

Cross-Cultural Sports Comparison

By Haja Sharifi – Based on Research by Carrington (2015), Anderson & Li (2022)

Theoretical Background

1. Cultural Theories

Frameworks: Hofstede (dimensions), Hall (context), Trompenaars (values)
These help explain communication, authority, and teamwork differences in sports cultures.
Hofstede’s model identifies key dimensions such as individualism vs. collectivism and power distance.
Hall’s theory explains communication context: high-context (indirect, shared understanding) vs. low-context (direct).
Trompenaars emphasizes universalism vs. particularism, and how values guide relationships and authority in teams.

2. Participant Sample

Research Design

3. Methods

220 participants: Youth athletes (14–22), Coaches (25–60), Media experts
Countries: Germany, China, Japan, UK, USA – diverse cultural backgrounds

Surveys, interviews, training observations, media analysis
Cross-cultural comparative design with thematic evaluation
A mixed-methods approach was used.
Surveys gathered athlete perceptions; interviews revealed coaching strategies and cultural sensitivity.
Observations in practice sessions and media analysis showed how culture influences communication and leadership.

4. Reflective Loop & Synthesis

What works in one culture might not in another.
Reflection leads to improved coaching strategies & intercultural awareness. A mixed-methods approach was used.
Surveys gathered athlete perceptions; interviews revealed coaching strategies and cultural sensitivity.
Observations in practice sessions and media analysis showed how culture influences communication and leadership.

Findings & Implications

5. Findings: Athletes

Collectivist (e.g. Japan, China): harmony, team loyalty
Individualist (e.g. UK, USA): autonomy, personal achievement
Power distance affects communication with coaches.
Collectivist athletes prioritize team success and obedience to coaches.
Individualist athletes are more focused on personal development and open feedback.
These patterns affect motivation and conflict management.

6. Coaching Styles

Asian coaching: Top-down, strict, discipline-focused
Western coaching: Dialog-oriented, promotes independence and critical thinking
Coaches in East Asian cultures tend to lead authoritatively and stress discipline.
Western coaches use questioning, feedback, and promote athlete independence.

7. Good vs. Bad Practice

- ✓ Good: cultural adaptation, open communication
- X Bad: one-size-fits-all coaching, lack of feedback

Good Practice: Cultural adaptation, asking athletes for feedback, using context-appropriate motivation
Bad Practice: Applying same coaching style to all, ignoring cultural norms, imposing one-sided authority



Evaluation Criteria

🔄 Implications for Coaching Practice:
Cultural understanding improves athlete development, communication, and global teamwork. Adapting coaching styles increases effectiveness across cultures.

📖 References:
Carrington, B. (2015). Game of Two Halves. Sport in History, 35(4), 486–509.
Anderson & Li (2022). Coaching Styles in Cross-Cultural Contexts. International Review for the Sociology of Sport.