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SPORTS WATCHING CULTURE AMONG MALAYSIANS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ardent sports watching will lead an individual to engage in sports and recreational activities continuously, while it also creates a sports culture among Malaysians. Sports watching culture is actually an intellectual activity. It is capable of evaluating behaviour, moral values and the level of appreciation of every spectator.

Methods: This survey was conducted to identify the sports viewing culture among Malaysians. A cluster sampling method was used to select 6000 respondents from 30 million Malaysian population. Respondents were selected from urban (50%) and rural areas (50%). Ethnically 56% were Malays, Sarawak and Sabah natives were 11%, Chinese 25% and finally Indians 7%. The respondents age categories were 12 to 19 years (30%), 20 to 25 years (50%), 56 and above (20%). A questionnaire developed by the research team was used to collect data. The quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows.

Result: The findings indicate that from 5864 respondents who answered the questionnaire in full, a total of 4553 people or 77.6% watch sporting events, while a total of 1311 people or 22.4% have stated not watching any sports activities. Comparison by gender showed that 85.2% of the 2482 males watch sports events while among the female 70.2% of the 2071 watch sports events. In the category of those who do not watch, the female are higher at 29.8% than the males at 14.8%. In terms of ethnicity the Malays 80.2%, Chinese 64.6%, Indians 81.9%, natives of Sabah 94.0%, natives of Sarawak 77.6% like to watch sports events. Residential locations showed no significant differences as 78.7% of urban respondents watch sports events compared to 76.8% of rural communities.

Conclusion: The findings indicated that majority of Malaysians having fun in watching sports activities. Gender still plays a role in the involvement and enjoyment of sports events either as a player or supporter. Ethnicity shows some differences due to cultural, intellectual and geographical factors. Sports watching are influenced by interest, finance, facilities, comfort and privacy. The watching spirit could lead someone to involve himself/herself in sports and recreational activities continuously due to self-motivation. Viewing sport can have a positive impact on behaviour changes towards a healthy lifestyle. It will also bring progress to the sport and recreation industry. Increased level of viewing directly enhance the rate of participation and wellbeing among Malaysian.

Keywords: sports, sports watching, culture, recreational activities and behaviour changes

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INTRODUCTION

Sports culture, generally include sports activities, recreation or exercise and watching sports events. Sports watching culture in a community is actually an intellectual activity. It is capable of evaluating behaviour, moral values and the level of appreciation of every spectator. If a spectator has a high intellectual level, then he or she will be able to appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of a sporting event. Besides watching sports for fun as the main reason, a viewer must also appreciate the noble values expressed implicitly and explicitly in the games and take them as guidance in their daily lives¹ (Beagle, 2012).

Tokuyama, Nagatomo, Greenwell & Christopher (2011), stated that there is a difference in the motivation to play football and to watch football. Levels of motivations depend on the influence and involvement of each individual in the sport. However, football players have a high motivation to watch a football game compared to a non-player. There are also a small number of men today who play and watch football occasionally to reduce stress.

The trend in watching sports through various mediums is influenced by several factors such as a subject to interact with peers, share information, identify current developments, latest 'gossips' and show that they are also part of a group of spectators watching the game. Many viewers prefer to watch sporting events through various electronic media with friends and family members. The main reason for watching in a group, especially the live broadcast of a game is for having fun, foster comradeship, watching or sharing information and experience (HO and Syu, 2010; Kim, 2013). Most viewers use television, telecommunications devices (Mobile Device) and a computer as a media to watch live sports broadcasts or recordings as it is easy, comfortable, and economical (Cheever, 2009).²⁻⁶

According to Kim (2013), four main factors that make the motives for sports viewing, is for socializing, loyal fans, needs and personal satisfaction as well as alternative entertainment. Almost 80% watch at home with friends or family members.⁶ The trend of watching sports with friends and family members gave great satisfaction because they can share experiences, make them feel as part of the loyal fans of the particular team or event, more fun, able to share information and can find out what others think of the sports or games being watched at the moment.

Electronic media play an important role in the activities of sports viewing. The trend of watching

in a group is an important motivational factor than watching alone. Many sports viewers choose to watch at home due to privacy and comfort. Whereas the motive is orientated to sharing of the latest information and experience, teamwork, keeping up with the latest development in the world of sports and for social interaction.

METHODOLOGY

This is a survey study done in the field that involves the sports watching culture among Malaysians. Respondents were selected from the population of various demographic backgrounds. A total of 6000 respondents out of 30 million Malaysian population (Department of Statistics, 2010), were selected by Cluster sampling. They were categorized as urban respondents (50%) and rural (50%). Selection based on ethnicity; Malays (56%), Natives of Sabah and Sarawak were (11%), Chinese (25%) and Indian (7%). The age groups were 12 to 19 years (30%), 20 to 55 years (50%) and 56 years and over (20%).

5340 respondents from Peninsular Malaysia were selected, namely, 1335 people each, from four zones "North; Central; South and East ". Meanwhile, 660 respondents were selected from Sabah and Sarawak zone. A questionnaire developed by the research team was used to data collection. All the data collected in this study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for windows.

Findings

This study focussed on the viewership trend among the respondents towards sports activities and recreation. Among the 5864 respondents (chart 1), 4553 or 77.6% of them watch sports events, whereas 1311 or 22.4% of them stated that they do not watch any sports activities.

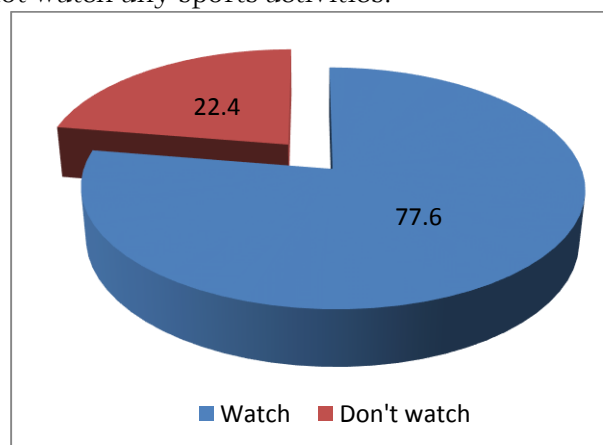


Chart 1: Sports viewership percentage

Table 1 below shows that 89.5% of Malaysian society likes to watch sports on TV and electronic media, while only 18.5% watch at the site of a sports event held. These findings clearly

demonstrate watching sports events through electronic media and TV is not only the preferred choice of Malaysian society, but a society's preference for a more comfortable, privacy, time saving and money saving compared to watching a sporting event held at its location (HO & Syu, 2010; Cheever, 2009 & Kim, 2013).

Table 1: Channels through which respondents watch sports activities, recreation and physical exercise

Source	N	Total	%
At the site of the events	4545	841	18.5
TV/Electronic media/computer	4544	4071	89.5

Viewership in terms of the respondents' activeness in sports (Table 2), this study found that 2150 respondents or 89.8% who are active in sports enjoy watching sports activities. A total of 1001 less active respondents too watch sports and recreations. Whereas a total of 1402 respondents or 60.7% who are not active also watch sports activities. Among the group of active and less active, the percentage of those who do not watch is less compared to the percentage among those who are not active whereby it is 10.2% among the active ones, 13.7% among the less active ones and 39.3% among the not active group.

Table 2: Watching forms based on level of activeness in sports.

		Do you watch sports events/recreations/physical activities			Total
		Yes	No		
Categories of involvement	Active	Sum	2150	245	2395
		%	89.8%	10.2%	100.0%
	Less Active	Sum	1001	159	1160
		%	86.3%	13.7%	100.0%
	Not active	Sum	1402	907	2309
		%	60.7%	39.3%	100.0%
Total		Sum	4553	1311	5864
		%	77.6%	22.4%	100.0%

Comparison of gender shows that 85.2% of the 2482 males and 70.2% of the 2071 females like to watch sports events. For those who don't watch, the female were 29.8% exceeding the male at 14.8% (Chart 2). This proves that more males like to watch sports activities because they have time and opportunity to engage in sports compared to women. Men also turn the spectatorship as a mean to socialize with surrounding community (Cheever, 2009 & Beagle, 2012).

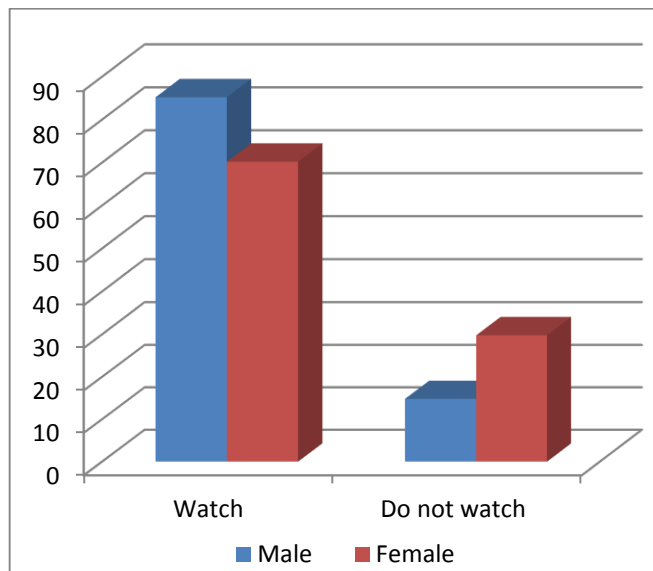


Chart 2: Percentage of viewers based on gender

Viewership based on ethnicity proves that Malays (80.2%), Chinese (64.6%), Indian (81.9%), Natives of Sabah (94.0%) and natives of Sarawak (77.6%) like to watch sports events. Based on the percentages given, Malaysians generally like to watch sports events. Ethnicity is not a factor that contributes to the culture of watching though a small number do not watch. (Table 3).

Table 3: Viewership based on ethnicity

		Do you watch sports events/recreations/physical activities			Total
		Yes	No		
Race/ethnicity	Malay	Count	2774	687	3461
		%	80.2%	19.8%	100.0%
	Chinese	Count	874	478	1352
		%	64.6%	35.4%	100.0%
	Indian	Count	312	69	381
		%	81.9%	18.1%	100.0%
	Natives of Sabah	Count	316	20	336
		%	94.0%	6.0%	100.0%
	Natives of Sarawak	Count	277	57	334
		%	82.9%	17.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	4553	1311	5864
		%	77.6%	22.4%	100.0%

The influence of residential locations on the viewership was also studied. And it was found that 78.7% of urban communities watch sports events compared to 76.8% of the rural communities. This difference is not significant. Basically facilities and financial factors of the rural communities mildly influence their viewing opportunities compared to urban dwellers. The number of sports and recreational activities organized in rural areas are also limited due to lack of facilities and active clubs (Table 4).

Table 4: Viewership based on locations

		Do you watch sports events/ recreations/physical activities			Total
		Yes	No		
Area	Urban	Count	2023	548	2571
		%	78.7%	21.3%	100.0%
	Rural	Count	2530	763	3293
		%	76.8%	23.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	4553	1311	5864
		%	77.6%	22.4%	100.0%

CONCLUSION

As a summary, the researcher could say that sports watching are influenced by interest, finance, facilities, comfort and privacy. The watching spirit could lead someone to involve himself/herself in sports and recreational activities continuously due to self-motivation. Fun is the main objective of watching a sports event. At the same time, this pleasure creates a sports culture among the Malaysians. Sports watching can have a positive impact in changing behaviours towards a healthy lifestyle through sports and recreational activities lifelong. Sports watching do not just increase

involvements; in fact it also brings about progress in sports industry which in turn affects the country's economy.

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