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VALUES AND VALUE PRIORITIES OF SINGAPOREAN AND
AUSTRALIAN SWIMMERS

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by

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ABSTRACT

This is an examination of the impact of values on participation and performance in competitive swimming in Singapore and Australia. Values are the broad goals or criteria that direct individual behaviour previously initiated by motivational traits such as needs, interests, and attitudes. Subjects, who competed in the National Age-Group Championships of their respective countries, completed the values instrument developed by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990) and refined by Schwartz (1992, 1995). Similarity structure analysis (SSA) and Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) were the tools of analysis. Significant main effects were reported for. Australian swimmers placed more emphasis on achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction than their Singaporean counterparts. Singaporean swimmers placed more emphasis on universalism, benevolence, tradition, and conformity than their Australian counterparts.

Key words:

Values, Singapore, Australia, Schwartz, swimming, motivation, priorities

Values and Value Priorities of Swimmers in Singapore and Australia

Australians have traditionally shown a great propensity for the pursuit of sporting excellence, being one of only two countries to be represented at each of the modern Olympic Games. Singaporeans, on the other hand, have rarely made an impact in the international arena. There does not appear to be the same motivation to succeed in sport. What differentiates participants from these two countries? Population size and limitations of physique cannot provide a complete explanation.

It has become traditional to attribute levels of success in sport to the economic, social, and political factors (Colwell, 1981) that may motivate individual athletes and representative teams. For example, national wealth is a prime indicator of success, and the stability of the political climate, which facilitates the distribution of human and physical resources, is a key element. As well as structural factors, the influence of the ideational structure of the society (Seppänen, 1981) has been considered; cultural attitudes and social commitment to elite sport are important predeterminants of success.

Beliefs and values, which are seen as significantly related to behaviours (Rokeach, 1968), are learned primarily through the process of socialisation at home and in schools. Therefore, desirable principles that are assimilated in these environments will be evoked in a variety of situations including competitive sport. There is an increasing awareness of the role of socialisation in individual motivation (Brustad, 1992), and the model used in the current study has identified moral and non-moral values expressed spontaneously in sport (Lee and Cockman, 1995). As yet, however, there have been no attempts to assess how relationships between selected values and value priorities might reflect differences in motivation at high performance levels.

The dominant paradigm for examining participation and the differences between elite and sub-elite athletes is strongly influenced by current research on cognitive-based theories such as achievement motivation (Nicholls, 1984), and competence motivation (Harter, 1978, 1981). In these theories, self-perceptions of ability take on an important role in initiating motivated behaviour (Brustad, 1992). Whilst such research identifies the fundamental importance of achievement, it may be that broadening the scope of the investigation to include other personal constructs may enhance our understanding and provide a more reliable empirical means of predicting differences. Recent interest in the perceived role of culture and values in explaining contrasts in economic competitiveness and academic performance, has added a new dimension to the study of individual differences and has motivated this study.

It has been implied that values contribute significantly to the pursuit of sport in both Singapore and Australia. When conceptualised as transsituational in application and as integrated in structure, a value system defines the guiding principles used by an individual engaged in sport. Schwartz (1992) identified 56 values which have universal application. These values are classified into ten value types, given here with appropriate definitions for sport, based on Schwartz (1992). Although there may not be exact equivalence of meaning amongst all subjects it will be assumed that the variance falls within tolerable limits.

1. **Achievement:** values that emphasise personal success or competence as defined by external or prevailing standards of sport performance, thereby obtaining social approval.
2. **Hedonism:** values that emphasise pleasure and personal gratification.
3. **Stimulation:** values that encourage the confrontation of uncertainty or risk, and thus generate further excitement.
4. **Self-direction:** values emphasising the conduct of sports participation for intrinsically based reasons associated with self-determinacy.

5. **Universalism**: values emphasising participation with due attention to the safety, welfare and personal enjoyment of team-mates and opponents.

6. **Benevolence**: values emphasising the development of cohesion and teamwork so as to promote the harmonious pursuit of predetermined sporting goals. This includes the support and encouragement of coaches, technical officers, and athletes in their combined efforts.

7. **Tradition**: values that originate from group needs to ensure survival and identity.

Symbolising the solidarity of the group, these values take the form of beliefs and norms of behaviour, which have the motivational goals of respect, commitment, and an acceptance of tried and tested methods of training, and tactical or strategic planning.

8. **Conformity**: values that encourage adherence to designated playing behaviour, such as following the prescribed strategies, not imposing on others, not taking risks that might compromise team performance.

9. **Security**: values that originate from the basic needs of individuals and groups in order to enjoy a safe and stable environment. They emphasise protection from real and perceived threats of a physical, environmental or emotional nature.

10. **Power**: values that originate from the acceptance of the need for dominance and control in social settings. They emphasise status, prestige, and control over people and resources.

Values as criteria for decision making in sport are triggered when a situation of conflicting interests exists. Values are influential in this role because of their contribution to the formation of specific attitudes, which may be evoked in immediate situations (Rokeach, 1968). Typically in sporting situations, the interests of team-mates may be at variance.

Schwartz' (1992) model conceptualises the 56 values as capable of representing 3 universal requirements of existence which have the potential to be conflicting: individual

needs, survival and welfare needs of group, and requisites for smooth social interaction. The interrelationships between these basic requirements are shown in Figure 1.

In the context of sport, values which may be operationalised in a particular situation are based on the personal needs of the participant, the requisites for social interaction amongst fellow athletes and officials, and the requirements of the sports culture as a whole. In this study, values can be recognised as both antecedents and consequences of behaviour associated with participation and performance in sport. As antecedents, values represent points of reference used during decision making in management processes. In this sense values are assumed to have been created as a result of either internalisation or interaction. Internalisation represents a somewhat passive acceptance of norms, whilst interaction alludes to active or wilful involvement in generating values (Theberge, 1984). As consequences, values represent the outcome of socialisation and personal experiences.

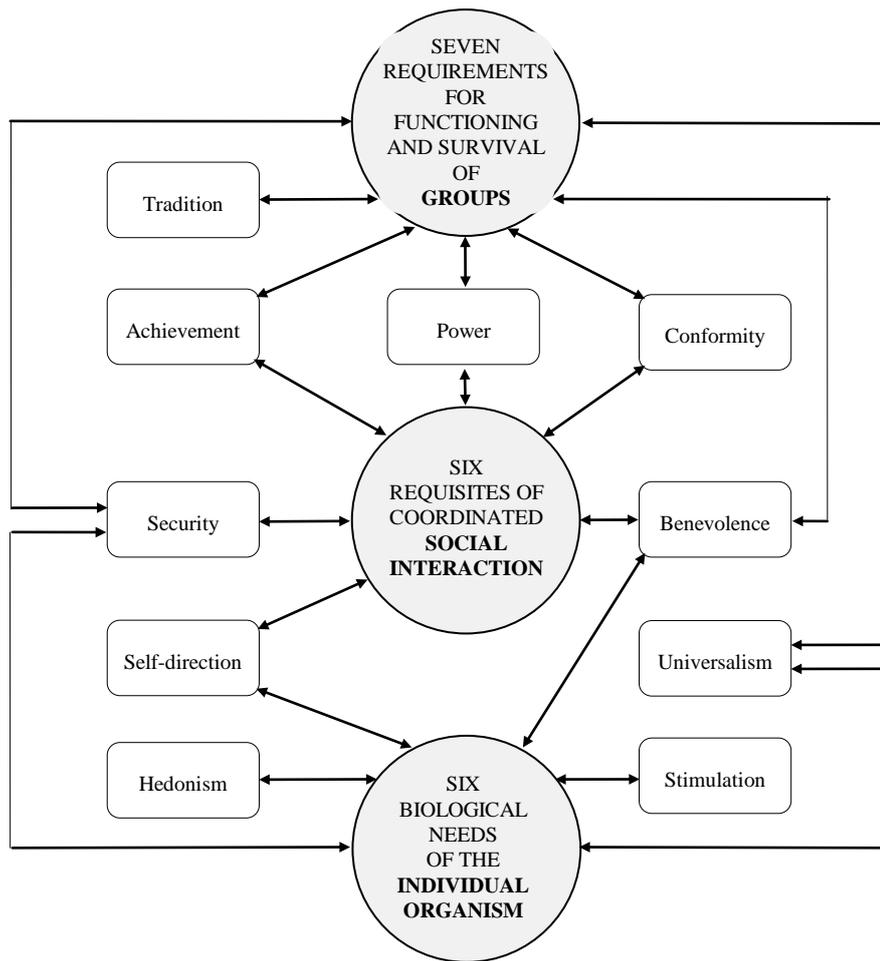


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of Values Content. Adapted from Schwartz, 1992. Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, **25**: 1-65.)

Dynamic relations are considered to exist between value types. When adjacent to each other in the model, the value types share a common motivational orientation or compatibility. When separated from each other in the model, values represent differing orientations and are in potential conflict with each other. To advocate striving for success (achievement) whilst simultaneously demonstrating concern for the physical well being of an opponent (benevolence) represents a typical dilemma within competitive sport. Two orthogonal

dimensions characterise the relationships between the value types. The circular structure of values is illustrated in Figure 2.

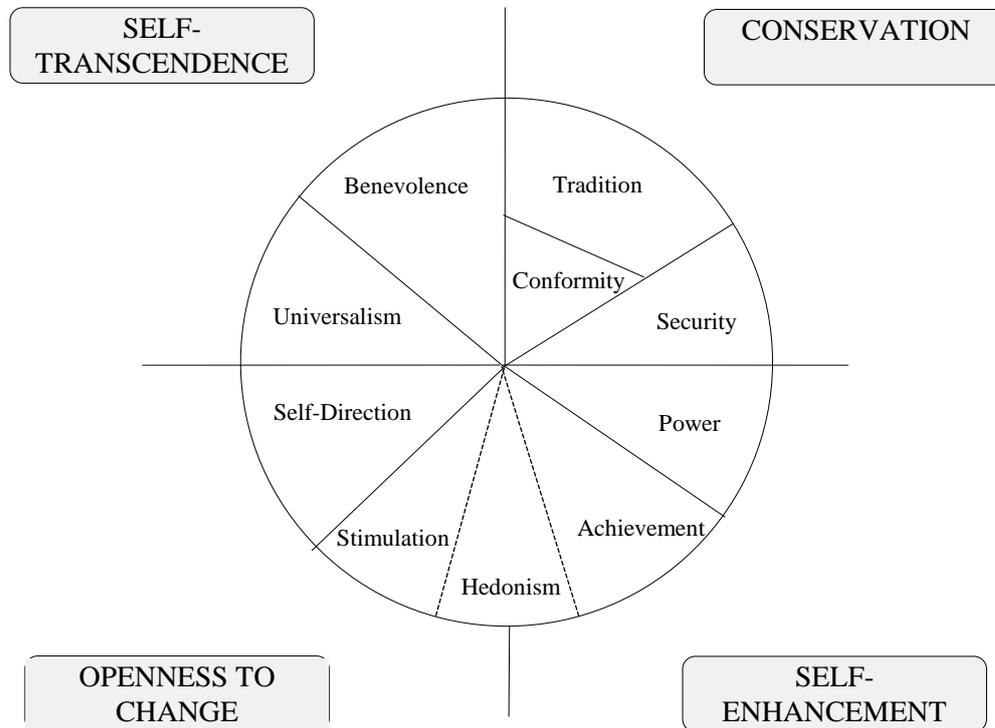


Figure 2. Integrated Value System showing Basic Structure. Adapted from Schwartz, 1992. Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, **25**: 1-65.)

One particular dimension focuses on the degree of centrality ascribed to the individual: self-enhancement to self-transcendence. The second dimension focuses on methods of dealing with uncertainty: openness to change to conservation.

It is argued that differences exist in the both the structure of value systems and the prioritisation of values within the systems. These differences serve to identify cultural groups. There is a perception amongst Australians that they prioritise achievement (particularly when against the odds), equality, security, and wealth. They are ambivalent towards authority, and tend to dislike the arrogant achiever or 'tall poppy' (Feather, 1994). It is assumed that some of these values will also be reflected in specific situations like competitive sport. Murray (1978) showed that Australians with a primary involvement in sport (a professional or vocational orientation) were likely to place emphasis on achievement, collective involvement, and pleasure seeking, whilst simultaneously playing down individuality and the need for extrinsic rewards. This supports the assertion that an individual's identification with Australia is positively related to the importance of values such as hedonism, security, and achievement (Feather, 1994).

The Singaporean Way of Sport

Singapore attained independence in 1965 and as such has had little time to establish a well-defined culture of sport. The most popular games and sports, soccer, horse-racing, swimming, badminton, sailing and so on, were brought by the early British settlers. The colonialists also introduced strongly held ideologies, such as fair-play, amateurism, and the character-building properties of those sports and games. North America has contributed basketball and volleyball, and martial arts associated with other Asian countries have found a foot-hold here as well. Three main ethnic groups comprise the population of Singapore. The indigenous race is the Malays, who have contributed sepak takraw to the list of national past-times. The Chinese, who represent the largest proportion of the population, brought no legacy of sporting activities, but they retained and promoted the sports inherited from the British. The

Indians have been staunch supporters of hockey, cricket and soccer. The pursuit of sport in Singapore today is closely linked to the national ideology which drives the economy, and all the social institutions. The communitarian philosophy, whereby group and national identity have primacy over the individual, has naturally espoused a sport for all policy.

The Australian Way of Sport

A number of myths surround the nature of sport in Australia, but what is certain is that a distinctive culture of sport does exist. This distinctiveness is based on the existence of elements such as a richly evocative sporting language; the tradition of barracking; the physical scale of sporting arenas; the rugged physical environment around the coast; and characteristic techniques evolving in aquatic sports and team games (Cashman, 1995). For some Australians the sporting environment serves to bestow on their nation the status of sporting paradise (Cashman, 1995). There is an overt passion or even obsession for sport, though it is doubtful that the strength of this passion is unique to Australians. One can identify certain characteristics that simultaneously define the culture and explain its absorption into the fabric of the national culture. Hancock (1944) argued that sport is closely identified with 'achievement', which is a core value in Australia. Dunstan (1973) attributes sport as the national obsession to such factors as: 1) the diffusion of sport from Britain, the parent nation; 2) attempts to use sport as a substitute for aspects of high culture; 3) the association of sport with the image of the outdoor 'bronzed Aussie'; 4) an available expression of masculinity, ruggedness and mastery.

Australia has been deeply involved in international sport, attaining high levels of achievement at all the major festivals. Traditional rivalries with Britain, the Commonwealth

countries, and the United States of America have also served to enhance the awareness of sporting competition amongst Australians.

Purpose of the Study

This study was concerned with identifying the relationships among values and value types within the context of competitive swimming in two different countries. There are two important objectives. First, to characterize the two nations in terms of their prevailing value systems. Identifying both the similarities and the differences inherent in the respective systems is necessary before comparing individual Singaporeans and Australians. Second, to discover whether values offer an appropriate means of explaining differences in the pursuit of motivational goals. Two particular questions arise concerning the impact of values on swimming in Singapore and Australia. First, how are the values prioritised by groups of competitive swimmers? Second, is there evidence to suggest that decisions guided by values have influenced the performance levels of the two groups of swimmers represented here? Therefore, the specific purpose of this study was to examine the general values and value priorities of individuals involved in competitive swimming. The following section describes elements of the respective national settings within which values have evolved.

Sport Ideologies in Singapore and Australia

The two countries share a common inheritance, with the dominant cultural system at work when sport was being established in the nineteenth century being decidedly British (Horton, in press). Characteristically, Singapore and Australia copied the sports and games of the colonial settlers. However, the elements of residual sport culture today reflect considerable differences. This is because of three main reasons. First, Singapore has always been more

cosmopolitan, with the presence of a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, and national groups. This has limited the pervasiveness of cultural aspects such as sport. Second, the equatorial climate in Singapore, with its constantly high humidity, has created a particularly oppressive environment for year round competitive sport. Third, settlers in the respective territories have held different perceptions of their own affiliations. Migrants to Singapore have seen themselves as fundamentally transient or expatriate, therefore a sense of ownership of the sport culture has been lacking. The concept of being a Singaporean did not exist until the advent of self-government in 1959 and independence in 1965. Sporting allegiance prior to that was either to Malaya or to Britain. Sport was a palliative for boredom (Sharp, 1993). Sport had less symbolic social significance in Singapore, than in Australia. Settlers in the former penal colony and other immigrants who came later invariably have seen themselves as Australian

Sport in its competitive form in Singapore has been largely an amateur-based pursuit, constructed initially along colonial and communal lines (Lau, 1978). After independence, competitive sport was expected to sacrifice its aspirations of success on the international scene in favour of the more practical benefits of simultaneously enhancing the health and welfare of the workforce, creating a credible defence force, and supporting moves towards racial integration (Lau, 1978).

Rapid and sustained economic growth, coupled with stability in government, high employment, and rising standards of living have enabled organisational restructuring of the sports system in recent years. The culture of sport in Singapore is thus seen as a unique manifestation of a highly materialistic, meritocratic, and prosperous young nation (Horton, in press).

Hypothesis

The national cultures of Singapore and Australia are characterised by inherently different value systems (Hofstede, 1991; Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 1993; Schwartz, 1994). For example, Hofstede (1991) describes Australians as higher in individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance than Singaporeans, but lower in power distance. Schwartz (1994) reported that ‘the sample from Singapore shows a profile that is closest to the pure Hofstede conception of collectivism, high in Conservatism and Hierarchy and low in Autonomy and Mastery’ (p.111). Based on these sources it is assumed that Australians will place particular emphasis on values associated with the satisfaction of individual interests (hedonism, stimulation). These values are cognitive constructs that have been linked closely to the desire to participate in sport. Enjoying life and pleasure (hedonism) are constructs central to explanations of motivation to participate (Kimiecik and Harris, 1996). Whilst daring, excitement, and seeking novelty (stimulation) find considerable opportunities for expression in various forms of sport. It is also assumed that Singaporeans will place more emphasis on values associated with collective interests (conformity, security). As an Asian country striving to attain developed nation status Singapore has been promoting communitarian values (Chua, 1995). The centrality of the state and its people has encouraged the subordination of individual interests. Therefore it is hypothesised that the structure of the respective value systems and the value priorities expressed by Singaporean and Australian swimmers will be significantly different.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 163 male and female competitive swimmers from Singapore and Australia, aged 14 to 16 years (mean = 15.0 years). Swimming was chosen as the focus of this study for two reasons. First, because participants in this sport have provided their respective countries with their peak moments of international achievement. And second, because of the relative ease of making accurate comparisons in individual performance. Using their personal best times, each swimmer was assigned a coefficient which expressed speed as compared to the appropriate world record time. Australian swimmers (n=83), who had competed at the annual National Age-Group Championships in Brisbane, and Singaporean swimmers (n=80), who had competed at the National Schools Championships in Toa Payoh comprised the sample. The groups were therefore representative of the best swimmers in the respective countries. All the Australians were members of swimming clubs outside school, whilst 42 of the 80 Singaporeans were members of external clubs. Levene's test for equality of means ($F = 7.347, p = .007$) showed that the swimmers did not differ significantly in age. A descriptive background profile of the subjects is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Age and gender distribution of Singaporean and Australian Swimmers

	14 years	15 years	16 years	Total
SINGAPORE	21	32	27	80
Males	11	19	15	45
Females	10	13	12	35
AUSTRALIA	12	51	20	83
Males	4	21	11	36
Females	8	30	9	47

Swimming Performance Levels in Singapore and Australia

In swimming, a sport which has consistently represented the peak of performance in the respective countries, Australia can currently (as at April 31, 1996) lay claim to four world records. When their scores are considered as a proportion of the various world record times, the fourteen national records held by Australian men in individual events convert to a mean score of 0.984 (the range is 0.968 to 1.000) and the marks for the thirteen national records held by women convert to a mean score of 0.980 (0.950 to 1.000). For Singapore, the equivalent scores of 0.928 (0.885 to 0.961) for men and 0.920 (0.890 to 0.958) for women, indicate that there is a lower standard of achievement.

Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

The Schwartz Value Survey (1992) was administered to ascertain the subjects' value priorities. Subjects were asked to rate sets of instrumental and terminal values on a 9-point scale ranging from "of supreme importance" (7) to "opposed to my values" (-1). Examining the impact of values on behaviour based on multiple-item indicators is more reliable than alternatives based on single values. The shared variance of items in a system creates a more valid measure of motivational goals.

The inventory was distributed in person to the subjects at two separate sittings by the respective authors. In the case of the Australian group, the forms were distributed directly to the subjects at the National Tip Top Camp after the championship meeting in April 1996. In the case of the Singaporean group, the forms were distributed to the swimmers with the assistance of the school teacher or coach responsible for the team. The Australian swimmers completed and returned their forms on the same day. The Singaporean swimmers completed

and returned the form over a period of two weeks. Data were processed using SPSS for Windows.

Results

Before analysing the data, it was necessary to control statistically for differences in scale use that may occur when comparing the value priorities of different groups. The individual's mean importance rating for the 56 values was used as a covariate in comparisons of group means in line with the method described by Schwartz (1992). To control for differences attributable to sex role it was also decided to use gender as a covariate.

The consistency of the responses for both the groups was determined by calculating Cronbach's (1951) Alpha coefficients of each of the ten value types: $r = .69$ (Achievement); $.60$ (Hedonism); $.66$ (Stimulation); $.63$ (Self-Direction); $.67$ (Universalism); $.64$ (Benevolence); $.41$ (Tradition); $.57$ (Conformity); $.48$ (Security); and $.74$ (Power). The responses to all types except 'Tradition' and 'Security' were therefore accepted as being moderately or highly related. Schwartz (1992) established that reliabilities greater than $.45$ are reasonable considering the small number of items in each index. 'Tradition' remains a problem. The low internal consistency of this item may be a reflection of the mixed perceptions towards these types of values by subjects in mid-adolescence. The subjects may have associated the values more closely with other types in the conservation dimension (conformity, security).

Value Structure

There were some differences between the prototype of Schwartz and the current study. Values do not automatically emerge in the regions designated by the prototype. As adjacent

regions are similar in their motivational relations it is quite possible accept some deviation. If there is a shift in location of more than one region, there is some justification for assuming that the particular value has been interpreted in a different way. For example, in certain value types there were significant changes: the value 'healthy' moved from security to achievement; the values 'intelligent' and 'self-respect' moved from achievement to security; and the value 'social order' moved from security to universalism.

Comparing National Cultures

In order to establish a baseline for comparing the two subcultural groups of swimmers, it was first necessary to identify differences in values based purely on characteristics of the national culture. Although the total sample size was limited, it was decided to match as many of the swimmers as possible on the basis of reported swimming speed and age, so as to establish similarities and differences not attributable to performance in swimming. The mean performance scores were .8864 for the Australian group and .8747 for the Singaporean group. The correlation between performance coefficients was .77 ($p=.000$). Gender and the mean score of each individual's responses were used as covariates. A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) indicated a significant difference between the matched groups on the two higher order dimensions (Self-Enhancement--Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change--Conservation), $F(1,36)=7.50$, $p=.000$. The observed power to reject a false null hypothesis at the 0.5 level was .99. Table 2 shows the combined adjusted means and univariate statistics.

A further MANCOVA was conducted to distinguish between the matched groups on the 10 value types. The results indicated the anticipated difference between groups,

$F(1,36)=3.36, p=.006$. The observed power to reject a false null hypothesis at the .05 level was 0.95. Univariate F-tests revealed that subjects as representatives

Table 2. Combined Adjusted Means and Univariate Statistics for Matched Groups

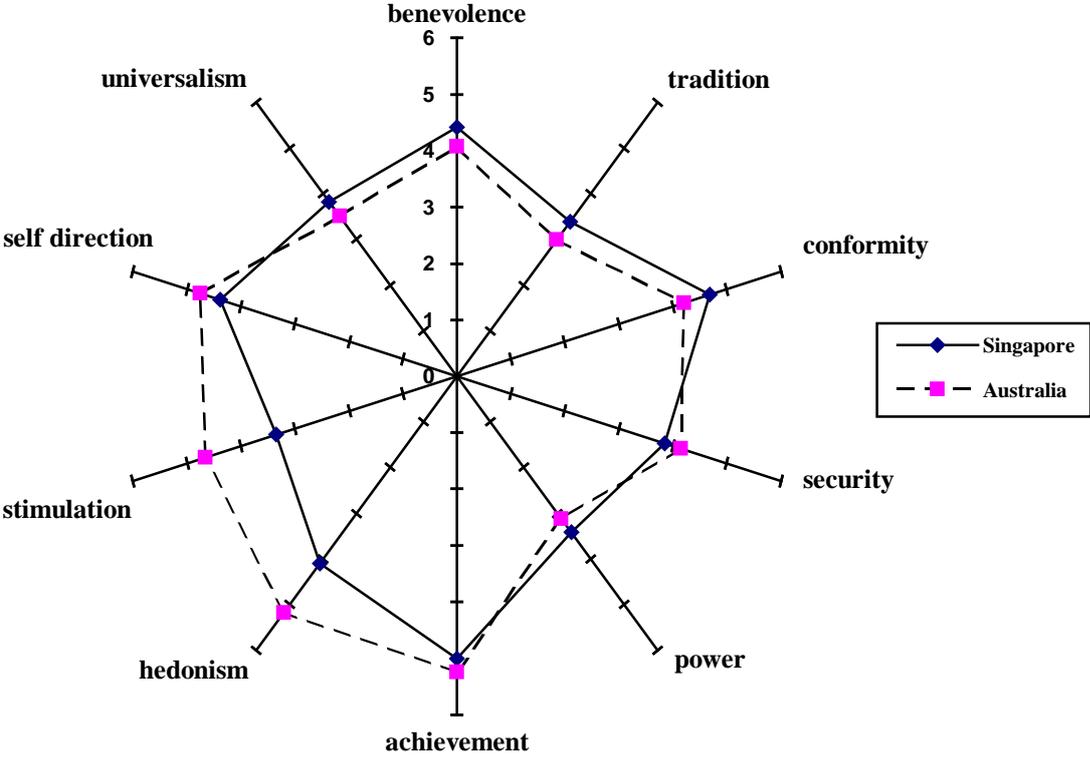
Dimension	Singapore	Australia	F score	Significance of F
Conservation	3.97	3.77	0.91	.347
Openness to Change	3.94	4.86	19.16	.000
Self-Enhancement	4.18	4.51	3.23	.081
Self-Transcendence	4.13	3.79	5.82	.021

of national groups differ significantly in importance placed on ‘stimulation’ $F=13.99, p=.000$ and ‘hedonism’ $F=6.69, p=.014$. Table 3 shows the ranking of values for the respective groups.

Table 3. Matched groups

Rank	Value type	Singapore Means	Rank	Value type	Australia Means
1	Achievement	5.00	1	Achievement	5.24
2	Conformity	4.80	2	Hedonism	5.17
3	Benevolence	4.35	3	Self-Direction	4.71
4	Self-Direction	4.32	4	Stimulation	4.52
5	Hedonism	4.10	5	Conformity	4.43
6	Security	3.92	6	Security	4.03
7	Universalism	3.72	7	Benevolence	3.98
8	Tradition	3.53	8	Universalism	3.48
9	Stimulation	3.35	9	Power	3.13
10	Power	3.42	10	Tradition	3.12

If hedonism and stimulation represent the main cultural differences, what might be responsible for cognitively based differences in swimming? One interpretation is that Australian swimmers place less importance on self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence), less emphasis on two elements of conservation (tradition and conformity), and place more importance on self-enhancement as reflected by hedonism and openness to change as reflected by stimulation. Achievement, per se, does not represent a significant factor in explaining cultural differences. Figure 3 is a diagrammatic representation of the relative congruence of value types between the two cultural groups, and highlights the main differences.



Figure

3. Radar Chart of Value Types for Matched Groups (Singapore, Australia) Comparing Swimmers

In order to compare subjects on each of the value types simultaneously, a 2 (group) x 10 (value types) multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. Gender and the mean score of each individual's responses were used as covariates. The MANCOVA indicated a significant interaction between value types and group membership, $F(1,159) = 10.64, p = .000$. The observed power to reject a false null hypothesis at .05 level was 1.00. Univariate F -tests revealed the Singaporean swimmers and the Australian swimmers differed significantly on seven components of Schwartz' model. Singaporeans placed greater emphasis on '**universalism**' $F=26.17, p=.000$, '**benevolence**' $F=24.26, p=.000$, '**tradition**' $F=9.82, p=.002$, and '**conformity**' $F=4.47, p=.036$. Australians placed greater emphasis on '**achievement**' $F=46.91, p=.000$, '**hedonism**' $F=42.24, p=.000$, '**stimulation**' $F=26.01, p=.000$, and '**self-direction**' $F=7.21, p=.008$. Combined adjusted means and univariate F -tests of significance are presented in Table 2.

In general it was revealed that the Australians were more expansive in their rating of the values (range of 2.22 points compared to 1.68). This tendency may be explained by differences in the style of response or in the interpretation of the requirements for answering the questions. That is, some subjects have a tendency to use extreme ratings or will provide socially desirable responses (Paulhus, 1991). Subjects were requested to use the whole range of the scale (-1 to +7).

Table 4. Combined Adjusted Means and Univariate F-tests of Significance for each of the Ten Value Types

Variable	Means for Singaporeans	Means for Australians	<i>F</i>	Significance of <i>F</i>
ACHIEVEMENT	4.43	5.21	46.91	.000
HEDONISM	3.68	4.93	42.24	.000
STIMULATION	3.42	4.37	26.01	.000
SELF-DIRECTION	4.49	4.75	7.21	.008
UNIVERSALISM	4.02	3.52	26.17	.000
BENEVOLENCE	4.70	4.26	24.26	.000
TRADITION	3.47	2.99	9.82	.002
CONFORMITY	4.62	4.34	4.47	.036
SECURITY	4.04	4.08	0.13	.720
POWER	3.02	3.22	1.65	.202

Table 5 shows that the prioritisation of values by the respective groups was distinctive. Australian swimmers placed most emphasis on the group of value types that comprises the sector from self-transcendence to openness to change (achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction). Their counterparts from Singapore gave prominence to those types that are located in the section from self-transcendence to conservation (benevolence and conformity). Of overriding importance to the Australians was the motivational goal of **‘achievement’**, which, predictably is emphasised at the expense of the contending goal of **‘benevolence’**. Subjects from Singapore were less demonstrative in distinguishing between the dominant types. **‘Benevolence’**, **‘conformity’**, **‘self-direction’**, and **‘achievement’** were credited with comparable significance. The Australian swimmers placed moderate emphasis on **‘benevolence’** and **‘conformity’** and played down the roles of **‘tradition’** and **‘power’**. For the Singaporean representatives the ratings of **‘security’** and **‘universalism’** marked the mid-point in their scale.

Table 5. Hierarchy of Values amongst Singaporean and Australian Swimmers

Singapore			Australia		
Rank	Value type	Means	Rank	Value type	Means
1	Benevolence	4.70	1	Achievement	5.21
2	Conformity	4.62	2	Hedonism	4.93
3	Self-Direction	4.49	3	Self-Direction	4.75
4	Achievement	4.43	4	Stimulation	4.37
5	Security	4.04	5	Conformity	4.34
6	Universalism	4.02	6	Benevolence	4.26
7	Hedonism	3.68	7	Security	4.08
8	Tradition	3.47	8	Universalism	3.52
9	Stimulation	3.42	9	Power	3.22
10	Power	3.02	10	Tradition	2.99

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that certain personal values and value types are significant correlates of behaviours associated with high performance swimming. This conclusion was reached by means of two objectives: first, by identifying general cultural differences, and second by establishing which values might contribute to perceived differences in swimming performance. By matching subjects it was possible to identify hedonism and stimulation as significant cultural indicators. The subsequent emergence of contrasts between the values of the two groups of swimmers leads to the speculation that differences in performance can be explained by variations in value priorities in any location within the system. Value types associated with self-enhancement and openness to change being the most meaningful here.

Two groups of swimmers were examined in this study. The first group comprised the participants in the Age-Group Championships of a leading swimming nation. All swimmers in this group experience socialisation through the club environment, receive high levels of social

approval, and have the most direct and personal contact with other elite swimmers. These are individuals, who may have had considerable competitive experience. They have a feel for their sporting culture. It was anticipated that this group would emphasise criteria associated with the requirements of individual gratification and close personal interaction with similar athletes. Members of this group may feel themselves to be special in view of the initial invitation to attend the Tip Top Training Camp. This prompts the question: do the Australian swimmers currently place more emphasis on the principle of achievement because they have attained success in the past and are determined to advance further, or was their success a consequence of being socialised into an achievement orientation specific to swimming.

The second group represented the participants of the National Schools competition in Singapore. Whilst more than half of the group had club experience, a large proportion had not benefitted from interaction with members of a defined subculture. Here it was predicted that this group would have less concern for individual performance, often being school representatives rather than aspiring club swimmers. Their participation offers less direct contact with elite swimmers, partly because of lower rates of club membership and partly because of a smaller national culture as compared to Australia. This group was expected to emphasise criteria relating to collective rather than individual interests. Whilst as individuals they may have had considerable involvement with their specific sport, the key motivation of the majority is not to pursue sporting careers. Their current active participation in the competitive sport is expected to be less extensive than their counterparts from Australia.

One particular assumption is made about these groups. The involvement of both is based on the need for athletes to demonstrate competence. However, the Australian swimmers potentially have greater ambitions at national and international levels. 'Achievement' values were emphasised by both groups as they emphasised the demonstration of success or

competence regardless of activity. At this age there are also academic goals to be attained, which would account for the the high priority of this value type. Lack of success in swimming for the Australians might also be a more significant issue than for Singaporeans, who have traditionally been guided more towards academic achievement. The expectation of sporting success or non-success would influence the intensity of arousal inherent in competitive sporting situations. If competitive swimming is perceived as an on-going challenge then excitement would generate reward and reinforcement to persist.

Based on the results, 'self-direction' values emphasising the affective autonomy of sport for intrinsically based reasons would seem to be more closely associated with the Australian swimmers. 'Universalism' values are those which emphasise understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and for the environment (Schwartz, 1992). These are principles more closely associated with the advocacy of the Sport For All policy, which is central to sport in Singapore. 'Benevolence' values were the most compatible between the two groups, with scores for both indicating a high priority. This emphasises that the development of cohesion and teamwork in pursuit of harmony is a well-recognised goal. It is assumed that tradition is not a strong guiding principle for sport in Singapore at present. The colonial inheritance has not been transformed into a uniquely Singaporean sport culture as yet. 'Conformity' values encouraging adherence to designated sporting behaviour was given a high priority by the Singaporean swimmers. As small independent bodies, the maintenance and promotion of conformity has replaced tradition as the focus for ensuring survival and identity. 'Security' values emphasise conservation of order and harmony in personal interactions (Schwartz, 1995). The scores for each group reflected the relative importance of this value as a means to avoiding or overcoming the threat of uncertainty. The scores for the 'Power' values were low for both groups.

Conclusions

This study is part of an on-going investigation of values associated with competitive sport. It provides descriptive information on the interplay between values within an individual's own integrated system. The key findings relate to the criteria used to direct decision making by representatives of two different groups of sports participants. Based on a historical perspective it was anticipated that the two groups would show contrasting characteristics. The results showed that a significant difference did indeed exist between the values of the representatives.

The main implication of the study focuses on the creation of sports cultures. Within the context of this study, one particular factor is considered most influential in shaping the content of the values associated with competitive sport in Singapore and Australia. Values are a product of socialisation into and through sport. For most children, this on-going process is initiated in schools and then expanded through parental approval and peer support. Australian swimmers seemingly focus more on values that satisfy individual needs and interests. This is transformed into intrinsic motivation to compete. It would seem from the results that the most beneficial way to maximize performance potential at this developmental stage is promote intrinsic elements such as fun, excitement, enjoyment, variety, challenge in competition and not to over-emphasize the need for absolute success that is synonymous with achievement.

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