



The Current Status and Influence of Chinese National Self-Confidence on Out-Group Trust during the Tokyo Olympics - A Survey of the Mainland Chinese Public

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Abstract

The Tokyo Olympics was different from the motto of previous Olympics, especially incorporating the concept of “togetherness”. In today’s complex world, it is necessary for big countries to trust each other, eliminate barriers, and work together to unite and cooperate. During the Tokyo Olympics, China’s Internet community had a large-scale discussion in the face of discordant voices. The Tokyo Olympics should have been used to improve the trust of the mainland Chinese in other countries and regions, however; it proved to be counterproductive. Hence, this article discusses the issue of national self-confidence in mainland China and out-group trust. A survey of 714 mainland Chinese was conducted by initially establishing an effective national self-confidence scale and using an established out-group trust scale. It was found that the mainland Chinese public has good national self-confidence and a middle-level of out-group trust. National self-confidence and out-group trust are affected by age, education level, and region. SEM analysis showed that the national self-confidence had a moderately positive effect on the trust of out-groups while Independent group t-tests showed that the Olympic Games had a catalyzing influence on that relationship, increasing distrust of out-groups that previously had negative perceptions and creating more trust for out-groups that previously had positive perceptions.

Keywords: *Chinese national self-confidence, Out-group trust.*

1. Introduction

As the first major global event after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tokyo Olympics brought together athletes from 205 national and regional Olympic committees and national Olympic committee refugee delegations (Business Line, 2021). This year’s Olympic motto went from the original “faster, higher, and stronger” to “faster, higher, stronger, and together”. “Together” shows a concept of team and even the entire cooperation of mankind. The spirit of solidarity in the Olympics has a special stimulating effect on enhancing the faith of all mankind to help each other and have the determination to overcome difficulties together (Akhir, Govindasamy, & Paidi, 2021). “Togetherness” is a key part of mankind’s response to the epidemic. It is also the source of our confidence in the face of world uncertainty and is an important driving force for building a community with a shared future for mankind. Therefore, trust and cooperation between countries are now extremely important, not only to deal with the COVID-19 but also to face the future of our entire humanity. From strengthening international cooperation in the COVID-19’s prevention and control to addressing global issues such as climate change and network security, the international community needs to foster a sense of a community with a shared future for mankind, expand mutually beneficial cooperation, and join hands to build a more inclusive global governance system to help each other to cope with the risks and challenges of building a more prosperous and beautiful world.

However, the world has shown an incomprehensible and unacceptable response and even ridiculed many situations during the Olympic Games to varying degrees. China, as the only positive growth economy during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Hale, & Sun, 2021), has gradually assumed responsibility for the health of the world’s economy, and China’s existence and every move has gradually begun to be watched much more closely by the world. The reaction of Chinese netizens during the Olympic Games can be shown to truly reflect the current situation of the Chinese public’s trust in out-groups. During 14 days from July 26 to August 8, positive and negative evaluations of the related topics in the three media organizations in China’s four top search lists, namely Zhihu, Weibo, and Baidu’s 24-hour hot search list, were counted for each country/region outside Mainland China, and the number of times that the Olympic Games appeared on the top 5 of the three major hotlists in the mainland for that day was also recorded (The WeChat hot search list

was excluded because the top ten of the WeChat's hot article list is dominated by the national official media). Among the three main sources, the Japanese Olympic Games appeared on China's hot search list 20 times, all negatively. The United States appeared on the lists five times, mostly on the last three days of the Olympic Games and with solely negative topics. Taiwan appeared on the lists three times, mostly from August 2 to August 5, and always in a negative aspect. Because of these results, the author questioned whether the Chinese public in mainland China has an issue with the out-group trust of these countries and initiate an investigation through this article.

The study of out-group trust originated from the discussion of intergroup trust. At present, researchers continue to suggest that individual cognition, behavior, and decision-making methods will also be affected by the environment. Thus, modern research on trust is no longer limited to individual trust, research on trust has risen to the inter-group level, and hierarchical trust has gradually attracted people's attention (Foddy, & Yamagishi, 2009). In the current Internet era, trust in strangers is particularly important, because, in this era, there is less face-to-face contact to determine whether an individual is worthy of trust. Under such circumstances, trust is formed based on the individual's social status, and the classification of their social information is becoming more and more important. The formation of trust in today's life is determined by the social identity of the individual, like a person's citizenship and residency in a country, people having in common the same household registration, and so on (Kramer, 1999; Güth, Levati, & Ploner, 2008). People usually trust groups with a similar identity and tend to trust individuals with the same or similar identity. To out-groups that people do not belong to, the trust of groups composed of others will typically be low (Xin et al., 2013). At the same time, Kramer (2018) stated that out-group trust focuses on whether a person trusts strangers or people who are different from them in terms of nationality or religion. Therefore, this study divided the in-groups and out-groups according to nationality. The in-group is composed of people from mainland China while the out-groups are people from countries and regions outside mainland China. The trust of the out-group comes from the willingness of individuals to believe in others, depending upon their own judgment and according to the research, while the self-confident person is more likely to place trust in others (Stolle, 2002; Wang, 2014). The trust of highly confident individuals in strangers is significantly higher than the trust of less-confident individuals in strangers, and it can be inferred that an increase in national self-confidence will increase the trust in strangers (Wang, 2014). Therefore, this article will examine the degree to which Chinese national self-confidence can affect the trust of out-groups.

The core of national self-confidence in China today lies in the "Four Self-confidences", namely path self-confidence, theoretical self-confidence, system self-confidence, and cultural self-confidence, as proposed by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China in 2016 (Yan, 2021). The Four Confidences correspond to a high degree of recognition of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It represents a high degree of recognition, perseverance, and confidence in achieving a better blueprint for the future (Jin, 2019). The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is projected to be a road to truth, formed by integrating China's social and economic structure, production relations, politics, culture, and ecological civilization. Therefore, to be confident in the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics means to be confident in the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, cultural identity, and self-confidence (Jin, 2019). Theoretical confidence comes from the scientific, practical, and popular nature of Marxist theory, which is the theoretical basis of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the key to the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics (Jin, 2019). The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, including China's political, legislative, and judicial systems, is the practice of Chinese scientific theory. It advances together with the construction of the Chinese path and also provides system guarantees for the inheritance of the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics (Jin, 2019). The mainstream ideology of the culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as a superstructure of ideas, plays an important guiding role in the political superstructure such as institutions, state power institutions, and political parties (Jin, 2019).

At present, China, from the top leadership to the grassroots, is working hard in the direction of the "Four Self-confidences" described by Xi Jinping and enhances national confidence by enhancing "the Four

Self-confidences” (Yan, 2021). Therefore, this article analyzes and discusses the “Four Self-confidences” as the essence of national self-confidence.

2. Objectives

- 1) To evaluate the level of Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust
- 2) To evaluate the differences in Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust by gender, age, education, and region
- 3) To research the relationship between Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust
- 4) To evaluate the impact of the Tokyo Olympics on Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust

3. Materials and Methods

Sample: In this article, a cluster random sample survey was conducted among citizens in the Eastern, Central, and Western parts of mainland China through an online questionnaire survey platform--with Xi’an province was the representative of China Western economic area, Henan Province was the representative of China Central economic area, and Zhejiang Province was the representative of China Eastern coastal economic area--for a total of 750 people. After deleting inconsistent or redundant samples due to the regularity of the answers or answering from the same IP address, the remaining 714 questionnaires were used as the final sample of this study, with a response rate of 95.2%. The final sample included 269 males and 445 females in total, mostly aged between 18 and 40 years old. While 33.61% of them had the education level in the undergraduate degrees, 48.04% had less than a college education. If categorized after the Chinese economic area, 303 responses were from the Eastern coastal area, 266 responses from the Central area, and 145 responses from the Western area.

Chinese national self-confidence scale: The survey employed the “Four Self-confidences” self-assessment scale of Chinese college students developed by Huang (2020), which contains 25 items and a total of four dimensions. There are 1) six items in the dimension of the path self-confidence, 2) five items in the dimension of the theoretical self-confidence, 3) eight items in the dimension of the system self-confidence, and 4) six items in the dimension of the cultural self-confidence. The original test reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) was 0.890. This research conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the original scale, and the results are shown in Table 1, which reveals a two-factor solution.

Table 1 Rotated factor loadings and communalities of Chinese national self-confidence

Items (Chinese translated into English)	Path & Theory self-confidence	System & Culture self-confidence	Communalities
Strengthening the path self-confidence is related to the stability of the country and the success or failure of the cause of socialism.	.953		.816
The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the only correct path to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.	.879		.727
The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the only way to achieve socialist modernization and create a better life for the people.	.877		.828
Believing in Marxism and having firm theoretical self-confidence is very important to me.	.875		.656
The development prospects of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics are bright.	.870		.843
The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the inevitable result of the development of modern Chinese society.	.818		.730
The theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics can guide China’s scientific development.	.787		.756

Items (Chinese translated into English)	Path & Theory self-confidence	System & Culture self-confidence	Communalities
I am proud of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.	.732		.674
Only by affirming ideals and faith can we better shoulder the mission era and realize the great “Chinese Dream”	.730		.772
I always pay attention to the country’s principles and policies.	.598		.712
Cultural soft power is the core content of China’s comprehensive strength.		.910	.753
The culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a powerful spiritual force that inspires the entire Chinese people to march forward courageously.		.869	.827
The Chinese culture has enhanced my cultural self-confidence and pride.		.852	.771
China’s excellent traditional culture is a valuable asset of Chinese culture.		.847	.807
Culture is the cohesion and accumulation of a national spirit.		.833	.820
The system of regional national autonomy and the principle “one country, two systems” are conducive to maintaining national stability and unity.		.820	.812
The National People’s Congress represents the interests and demands of the people.		.775	.792
China should actively learn from the beneficial achievements of human political civilization, but cannot copy the Western political system model.		.600	.759
Adhering to the public ownership economic system as the mainstay is conducive to the development of our country.		.537	.715
All rights in China belong to the people.		.520	.647
% of Variance	70.021%	75.375%	

It can be seen from Table 1 that the factor loadings for each dimension are greater than the required 0.33 (Ho, 2006), the communalities are all greater than the required 0.30 (Ho, 2006), and the cumulative percent of variance explained is quite high at 75.375%. This scale is suitable for two-factor structure analysis. The resulting Chinese national self-confidence self-assessment scale consists of two factors with a total of 20 items, including 1) a total of 10 items of the path and theory self-confidence and 2) 10 items of the system and cultural self-confidence. Using AMOS for two-factor confirmatory factor analysis, the revised results are $X^2/df = 12.176$, CFI = 0.919, NFI = 0.909, TLI = 0.906, RMSEA = 0.081, these indicators are all within the recommended levels (Lai, 2018), indicating that the two-factor structure of this scale is valid and has an acceptable degree of goodness of fit. After testing for the reliability, the internal consistency of the 20-item Chinese national self-confidence self-assessment scale has a Cronbach $\alpha = 0.978$, indicating that the Chinese national confidence self-assessment scale has excellent reliability and consistency.

Classification of out-groups: This study divided the in-group and out-group according to national identity (Welzel, & Delhey, 2015; Kramer, 2018). The in-group is mainland Chinese, and the out-group is the population of countries and regions outside mainland China. The designated outside group choices were the United States, Japan, and Taiwan, which were the three countries that were frequently discussed by Chinese netizens on the hot list of social platforms during the Tokyo Olympics. After discussions with several Chinese international relations experts, Russia, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Macau were selected as the reference group. None of the above-listed countries and regions appeared on the hot search lists of China’s three major social platforms during the Tokyo Olympics. Russia contrasts with the United States since both

of them are the world’s leading powers. South Korea is to compare with Japan as a core Asian country. Hong Kong and Macau are to compare with Taiwan—especially Hong Kong, which is similar to Taiwan because it has also been controversial and full of various challenges to mainland China. Consequently, this research divided the out-groups into three groups for research. The first group is Out-group (Total). The second group is “on the list”, and consists of the United States, Japan, and Taiwan. This group is abbreviated as OTL (USA, JPN, and TWN). The third group is the “not in list” group, consisting of Russia, South Korea, and Hong Kong. This group is abbreviated as NIL (RUS, KOR, and HKG).

Out-groups trust scale: Voci (2006) used a scale to measure the trust of southerners and northerners in Italy in each other’s outgroups. Wang, Zhao, and Ming (2009) used a questionnaire to measure the trust level of residents’ out-group members and the migrant population. Gries and Crownson (2010) used questionnaires to measure Americans’ out-group trust in the Chinese people and the Chinese government. This article used the outgroup trust scale adopted by Noor, James Brown, and Prentice (2008), which is used to measure the outgroup trust of the Northern Irish. The outgroup trust scale (Noor et al., 2008) contains six items, including four forward scored items and two reverse-scored items. This article surveyed the United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Taking South Korea as an example, the questions were: ‘I think Koreans are trying to be fair’, ‘I think Koreans are trustworthy’, ‘I think Koreans will not mislead us’, ‘I think Koreans will honor their promises’, ‘I think Koreans will catch up with our shortcomings’, ‘I think Koreans only see their own good’. After reliability testing, the reliability of the comprehensive out-group trust scale in this paper is Cronbach $\alpha = 0.864$, representing good internal consistency.

4. Results

The current status of national self-confidence: To clearly understand the current status of Chinese national self-confidence and the variables that may affect China’s national self-confidence, this research conducted a descriptive analysis on the Chinese national self-confidence and related variables. It then conducted independent sample t-tests on gender, and One-way ANOVA tests were performed on age, education level, and region. The results of the national self-confidence group statistics with means and standard deviations and significance test results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Chinese national self-confidence group statistics and descriptive statistics

Variable	National Self-Confidence		
	N	M ± SD	
Descriptive (Total)	714	73.41±24.56	
Male	269	71.36±23.72	NS
Female	445	74.64±24.99	
Age lower than 18	54	78.22±23.39	F=11.14***
Age 18-25	157	76.06±23.18	
Age 26-40	352	76.38±22.69	
Age 41-56	81	63.26±29.20	
Age over 56	70	60.53±24.89	
Below Undergraduate	343	63.32±26.44	F=65.81***
Undergraduate	240	83.02±18.62	
Post undergraduate	131	82.20±17.70	
Eastern coastal areas	303	77.21±24.04	F=27.75***
Central areas	266	65.02±23.91	
Western area	145	80.84±22.44	

*** $p < 0.001$

The results in Table 2 show that the overall Chinese national self-confidence is at the upper-middle level ($Mean = 73.41$, $SD = 24.56$). Chinese national self-confidence was affected by age ($p < 0.001$), educational background ($p < 0.001$), and geographic location ($p < 0.001$), while gender had no significant

difference. From the results, it can be seen that males and females each have maintained a high level of national self-confidence; those under 40 years of age have a high degree of national self-confidence, including those having 18 years of age (*Mean* = 76.06, *SD* = 23.18), 18-25 years of age (*Mean* = 78.22, *SD* = 23.39) and 26-40 years of age (*Mean* = 76.38, *SD* = 22.69). Those having below 18 years of age had a national self-confidence that was significantly higher than the other age groups ($p < 0.001$) while those with 41-56 years of age (*Mean* = 63.26, *SD* = 22.69) and those over 56 years old (*Mean* = 60.53, *SD* = 24.89) were two age groups at a medium level of national self-confidence. Those with below undergraduate education level (*Mean*=63.32, *SD*=26.44) were significantly lower in national self-confidence than those with undergraduate degrees (*Mean* = 83.02, *SD* = 18.62) and postgraduates (*Mean* = 82.20, *SD* = 17.70). The national self-confidence of the western responders (*Mean* = 80.84, *SD* = 22.44) was significantly higher than that of those in the central region (*Mean* = 65.02, *SD* = 23.91) and those in the eastern part (*Mean* = 77.21, *SD* = 24.04) while the central region had the lowest level of national self-confidence.

The current status of out-group trust: To clearly understand the current status of out-group trust and the variables that may affect out-group trust, this research conducted descriptive analysis and significant difference analysis on the Out-Group Trust (Total), OTL Group Trust (USA, JPN, TWN) and NIL Group Trust (RUS, KOR, HKG), respectively. The results of an independent sample t-test for gender and One-Way ANOVA tests of age, education level, and region are shown in Table 3, showing means and standard deviations and significant differences.

Table 3 Group statistics and descriptive statistics of out-group trust, OTL group trust, and NIL group trust

Variable	Out-Group Trust (Total)		OTL Group Trust (USA, JPN, TWN)		NIL Group Trust (RUS, KOR, HKG)	
	N	<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>		<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	
Descriptive (Total)	714	15.83±2.32	11.14±2.32		17.26±2.41	
Male	269	15.57±2.00	11.19±3.10	NS	16.84±1.81	<i>t</i> =3.62
Female	445	15.98±2.48	11.12±3.40		17.51±2.67	***
Age < 18	54	15.28±1.92	8.59±3.48		18.60±2.07	
Age 18-25	157	15.84±2.22	10.85±2.76	<i>F</i> =11.93 ***	17.40±2.36	<i>F</i> =11.23 ***
Age 26-40	352	15.94±2.61	11.64±3.48		17.18±2.46	
Age 41-56	81	15.61±2.06	11.65±2.64		16.02±2.21	
Age over 56	70	15.90±1.24	10.69±2.99		17.75±1.99	
< Undergraduate	343	16.10±1.95	11.39±3.13	NS	17.26±2.48	NS
Undergraduate	240	15.52±2.55	10.75±3.22		17.12±2.44	
Postgraduate	131	15.65±2.67	11.21±3.75		17.51±2.13	
Eastern areas	303	16.09±2.39	11.82±3.23	<i>F</i> =37.49 ***	17.20±2.42	<i>F</i> =5.09 **
Central areas	266	15.93±2.19	11.46±2.74		17.03±2.32	
Western area	145	15.07±2.25	9.16±3.58		17.81±2.47	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

The results in Table 3 show that the overall out-group trust (*Mean*=15.83, *SD*=2.32) reached a moderate level, while the OTL Group Trust (*Mean* = 11.14, *SD* = 2.32) was lower and the NIL Group Trust (*Mean* = 17.26, *SD* = 2.41) was higher. The overall out-group trust was affected by age ($p < 0.001$), education level ($p < 0.001$), and region ($p < 0.001$). Females (*Mean* = 15.98, *SD* = 2.48) had significantly higher out-group trust than males (*Mean* = 15.57, *SD* = 2.00). Age had no significant effect on overall out-group trust. Undergraduate (*Mean* = 16.10, *SD* = 1.95) out-group trust was significantly higher than those with less than college training (*Mean* = 15.52, *SD* = 2.55) and postgraduate (*Mean* = 15.65, *SD* = 2.67). Eastern responders' out-group trusts in overall out-group (*Mean* = 16.09, *SD* = 2.39), OTL Group (*Mean* = 11.82, *SD* = 3.23) and NIL Group (*Mean* = 17.20, *SD* = 2.42) were significantly higher than those from the central and western regions. To more intuitively analyze the trust difference of the respondents to the countries and regions studied in this article, the national trust group variable was used as a grouping variable that was divided into seven groups; United States, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. One-way ANOVA was performed, and the results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Out-group trust descriptive and one-way ANOVA test

Variable	Out-Group Trust		
	N	M ± SD	F
USA	714	13.53±4.22	207.27***
JPN	714	13.51±4.45	
KOR	714	14.94±3.62	
RUS	714	17.93±4.25	
TWN	714	14.70±4.72	
HKG	714	16.32±4.12	
MAC	714	19.83±5.14	

*** $p < 0.001$

The results showed that nations were significantly different in Chinese out-group trust ($p < 0.001$). After using the Scheffe posthoc multiple comparison tests, the results showed that Japan ($Mean = 13.51, SD = 4.45$) and the USA ($Mean = 13.53, SD = 4.22$) were significantly lower in Chinese out-group trust than the other nations, while Macau ($Mean = 19.83, SD = 5.14$) was significantly higher in Chinese out-group trust than the other nations.

The relationship between Chinese national self-confidence and foreign group state trust: At present, national self-confidence and out-group trust remain theoretical constructs, especially the trust relationship between countries. There are only a few relevant studies. This article used SPSS to test the correlations of out-group trust on samples. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Correlations of out-group trust, OTL group trust and NIL group trust

Variables	National Self-confidence
Out-group Trust	$r = 0.169^{***}$
OTL Group Trust (USA, JPN, TWN)	$r = -0.207^{**}$
NIL Group Trust (RUS, KOR, HKG)	$r = 0.226^{**}$

** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 shows that the correlation between national self-confidence and out-group trust is positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.169, p < 0.001$). However, the correlation between the national self-confidence and the OTL Group Trust represents a negative ($r = -0.207$) relationship, and there is a positive ($r = 0.226$) correlation with the NIL Group Trust. National self-confidence did not have a strong influence on the external group trust. After using AMOS to establish the structural relationship model between the national self-confidence and the out-group trust, after modification, the results of the suitability of the role of national self-confidence in the out-group trust showed that $X^2/df = 15.25$, Goodness of fit (GFI) = 0.912, Adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI) = 0.903, The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.919, The Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 0.916, Tucker Lewis index (TLI) = 0.909, and The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.086. Each fitting index reached a good level of fit (Lai, 2018), indicating that the model is well constructed. The parameters are shown in Figure 1.

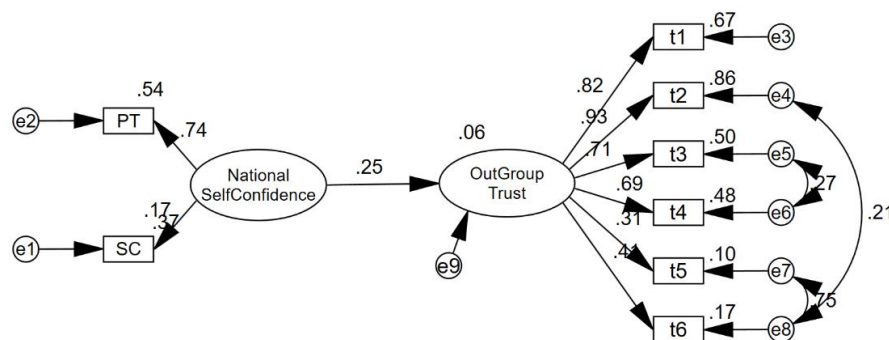


Figure 1 Effect model of Chinese national self-confidence on out-group trust parameter estimation.

According to Figure 1, the results show that national self-confidence has a significant direct effect on out-group trust, but the degree of the effect is modest, with a path coefficient of Beta = .25.

The impact of the Olympics on Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust: A t-test was performed to compare the national self-confidence between the respondents who were concerned about the Olympics and those who were not concerned about the Olympics. The author also conducted independent sample t-tests for the Out-group Trust, the OTL group Trust, and the NIL Group Trust on whether they paid attention to the Olympic Games. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 The impact of the Olympics on Chinese national self-confidence and out-group trust

Variables	Concerned about the Olympics	Not Concerned about the Olympics	t
	N=603	N=111	
	M ± SD	M ± SD	
National self-confidence	74.97±24.36	64.91±23.94	4.01***
Out-group (Total)	15.62±2.34	16.95±1.85	5.70***
OTL group (USA, JPN, TWN)	13.13±4.68	15.76±3.39	12.79***
NIL Group (RUS, KOR, HKG)	17.32±3.60	17.23±5.08	NS

*** $p < 0.001$

It was found that there was a significant difference in Chinese national self-confidence between those respondents who were concerned about the Olympic Games ($p < 0.001$) and those who were not. Those concerned about the Olympic Games ($Mean = 74.97, SD = 24.36$) had significantly higher national self-confidence than those who paid no attention to the Olympic Games ($Mean = 64.9, SD = 23.94$). Table 6 also shows that there were significant differences in the out-group trust; the respondents who were concerned about the Olympic Games had lower out-group trust ($Mean = 15.62, SD = 2.34, p < 0.001$) than those who paid no attention to the Olympic Games ($Mean = 16.95, SD = 1.85$). Specifically, the respondents who followed the Olympics ($Mean = 13.13, SD = 4.68$) had significantly lower trust in the OTL group than those who did not follow the Olympics ($Mean = 15.76, SD = 3.39$), while those who did or did not follow the Olympic Games did not have significant differences on trust in the NIL Group.

5. Discussion

The current status of national self-confidence identity: After data analysis, it was found that in the sample surveyed, the overall Chinese national self-confidence is at the upper level, which is consistent with the results of the *Annual Report on Social Mentality of China* (Wang, 2021). At the same time, Chinese national self-confidence is affected by age, educational background, and region, while gender has no significant difference in Chinese national self-confidence. From the results, men and women each have maintained a high national self-confidence level.

Concerning age group, national self-confidence is highest for those under the age of 25, indicating that China's political education is still in place, and it can also be seen indirectly that China's current development makes the new generation of young people feel more satisfied and confident about China's future. Especially for those of 18 years of age, Chinese national self-confidence was significantly higher than the other age groups, which is understandable given that current compulsory education students are happy about the environment for the country. Upon entering university and after entering into the community, there appears to be some deviation from the social reality of life, however, a very high degree of national self-confidence still exists. As for those between 41 to 56 years old and those more than 56 years old, this research suggests that the founding of new China has still been over a relatively short time, with rapid development. Since this age range has experienced many ups and downs of social development, although compared to those below 40 years old age, national self-confidence has been significantly reduced, but overall, is still in the upper level.

For the educational background, from the research results, the national self-confidence level among the below undergraduate level is significantly lower than that of undergraduates and postgraduates. This study suggests that it is more difficult to obtain resources in real society for those with an education level below the

undergraduate level, and hence there would be a greater level of pessimism. Today China's involution phenomenon, namely the shrinking of resources, is a very serious problem (Meng-ying, 2021). Under the conditions of scarce social resources, the unfair distribution of social resources and the resulting unsatisfactory real lifestyle have affected the national self-confidence of this group of people.

There are significant regional differences as well. The research results have shown that there are significant differences between the Eastern, Central, and Western responders' national self-confidence. Among them, the Western group has the highest level of self-confidence, while the Central group has the lowest self-confidence. The researcher believes that the economic development of the East has been the best for mainland China, and consequently its quality of life is also the highest (Han et al., 2008). However, high quality also means high competition, and the pressure on the people living in the East is the greatest (Han et al., 2008). However, the Eastern region is relatively close to the Central region in the standard of living, while the economic levels of the Central and Eastern regions are far apart. Taking Henan province for example, as the most populous province in central China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021), it has only one university in the China 211 Project (a project that has been successfully managing 100 universities in preparation for the 21st century). Despite being such a big province, Henan has no first-tier (developed) city and only one new first-tier (more developed) city, no second-tier (better development) cities and the rest are third-tier (general development) or below third-tier (poor development) cities (Yicai Global, 2021). It can be seen that there is a huge gap between cities. The huge pressure is borne by only having one new first-tier city and the subsequent impact has caused a huge difference in peoples' living standards, which may have caused their social dissatisfaction and also may have had an impact on their national self-confidence.

The current status of the out-group trust: First of all, this study suggests that, because of China's unique culture, it should have its own trust evaluation system. However, China's various aspects of strength have become more and more important internationally, and it is even more inseparable from the influence of globalization. Therefore, this research adopted the international scale of out-group trust that has been used to allow for better comparative studies in the international arena. Through the out-group trust scale used in this article, it can be seen that the overall out-group trust has reached a medium level, with the OTL Group Trust lower and the NIL Group Trust higher than the medium level. The overall trust of the out-group is affected by age, education level, and region. Female out-group confidence was significantly higher than the male group. Huang, and Deng (2012) conducted a statistical analysis of the social trust level of 1,429 Chinese samples and 4,866 British samples that showed that social trust was influenced by education and age, and female social trust in the UK sample was significantly higher than for males, so these results are similar to this study. Huang, and Deng (2012) believes that the group with experience of going to work in the countryside or mountain areas in China, those aged 56 and above corresponding to this article, have significantly lower social trust than the group without such experience. However, the results from this research show no significant effect on the overall trust of the outside group. At the same time, the survey by Huang, and Deng (2012) showed that the social trust of females in the Chinese sample was significantly lower than that of men.

Education level seems to have a positive effect on social trust. Wang (2014), Wu and Shi (2020) found the same result, and social trust was not affected by region. These conclusions are inconsistent with this article's findings. According to the findings of this article, the trust of out-groups among those with an undergraduate education level is significantly higher than that of those with less than undergraduate education and postgraduates, and those with undergraduate education have the lowest trust of out-groups, that is, the education level has no positive impact on the trust of out-groups. In Huang, and Deng's study (2012), the growth area had no significant impact on social trust, while the respondents from the Eastern region in this study had the highest level in overall out-group trust, OTL Group Trust, and NIL Group Trust and is significantly higher than the other two regions.

This research suggests that intergroup contact can enhance out-group trust (Wei, 2017), and due to the high level of economic development of the Eastern coastal areas, foreigners are more concentrated in the Eastern region. According to the Beike Research Institute (China Development, 2021) on investigations of foreigners living in Chinese cities, among the top ten residence lists, eight are located in the Eastern coastal area, whereas only two are located in the Central Region and none are found on the list in the Western region.

Therefore, more inter-group contacts, as well as the high national self-confidence brought about by developed cities and superior life, have enabled the public in Eastern China to have higher external group trust.

From the more detailed survey results, it was found that the Chinese people's trust in the United States, Japan, and Taiwan is significantly lower than that of Russia, South Korea, and Hong Kong. Han's survey (2012) found similar results as this article. Chinese people have the lowest out-group trust in Japan among the countries listed and regions surveyed, followed by the United States. According to the Japan-China Public Opinion Survey (The Genron NPO, 2020), from 2014 to 2020, after four public opinion surveys, although Chinese respondents' preference for Japan has rebounded, the rate of recovery has been slow and the effect is limited (Xu, 2020). The Chinese public opinion of the United States continues to deteriorate (The Genron NPO, 2020), and nearly half of the people express a pessimistic attitude towards China-US relations. As seen from the Han (2012) survey from 2006 to the present, the Chinese people's attitudes toward Japan, the United States, and Taiwan and trust of these out-groups has not effectively been improved.

This research suggests that due to historical, political, economic, and other conflicts, as well as China's rapid development, there may be external evaluations of China that do not match the speed of development (Silver et al., 2020). In the face of negative reviews, the trust of the Chinese people in out-groups has gradually been wiped out. The conflict between mainland China and the United States, Japan, and Taiwan has been escalating, and these problems have penetrated the cognition of the Chinese people, especially the conflict between China, the United States, and Japan. As a controversial event, Taiwan has continued to ferment in China, the United States, and Japan. As a result, China's trust in Taiwan has gradually decreased. In recent years, the relationship between Russia (Brain, 2021), South Korea (Chey, 2021), Hong Kong (Xie, 2015), Macau (Xie, 2015), and mainland China has maintained sustained good conditions. While on the other hand, for Russia and the United States, as well as South Korea and Japan, there are also been conflicts of interest that, in turn, promote the development of the relationship between China and Russia (Brain, 2021), as well as China and South Korea (Chey, 2021). Although the respondents' trust in Hong Kong is significantly lower than that of Macau in this article, the overall level of trust in Hong Kong is still at the upper-middle level. Hong Kong and Macau are regions that have returned to China for many years, and mainland China's sense of identity with both is at a high level (Xie, 2015).

The relationship of national self-confidence to out-group trust: The research in this study finds that national self-confidence directly affects the trust of out-groups, but the relationship is a general one. Sung and Son (2020) found in a study of 2,314 Taiwanese respondents that out-group trust is associated with self-rated health. Diotaiuti, Marco-Zona, and Rea (2015) found that people who feel that the in-group is more reliable had lower self-confidence and are more likely to trust the out-group. By comparing national self-confidence with OTL group trust and NIL group trust, it was found that national self-confidence is negatively correlated with OTL group trust, and positively correlated with NIL group trust. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that the current Chinese national self-confidence is like a catalyst that will deepen the original levels of trust and distrust. That is to say, there is more distrust of the original negative cognition group, and more trust in the original positive cognition group.

The author believes that the Chinese people once had a serious case of reverse nationalism (Ye, 2015). Nationalism has a strong identity with one's own nation. Reverse nationalism is the opposite. It has a strong aversion to one's own nation and feels that it is inferior to other nations (Ye, 2015). This article also sees many related phenomena. For example, in the past, foreigners were usually able to enjoy a better treatment, such as international students in China, which can often be seen from arrogant news (Xue, 2021). Not only do foreign students have poor grades, but they are also domineering and the Chinese have always been too tolerant of them. Even several criminal cases were made to disappear (Xue, 2021). Do Chinese people really lack self-confidence? It can be seen from these survey results that the national self-confidence of the respondents is at a relatively high level. Therefore, this research suggests that the building of self-confidence is a long process. New China has been established in a short time and the development speed is fast so that the development of self-confidence of the people is in a U-shaped development curve. Today, China, as a big country that cannot be ignored in the world, has accelerated the development of its citizens' self-confidence. Therefore, over-confidence or pseudo-confidence may also appear. The author believes that Chinese senior officials attach great importance to the building of self-confidence at the grassroots level. They are deeply aware of the lack of quality among Chinese citizens and thus have given great resources to

education and society to improve. It can also be seen from related academic articles and these findings. Indeed, effective results have been achieved. At the same time, this study suggests that the building of true self-confidence requires the improvement of generations of people, rather than raising it in a few years. Of course, we cannot expect a country with the largest population in the world to reach a reasonable stage of development everywhere at once. China's national self-confidence has already had a good start and can be expected to improve in the future. The development of trust of out-groups also improves with the changes in national self-confidence. Therefore, the author believes that as China gradually accelerates international participation, such as at the 2022 Winter Olympics and Asian Games, along with the building of national self-confidence, it is bound to be in the future that the trust of outside groups will reach new heights.

The impact of the Olympic Games on national self-confidence and out-trust groups: This research found that the Olympic Games have had a positive impact on national self-confidence. The national self-confidence of the respondents who followed the Olympics was significantly higher than that of the respondents who did not follow the Olympics. The Chinese in this article is a kind of in-group. The Olympic Games have had a negative impact on the out-group trust. Specifically, there was no significant difference between the several variables in the NIL Group, that is, whether following the Olympic Games or not, it had no impact on the NIL Group. The surveyed respondents' trust in NIL Group's countries and regions is close to the same level, however, there were significant differences in the trust of countries and regions on the OTL group.

This study suggests that paying attention to the Olympics deepened the negative perceptions of those countries and regions that originally had negative perceptions. It can be seen that the Tokyo Olympics had enhanced the confidence of the Chinese national in-group and reduced the trust of the out-group, which obviously violates the spirit and slogan advocated by the Tokyo Olympics. The intention of the Olympic Games is to eliminate global barriers; in fact, this Tokyo Olympic Games placed special emphasis on unity and cooperation, including the addition of the theme of the opening ceremony of this Olympics: "Moving Forward and United by Emotion" (Tokyo, 2020, 2021). Just as IOC President Bach previously announced the change in the Olympic slogan, from the familiar "faster, higher, and stronger" to "faster, higher, stronger, and together" (Tokyo, 2020, 2021), emphasizing the need for human society to unite in difficult times.

On a more practical level, if the Olympics had been canceled, it would have destroyed the dreams of 11,000 Olympic athletes. The Olympic Games in Tokyo had to meet the challenges to overcome extreme difficulties to be held, while on the economic and political level, the Japanese also had their own self-interests. Regardless of the reasons, this was a high-profile event. Because of its hard-won and extraordinary significance, the Tokyo Olympics should have emphasized the concept of "togetherness", such as the implementation of the concept of being "together", the media's positive reports, respect for the principle of fairness and justice, the official response to issues in a timely and positive manner, and attention to the voices of the people in various countries. On the contrary, during the Tokyo Olympics, the performance of Japan, the United States, and Taiwan in the Olympics deepened the Chinese people's negative understanding of them. For example, some controversial judgments of gymnastics in the Tokyo Olympics (Orlowitz, 2021), some arrogant performances of Japanese athletes (MINNEWS, 2021a), the speech of victory of Taiwanese athletes against the Chinese public, and some exaggerated facts and controversial reports in the Western media such as made by BBC New (2021) all received large-scale condemnation on the Chinese Internet. This also made this much-watched event inspire the national self-confidence of the Chinese and reduce the trust of the out-group. Therefore, this author believes that this is far from enough to respond to "Togetherness". In this situation, full of misunderstandings and a crisis of trust, how we collectively try to eliminate the barriers and let the big countries directly help each other is the core meaning of the Olympic Games. Furthermore, the author believes that the next Tokyo Olympic Games can be a reminder of the important events, such as the 2022 Winter Olympics and Asian Games, in which the host country of China may pass on how to make being "together" a better upgrade, such as by enhancing the media's consciousness, paying attention to the recommendations and requirements of each country, proactively providing an official positive response, and so on.

Media has an important impact on trust (Lu et al., 2020). Hardin (2008) was also concerned with the causal link between watching TV and the fall in trust in the government. Therefore, in addition to commercial advertisements, public service advertisements can also be used to convey "being together;" social media

should also directly “be together” to promote the development of national quality. In addition to paying attention to the athletes of your own country, you can also report on the kind deeds of the athletes from other countries. The athletes themselves are the best film stars. Compared with the common people, athletes have increased inter-group contacts. They can also visually show that athletes from various countries stand together because of sports and convey the concept of true tolerance, understanding, and togetherness. For example, Sunisa Lee, the American all-around gymnastics champion, gave encouragement and support to the balance beam champion Guan Chenchen of China (Global Times, 2021); the Chinese swimming champion Zhang Yufei waited and embraced Rikako, a Japanese swimmer who fell ill before the Olympic (MINNEWS, 2021b); Mutaz Barshim and Gianmarco Tamberi together won the gold medal in the high jump (Jeffery, 2021). These moments were the best manifestations of togetherness, but the media rarely reported them. They seemed to prefer controversial topics to increase media attention. Therefore, the China 2022 Winter Olympic Games and the Asian Games should be held with the same emphasis on solidarity between the media and athletes. They should be hopeful, not afraid of gossip, and bravely should come out to show self-confidence in building out-group trust, as an important way to eliminate the prejudice against the out-group.

6. Conclusion

After establishing an effective Chinese national self-confidence scale and adopting the previously developed and researched out-group trust scale, this research found that the mainland Chinese respondents have good Chinese national self-confidence and a medium level of out-group trust. The national self-confidence and out-group trust are affected by age, education level, and region. Chinese national self-confidence has a direct and general effect on the trust of out-groups, and the Olympic Games helped catalyze the influence of relationships, made out-groups with originally negative perceptions more distrusted, and created more trust of those out-groups with originally positive perceptions.

Although China has always discussed national self-confidence, in fact, until recently, the Chinese nation was not really confident enough. China is eager to prove itself to the outside world, so it sometimes falls into utilitarianism. For example, in global events like the Olympics, the whole country used to pay attention to every gold medal. The gold medal had become a symbol, carrying too much value and meaning beyond sports. As a result, the athletes who received the gold and reveled in the whole country became a hero while the losers received national condemnation and were drowned in scolding saliva. For the out-groups, when there are different interests in China, the whole country will condemn it. None of this should happen to a citizen of a country with high national self-confidence. China in 2022 will usher in the Olympic Winter Games, and the Asian Games, with understanding, solidarity, friendship, and fair play; the spirit of sports lies in mutual exchanges and discussions, seeking a better self-presentation for mankind.

At a time when the COVID-19 is raging the world, it is especially necessary for human beings to let go of their prejudices, transcend differences in race, belief, and ideology, and join hands to overcome difficulties for a better future. This article also hopes that, while China will successfully host the Winter Olympics and the Asian Games, it will increase the sense of trust among nations and at the same time, pay attention to the level of national self-confidence in society, correctly guide and develop national self-confidence, and not excessively develop national self-confidence and eliminate false self-confidence. In the face of various rumors, the Chinese public should be willing to help without arrogance or rashness, and with a tolerant heart, shoulder the quality and responsibility of a big country, which is also a true manifestation of national self-confidence. This article hopes that this “Together” spiritual wealth can continue from the arena to the outside, and become a powerful force for mankind to overcome various crises and challenges.

7. References

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