

Examining Sport and Physical Activity Participation, Motivations and Barriers among Young Malaysians

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Abstract

Although a considerable amount of research has contributed to our understanding of the underlying causes of sporting behaviour, there is a paucity of research examining the motivations and barriers in sport and physical activity participation among young Malaysians. In order to address the gap in the literature, thus, this study was designed to ascertain the motivations and barriers in sport or physical activity participation among young Malaysians across the country. The study included 2894 young Malaysians ranged in age from 15 to 30 years old. A cross-sectional survey questionnaires comprised of open and close-ended items pertaining to sport participation level, participation motivations and barriers, and socio-demographic characteristics were conducted. The results show that 1465 were active, 710 were less active and 719 were inactive in sport and physical activity participation. In terms of their motives and barriers to sport and physical activity participation, the results indicate that the common motives for participation included 'physical fitness', 'improve health', 'reduce stress', 'leisure time' and 'active lifestyle'. On the other hand, common barriers for those who do not participate in sport and physical activity included 'no time', 'no interest', 'weather', 'health reasons', and 'lack of facilities'. Thus, the sport organization management needs to understand the motives and barriers to sport and physical activity of young Malaysians participation in order to optimize throughout their sporting endeavor and exercise adherence.

Keywords: barrier, motivation, sport and physical activity participation, young Malaysian

1. Introduction

The success of the nation depends on the younger generation who are not only equipped with some degree of knowledge and skills, but also need to acquire a substantial level of physical fitness. Thus, in achieving physically and mentally fit individuals, participation in sport or physical activity is of supreme importance. Numerous research studies confirm the positive impact of sport or physical activities on health preservation and promotion. Active individuals experience improvement in mental and physical characteristics, they look better, feel better, and rehabilitate faster (Inhan, 2000 in Masten, Dimec, Donko, & Tusak, 2010).

In Malaysia, the pace of industrialization and urbanization has been increasing rapidly in the past several decades leading to a more sedentary lifestyle among Malaysians (Poh, Safiah, Tahir, Siti Haslinda, Siti Norazlin et al., 2010). As such, the issues of obesity or overweight is a serious concern in Malaysia and efforts should be taken to address the problem at an early stage. A 2011 National Health Morbidity Survey found that almost half a million children and adolescents are obese (Institute for Public Health, 2011). In addition, data from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that more than 42% of Malaysian adults are overweight or obese (NST, April 10, 2013).

According to the Population and Housing Census of Malaysia in 2010, there were approximately 8.4 million young people in the age of 10 to 24 years old, which constituted about 30% or one third of Malaysia population (The Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2012). Those young Malaysians are the potential human capitals of the future for the nation building. Therefore, due to the importance of a country's development, the focus on developing a healthy young generation with sufficient knowledge and skills competencies should be the utmost priority for Malaysia and every developing nations. However, in order to develop a healthy society, one of the strategies could be undertaken is by determining the trends and benchmark of the sport and physical activity levels among the young people in the country and their motivations and barriers to participation in the activity. Hence, more appropriate and effective health promotion and active lifestyle intervention could be initiated.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

In the light of understanding issues of sport and physical activity participation behaviour, this paper will examine the young Malaysians participation levels and their motivations and barriers in sport and physical activity. Although a considerable amount of research has contributed to our understanding of the underlying causes of sporting behaviour, there is a paucity of research examining the motivations and barriers in sport and physical activity participation among young Malaysians. Essentially, in order to address this gap in the literature, this study was designed to attain the following objectives:

- 1) To identify the sport and physical activity participation levels of young Malaysians.
- 2) To determine the sport and physical activity participation motivations among active young Malaysians.
- 3) To ascertain the sport and physical activity participation barriers among inactive young Malaysians.

2. Literature Review

Bouchard, Shephard and Stephen (1993) define physical activity as 'any body movement produced by the skeletal muscles that results in a substantial increase over the resting energy expenditure' (p. 11). It included exercise (undertaken with the deliberate intent of improving health or physical performance) and sport. Furthermore, the council of the European (2001) defines sport 'as all forms of physical activity which, through informal or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels' (p. 1). So, sport does not have to be competitive, nor does it always requires specialized equipment or rules; in fact, sport includes activities such as working out, swimming, running, boating and dancing (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2007).

In view of sport or physical activity participation among young Malaysian, previous studies indicated that the Malaysian youths have been identified the preference for sedentary pursuits, rather than sport or actively participating in games in their leisure time (Institute for Public Health, 2011; Poh et al., 2010; Wilson, 2006). According to Aminuddin et al. (2009) only 22 percent of Malaysian teenagers (15 – 18 years old) participate in regular sport or physical activity (at least 4200 minutes per week), and 34 percent of young adult Malaysians (18 - 40 years old) participate in regular physical activities (at least 2100 minutes per week) (Aminuddin et al., 2009). In terms of gender and ethnicity, the findings from Aminuddin et al. (2009) also show that the Malaysian male teenagers and young adults are more active participation in sport or physical activity than females, and the Chinese were found to be the least active as compared to other ethnic groups. The findings of the study were consistent with the studies conducted by Lim (2007; 2009) and Lim and Kalsom (2010), which focussed on university students regarding their attitude, motivation, and self-efficacy towards leisure time physical activity. The results of the study portrayed a similar trend in the students' sporting behaviour, and varied across gender and ethnicity.

According to Norlena and Mohd Taib Harun (2013) report, the overall physical activity index of Malaysian youths (18 – 25 years old) is in the intermediate category and none is in the highest category. Intermediate category suggests that Malaysian youths are leading from sedentary to moderately active lifestyle (three times per week for at least 30 minutes for each session). Their findings also indicated that there was a significant difference between male and female in physical activity participation with the male was more active than their female counterpart. However, the results show that there are no significant differences in physical activity index among the four main ethnic groups, namely, the Malays, Chinese, Indians, and Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous.

Generally, the young Malaysians population is considered sedentary. Participation in sport or physical activities is low. As such, there is growing concern of inactive participation in sport or physical activity among young Malaysians which may lead to risk factors for cardiovascular disease and a variety of other chronic diseases, including diabetes mellitus, colon and breast cancer, obesity, hypertension, bone and joint diseases, as well as depression (WHO, 2003). Therefore, in relation to the issue, it is vital to address the questions on what is the

level of participation in sport or physical activity among young Malaysians to date. What motivate the young Malaysians to participate in sport or physical activity? Why the young Malaysians do not participate in sport or physical activity? In other words, it is important to understand the motivations and barriers that individuals face in their pursuit of sport or physical participation. The information pertaining to the motives and barriers to sport or physical activity would be necessary to create intervention strategies that maximize the likelihood of sport and physical activity participation as well as to assisting policy makers in designing strategies to encounter the issues effectively.

There were many studies regarding the motivations and barriers in sport or physical activity participation, which highlighted multiple factors influencing people to become active in their participation (Coakley, 1998; Salman, 1997; Thatcher, 2009). Wilson (2006) reported that the Malaysian youth agreed that by participating in sport or physical activity will keep them healthy, and physical activity makes or 'keep them fit'. Besides, they also agreed that physical activity will help them lose or control weight. However, the main barrier to participate in sport or physical activity for male students was that current physical activity was perceived to be sufficient, followed by a preference for watching TV or playing electronic games, and 'I don't have someone to be active with'. Female students, on the other hand, reported the preference for watching TV or playing electronic games as the major barriers, followed by 'I don't have someone to be active with'. A lack of parks or sport grounds was seen as a barrier too to participate by both male and female students. Perceived 'lack of time' as a barrier to participate in physical activity was relatively low for both males and females.

On a parallel note, Aminuddin et al. (2009) found that the motives to participate in sport or physical activity among Malaysian youths were 'want to be physically fit', followed by 'to become active', 'to reduce stress', 'to develop my interest', and 'to socialize with others'. Lim's (2007) research revealed that there were gender and ethnicity differences in motivation towards physical activity. Males scored higher than females did on physical activity participation motivation scale. Specifically, males showed higher scored than females did on competence and intrinsic component. However, males and females had similar scores on body-related component. Besides, the findings seem to support the fact that cultural backgrounds do play an important role in influencing students' motivation towards physical activity.

Moreover, the Malaysian youths perceived the barriers they are encountered were the location of the facilities is far from their home, the scheduling for the use of facilities is not appropriate, too many people using the facilities, lack of information about the activities, my friends lack of time to join me to play sports, my friends lack of skills to play sports, and because of health problem. The study also indicated that the motives and barriers reported were varied according to gender, age and ethnicity differences (Aminuddin et al., 2009; Wilson, 2006). These findings seem to demonstrate the common barriers to physical activity or sport, including 'lack of time', 'physical factors', 'lack of motivation', 'health problem', 'lack of facilities', and 'weather' (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 1996; Buckworth & Dishman, 2002; Thatcher, 2009). Thus, at this juncture, the sport organization management needs to understand the motives and barriers to sport and physical activity participation based on the needs, interests, and constraints faced by the individuals in order to optimize throughout their sporting endeavor and exercise adherence.

3. Research Method

3.1 Samples

The sample consisted of young Malaysians from urban and rural areas of Malaysia. A total of 2894 young Malaysians (male = 1472, female = 1422) within the age of 15 to 30 years old were identified from a total of 5684 samples in the national study. They were selected through a stratified random sampling technique from the division of six zones conducted in Malaysia. The subjects were from a diverse backgrounds in terms of their gender, ethnicity, levels of education and occupation.

3.2 Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire was prepared by a consultant team from Universiti Malaya, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris with inputs and comments from the Youth Research and Development Institute, and Sport Division, Ministry Youth and Sport Malaysia. The questionnaire was designed as a respondent-completed survey consisting of a combination of close-ended and open-ended questions. Following a pilot study conducted among 20 staff to test the validity of the instrument, several items were reworded to improve its readability and clarity. In addition, several variables were added and dropped in accordance with the purposes of the survey.

The questionnaire consists of two sections including respondents' demographic profile, levels of sport

participation, spectatorship, expenditure, motivations and barriers in sport participation. However, this paper will focus on the sport and physical activity participation levels, motivation and barriers. The motives and barriers relating to sport and physical activity participation identified were derived from theoretical and empirical findings through the related literature review. Motivation is the energy and directions that drive our behaviour. Direction refers to what we do, whereas, energy refers to how much effort we put into what we do. Thus, the motive for sport and physical activity is referred to individual's energy and direction in determining to participate in the activity. Barriers refer to elements of an individual's day-to-day life which may prevent them from taking part in sport or physical activity; such barriers might range from time constraints to financial implications. There are seven factors for motivations and eight factors for barriers are listed in the questionnaire. The respondents are required to select the factors that best describes his or her behaviours.

3.3 Data Collection

The on-site survey was conducted by a team of 12 enumerators who were trained in data collection procedures and ethical aspects pertaining to on-site survey. The enumerators approached the selected respondents and asked them to participate in the survey. Informed consent was obtained from respondents prior to their participation in the survey. Respondents who agreed to participate were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it to the enumerators.

The survey was conducted within the six zones throughout Malaysia, namely, the northern, Southern, Western, and eastern zones of Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and Sarawak from June to July 2014. The questionnaires were distributed to the 6000 respondents that have been selected via stratified random sampling method. The survey effort resulted in 5684 completed responses for a 94.7% response rate. A total of 2894 surveys was extracted from the initial 5684 completed surveys due to the purpose of this paper is to focus on young Malaysians within an age range of 15 to 30 years old.

3.4 Data Analyses

IBM SPSS Statistic version 21.0 windows was used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive analysis using frequency and percentage was performed to present a demographic profile of the respondents as well as their motivations and barriers in sport or physical activity participation.

The overall sport and physical activity participation levels are computed for each dimension to identify the categorization of respondents based on the following criteria:

- 1) Active participation, if the involvement in sport or physical activity is more than three times in a week with 30 minutes per session,
- 2) Less active, if the involvement in sport or physical activity is less than three times in a week with 30 minutes per session, and
- 3) Inactive, if no involvement at all.

A person was considered to have had adequate participation in sport or exercise if he or she had performed any moderate or vigorous intensity activity for more than 3 days a week, each of which lasted at least 20 minutes (NCCFN, 1999). However, WHO (2009) and American College of Sports Medicine (2007) recommended at least three days a week with a vigorous physical activity for 20 minutes per session, or three days in a week with a moderate physical activity for 30 minutes each session.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Analysis of Respondents

The five selected socio-demographic variables have been examined in this study included, gender, ethnicity, area of residence, education level, and occupation as shown in Table 1. Females represented 49.1% of the respondents and males represented 50.9%. Of the total respondents (n=2894), there were 48.8% of the urban area and 51.2% of rural area. The majority of respondents were Malays (57.7%), followed by Chinese (22.4 %), 7.2% were Indians, and 13.4% representation of other ethnic groups. In terms of their education, about 50% obtained a secondary school level education certificate, 16.1% primary school education, 26.4% with high school certificate, vocational certificate, and diploma. Only 6.5% of the respondents earned bachelor and postgraduate degrees. The majority of the respondents were school students, followed by university students. About 13% were employed in the government and private sectors, and others were either self-employed, homemaker or unemployed

Table 1. Profile of respondents (n=2894)

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency (<i>f</i>)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	1472	50.9
Female	1422	49.1
Ethnicity		
Malay	1670	57.7
Chinese	647	22.4
Indian	189	6.5
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous	388	13.4
Area of residence		
Urban	1413	48.8
Rural	1481	51.2
Education		
Primary School	467	16.1
Lower Certificate (LCE)	661	22.8
School Certificate (MCE)	777	26.8
Higher Certificate (HSC)	425	14.7
Vocational Certificate	81	2.8
Diploma	287	9.9
Bachelor Degree	172	5.9
Postgraduate Degree	24	0.8
Occupation		
Government Sectors	224	7.7
Private Sectors	156	5.4
School Students	1585	54.8
University Students	721	24.9
Self-employed	137	4.7
Home maker/Unemployed	71	2.5

4.2 Participation Levels in Sport and Physical Activity

Table 2 shows the prevalence of sporting behaviours, which refers to involvement in sport or physical activities among young Malaysians carried out in the one week prior to the study. Prevalence of sporting behaviour levels was 50.6% in a category of active participation, 24.5% less active, and 24.9% inactive.

Comparison between male and women shows that there were more men in the category of active participation (60.7%) than women in the same category (40.2%). In contrast, there were more female less active (27.9%) and inactive (31.9%) involved in sport or physical activity as compared to males in the same categories. In terms of ethnicity, the results indicate that the majority of the ethnic groups were in the category of active involvement in sport or physical activity with the Malays (51.8%), Chinese (47.3%), Indians (56.6), and Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (48.2%). However, the Chinese was found to be the most inactive group in this study. The findings of this study seem to support most of the results revealed in the previous studies such as Aminuddin et al. (2009), Lim (2010), and Lim and Kalsom (2009).

Such information could then be useful in developing interventions designed to improve the strength and quality of physical activities and sports programmes and services. Therefore, these results have implications for leadership in sport administration and management, particularly with respect to effort, persistence and

commitment in organizing physical activities and sports programmes in the communities. For example, the present study can help the administrators of the Ministry of Youth and Sport or other related agencies to consider in their programmes and services the opportunities and experiences necessary to increase the young Malaysians' needs and enhance their lifestyle.

Table 2. Levels of sport and physical activity participation in terms of gender and ethnicity (n = 2894)

Respondent Characteristics	Active (n=1465)	Less Active (n=710)	Inactive (n=719)
Gender			
Male (n=1472)	893 (60.7%)	314 (21.3%)	265 (18.0%)
Female (n=1422)	572 (40.2%)	396 (27.9%)	454 (31.9%)
Ethnicity			
Malay (n=1670)	865 (51.8%)	430 (25.7%)	375 (22.5%)
Chinese (n=647)	306 (47.3%)	150 (23.2%)	191 (29.5%)
Indian (n=189)	107 (56.6%)	35 (18.5%)	47 (24.9%)
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n=388)	187 (48.2%)	95 (24.5%)	106 (27.3%)

4.3 Motivation for Sport and Physical Activity Participation among Active Young Malaysians

The descriptive analysis for each of the motivation factors of gender and ethnic groups are shown in Table 3. The frequency and percentage of each factor presented separately was to the motivation patterns in participating in sport and physical activity among young Malaysians. The findings showed the majority (70.8%) of the respondents agreed that the reasons they participated in sport or physical activity because they 'want to keep fit', followed by 'want to improve health', 'reduce stress', 'for leisure time', and 'adopt an active lifestyle'. The findings also indicate that male respondents with a higher percentage than females on motivation factors 'want to keep fit' (73.7%) and 'adopt an active lifestyle' (56%). On the other hand, females showed higher motivation related to 'reduce stress' (67.5%). Other motivational factors such as 'improve health' (male = 63.8%, female = 63.6%) and 'for leisure time' (male = 61.5%, female = 61.7%) seems to be quite balanced in their percentages. Thus, in this study, young Malaysian males and females are equally health conscious, want to improve their body shape, appearance and fitness. This suggests that males are just as likely as females to value the significant role of physical activity in maintaining one's health and fitness. As both sexes wanted to maintain or improve their health and fitness, this is something that the program organizers and others involved with the community sports and recreation should not lose sight of.

In terms of ethnicity, the results in the Table 3 also revealed the majority of the respondents from different ethnic groups were agreed that their main motive to participate in sport or physical activity because 'want to keep fit'. Among the ethnic groups, the respondents from Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous depict the highest percentage (91.4%), followed by the Malays (70.5%), Indians (68.2%), and Chinese (63.1%). Likewise, the majority of the respondents of the various ethnic groups did agree that motivational factors such as 'want to improve health', 'reduce stress', 'adopt an active lifestyle', and 'for leisure time also motivate them to participate in sport or physical activity'. In addition, other motivational factors specified by the respondents were 'friend influence', 'want to socialize', and 'family influence'. Most of the findings in this study are consistent with the previous research results by Aminuddin et al. (2009), Lim (2007), and Wilson (2006).

Table 3. Sport and physical activity participation motivations among active respondents (n = 1465)

Motivation Factors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Total (%)
Physical fitness			1037 (70.8%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	658	73.7	
Female (n = 572)	379	66.3	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	610	70.5	
Chinese (n = 306)	193	63.1	
Indian (n = 107)	73	68.2	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	171	91.4	
Reduce stress			907 (61.9%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	521	58.3	
Female (n = 572)	386	67.5	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	561	64.9	
Chinese (n = 306)	155	50.7	
Indian (n = 107)	52	48.6	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	139	74.3	
Friends influence			500 (34.1%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	340	38.1	
Female (n = 572)	159	27.8	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	249	28.8	
Chinese (n = 306)	134	43.8	
Indian (n = 107)	35	32.7	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	81	43.3	
Family influence			261 (17.8%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	152	17.0	
Female (n = 572)	109	19.1	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	111	12.8	
Chinese (n = 306)	71	23.2	
Indian (n = 107)	23	21.5	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	56	29.2	
Active lifestyle			812 (55.4%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	500	56.0	
Female (n = 572)	312	54.5	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	488	56.4	

Chinese (n = 306)	131	42.8	
Indian (n = 107)	52	48.6	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	141	75.4	
To Socialize			464 (31.7%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	319	35.7	
Female (n = 572)	146	25.5	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	264	30.5	
Chinese (n = 306)	75	24.5	
Indian (n = 107)	26	24.3	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	100	53.5	
Improve health			933 (63.7%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	570	63.8	
Female (n = 572)	363	63.5	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	549	63.5	
Chinese (n = 306)	184	60.1	
Indian (n = 107)	55	51.4	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	145	77.5	
Leisure time			902 (61.6%)
Gender			
Male (n = 893)	549	61.5	
Female (n = 572)	353	61.7	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 865)	576	66.6	
Chinese (n = 306)	130	42.5	
Indian (n = 107)	55	51.4	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 187)	141	75.4	

4.4 Barrier to Sport and Physical Activity Participation among Inactive Young Malaysians

Table 4 indicates nine barriers to sport or physical activity specified by respondents, namely, 'lack of time', 'financial constraint', 'friend influence', 'partner/spouse influence', 'not interested', 'lack of facilities', 'health problems', 'weather', and 'family discouragement'. The findings showed that 'lack of time' (64.0%) as the main barrier that hindered the young Malaysians to participate in sport or physical activity. Hence, in parallel to Buckworth and Dishman's (2002) notion that a perceived of 'lack of time' is one of the most frequently reported reasons for dropping out of supervised clinical and community exercise programs and for inactive lifestyles. However, Wankel (1988) argue that it does not mean that people who participate have more time available than others. Many consider having no time as a lame excuse for not participating as participation depends on the priority one gives to physical activity.

Comparison between males and females shows that more males (68.7%) than females (61.2%) cited for not participating in sport or physical activity. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents in this study quoted 'lack of time' for not participating, with Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous being the highest percentage (70.8%) among all ethnic groups. Another major factor inhibiting sport and physical activity participation is 'not

interested'. Lack of interest is also a major reason reported by Biddle (1995) as preventing a person from engaging in sport activities. Comparison between males and females indicates there is a higher percentage cited by females (63.8%) respondents compared to males (42.3%). The Malays respondents (44.3%) seem to be higher percentage cited of no interest in sport and physical activity participation, followed by Chinese (43.5%), and Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous (43.3%).

In addition, the weather is also being cited as one of the major barriers that inhibited them to participate in sport and physical activity. When comparisons between males and females, the results of this study reveal that males are higher percentage (45.6%) than females (38.5%). They tend to 'blame' weather as their excuse not to participate in sport and physical activity. Whilst, among the ethnic groups, a higher percentage cited weather as a hindrance for them to participate in the sporting activity are the Sabah and Sarawak Indigenous (57.6%) and Malay (42.7%). Other reasons for not participating in the sport or physical activity quoted by the respondents were 'health problems', 'lack of facilities', 'financial constraint', 'family discourage', 'friend discourage', and 'partner or spouse discourage'. Thus, generally, the reasons cited by the respondents for not participating in sport or physical activity were consistent with previous related studies which include cultural, health, fitness, psychological and social experiences (Coakley, 1998; Aminuddin et al., 2009; Thatcher, 2009; Wilson, 2006). Thus, with reference to the findings, the sport and physical activity providers from various government and private agencies need to be thoughtful when planning and providing services to their stakeholders. Most probably more indoor facilities should be designed to tailor the needs, desired and interest of their clients.

Table 4. Sport and physical activity participation barriers among inactive respondents (n = 719)

Barrier Factors	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Total (%)
Lack of Time			460 (64.0%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	182	68.7	
Female (n = 454)	278	61.2	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	234	62.4	
Chinese (n = 191)	121	63.4	
Indian (n = 47)	30	63.8	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 106)	75	70.8	
Financial constraint			166 (23.1%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	77	29.1	
Female (n = 454)	89	19.6	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	77	20.5	
Chinese (n = 191)	52	27.2	
Indian (n = 47)	10	21.3	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous (n = 106)	27	25.5	
Friends influence			105 (14.6%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	40	15.1	
Female (n = 454)	65	14.3	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	53	14.1	
Chinese (n = 191)	31	16.2	
Indian (n = 47)	5	10.6	
Sabah & Sarawak Indigenous	16	15.1	

Indigenous (n = 106)			
Partner/spouse influence			45 (6.3%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	21	7.9	
Female (n = 454)	24	5.3	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	19	5.1	
Chinese (n = 191)	16	8.4	
Indian (n = 47)	4	8.5	
Sabah & Sarawak	6	5.7	
Indigenous (n = 106)			
Not interested			311 (43.3%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	112	42.3	
Female (n = 454)	199	43.8	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	166	44.3	
Chinese (n = 191)	83	43.5	
Indian (n = 47)	15	31.9	
Sabah & Sarawak	47	43.3	
Indigenous (n = 106)			
Lack of facilities			181 (25.2%)
Gender	73	27.5	
Male (n = 265)	108	23.8	
Female (n = 454)			
Ethnicity	82	21.9	
Malay (n = 375)	48	25.1	
Chinese (n = 191)	12	25.5	
Indian (n = 47)	39	36.8	
Sabah & Sarawak			
Indigenous (n = 106)			
Health problems			215 (29.9%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	82	30.9	
Female (n = 454)	133	29.3	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	119	31.7	
Chinese (n = 191)	46	24.1	
Indian (n = 47)	6	12.8	
Sabah & Sarawak	44	41.5	
Indigenous (n = 106)			
Weather			296 (41.2%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	121	45.6	
Female (n = 454)	175	38.5	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	160	42.7	

Chinese (n = 191)	62	32.5	
Indian (n = 47)	13	27.7	
Sabah & Sarawak	61	57.6	
Indigenous (n = 106)			
Family discourage			115 (16.0%)
Gender			
Male (n = 265)	39	14.7	
Female (n = 454)	76	16.7	
Ethnicity			
Malay (n = 375)	67	17.9	
Chinese (n = 191)	19	9.9	
Indian (n = 47)	9	19.1	
Sabah & Sarawak	20	18.9	
Indigenous (n = 106)			

5. Conclusions

5.1 Implications

In this survey, the results show that the majority of young Malaysians were moderately active in terms of their sport or physical activity participation. Overall, the rate of active participation amongst young Malaysians is about 50 percent and the other half is in the categories of less active and inactive. In addition, despite most of the studies pertaining to sport and physical activity participation among youths in Malaysia were found to be the most active as compared with other age groups (Aminuddin et al., 2009, Nerlena & Mohd Taib, 2013), yet their level of participation seems not up to the recommended level as suggested by the World Health Organization (2009) and American College of Sports Medicine (2007). In addition, in relation to their sporting participation, this study discovered that the motivations and barriers of young Malaysians to participate in sport or physical activity are varied across gender and ethnicity.

The results of this study indicate that the young Malaysians have multiple motives and barriers for sport or physical activity participation. The common motives for participation included 'to improve physical fitness', 'to improve health', 'to reduce stresses', 'for leisure time purpose', and 'to adopt an active lifestyle'. However, top five barriers for those who do not participate in sport and physical activity included 'do not have enough time', 'not interested', 'weather condition', 'health reasons', and 'lack of facilities'. Thus, the authority concerns must be aware of this diversity, and at the time a need to design some practical strategies for overcoming common barriers to sport participation. It is important that they can use the findings to create a sporting situation which will motivate and minimize the existing inhibiting factors among the young Malaysians to involve in sport or physical activity. Furthermore, the primary contribution of sport and physical activity participation is not only the frequency and the awareness of engaging in those activities, but above all, the benefits and satisfaction obtained. Therefore, information from this study will able to assist leisure practitioners (include sport, recreation and physical activity) to design, plan, and offer services which contribute not only to increase the rate of participation but also to fulfil leisure satisfaction and psychological well-being of young Malaysians.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

However, some limitations of this study need to be considered. The study occurred at various locations in Malaysia and was limited to six zones which inclusive of six states out of thirteen states in Malaysia that identified by the researchers. Thus, the extent of these result generalizes to other states is unknown. In addition, the sport and physical activity participation scale utilized in this study needed the participants to rely on recall over the past weeks in order to accurately remember the frequency and intensity in participating in various sporting activities.

Several directions for future research can be offered to advance both theory and practice in this area. The present study should be replicated utilizing other population samples (e.g. older adults, working class, and disabled people) in a wider coverage throughout the country. In spite of that, future research should also explore additional variables in participating sport and physical activity which was determined by the theory and previous empirical research. It is also recommended to examine the participation in sport and physical activities relate to

other age groups, types of physical activities, and other psychological variables such as goal achievement, self-efficacy, personality, and exercise adherence. In addition, a suggested modification measurement scales are used to obtain a qualitative data which may explain the individuals' sporting attitude, motivation and barriers to participating in sport and physical activities.

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