

## UNDERSTANDING SPORT EVENT VISITORS' MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION OF SMALL-SCALE SPORT EVENT

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to have further understanding on the visitors' motivation and satisfaction in attending the small-scale sport event particularly in northern peninsular of Malaysia. Understanding of the factor that motivates visitors' to attend the sport event and what influence their satisfaction becomes important for the event organizer and the marketing purposes. Through this understanding, the sport event can be organized according to the needs and demands of the visitors'. As the main purpose of the small-scale event is to give the benefits to the local community, understanding these factors becomes important to ensure the success. Hence, this study applied the push and pulls model in order to examine the visitors' motivation and satisfaction that influence the visitors' to attend this small-scale sport event. Finding showed that visitors' motivate to attend this event to earn the knowledge and to escape from the routine life. Moreover, the visitors' significantly satisfied with facilities and convenience. This finding becomes valuable information for event organizer for their strategic planning and marketing purposes.*

**Keywords:** small-scale sport event, motivation, satisfaction, visitors' behaviour, tourism

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### Introduction

Sport tourism becomes part of tourism product which contributes to the economic development for the destination. Besides promoting the destination, organizing an event also

becomes as one of the attractions for the visitors' to choose a destination to visit. Fourie and Santana-Gallego (2011) agreed that organizing the sport events can give more benefits to the country or host cities due to the popularity of the events especially mega-sporting events. Mega-sporting events defined as large scale events which involved international significance, character and international mass media. The benefits received by organizing the mega-sporting events has kept the global competition among the countries to host these types of events. As stated by Liu (2015) the image impact received by the host country has influenced the possible opportunities and giving the large potential for tangible and intangible benefits.

The attention given to the mega-sporting event has been negating the ability of small-scale sport events in contributing to the economic and tourism as well. Higham (1999) agreed that the small-scale sport events get less attention from the organizer due to the fewer prospects and less contribution in terms of economic. This is due to the small-scale sports events often organized at the community level and getting less attention from the visitors' compared to mega-sporting events. The potential of small-scale sport events as a tourism product should be acknowledged due to the benefits that have been given to the local community by providing and improving the additional incomes, used the existing infrastructure compare to mega-sporting events and build up the positive relationship between the community and state tourism action council. Due to the less attention that has been given, this potential product widely known among the surrounding local community. The less attention that has been given has influenced the limited study of small-scale sport events by knowing the factors that affect the visitors' decision to attend (Yusof, Shah, & Geok, 2010).

Understanding the visitor's behaviour is complex due to the diversity of psychological needs and demand. In the sport tourism literature, motivation and satisfaction becomes the preferences to recognize the visitors' attitude (Funk, Beaton, & Alexandris, 2012; Prayag & Grivel, 2014). Accordingly, several of previous studies (Ramírez-hurtado, 2014; Wicker, Hallmann, & Zhang, 2012) agreed that there is a difference with the regards to the visitors' perception and experience due to the difference of need and demand. This assumption has been supported by Koo et al. (2014) which indicated that positive motivation on visitors' does not necessarily affect their behaviour intentions. Moreover, due to the dissimilarity, the motive and the satisfaction level could be different from each of the visitors'. The distinction between each of visitors' should be acknowledged by the event organizer to understand and enhance their marketing for the better positioning strategies. Besides that, by knowing the factors also can help the event organizers to examine how motivation and satisfaction affect the behaviour of the visitors'. Thus, it is necessary for event organizers to understand the visitor's behaviour in terms of motivation and satisfaction to offer a better event experience while attending this small-scale sport event.

The current studies of small-scale sport events works on the visitors' characteristics and their participating (Shonk, Greenwell, Bravo, & Won, 2012; Yusof & Shah, 2007) but this study emphasis on the factors and demand side which influence the visitors' to attend this small-scale sport events in north state of Malaysia. Specifically, knowledge on the visitors' behaviour in the small-scale sport event is limited in north state of Malaysia. Without this

essential information, it is impossible to develop any of strategic planning and marketing purposes in order to market this event as one of the tourism products and attraction. This is due to the event organizer does not have control of the push factors, but they have control on the pull factor. The benefits seeking through attending an event will depend on many of

personal factors such as experience, motives and expectations. The external benefits obtained by the visitors' are depending on the facilities and images of the event. In fact, the external motivation of the visitors' are in the some way of the event organizer control (Bayrak, 2011). Hence, when the internal motivation has been achieved, the event organizer should create the external factors by attracting to the price, experience and program offered. The specific objective of this study are

1. To examine the push and pull factors of the visitors' which influence the decision to attend the small-scale sports event.
2. To identify the satisfaction factors of small-scale sports event visitors'.
3. To examine if there are significant differences between motivation and satisfaction towards social demographic factors.

This study contributes to the essential information to the organizer on the need and demand of the visitors' during their visit. Information that has been given can be used for the strategic planning and marketing purposes due to the difference in scope and objective compared to mega-sporting events. Exploring the factors that influence the visitors' decision in attending these small-scale sport events are the first step of the strategic planning. Furthermore, it also can help for the development of this sport event to become as an attraction in the northern state of Malaysia comparable with mega-sporting events.

## **Literature Review**

### **Small-scale sport event**

Most of the event organizers tend to focus on the mega-sporting event which, according to them gives more value and huge benefits, especially on the economic and profit such as Formula One, Monsoon Cup and Langkawi International Regatta. This trend also has influenced most of the literatures which tend to focus on the mega-sporting event on the impacts and positive benefits by organizing this event. However, in terms of the economic benefits, small-scale sport event also gives value benefits to the host communities. This has been agreed by Higham (1999) on the positive benefits of organizing this type of sport event. Besides the economic benefits, small-scale sports event also can become as one of the tourism attractions for the host communities. This is due to the uniqueness of this event which sometimes highlights the local sport activities. The local sports activities should be promoted as an attraction besides preserving the local heritage.

### **Motivation**

Motivation defined as a dynamic process of the internal psychological factor that generates a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals (Crompton, McKay & Society, 1997). This process has led the motives to attend the event due to the different needs each visitors'. Due to the different motives, each of visitors' may have several of needs which should acknowledge by the event organizer. Understanding the motives becomes the valuable

criteria to design a better products and services. This understanding will help organizer to provide the suitable services due to the growing number and diversity of the event which lead to the competition. The understanding of the why visitors' attends an event must be complemented with to what extend the different events has attracted them to attend those

events, whether visitors' have different motives or they are underlying with similar motivation.

For example, Prayag and Grivel (2014) found that visitors' participated in the Interamni World Cup 2012 with the motives of socialization, participation and competition. However, the result of this study has grouped the visitors' according to the cluster based on the higher ranking of motivation factor. The higher ranking of motivation factors has grouped the visitors' into indifferent, enthusiast, socializer and competitive. As the study focusing on the younger visitors', the finding has led to the motives of socialization. On the other hand, Menzies and Nguyen (2012) determining the motives of the visitors' attending the sport event by using internal and external factors. The internal factors (excitement, enjoyment) and external factors (atmosphere, entertainment) has influence the visitors' motives to attend the sport event. Similarly, Tokuyama and Greenwell (2011) indicated that achievement, affiliation and reduce stress becomes the motives of consumer to watch and play football soccer. This study found that, consumer play and watch football reduce their daily life stress, to join the specific community group and to improve the team performance. The result revealed that, each of the visitors' who attend the events has different of motives and in order to ensure the event success, event organizer should understand the visitors' motives.

Understanding the visitors' motives will guide the event organizer to develop the better marketing plan because visitors' motives are related to the attitude and behaviour. From the above finding, it shows that the motives of the visitors' who attend the sport event are different. The differences have been influenced by the type of sport event, sport attraction, experience and also the demographic factors. Thus, understanding the different motives of the visitors' is very important to find the contrary pattern of the motives.

### **Satisfaction**

In the tourism industry, understanding of the visitors' satisfaction is the key component to predict the visitors' repeat and repurchase the product because it includes expectation and perceived reality of experience (e.g., Kim et al., 2010; Ko, Kim, Kim & Lee, 2010; Lee & Beeler, 2009). Satisfaction defined as the best outcome or process of an experience (Krohn & Backman, 2011). In the meantime, Grace and O'Cass (2004), stated that satisfaction as the emotional response to service attributes and information lead to the immediate response. However, Chen and Tsai (2008) claimed that satisfaction refers to the perceived discrepancy between prior expectation and perceived performance after consumption.

In the sports tourism context, the essential of satisfaction has been examined by several of studies (e.g., Ramírez-hurtado, 2014; Tzetzis, Alexandris & Kapsampeli, 2014). Satisfaction has generally been linked to the marketing strategies, positive word of mouth besides as a factor that influence visitors' to have the intention to return and recommend the positive things to others. Furthermore, satisfaction can be achieved from evaluation of visitors' experiences based on the two-way judgements namely product performance and the product

itself (Lee & Beeler, 2009). Even though the consensus has stated that core service and employee service influence the level of satisfaction, the increasing of the interpersonal dimension on the service offering should be more focused (Grace & O'Cass, 2004; Neill, Carlsen & Getz, 1999).

Maintaining the service offering to fulfil the visitors' satisfaction is the major challenge for the event organizer. This is due to the visitors' high expectation from the time they deciding

to attend an event. The various reason of attending an event becomes the reason of the visitors' to have the high expectation. Previous studies (e.g., Bonnefoy-Claudet & Ghantous, 2013; Koo, Byon, & Baker, 2014; Tzetzis et al., 2014) have shown that satisfaction might be vary depending on the several of factors such as emotions, service quality and experience. Understanding and fulfilling the visitors' satisfaction will ensure the visitors' committed to attend the event and remain the event sustainability compared to unsatisfied visitors'. Thus, considering the role of satisfaction as the determining factor that influences future behaviour, event organizer should have further understanding of the specific factors that influence visitors' satisfaction besides measured based on the overall satisfaction.

### **Motivation, Satisfaction and Visitors' Behaviour**

In the tourism industry, attracting new and retaining the existing visitors' becomes the most important action that should be taken by the tour operators. Prayag and Grivel (2014) indicate that, it is important to understand the visitor's motivation and satisfaction due to the linkages of these variables towards visitors' behavioural intentions. Moreover, Prayag (2012) stated that the important of understanding the link between motivation and future behavioural intentions will add knowledge regarding visitors' psychology and marketing segmentation. Besides that, the important of satisfaction towards the positive behaviour of the visitor also has been agreed by Koo et al. (2014) in their study of small-scale marathon event. Achieving the visitors' satisfaction will enhance the positive behaviour among visitors'. In addition, understanding visitors' through motivation enable the event organizer to find out the strength of the event and furthermore fulfilled the visitors' satisfaction (Lee, Kang, & Lee, 2013). Besides understanding how satisfaction leads to post-consumption behaviours of sport visitors, it may be necessary to understand the role of motivation in shaping satisfaction to influence the positive outcome on the visitor behavioural intentions. Therefore, the research question are:

- 1: What are the motivation (push and pull) factors of visitors' to the small-scale sports event?
- 2: What are the factors that influence the visitors' satisfaction?
- 3: Did the gender of the visitors' have significant influence towards visitors' motivation and satisfaction?

### **Methods**

#### **Participant and procedure**

In total, of 600 visitors' who have participated in this survey, 132 questionnaires were excluded due to the uncompleted answers. Only 468 of the questionnaire were validating to analyse. All the respondents are the visitors' who are attending the small-scale sports event in the northern state of peninsular Malaysia. Among the 468 respondents, 52.8% are male and 47.2% were female. As presented in Table 1, this event is popular among the younger visitors' with the range of age 21-30 (38.9%). From the finding it showed that, the small-scale sport event has successful attracted younger visitors'. This sport event classified as the small-scale because it was hosting for the community, using existing infrastructure and limited funding (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012). In this study, visitors' were defined as spectators who are visiting the sport event. An on-site quantitative survey was used as an appropriate method because leisure visitor can be surveyed on-site. Thus, simple random sampling was used at the survey location. Assistant researcher has been used to distribute the data and collected back from the visitors' within the event area. The demographic data of the visitors are presented in Table 1.

## Instrumentation

*Motivation.* It was measured by using 15 items, which was adapting from Prayag and Grivel (2014) and Savinovic, Kim and Long (2012). This item was adjusted according to the context of the study. The dimensions of these items were: escape, excitement, knowledge/education and marketing. A seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7) was used.

*Satisfaction.* These items was measured by using 16 items, which was developed by Huang (2009) as follows: attraction of games, facilities and convenience and promotion. These 16 items were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Category	Frequency	Percent %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	247	52.8
Female	241	47.2
<b>Age</b>		
< 20	123	26.3
21-30	182	38.9
31-40	82	17.5
41-50	54	11.5
Over 51	27	5.8
<b>Education</b>		
Primary-secondary school	201	42.9
Certificate or diploma	158	33.8
Degree	73	15.6
Master or PhD	11	2.4
Others	25	5.3
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	200	42.7
Government officer	68	14.5
Professional	23	4.9
Business owner	96	20.5
Unemployed	36	7.7
Retiree	13	2.8

## Results

The two research questions were examined by using the statistical package SPSS16.0. A one-sample t-test using a test value of “3.0” was used to examine which of the motivation attributes motivates visitors’ to attend the small-scale sports event. The findings are reported in Table 2. The mean scores of this item ranged from 4.66 to 5.18 which showed that all the items were perceived to be positive. The mean score of these 16 items was comparatively showed that these attributes were rated as significantly important by all visitors’.

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Motivation Attributes (n=468)**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
To escape from routine life	4.66	1.54
To enjoy being away from home	4.72	1.47
To rest/relax	5.00	1.35
To experience the excitement	5.10	1.38
To enjoy the atmosphere of the event	5.16	1.31
To enjoy the unique/attraction close to the event	5.16	1.31
To meet new people and make friends	4.77	1.48
To meet new people with similar interest	4.82	1.39
To share experiences with my friends	4.95	1.38
To increase knowledge about small-scale event sports tourism	5.18	1.28
To experience the uniqueness of this event	5.11	1.35
Experience a different culture	5.15	1.36
To disclosed with the activities that has been offered by the organizer	5.06	1.32
I came because of adequate information about the activities of this event	4.95	1.37
I came because of the quality of marketing prior to the event	4.96	1.43

The satisfaction factor also, has been examined by using a one sample t-test to measure the satisfaction attributes of the visitors'. The measurement scale of visitors' satisfaction consists of 16 items reflecting the importance of attraction of games, facilities and convenience and promotion. Table 3 reports the mean performance ratings of the visitors' satisfaction which the highest mean score (M = 4.04), followed by "excitement" which got (M = 3.99), "games attraction" (M = 3.99), and the lowest scores were "clean restroom" (M = 3.04). Moreover, in Table 4, the effects of motivation and satisfaction has been reported. The value does show, there is no effects on the visitors' motivation and satisfaction by gender. In terms of motivation and satisfaction, male visitors' are more agreed on the motives and the satisfaction level of attending this event. It shows that, 53% (203) of the male visitors' agreed with the motives to attend this small-scale sport event compared to female visitors' which are 47% (180). This may due to the fact that gender are not strongly related to the visitors' motivation and satisfaction.

**Table 3: Descriptive Analysis for Visitors' Satisfaction Attributes (*n*=468)**

Items	M	Std. Deviation
Excitement	3.99	.97
Entertainment	3.93	.96
Relaxation	3.88	.96
Games attraction	3.99	.94
Diversity in sport games	3.98	.96
I truly enjoyed with the attraction of the games in this event	4.04	.92
Viewing of the event	3.82	.98
Food and beverage outlets	3.91	.95
Transportation	3.39	1.14
Clean restroom	3.04	1.21
Signs and directions	3.35	1.11
Sufficient parking space	3.56	1.11
Venue of the event	3.72	1.05
I am satisfied with the facilities and feel comfortable when attending this event	3.83	.98
Social media promotion (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	3.77	1.08
Media promotion (e.g., newspaper, magazines)	3.77	1.11

**Table 4: Demographic Effects on Visitors' Motivation and Satisfaction (*n*=468)**

Variable		Disagree	Agree	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	p-value
		%	%	%	%	
Motivation	Male	44	203			.465
		51.8	53.0			
	Female	41	180			
		48.2	47.0			
Satisfaction	Male			31	216	.337
				56.4	52.3	
	Female			24	197	
				43.6	47.7	

## Discussion

The results provide evidence to address the two research questions that has been proposed earlier. A list of 16 motivation and satisfaction attributes which are applicable to determine



the visitors' decision to attend the SSSET. Findings have shown that knowledge (push factor), atmosphere of the event and event attraction (pull factors) has influence visitors' decision to attend the SSSET in the north area of peninsular Malaysia.

However, the 16 of motivation attributes were perceived as important to the visitors'. This finding has demonstrates the importance of these items towards understanding of push and pull motives which influence the visitor decision to attend the SSSET (Egresi & Kara, 2014; Prayag & Grivel, 2014). The uniqueness of this event has motivates the visitors' to attend this event due to the differences they have experience (Egresi & Kara, 2014). However, Prayag and Grivel (2014) in their study has found socialization as the motive of visitors' to attend the small-scale sport event. Compared to the mega-sporting events, visitors' who attend this event have intention to learn and get new knowledge from their participations while visitors' attending the mega-sporting events more focus on the entertainment (Kim, Byon, Yu, Zhang, & Kim, 2013).

The difference motives of visitors' have shown that, this type of events has been accepted as one of the sport event that visitors' can learn something with their family and friends. In addition, findings also found that this type of event can be accepted by the younger visitors'. This mean that, this event has drawn the younger attention to participate in this event, although this event has been organized at the community places. The results of youngers participation and attention consistent with the finding of Csobán and Serra (2014) and Yusof, Omar-Fauzee, Shah and Geok (2009). In addition, many of these events highlights the local and traditional sport events which before this is not acceptable by the younger visitors' compared to mega-sporting events. Overall, the motives that have been identified in this study have revealed that visitors' decision to attend this small-scale sport event using the combination of motives rather than single motives.

Besides understanding the visitors' motives, knowing the visitors' satisfaction also becomes as valuable information for the event organizer and marketers. Understanding satisfaction can adequately predict the visitors' post-consumption behaviour when attending the event. From the analysis, visitors' achieved their satisfaction through the attraction of games that has been experienced. An attraction that has been offered has created the excitement among the visitors' and influenced their satisfaction. This finding implied the previous study from Ramírez-hurtado (2014) who found that attraction of games becomes as one of the factor that influence the visitors satisfaction while attending the sporting event. It can be concluded that, attraction of games becomes the first attributes that the visitors' looking for when deciding to attend the sport event. Yu (2010) in their study of sport event also found the similar finding which sports event spectator tend to focus on the attractives of games before deciding to attend the event. This is due to the situation when attending the sport event required the visitors' to spend their money, time and the visitor's expectation are high and should be equal to what they already spend.

This generic attribute is very important for the understanding of the event organizer and marketers. However, it is great if the event organizer could enhance their understanding based on the visitors' demographic factors. Since this event has been organized at the community level, it is important to understand the social factors of the local community due to the attention given by the local community before promoting this event as a large scale event. Failure to understand the demographic factors, visitors' motivation and satisfaction will lead to the waste if this unique product cannot be listed as one of the tourist attractions

for the local tourism product. Event managers and marketers should identify and offer the diversity of the activities that can influence the visitors' to attend this small-scale sport event. As the visitors' prefer the diversity of games and the attraction as their satisfaction, event organizer should focus on these attributes in order to remain the sustainability of this event. Therefore, there is an important understanding of the visitors' behaviour, especially on the motives and satisfaction that can derive the decision to attend this sport event. This study creates a starting point in exploring the development of small-scale sport events as a tourist attraction in northern state of peninsular Malaysia. Future research should focus on measuring how perceived event value influenced the visitors' decision to attend this event, which also becomes the contribution towards the event successful and also to the academics and practitioners.

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