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East-West measures of evaluative concern and

self-presentational thinking in intercollegiate soccer

Abstract

Three facets of self-presentation were examined for 179 intercollegiate soccer players in Canada, Germany, and Japan. Participants completed the brief Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (FNE; Leary, 1983) and listed their sport-specific self-presentational concerns plus the target people of those concerns. Independent samples *t* tests and post hoc Tukey analyses of FNE scores revealed that evaluative fear was significantly higher for the Japanese players than for the Western participants. In addition, content analysis indicated that all three cohorts' thoughts were both performance- and behaviour-focused, but more team oriented than individual. Interestingly, though, the highest scoring category in Canada and Germany was that players had no specific concerns/that impressions did not matter; no such response was given in Japan. All of the players listed teammates and both knowledgeable and less knowledgeable spectators as target people, but the Japanese targets differed in that there was greater emphasis on in-groups. The results suggest that positive social evaluation carries considerable weight in Japanese sport, due in part to collectivistic values and the threat of losing "face". Coaches can reduce evaluative concern in Japan by reframing appropriate behaviours for sport versus those for social contexts. In Western nations, a Japanese-like emphasis on in-groups could lessen some of the pressures that stem from external sources. Follow-up study should examine how evaluative concern affects anxiety and performance quality in non-Western samples, as there are indications that self-presentational thinking may serve an adaptive function in Japan.

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Self-presentation is the process of monitoring and controlling how one is perceived and evaluated by others (Schlenker, 1980). Through deliberate presentation and omission of selected aspects of the self, the aim of self-presentational behaviour is to cast favourable impressions and avoid negative images within a variety of situations and environments (Leary, 1992; Schlenker, 1980). All interactions are affected in one way or another by self-presentational thinking (Leary, 1995), but the accompanying motives are not necessarily deceptive or manipulative in nature. In fact, most self-presentations are thought to reflect the individual's own self-construal and internal sense of identity within the immediate social context (Hudson & Williams, 2001; Leary, 1992; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980).

Contemporary reviews suggest that self-presentational behaviour stems from the discrete psychological processes of impression motivation and impression construction (Gammage et al., 2004; Leary & Kowalski, 1990), though the associated processes can vary widely between people and situations. Factors that commonly affect one's impression motivation include the relevance of others' evaluations to goal attainment, the personal significance of those goals, and the discrepancy between current and desired social identities (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Two main determinants of impression construction involve aspects of the private self; namely, the individual's self-concept and his or her desired and/or undesired identities. Leary and Kowalski (1990) state that both of these factors play a significant part in building an image that is congruent with the way one sees or would like to see oneself. The remaining determinants stem from interpersonal variables and include situational role and normative constraints, presumed values of the targets of the self-presentation, and the person's current or potential social image (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Elaborating on these points, people tend to act within the parameters of their perceived roles

and of the prevailing norms in most situations. They also behave in accordance with what they see as important to those they wish to impress, but will generally attempt only those presentations that can be reasonably maintained and defended (Schlenker, 1980). In other words, self-presentational efficacy (or one's confidence in leaving desired impressions) plays a part in the types of images one attempts to put forward and in the extent to which impression management is a source of concern to the individual.

It should be clear, then, that goals play a significant part in self-presentations, and that the pursuit of those goals is typically carried out in ways that do not jeopardize one's image in the eyes of relevant others (Leary, 1992). Few environments are more goal-driven than sport and physical activity settings, and more than two decades of research show that self-presentational thinking indeed plays a prominent role in sport and exercise behaviour (e.g., Carron, Burke, & Prapavessis, 2004; Hudson & Williams, 2001; Leary, 1992; Martin & Mack, 1996; McGowan, Prapavessis, & Wesch, 2008; Podlog et al., 2013; Prapavessis, Grove, & Eklund, 2004; Wilson & Eklund, 1998). The context of competitive sport contains its own set of unique self-presentational risks in that performance athletes are routinely faced with the prospect of projecting negative images of themselves to a myriad of evaluative others (Leary, 1992; Martin & Mack, 1996). Such images include the appearance of being incompetent, unprepared, or unable to handle pressure, among others (Leary, 1992; Wilson & Eklund, 1998), and their importance is exacerbated by the fact that the image a person portrays as an athlete is likely to be paralleled with his or her overall social identity (Hudson & Williams, 2001). As a result, self-presentational thinking is often associated with choking (Mesagno, 2009) and self-handicapping behaviour (Prapavessis et al., 2004) in competition settings, but the most salient topic of study in self-presentation and sport has been the link with competitive anxiety. This is hardly surprising, as concerns about self-presentational effects are often marked by a concomitant fear of negative evaluation (Leary, 1992), which can lead

to heightened perceptions of threat and corresponding increases in anxiety during performance.

Leary (1992) contends that competitive anxiety is a context-specific version of social anxiety, both of which arise when people have doubts about their capacity to make positive impressions on others. Leary (2001) also notes that social anxiety increases if interactions show potential for "relational devaluation"—the belief that the impressions made on others will lead those others to put less value on the relationship or interaction—and it is easy to extend this phenomenon to team sport settings considering the synergistic nature of training and competition. Accordingly, there is considerable consensus today that a wide range of sport anxiety experiences are driven by some facet of evaluative fear or self-presentational concern (Hudson & Williams, 2001; Leary, 1992; McGowan et al., 2008; Wilson & Eklund, 1998).

Looking further, Bray, Martin, and Widmeyer (2000) point out that it is also important to identify, acknowledge, and address the *specific concerns* of athletes with respect to others' evaluations, as well as *who* those others might be. In their research with adolescent skiers, Bray and colleagues showed that evaluative concerns were significant sources of anxiety and that these concerns encompassed various ability assessments (such as technique, power, and form) from other competitors alongside simpler outcome evaluations (winning or losing) of parents and friends, with differences in type of concern based on the spectators' degree of knowledge about skiing. Bray et al.'s (2000) research thus demonstrates the multifaceted nature of self-presentational cognitions and the interaction between the athlete, the situation, and the characteristics of the applicable target people.

One area with little consideration to date, however, is the role of cultural identity in self-presentational behaviour. That is, research into self-presentation among athletes has focused on Western competitors, despite growing calls to consider cultural influence in sport

psychology studies (e.g., Dewar & Horn, 1992; Duda & Allison, 1990; Hayashi & Weiss, 1994; Kim, Williams, & Gill, 2003; Park, 2004; Peters & Williams, 2006). When used to describe the mores of nationhood, culture is associated with specific sets of behaviours, attitudes, and traditions that are shared by a group of people and passed down from one generation to the next (Myers, 2005). Different cultures develop conventions for sampling information from the environment, plus corresponding norms for how to weigh the sampled elements (Berry & Triandis, 2004), and variations in these conventions can affect people's values and attitudes. This includes attitudes toward sport (Nagaki, 1998), and empirical findings once thought to be universal are increasingly seen as culturally bound (Peters & Williams, 2006). Such cultural interpretations may be especially interesting within an East-West framework, where cross-national diversity in other branches of psychology has frequently been attributed to the cultural dimensions of individualism and collectivism.

In brief, individualistic cultures are defined as those that stress independence, social assertiveness, uniqueness, autonomy, and personal goals; a great deal of focus is on the *self*. Collectivistic cultures emphasize social interdependence, group connectedness, deference, and mutual compromise; information processing is primarily based on the *group* (Bochner, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). A substantial body of research suggests that people in Japan and other East Asian countries exhibit greater collectivism or interdependence and have a stronger sense of hierarchy and community, whereas independence, individuality, and horizontal relationships tend to be characteristics of North American and European nations (Kerr, Kawaguchi, Oiwa, Terayama, & Zukawa, 2000; Kim & Gill, 1997; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). An interesting addendum is the work of Oyserman, Koon, and Kemmelmeier (2002), who reported higher individualism scores in Germany than Japan but similar ratings of collectivism. As outlined below and in later sections of the paper, though, it

is reasonable to suggest that Japanese collectivism includes unique aspects of tradition and ideology that are not as evident in the collective ethic of Germany.

In competitive sport environments, one might expect athletes' cognitions to reflect in some way(s) the purported individualistic or collectivistic nature of the cultures in which they live and compete. As regards Japan, support for this notion is provided by Pempel (1998), whose discourse on Japanese sport and the characteristics of Japanese athletes refers to a sense of spirituality in one's activity and a devotion to the country's collective traditions as traits that are widely embraced and respected. Kelly (1998) takes a similar position in his discussion of Japanese baseball, with particular mention of hierarchy and the view of the coach as the unquestioned leader, while Nagaki (1998) describes obligation as a traditional sports value in Japan. For Japanese athletes, then, a collectivistic mindset means that the process of competing is contained within a climate of structure, obligation, and discipline. This is captured by the Japanese spirit of Budo or "do" (see Inoue, 1998; Otawa, Shinkawa, & Hirota, 1986), a philosophy on the proper *way of life* or *ways of doing* that is inherent in cultural arts (e.g., "Sho-do," or calligraphy), martial arts (e.g., "Ju-do," "Ken-do"), and spirituality (e.g., "Bushi-do," or the way of the warrior). In sport, two important characteristics of Japanese "do" are the adherence to behavioural norms and the value of correct process (Sakairi, 2000), and failure to meet the attendant standards can elicit negative evaluations from people whose impressions may be relevant to goal attainment. Such people are usually members of one's socially important in-group (or "miuchi") and are likely to include teammates, coaches, and close supporters.

There are numerous cultural display rules and "appropriate" behavioural codes for a variety of contexts in Japanese life (Matsumoto et al., 2002), the majority of which are followed due to the self-presentational importance of maintaining "face" (Whiting, 1977) and meeting social expectations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In performance settings, for

example, people tend to avoid expressing pride for individual success while readily

acknowledging their shortcomings and responsibility for failures, a self-presentational pattern

based in part on maintaining affiliation with one's group (Yamauchi, 1986). This should not

be interpreted as undermining the importance of winning, however. Winning is highly valued

in Japanese sport (see Alfermann, Geisler, & Okade, 2013; Hayashi & Weiss, 1994; Isogai,

Brewer, Cornelius, Etnier, & Tokunaga, 2003; Kusaka, 2006), and the combined need for

affiliation and group/team success often leads to the self-presentational act of crying after

losing or failing to win the top prize. To illustrate, tears are not uncommon among Japanese

Olympians after earning *only* silver or bronze medals (Tamaki, 2006). Even more customary

is the sight of high school soccer and baseball players crying disconsolately after elimination

from the national championship tournament, regardless of whether those losses occur in the

opening rounds or in the tournament's final stages. Such behaviour is not necessarily

exclusive to athletes in Japan, of course, but Japanese sportswriter Masayuki Tamaki asserts

that players have learned to think that it is *expected* of them (Tamaki, 2006)—to demonstrate

to teammates, coaches, and supporters that they gave their all and are devastated by their

failure. Tamaki adds that he doubts the trueness of these displays and suggests that those who

cannot cry usually pretend to do so, knowing that it is traditional behaviour and that spectators

want to see them cry. This conflicts with the Western notion of showing grace and stoicism

in defeat, but it is a further and poignant illustration of the importance of context-appropriate

self-presentation in Japan and in Japanese sport.

　　　Nevertheless, the presumed links between Japanese cultural norms, sport behaviours,

and evaluative concern have received scant research attention outside of Alfermann et al.

(2013), whose examination of athlete and coach variables failed to show significant

differences in evaluative fear between German and Japanese youth swimmers in combined-

gender training groups. Otherwise, any associations must be inferred from findings in

research with only peripheral connections to self-presentational thinking. An early example of such an extrapolated relationship can be gleaned from Berkowitz's (1972) studies on aggression, which demonstrated that certain societies do not display aggressive behaviour or condone aggressive incidents in their customs of play. Although not stated outright, Berkowitz's observations imply that aggressive acts within these cultures produce negative social evaluations in accordance with local behavioural codes and sport norms. Such should be the case in Japan, where people are said to be less outwardly aggressive than in most Western nations (Ferraro, 1999) and where overt shows of hostility are antithetical to cultural display rules (Izawa, Kodama, & Nomura, 2006), but correlations with self-presentational thinking have yet to be addressed in Japanese sport.

In a more recent study with potential (but secondary) connections to evaluative concern, Geisler and Kerr (2007) used a reversal theory framework to show that Japanese futsal players reported higher pre-game levels of humiliation, shame, and guilt than Canadian competitors in a tournament setting. Reversal theory associates these three emotions with human transactions (Kerr, 1999). Thus, it is possible that they reflected a pre-occupation with social evaluative thinking and consequent relational devaluation amongst the Japanese competitors—perhaps through fears of unfavourable interactions with teammates or some other self-presentational consideration. The premise remains speculative, however, as the study did not examine whether the reported emotions had self-presentational underpinnings.

Therefore, on the basis of the preceding review and dearth of research into evaluative concerns of Japanese athletes, this study's primary aim was to shed light on the self-presentational thinking of Japanese team sport competitors through cross-cultural comparisons with two Western cohorts. To address this current knowledge gap, the research was focused around the following three questions:

1. What are the similarities and/or differences in fear of negative evaluation between intercollegiate soccer players in Canada, Germany, and Japan?

2. What are the similarities and/or differences in the three groups' soccer-specific self-presentational thoughts?

3. What are the similarities and/or differences in the target people of the three groups' self-presentational thoughts?

Question 1 had an associated hypothesis, which predicted that players in Japan would score significantly higher on fear of negative evaluation than players in Canada and Germany. Questions 2 and 3 were intended to provide insights into the findings for Question 1. Due to the exploratory and descriptive nature of these follow-up questions, however, no formal hypotheses were proposed.

Methods and Procedures

Participants

The study involved 179 male intercollegiate soccer players from university teams in Canada (60 players), Germany (59 players), and Japan (60 players). Participants were drawn from four competing teams per country, with ages ranging from 18-31 years in Canada ($M = 21.4$, $SD = 2.31$), 20-30 years in Germany ($M = 22.8$, $SD = 2.27$), and 18-22 years in Japan ($M = 19.6$, $SD = 1.13$). All participants were full-time students as well as members of the top varsity soccer team at one of the selected institutions. Whether players were starters or non-starters was not a variable that could be assessed reliably since the starting line-ups for teams tended to vary from match to match, with players not always knowing until game day and thus not knowing for certain at the time of data collection. Therefore, players were only included in the research if they expected to be in the squad for their team's next match. This provision was to ensure that all participants believed their performances would be observed by others and that they were sufficiently engaged in the intercollegiate soccer experience at

the time of the study. On a team level, controlling for the strength/success of each squad was done by sampling teams that were in a league playoff position at the time of data collection.

It is also important to clarify that the terms "Canadian players," German players," and "Japanese players" in this research represent the nations where the applicable participants competed. Nevertheless, informal polling of the coaches in each country indicated that all of the Canada-based and Japan-based players were indeed Canadian and Japanese citizens, respectively. In Germany, one player was not a German citizen and instead held an Italian passport.

Measures

All participants completed the brief version of the Fear of Negative Evaluation scale (FNE; Leary, 1983). The brief FNE is a self-report inventory with a 5-point Likert-type scale for each of 12 questionnaire items, and respondents must indicate the extent to which the items describe them. A total score between 12 and 60 is then obtained, with higher scores indicating a greater fear of negative evaluation. Leary (1983) reported a correlation coefficient of .96 between the brief version of the FNE and the original long version. He also showed high internal consistency ($a = .90$) and acceptable 4-week test-retest reliability ($r = .75$). The German version of the FNE was developed by Vormbrock and Neuser (1983); the Japanese version was developed by Ishikawa, Sasaki, and Fukui (1992), and the two scales have since been used by different researchers in both languages (e.g., Alfermann et al., 2013; Chen et al., 2007; Keaten et al., 2009; Reichenberger et al., 2015). In the current study, the FNE showed good to excellent internal consistency via Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .90$ for the German version and $\alpha = .80$ for the Japanese version). These values are similar to those reported by Alfermann et al. (2013), who used the scale in their research with German and Japanese swimmers.

Players were told that their responses to the FNE items were to reflect their thoughts in an overall soccer context. A second form was then used to list any specific self-presentational thoughts as they pertain to competing in soccer, both on an individual and team level. The assessment read as follows: "Please list any other concerns or thoughts you have about the impressions that you and your team make on other people during games. Who are these people?" The first part of this follow-up addressed Question 2, while the second part addressed Question 3.

Procedure

All of the data were collected on non-game days during the latter stage of the season in each country. The FNE was administered first because the information was of a dispositional rather than state nature, meaning that responses were to be free of any intervening or moderating thoughts that might stem from specific matches, opponents, or venues. The form for Questions 2 and 3 was then completed after the FNE, and participants were assured that confidentiality would be protected through a coding system on the forms and in the data analysis. In Canada and Germany, questionnaire documents were distributed to the players by the researcher. The coaches and researcher then left the room while players completed the forms, after which they were collected and returned by a player representative. In Japan, the questionnaires were given to a member of the coaching staff, but distribution amongst the participants was delegated to a senior player. This was the wish of the Japanese coaches, though all agreed to follow the same procedure of leaving the room during questionnaire completion and to have a player representative collect and return the forms afterward. The preference of the Japanese coaches can be seen as a cultural difference on its own, seemingly in keeping with the system of hierarchy and duty common to Japanese groups. This notion is supported by Alfermann et al. (2013), who reported a similar procedural

discrepancy between German and Japanese swim coaches and attributed the difference to a

Japanese sense of obligation.

Data Analysis

Initial analysis for Question 1 employed a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

using country (Japan, Canada, and Germany) as the independent variable and FNE scores as

the dependent variable. The question dealt with the significance of group differences,

however, and as per the hypothesis, the group of Japanese players was compared with a

combination of the Canadian and German players. Thus, an independent samples *t* test was

performed on the FNE data to determine the specific effect between means (Freedman, Pisani,

& Purves, 1998, p. 490). To specify groups for the *t* test, an indicator (Yes/No) variable was

created to show whether or not a player was on a Japanese team. This was then followed by

Tukey's procedure to compare the Japanese scores with the Canadian scores and German

scores separately. The SAS Stat 9.2 manual describes Tukey's test as a common approach

when significant differences are found and a sensible means of making the strongest possible

inferences while controlling for Type 1 error in all pairwise comparisons.

Questions 2 and 3 were not guided by existing theory and had little precedent upon

which to formulate hypotheses. Moreover, the data were obtained through open-ended

questionnaires. Therefore, responses were analyzed via the conceptual analysis variant of

content analysis, an inductive process whereby similarly-themed words are grouped into

conceptual clusters to represent selected ideas (Sanders & Pinhey, 1983). As per conceptual

analysis procedure, instances of certain words or statements (raw data) in the questionnaires

were counted as individual scoring units of the corresponding higher-order themes (or

conceptual clusters) that emerged, and these statements provided a numerical expression for

each cluster (e.g., 3 instances of a given themed statement equaled 3 scoring units).

Percentages were then determined for each category, which revealed patterns within and

between the three sets of participants. This process resembled Park's (2004) method in previous research on coping and stress perceptions of Korean athletes. It was also similar to Dale's (2000) analysis of the distractions experienced by decathletes, in which eight higher-order distractions were drawn directly from 32 raw data themes.

Translation of the German and Japanese players' responses was carried out by two bilingual individuals in each country who were familiar with the applicable constructs and terminology. They also served as the coders of the raw data. There were two additional coders for the Canadian group; thus, six in total. The coders coded all of the statements provided on the questionnaires and were aware of the questions, but they were not given the FNE scale. Consensus on common higher-order themes was reached through discussion between the coders. To ensure trustworthiness in the coding process, themes were first determined by coders individually, after which interpretations were shared and discussed between coding partners for each national cohort. They were then shared and discussed between all six coders before agreeing on the final themes. Any differences were discussed during each process, but discrepancies between coders were minor (requiring very little discussion) because most responses were single words or short statements that were interpreted relatively easily. Assessment of inter-rater reliability between coders in each country further underlined trustworthiness in the process. On Question 2 (specific self-presentational thoughts), percent agreement in Canada was 86.7% with a Krippendorff's alpha of 0.597; in Germany, the values were 84.2% and 0.575; in Japan, they were 85.7% and 0.438. On Question 3 (target people), percent agreement in Canada was 86.7% once again with a Krippendorff's alpha of 0.78; in Germany, the values were 89.5% and 0.815; in Japan, they were 92.9% and 0.886.

Results

Question 1: Fear of Negative Evaluation

One-way ANOVA showed a main effect for country on FNE score, $F(2, 176) = 4.97$, $p = .0079$. Regarding the specific hypothesis for Question 1, players in Japan were expected to score higher on fear of negative evaluation than players in both Canada and Germany. The relevant t test comparing Japanese players and non-Japanese players indicated that the two groups had significantly different scores, $t(177) = -3.16$, $p = .0018$, $d = 0.51$, which represents a medium effect size as per Cohen (1988). The mean score for players in Japan was higher than in Canada and Germany, and as a result, there is sufficient evidence that the Japanese players felt the strongest fear of negative evaluation among the three groups. The hypothesis was therefore confirmed.

To back up this finding, post hoc Tukey test results on all pairwise comparisons also showed that at the .05 level, the FNE scores in Japan ($M = 35.8$, $SD = 6.44$) were significantly higher than the Canadian scores ($M = 32.0$, $SD = 6.66$) and the German scores ($M = 32.1$, $SD = 9.11$). Table 1 shows the results of pairwise comparisons obtained through the Tukey analyses.

[TABLE 1 NEAR HERE]

For ease of interpretation, the mean scores for each country on the FNE questionnaire are also illustrated in Figure 1. The error bars superimposed on the figure indicate two standard errors of the mean for the values on the vertical axis, and the span of these error bars is approximately equivalent to a 95% confidence interval for the mean. Any overlap between the full lengths of the two-standard-error bars on the three country plots reduces confidence that there are significant differences between the corresponding scores. There is little to no overlap between the Japanese plot and the Canadian and German plots, which shows once more that the scores were significantly different.

[FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE]

Question 2: Specific Self-Presentational Concerns

Content analysis of participants' soccer-specific self-presentational thoughts yielded 157 raw data themes. The mean number of thoughts per player was 0.88, with a range of 0 to 4, and this produced 22 conceptual clusters in total. Of these, 15 were endorsed by the Canadian sample, 19 by the German players, and 14 in Japan. Individual concerns accounted for 6 of the categories while 15 were team-oriented; one matched neither designation. In addition, 9 clusters dealt with performance while 10 focused on behaviour; 2 encompassed both designations and one was neither performance- nor behaviour-based.

Setting these patterns aside for the moment, one of the more notable findings was that 9 scoring units in Canada (16.7%) and 16 in Germany (27.6%) represented players who had *no* specific concerns or felt that impressions did not matter. In fact, this category scored the highest for both the Canadian and German groups, but was not listed at all by the Japanese. The following are brief outlines of the other main patterns in each nation as delimited by those clusters that received 4 or more scoring units; the remaining categories were supported to lesser extents or not at all. For full details, Table 2 shows all of the conceptual clusters and the corresponding scoring units and percentages for each country.

In Canada, participants mainly wanted others to think they were good players (individual; performance), had a good/competitive team (team; performance), showed a good team atmosphere (team; behaviour), showed personal effort (individual; behaviour), and met their coach's/team's expectations (individual; both performance and behaviour). Furthermore, they did not want their weaknesses exposed/look like a bad player (individual; performance) or to look like a bad/weak team (team; performance). The overall balance reflected 5 individual and 9 team-oriented categories, plus 6 emphasizing performance and another 6 emphasizing behaviour (2 clusters reflected both performance and behaviour).

In Germany, players mainly wanted to show a good team atmosphere (team; behaviour), avoid looking like a bad/weak team (team; performance), show good team technique and tactics (team; performance), and meet their coach's/team's expectations (individual; both performance and behaviour). The overall balance reflected 5 individual and 13 team-oriented categories, plus 7 emphasizing performance and 10 emphasizing behaviour (one category reflected both performance and behaviour).

In Japan, players mainly wanted their team to show effort and determination (team; behaviour). They also wanted to show personal effort (individual; behaviour), be thought of as good players (individual; performance), show team discipline (team; behaviour), and have spectators enjoy watching (team; performance). The latter category was not listed by any of the Canadian or German players. The overall balance reflected 3 individual and 11 team-oriented categories, plus 7 emphasizing performance and another 7 emphasizing behaviour.

[TABLE 2 NEAR HERE]

Question 3: Target People

Content analysis of participants' self-presentation target people produced 105 raw data themes. The mean number of targets was 0.59 per player, with a range once again of 0 to 4. Within the 16 categories of targets that were reported, 10 were listed by the Canadian sample, 8 by the German sample, and 11 by the Japanese, with only 4 categories endorsed by all three groups. Table 3 presents all of the categories of target people and their corresponding scoring units and percentages for each country.

[TABLE 3 NEAR HERE]

The most frequently listed target people for players in Canada were coaches (22.9%). The next most common targets were general spectators and opposing players (both with 18.8%), as well as teammates (14.6%).

The most important categories for the German participants mirrored those of the Canadians, but in a different order. General spectators topped the list (33.3%). After that, the major target people were coaches and opposing players (both with 18.5%) as well as teammates (14.8%).

Finally, general spectators accounted for the most scoring units (36.7%) in Japan. The other main targets were (general) teammates (13.3%) as well as veteran teammates, teammates playing the same position, and parents/family (each with 10.0%).

Discussion

Fear of negative evaluation was found to be significantly higher among intercollegiate soccer players in Japan than among those in Canada and Germany. Specific self-presentational thoughts and target people of those thoughts were also compared, and the ensuing discussion accounts for similarities as well as differences in the findings. Possible implications are also suggested for coaching practice, but to begin, some limitations of the study must be acknowledged. The first concerns the seriousness and standard of intercollegiate soccer. In Canada and Japan, highly accomplished athletes are often members of intercollegiate sports programs. In Germany, however, soccer players with elite aspirations are generally involved with high performance programs or professional academies outside of university. Consequently, although the German players had to be experienced and exhibit a good standard of amateur play to be selected for their university teams, it is possible that the level within the overall German soccer scheme was somewhat lower than the relative standing of university soccer in Canada and Japan. For future study with intercollegiate players, participants' age, years of playing experience, and the highest level achieved could be controlled for in statistical analyses and would provide additional information about players' equivalence in performance terms. Similarly, the variables of rookie/veteran and

characteristics of the teams' coaches were not examined, but were factors which had the potential to influence the results.

It should also be noted that evaluative fear, as addressed by Question 1, is only one part of the overall self-presentation picture. That is, the high FNE scores of the Japanese players do not automatically correspond with high impression motivation of and by themselves. Moreover, the confidence of athletes to leave positive impressions on others (self-presentational efficacy) was not measured, but both factors could be informative from a performance perspective. Specifically, those with high evaluative fear but low impression motivation and/or high self-presentational efficacy may not experience noticeable detriments. Subsequent research might therefore choose to examine links more directly between these three variables to gain a better understanding of self-presentational effects on athletes of different cultural backgrounds. Lastly, it bears repeating that Questions 2 and 3 provided descriptive information. This means that both commonalities and differences between the three groups must not be interpreted as being statistically significant. Instead, the findings offer insights into the players' cognitions and the possible links with their FNE scores; information which can serve as a springboard for new empirical questions and hypotheses.

Turning to the results for Question 1, the higher evaluative fear of the soccer players in Japan contrasts with Alfermann et al.'s (2013) findings with German and Japanese youth swimmers as noted previously. Alfermann and colleagues, however, suggested that bodily self-presentational concerns could have existed to some extent for all of the participants in their study through the revealing nature of swimwear, especially in mixed-gender environments. The authors also presented the opposite possibility that, regardless of culture, those who choose to participate in competitive swimming may already be sufficiently comfortable with their physical self-presentation that physical evaluation is not a significant concern. In the current study, neither social physique anxiety nor physical self-presentation

confidence were likely considerations. Accordingly, the higher FNE scores of the Japanese

soccer players can be reasonably attributed to other sources, most notably the influence of

cultural collectivism on people's cognitions and self-construal as well as the aforesaid

importance of winning (Alfermann et al., 2013; Hayashi & Weiss, 1994; Isogai et al., 2003;

Kusaka, 2006). To elaborate, the sporting creed of Japan's National Association of Amateur

Sport, established in 1935, contained the dictum that players are honour-bound to strive to

win (Kusaka, 2006). Today still, failure (or losing) in sport is often associated with a sense of

shame (Hayashi & Weiss, 1994), and the ramifications of such shame include loss of "face"

through negative self-presentation and relational devaluation that may be particularly

prominent in Japan. An interesting addendum to this discussion, however, is the fine balance

between the value of winning and the collectivistic need to show modesty. Immodest people

are generally viewed as less likeable in Japan (Kudo & Numazaki, 2003), and Kurman (2001)

states that Japanese modesty norms are internalized between the second and fifth grades of

elementary school. The most immediate behavioural outcome of these cognitions is the

tendency of people to understate their capabilities and avoid standing out or showing off, and

it is fair to say that this interdependent self-construal (borne of dual collectivistic emphases on

modesty and winning) can foster fear of negative evaluation in sport contexts.

 In broader terms, the findings for Question 1 contribute to existing theory in two ways.

One, they suggest that maintaining "face" is as central to Japanese soccer—and perhaps more

widely to Japanese sport—as it is to everyday life, and that many of the underlying self-

presentational codes are similar; this point shall be addressed again under implications for

coaching practice. Two, the Japanese FNE scores provide corroboration for Singelis and

Sharkey's (1995) premise that collectivistic societies and the self-construal of their members

engender greater susceptibility to embarrassment than individualistic cultures. Singelis and

Sharkey propose that "embarrassability" be seen within a cultural context that considers its

role as an adaptive mechanism, and when combined with the need for modesty alongside the threat of shame and potential for loss of "face" in Japanese sport, evaluative fear may serve as a type of safeguard to minimize the chance of embarrassment in collectivistic sport settings.

Question 1 addressed a general fear of negative evaluation in sport. Question 2 followed up with players' specific self-presentational thoughts in soccer, and while only a modest amount of data emerged, most interesting was that the highest scores in both Canada and Germany were for *no* specific concerns/that impressions do not matter. It is equally notable that not one such response was given by the Japanese participants, which reinforces the key point behind the hypothesis for Question 1 and alludes once more to an elemental conclusion for this study—that while there are times when athletes of all backgrounds wish to set good impressions in one way or another, positive social evaluations are a greater concern in Japan. This was true for the sample of soccer players, and when viewed against the backdrop of the current cross-cultural literature, it is equally plausible across different activities and competition levels. Follow-up research in more diverse sporting contexts, of course, would help to verify this assertion.

Other findings for Question 2 revealed a handful of similarities between the groups in specific self-presentational thoughts. The most highly scored categories indicated that both Canadian and Japanese participants wanted to show personal effort and have people think that they were good players. Also, equal numbers of Canadians and Germans wished to meet their coach's/team's expectations and to show a good team atmosphere, while near-equal numbers of the same two groups wanted to avoid looking like a bad/weak team. In summary, the players in all three nations were similar in reporting more team-oriented than individual thoughts, and all showed a balance between performance- and behaviour-focused concerns (though slightly more behavioural in Germany).

Question 3 also elicited a modest amount of data and a similar degree of convergence between the participants. The Canadian and German cohorts rated general spectators, coaches, teammates, and opposing players as the most important self-presentational target people. The Japanese players gave equally high scores to general spectators and to teammates, but as will be discussed shortly, teammates were broken down into more specific sub-categories. In any case, the main take-home point from these results is that spectators' familiarity with the activity was not a deciding factor, as the target people in each nation contained both knowledgeable (coaches, teammates, and opponents) and less knowledgeable others (general spectators). Bray et al. (2000) reported similar findings in their research with young Western ski racers, where fellow competitors and parents/friends constituted knowledgeable and less knowledgeable targets, respectively.

The commonalities between the national cohorts for Questions 2 and 3 are best explained via the "athletic imperatives" viewpoint (see Chelladurai, Imamura, Yamaguchi, Oinuma, & Miyauchi, 1988) that, due to universally accepted performance objectives and requirements in sport, there is often a degree of cultural congruence in athletes' thoughts about competition. The current findings thus support "athletic imperatives" with regard to selected self-presentation emphases and target people, which is logical given the goal-driven nature of sport and common rules of play, both written and unwritten. That being said, there were also some noteworthy points of divergence which separated the Japanese participants and were seemingly rooted in a collectivistic value system. The following section addresses self-presentational thoughts and targets that were unique to the players in Japan.

Self-Presentational Thinking in Japan

For Question 2, three clusters distinguished the Japanese from the Canadian and German players. The first two were team-oriented, comprising the wish that one's team show effort and determination (the highest scoring category in Japan) and that it also show

discipline. The same categories received very low scores or none at all in Canada and Germany. Although all players showed a certain team focus, these particular modes of thinking underscore a team orientation that echoes collectivistic priorities, especially when coupled with the fact that the highest ratio of team to individual concerns was found in Japan (11 versus 3). They also reflect the importance ascribed to correct process during performance (Sakairi, 2000) and to traditional Budo spirit ("seishin") in Japanese sport (Kelly, 1998; Pempel, 1998), both of which were outlined earlier as connoting a "ways of doing" mentality. The other category that was distinctly Japanese was the hope that spectators enjoy watching. No such mention was made by the Canadian or German cohorts, and this need to perform well for supporters further highlights the value of process and obligation in collectivistic settings.

Question 3 provided interesting data on players' thoughts about teammates as self-presentation targets. The Canadian and German groups listed them as one general entity while the Japanese responses differentiated between general teammates, veteran teammates, and teammates playing the same position. Together, they comprised one-third of the Japanese targets and outnumbered the teammate scores in Canada and Germany by a considerable percentage. The hierarchical social structure that these teammate categories represent is characteristic of Japanese society in general (Kerr et al., 2000; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Within families, for instance, the terms used for one's siblings denote standing by identifying whether they are younger or older; it is not simply "sister" or "brother". In the workplace and on sports teams, senior ("sempai") and junior ("kohai") members are recognized as such, which means that interactions with veteran teammates will often differ from those with counterparts/equals (e.g., playing the same position) or junior team members. The different teammate designations are thus understandable, as ignoring the accompanying hierarchy can result in unfavourable self-presentations and possible relational devaluation.

Surprisingly, the Japanese players did not list coaches as self-presentation targets, despite this cluster scoring very highly for the Canadians and Germans, nor did they endorse the category of meeting coaches' expectations for Question 2. Both findings seem to contradict the role of coaches in goal attainment and the hierarchical system of respect or deference mentioned above. A probable explanation for these patterns is the fact that intercollegiate soccer coaches in Japan do not have a lot of personal contact with their players. The implementation of training and pre-game routines is often the responsibility of assistants and senior players, making coaches less "immediately present" in players' minds. This is backed up by Polster's (2004) claim that traditional Japanese group dynamics prevent strong interpersonal coach-athlete cooperation. It is also supported by Yoshida, Matsuo, Yamamoto, and Taniguchi (1998), whose research with university athletes from seven nations led them to conclude that Japanese coaches put little emphasis on monitoring relationships with members of their teams. Therefore, it is possible that the players focused largely on people with whom they interacted when listing self-presentation targets, the exception being general spectators on account of the aforementioned feelings of obligation to supporters. To better examine the importance of coaches as target people in Japan, future research should employ surveys that address coaches directly, much like Bray et al.'s (2000) series of questions that asked how important it was to ski well when specific people (e.g., parents, friends, other competitors, or strangers) were watching.

Opposing players made up another category that was meaningful in Canada and Germany but virtually unacknowledged in Japan. This can be attributed to the concept of in-group ("miuchi") versus out-group ("soto"), an important theme of membership in Japanese life that is only weakly acknowledged in the West (note that the Canadian and German players gave recognition in relatively equal measure to targets from inner and outer circles). The significance of this mindset is underlined by Hasegawa (2005), whose research on self-

presentation and cultural self-construal showed that Japanese undergraduates with an interdependent/collective self-construal had a greater desire than independents/individualists to manage their self-images among in-group members and a lesser tendency to do so with out-groups. In competitive sport contexts, opposing players and teams constitute out-groups and, therefore, are low on the list of self-presentation target people.

The observation of both similarities and differences between the Japanese and Western players illustrates the dual mindset that is necessary when conducting and interpreting cross-cultural research. This duality is expounded by Chelladurai et al.'s (1988) second paradigm, which complements the "athletic imperatives" view on cross-cultural issues in sport; namely, the "cultural influences" perspective that certain thought processes and behaviours can indeed be affected by culture. To be sure, there were patterns in the current study which appeared to be characteristically Japanese and borne of a collectivistic value system, but it is equally important to recognize that other findings revealed discernible similarities. It is therefore worthwhile for investigators to understand and acknowledge Chelladurai and colleagues' dichotomy. While it can mitigate the tendency to overstate cultural variation when discussing research findings (see Lazarus, 1999), it should also prove useful to practitioners in the field. To that end, the final section provides two practical recommendations for coaches. It must be emphasized, however, that links to performance were not included in the study's design. As such, these recommendations are presented as speculative extensions to the findings.

Implications for Coaching Practice

Departing from the more usual approach of applying patterns from Western samples to groups of various backgrounds, the first recommendation draws from the Japanese results and offers advice for team sport coaches in nations without strong in-group versus out-group dynamics. In particular, it could be beneficial for Western coaches to teach and promote a Japanese-like in-group emphasis to their players, so as to minimize evaluative concerns about

opponents or other (uncontrollable) factors external to the team. This might be helpful if such factors are associated with high self-presentational importance or impression motivation, especially among players with low self-presentational efficacy.

The second recommendation, taking into account the high FNE scores of the Japanese participants, suggests that coaches in Japan consider cultural display rules in their athletes' self-presentational processes. In other words, acknowledging the potential role of such norms or rules in adaptation could be advisable before employing interventions that reduce self-presentational thinking. Research has shown, for example, that self-criticism and negative self-talk are prevalent among athletes from collectivistic backgrounds, but that attempting to curb these patterns—as would be the tendency in Western nations—can actually increase anxiety and have detrimental effects on performance (Heine, 2001; Peters & Williams, 2006). Although the role of self-presentational thinking in adaptation or performance was not examined here, extension of this reasoning allows for the possibility that evaluative concern and related self-presentational cognitions among Japanese athletes might serve an adaptive function in line with Singelis and Sharkey's (1995) views on embarrassment.

Research that specifically addresses this notion is necessary before drawing any conclusive parallels, of course, but focused consultation between coaches and players could also provide useful insights. In the event that self-presentational thoughts are indeed appraised as debilitative by players, coaches might wish to de-emphasize the corresponding concerns by teaching alternative interpretations of what is appropriate and acceptable for sport settings versus everyday societal contexts. This entails a recognition that competitive sport has its own set of norms and guidelines with different (and perhaps fewer) self-presentation codes, a mindset that could conceivably unburden athletes from selected concerns. An investigation by Otake et al. (2004) illustrates that the premise is not unrealistic. The researchers found that soccer players from professional youth programs in Japan demonstrated

better "psychological competitive abilities" (e.g., more aggressiveness, individualism, and self-oriented thinking) than players from middle schools, underlining an acceptable mentality in Japanese competitive soccer that challenges some of the collectivistic traditions of everyday life.

In closing, this study has attempted to address a current knowledge gap in the sport and self-presentation literature. To continue this line of enquiry, subsequent research initiatives with culturally diverse athletes should examine club-level programs and revisit the links between self-presentation and competitive sport anxiety. The relationship has been well established in Western settings, as noted, but has yet to be addressed with Japanese or other East Asian competitors. Similarly unclear is the correlation of Japanese evaluative concern with impression motivation, self-presentational efficacy, performance quality, and sport satisfaction among players. Such research would extend the current knowledge base while producing information of value to theorists, coaches, and mental trainers alike.

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Figure Caption & Note

Figure 1. Mean scores for Fear of Negative Evaluation versus Country for the three groups of

players.

Note. Two-standard-error bars are attached to each mean.