lora identified the increased confidence she found her son developed from participating in sport. She stated,

When my son was younger, he was much weaker in sports compared to other children. Other kids may be more energetic, for example, they might climb small hills at the age of five or six, but my son was afraid to do so. After he participated in several sports activities both off-campus and on-campus, then he signed the soccer club at school, I discovered that he was braver, willing to try new things and challenge himself the task he would never think about.

Many participants also identified that they became aware of the positive influence of sport on children's emotional stability. As Faye commented:

A boy at this age usually has a great amount of energy, he has to release these energies in an appropriate way, otherwise, he is not able to focus on his study or sleep well. He is full of energy, and if you cannot let him free these energies through sports, it will turn into a negative emotion, and he would be angry easily, have a big temper or cry.

Other participants also pointed out that they found sports were a good way to reduce the negative emotion that resulted from the pressure of school. Marry commented:

My son is under some study pressure for sure, and sports training can be a solution for him to relieve his pressure. By sweating more in his exercises, he can let those negative energies go and get rid of those pressure, such as the emotion from his study.

Almost all participants indicated that they believed sport may lead to a strong mind for their children. Nancy recalled,

In her study, I would assume it will help her develop some qualities, or namely sport spirits. She may encounter some setbacks or failures in her life, in occasion like this, I wish some encouragements and inspirations from her inner heart could get her through these tough moments, and pull herself together.”

Parents also cited that they discovered that sport participation was helpful in increasing children’s tolerance and openness. As Cindy said:

I think participating in sports could smooth children’s rough edges. My son used to be very sensitive and afraid of people getting closer to him. However, once he gets involved in team’s sports, he can't avoid contact with others, especially in a sport like a football which involves frequent collision. Now, he is more accepting of body contacts or minor body collisions with other kids. My son’s personality is too sensitive; thus, I wish sports could make him relax, less careful and ease his nerves.

Marry highlighted the positive relationship some parents found between openness and sport participation. She stated,

I hope my son will not be bothered by difficulties in his life, but be open to communicate, to express, instead of hiding it inside his heart or Ip it himself... I feel like sports could develop an optimistic, energetic personality in him and keep him open and transparent.

Social Domain. The parents also identified that they learned participating in sport was regarded as very beneficial for people’s social lives. Specifically, participants reported that they discovered sport could facilitate expanding social circles, developing social skills, and achieving social inclusion. Cindy stated:

I think one major value of sports is that you can find some playmates. Our next generation is so lonely, in comparison to them we still have cousins to play with, they are all by themselves. My son can only play with my friend's son when she occasionally comes back to Shenyang. There are few children at the same age as my son. Kids do not have playmates every day. By taking football class twice a week, at least he has two hours to play with other kids together.

Interestingly, Susan discovered that children's sport participation helped to expand parents' social circle. She said: "We grown-ups are offered communication opportunities through children's soccer classes, in that way, we can make more adult friends and broaden our own social range."

Jack indicated that upper-class families might use sports as tools to expand or consolidate their social class: "Those rich families may select a noble sport for their children at a very young age and use it to reach other people who are in the same social class or higher social class. This could help their lives in the future in many aspects including their business and economy." Cindy reported a similar idea, she said:

My husband firstly wanted to send my son to a basketball class, I did not have any opinion on this sport, but a mother of a kid who happened to play basketball told me that this basketball class only costed 6000 yuan for two years, then I hesitated. I asked my husband and my mother-in-law if we could find a personal training class for our son, my husband said it might be difficult to find a class like that. I believe no one would feel bad if they can spend less on their kids' sports education, but this basketball class only

costs 6000 yuan for two years, then I have to think about what group of the family will send kids to this type of basketball class.

The development of team spirit and social skills were recognized by participants as additional benefits that sport could bring to their children's lives. As Sherry explained,

Sports like basketball emphasizes teamwork which is a profound reason why I select it for my son to play. To play basketball he can develop the spirit of cooperation in a team. It does not only require you to have good basketball skills, at the same time you need to take care of your teammates and cooperate with them.”

Lastly, parents also asserted that they believed that sport participation is positively associated with social inclusion. Cindy stated,

I wish my boy is able to play all kinds of sports, such as skating or basketball. I am not hoping him to be professional in these activities, at least he can fit in a group. More importantly, when he is enrolled in a college in the future, with so many sports clubs in his school, he can join one.

Lily also commented on the social benefit that she learned sport can provide for her son. She stated, “I think mastering one sport is beneficial for my son to fit in his work environment or school environment. Kids who love sports are more likely to be liked by other peers.”

Educational Domain. Lastly, parents identified that they developed understandings of the perceived benefits of sport participation in the educational domain. Participants reported that they found sports offered children an advantage through access to better education opportunities. For example, Cindy claimed:

Many international schools in China and those foreign famous schools have special sports requirements for applicants, for example, ice hockey is a very popular activity in China because it adds bonus points for children when applying for foreign senior high schools. Moreover, if your football team wins some awards in national competitions or international competitions you have a better chance to be admitted by key senior high schools or some other famous senior high schools. When applying for this kind of school, the admission officer will not be very harsh on your academic grades if you have a sports specialty, especially for those American schools. This rule also applies to the equestrian. International schools in China have requirements for applicants' equestrian skills, to be specific, if you achieve a certain level and get the certification, the admission office will consider you first.

Parents also identified that they believed specializing in sports could create a shortcut for students to get into a domestic college. As Cici said:

From an educational perspective, particular sports specialty gives students extra points in the senior high school entrance examination. If my kid can participate in a national go competition on behalf of our city and win a title, it will give a big advantage to him when applying to university in the future, which I consider as the sport's influence on education.

Lastly, participants reflected that the SES of a family, and thus the parents' level of education, could affect understandings of the benefits of a sport. Marry commented on families' various understandings of the same sport from different social class:

I think the parents' understanding of a sport is linked to their education level. There is a clear stratification in this, and better-educated parents usually have a deeper understanding of a sport. For example, fencing as an unpopular sport in China is considered a very boring sport by some parents. They may think that fencing is a sport that only requires their kids to step back and forth while holding a sword. However, for those parents from the middle class or above, they can perceive deeper benefits in this sport. They can recognize that this sport improves children's concentration, confidence, reflexes, coordination and judgment. They understand that this sport is not just an outlet for children to release their energy, but a way to comprehensively build a child's personality and mental power.

4.3.3 Phase Three: Consideration of Sport Factors

The last phase of the sport selection process involves the consideration of sport factors. Thus, once the parents develop an understanding of the perceived benefits of sport, they then start to consider all the factors about a particular sport to evaluate if it fits their children's needs as well as the parent's expectations. The factors which are considered in this phase include, children's interest, children's talent and personality, the sport culture, popularity of the sport, cost of the sport, international degree of the sport, and the proximity of the sports institution.

Children's Interest. Surprisingly, almost all participants identified that their children's interest was their major consideration when selecting a sport for them to participate in. As Pan stated,

I never force him to do anything or choose any sport for him, instead, as long as he wishes to participate in one sport he has my full support. I remember that one day I took

him to try a football class, he expressed his interest in football right away, when we came back I immediately signed that program for him.

Sherry also commented on how she valued her children's interest:

All what I do is to provide conditions for my kids to practice all kinds of sport. For example, if my daughter likes jazz dance, not China dance, I sign up for a jazz class for her, if my son prefers Ping pong over basketball, I will sign a ping pong class for him.

All my decision is based on their interests.

Children's Talent and Personality. Participants identified that their children's physical talent and personality impacted their sport decisions for their children. Specifically, parents would examine their child's physical strength and weakness and then choose a sport that helped them to reach their greatest potential and ultimately avoid failures. For example, Nancy stated:

I have considered badminton for my girl to play, but I gave it up as I noticed that my girl did not have good physical coordination. If she plays in a badminton class, other children may laugh at her because of her physical weakness. Taekwondo is the sport both me and my husband wish her could play. The principal reason for this is because this sport is not very difficult, and she has some dancing experience, thereby I feel like her ligaments and her muscles are capable to make those moves. I think Taekwondo is not that difficult for her.

Personality is another factor that parents reported influenced their selection of sport activities for their children. The parents suggested that they would choose sports that would assist in addressing weaknesses in their children's personality. Cindy said: "Since my son is too active and impatient, then I think that horse is a gentle and emotion stable animal which could

have some positive influences on his personality. Due to this reason, I let my son play equestrian.”

Sport Culture. Participants also reflected that negative cultural aspects of a sport would turn them away from selecting that sport for their children. As Cindy recalled:

Some activities are out of my range of selection. For example, one day my colleague suggested my son to learn street dance to improve his sense of rhythm. This type of sport is not an option for me, not because I think the activity itself is bad, what I care about is its music. The music used in street dance usually contains some bad words, especially for a kid who goes to international kindergarten, he can understand those words and languages.

Athletes’ manners while participating in a sport also negatively imp’cted participants’ impressions of that sport and subsequent participation decisions for their children. As Cici identified,

I regard soccer as an inelegant sport. For example, when I was watching a soccer game, I saw those players speaking bad language or spitting on the court, which made me uncomfortable. As you know, many soccer players are rude and have very bad manners, and I do not want my kid to copy the characteristics of those soccer players. I really do not like this sport.

Sport’s Popularity. Additionally, participants reported that the popularity of a sport was an important factor that impacted their sport decisions for their children. Specifically, they identified that popular sports required less effort to participate in and find someone to play with. As Pan stated:

I did not sign up for a football class for my kid because I thought it was not a popular sport in China. Obviously, it is not a sport that you can play alone, or easily find other peers to play together. Meanwhile, there are so many restraints in football such as the field limitation, that is why I think it is so important to let him play a popularized sport. He could find a suitable field and a friend anytime anywhere if he plays a popular sport.

Cost of the Sport. The influence of financial concerns related to sport participation was also referred to by the participants. For example, Sherry said:

I certainly evaluate the cost for a sport, if it is very expensive and hard for us to afford, then I will give it up. For example, one day my husband asked me why not let our daughter play tennis since she already had Ping Pong skills, if she could play tennis well she would better fit into foreign environments one day she studies abroad. I told him it was not feasible for two reasons, first, the ping pong training institution was close to our home, she could go to ping pang class alone without our help, second, ping pong is much cheaper than tennis. He got me immediately. As my daughter has already had a bunch of after-school classes, adding one more tennis is too much financial burden for this family. We could wish for the good, but still, we also have to think about the cash we have.

Additionally, participants reported that families with more wealth tended to have more sport options to choose from for their kids. As Marry suggested,

For a family above middle class, it is possible for their kid to learn equestrian for a year for a trial. However, if you expect the kid to reach a certain level or sustain this hobby for three or four years, that is going to be a burden for this family. So basically, a

working-class family cannot afford a sport like this. This is only for those families with a great number of assets.

Lastly, participants reported that noble sports were only for elite class (i.e., wealthy) people. For example, Pan said: “Football and golf are upper-class families’ options. Basketball and soccer are lower-class families’ popular choices. Sport like golf draws a line between the upper-class and lower class, and in my subconscious, I feel like it is not my thing.”

International Degree of a Sport. The international degree of a sport was cited by participants as one of the influential factors in their sport selection process. Some participants identified their intention to send their children overseas, and how learning an international sport could offer the opportunity to continue this sport and provide their children with a tool to interact with others in a foreign country. Sherry suggested, “Some parents are sending their children to practice ice hockey and other kinds of expensive sports, and their purpose is to prepare their kids to study abroad.” Faye also commented on the reason why she chose tennis for her son:

My son will go to America for sure. My plan is that when he goes to America, I can be his partner and play tennis with him. I have also considered that he is not at the right age to play basketball, then the best option to integrate with the American environment is tennis...Another concern of mine is that it is difficult to find a badminton coach in America but to find a tennis coach is much easier. What I am looking for is continuity.

The Proximity of Sport Institutions. Lastly, the proximity of the sport institution was identified as a very important factor that influenced participants' decisions in selecting a sport for their children. Several reasons were explained by participants concerning why they valued

proximity, including better access to experience the sport, easier to continue with the chosen sport, and convenience to pick up and send children. Cindy commented,

The objective factor led me to football and equestrian is that the places where coaches teach these two sports are very close to my home...one of my friends told me that there was the equestrian class where kids could learn how to ride a horse...then I decided to take my son for a trial class and it turned out we liked it very much.

Sherry expressed the importance of proximity when she stated:

The first prerequisite for me to choose a sport is that it is near my home to try and makes it easy to stick to this sport. If the sport institution is very far from where I live, I am not going to try it in the first place. It would be unrealistic, no matter how good that sport is, it is still impossible for me to take him to a place that far twice a week.

Shawn indicated that the convenience to pick up and deliver her child was a key consideration for her:

I signed ping pong class both for my two kids, and the major reason for that was because the training institution was close to their school. The institution would pick up my kids at 4:30 PM from school, and when I am off my work I could pick them up at 6:00 PM.

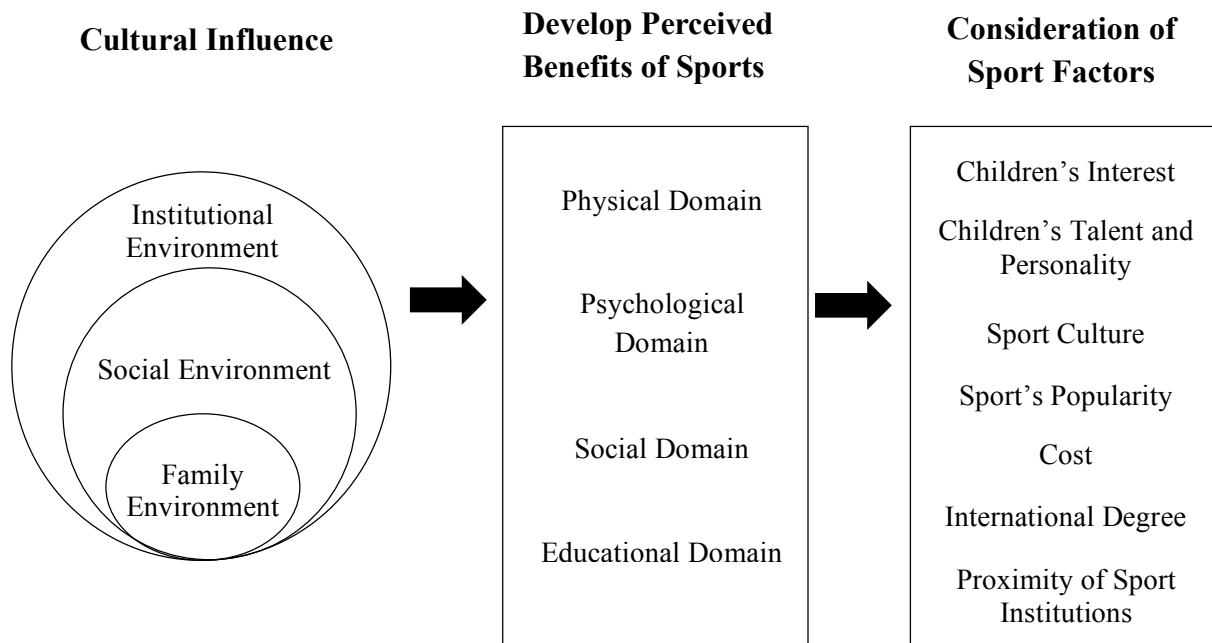


Figure 1. A theoretical model of the process that Chinese parents would experience when choosing sports activities for their children.

5.0 Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to develop an understanding of the cultural influences that affect Chinese parents' selection of sports activities for their children. In order to examine this process, fifteen Chinese parents who have children between the ages of six to twelve were interviewed. The findings suggest that Chinese parents progress through three phases in making decisions for their children's sports activities including, cultural influence on parent's perception of the sport, the development of understanding of the perceived benefits of sport participation, and the consideration of sport factors. Cultural consonance and social capital were discovered to play important roles in this process, not only by shaping Chinese parents' understanding and attitudes of sports activities but also by facilitating the identification of the ideal sports that meet their needs.

Chinese Culture

The findings identified that Chinese parents have experienced great cultural change related to sport participation. When they were still adolescents the prevailing culture held an evident negative attitude towards sport and regarded it as an inessential part of people's lives. Consequently, their parents did not invest any time or money into their sports activities. Moreover, the participants frequently suggested that elderly people regarded sport as a waste of energy and time and believed that it did not contribute to education. This cultural belief (i.e., that sport is inessential) supports findings from previous research which identified the conflicting relationship between leisure and education in traditional Chinese culture (Wang & Stringer,

2000). Additionally, it reflects Chinese people's belief in a strong work ethic and a low interest in leisure life that was discovered in the World Values Survey (2005).

The current mainstream culture, however, differs from the past culture significantly and places a high priority on sport participation which has influenced Chinese people's perception of sport. In the current study all parents expressed their endorsement of sport participation now for their children. The support provided by parents for their children's sport participation and their positive attitudes toward sport participation contradicts previous research which found that Chinese people prefer passive leisure activities and solitary activities, and are rarely involved in outdoor activities (Wang & Stringer, 2000). Based on the current findings it appears there has been a cultural shift and as a result the influences of traditional Chinese culture on Chinese parents' leisure style and preferences for their children have ultimately changed.

Phase One: Cultural influence

The first phase in Chinese parents' process of selecting sport activities for their children begins with a cultural influence on the perception of sport. The cultural influence that impacted their perception and knowledge about sport came from three levels of the environment, namely, organizational, social, and family. As acknowledged, parents were supportive of sport participation for their children and the impact of this cultural influence was found in these three levels of the environment.

With respect to the organizational environment, the institutions, including governments and schools, initiated the policies and implemented the measures that encouraged increased levels of sport participation among children. In doing so, these authorities set a level of acceptance and standards for society to act in compliance with. Compared to the previous organizational

environment and the policies and measures that were in place, it is evident that there has been a profound adjustment and change. As identified in the literature, Chinese institutions have been devoting most of their resources to elite sports (Tsai & Zhou, 2017). However, it appears that now they are distributing increased levels of support to mass and school sport participation. As a result of these changes in policy that were initiated by the state-controlled institutions, it has become evident that the culture and the value placed on sport has changed as well. Specifically, sport has transformed from a means to glorify China's pride and power, to a crucial method to realize individual citizen's health and happiness.

The social environment, on the other hand, triggered parents' interest in specific sport activities. Participants' city sports heritage offered them a sense of belonging to be attached to a particular sport. Other parents in their environment constantly communicated benefits of a specific sport which ultimately led to an inclination towards a particular sport(s) from parents. Additionally, media promoted sport to parents via different aspects (e.g., entertainment, sport events), in order to gradually increase their desire to learn more about sports. The parents relied heavily on their social environment in order to develop their interest in a sport given they did not receive any support or knowledge from their parents regarding sport when they were children. As a result, not many of the parents had a preference for a particular sport or any experience with a specific sport which resulted in them relying more heavily on their social environment for information. Researchers have identified the importance of parents' support (Holt, Kingsley, Tink, & Scherer, 2011) and role modelling (Beets et al., 2010) in promoting children's sport participation and preferences. Thus, this assists in explaining why parents personally had no

special preference for any sport(s) until they obtained information or knowledge from their social environment.

Last, the family environment also affected parents' perceived importance of sports. Parents identified that a family's SES and acceptance of Western culture were positively influenced the perceived level of importance they placed on their children's sports participation. This finding supports Bourdieu's (1984) assertion that upper classes tend to be more active in sports. Also, the literature has identified the positive relationship that exists between status and children's sport participation (Duncan et al., 2005). One possible explanation for the upper classes being more involved in sport is that higher SES families have more resources and time available for their children's sport participation (Beets et al., 2010). On the other hand, low-income families in the current study identified that they have fewer resources and time available for sport participation, which supports the findings from previous research (Blanksby, Anderson & Douglas, 1996). Moreover, similar to previous research (Cerin & Leslie, 2008), the findings identified that a family's educational background influences their depth of understanding of a sport.

The unique contribution of the current study is that it unveiled the prominent change that happened in Chinese sport culture and the resultant transformation in people's perception of sport that coincided with this change. Specifically, the current study identified a dynamic Chinese sport culture that exists within the country and culture today. This work builds on previous research and addresses the limitation that previous work has mainly examined the Chinese sport culture at a current point in time and has neglected to examine whether changes in the prevailing culture have occurred over time. Also, the current study identified that cultural consonance influences Chinese people's sport life by identifying that parents' perception of sport

participation tends to coincide with the prevailing culture under the cultural influence from institutional, social, and family environments.

Phase Two: Develop Understandings of Perceived Benefits

Following the cultural influence on the process of Chinese parents' sports activity selection, parents developed an understanding of the perceived benefits of sport participation. Specifically, participants' understandings of the perceived benefits of the sport were developed in the physical, psychological, social, and educational domains. In addition, families' understandings of the same sport varied based on their social classes.

The physical and mental benefits of sport and physical activity for children has been vastly identified in previous research (e.g., Janssen & Leblanc, 2010). Very predictably, in the current study, most Chinese parents could easily understand the positive physical and mental outcomes from sport participation for their children. However, the educational benefits that arise from being involved in sport (e.g., access to better education) have rarely been discussed in past research. In the current study, the parents placed considerable value on the positive educational opportunities that participating in sport could offer their children. This aligns with the traditional Chinese culture which places a high value on education (Walker et al., 2007). Thus, the study identifies that present Chinese parents are still influenced by traditional Chinese culture and are willing to utilize sports as a tool to send their children to a superior academic environment. Chinese parents' decisions to allow and facilitate sport participation for their children can also be seen as an example of how Chinese parents regard leisure expenditures as educational spending for their children (Veeck, Flurry & Jiang, 2003). As a result, the educational benefits of sport participation, perceived by parents, identify the influence of cultural consonance on their

selection of sports for their children. Subsequently, Chinese parents selected sports that would provide their children with enhanced educational opportunities that would not have been available to them otherwise.

With respect to the perceived social benefits, the parents identified that they can achieve social inclusion and class consolidation through sport. That is, the parents explained how upper-class families could reach other families from the same social class or exclude other families from different social classes based on similar tastes and preferences for sports. This finding supports previous research by Bourdieu (1978) which identified that people have the intention to group themselves into a certain class through sport. The results also provide strong support for “cultural distancing” (Carl, 2005) which asserts that participation in sport has been used to distinguish the dominant class from other classes. Moreover, similar to previous research (e.g., White & Wilson, 1999) the SES of a family was found to be positively related to the depth of their understanding of a sport, indicating that education is associated with sport participation and can be seen as cultural capital that is utilized to achieve class status distinctions. Thus, the similar preferences for sports and equal level of understanding of sports possessed by parents from the same social class are all sources of cultural capital which leads to parents’ consumption of particular types of sport in China. Given the findings discussed above, it is evident that the concept of cultural capital is useful in the examination of Eastern sport culture. The parents identified that differences in intangible elements influenced their sport consumption choices for their children which ultimately coincided with their particular social class.

Phase Three: Consideration of Sport Factors

The last phase of the sport selection process involves parents' consideration of sport factors. Thus, once the parents develop an understanding of the perceived benefits of sport, they then start to consider all the factors about a particular sport to evaluate if it fits their children's needs as well as the parent's expectations. The factors that were considered in this phase included children's interest, talent and personality, the sport culture, popularity of the sport, cost of the sport, international degree of the sport, and the proximity of the sport institution. Ultimately, the parents would consider many of these factors related to their potential choice of sport(s), then select the sport with the greatest benefits.

Interestingly, the parents prioritized their children's choices and personal developments over their own preferences and were willing to listen to their children's ideas related to sport participation. This type of children-centred thinking is new to the literature, as previous research has mainly highlighted the lack of autonomy in Chinese children's leisure life (Ying, 2003). One possible explanation for this shift is that the children who were exposed to a more Western lifestyle (Knight, 2006) and values fifteen years ago have now become parents, and as a result, they respect their children's right to greater freedom and individual feelings. Thus, the change in parental style also reflects the cultural change in China. China's culture used to be guided by Confucianism which emphasizes a collective work ethic (Stodolska & Lee, 2007), and self-sacrifice, however, the freedom and autonomy offered by parents to their children nowadays clearly contradicts the doctrines from Confucianism. Therefore, it is evident that there is currently a change happening in China's culture.

Additional factors that influenced sport participation decisions were related to families' cultural capital. For example, some participants with a high SES suggested that negative cultural

aspects (e.g., uncivilized lyrics in music, athletes' inappropriate manners) of a sport would make them remove it from their consideration list. The decision to remove sports from consideration supports previous research that identified that one reason that causes upper classes to reject a specific sport is that it departs from their value system (Bourdieu, 1984). The cost of a sport was reported as another key factor that impacted parents' decisions. The parents indicated that there was a clear stratification in sports based on cost, and ultimately, they would choose sports that fit within their social class. Some parents from the upper class explicitly expressed their intention to only choose a sport at a certain cost level as it would enable them to maintain their distance from lower-class people.

The international degree of a sport is another factor that was considered by high-income parents as they planned to send their children overseas and believed that some sports could help their children to better integrate with the foreign environment. As a result, these parents, without exception, all selected at least one popular Western sport for their child to participate in. Thus, it appears that parents may use sport as an asset to express their taste, wealth and lifestyle, and to draw boundaries between themselves and other social classes. All of these factors (e.g., sport culture, cost, international degree) fit with Carl's (2005) understanding of cultural capital in that they are used as economic capital by the dominant classes for them to be able to disconnect and exclude other classes from approaching their resources. In addition, the assimilation-based framework can also be an appropriate tool to assist in understanding high-income participants' preference for popular Western sports. According to the framework these parents were trying to adapt their cultural patterns to the host society in the first stages of assimilation even though they had not yet immigrated (Gordon, 1964). Thus, the parents were preparing their children for

future immigration opportunities and wanted to provide them with opportunities that would enable them to assimilate more easily.

The popularity of a sport and the proximity of sports institutions were also considered by parents when choosing sports for their children, as they usually represent the easy accessibility of a sport and the convenience for participants to support their children's sport participation.

Cultural Influence in the Sport Selection Process

The culture was found to be very influential throughout the three stage process of sport selection for Chinese parents. In the first phase, the cultural influence from three-levels of the environment was an important factor that shaped people's general perception and attitude of sport. The institutional environment developed policies and measures that either neglected or promoted children's sport participation, and accordingly parents generated their negative or positive attitudes towards sport participation. Living in a collective value orientated culture, Chinese parents tend to follow the prevailing culture led by state-owned institutions to achieve cultural consonance. They then decide if they are willing to invest in their children's sport participation. This assists in understanding why twenty years ago, when governments and other institutions gave little attention to children's sport participation, few parents believed that sport participation was important and rarely provided supports for their children's involvement. However, now most parents place great importance on their children's participation in sport and are willing to provide resources and support for their involvement. Guided by institutions' policies, the social environment constantly communicates information about different sports to Chinese parents, and as a result, triggers their interest in particular sports. However, how the

parents perceive different types of sport and their perceived importance of sport participation depends on their family environment (e.g., acceptance of western culture, SES).

In phase two, parents developed their understanding of the benefits of sport participation, however, their SES ultimately affected the level of benefits they could obtain from sport. Most commonly, the higher the level of education obtained by a parent, the deeper understanding of the benefits of sport participation they developed. In phase three, parents conducted an evaluation of all factors related to their potential sport options. In this evaluation process, the parents SES and cultural capital informed the qualities parents looked for and what they should value in different sports. Doing so enabled parents to select the sport that fit most with their needs and their social class.

Practical Implications

The findings from the current study may be used to inform sport institutions about the process involved and the factors that influence Chinese parents' purchase decisions of sports for their children. More pragmatically, the results could be used to help sport institution operators better develop their market strategy to accurately find their real customers at a lower cost but higher efficiency. In the meantime, sport institution operators could learn from this study to better understand their potential customers from a cultural perspective, and as a result influence the image they present to the public and reduce the possibility of offending their potential customers. For the policymakers, such as the Education Bureau and Sports Bureau, this study is especially valuable, as it verifies the effectiveness of their current work in increasing children's sport participation and parents' perceived importance of sport participation for their children. Furthermore, it also unveiled the unequal access to sport resources and barriers for low SES

families. Hopefully, based on these findings, the policymakers could begin to develop targeted policies to make sport more accessible for disadvantaged or lower SES families.

Limitations and Future Research

The current study is not free of limitations. First, a small sample was recruited from cities, without consideration of rural areas, which could have overlooked a very different sport culture in China. Additionally, by conducting this research based on a constructivist grounded theory approach a researcher's personal experience and the environment in which they grew up may unavoidably contribute to bias in data collection and data analysis. Thereby, the framework generated in this study remains open for further development. Lastly, given the fact that the interviews were conducted via phone call, the lack of face-to-face contact may have reduced the trust between the interviewer and interviewees. As a result, participants might not have shared all of the feelings and stories they have, leaving additional influences of culture on the sport selection process to still be identified. It is also possible that the framework is not completed or could be refined further based on this additional information.

While the current study has identified that a change has occurred in China's sports culture, how this change transpired is still unknown. Additional research is needed to examine the process of change and the causal factors that contributed to the change in China's sports culture. Additionally, future research should examine the process by which people changed their perceptions and attitudes towards sport participation. Moreover, since the current study identified that children are offered increasing levels of freedom and autonomy in the selection of sports, additional research is needed to investigate how Chinese children develop their perceptions of sport and their perceived cultural influence on sport participation from their environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical model generated from this study suggests that the Chinese sport culture has been changing in the last decade, and Chinese parents have been constantly adjusting their perceptions and attitudes along with the prevailing sport culture in the country. To choose a suitable sport activity for their children, Chinese parents experienced a process that involves three stages, including cultural influence, the development of understandings of perceived benefits, and lastly, the consideration of sport factors. Achieving cultural consonance was found to be influential in shaping Chinese parents' perceptions and attitudes of sport in general. Cultural capital and families' SES were also discovered to be impactful for Chinese parents' preference for particular sports.

The strength of the present study is that it discovered a dynamic sport culture in China. It is particularly valuable to study a fast-developing country's culture or phenomenon within it (i.e., their leisure life) where, unlike developed countries, the culture is still very flexible and has great potential for change. Additionally, this study also unveils the influence of cultural consonance that leads to the transformation in the perception of sport for Chinese parents and identifies the influence of cultural capital on Chinese parents' selection of sports for their children.

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Appendix

Appendix A Telephone Script

“Hello, may I please speak with {participant’s name}.”

- *If the potential participant is not home ask if there is a better time to call.*

“Hi, {participant’s name} this is Xiaochun Yang and I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Applied Health Science at the University of Waterloo.”

“I am calling today to ask if you are interested in a research study that I am conducting for my thesis. For my research, I am conducting interviews with Chinese parents regarding sport participation for their children. I am interested in examining cultural influences on parents’ choice of sport participation for their children. Would you be interested in hearing more about this study?”

- *If person says “No”, I will thank them for their time and say good-bye*
- *If person says “Yes”, I will tell them the research will study the factors that influence Chinese parents’ selection of sports items for their children, such as the degree to which they perceive their image fit prevailing model and cultural capital including their taste, attitude and knowledge towards sports items.*
- *At the end of the description, ask if they would consider participating. If “Yes” I will take the following steps:*
 - *asking screening questions to confirm eligibility*
 - *Do you have a child age between 6 to 12 years old?*
 - *Does your child participate in one or several sports regularly?*
 - *Do you raise your child in mainland China?*

- *If they fit the eligibility I will ask them for a date and time that is convenient for them to meet for the interview.*
- *I will ask them for an email address so that I can send a letter of information with all the necessary contact information and information pertaining to the study.*
- *I will also inform them that a consent form will be presented on the day of the interview and ask for their signature on it.*
- *After all of the necessary information has been provided, end the conversation with the following:*

“Thank you for speaking with me today. My phone number is 15110086018, and my email is xiaochun.yang@uwaterloo.ca. Please contact me if you have any more questions, or would like to have more information about the study.”

Appendix B Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research Question 1: How do perceptions of cultural consonance and perceived importance influence parents' choices of sport participation for their children?

Sub-question 1: What do you think of youth sport participation?

Lead Question 1A: What do you know about youth sport?

Potential Probes:

- A. What is the social environment for youth sport in China?
- B. How does your child participate in sport?
- C. How do you feel about being a parent who encourages his or her child to practice sports activity?

Sub-question 2: How do Chinese parents perceive their cultural identity?

Lead Question 1A: Tell me about how you think about your cultural identity.

Potential Probes:

- D. What are some cultural principles you believe?
- E. What is the cultural environment you grow up?
- F. What are some cultural characteristic do you think you have?
- G. What is an ideal middle age person like in Chinese society or Chinese culture?

Sub-question 3: How do Chinese parents perceive and experience sports in Chinese culture?

Lead Question 2A: Tell me about your perception of sports in China and your family.

Potential Probes:

- A. What is your first impression of sports in general?
- B. How do you think sports fit in traditional Chinese culture?
- C. What are some benefits or drawbacks of sports for your children?
- D. What role does sports play in your family life?

Lead Question 2B: Tell me more details specifically about your sports experience.

- A. What are some factors triggered your interest in sports?
- B. Tell me what are some sports education experience you had when you were young?
- C. How do you personally enjoy sports?
- D. How do Chinese culture influence your sports life and how you manage it?

Sub-question 4: What are some Chinese parents' motivations to encourage their children to play specific sports activity?

Lead Question 3A: Tell me about your sports expectation for your child.

- A. What motivated you to introduce sports to your child?
- B. How would you describe the meaning of sports for your child?
- C. What are some cultural benefits you expect your child to get from practicing sports?

Lead Question 3B: Tell me about other family members' attitude towards sports for your child.

Potential Probes:

- A. What are some encouragements or discouragements you get from your family members?
- B. Who are some key family members that could influence your decision about your child's leisure life?
- C. Why do you think they support or not support your child to play sports?
- D. How do you react to their attitude?

Lead Question 3C: Tell me about what affects your selection of sports for you Children.

- A. What sports you would like your child to play and why?
- B. What attracts you most about this sports activity?
- C. How do you think this very specific type of sports is a good fit for your kids?
- D. Tell me about how you first know about this sport and how you convince your child to play it.

Research Question 2: What role does cultural capital play in parents' sport activity selection for their children?

Sub-question 1: How do parents perceive their SES status?

Lead Question 1A: Tell me about your perception of you SES status.

Potential Probes:

- A. How do you think it affects your life and your family?
- B. How would you describe the importance of SES in China?
- C. How does your SES shape your perception about sports?

Sub-question 2: What is the relationship between SES status and sports selection for child?

Lead Question 2A: Tell me about how you think about some specific sports activity economically or educationally.

Potential Probes:

- A. How do you think your SES status affects your preference for sports?
- B. What are some experience you dislike about some certain sports due to economic reasons or educational reasons?
- C. How do you feel when you engage in some sports when you think it's not suitable for your SES status?

Sub-question 3: How do parents evaluate what sports children should play with the influence of their family's certain SES status?

Lead Question 3A: Tell me about the process how you chose sports activity for your child.

Potential Probes:

- A. Tell me about what are some sports activities you have considered for your child and why you chose them?
- B. Why you finalize this certain sport activity?

- C. What are some other resource you learn about this sport activity?
- D. Who helps you to get knowledge about this sport activity?
- E. How do you think it could contribute to your child's education or career development?

Lead Question 3B: Tell me about the how your child's sports activity makes impact on your family.

- A. How does the spending on your child's sports affect your financial situation?
- B. What are some changes happened to your family caused by your child's sports activity?
- C. What are some benefits you gained from your child's sports activity?