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Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users' Motivation for Following Sport Organizations on Twitter and Weibo

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Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users' Motivation for Following Sport
Organizations on Twitter and Weibo

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Recreation and Sport Management

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore how culture shapes social media users' usage as they follow sport organizations on two similar microblogging services - Twitter and Weibo. In particular, the study attempted to measure whether social media users exhibited different usage pattern, points of attachment, and usage motivations within two different cultural environments known as individualism and collectivism.

The Los Angeles Lakers' social media followers were selected and invited to participant in this study. There were 839 the Lakers' Weibo followers and 334 Twitter followers who completed an online survey facilitated on Qualtrics. The results of Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) indicated that the Lakers' Twitter and Weibo followers displayed significant differences in points of attachment where Weibo followers had higher affiliations with the sport, the player, and the NBA than Twitter followers. However, Twitter users had a higher association with the team compared to Weibo engagers.

Different motives were revealed explaining why users follow the Lakers on Twitter and on Weibo. The results of MANOVA tests revealed that Weibo users were more motivated than Twitter users in multiple categories: obtaining information, entertainment, technical knowledge, expressing support to athletes, interactivity, escaping from the current life, and fulfilling curiosity. However, Twitter followers were more motivated when it came to convenience and team support than Weibo followers. There was not a significant difference in pass-time motivation between two groups.

The relationships between social media users' motivation and their interactivity have also been examined in this research. The results of stepwise regression analysis revealed that information and team support were two significant motives to predict Weibo users' activeness.

Twitter users, however, could be more active if their demands in entertainment, team support, and technical knowledge were satisfied.

In this study, the relationships between social media users' points of attachment and their motivation were also measured. The results of stepwise multiple regressions indicated that both Twitter and Weibo followers' motive of team support was positively related to their team identification, but was negatively associated with their player identification and attachment to the NBA.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation could not be completed without these individuals:

Frist and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Steve Dittmore, the chair of my doctoral committee, for his mentorship throughout the entire journey. As my adviser, Dr. Dittmore has been working closely with me starting from the beginning of my doctoral journey. He has been a great mentor, guide, and friend to me. Without his guidance, input, assistance, and contribution, the project will not be accomplished.

Special thanks also go to Dr. Wen-juo Lo for his presence on my committee. His statistic knowledge, efforts, and ideas assisted me to shape this dissertation, and I am very fortunate that this project has benefited from his enrich knowledge and experiences in cross-cultural research.

In the meantime, I also thank Dr. Sarah Stokowski and Dr. Kasey Walker for serving on my committee. Dr. Stokowski has been very supportive throughout the entire process, and this will not be happened without her encouragement.

I will not be where I am at today without support from my family members. I wish to express my expression to my wife, Mi Yu. I could never have completed this dissertation without her love, unconditional support, and understanding. My mom (Fang Xu) and father (Yuzeng Li) also were a big part of this accomplishment. I would be nowhere without the sacrifices my parents made.

Last but not the least, I would also like to thank my great friends Tomas Ernst, Jeremy Hawke, Nikolai Goodyear, and Greg Stine for their kindness and supports during the entire journey.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, my parents, and to all my family.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Space-time barriers between spectators and sports have been removed with the introduction of mediated technologies (Bowman & Cranmer, 2014). Modern new media technology, especially social media, has not only transformed spectators from passive messages receivers to active content contributors (Bowman & Cranmer, 2014; Wenner, 1998), but also has altered how individuals receive content regarding their favorite athletes, teams and leagues (McNary & Hardin, 2013). Additionally, obsolete relationships among sports fans, athletes and sport organizations have been replaced by contemporary communication fostered by social media, where sports fans can actively interact with their favorite athletes, sports organizations, media and each other (Sanderson, 2011).

Due to the unique social nature of social media and its fast-growing trend in recent years, sports academics and practitioners have examined the motivation of sports fans consuming social media (Clavio & Kian, 2010; Clavio & Walsh, 2013; Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Nicholson, 2003; Witkemper, Lim, & Waldburger, 2012), constraints of evolving with social media (Witkemper et al., 2012), and their preferences (Kwak, Kim, & Zimmerman, 2010). However, few studies have explored how market and cultural differences impact users' motivations of following sport organizations on social media and their patterns of utilizing social media.

The global expansion of social networking sites (SNS) seems to reflect that individuals around the world share a common desire of connecting to others, which could exceed the restriction of geographic, social, cultural and ideological differences (Levitt, 1983; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011; Park & Jun, 2003), but a fact that should not be ignored is that computer mediated communication appears in a social environment where personal behaviors are shaped by

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individual's values and norms (de Mooij, 2008; Halavais, 2000; Kim et al. 2011; Recabarren, Nussbaum, & Leiva, 2008). Therefore, social media users from different platforms and cultural backgrounds may have different perceptions, motivations, and patterns of utilizing the service. For instance, although Weibo, a Chinese microblogging service, features similar functions as Twitter, Gao, Abel, Houben, and Yu (2012) revealed that Chinese Weibo users exhibited different behaviors from Twitter users in the West. Compared to Twitter users, Weibo engagers are not accustomed to using a hashtag to ensure their messages were receiving more attention and raising possible discussion in the future (Gao et al., 2012). Moreover, social media users from different nations may utilize the same social media tool differently. Twitter, for example, has been used by Australian sports journalists to monitor and research news sources (Sherwood & Nicholson, 2012), while American sports journalists primarily use it for expressing their opinions, breaking news, and interacting with followers (Sheffer & Schultz, 2010).

Considering the fact that social media users from different cultures may be driven by different motives and patterns of using social media, since their behaviors are shaped by their cultural identity, it is worthwhile to explore the role of culture in computer-mediated communication. In sports communication, in particular, scholars should consider to investigate whether sports social media users from different cultures may display different patterns in their social media usage. By examining the similarities and differences among social media users from different cultural backgrounds, it could not only demonstrate the diversity of global social media landscape and the uniqueness of different marketplaces, but also assist sport organizations and sport marketers to better understand various demands of sports social media consumers in different markets.

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Globalization of Professional Sports

The world of sports has been globalized, along with the trend of globalization across economy, people, and popular culture on the planet. Due to the advance of broadcast technologies, sports become a global enterprise that allows the individual sporting event to be televised across different countries. The 2014 Super Bowl between the Seattle Seahawks and the Denver Broncos, for instance, attracted 160 million viewers around the world (Both, 2015). The trend of globalization also provides professional sports with the opportunity to attract all the best athletes competing against each other in the same event and league on a daily basis (Lane, 2004), and enables professional sports leagues to overcome the geographic restriction, embracing international markets. The National Basketball Association (NBA), for example, now is filled with foreign players, and its 2015 Global Games have been played in many markets outsides the U.S, including Mexico, England, Germany, Turkey, Brazil and China. Numerous international basketball fans are following their favorite teams and players' performance on a daily basis, through different media channels.

One example is the Houston Rocket adding 30 million fans overnight following their 2002 selection of Yao Ming, the seven-foot six-inch, twenty-two-year-old Chinese basketball star. The largest number of the new fans even overtook the merely one million viewers in the US market (Pardini, 2008). As of 2014, the NBA is one of the most popular brands in China, and attracts a combined 70 million followers on its Sina Weibo and Tencent's microblog service, becoming the only American professional sports league that has millions of followers throughout Asia (Sin, 2014). With sport organizations, such as the NBA, having bigger international sports fan bases, understanding the unique features of sports fans in different markets, especially how

they engage with social media markets, is a necessity because it can assist sport organizations to better serve sports fans in different markets with this knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

As the second largest economic power in the world, China has a distinguished sports and social media market, creating a challenge for sports organizations, especially international-focused sport organizations. With 250 million Chinese sports fans that are actively following sports teams and athletes online nowadays (Campaign Asia, 2015), one of the biggest obstacles that international sport organizations need to overcome is how to effectively engage with Chinese sports customers through its own social media platforms. Due to the fact that the majority of international mainstream social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, are inaccessible in China because of the concern of national security, localized social media platforms, especially Weibo and WeChat, are primarily being used by Chinese customers (Li, Stokowski, Dittmore, & Scott, 2015). In order to engage with this huge potential market, sport organizations and athletes have begun to embrace new Chinese media platforms, especially Weibo, to communicate and interact with consumers in China. Based on the data provided by the Mailman Group (Favorito, 2015), more than 1,200 official sports organizations are embracing Weibo. The NBA has been considered as one of the most successful Weibo engagers among all sport organizations, owning the two most engaged hashtags of the year, with a combined 9.1 billion reads in 2015.

Even if Weibo, referred to as "Chinese Twitter" (Staufenberg, 2015), has similar features as Twitter (Chen, Zhang, Lin, & Lv, 2011), their users' motives and behaviors could differ since their involvement with social media may be shaped by their cultures, languages, customs, values, and even ideologies. Therefore, there is a need for a study to assist sport organizations to

understand how sports fans utilize Twitter and Weibo – two alike microblogging services dominating in different markets – differ from each other. Through acknowledging similarities and differences between Twitter and Weibo users' motivations, behaviors, and uniqueness of consuming SNS, sport organizations can obtain more potential advantages in their future competitions in different markets, especially in China and in America.

Guided by uses and gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973), which was developed to explain how the media have been used by individuals to gratify their needs, the purpose of this research was to observe how Twitter and Weibo users' motivations are different from each other when following sport organizations. In addition, this study also aimed to explore the relationships between users' points of attachment and their motives of following sport organization on two platforms.

Based on the data provided by Forbes (Lipman, 2014), the top eight countries with the most Twitter users are all American and European countries where individual culture dominated - the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Netherlands, and France. However, the majority of Weibo users are from mainland China, where collective cultures dominated. Therefore, this study examines whether these cultural differences will impact sports social media users' motivations and behaviors.

The results of the study will provide a better understanding for international sports organizations, professional sports leagues/teams, and high profile athletes in regards to the uniqueness of Chinese sports consumers and their social media behaviors, especially how they differ from Twitter users. The knowledge gathered from the study will also assist sport organizations to develop more flexible and localized marketing and communication strategies to fulfil sports consumers' needs in China.

Significance of the Study

As Filo, Lock and Karg (2015) suggested, social media research in sports should surpass geographic restriction to understand the diversity of social media users, since the majority of current studies derive from North American perspectives. There is also an increasing need for more research conducted in the Asia and Pacific region (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Filo et al., 2015). Therefore, investigating how Chinese sports fans' motives of adopting social media is significant since an array of international sports organizations (e.g. the International Olympic Committees, the PGA Tour), American and European professional sports leagues (e.g. the NBA, and the England Premier League, or the EPL) and high profile athletes (e.g. David Beckham, and Kobe Bryant) are involving with Chinese SNS platforms to connect with sports consumers in the second largest economy in the world (Yu, Asur, & Huberman, 2011). The results of the study can provide insightful information to international sport organizations for developing more flexible and localized marketing and communication strategies to fulfil sports consumers' needs in China.

This study is one of the first known studies to identify cultural impacts in users' social media motives and behaviors in a sport and social media context. Sport organizations and athletes could better understand the similarities and differences between users on Twitter and Weibo in terms of their motivations and behaviors. Additionally, this study also sought to determine which motives could predict users' using patterns, perceptions toward social media, and the relationship between points of attachment and users' social media motivations. This study contributes to previous literature by providing an in-depth understanding on why and how sports fans from different platforms and cultures follow sport organizations social media accounts.

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

There were various assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, which the researcher needed to take into consideration in order to conduct this research successfully.

Assumptions: It was assumed that the participants of this study filled out the survey honestly and presented their true personal information including their gender, age, educational level and income level.

It was assumed the participants of this study are actively following sport organizations on either Twitter or Weibo accounts.

Limitations: This study also has some limitations which need to be noted. First, this study only measured how social media users utilize Weibo and Twitter respectively, thus the results are not representative of the perceptions of consumers using other SNS, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WeChat, since different SNS contain unique features to gratify users' various needs. Second, it was assumed that the different features of both Twitter and Weibo will not have any impacts on users' motivation of following sport organizations. Finally, it was assumed that all individuals who completed the survey questionnaires were actual following sports organizations on their microblogging accounts.

Delimitations: This study examined social media followers of one particular sport team. Generalizations of this study's results to followers of other sports teams should be made with caution.

Definitions of Key Terms

Follow

It is a term to describe that users subscribe other users' messages on either Twitter or Weibo.

Interactivity

"A perceived degree that a person in a communication process with at least one more intelligent being can bring a reciprocal effect to other participants of the communication process by turn-taking, feedback, and choice behaviors" (Lee, Park, & Jin, 2006, p. 263)

Microblogging

Microblogging is a derivative of blogging. It is a platform through which internet users are able to transfer news, expressing opinions and ideas in an online setting.

Social media

Filo et al. (2015, p. 167) defined social media as "new media technologies facilitating interactivity and co-creation that allow for the development and sharing of user-generated content among and between organizations (e.g. teams, governing bodies, agencies and media groups) and individuals (e.g. consumers, athletes and journalists)."

Team identification

The idea of team identification reflects an individual's personal commitment, emotional attachment to a sport organization, which incorporate psychological and behavioral aspects.

Tweet

A short message posted on Twitter or on Weibo.

Twitter

It is a microblogging outlet (Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007) that provides a service for users to share thoughts, news, information, photos and video in 140 or fewer characters of text.

Weibo

It is a Chinese microblogging website where users are able to "create, distribute and discover Chinese-language content" in a feed of up to 140 Chinese characters (Weibo.com, n.d.).

Summary

This study expands previous studies with regard to social media and sports communication. By identifying different motives, patterns and perceptions between Twitter and Weibo users in their social media use, it attempts to provide a clearer picture of sports social media markets in two different markets. This study aims to provide insights for future user-focused research in sports and social media.

Organization of the Dissertation

The layout of the dissertation contains the following chapters. The next chapter reviews literature which has examined social media, the concepts of Twitter and Weibo, users' motivation of using social media, the cultural framework of individualism and collectivism, as well as team identification. Chapter 3 explains the rationale of the research methodology that was used in this study. The methodology chapter contains research questions, the participations, the measurement of the online survey, data collection process and data analysis involved. Chapter 4 presents information and results of the collected data to address developed research questions. The last chapter of this dissertation contains a discussion of the findings of this study, which can enrich understanding about the motivation of Twitter and Weibo users, and their social media usage.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Organization of the Chapter

The literature review is organized by five sections. The first section defines social media, and compares the similarities and differences in two microblogging services, Twitter and Weibo in terms of functionalities and users' behaviors. The second section briefly introduces the theoretical framework used in this study – uses and gratifications theory, and how it has been applied in the internet studies and sport communication research. The third section reviews motives behind online sport consumption, and identifies motivational dimensions of following sport organizations on social networking sites (SNSs) in this study. The fourth section reviews the literature of team identification and points of attachment and how it has impacted sports fans' behaviors in media consumption. Lastly, the fifth section reviews literature that focused on the impacts of cultural difference towards social media users' motivations, behaviors, preferences, and perceptions.

Social Media

Researchers and practitioners have always confused what the term of social media should contain and how it differs from Web 2.0 and the User Generated Content (UGC) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The era of social media actually started in 1997 as Bruce and Susan Abelson created the "Open Diary", a social networking site that forms a community that can gather online diaries (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). With the aid of the high speed internet access, and a widespread acceptance of the concept, social media sites such as MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004), and Twitter (2006) were created (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media platforms have always been referred to as Web 2.0 technology. Web 1.0, where one-way communication is facilitated, provides limited opportunities for the interaction between individuals. However, Web 2.0 (i.e. social media) allows all users to engage in different levels of interactions (Frederick, 2012). With reference to the relationships between Web 2.0 and social media, the former provides a platform for the evaluation of the latter (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The UGC is the term to describe the internet content created by individuals, which could be shared with others, and everyone has equal opportunities to access to such contents (Clavio, 2011). Based on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007), the UGC requires three basic conditions: First, it needs to be published on either assessable websites or on a page of a social networking site (SNS); Second, it needs to demonstrate a certain amount of creative contents; Lastly, it should be created outside professional routines and practices (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

The features of Web 2.0 and UGC defined social media are as follows:

"*Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content*". (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p.61)

By using social presence theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) and self-presentation theory (Goffman, 1959), Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) noted that there were seven sources of social media: collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia), blogs, forums, content communities (e.g. YouTube), social-networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and Weibo), virtual game world (e.g. Second Life), and virtual social world (e.g. World of Warcraft). Among all these categories, SNS has been considered as the most popular social media among younger internet users.

SNS is the application that allows users to connect with each other by creating personal profiles, allowing their friends and family members to access contents, sending direct messages and creating conversations, and sharing their thoughts, videos and pictures (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). As one type of SNSs, microblogging is defined as "a form of blogging that let you write brief text updates (usually less than 200 characters) about your life on the go and send them to friends, and interested observers via text messaging, instant messaging (IM), email or the web" (Java et al., 2007, p.57). Twitter and Weibo are currently two dominated microblogging services in the world.

Twitter

Twitter, founded in 2006, describes itself as "a service for friends, family, and coworkers, to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to the simple question: What are you doing?" (Twitter, 2007, para.1)

According to the mission statement, Twitter is "to give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers" (Twitter, n.d.). As of June 30, 2015, Twitter boasts over 316 million active users every month around the world, and its users post more than 500 million tweets per day (Twitter, n.d.). Twitter has also been considered as an international mainstream social media platform because nearly 77% of accounts are created outside the U.S., and it also provides services in more than 35 languages (Twitter, n.d.). In addition, over 75% of active users utilize Twitter through mobile devices (Twitter, n.d.).

As a microblogging outlet (Java et al., 2007), Twitter facilitates social communication that is similar to cell-phone text messaging (Angwin, 2009). It features the similar function to blogging that allows users to post information on an internet platform. However, Twitter users are required to post a message (or a tweet) within 140 characters, and the tweet directly appears

on people's pages (Angwin, 2009). Those people are known as "followers". Due to the fact that Twitter only allows users to send a short portion of content, this platform facilitates quick dissemination of information, innovate ideas, and personal opinions (Clavio & Kian, 2010). Through end-users' innovation, Twitter can be used to influence opinions, information, search, and advertising (Gibbs, O'Reilly, & Brunette, 2014; Johnson & Yang, 2009).

Internet users are able to register a Twitter account for free. As Twitter users complete registration process, they are able to "follow" other users. Once a new Twitter user follows another account, the new user will received instant updates of any information posted by the user they are following. Users can follow any individual they wish to receive updates from; friends, family, coworkers or even the President of the United States; Barack Obama. However, Twitter has a restriction of how many accounts an individual can follow. Every individual account is unable to follow more than 1,000 users per day. When an account has followed 2,000 users, the individual has to wait until he/she has more followers, and then continues to follow more accounts (Twitter, n.d.).

Twitter users can have a direct conversation with a special user by using "@" symbol in front of that individual's user name(e.g. @BarackObama), and this message will be viewed by the generate public. Twitter also allows users to communicate with each other privately through Direct Messages (DM). As two Twitter accounts mutually follow one another, one user can send a private message to the other that will not appear publicly, but rather in an "inbox" similar to an email or text message. The length of the direct message was initially limited to 140 characters, but Twitter raised the limit from 140 to 10,000 characters in August, 2015 (Collins, 2015). In addition, Twitter users can also choose to "retweet" posts made by other users that can then be read by their own followers. A retweet is an effective way to increase the exposure of a message

on Twitter. @reply, DM, and retweet are considered the main features of Twitter (Frederick, 2012).

Clavio and Kian (2010) stressed that "Twitter has made considerable inroads in the sports communication landscape since its introduction in 2006" (p.485). It has been proved to be an effective tool in increasing the intimacy between sports fans and athletes, fostering the communications among sports fans, athletes, and sport organizations, increasing ticket and merchandise sales, as well as driving the TV program viewership (Fisher, 2011).

Both athletes and sports organizations are embracing Twitter for different purposes. Elite athletes, especially professional athletes, utilize social media for personal branding, and to provide behind-the-scene insight of their sport and daily lives (Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, & Greenwell, 2010). For instance, tennis star Serena Williams attempted to inform her followers to go to watch her interview on The Jimmy Kimmel Show. She tweeted, "I will be on the Jimmy Kimmel Show on the 16th… If you want tickets read my latest blog" (Hambrick et al., 2010, p. 462).

Sport organizations, including professional sports franchises, national sports governing bodies, intercollegiate athletics, and professional sports leagues, also consider Twitter as an effective communication and marketing tool to connect with their supporters. Interacting with fans on social media platforms could enhance fan's loyalty with the team. Broughton (2010) revealed that 61% of the Major League Baseball (MLB) fans and 55% of the National Football League (NFL) fans considered themselves as bigger fans of that league after following these leagues and teams on social media platforms.

Weibo

Weibo was created in August of 2009 by Sina, the leading Chinese internet company that founded the largest news and entertainment postal. The term of Weibo is an abbreviation of *Weixingboke*, a Chinese term of microblog (Canaves, 2011). The service has experienced a dramatic growth, with more than 281 million users using this service in 2013 (CNNIC, 2014).

Weibo has always been compared to Twitter. As a microblogging service, Weibo enables users to share their thoughts in a message or a tweet within 140 Chinese characters that can be shared on users' page (Zhang & Pentina, 2012). Weibo has many similar functions to Twitter. For instance, every user's Weibo page can be viewed by anyone; and mutual followers could communicate with each other through private messages (Zhang & Pentina, 2012). In addition, Weibo users are also able to search information and trending topics, and these functions are also provided by Twitter (Zhang & Pentina, 2012).

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Compared to Twitter, Weibo contains some new features, such as message threading, and directly commenting on other uses' posts (Sullivan, 2014). Even though both Weibo and Twitter have a 140-character limit in the length of messages, a Weibo message in Chinese contains more information than a tweet in English since each Chinese character simply represents a word with

one or more multiple meanings, while a character in English is essentially a letter without a meaning on its own (Zhang, 2011; Zhang & Pentina, 2012). Therefore, compared to Twitter users, Weibo engagers are able to post a "nuanced" message that could contain more information about their thoughts (Sullivan, 2014).

In addition to the functions similar to Twitter, Weibo also allows users to upload music, videos, and pictures into other user feeds. Over 1600 applications are also available to Weibo users which allows them to play online games, listen to music, and share files (Zhang & Pentina, 2012). When Twitter users view a tweet, they are able to retweet, response to the author, and mark a tweet as a favorite. On Weibo, users also enable to comment on other users' posts. This specific function is broadly used among Chinese internet users because they enjoy chatting in a group. It could also enhance users' stickiness and contributes to the traffic of the site (Zhang, 2011).

Gibb (2015) also exposed some unique elements that aligned with Weibo on his social media blog. He noted that Weibo users need to use double hashtags to active the hyperlink to make the topics discoverable, but Twitter users only need to use one hashtag if an individual wants to develop a topic.

In recent years, China has undergone a rapid growth within its sports market. As a result international sport organizations and international high profile athletes have started to work with Chinese media partners to connect with their fast growing fan bases in China. For instance, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), an early Weibo user, arranged an online Questions & Answer interaction between the former president Jacques Rogge and Chinese fans on the IOC's official Weibo account in 2011. The online interaction was tremendously successful, with over one million users watching the online video within 24 hours. Within the same amount of the

time, the IOC's Weibo account gain 40,000 followers (Nicholson, Kerr, & Sherwood, 2015).

Some professional sports leagues, such as the NBA, the National Football League (NFL), the

Major League Baseball (MLB), and the England Premier League (EPL), are also embracing this

ever-growing Chinese social networking site. As of August, 2013, the NBA had 31.15 million

Weibo users following its official account (Weibo, n.d.).

Even though both Twitter and Weibo provide platforms where users could share their

thoughts, video, and pictures in a short message, scholars (e.g. Gao et al., 2012) acknowledged

some differences in users' behaviors between Weibo and Twitter users. Twitter users, for

instance, were found to use hashtags and URLs more frequently than Weibo users, and they were

also more likely to disclose their organizations, political parties, institutions, and their locations,

compared to Weibo users (Gao et al., 2012). With regard to users' temporal behaviors, Gao and

his colleagues revealed that Chinese Weibo users adapted new topics faster than Twitter users

since the former were more quickly to change their interests in a comparison with the latter.

Due to the existing differences between Weibo and Twitter users, understanding the

different motivations of each group may benefit sport organizations to engage with local sports

fans in China and in other markets. Therefore, there is a necessary to apply uses and

gratifications theory to explain the differences.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications (U&G) theory is the most commonly used theory in sport

communication to explain how media consumers' social and psychological needs are satisfied by

actively choosing media channels and information. This theoretical framework assumes that

audiences are active and goal-orientated media users (Ruggiero, 2000).

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An Overview

Uses and gratifications appeared in 1940 as researchers attempted to understand media audiences' behaviors of consuming a variety of types of media, such as listening to radio programs and reading newspapers (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). The early studies in uses and gratifications can be dated back to Lasswell's (1948) model in which he classified how an individual selects and uses a media, and what effects it may have. Lasswell identified three main functions of the mass media: surveillance of the environment, correlation of events, and transmission of social heritage. These were also considered as the basic needs and expectations in the uses and gratifications model. Subsequently, Wright (1960) included entertainment as another function in the mass media, which was used to measure audiences' motivations by the U&G researchers. However, early research mainly classified audiences into various categories (Ruggiero, 2010). By conducting a series of qualitative research, even though researchers grouped gratifications into different labeled categories, they failed to explore the relationship between "the gratification detected" and "the psychosocial or sociological origins of the needs satisfied" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, p.19).

Until the 1970s, communication scholars started to examine audiences' motivations, and how audiences use media to satisfy their psychological and societal needs. Katz et al. (1973) reviewed and organized previous U & G studies, and found that prior researchers had focused on six areas:

"(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposures (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratification and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (p.510)

Rosengren (1974) developed a model to refine uses and gratifications theoretically. The model suggested that the basic needs were interacted with both personal characteristics (psychological setup, social position, and life history) and a social environment to produce perceived problems and perceived solutions. These problems and solutions consisted of motives of how users were gratified from media consumption and other activities.

Based on theoretical and conceptual adjustments, Rubin (1994) noted that U & G was founded upon the following five assumptions: (1) "communicational behavior, including media selection and use, is goal-orientated, purposive and motivated; (2) "people take the initiative in selecting and using media vehicles to satisfy felt needs or desires"; (3) "a host of social and psychological factors mediate people's communication behaviors"; (4) "the media compete with other forms of communication (i.e. functional alternative) for selection, attention, and use to gratify our needs or wants"; and (5) "people are typically more influential than the media in the relationship, but not always" (p.420).

Katz et al. (1974) suggested two essential components of the uses and gratifications perspectives. First, from a methodological perspective, individuals are able to articulate its motivation, which means that self-reports can be used to measure the media use. Second, researchers should understand an individual's motives and gratifications first, and then provide valuable judgements regarding the cultural significance of the media.

Typologies of Media Use

In the early 1970s, uses and gratifications researchers started developing the typologies of media use by exploring the connection between media use, social roles (social conditions) and psychological dispositions.

McQuail, Blumler, and Brown (1972) developed a typology which classified television audiences' demands into four categories: (1) diversion (escaping from the current daily routine or daily problems); (2) personal relationship (substituting the media for companionship); (3) personal identity or individual psychology (in quest of media to enhance personal values); and (4) surveillance (seeking information to help an individual to accomplish a task).

Katz, Haas, and Gurevitch (1973) proposed a scheme that contained a large variety of special functions to understand individual media consumers' gratifications. Their main argument was that individuals used mass communication to "connect (or disconnect with) themselves- via instrumental, affective, or integrative relations- with different kinds of others (self, family, friends, nation, etc.) (p.509)". Fourteen identified needs in this study were falling into five categories: (a) cognitive (acquiring information or knowledge); (b) affective (i.e. emotions, pleasure, or feelings); (c) personal integrative (enhancing credibility or status); (d) social integrative (interacting with family or friends), (e) tension release (escape and diversion).

Rubin (1983) examined television viewers' motivations, and how it had produced certain viewing patterns via consuming mass media. The analysis of a secondary data showed that TV audiences' viewing motivations were classified into nine categories: relaxation, companionship, habit, pass time, entertainment, social interaction, information, arousal, and escape. After testing two categories of viewing patterns; television viewing behaviors (viewing levels and program preferences) and television attitudes (affinity and realism), the findings revealed two types of television connected consumers: users for time consumption and entertainment, and users of television content for nonescapist and information seeking.

U & G Theory and the Internet

With new technology presents audiences with more options, audiences' motivations and gratifications are given more attention in communication studies. The U&G theory has also been broadly applied to interpret audiences' new media consumption. Compared to traditional media, the new telecommunication technology displays at least three unique attributes: interactivity, demassification, and asynchroneity (Ruggiero, 2000). Since this research focuses on Twitter and Weibo, this portion of the literature review concentrates on research with regard to uses and gratifications and the Internet.

Williams, Rice, and Rogers (1988) defined interactivity as "the degree to which participants in the communication process have control over, and can exchange roles in their mutual discourse" (p.10). The Internet is interactive, allowing users to communicate with one another from different places around the world.

Demassification was defined as the medium was controlled by the individual (William et al., 1988). With the internet, users are able to choose media and information in which they are interested to satisfy their needs.

Asynchroneity refers to the concept that users can utilize the Internet to post messages in any time, and they are also able to engage in a conversation with other users at their convenience (Chamberlain, 1994; William et al., 1988). With the internet, an individual can store, duplicate and print graphics and texts and they even can transfer these messages to another Web page (Ruggiero, 2000). The individual is also given the opportunity to control and manipulate the medium (Ruggiero, 2000).

Compared with traditional media, the Internet requires a higher level of interactivity from its users. Based on its unique features, scholars utilize the U&G theory to examine psychological

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and behavioral aspects of Internet users, and then identify their motivations of embracing new technology.

Korgaonkar and Wolin (1999), for instance, applied U & G theory to explore what motivates and constrains Internet users may have while utilizing Webpages. Researchers conducted a series of six focus groups with undergraduate and graduate students in one American university. They developed a 41-item survey instrument that captures eight dimensions: companionship, entertainment, interactivity, learning about things, privacy concern, security concerns, shopping, and to pass time. After analyzing the data collected from 420 participants the results of a multivariate factor analysis suggested that seven factors could explain Web users' motivations and concerns. These seven factors included social escapism motivation, transaction-based security and privacy concerns, information motivation, interactive control motivation, socialization motivation, nontransactional privacy concerns, and economic motivation.

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) also employed the U & G framework to assess how the Internet users' behaviors and attitudes could be influenced by their social and psychologic antecedents, perception of media attributes, and internet motives. After surveying 279 college students, the results of a principal-components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation revealed that users were motivated to use the Internet by the following five factors: interpersonal utility, pass time, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment. The study also disclosed that convenience motivation was the only significant factor that could predict the duration and length of the Internet users, while the amount of Internet exposure could only be explained by interpersonal utility motivation. Additionally, researchers also noted that information seeking and entertainment motivation could predict email use, while convenience motivation could

predict newsgroup use. The results of the hierarchical regression suggested that interpersonal utility was a significant predictor for internet affinity, while information seeking was an only significant predictor for measuring internet satisfaction.

U & G Theory Applied in Sport Media Consumption

U&G theory has also been applied by sports communication researchers to explore the nature of sports and new media (see Table 2.1). This perspective has been applied to various Internet, social media, and online gaming platforms, such as message boards (Clavio, 2008), Facebook (Clavio & Walsh, 2013), Twitter (Blaszka et al., 2012; Clavio & Kian, 2010; Clavio & Walsh, 2013; Gibbs et al., 2014; Hambrick et al., 2010; Witkemper et al., 2012), and fantasy sports (Ruihley & Hardin, 2011). The findings of those studies were discussed in this section.

Table 2.1

Uses and Gratifications Theories Applied in Social Media Research

Researchers	Year	Types of media	Participants (geography)
Blaszka et al.	2012	Twitter	
Browning & Sanderson	2012	Social media	College student-athletes (US)
Clavio	2008	Message boards	Message boards users (US)
Clavio & Kian	2010	Twitter	Golfer Twitter followers (US)
Clavio & Walsh	2013	Twitter & Facebook	College football fans (US)
Gibbs et al.	2014	Twitter & Facebook	Canadian Football League (Canada)
Hambrick et al.	2010	Twitter	Professional athletes (US)
Ruihley & Hardin	2011	Message board	Fantasy sport users (US)

In order to explore the demographics and usage patterns of sports message board users, Clavio (2008) conducted a survey on 14 college sport message boards, and found that the motives with the highest means were associated with the quickness of information access, the depth of information compared to traditional media sources, the ability to read analysis from fellow fans, the ability to talk about recruiting efforts, and finding out the latest gossip about

users' favorite teams. Clavio also proposed that the U&G theory is an appropriate approach to measure internet-based sport communication media.

In a study of examining the uses, demographics, and gratifications of Twitter users who follow a retired female golfer Clavio and Kian (2010) conducted an internet-based survey which was posted on one golfer's Twitter account. The results showed the reason for users to follow the golfer on Twitter was because they considered her as the expert of this sport. The significant differences in item salience between male and female followers were also reported. Female followers were more likely to be motived by an affinity for the athletes, while physical attractiveness was the main motive among male followers. Moreover, three dimensions merged, as researchers conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to measure followers' U&G. This included an organic fandom factor, a functional fandom factor, and an interaction factor. As one of the earliest studies explaining fan's motivation of following an athlete's Twitter, this study is significant but researchers only studied one athlete.

Aside from exploring the motives of followers of individual athletes on social media, U&G theory was also applied to discover why social media users follow sport organizations. Clavio and Walsh (2013) conducted a survey among 1036 sports fans in a large NCAA Division 1 institution in order to determine the usage characteristics of college sports fans. The authors also attempted to understand how they use Twitter and Facebook to gratify their needs of information gathering and interactivity. The results of this study surprisingly suggested that college sports fans were more likely to utilize traditional media, such as newspaper and official website of the teams, for informational and interactive purposes, and they had a low level of social media participation in relation to team's official Twitter and Facebook feeds. A factor analysis suggested that four dimensions related gratifications for social media usage in college

sports fans: content creation, Twitter functionality, Facebook functionality, audio and video. A factor analysis revealed two dimensions, information-gathering and interactivity, in relation to how fans utilized team's official Facebook and Twitter account. The researchers also found that YouTube and Facebook were two social media applications that could satisfy their needs of gathering information and interactivity.

In another study, Gibbs et al. (2014) explored how professional sports fans in Canada were motivated and gratified from their Twitter use. By conducting semi-structured interviews with five perspectives who worked in communications and media relations in the Canadian Football League (CFL), the results revealed that Twitter was more frequently used than Facebook by teams to share information with fans. Facebook and team's websites were mainly utilized to create discussions with fans. Additionally, Twitter was also reported as an effective tool to enhance fan engagement. After analyzing 1,527 team tweets, four categories were merged: in-game information, news, promotion, and interaction. To better understand CFL fans' motivations and gratifications in utilizing Twitter, the authors also distributed a survey among CFL Twitter users. A factor analysis suggested that the four main gratifications sought and obtained by Twitter users were interaction, promotion, live game updates, and news.

Browning and Sanderson (2012) examined student-athletes' perceptions toward their Twitter use from a perspective of uses and gratifications. After conducting semistructured interviews with 20 student-athletes at an NCAA Division I institution, the participants revealed that Twitter was primarily used in three ways which include maintaining contacts with friends and peers, interacting with followers, and seeking information.

U & G theory is also used to examine how Twitter hashtag was used during a sport event (i.e. Blaszka et al., 2012). Through analyzing 1,450 tweets using #Worldseries during the 2011

World Series, Blaszka and his colleagues found that laypersons predominately utilized the hashtag #Worldseries and mainly used it to express their fanship and interactivity. This study also found that layperson usually utilized this hashtag when they were sending interactive tweets to MLB, league's officials and other laypersons.

Scholars also examine how athletes are motivated to use social media through the lens of U&G. By analyzing 1,962 tweets on professional athletes' Twitter accounts, Hambrick et al. (2010) posited that these athletes' twitter feeds can be classified into six categories: 1) interaction- responding to their followers and fans, 2) promotion- sharing information about their sponsors, campaigns, and their upcoming games, 3) sharing information- acting as a reporter to share behind-the-scene stories about their sports, 4) link to other social media platforms or websites- sharing the links of other websites that contain news, pictures and videos, 5) fanship- expressing their supports to other athletes/teams, 6) diversion- posting non-sport related information. Researchers revealed that athletes mainly utilized Twitter to interact with their followers and share non-sports-related information. This study also suggested that athletes should take advantage of opportunities provided by online social media applications to achieve their marketing objectives.

In addition to Facebook and Twitter, U&G theory was also used to comprehend fantasy sport fans' motivation of using message boards. Ruihley and Hardin (2011) surveyed 322 fantasy sport users (FSU) and found that more than half of participants used message boards in their fantasy sport experience. The results of a content analysis revealed that logistical conversation, socializing, surveillance, and advice or opinion were four main drivers for FSUs to use message boards, while no interest, information, time, and alternative opinions were reasons for FSUs not

to use message boards. The results also indicated that message boards' users had a higher satisfaction with their experience than non-users, and also had a higher intention of future use.

Motives of Sport Online Consumption

While U&G provides a perception in understanding the motivation and gratifications of media consumers, especially social media users, what factors should be used to measure the motivation of Twitter and Weibo users following sport organizations are needed to study in this section (see Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Motives of Using Social Media Found in Previous Research

Researchers	Year	Media	Participants (geography)	Motives
Clavio & Kian	2010	Twitter	Followers of an retired golfer	organic fandom, functional fandom, and interaction
Clavio & Walsh	2013	Twitter & Facebook	College sports fans (U.S.)	information-gathering, and interactivity
Gibbs et al.	2014	Twitter	Canadian football League fans (Canada)	Interaction, promotion, live game updates, and news
Hardin et al.	2012	Website	Rival.com followers (U.S.)	team support and information
Kang et al.	2015	Sports app	Sports app users (U.S.)	Fanship, convenience, information gathering, entertainment, economic considerations, and curiosity
Park et al.	2015	Weibo	Followers of Olympians (China)	diversion, pass-time, athlete support, and technical knowledge
Stavros et al.	2013	Facebook	NBA team's Facebook followers (U.S.)	passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie
Witkemper et al.	2012	Twitter	Athletes' Twitter followers	information, and entertainment

To understand the psychological and behavioral reasons of actual online media use (Kang, Ha, & Hambrick, 2015), Hur, Ko, and Valacich (2007) tested a conceptual model of

online sport consumption motivation (SMOS) and concern as using internet. The developed

model consisted of five motives and four concerns. The five motives include: 1) convenience, 2)

information, 3) diversion, 4) socialization, and 5) economic. Four concerns contain: 1) security

and privacy, 2) delivery, 3) product quality, and 4) customer service. After surveying 222 sports

participants, the results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) test revealed that motivation

positively influenced sports fans' usage of sport-related websites but there was not a significant

relationship between concerns and actual usage. The researchers noted one limitation this study

had was utilizing a convenience sample (e.g. university recreational sports users), and they

suggested that further research could consider the use of actual samples (e.g. members of a sport-

related website, or followers of athletes/teams' social media accounts). The scale had acceptable

levels of Cronbach's alphas ranging from .81 to .85.

Another model was created by Seo and Green (2008) aimed to measure internet users'

motives for consuming sports team's websites. The authors developed the Motivation Scale for

Sport Online Consumption (MSSOC) to identify the motives that related to online sports

consumptions. The authors explored the motives that mentioned in Hur et al. (2007), and

indicated six dimensions of motivation: 1) fanship, 2) interpersonal communication, 3) technical

knowledge, 4) entertainment, 5) economics, 6) fan expression, 7) information, 8) pass time, 9)

escape, and 10) team support.

The first dimension, fanship, is defined as "the reason that one considers oneself a huge

fan of particular sports and teams" (Seo & Green, 2008, p.86). Sport fans often obtain

information from their favorite team's website. The information they gathered is normally being

used to share with other fans, and the communication created in this process is labelled as

interpersonal communication. Aside from sharing information with other users, fans are also

keen to gather technical knowledge, which refers to their motivation of learning the rules and skills of a sport. The fourth dimension, entertainment, is defined as the motive of enjoying sports using the website. Economic, the fifth dimension describes the motivation to obtain incentives or buy gifts from teams' websites. Teams' websites also provide a platform for fan expression, which is defined as the concept of fan community, belongingness, and subcultural expressions. The seventh dimension, information, is defined as the motive to learn about things happening in the sport world. Sports teams' websites are also being used by sports fans for other purposes, such as, pass time. This is defined as the motive to kill time while utilizing the sites. Escape, which is defined as the motive to relax, and escape from the real life are also included. Team support is the tenth dimension which is referred to as the motive to express support to favorite team through the team's website.

In this study, Seo and Green (2008) conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to generate a 10-factor, 40-item scale. In order to establish validity of the scale, the researchers conducted the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and the results suggested that the scale was reduced to 30 items and 10 dimensions. The 10-factor final scale had acceptable levels of Cronbach's alphas ranging from .77 to .90.

The MSSOC has been either fully or partially adapted in various studies in examining other websites (Hardin, Koo, Ruihley, Dittmore, & McGreevey, 2012; Hur et al., 2011) and other mediums including social media (Park, Li, & Dittmore, 2015; Witkemper, et al., 2012), sports mobile applications (Kang et al., 2015), and fantasy sports (Dwyer & Kim, 2011).

Hardin et al. (2012) employed both the MSSOC and the SMOS examining the relationship between the motivation of subscribing online media, perceived value, and usage for sport website subscribers. Four adapted factors were diversion, information, interactivity, and

team support. The data were collected from the Rival.com network which had more than 7,100 subscribers. The results of *SEM* revealed that team support and information pursuit had positive impacts on the perceived value while diversion had negatively influenced value. In addition, the results also suggested that the perceived value and interactivity had directly impacted users' media usage. Team support and information pursuit had indirectly influences on media use behaviors which was mediated by perceived value. Furthermore, loyal subscribers frequently visited Rival.com, and utilized this site as the entry point into other related sports sites.

Both the MSSOC and the SMOS have also adapted, modified and utilized to measure the motives of Chinese Weibo users' following Olympians' Weibo accounts. Park et al. (2015) conducted a study among 274 Weibo users who followed eight Chinese Olympians, and attempted to identify the motivational factors for Weibo users to follow Chinese Olympians' on Weibo. The results of *SEM* method suggested that diversion, pass-time, athlete support, and technical knowledge were positively related to Weibo users' social media consumption, while information, socialization, fanship were not the factors that predicted the Weibo user's online consumption.

In another study, Witkemper et al. (2012) adapted the MSSOC to examine what motives and constraints impacted Twitter users to follow athletes. The results of *SEM* method with a convenience sample of 1,124 participates proposed a model that consisted of 12 items with four dimensions of motivations (information, entertainment, pass time, and fanship), and 12 items with four dimensions of constraints (accessibility, economic, skills, and social). The researchers also highlighted that information and entertainment could explain more variance of the motivation of users' Twitter consumption, compared to pass time and fanship. In other words, individuals were more likely to use Twitter for information gathering and entertainment

purposes. The study suggested that providing more opportunities to interact and communicate with followers could establish stronger relationships between sport organizations, athletes and college students. In addition, researchers also advised that sport organizations should post more informative messages, such as an inside story about their athletes, on their social media accounts to satisfy users' demands. Moreover, sport organizations could use social media to promote their upcoming games and encourage their athletes to interact with their fans. For future research, authors suggested focus should be placed on exploring the effects of social media on sport needs and identifying other motivations and constraints.

The MSSOC framework is also used to explore the motives of sport-related mobile applications among college students. Integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the MSSOC, Kang et al. (2015) utilized a mixed-method approach to survey 320 college students. Of 305 responses, sport information applications was the most often used among the participants, followed by sport organization apps, fan apps, and sport activity apps. The results of the study indicated that fanship was the most important motive for using sports apps, followed by convenience, information gathering, entertainment, economic considerations, and curiosity. The semistructure focus group interviews were also conducted by researchers to explore underlying concepts and meanings. The results of qualitative studies revealed that social influence was another factor that impacted users to adopt new technology and subjective norms.

As researchers examine what psychical needs are satisfied in other mediums, such as fantasy football consumption, the factors in their findings were somehow in line with the dimensions of the MOSSOC and the SMOS. Dwyer and Kim (2011) developed a motivational instrument for fantasy football participation through a five-step approach: 1) specifying the construct domain, 2) generating sample items, 3) collecting the data, 4) purifying the measure,

and 5) examining the reliability and validity. The results of principal component analysis (PCA) suggested a 4-factor, 20-item scale, which included competition (4 items), social interaction (5 items), entertainment/escape (5 items), and gambling (6 items). After conducting a CFA, researchers developed a scale that consisted of 3 factors and 12 items. They reported that interacting with other fans was one of the most important motives for fantasy football fans' participation. In addition, fantasy football fans' motivation also came from perceiving fantasy football as an entertainment, and escaping from the reality. Moreover, the authors also noted that the findings of the study were somehow consistent with some dimensions of the MSSOC and the SMOS, such as escape, entertainment, and diversion. Social interaction was the third factor discovered in this study that motivated fantasy football fans' participation. This indicated that participants utilized fantasy sports as a channel to maintain the communication with their friends and family members.

Stavros et al. (2013) conducted a study to examine fan interaction on Facebook. Utilizing a netnographic approach and content analysis, authors collected and analyzed 14,030 Facebook messages posted on the official Facebook "wall" of eight NBA teams (Boston Celtics, Brooklyn Nets, Los Angeles Lakers, Minnesota Timberwolves, Orlando Magic, Phoenix Suns, Sacramento Kings and Washington Wizards) over two weeks during the off-season. The findings of the study indicated that sports fans were motivated to interact with other fans by the following four factors: passion, hope, esteem, and camaraderie. Passion refers to as "team-directed displays of strong affection reflecting one or a combination of love, tribalism, encouragement and praise" (p.7). Hope is identified as "team-directed pronouncements centered on desirable achievement and outcome demonstrating one of a combination of ambition, expectation and situational anticipation" (p.7). Esteem refers to fans share about their either positive or negative personal

fandom experiences toward team or follow fans. Camaraderie is defined as "community-directed comments that reflect a desire for identification and interaction within the community" (p.7).

Motivational Dimensions of Following Sport Organizations on SNSs. Since the purpose of the study was to explore the similarities and differences of motivations between Twitter users and Weibo users following sport organizations, it is necessary to identify the motives used in this study. Stafford, Stafford, and Schkade (2004) indicated that three dimensions associated with Internet-specific gratifications were: content gratifications, process gratifications, and social gratifications.

Content gratifications is referred to as the messages carried by the medium (i.e. information and entertainment), which could satisfy consumers' demands (Stafford et al., 2004). In other words, Internet users may be motivated by their desire of obtaining informational content when they are using specific websites (Stafford & Stafford, 1998), and internet contents are served as achieving users' learning goals (Stafford et al., 2004). Similar to general Internet users, previous literature suggested that sports social media engagers were also motivated by gathering information contents including information (Clavio, 2008; Clavio & Walsh, 2013; Gibbs et al., 2014), entertainment (Kang et al., 2015), and technical knowledge (Park et al., 2015). **Information Motivation (IM)** measured the subjective' motivation of gathering information from sports organization accounts (Witkemper et al., 2012). **Entertainment Motivation (EM)** was meant to assess if users were motivated to gain entertainment when they follow certain sport organizations. **Technique Knowledge Motivation (TKM)** was used to examine whether gathering technique knowledge about their sport or teams motivate users to follow sport organizations.

Process gratifications deals with how the medium has been actually used (Cutler &

Danowski, 1980). Internet users could be motivated by enjoying the usage processes where they

are able to random browse and navigate the sites (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Stafford et al.,

2004). **Convenience Motivation (COM)** measured whether social media users obtain and gather

information about their favorite teams in a quick and easy way.

Considering Internet as a social environment, the associated social gratifications are also

explored in previous scholarships. As Hoffman and Novak (2006) illustrated, being able to

interact with others was one of specific features of the Internet. Sports users following or

subscribing to athletes and sport organizations/teams' social media accounts might also be

motivated by the desire of interacting with the athletes and the team (Clavio & Walsh, 2013;

Gibb et al., 2014), expressing their support to the team and the athlete (Park et al., 2015). Three

motives associated with social gratifications were measured in this study: interaction, team

support and athletes support. **Interaction Motivation (IM)** asked whether a participant was

motivated to expect to interact with this sport organization/team on this online media platform

when they follow certain team. **Team Support Motivation (TSM)** measured whether subjects

were motivated to follow sport teams for expressing their support to their favorite teams. **Athlete**

Support Motivation (ASM) measured if a response was motivated to follow a particular team in

order to expressing their support to one or one than one players currently on a particular team.

Aside from three gratifications, Stafford et al. (2004) mentioned, past literature also

suggested sports social media users might be motivated by other factors to follow athletes and

sport organizations on SNS, such as escape (Park et al., 2015), passing time (Park et al., 2015),

and curiosity (Kang et al., 2015). These motives could be categorized as personal gratifications.

In this study, the above mentioned motives were also measured. **Escape Motivation (EM)**

measured how the use of a team's social media contents helped a user to escape reality. **Pass-Time Motivation (PTM)** measured if a user was motivated to pass time as they consumed social media. **Curiosity Motivation (CUM)** was to assess whether users followed a sport organization on social media simply because they were curious about the team and attempted to try new things.

Team Identification

One of the most important sport consumption behaviors is team identification, which is defined as customers have personal commitment and emotional involvement with sport organizations (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Based on social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), an individual's self-esteem is enhanced after affiliating themselves with a certain group since they could obtain their personal meanings and values throughout associating themselves with a group. Team identification assists an individual psychologically connecting with a team, and the individual considers himself or herself as a part of the team, and experiences self-achievements once their team performs well (Sloan, 1979).

Fan identification with different levels determines different consequences on affective, cognitive, and behavioral tendencies. Sports fans with high team identification are more likely to share their favoritism with other fans of the teams, and also to criticize fans supporting opposing teams (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Wann & Branscombe, 1995). Tajfel and Turner (1979) posited that individuals seek to affiliate themselves with a certain social group, which could reflect positive ways for themselves. Therefore, sport fans can obtain social identity benefits from their social categories after associating themselves with their favorite teams. In order to protect and maintain a positive image of their team, highly identified fans are more likely to associate with a winning team, and distance themselves from a losing team.

The relationship between sports fans' team identification and behavioral responses has also been investigated by scholars. Sports fans mainly had two distinctive behavioral expressions associating with their favorite teams' winning or losing: "*bask in reflected glory*" (BIRGing) (Cialdini et al., 1976) and "*cutting off reflected failure*" (CORFing) (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). BIGRing refers to an individual's inclination to share the glory of their team's victories and to create a positive affiliation with the team, and the individual's self-esteem could be elevated throughout the process. CORFing is defined as a fan attempts to disconnect with the team after a team's failure, and this process could assist the fan to preserve their social identity.

Team Identification and Media Consumption. The sports fans with different levels of team identification may also impact their behaviors in media consumptions. Sports consumption has been divided into three categories: team-related, game, and sponsorship (Chan & Frawley, 2014). Team identification has not only been considered as one of factors determining whether sport fans will attend the games, it has also been proven as the most important factor (Greenwood, Kanters, & Casper, 2006).

Gau, James, and Kim (2009) examined how team identification has impacted on motives, behavior outcomes, and perceived service quality. After analyzing 374 participants who attended baseball and softball games, the results highlighted that highly identified fans had different consumer motives (entertainment, sociability, and self-definition), media consumption, merchandise consumption, and perceived service quality compared to low identified fans. Authors indicated that highly identified fans displayed a higher level of motives, and were more likely to consume media including TV and newspapers, and purchase licensing products provided by teams than low identified fans. The study also showed that fans with higher levels of team identification were more likely to be motivated by self-definitive motives than by

entertainment and sociability motives, while low identified fans were more motivated by entertainment and sociability than by self-definitive motives.

In another study, Phua (2010) tested whether media was a moderator to positively associate with sports fans' team identification and self-esteem. After surveying 203 American college football fans, the results of the study indicated that highly identified football fans were more likely to consume various media (i.e. print, broadcast, online and mobile phones) to follow information about the team to nonfans. The study also revealed that four types of media significantly influenced the relationship between team identification and self-esteem. Furthermore, online media had the greatest impact in this relationship, followed by broadcast media, mobile phone, and print media.

Team Identification and Social Media. With the raise and popularity of social media, sport consumers started to engage online conversations with other sport consumers on new media platforms (Smith & Smith, 2012). Through studying the 2012 College World Series of baseball event, Smith and Smith revealed that hashtags on Twitter could be considered as a way that fans identify their social identity, which owns the same meaning of wearing a team's jersey. By using the hashtags on their tweets, sports fans are easily to find a group of individuals that share the same interests to share their experiences and opinions towards their games and performance. In addition, hashtags may also be served as an identifier of fans of opposing teams, can created more adversarial conversions and debates on Twitter. Through the highly involvement with social media, sports fans' social identity and team identification are also enhanced.

Gau et al. (2009) mentioned that sports fans with different levels of team identification had different motives and consume media differently. Heavily identified sports consumers are

more likely to spend more time consuming sport through the media (Fisher, 1998; Wann, 2006).

When Moyer (2012) studied the relationship between Facebook and team identification by using a sample of Milwaukee Brewer Facebook followers, the researcher found that fans which highly identified with the Brewer's were more likely to follow them on social media, like Facebook, and also spend more time viewing information regarding the team. The study also indicated that sports fans' team identification were enhanced after consuming their favorite team's social media account.

Points of Attachment

Other than associating with a particular team, scholars also indicated that a fantastic sport spectator may be guided by other experiences. Trail, Anderson, and Fink (2000) defined identification as "an orientation of the self in regard to other objects including a person or a group that results in feeling or sentiments of close attachment" (p.165-166). They were among one of earliest researchers to consider other points of attachment beyond team identification, suggesting that an individual might also be attached by other aspects of the competition, such as a coach or a certain player. In order to better understand an individual's psychological connection to sport, Funk and James (2001) developed a conceptual framework to explain how spectators' psychologies moves from acknowledging a sport team to affiliating to the team. They noted that sports fans' attachment to the sport and players were also very important in this process of attaching to the entity.

Researchers attempted to understand points of attachments from different perspectives. Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, and Hirakawa (2001) studied which unique motives would be related to consumer interests at an international sporting event. After surveying 1,321 spectators who attended the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup, the results of the study revealed that some

spectators attended matches due to their interests in soccer rather than the certain team, while some other spectators were motived by their interests in certain players.

After reviewing this line of research, Robinson and Trail (2005) developed and validated a Points of Attachment Index (PAI). After surveying 669 spectators at three NCAA conferences, the PAI indicated that college sports fans had seven connection points which included the team, the players, the coach, the community, the sport, the university, and the level of sport. This study also found that gender and type of sport attended were significant factors that differentiate points of attachment among intercollegiate sports spectators.

Based on this study, Kwon, Trail, and Anderson (2005) continued to test whether the PAI could be used to predict cognitive, affective, conative and behavioral dimension of sport spectatorship. After surveying 358 university students, the results of *SEM* indicated that a significant amount of variance in BIRGing, satisfaction, conative loyalty and attendance behaviors could be explained by six factors, which were the team, the sport, the university, the players, the level of sport, and the coach.

Points of Attachment and Motives for Spectating. The relationships between motives for spectating and points of attachments have been investigated by scholars. Trail, Robinson, Dick, and Gillentine (2003) studied whether fans and spectators differed in intercollegiate athletics in terms of their movies and points and attachment. After surveying 861 intercollegiate football fans and spectators, the researchers indicated that motives were classified into three categories: motives relating to fans of successful teams (i.e. achievement), motives associating with fans or spectators of unsuccessful teams (i.e. aesthetics, physical skill of the athletes, eustress/drama, and knowledge), as well as motives applying to athletes and fans alike (i.e. escape, social interaction). The results revealed that there were associations between

achievement motives and fans' attachment with team, community, coach, and university. In addition, there were significant relationships between aesthetics or dramatics qualifes and fans' attachment with the sport in general or the level of the sport. Furthermore, even though both fans and spectators were driven by social supports and escape motives, the points of attachment displayed differently in both parties. Fans' social and escape motives were related to their commitment to the team, the coach and the university, while sports spectators' social and escape motivations were associated with the sport itself.

Robinson, Trail, and Kwon (2004) studied the relationships between motives and points of attachment among professional golf spectators. The study adopted the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) and the Point of Attachment Index (PAI) surveying spectators at a PGA, an LPGA and a PGA Senior Tour event. The results of the study revealed that golf spectators' motives were significantly associated with the points of attachment, and the variance explained was large. The majority of the variance in spectators' motivations were explained by spectators' identification with certain golfers, tour, and hosting community. Researchers suggested sport marketers in golf tour events did not need to provide different marketing plans based on different events, and their primary focus should be on certain star players who are competing in the event.

Points of Attachment and Media Consumption. Few scholars concentrated on exploring the relationships between points of attachment and media consumption. One of these studies conducted by Dwyer, Shapiro and Drayer (2011), where scholars investigated the associations between points of attachment and media consumption that related to watching Major League Baseball (MLB) and participating fantasy baseball. After conducting the cluster analysis and MANOVA, researchers concluded that fantasy baseball participants in different segments

and different motives, their media consumption intentions differed. They suggested that the attachment to the individual's favorite team, community, and sport were the most common connection points for fantasy baseball participants.

In another case study, Dittmore, Stoldt, and Greenwell (2008) utilized the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball official weblog users as samplings, assessing whether users considered a sport team's official weblog as an effective channel of two-way communication and profile users in terms of consumption patterns and points and attachment. The results of the study showed that Dodgers weblog users were highly related to the team and the sport, but had a comparatively low identification with individual players in the team.

Due to the fact that the majority of previous literature evaluated the relationships between points of attachment and fans and/or spectators' motivations of watching sports, this study is one of the first attempts to explore whether there is a relationship existing between points of attachment and users' motives of following sport organizations on social media.

Cross-Cultural Differences in Social Media Usage

Culture, as a shared perception of social environment, could have an impact on an individual to behave, react, and interact with others (Gudykunst et al., 1996; Hofstede, 1984, Kim et al., 2011). The individualism- collectivism framework is one of the most commonly used dimensions to distinguish cultures. The framework explained how culture impacted on human development and social relationships in different countries (Hofstede, 1984). People from collectivistic cultures always consider themselves as part of more collectives, such as family, and emphasize interdependence among people (Triandis, 1995). However, people from individualistic culture often view themselves as an independent of collectives, and are motivated by their goals, needs and preferences (Triandis, 1995). Asian countries, such as China and Korea,

which are impacted by Confucianism, display a higher level of collectivism while the majority of Western countries, such as the U.S., are considered as the representatives of individualism (Hofstede, 1984).

The differences between individualistic cultures and collectivistic cultures impact an individual's perceition of the Internet. Chau, Cole, Masses, Montoya-Weiss, and O'Keefe (2002) studied American and Hong Kong Internet users' online behaviors and revealed that consumers in collectivistic cultures, such as Hong Kong, mainly utilized the Internet for social communication purposes, while consumers in individualistic cultures, such as the U.S., primarily considered the Internet as an information searching tool. The researchers suggested in their study that customers' online behaviors in different groups may be culturally different.

Social media users in collectivistic cultures and individualistic cultures exhibit different motives of using social media. Kim et al. (2011) conducted a study among Korean college students and American college students and found that the major motives of using SNS in both countries were similar, which included seeking friends, social support, entertainment, information, and convenience. However, the weights placed in each motive were different between two groups. Korean students had greater motivations in seeking social support and information while American student's motives were using social media for entertainment. The results of the study also suggested that seeking information and social support motivations could be used to predict American college students' social media behaviors, while there were no significant predictors found to understand Korean participants' perceptions toward social media and the pattern of their social media use.

Jackson and Wang (2013) studied the difference between Chinese and American social media users in terms of their SNS use. After surveying 400 Chinese college students and 490

American college students, the study indicated that there were some differences existing among American and Chinese users. Compared to Chinese SNS users, American users spent more time in SNS, had more friends and also emphasized the SNS was more important to their lives. The study also showed that personal characteristics could predict their SNS use and both cultural users indicated a different personal characteristics. Researchers illustrated that users in collectivistic cultures used SNS less than people in individualistic cultures because they valued the importance of the family, friend and one's groups. However, users in individualistic cultures spend more time on consuming social media because they considered the importance of itself, and had less close and long term friendships. The results also revealed that personal characteristics was a stronger predictor in an individualistic culture than in a collectivistic culture.

Kim et al. (2011) mentioned that the individual in different cultures may be motivated by different factors engaging with social media since their online behaviors always reflect their cultural values. Therefore, this study aims to explore whether Weibo and Twitter users' motives of following sport organizations will be different due to cultural differences among their main consumers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Focus of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore motives behind why users follow a sport organization on Twitter and Weibo. Specifically, the study examined whether the motives of Weibo users differ from Twitter users. This study also explored which identified motives could predict users' SNS usage pattern and the level of interactivity. Finally, this study also explored the relationship between the level of team identification and social media motivation across different cultures.

Sport Organization Selection

In order to determine the sport organization that would comprise this sample, the researcher decided to select one particular sport organization's Twitter and Weibo account to study. Considering the fact that the majority of Weibo users are Chinese speaking consumers in the Chinese market, and NBA franchises are active in both Twitter and Weibo platforms, the researcher decided to study an NBA team's social media users. The Los Angeles Lakers were viewed as an appropriate case since they have been identified as one of the most popular sport organizations on both platforms (Statista, 2015), as a result Los Angeles Lakers Twitter and Weibo users were selected to participate in the study.

As of September, 2015, the Los Angeles Lakers had more than 4.474 million users following its Twitter account since engaging the platform in February 2009 (Twitter, n.d.). The number of followers is higher than the second-most followed team, the Miami Heat (3.1 million users) (Statista, 2015). On Weibo, Los Angeles Lakers have attracted more than 1.9 million users as of September, 2015 after embracing the platform three years earlier.

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Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: What are the differences in points of attachment between Lakers' Twitter followers and Weibo followers?

RQ2: What are the similarities and differences between Lakers' Twitter followers and Weibo followers in terms of usage patterns, and their attitudes toward social media?

RQ3: What factors motivate Weibo users to follow the LA Lakers' Weibo account?

RQ4: What factors motivate Twitter users to follow the LA Lakers' Twitter account?

RQ5: Do Weibo users have different motives for using Weibo from Twitter users? If so, how do they differ?

RQ6: What are the relationships between users' motives of following the LA Lakers on Weibo and the frequency of interacting with Lakers on Weibo?

RQ7: What are the relationships between users' motives of following the LA Lakers on Twitter and the frequency of interacting with Lakers on Twitter?

RQ8: Which Weibo users' motivations of following the LA Lakers could predict points of attachment?

RQ9: Which Twitter users' motivations of following the LA Lakers could predict points of attachment?

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore motives behind between Weibo and Twitter users for using microblogging services. Specifically, this study aimed to investigate whether the motives of sport organization's Weibo users differ from motives of their Twitter users. Due to the fact that the primary Weibo users are from collectivist cultures (i.e. Chinese), and the

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majority of Twitter users are from individualist cultures (i.e. the U.S.), this study also examined how cultures impacted users' motivations. The researcher also had a desire to explore which motives could predict users' social media usage patterns and interactivities on two platforms.

The current study is exploratory in nature as it is one of the first to comprehend the different features of sport consumers' motivation of following sport organizations on different social media platforms. Additionally, it also attempted to examine whether the level of team identification would impact social media users' motivation of following sport organizations.

Participants and Procedure

In an effort to obtain a suitable sample of Los Angeles Lakers Twitter and Weibo followers, a convenience sampling method was employed in this study. An online survey was created using a popular survey online survey software – *Qualtrics*, where researchers could use different question formats, and download data into SPSS. The online survey tool also provided participants' IP addresses which could assist researchers to ensure no participants has completed the survey multiple times. Due to the nature of a cross-cultural research, two versions of an online survey were developed to measure the need of different participants. To survey Twitter users, an English version of the survey was developed, and then the survey was translated into Chinese and distributed among Weibo users. Skip logic questions were utilized in the beginning of the survey, which guided LA Lakers' Twitter followers to answer Twitter survey in English, and LA Lakers' Weibo users to answer Weibo survey in Chinese.

In order to obtain a suitable number of Twitter users following LA Lakers, the researcher applied various approaches: 1) The researcher shared the link of the online survey with #LALakers and #NBA on his Twitter account, and encouraged his followers to retweet the survey. 2) In order to increase the number of participates, the researcher also contacted Lakers'

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New Digital Department and the department shared this online survey through a tweet on its official Twitter account. 3) One of the Lakers' beat writers also shared the online survey on her Twitter account. 4) Lastly, the researcher also sent a separate messages to 500 Lakers' Twitter followers, and invited them to fill out the survey.

In order to obtain a suitable sample of Chinese Weibo users, a convenience sampling was used in this study. The researcher shared the link of the online survey with #洛杉矶湖人 (the LA Lakers in Chinese) and #NBA on Weibo, and encouraged Weibo users to participate in this survey. In order to increase the response rate, the researcher contacted a Chinese NBA commentator who had 1.2 million followers on Weibo, and the latter shared the online survey link on his verified Weibo account.

Demographics of Weibo Users

There were 839 Lakers' Weibo users who participated in this study. Among all participants, users had an average age of 23.21 years (*SD*=3.60), with the vast majority of participants male (*n*=765, 91.2%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 55. In terms of participants' educational levels, the majority of users were either holding a bachelor degree (*n*=350, 41.7%) or currently studying at the college (*n*=288, 34.3%) (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Demographics of Lakers' Weibo followers (n= 839)

Characteristics		Num	%
Gender			
	Male	765	91.2
	Female	74	8.8
Race			
	Asian	871	99.32
	White	2	.11
	Black	1	.23
		0	0
	Other	3	.34
Educational Level			
	Somewhat High School	40	4.8
	High School	100	11.9
	Somewhat college	288	34.3
	Undergraduate degree	350	41.7
	Graduate degree	61	7.3

More than half of Lakers' Weibo followers (*n*=505, 57.58%) classified themselves as "die-hard fans", while only 7.98% users (*n*=70) considered themselves as general observers. In terms of the most desired information they would like to gather from the Laker's official Weibo account, players news, videos, and behind-the-scene information were reported with highest means, while interaction and promotion were recorded as the least wanted information (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

The Most Desire Information by Lakers' Weibo Users (n=839)

News sources	*M*	*SD*
Players news	4.31	1.09
Videos	4.28	1.07
Behind-the-scene information	4.25	1.08
Team news	4.17	1.17
Live games updates	4.04	1.22
Interaction	3.48	1.38
Promotion	3.32	1.41

Among Lakers' Weibo followers, the majority of participants have seldom (*n*=254, 28.96%) or never (*n*=315, 35.92%) interacted with the official account, while only 6.27% of participants (*n*=55) interacted with the account multiple times in a day. In addition to following Lakers' social media accounts, Weibo followers also utilized other media channels to gather information. Internet and TV were reported as the most popular platforms where the participants can gather Lakers' news, with 96.5% of users (*n*=810) choosing to watch live stream on the internet, and 78.2% of users (*n*=656) gathering Lakers' news on TV. Additionally, users also could obtain Lakers' news from "newspapers" (*n*=212, 25.3%), "radio broadcasting" (*n*=127, 15.1%), and "go to watch the games" (*n*=36, 4.3%).

Demographics of Twitter Users

There were 651 Twitter users who participated in this study. However, due to the length of the survey instrument, 334 participants (51.31%) completed the entire survey, with 48.6% of social media users dropped out in the middle of completing the survey. The high drop off rate is also one of the limitations of this study.

The data analysis process used all completed response the researcher gathered (see Table 3.3). The sample of 334 Lakers' Twitter followers consisted of predominantly male (80.2%)

social media users, with an average age of 26.87 years (*SD* =9.28), living in the United States

(n= 276, 82.6%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 61. Nearly 40.1% of participates

identified themselves as Caucasian, followed by Hispanic (21.9%), Black (15.9%), and Asian

(13.5%) (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

Demographics of Lakers' Twitter followers

Characteristics		Num	%
Gender			
	Male	268	80.2
	Female	62	18.7
	Missing values	2	.6
Race			
	Asian	45	13.5
	Caucasian	134	40.1
	Black	53	15.9
	Hispanic	73	21.9
	Other	23	6.9
	Missing value	6	1.8
Educational Level			
	Somewhat High School	30	9.0
	High School Graduate	38	11.4
	Somewhat college	106	31.7
	Bachelor's Degree	99	29.6
	Graduate Degree	46	13.8
	Missing value	15	4.5
Location			
	United States	276	82.6
	Canada	10	3.00
	Philippines	9	2.69
	Mexico	4	1.20
	U.K.	3	.9
	France	3	.9

Table 3.3

Demographics of Lakers' Twitter followers (Cont.)

Characteristics	Num	%
Location		
Australia	3	.9
Spain	2	.6
Germany	2	.6
Brazil	2	.6
Other Countries	20	5.99

Team news (*M*=4.66, *SD*=.74), players' news (*M*=4.65, *SD*=.74), and live games updates (*M*=4.33, *SD*=1.03) were reported as the most desired information that Lakers' Twitter followers wanted to gather from its official account, while Interaction (*M*=3.52, *SD*=1.29) and Promotion (*M*=2.93, *SD*=1.35) were the least wanted information (see Table 3.4). More than half of the participated Twitter users (52.3%) had interacted with the Lakers' official Twitter account several times per day (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.4

The Most Desire information By Lakers' Twitter Users

News sources	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Team news	332	4.66	.74
Players news	333	4.65	.737
Live games updates	331	4.33	1.03
Behind-the-scene information	333	4.17	1.10
Videos	332	4.11	1.05
Interaction	328	3.52	1.29
Promotion	325	2.92	1.36

Table 3.5

The Frequency of Twitter Users Interacting with Lakers' Accounts

	N	*%*
More than once a day	41	12.3
Daily	63	19
Several times per week	69	20.8
No more than once per week	31	9.4
Seldom	79	23.9
Never	48	14.5

Other than utilizing social media, participated Twitter users were also consuming other public media to gather information relating to Lakers. TV was reported as the most commonly used mass media platform where Lakers' Twitter users could obtain information, with 84.4% of participants (*n*=282) mentioned it, followed by Live streaming (*n*=184, 55.1%), radio (*n*=106, 31.7%), attending games (*n*=104, 31.1%), and newspapers (*n*=80, 24%).

Measures

The major focus of this study was a quantitative analysis of individuals' use patterns of the Los Angeles Lakers' Twitter and Weibo accounts. Users' attitudes toward social media, their motives of following sports team's social media account, as well as the relationship between the level of their team identification and social media motivation. The instrument (see Appendix A) was administered via an online survey using a convenience sample of people who follow the Lakers on these two platforms. The online questionnaire contained a consent form that included the purpose of the study, the duration of completion, rights of confidentiality, and study participation consent. All measures included in this questionnaire were guided by the developed research questions and some measures of other variables including demographic information.

The instrument developed for this study was a survey. Due to the nature of this study, it is necessary to use subscales from previous literature to measure the motives of social media users.

Since this study was to examine the differences in the motives among Twitter and Weibo users, versions of the survey were created in both English and Chinese. The survey in English was to measure the motives of Twitter users, and the survey in Chinese was applied to examine the motives of Weibo users. In order to maintain the reliability of the measurement, the two surveys used the same items and subscales.

The order of survey questions were carefully considered to reduce influence on responses rates and nonresponse errors. The survey began with questions relating to attitudes towards SNS, the frequency of social media usage, progressed to the scale testing motivations of using SNS, and finished with demographic information (Clavio, 2008). The entire survey contains five sections: five items relating to attitudes towards using SNS, three questions measuring sports fans' social media usage, four questions examining how they use Lakers' social media, twelve items measuring points of attachment, 31 items measuring the motivation of using SNS (either Twitter or Weibo), and five demographic questions.

Key Variables

Attitudes toward SNS. To measure users' attitudes toward Twitter and Weibo, five questions adapted from Frederick's (2012) study on the gratifications of Twitter users following athletes. Five items were measured in a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

Social Media Usage. In an attempt to measure the frequency of participants utilizing Twitter and Weibo, three questions from Frederick's study (2012) were adopted in this survey.

It included questions like "How much time would you estimate that you spend tweeting in an average day?" The items in this portion do not have reliability since they are not measured

by a Likert-type scale. However, all multiple choice questions were changed to open ended questions.

Usage of Lakers' Media/Social Media. The first question was to measure users' level of fandom by using 7-point Likert scale from 1 (casual observer) to 7 (hardcore fanatic). In this section, participants also need to display what types of contents they were seeking from Lakers' social media accounts, the frequency of interacting with the Lakers' official account on social media, and other media channels they used to obtain Lakers' information.

Points of Attachment. The construct of points of attachment was derived from Point of Attachment Index (PAI) conducted by Kwon et al. (2005). Since this study concerned about the individual's points of attachment towards LA Lakers, the items adopted to gauge levels of points of attachment of Lakers. The subscale used in this study contained four subscales from PAI including attachment to the team, attachment to the sport, attachment to players, and attachment to the NBA, and each subscale had three items. These subscales contained reasonable reliability ranging from .829 to .870. The convergent validity of four subscales were ranging from .641 to .725. All items in this scale were measured on a seven-point Likert scale in which response chooses from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly disagree).

Motivations of Following Sport Organizations on SNS. To measure the motives of sports fans using SNS, the questionnaire utilized three previously tested scales (see Table 3.1). The first scale was the 30-item Motivations Scale for Online Sport Consumption (MSSOC) developed by Seo and Green (2008), to measure the sport customers' online consumption. A total of 18 items from seven motive factors - information (3 items), entertainment (3 items), technical knowledge (3 items), escape (3 items), pass time (3 items), and team support (3 items) - were applied in the study. The scale has a reported level of reliability ranging from .77 (team

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support) to .88 (technical knowledge) and correlations with a measure of internet commitment were statistically significant, from .519 (team support) to .715 (technical knowledge). The correlation with Web-commitment ranged from .20 to .62. Twenty-one items were modified for adopting the present study. For instance, the original item stated "One of the main reasons I use the team's Website is because of a particular team I am interested in following." The modified item will state "One of the main reasons I use the Lakers' Twitter/Weibo is because it is the particular team I am interested in following". All items in the instrument were measured on seven-point Likert scales with response categories anchored by 1 = very strongly disagree to 7 = very strongly agree.

In order to measure the convenience motivation and interactivity, two subscales of the Scale of Motivation for Online Sport Consumption (SMOS) by Hur et al. (2007) were also used in this study. Four modified items from "convenience" subscale were employed in this instrument. The Cronbach's alpha for the subscale was reported at .86 with a factor loading ranging from .66 to .84. Three modified items from "socialization" were adopted in this study to examine "interactivity". The Cronbach's alpha for the subscale was reported at .85 with a factor loading ranging from .72 to .90. The word "Internet" will be changed to "Twitter" in English version, and it will be changed to "Weibo" in Chinese version. For instance, the original item stated "Internet makes it easy to obtain desired information". The modified item will state "LA Laker's Twitter/Weibo makes it easy to obtain desired information". All items in the instrument were measured on a seven-point Likert scale with response categories anchored by 1 = very strongly disagree to 7 = very strongly agree.

The construct "curiosity" was measured with three items from Chang, Lin and Yan (2011). Chang et al. (2011) adopted the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to measure the

influence of convenience and curiosity on users' English learning intention in a mobile

environment. The Cronbach's alpha for this construct was reported at .88 with a factor loading

ranging from .68 to .86.

Demographics. Participants were asked five questions relating to their demographic

information, indicating age, gender, race, nationality, and education level.

Table 3.6

Motivational Scale for Following Sport Organizations on SNSs

Subscales	Scales	Researchers	Reliability	r
Information (3 items)	Motivations Scale for	Seo and Green	.80	.20
Entertainment (3 items)	Online Sport	(2008)	.86	.62
Tech Knowledge (3 items)	Consumption		.88	.40
Escape (3 items)	(MSSOC)		.77	.44
Pass Time (3 items)			.81	.49
Team Support (3 items)			.77	.61
Athlete Support (3 items)			.77	.61
Convenience (4 items)	Scale of Motivation	Hur et al.	.85	.62
Interactivity (3 items)	for Online Sport	(2007)	.85	.71
	Consumption (SMOS)			
Curiosity (3 items)		Chang, Lin &	.88	
		Yan (2011)		

Reliability and Validity

Expert Review. Five sport management professors were invited to review the entire

scale for establishing the face and content validity. The experts were selected based on their

expertise and past experiences in developing survey instruments as well as studying on social

media and users' motivation.

These experts were contacted through emails by the researcher, and were asked to

response six items that relating to the quality of the scale. The items in this survey contained

"Overall, the instrument is readable and easy to follow", "items concerning points are

appropriate", "Items concerning content gratification are appropriate", "Items concerning

process gratification are appropriate", "Items concerning social gratification are appropriate", and "Items concerning personal gratification are appropriate". All items were measured by a four-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". In addition, an open-end question which expected reviewer to describe any changes they would suggest for any part of the instrument was also added in this survey.

Four experts answered the survey, and the overall mean for the entire survey was 3.75 ($SD =.5$). One panel expert suggested the instrument should include five questions that relate to the contents fans are seeking, as well as two demographic items. The rest of experts in the panel suggested that there were no need to change anything. Based on the suggestion from that expect, the researcher determined to add the following questions: one item measuring the fanatic of fans, eight items measuring what information that social media users are willing to obtain (i.e. interaction, promotion, live game updates, team news, player news, video, behind the scenes information, and other), the interaction frequency of social media users, and the other channels that social media users use.

Back Translation. The survey was initially created and developed in English, and then it was translated into Chinese by two Chinese native speaking researchers. Brislin (1990) suggested that back translation should be employed in this study for maintaining the equivalence of contents of two surveys. Thus, the English version survey was translated into Chinese by one Chinese researcher first, and then the other Chinese researcher translated it back into English to measure comparability. This process ensured that there were no discrepancies between the Chinese version and the English version. The intercorder reliability between two Chinese researchers were .95, indicating two versions of the instrument had no discrepancies.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0 for Windows. In order to answer developed research questions, a number of steps were used to analyze the data.

First, the multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to measure the similarities and differences between Twitter and Weibo users in terms of points of attachment (RQ1).

Second, independent sample *t* tests were conducted for measuring the similarities and differences between Lakers' Twitter followers and Weibo followers in their usage patterns and their attitudes toward social media (RQ2).

Third, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using EQS 6.1 to measure the latent structure of the motivational scale. The means and standard deviations were computed for each factor and each item, to answer what factors motivate users to follow Los Angeles Lakers Weibo and Twitter accounts (RQs 3 and 4).

Fourth, MANOVA was used to identify whether Twitter and Weibo users have different motives of following sport organizations (RQ 5).

Fifth, stepwise regression analyses were conducted to assess what motivation could predict Twitter and Weibo users' patterns and attitudes of using SNS (RQs 6 and 7).

Finally, stepwise regression analyses were utilized to measure the relationship between social media users' points of attachment and their motivations of following Lakers' social media accounts (RQs 8 and 9).

Summary of the Methodologies

It was a desire of the researcher to shed the light on whether certain motivation patterns existed as social media consumers from different cultural contexts using similar social

networking sites. Also, the researcher aimed to examine what motives could predict the

perceptions of Twitter and Weibo users' patterns of social media usage. Therefore, quantitative

research methods were needed to apply in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Research Question 1

The first research question (RQ1) was meant to explore the similarities and differences between Lakers' Twitter and Weibo users in terms of points of attachment. Using one-way MANOVA, four points of attachment (team attachment, sport attachment, player attachment, and NBA attachment) were dependent variables (DVs), and type of social media was the independent variable (IV). The result revealed a significant multivariate main effect for type of social media, Wilks' Lambda =.732, F (1, 1163)= 106.522, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2 = .268$, indicating a difference in users' points of attachment between Lakers' Weibo users and Twitter users (see Table 4.1).

The univariate F tests revealed there was a significant difference between Weibo and Twitter followers for users' attachment with team, F (1, 1163) = 18.86, $p < 0.001$. Twitter users perceived a significantly higher association with the team to Weibo users. The F tests for both groups on their attachment with the sport, the player, and NBA were also significant. Lakers' Weibo users had a significantly higher attachment than Twitter users in basketball ($p < 0.001$), players ($p < 0.001$), and the NBA ($p < 0.001$). In addition, Twitter users perceived a higher attachment with the team to Weibo users ($p < 0.001$). Thus, Weibo and Twitter users were significantly different in their points of attachment (team, basketball, the player, and NBA).

Table 4.1

MANOVA Results of PAI between Twitter and Weibo Users

Dependent Variable	*F*	η²	Users	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Attachment with team	18.488**	.016	Twitter	326	5.97	1.34
			Weibo	839	5.52	1.70
Attachment with basketball	26.039**	.022	Twitter	326	5.54	1.39
			Weibo	839	5.91	.95
Attachment with player	334.164**	.223	Twitter	326	3.27	1.63
			Weibo	839	5.10	1.49
Attachment with NBA	107.366**	.084	Twitter	326	3.32	1.33
			Weibo	839	4.33	1.55

Notes: ** *p* < 0.001

Research Question 2

The second research question aimed to explore similarities and differences in Twitter and Weibo users' usage pattern and their attitudes toward social media usage. The average time that Weibo users were holding an account was 3.53 years (*SD* = 1.44), having been following Lakers on Weibo for average 1.57 years (*SD*=1.12). Participants reported that they spent 2.59 hours (*SD* = 2.97) viewing messages on Weibo every day, and the average amount of time they spent on updating their Weibo was 1.43 hours (*SD* =1.43).

Among Twitter users, the average time of holding a Twitter account was 4.26 years (*SD* =1.15), and the average time of following Lakers' account was 3.27 (*SD*=1.86). Participants reported that they spent 2.9 hours (*SD* = 3.56) viewing messages on Twitter every day, and the average amount of time they spent on updating their Twitter was 1.39 hours (*SD*=3.18). The results of the independent *t*-tests indicated that there were no significant differences in the time two groups of users spent on viewing messages on their social media platforms, *t* (1163) = 1.368, *p* =.172, and time spent on posting on the messages, *t* (1160) = -.165, *p* =.869.

In terms of their attitudes toward two social media platforms, Twitter users expressed lower dependence on Twitter (M=3.02, SD= .87) than Weibo users (M=3.41, SD= .84), t= -7.054, p<.001 (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

The Similarities and Differences in Attitudes Toward Social Media

Statements	Twitter users		Weibo users	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Using Twitter/Weibo is one of the most important things I do each day.	3.36	1.19	3.93	1.06
If Twitter/Weibo was not working, I would really miss it.	3.6	1.12	3.69	1.09
Using Twitter/Weibo is very important in my life.	3.12	1.04	3.63	1.03
I could easily do without Twitter/Weibo for several days. (R)	3.32	1.20	3.39	1.05
I would feel lost without Twitter/Weibo.	2.35	1.15	3.18	1.15
Total	3.02	.87	3.41	.84

Notes: ** p< 0.001

Research Question 3

RQs 3-5 aimed to explore what motivated Weibo and Twitters' users to follow the Lakers on social media, and whether there were some differences existing in two groups. Before answering these research questions, the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) analyses were conducted to test the model fit.

The researcher conducted a first order CFA first to evaluate the appropriateness of the measurements utilized with ten first order latent constructs (information motivation, entertainment motivation, technique knowledge motivation, convenience motivation, team support motivation, athlete support motivation, interactivity motivation, escape motivation, pass-time motivation, and curiosity motivation, see Figure 4.1).

The measurement model attained an acceptable level of S-B X^2/df ratio (i.e. 1612.04/389 = 4.144, $p < .001$) (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). Additional fit indices suggested the model reached satisfactory fit for the data: X^2 (389)= 3215.63, $p < .001$, CFI=0.952; RMSEA=.052 (.050 -.055); SRMR=.055. Hu and Bentler (1998) suggested that a value of CFI $\geq$ 0.95 and a value of SRMR value $\leq$ .08 could be recognized as indicate of good fit. Also, MacCallum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996) suggested that the value of RMSEA in the range of .05 to .10 is considered an indication of fair fit.

Discriminant validity was also attained based on the suggestion from Kline (2005), as the Table 4.4 shows, the correlations between the latent factors were also below .85.
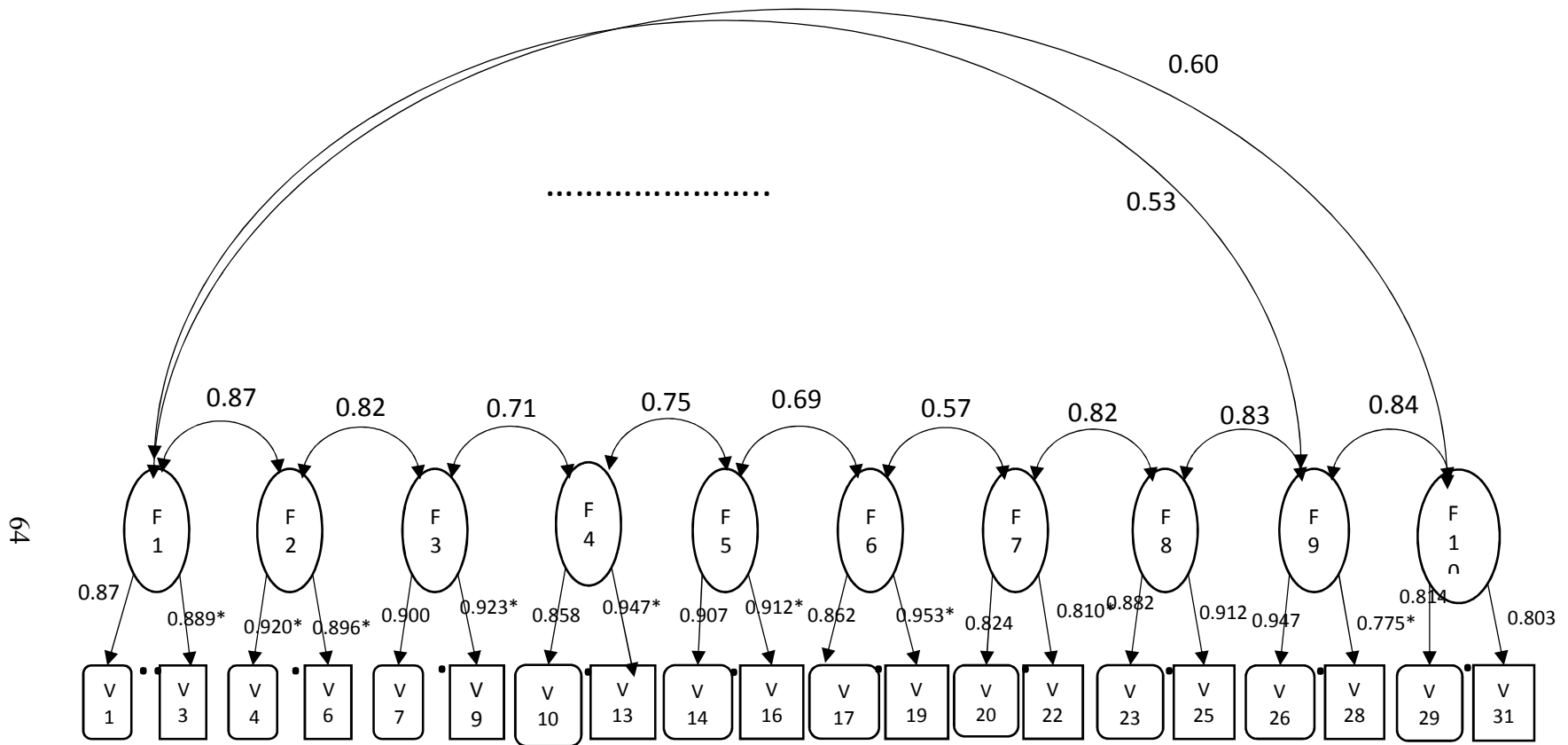
Figure 4.1 Proposed first order model with standardized path loading. F1= Information, F2= Entertainment, F3= Technology Knowledge, F4= Convenience, F5= Team Support, F6= Athlete Support, F7= Interactivity, F8= Escape, F9=Passtime, F10= Curiosity. CFI= .952, RMSEA=.052, SRMR= .055. *p < .05

As mentioned in the literature review, Stafford et al. (2004) proposed that internet-specific gratifications contained four dimensions: content gratifications, process gratifications, social gratifications, and personal gratifications. However, they have never tested this conceptual model. In this study, the researcher also planned to test this model. Therefore, a higher order CFA was conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the measurements utilized with ten first order latent constructs (information motivation, entertainment motivation, technique knowledge motivation, convenience motivation, team support motivation, athlete support motivation, interactivity motivation, escape motivation, pass-time motivation, and curiosity motivation) and four higher order factors (content gratification, process gratification, social gratification, and social gratification; see Figure 4.2).

The measurement model attained an inadequate level of S-B X^2/df ratio (i.e. 2161.93/419 =5.15, p <.001) (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). Additional fit indices suggested the model reached satisfactory fit for the data: X^2 (389) = 4212.71, p < .001, CFI=.931, RMSEA=.060 (.058 -.063); SRMR=.077 (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The results from the Table 4.5 showed that all subscales reached satisfactory fit for the reliability levels measured by Cronbach's alpha ranging from .73 to .95 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2006).
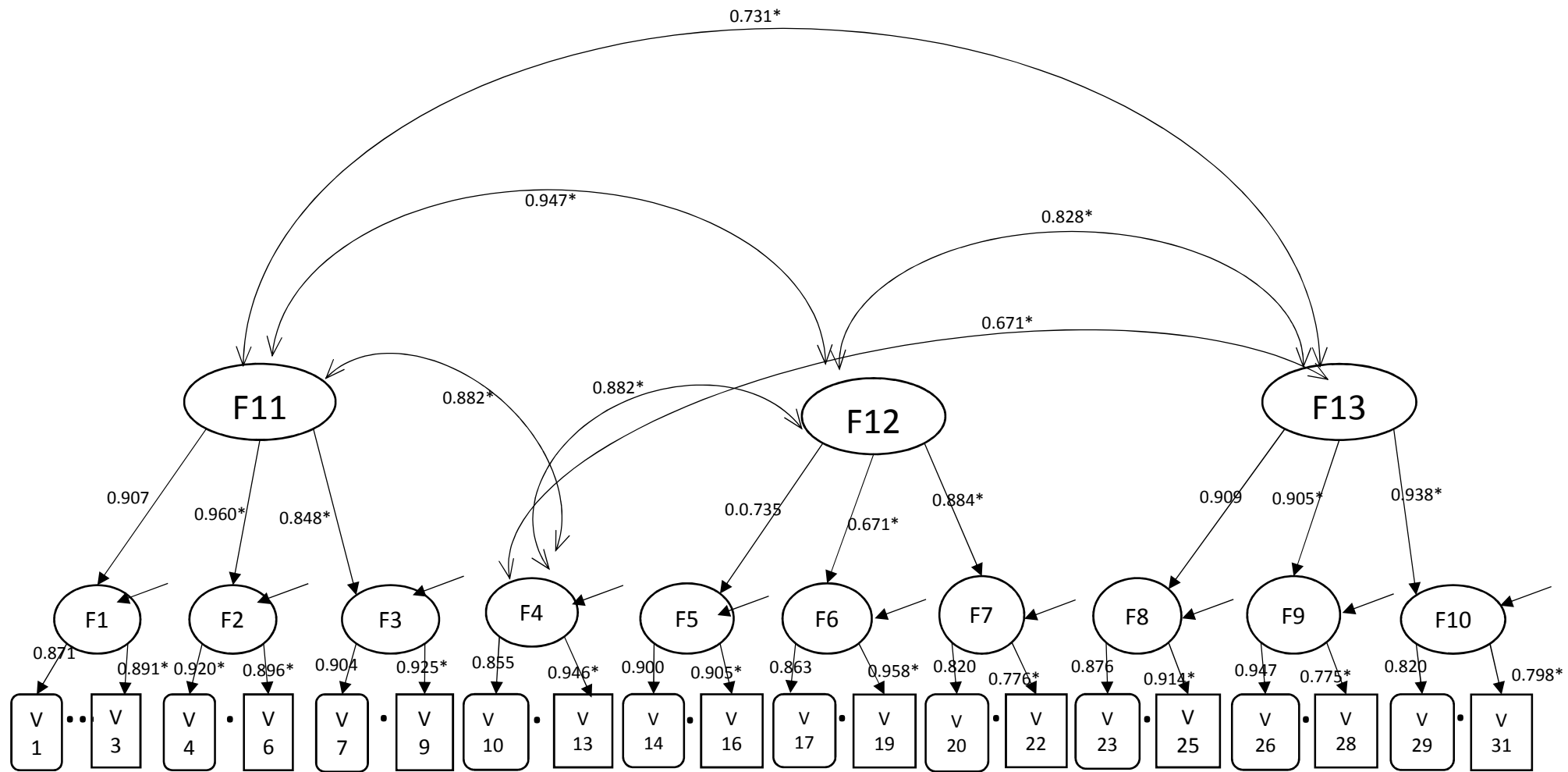
Figure 4.2 Proposed higher order model with standardized path loadings. F1= Information, F2= Entertainment, F3= Technology Knowledge, F4= Convenience, F5= Team Support, F6= Athlete Support, F7= Interactivity, F8= Escape, F9=Passtime, F10= Curiosity, F11= Content Gratification, F12= Social Gratification, F13= Personal Gratification. Model fit index: CFI= .931, RMSEA= .060, SRMR= .077. Note: *p < .05

Table 4.3

Items of the First Order Model's Factor Loadings

Factor	Items	λ	*M*	*SD*
Info	LA Laker's Twitter/ Weibo provides large volumes of sports information.	.87	5.06	1.50
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I am able to obtain a wide range of sports information.	.92	4.92	1.60
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I can learn about things happening in the sports world.	.89	4.88	1.61
Enter	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it is exciting.	.92	4.92	1.57
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it is cool.	.90	4.68	1.71
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it is amusing.	.90	4.83	1.61
Tech	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/Weibo because I want to know the technical aspect of sports.	.90	4.65	1.65
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/Weibo because I want to know the rules of their sports.	.90	4.21	1.82
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/Weibo because I want to know strategies of their sports.	.93	4.46	1.76
Convenience	LA Laker's Twitter/Weibo provides quick and easy access anywhere.	.86	5.08	1.51
	LA Laker's Twitter/Weibo allows me to navigate and find desired information quickly and easily.	.95	4.96	5.00
	LA Laker's Twitter/Weibo makes it easy to obtain desired contents.	.96	5.00	1.49
	LA Laker's Twitter/Weibo is easy to use and find needed contents.	.95	5.02	1.49
Team Support	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo is because it is the particular team I am interested in following.	.90	5.62	1.52
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I believe it is important to support my favorite team.	.96	5.53	1.54
	Following LA Larker on Twitter/ Weibo demonstrates my support for favorite team.	.91	5.53	1.55
Athlete Support	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo is because they have a particular athlete I am interested in following.	.86	5.49	1.66
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I believe it is important to support my favorite athletes.	.92	5.52	1.61
	Following LA Larker on Twitter/ Weibo demonstrates my support for my favorite athlete.	.96	5.44	1.66

Table 4.3

Items of the First Order Model's Factor Loadings (Cont.)

Factor	Items	λ	*M*	*SD*
Interactivity	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo for interacting with other social media users.	.82	4.42	1.77
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo for interacting with the team.	.89	4.58	1.70
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo for participants in contests.	.78	3.96	1.81
Escape	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I can escape from reality.	.87	3.71	1.94
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it allows me to enter a nonthinking, relaxing period.	.92	4.14	1.85
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because I can forget about work.	.91	3.95	1.90
Passtime	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it gives me something to do to occupy my time.	.95	4.37	1.76
	I follow LA Laker on Twitter/ Weibo because it passes time away, particularity when I am bored.	.92	4.30	1.79
	I use LA Laker's Twitter/ Weibo during my free time.	.78	4.72	1.62
Curiosity	When I see new things I want to try them.	.82	4.69	1.63
	When a friend or family member recommends LA Lakers' account, I want to try them.	.73	3.51	1.98
	I enjoy exploring new social media accounts.	.80	4.31	1.79

Table 4.4

Factor Correlations among Users' Motivations for the First Order Model

	IM	EM1	TKM	CM	TSM	ASM	IM	EM2	PM
EM1	.85*	-							
TKM	.75*	.82*	-						
CM	.84*	.84*	.71*	-					
TSM	.68*	.69*	.49*	.75*	-				
ASM	.59*	.62*	.58*	.59*	.70*	-			
IM	.69*	.80*	.79*	.72*	.56*	.57*	-		
EM2	.56*	.64*	.68*	59*	.38*	.40*	.82*	-	
PM	.54*	.61*	.58*	.60*	.47*	.43*	.71*	.83*	-
CM	.60*	.67*	.66*	.67*	.47*	.42*	.85*	.84*	.85*

Notes: IM= Information; EM1=Entertainment; TKM=Technique Knowledge;
CM=Convenience; TSM=Team Support; ASM=Athlete Support; EM2=Escape; PM=Pass-
Time; CM=Curiosity
* *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Table 4.5

Factor Correlations among Users' Motivations for the High Order Model

	CG	PG	SG
PG	.88*	-	
SG	.95*	.88*	-
PG	.73*	.67*	.83*

Notes: CG= Content Gratification; PG= Process Gratification; SG= Social
Gratification; PG= Personal Gratification
* *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Since both models were not nested to each other, the index of Akaike's Information

Criterion (AIC) was used to compare. The AIC value showed that non-nested first order model

had a smaller value than the non-nested higher order model, thereby indicating that the first order

model was the best fitting model (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6

Goodness-of-Fit Indicators for Both Models

Model	X^2	df	SBX^2	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC
First order							
	3215.63**	389	1612.04	.952	.052	.055	834.04
Higher order							
	4212.71**	419	2161.92	.931	.060	.077	1323.93

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

The third research question aimed to explore what motivated Weibo users to follow

Lakers. The Table 4.7 stated that Lakers Weibo followers were primarily motivated by

expressing their support towards the team (*M*=5.38, *SD*=1.51), and information gathering

(*M*=5.01, *SD*=1.49). In the meantime, Laker's Weibo followers were also motivated by its

conveniences (*M*=4.94, *SD*=1.47) and entertainment (*M*=4.79, *SD*=1.53). However, Weibo

followers were less determined by escape (*M*=4.13, *SD*=1.73) and athlete support (*M*=4.25,

SD=1.12).

Research Question 4

The fourth research question attempted to understand which factors motivated fans to follow the Lakers on Twitter. Based on Table 4.7, Lakers Twitter followers were primarily motivated by expressing their support towards the team (M=6.07, SD=1.17), and its convenience to gather Lakers' information (M=5.21, SD=1.26). In addition to these two motives, Twitter followers were also driven by information gathering (M=4.81, SD=1.38), entertainment motivation (M=4.57, SD=1.52), and pass-time (M=4.43, SD=1.54). However, Twitter users were comparably less motivated by using it to escape their current life (M=3.40, SD=1.79) and obtaining technique knowledge (M=3.50, SD=1.57).

Research Question 5

The fifth research question attempted to explore the similarities and differences between Twitter and Weibo users in terms of their motivations of following Lakers' social media accounts.

The MANOVA was conducted, and the result were significant for users engaging with different social media platforms, Wilks' Lambda =.581, F (1, 1143) = 82.485, p < .001, η^2 = .419, power to detect the effect was 1.00, indicating a significant difference in users' motivation between Lakers' Weibo users and Twitter users.

The univariate F tests showed there was a significant difference between Weibo followers and Twitter followers in terms of their motivation in gathering knowledge, F (1,1152) = 4.61, p < .05, η^2 = .004, power to detect the effect was .574. Weibo users showed a significantly higher motivation in gathering information to Twitter users (p < .01). In addition to information motivation, Weibo users also displayed a higher level of motivation in entertainment

($p < .01$), technology knowledge ($p < .001$), athlete support ($p < .001$), interactivity ($p < .001$),

escape ($p < .001$), and curiosity ($p < .001$) (see Table 4.7).

The *F* tests for both groups on their motivation in convenience and team support were

also significant. Lakers' Twitter users had a significantly higher motivation in enjoying the

convenience of social media than Weibo users, $F(1,1152) = 7.74, p < 0.001$. In addition, Twitter

users had a significantly higher motivation in team support than Weibo users, $F(1,1152) =$

$52.42, p < 0.001$. However, there was not a significant difference in pass-time motivation

between Twitter and Weibo followers, $F(1,1152) = .1, p = .75$.

Table 4.7

MANOVA Results for Motivations among Twitter and Weibo users

Dependent Variable	*F*	η^2	Observed Power	Weibo		Twitter	
				M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Information	4.613*	.004	.574	5.01	1.49	4.81	1.38
Entertainment	10.688**	.009	.904	4.90	1.52	4.57	1.52
Tech Knowledge	158.456**	.122	1.00	4.79	1.53	3.50	1.57
Convenience	7.736**	.007	.794	4.94	1.47	5.21	1.26
Team Support	52.418**	.044	1.00	5.38	1.51	6.07	1.17
Athlete Support	42.946**	.036	1.00	4.25	1.12	3.76	1.19
Interactivity	21.822**	.019	.997	4.45	1.54	3.98	1.59
Escape	41.574**	.035	1.00	4.13	1.73	3.40	1.79
Pass-time	.1	<.001	.062	4.47	1.60	4.43	1.54
Curiosity	17.723**	.015	.988	4.28	1.65	3.86	1.18

Note: * $p< 0.05$, ** $p< 0.001$

Research Question 6

In order to determine the relationship between Lakers Weibo followers' motivations and

their interactivity, a stepwise regression analysis was utilized. The reason for using stepwise

regression analysis is because it could identify a useful subset of predictors, especially it could

systematically contain the most influential factors and remove the least significant factors.

The results of stepwise regression analysis indicated the initial model was statistically significant, $F(1,837) = 182.75$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .179$, adjust $R^2 = .178$ (see table 4.8). The second model consisted of two main contributing factors after eliminating noncontributing predictors: information and team support motivations, $F(2,836) = 103.12$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .198$, adjust $R^2 = .196$. The results revealed that information and team support factors could predict 19.8% of the variances of Weibo users' interactivity. The standard coefficient (β) revealed that information ($\beta = .26$, $t = 5.53$, $p < .01$) explained more variance than entertainment ($\beta = .21$, $t = 4.41$, $p < .01$).

Table 4.8

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Weibo Users (*N*=839)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*R²*	*F* for change in *R²*
Model 1				.179	182.75**
Information	.44	.03	.42**		
Model 2				.198	12.53**
Information	.27	.05	.26**		
Team support	.22	.05	.21**		

Note: * *p* < 0.05, ** *p* < 0.001

Research Question 7

A stepwise regression analysis was also utilized to determine the relationship between Lakers' Twitter users' motivation and the frequency of their interaction with Lakers on Twitter. The results of the analysis indicated that three motives: entertainment, team support, and technical knowledge - can predict the variance of Laker Twitter users' interactivities, $F(3,315) = 29.80$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .227$, adjust $R^2 = .219$ (see Table 4.9).

The results revealed that approximately 22.7 % of the variance of Twitter users' interaction with the Lakers could be accounted by the following three motives: entertainment, team support, and technical knowledge. The standard coefficient (β) revealed that entertainment

motivation ($\beta = .24$, $t = 3.60$, $p<.001$) explained more variance than team support ($\beta = .20$, $t = 3.67$, $p<.001$) and technical knowledge ($\beta = .17$, $t = 2.54$, $p =.007$)

Table 4.9

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Twitter Users (N=334)

Variables	B	$SE\ B$	β	R^2	F for change in R^2
Model 1				.175	65.06**
Entertainment	.45	.06	.42**		
Model 2				.208	12.78**
Entertainment	.37	.06	.34**		
Team support	.28	.08	.20**		
Model 3				.227	7.38*
Entertainment	.26	.07	.24**		
Team support	.28	.08	.20**		
Technical knowledge	.18	.07	.17*		

Notes: * $p< 0.05$, ** $p< 0.001$

Research Question 8

A series of stepwise regression analyses were conducted to evaluate which motives were necessary to predict Weibo users' four points of attachment (team, basketball, players, and NBA). The results indicated that 54.5% of the variance of Weibo users' team identification could be explained by team support, athlete support, and entertainment motivations, F (3, 835) = 335.47, $p < .001$, $R^2= .547$, adjust $R^2= .545$(see Table 4.10). Additionally, athlete support and escape could account for 12.9 % of the variance of Weibo users' attachment with basketball, F (2, 836) = 62.84, $p < .001$, $R^2= .131$, adjust $R^2= .129$ (see Table 4.11).

The results of stepwise regression analyses also found to be statistically significant F (5, 833) = 35.362, $p < .001$, indicating athlete support, escape, team support, convenience, and technique knowledge are good predictors of Weibo users' attachment with players (see Table 4.12). The multiple correlation coefficient was 17.5, indicating approximately 17.5% of the variance of Weibo users' affiliation with players could be explained by these five mentioned

motives. The variable of athlete support, as indexed by its β value of .47, was shown to have the strongest relationship to attachment with players, while team support (β = -.33) and technique knowledge (β = -.21) had negative relationship with users' association with players.

In addition, results also revealed that Weibo users' association with the NBA could be predicted by three motives: curiosity, team support, and interactivity, F (3, 835) = 30.31, $p <$ .001(see Table 4.13). The multiple correlation coefficient was 10.4, indicating approximately 10.4% of the variance of Weibo users' attachment with the NBA could be explained by these three motives, with curiosity to be the strongest predictor (β = .22). Team support motivation (β = -.19) appears to be negatively related to users' attachment with the NBA.

Table 4.10

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Team Identification and Motivation among Weibo users (*N*=838)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	R^2	*F* for change in R^2
Model 1				.534	960.65**
Team support	.822	.027	.731**		
Model 2				.542	13.86**
Team support	.681	.046	.606**		
Athlete support	.231	.062	.153**		
Model 3				.547	8.41**
Team support	.592	.055	.526**		
Athlete support	.229	.062	.151**		
Entertainment	.117	.040	.105*		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Table 4.11

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Attachment with Basketball and Motivation among Weibo users (*N*=838)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*R²*	*F* for change in *R²*
Model 1				.111	104.201**
Athlete support	.206	.020	.333**		
Model 2				.131	19.219**
Athlete support	.121	.028	.196**		
Escape	.125	.029	.196**		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Table 4.12

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Attachment with Players and Motivation among Weibo users (*N*=838)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*R²*	*F* for change in *R²*
Model 1				.119	113.26**
Athlete support	.459	.043	.345**		
Model 2				.144	24.49**
Athlete support	.382	.045	.287**		
Escape	.146	.029	.169**		
Model 3				.161	16.78**
Athlete support	.624	.074	.469**		
Escape	.186	.031	.216**		
Team support	-.238	.058	-.240**		
Model 4				.166	4.71**
Athlete support	.619	.074	.465**		
Escape	.144	.036	.167**		
Team support	-.321	.070	-.325**		
Convenience	.139	.064	.137**		
Model 5				.175	9.37**
Athlete support	.628	.074	.472**		
Escape	.175	.038	.203**		
Team support	-.329	.069	-.333**		
Convenience	.301	.083	.297**		
Technique Knowledge	-.203	.066	-.207*		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Table 4.13

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Attachment with NBA and Motivation among Weibo users (*N*=838)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	R^2	*F* for change in R^2
Model 1				.078	70.491**
Curiosity	.262	.031	.279**		
Model 2				.092	14.77**
Curiosity	.362	.035	.347**		
Team Support	-.148	.038	-.144**		
Model 3				.101	9.615**
Curiosity	.210	.051	.223**		
Team Support	-.198	.042	-.193**		
Interactivity	.186	.060	.184**		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Research Question 9

To determine the relationship between Twitter users' points of attachment and their motivation of following the Lakers, a series of series of stepwise regression analyses were conducted. The results indicated that team support motivation could explain 35.6% of the variance of Twitter followers' team identification, $F(1,311) = 173.589$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .358$, adjust $R^2 = .356$ (see table 4.14).

In addition, the result also found that athlete support could account for 2.1% of the variance of Twitter users' attachment with basketball, $F(1,310) = 7.585$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .024$, adjust $R^2 = .021$ (see table 4.15). Meanwhile, 29% of the variance of Twitter users' attachment with players could be explained by team support motivation and athlete support motivation, $F(2,310) = 62.310$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .024$, adjust $R^2 = .021$ (see table 4.16). Also, 9.1% of the variance of attachment with the NBA among Twitter users could be predicted by three motives, which are pass time, team support, and interactivity, $F(3,307) = 11.401$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .10$, adjust $R^2 = .091$

(see table 4.17). However, Twitter users' attachment with the NBA positively correlated with pass time and interactivity motivation, but negatively correlated with team support motivation.

Table 4.14

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Attachment with Players and Motivation among Twitter users (*N*=313)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	R^2	*F* for change in R^2
Model 1				.12	44.10**
Athlete support	.48	.07	.35**		
Model 2				.29	70.69**
Athlete support	.78	.07	.57**		
Team support	-.63	.08	-.46**		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

Table 4.15

Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis between Attachment with NBA and Motivation among Twitter users (*N*=313)

Variables	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	R^2	*F* for change in R^2
Model 1				.05	17.00
Pass time	.20	.05	.23**		
Model 2				.08	9.01
Pass time	.25	.05	.29**		
Team support	-.20	.07	-.17**		
Model 3				.10	7.21
Pass time	.20	.05	.24**		
Team support	-.25	.07	-.22**		
Interactivity	.14	.05	.17*		

Note: * *p*< 0.05, ** *p*< 0.001

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The emerging use of new technology - especially social media - provides a new opportunity to consume sports, but the diverse makeup of the world creates some new challenges to understand the unique demands of consumers in different markets. This study attempted to explore whether culture determines users' motivations of following sport organizations on Twitter and Weibo, focusing on whether users in two different cultures displayed different attitudes, usage patterns, and motivations as they consume social media.

Interestingly, the majority of social media users on both platforms who participated in this study were male users. Also, it was not a surprise that all Weibo users are living in mainland China, since it is a main social media tool in Chinese speaking regions including mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Because Twitter is a global social media platform, the Lakers has been referred to as the most popular professional sport team, with nearly 70% of followers coming from outside California (Mandell, 2015). Lakers' Twitter account has attracted users from diverse background; more than 96% of participants in the study were from Western countries, which is dominated by individualistic cultures.

In terms of the content, there were no main differences found between Chinese Weibo users and Twitter users. Both groups were interested in obtaining team and player news, behind-the-scenes information, and live game updates. However, they were less concerned about interaction with the account and promotional information. New media are the main channels where fans could gather news sources. Especially with Chinese Weibo users, due to the limited content available on other media sources, such as TV, radio, and newspapers, internet has become a primary platform where fans obtain Lakers news. This finding coincided with a study

conducted by Kaplan and Langdon (2012) who also discovered that the Internet was a main channel for Chinese sports fans to consume American professional sports leagues.

The majority of the previous literature indicated that information gathering and interaction were two purposes for sports fans to use social media. For instance, Clavio and Walsh (2013) found that the main gratifications that college football fans obtained from Twitter and Facebook were interaction and information gathering; Gibbs and his colleagues (2014) found similar results from Canadian football fans who were gratified by interaction, promotion, live game updates, and news. However, one of the interesting findings in this study was that participants on both platforms seemed less interested in interaction and promotion compared to other contents such as gathering news, information, and videos. Furthermore, interaction was also a less important motive for both Twitter and Weibo users comparing to other motives such as gathering information, entertainment, team support, athlete support, and even pass time. Therefore, even though interaction has been stressed significantly in past social media studies, the participants of the current study did not appear to value the interactivity that is facilitated by social media.

The first research question aimed to examine the differences between Lakers' Twitter users and Weibo users in their points of attachment. The results of the current study revealed that Lakers' Weibo users had higher attachment with the sport, the player, and NBA, while its Twitter users were more highly attached to the team. The results were consistent with Kaplan and Langdon (2012), who mentioned the main reason Chinese spectators follow professional sports was to follow a certain athlete of the team, or the league. Also, it needs to be noted that Kobe Bryant, the Lakers' star player for 20 years, is among one of the most well-known athletes in China. When he posted his retirement letter "Dear Basketball" on his official Weibo account,

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the message was reposted by more than 147,000 users in a very short period of the time (Times staff, 2015). Kaplan and Langdon also noted that one of the most effective marketing strategies for the American professional leagues to globalize their market to China was to emphasize their certain individual players. Therefore, it is understandable that Weibo users have higher attachment to certain star players compared to Twitter users.

Chinese Weibo users also expressed a higher affiliation with basketball and the NBA than Twitter users in this study. The results were also not surprising since basketball is more popular in China than in the U.S. (Gao, 2012). Based on Yardley (2012), an estimated 300 million people played basketball in China, which was equivalent to the entire population of the United States. In addition, basketball is the only true national team sport in China since it is able to unite all people from different backgrounds and set alight the nation, while Americans engage in multiple different team sports from American football to ice hockey (Gao, 2012). The slow development of domestic professional sports leagues in China also gives the NBA an opportunity to occupy this giant market. However, the NBA faces more competition in the U.S. In addition to the other three main professional leagues such as the NFL, the MLB, and the NHL, it also has to fight for audiences with intercollegiate sports and other fast growing leagues such as the MLS. This might explain why Chinese Weibo users have rated higher with their attachment to basketball and the NBA than Twitter followers.

Another finding in the current study is that sports customers in individualistic cultures (Twitter users) rated higher in team identification than their counterparts in collectivistic cultures (Weibo users). This coincides with existing literature, such as Gau and Kim(2011). As Gau and Kim examined how national culture-value has impacted spectator's attitudes and team identification between spectators among Taiwan, Korea and the United States, their study

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showed that there were much closer relationships between spectators' attitudes and team identification in American fans than in Asian fans. In this study, since the Lakers is a foreign sport team to Chinese Weibo users, these users' attachment with the team may be lower than Twitter users, since some Twitter users were actually from the California area. As Putnam (2000) mentioned when introducing social capital theory, sport teams played a more important role to connect an individual with its community. Sports teams are not just a unique community of players, coaches, owners, and fans; Heere and James (2007) stressed that teams also represented other communities such as geographic and ethnic groups. They explained that an individual's commitment with the team, was shaped by his or her city larger social networks including his or her city of residence and the ethnic groups that dominated in the area.

Even though a relationship between cultural orientation and social media usage was not found in this study, Weibo users still indicated a more positive attitude towards social media; this indicates that Weibo plays a more critical role in their lives (RQ2). This finding was not particularly surprising since Gonzalez (2010) explained that people in collective societies, like Chinese social media users, were more frequent to communicate with others because their individual identity is more related to their group or group of reference. Therefore, they tend to be more social than people in individualist societies, who are more task-orientated (Gonzalez, 2010).

One of the main purposes in this study was to measure whether culture would impact Twitter and Weibo users' motivation in following sport organizations. In the majority of previous cross-culture studies, Hofstede's 6 Dimensions Model was used to understand cross-national communication. Hofstede's model contained six cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, long-term versus

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short-term orientation, and indulgence versus self-restraint (Hofstede, 2015). Power distance measures whether a society could accept an unequal distribution of power. Individualism-collectivism examines the relationship between the individual and the group. Masculinity-femininity looks at the distribution of the roles between the genders. Uncertainty avoidance describes the extent to which people try to escape uncertainty and ambiguity. Long-term versus short term orientation measures the extent to which a society displays a future-oriented perspective or a short-term perspective. Indulgence versus self-restraint observes whether individual happiness and wellbeing are related to personal control or regulated by strict social norms. Among these six dimensions, Chinese participants were completely different from American participants in power distance, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, long term or short term orientation, and indulgence (Chiang, 2014, See Figure 5.1).
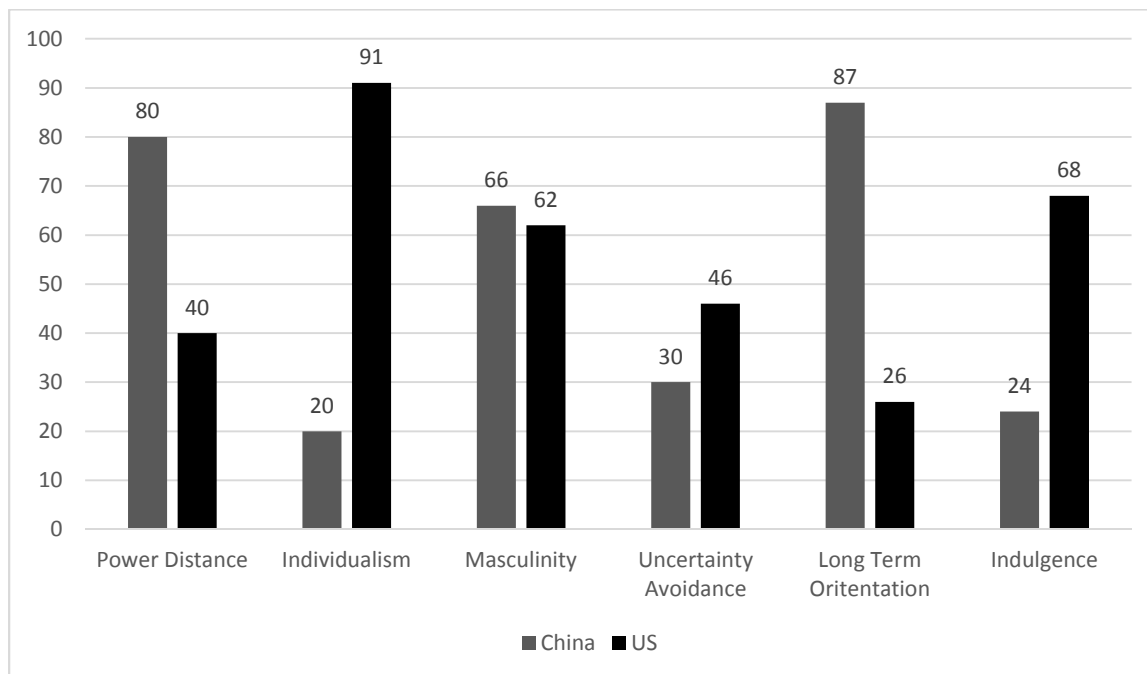
Figure 5.1 Hofstede Dimension Index scores between China and the United States. Adapted from "the website of The Hofstede Centre," by G.H. Hofstede, n.d., Retrieved from http://geerthofstede.eu/

In this research, Lakers' Weibo followers and its Twitter followers displayed different motives of following sport organizations (RQs 3-5). Previous studies indicated that differences did exist among sports fans in terms of their races and nationalities. As Chiang (2014) mentioned, all Weibo users from China, where the collectivistic cultures were dominated, while the vast majority of Twitter participants were living in countries where individualistic cultures were prominent. Therefore, it is not a surprise that there were differences between two groups in terms of their motivations for following sport organizations.

The results of the study indicated that Weibo users were highly motivated by gathering technical knowledge, expressing support toward their favorite athletes, escaping from their current lives, and their curiosity. The findings of the study are somewhat in line with a study conducted by Park and his colleagues (2015), where they found the motives behind Chinese users following Olympians' Weibo were: obtaining technical knowledge, supporting athletes, pass-time, and diversion (escape). Also, the results of this study indicated that Chinese Weibo users rated higher in information motivation and interactivity motivation than Twitter users, which was also consistent with a past study (i.e. Kim et al., 2011). In their study, participants in collectivistic dominated cultures (Korean) rated information and social support higher than social media users in individualistic countries (U.S.) when asked their motivation for using social media. One different result between the two studies was Weibo users rated higher than Twitter users on entertainment motivation in the current study, but Kim and her colleagues claimed that American students were more motivated than Korean students. The primary reason for this discrepancy was that Kim et al.'s study was focusing on SNSs as whole, while this study only concentrated on microblogging services. As mentioned in the literature review, Weibo provides

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more entertaining functions to its users than Twitter, so it can interpret why Weibo users rated entertainment motivation higher than Twitter users.

In this study, Weibo users were more motivated than Twitter users in following Lakers' social media for satisfying their content gratification including obtaining entertainment information and technical knowledge. This is supported by Hofstede's (2013) theory that Chinese participants had higher Power Distance Index (PDI) than Americans, suggesting that Chinese live in a higher hierarchy society where people tend to rely on authoritative information. In societies that exhibit low PDI scores, people were more likely to make decisions based on the data and facts, since independence was highly valued (Chiang, 2014). Since the Lakers' Weibo official account has been verified, Chinese social media users are more likely to believe the credibility of information provided on this account and use it to gather news regarding the team.

The results of the MANOVA analysis also revealed that the convenience motivation was rated significantly higher for Twitter users compared to Chinese Weibo users, which was also consistent with the result from Kim et al. (2011). In their study, individualistic people (American students) had a higher desire to use social media since they believed it was a fun and convenient tool for obtaining information and seeking out friends. Also, the Lakers' Twitter account has been updated more frequently than its Weibo account, with an average 513 messages posted on Lakers' Twitter account per month (Los Angeles Lakers, 2016a) compared to only 106 messages shared on its Weibo per month (Lakers, 2016b). Therefore, Lakers' Twitter users may find it easier to obtain information compared to Weibo users, since more information is accessible on Twitter. Additionally, supporting their favorite team was another main driver for Twitter users to follow the Lakers compared to Weibo users. This result indicates that the Twitter users sample had higher team identification with the Lakers than the Weibo sample.

Regression analyses conducted in this study explained which identified motives appeared to be significant predictors of the interactivity among both Twitter and Weibo users (RQs 6-7). The results identified two significant factors – information and team support- that could predict the frequency of Weibo users' interaction with Lakers' official account, which means that social media users in collectivistic, high-context cultures (Kim et al., 2011), such as Chinese Lakers' Weibo followers, tended to more actively interact with sport organizations on social media as their information and team support demands were gratified. However, the results revealed there were three significant motives – entertainment, team support, and technical knowledge – that can predict the Lakers Twitter users' interactivity. In other words, social media users in individualistic, low-context cultures (Kim et al., 2011), such as the Lakers' Twitter followers, would be more active as long as their needs of entertainment, team support, and technique knowledge are fulfilled.

The majority of the prior studies measuring the relationship between motives and points of attachments were mainly focused on the spectator's perspective. For instance, Funk and his colleagues (2001) found that the motives of aesthetics and excitement were significantly associated with the interest in soccer as they researched fans following professional soccer teams. In this study, the relationship between the motives of using social media and points of attachment was observed (RQs 8-9). The results indicated that both team support and athlete support motivations played important roles in predicting Weibo users' points of attachment (team, basketball, players, and the NBA). Regression analysis revealed that team support, athlete support, and entertainment motivations could predict Weibo users' team identification, while athlete support and escape motives could explain users' association with basketball. In addition, the results also indicated that Weibo users' association with players could be predicted by athlete

support, escape, team support (negative), convenience, and technique knowledge (negative), which means users who highly identified themselves as certain players' fans would be more likely to follow sport organizations on social media for expressing their support to the athlete, escape, and convenience motivations, but not for motives of team support and technique knowledge. Moreover, Weibo users' association with NBA could be predicted by curiosity, team support (negative), and interactivity. In other words, as Weibo users are more likely to identify themselves as general NBA fans, they are more likely to follow sport organizations for fulfilling their demands of curiosity and interactivity.

The motives of team support also explained the biggest variance of Laker Twitter followers' points of attachment, which was highly associated with participants' team identification (positive), player affiliation (negative), and the NBA (negative). The results also showed that Twitter users' motive of pass-time was a positive predictor to their affiliation with the NBA, and their motive of expressing athlete support was positively related to their attachment to players.

One interesting finding in this study is that both Twitter and Weibo followers' motive of team support was positively related to their team identification, but was negatively associated with their player identification with players and the NBA. In other words, sports fans with higher level of team identification would be more likely to follow the team on social media to express their support toward their favorite team. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Phua (2010), which showed that highly identified football fans were more likely to obtain more information through different media channels, such as TV and the Internet. Moyer (2012) found that consuming such media enhance sports' fans media' association with the team. However, the results also found that these fans' consumption of media would decrease their affiliation with

players and the sport itself. This finding is consistent with BIRG and CORF theories, which claim that highly identified fans tend to BIGR more and CORF less than fans with low identified fans, and they also are concerned about a team's performance (winning or losing) rather than individual players (Ngan, Predergast, & Tsang, 2009). Even though star players are crucial to sport organizations, their absence would not cause highly identified fans to stop supporting their favorite team (Ngan, et al. 2009).Therefore, sport consumers with higher team identification prefer evaluating the team as a whole rather than certain individual players. (Ngan et al. 2009)

Implications

Though culture has been considered conceptually in prior research that may determine social media users' motivation and behaviors, this study provides the empirical evidence for the first time that there is an existing connection between cultural difference and motivational discrepancy. Through uses and gratifications theory, the study shed light on how the role of culture determines sport social media consumers' points of attachment, motivation of following sport organizations, and their social media usage. The results of the study confirmed that there were many significant differences between Weibo and Twitter users in terms of their motivation, usage pattern, and points of attachment.

Undeniably, China is the home to NBA's the largest international fanbase (Heitner, 2015). Therefore, exploring the similarities and differences of how sport consumers in the United States and China utilize social media could assist more sport organizations, especially those interested in unlocking commercial opportunities in Asian markets, to develop more adaptable social media strategies in sport marketing and sport communication. The results of this study suggested that sports organizations need to dedicate more efforts to providing greater depth and

more targeted information on their social media platforms, especially Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo, in order to satisfy Chinese users' demands. In the meantime, sport organizations should continue to share more information about their star players on Weibo in order to enhance sports fans' attachment with the team. In addition, since Chinese sports fans are more interested in using Weibo to gain entertainment and to escape from their current life, sport organizations should offer more interesting, interactive contents, such as behind-the-scenes stories, to attract their attention. As Chiang (2014) mentioned, in the collectivism society, maintaining a positive public image could assist organizations in preventing people from voicing complaints directly on social media, but organizations also have to consider whether social media users use other channels, such as using anonymous, to express their dissatisfaction. Therefore, the Lakers should also consider using other ways to monitor users' opinions.

The study found that expressing their support toward the team was the main diver for Twitter users to follow sport organizations; therefore, providing more team related content, such as a team's game videos and practice information on Twitter, could increase users' loyalty toward the sport organization. Also, the study showed that Twitter users were more likely to be active to interact with the Lakers' Twitter account as their entertainment motive, team support motive, and technical knowledge motive were fulfilled. Therefore, sport organizations need to disseminate more entertainment information (i.e. fun videos) and technical information (i.e. game statistic reports) on social media to augment their followers' satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Directions

There is not a study without limitations. One of the limitations in this study is that the researcher only surveyed one NBA team's users on two different social media platforms to explore the relationship between their points of attachment and motivations of following sport

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organizations, it may affect its' generalizability. Also, the study relied on participants to self-reporting data, and it assumed that they actually follow the Lakers on Twitter or Weibo, it is not guaranteed that the information provided by participants reflects their actual situations. Thirdly, the items regarding social media adapted in this study were modified from previous literature examining the Internet because there was not an available scale measuring the motivation of sport fans using social media. Fourthly, when measuring differences between Twitter and Weibo users in their motivation, even though some motives (such as convenience, information, and entertainment) were found to be significant between two groups, the effect sizes were not high. Application of this study's results to other research should be made with caution. Finally, the current study was conducted during 2015-2016 NBA season; that was an unsuccessful year for the Lakers, and it was also Kobe Bryant's last year. This may have impacted participants' answers, since participants could rate higher in obtaining information regarding players such as Kobe Bryant rather than team information.

In order to address these limitations, future research could focus on several different avenues. Due to the missed scale addressing sport social media users, further scholars could develop a valid and reliable scale that could be used to measure sport social media users' motivation. Using the new developed scale, other researchers could survey a bigger group of sport media consumers rather than fans of one particular team. In addition, since this is one of the first known studies examining the cultural impact on sports fans' social media behaviors, the understanding of the cultural influences among diverse social media users groups is still in the early stage. Thus, it is worthwhile to continue explaining the nature of this relationship, and how different cultural orientations would determine social media engagers' preferences, usage patterns, and behaviors. Finally, since prior studies also suggested that people's behaviors are

also shaped by their ethnicity, examining how ethnicity distinguishes users' social media

behaviors in a similar cultural environment appears to be a worthy topic to research in the future.

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APPENDICES

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

December 3, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bo Li
                       Stephen Dittmore

FROM: Ro Windwalker
                       IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #:   15-11-363

Protocol Title: *Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users'
                       Motivations for Following Sport Organizations on Twitter and
                       Weibo*

Review Type: ☒ EXEMPT   ☐ EXPEDITED   ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 12/03/2015 Expiration Date: 12/02/2016

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 400 participants. If you wish to make any modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.

Title of the research: *Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users' Motivations for Following Sport Organizations on Twitter and Weibo*

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Principal Researcher: Bo Li
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Stephen W. Dittmore

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

      The purpose of this study is to explore the motivations of Twitter and Weibo users following sports organizations through an online survey. As one of the first known studies to identify the cultural impacts in users' social media motives and behaviors in a sport and social media context, this study fills a gap of providing insights on whether sports social media users from different markets will display different motives when they consume similar social media platforms.

      Twitter and Weibo users who follow NBA team Los Angeles Lakers will be invited to participate in this study. Your participation will be invited to complete an online survey. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

      Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you may refuse to participate. Also, you may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There is no anticipated risk to participating and all information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable State and Federal law. No information you share can be traced electronically to you, the computer you used, nor can you traced by any information you provide. At the conclusion of the study you will have the right to request feedback about the results and you have the right to contact the principal researcher as listed below for any concerns that you may have.

      You may contact the principal researcher, Bo Li (boli@uark.edu). You may also contact the University of Arkansas Research Compliance office listed below if you have questions about your rights as a participant, or to discuss any concerns about, or problems with the research.

Ro Windwalker, CIP
Institutional Review Board Coordinator
Research Compliance
University of Arkansas
210 Administration
Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201
479-575-2208
irb@uark.edu

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Bo Li, Doctoral candidate

<div align="right">

IRB #15-11-363
Approved: 12/03/2015
Expires: 12/02/2016

</div>

Thanks you for taking the time to help us to understand why you are following Lakers on Twitter/ Weibo. The research is titled "*Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users' Motivations for Following Sport Organizations on Twitter and Weibo*".

This study is being done by Doctoral Candidate Bo Li (University of Arkansas), Associate Professor Steve Dittmore (University of Arkansas).

The purpose of this research study is to understand what motivate Twitter and Weibo users to follow LA Lakers' official social media account.

Please note that all information you provide is treated as strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this research project. Results are reported in aggregate form and you will not be identified in any way.

This project has approved by the University of Arkansas's office of Research Compliance Institutional Review Borad (IRB# 15-11-363). The University of Canberra Institutional Review Broad Coordinator can be reached at email: irb@uark.edu.
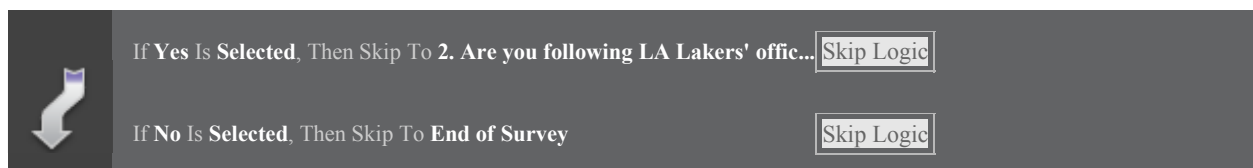
If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, please contact the leading researcher using the details below.

Bo (Norman) Li, Doctoral Candidate
University of Arkansas
Health, Human Performance and Recreation
219 HPER
boli@uark.edu

1. Are you 18-year old?
Yes
No

If **Yes** Is **Selected**, Then Skip To **2. Are you following LA Lakers' offic...** Skip Logic

If **No** Is **Selected**, Then Skip To **End of Survey** Skip Logic

2. Are you following LA Lakers' official account either on Twitter or on Weibo?
- Yes, I'm following Lakers on Twitter only
- Yes, I'm following Lakers on Weibo only
- Yes, I'm following Lakers on both Twitter and Weibo
- No, I am not following Lakers on both social media platforms.

On a scale of 1-5, with one meaning "strongly disagree" with five meaning "strongly agree", rate your feeling on Twitter/Weibo usage.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using Twitter is one of the most important things I do each day.	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
If Twitter was not working, I would really miss it.	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
Using Twitter is very important in my life.	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
I could easily do without Twitter for several days.	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌
I would feel lost without Twitter.	◌	◌	◌	◌	◌

How long in years have you had a Twitter accounts? (fill in from 1-10)_____

How much time in hours would you estimate that you spend reading Twitter messages in an average day? (fill in from 0-24))_____

How long in years have you been following LA Lakers' official account on Twitter? (fill in from 1-6) _____

How often do you interact with LA Lakers official accounts on Twitter/ Weibo?
- More than once a day
- Daily
- Several times per week
- No more than once per week

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- Seldom
- Never

On a scale of 1-5, with 1 meaning "least wanted" and 5 meaning "most wanted", rate what contents you are mainly seeking from LA Lakers' official Twitter account.

	least wanted	2	3	4	most wanted
Interaction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Promotion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Live game updates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Team news	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Player news	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Videos	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Behind the scenes information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What other channels do you use to consume the Lakers (check all that apply)?

☐ TV   ☐ Newspapers

☐ Radio   ☐ Attending games

☐ Live streaming

On a scale of 1-7, with one meaning "strongly disagree" and eight meaning "strongly agree", rate your feelings regarding your perspective of following LA Lakers on Twitter.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Lakers basketball team wins are very important to me. I consider myself to	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
be a "real" fan of LA Lakers.							
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of LA Lakers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being a fan of LA Lakers is very important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
First and foremost I consider myself a basketball fan.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Basketball is my favorite sport.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am a basketball fan at all levels.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I identify with an individual player on the team than with the team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am a big fan of specific players more than I am a fan of the team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider myself a fan of certain players rather than a fan of the team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am a fan of NBA regardless of who is playing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't identify with one specific NBA team, but NBA in general.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I consider myself a fan of NBA, and not	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
just one specific team.							
LA Lakers' Twitter provides large volumes of sports information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I am able to obtain a wide range of sports information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I can learn about things happening in the sports world.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it is exciting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it is cool.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it is amusing.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I want to know the technical aspect of sports.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I want to know the rules of their sports.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I want to know	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
strategies of their sports.							
LA Lakers' Twitter provides quick and easy access anywhere.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LA Lakers' Twitter allows me to navigate and find desired contents quickly and easily.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LA Lakers' Twitter makes it easy to obtain desired contents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
LA Lakers' Twitter is easy to use and find needed contents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter is because it is the particular team I am interested in following.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I believe it is important to support my favorite team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Following LA Lakers on Twitter demonstrates my support for favorite team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter is because they have a	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
particular athlete I am interested in following.							
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I believe it is important to support my favorite athletes.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Following LA Lakers on Twitter demonstrates my support for my favorite athlete.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter for interacting with other social media users.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter for interacting with the team.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter for participants in contests.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I can escape from reality.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it allows me to enter a nonthinking, relaxing period.	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because I	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
can forget about work.							
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it gives me something to do to occupy my time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow LA Lakers on Twitter because it passes time away, particularity when I am bored.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I use LA Lakers' Twitter during my free time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
When I see new things I want to try them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I follow the Lakers Twitter account because a friend or family member recommended it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I enjoy exploring new social media accounts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Sex

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age

_____

How would you classify yourself?

- ☐ Asian

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- ☐ Caucasian
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Others

Place of residence (country)

_____

Education level:

- ☐ A. Some High School, No Diploma,
- ☐ B. High School Graduate
- ☐ C. Some college, No degree
- ☐ D. Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ E. Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, etc.)

Section II

在分值1-5的评判标准里，请选择你使用微博的态度。1代表"强烈不同意"，5代表"强烈同意"。

	强烈不同意	不同意	中立	同意	强烈同意
使用微博是我每天都做的一个最重要的事情之一。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
如果有天没办法使用微博，我会非常想念它。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
使用微博在我生活里很重要。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
如果没有微博，我也能够轻松过几天。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
如果没有微博，我会感到很失落。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

你拥有一个微博账号多少年了？（填写从 1-6）_____

你估计平均每天花多少小时在你的微博账号上更新信息？（填写 0-24）_____

你关注洛杉矶湖人队的官方微博账号多少年了？（填写 1-3）_____

你与洛杉矶湖人队官方微博账号的互动频率是多少？

- ▢ 一天数次
- ▢ 每天
- ▢ 一周几次
- ▢ 一周不超过一次
- ▢ 很少
- ▢ 从没

在分值 1-5 的评判标准里，请选择你主要通过洛杉矶湖人队的官方微博获取那些信息。1 代表"不感兴趣"，5 代表"非常感兴趣"。

	不感兴趣	2	3	4	非常感兴趣
互动	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
宣传推广	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
赛事直播更新	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
球队信息	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
球员信息	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
视频	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
幕后新闻	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢
其他内容（请具体举例）_____	▢	▢	▢	▢	▢

你通过哪些其他渠道来关注洛杉矶湖人队？（可多选）

☐ 电视　　　　　　　　　☐ 现场观战

☐ 广播　　　　　　　　　☐ 报纸

☐ 互联网直播

在分值 1-7 的评判标准里，请选择你是否同意下面的陈述。1 代表"强烈不同意"，7 代表"强烈同意"。

	强烈不同意	非常同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意	强烈同意
我认为自己是洛杉矶湖人队的铁杆球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
如果我无法继续成为一名洛杉矶湖人队球迷的话，我会感觉到很失落。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
成为洛杉矶湖人队的球迷对我而言很重要。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
首先我觉得自己是一名篮球球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
篮球是我喜欢的体育运动。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我是各级别篮球赛事的球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我认同球队中的某位球员而并非整支队伍。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我是球队中某一球员的球迷多于这支球队的球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我觉得自己是某位队员的一位球迷，而并非是整个球队的球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我自己是美职篮（NBA）的球迷，不管是谁在比赛。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我觉得我并非某支具体球队的球迷，而是一名NBA球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
我认为自己是一NBA球迷，而不仅仅是某支队伍的球迷。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

在分值 1-7 的评判标准里，请选择你是否同意下面关于关注湖人队官方微博动机的有关陈述。1 代表"强烈不同意"，7 代表"强烈同意"。

	强烈不同意	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意	强烈同意
洛杉矶湖人队的微博提供了大量的体育信息。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为我能够获取大量的体育信息。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为我能了解到在体育世界里发生的事情。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为它令人兴奋。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为它很酷。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为它让人愉悦。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为我想了解体育的技术层面。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为我想知道他们体育的规则。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为我想知道他们体育的战术策略。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
在任何地方洛杉矶湖人队的微博都能快速轻易接入。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
洛杉矶湖人队的微博允许我快速轻易地寻找到渴望的信息。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
洛杉矶湖人队的微博让得到渴望的信息变得容易。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
洛杉矶湖人队的微博非常容易使用和找到所需要的信息。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为它是一支我特别感兴趣关注的队伍。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为我相信这对于支持我喜爱的队伍很重要。	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡	⊡

	强烈不同意	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意	强烈同意
在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队表明我对于我喜欢队伍的支持。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是因为它是有一名我很喜欢关注的球员。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为我相信这对于支持我喜爱的球员很重要。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队表明我对于我喜欢球员的支持。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是为了与其他社交网络用户互动。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是为了与球队进行互动。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队是为了参与其他竞猜。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为我能从现实生活中逃避出来。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为它允许我进入一个不用思考放松的阶段。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为能帮我忘记我的工作。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为它能让我有事可做，打发时间。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为它让我很容易消磨时间，特别是当我无聊的时候。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在空闲时间浏览洛杉矶湖人队的微博。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙

	强烈不同意	非常不同意	不同意	中立	同意	非常同意	强烈同意
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为当我看到新鲜事物的时候，我就愿意尝试。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为有朋友或者家人推荐给我。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
我在微博上关注洛杉矶湖人队因为我喜欢关注新的社交网络账号。	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙

性别

- ⊙ 1. 男
- ⊙ 2. 女

年龄_____

居住地_____

种族

- ⊙ 亚洲人
- ⊙ 白种人
- ⊙ 黑人
- ⊙ 拉丁裔
- ⊙ 其他

教育程度

- ⊙ **高中在读**
- ⊙ **高中毕业**
- ⊙ **大学本科在读**
- ⊙ **大学本科**
- ⊙ **研究生以上学历**

Bo (Norman) Li

EDUCATION

University of Arkansas   **Fayetteville AR**

Doctorate of Education in Recreation and Sport Management
Dissertation: Why We Follow: Exploring How Culture Shapes Users' Motivations for Following Sport Organizations on Twitter and Weibo
Committee members: Dr. Stephen W. Dittmore; Dr. Sarah Stokowski; Dr. Wen-Juo Lo; Dr. Kasey Walker
Expected graduation date: May 2016.

University of New South Wales (UNSW)   **Sydney, NSW, Australia**

Master of Arts in International Relations, May 2007

University of Wollongong (UOW)   **Wollongong, NSW, Australia**

Master of International Business, May 2006

Guangzhou University   **Guangzhou, China**

B.A in Radio and Television Broadcasting, May 2003

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Social media and sports organizations
Users' motivation and social media usage
Sport journalism
Olympic movement
Coach-athlete relationship

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Li, B., Stokowski, S., Dittmore, S. W., & Scott, O. K. M. (2015). For better or for worse: The impact of social media on Chinese sports journalists. *Communication and Sport*. DOI: 10.1177/2167479515617279

Li, B., Stokowski, S., Dittmore, S. W. & Scott, O. K. M. (2016). How mediated sporting events constituted nationalism? An analysis of Chinese newspaper coverage of the 2014 Incheon Asian Games. *International Journal of Sport Communication. 9* (1), 79-96.

Li, B., Dittmore, S. W. & Park, J. (2015). Exploring different perceptions of coach-athlete relationship: The case of Chinese Olympians. *International Journal of Coaching Science, 9*(2), 59-76.

Park, J., **Li, B.**, & Dittmore, S. W. (2015). What motivates Chinese sports fans to subscribe to athletes' social media accounts? *Journal of the Korea Academia-Industrial Cooperation Society. 16*(2), 1604-1072. DOI:10.5762/KAIS.2015.16.2.1064

Published Abstracts

Li, B., Rolfe, D., & Dittmore, S.W. (2015). Different perceptions of coach-athlete relationship between Chinese Olympians and Western Olympians. *Global Sport Business Journal*.

Li, B., Malmo, J., & Rolfe, D. (2015). The assessment of motivation of volunteers in 2014 Brazil World Cup. *Global Sport Business Journal*.

Park, J., Park, M., Shin, J., **Li, B.**, Rolfe, D., Yoo, J., & Dittmore, S. W. (2015). The Effect of Sports Participation on internet addiction mediated by self-control: a case of Korean adolescents. *Global Sport Business Journal*.

Malmo, J., Rolfe, D & **Li, B.** (2015). Black Belts and High Heels: An Analysis of Gender Representation on Martial Arts Magazine Covers. *Global Sport Business Journal*.

REFREED CONFERENCE PAPERS

Dittmore, S.W. & **Li, B.** (2016). Serve and volley: A political economy view of The Tennis Channel's 5-year quest for carriage. Paper presented at *2016 9ᵗʰ Summit of International Association of Communication and Sport*.

Hinsey, S., Stokowski, S., Moiseichik, M., Turk, M., & **Li B**., (2016). Athletic Identity and Career Maturity of Women's Basketball Student-Athletes. Paper presented at *2016 College Sport Research Institute Conference*.

Stokowski, S., Moiseichik, M., Turk, M., **Li, B**. & Goss, B. (2016). NCAA Eligibility Legislation and Student-Athletes with Learning Disabilities. Paper presented at *2016 College Sport Research Institute Conference.*

Kim, S., Yoo, J., **Li, B**., & Dittmore, S.W. (2016) Comparison of Motivational Factors to Participate in Sport Activities between American and Korean Students. Paper presented at *2016 Applied Sport Management Conference.*

Li, B., Stokowski, S., Malmo, J., Rolfe, D., & Dittmore, S. W. (2016 February). A gendered study of how student-athletes frame themselves on Twitter. Paper presented at *2016 Global Sport Business Conference*. Bahamas.

Rolfe, D., Cock, B.C., **Li, B**., Malmo, J.R., & Stine, G. (2016 February). Beyond doping: Analysis of professional sports' drug policies. Paper presented at to *2016 Global Sport Business Conference*. Bahamas.

Yoo, J., Kim, W., **Li, B**, & Moiseichik, M. L. (2015 October). Examining motives of participants in campus recreation: A cross cultural study. Paper presented at 2015 Conference of the Sport Marketing Association, Atlanta, GA.

Stokowski, S., **Li, B.,** & Dittmore, S.W. (2015 June). It's a love/hate relationship: Work motivation and job satisfaction of sport management faculty members. Paper presented at

the 2015 Conference of the North American Society for Sport Management, Ottawa, Canada.

Li, B., Stokowski. S., Yoo, J. & Dittmore, S. W. (2015 June). How mediated sporting events constituted nationalism? An analysis of Chinese newspaper coverage of the 2014 Incheon Asian Games. Paper presented at the 2015 Conference of the North American Society for Sport Management, Ottawa, Canada.

Li, B., Stokowski. S., Xiao L. Zong, S. & Dittmore, S. W. (2015 March). Twitter and Tennis: How professional players tweet in a Grand Slam event. Paper presented at 8th Summit of International Association of Communication and Sport, Charlotte, NC.

Li, B., Malmo, J., Liu, J. & Zong, S. & Dittmore, S. W. (2015 March). Has social media changed sport journalism? The case study of China. Paper presented at 8th Summit of International Association of Communication and Sport, Charlotte, NC.

Dittmore, S. W., Malmo, J., & **Li, B**. (2015 March). College athletic annual reports: Governmental requirement or public relations vehicle? Paper presented at 2015 Sport and Recreation Law Association Conference. Charlotte, NC.

Park, J., **Li, B.**, & Dittmore, S. W. (advisor) (2015 Feb). What motivates Chinese sports fans to subscribe to athletes' social media accounts? Paper presented at 2015 Southern Sport Management Association Conference. Baton Rouge, LA.

Li, B., Rolfe, D., & Dittmore, S.W. (2015 Feb). Different perceptions of coach-athlete relationship between Chinese Olympians and Western Olympians. Paper presented at *2015 Global Sport Business Conference*. Bahamas.

Li, B., Malmo, J., & Rolfe, D. (2015 Feb). The assessment of motivation of volunteers in 2014 Brazil World Cup. Paper presented at *2015 Global Sport Business Conference*, Bahamas.

Park, J., Park, M., Shin, J., **Li, B.**, Rolfe, D., Yoo, J., & Dittmore, S. W. (2015 Feb). The effect of sports participation on internet addiction mediated by self-control: a case of Korean adolescents. Paper presented at *2015 Global Sport Business Conference*, Bahamas.

Malmo, J., Rolfe, D & **Li, B.** (2015 Feb). Black Belts and High Heels: An Analysis of Gender Representation on Martial Arts Magazine Covers. Paper presented at *2015 Global Sport Business Conference*, Bahamas.

Li, B., Park, J., Yoo, J., Li, S., & Dittmore, S.W. (2014 April). Analysis of collegiate athletics' online social network: focusing on University of Arkansas official Twitter accounts. Paper presented 7th Annual College Sport Research Institute Conference, Columbia, SC.

Yoo, J., **Li, B**., Park J**.**, & Dittmore, S. W. (2014 Feb). The network and content analysis of American Olympic writers regarding the Olympic messages: focusing on Twitter. University of Georgia Sport Business Symposium. Athens, GA.

Park J., Yoo, J., **Li, B**., Dittmore, S. W. (2014 Feb). Network analysis of U.S. winter Olympic network: focusing on Twitter. University of Georgia Sport Business Symposium. Athens, GA.

NON- ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

- **Li, N**., (2014 Feb). Li Na's poker face. *Sports Business International*.
- **Li, N**., (2015 August). Digital upstarts. *Sports Business International*.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

- Undergraduate RESM4083: Research Methods in Recreation and Sport, Fall 2015
- Undergraduate RESM4003: Management in Recreation and Sport, Spring 2015, Spring 2014
- Undergraduate RESM2011 Recreation and Sport Management Practicum, Fall 2014
- Undergraduate RESM440V Internship, Fall 2014
- Undergraduate RESM3843 Recreation and Sport Facilities, Spring 2014
- Undergraduate RESM2853 Leisure and Society (Online), Fall 2013

GRANT ACTIVITIES

- February 2015   Travel to Global Sport Business Association Conference. Funded by University of Arkansas Graduate School Research Travel Grant in the amount of $1,112
- February 2014   Travel to University of Georgia Sport Business Symposium. Funded by University of Arkansas Graduate School Research Travel Grant in the amount of $1,112
- 2013-2016   Graduate assistantship awarded by University of Arkansas

PROFESSIONIAL MEMBERSHIPS

North American Society for Sport Management
Global Sport Business Association
International Association for Communication and Sport
Southern Sport Management Association

MASS MEDIA APPEARANCES

- 2015 July Media and Sports Podcast Commented about sports journalism and social media in China
- 2014 June Global TV (Brazil) Commented about Wayne Rooney's goalless World Cup journeys
- 2013 July Le Monde (France) Commented about Chinese swimmers' performance at

FINA World Championships

- 2013 April Al Jazeera Sport (UAE) Commented about David Beckham's impacts in China after being selected as the ambassador of the Chinese Premier League
- 2013 Jan ABC (Australia) Joined in a live interview in ABC news commenting about Li Na's achievement at the 2013 Australian Open and her impacts on the development of tennis in China
- 2012 June Agence France-Presse (AFP) Commented about Chinese Olympic delegation's preparation for 2012 London Olympic Games
- 2012 April ESPN (Brazil) Commented about Beijing Olympics' legacies and the development of extreme sports in China
- 2012 February   Participated in Olympic legend Greg Louganis' film- Back on Board: Greg Louganis.
- 2011 October L'Equipe (France) Commented about the development of tennis in China

CAREER SUMMARY

Freelancing News Writer, TV presenter   **2013-Present**

- Wrote stories about Chinese sports for *SportBusiness International* magazine
- Reported 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup
- Represented Tencent of China to report 2014 Brazil World Cup
  - Hosted an online video show *Stars Face to Face* where I have interviewed NBA players Steve Nash and Ricky Rubio, FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke, soccer legends Arsene Wenger and Zico.
- Writing a column at Letv.com introducing American collegiate sports and professional sports

Around the Rings (ATR)   **2011- Present**

   Asian Sport Correspondent

- Writing English reports for ATR with regard to real-time developments of China's sports and Asia's sports
- Reporting World Conference on Women and Sports organized by IOC in Los Angeles, USOC Media Summit, London Olympics Games working as the Asian Correspondent

Tencent, *Beijing, China,*   **2008-2013**

  Chief Sport Journalist

Responsible for reporting all international and domestic sporting events.

- Reported all international major sporting events including Summer Olympic Games (2008 & 2012), UEFA European Football Championships (2008 & 2012), FIFA World Cup (2010), FINA World Championships (2009, 2011& 2013), World Table Tennis Championship (2009), Asian Games (2010), World University Games (2011), NBA

All Star Games (2012).

- Presented Tencent to interview sports political figures including Jacques Rogue, former president of International Olympic Committee (IOC); Thomas Bach, current president of IOC; Scott Blackmun , CEO of USOC; Sebastian Coe, Chairman of the British Olympic Association (BOA), Former chairman of the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games; Moon-Joon Chung, Honorary Vice President of FIFA
- Wrote more than 3000 news stories in Chinese with more than 20 written and visual Journalistic Works that had been viewed and read by over 1 million times
- Reported international political and economic events including Davos Global Economic Forum (2010) and Annual Meeting of the New Champions (2009 & 2010)
- Presented Tencent to interview International Political and Economic Figures including Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the UN and other Economists and entrepreneurs.
- Interpreted for entertainment and sport stars on TV shows including Oscar the best supporting male actor, Christian Bale, NBA star Dikembe Mutombo, and football legend Luis Figo.
- Assisted international media such as New York Times, AP, AFP, Global TV (Brazil), Al Jazeera Sport (UAE), SBS (Australia), ABC (Australia), ESPN (Brazil), ARD (Germany) to cover sports in China.