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TRENDS AND USAGE OF SPORTS FACILITIES AMONG MALAYSIANS

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ABSTRACT

Background: Participation in sports positively related to the usage of sports facilities. Participation in sports becomes an indicator of the active lifestyle of Malaysians. Ministry of Youth and Sports defines sports culture as sports activities, exercise, and active recreational activities which become practices and routine towards an active, energetic, and competitive lifestyle. (IYRES, 2019). Sports facilities are places for sports activities such as stadiums, halls, fields, courts, and support facilities, including the parking area and cafes. The trend in using sports facilities, exercise, and active recreation vary from one another. Sports activities depend much on a sports facility's specific, while exercise and recreation activities don't necessarily need a specific sports facility.

Methods: The survey of the Malaysian Sports Culture Index was done in 2019 among 8468 Malaysian from 13 years and above according to gender, age, locality, marital status, and ethnicity. The data collected through the questionnaire developed by the Malaysian Institute for Youth Research (IYRES).

Results: Descriptive analysis showed that the overall facility usage is at a low level of 46.9 according to the IYRES (2018) norm. This means efforts are needed to encourage sports facilities to increase the score to a higher level. Further analysis shows that people's main choice for sports activities is multipurpose halls and public facilities 39.3%. Malaysians chose residential areas to exercise (27.9%) and for recreational activities (32.1%). Gender, age, and marital status influence facilities' usage, but locality and ethnicity don't.

Conclusion: In conclusion, people who are active in sports need specific sports facilities, while those active in exercise and recreation require only public amenities appropriate to the type of activities carried out around residential areas.

Keywords: Sports facilities, Sports Culture, Sports Activities, Exercise & Active Recreation

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INTRODUCTION

The level of participation in sports is positively related to the availability of sports facilities. The higher the usage of sports facilities, the higher will be the involvement in sports. On the other hand, if the facility's usage score is low, then the involvement in sports is also low. According to reference [3], there was a significant positive relationship between sport participation and the level of provision of sports facilities. This was true for all sports and both rural and urban areas. According to place and type, the Malaysian Sports Culture Index 2019 study has identified the sports facility usage trend. The sports facility is a place for sports activities such as stadiums, halls, fields, and courts with additional facilities like cafes and parking lots. Open spaces such as recreational parks, public fields, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian walkways are used for exercise and recreation activities. These sports facilities' existence becomes the surrounding support for the community to engage in sports, exercise, and recreation activities. The purpose of this periodic study conducted by the Malaysian Institute for Youth Research (IYRES) is to identify the facility domain's level as one of the components in the Malaysian Sports Culture Index 2019 and the demographical factors that influence the trend of facility usage among Malaysians.

METHODS

This study was conducted through a survey. It was an appropriate method due to a large number of respondents and covering a large area. This method of compiling data saves time and reduces the costs involved [6]. The proportionate Random Sampling method was used to select respondents according to states and population. A total of 8468 respondents with a return rate of $\pm 20\%$ were selected to represent 25.95 million Malaysians aged 13 years and above in 2019. Respondents come from diverse demographic backgrounds, some in the realm of education, in higher education, working and non-working, and the general public.

The survey instrument was adapted and refined from the Malaysian Sports Culture Index Questionnaire 2018, developed by Malaysian Institute for Youth Development (IYRES) because this survey is a continuation from the year 2018. There are 12 main sections in the questionnaire to gather data from the respondents. This includes demographical aspects and five domains, which are used to determine the Malaysian Sports Culture Index. The instrument was developed to represent every domain and indicator, which will give empirical data on the practice of sports culture among Malaysians.

Data collection was done by 260 enumerators appointed by IYRES from among the local youths. The IYRES researchers conducted training of Trainer and periodic monitoring was done by the State Sports and Youth officers appointed as State Organising Officers to enable the enumerators to collect data according to the Data Collection Manual. The questionnaires were distributed door to door in a location determined by the ethnic breakdown of samples, housing

locations such as squatter, flats, semi-detached houses, terrace houses, luxury homes, village houses, gender, and age categories. The data collection took 2 to 4 weeks for every state starting from April to May 2019.

Data analysis was done by summing the total of indicator scores based on their weightage. The weightage is different based on importance and determined through various platforms with various sports development and statistic consultants. The Malaysian Sports Culture Index Score uses 0 to 100, whereby 100 is the maximum score. Below is the formula used to calculate the score for each domain. Based on the formula, a scale showing the level of the category of score values for each index. (Figures 1 and 2)

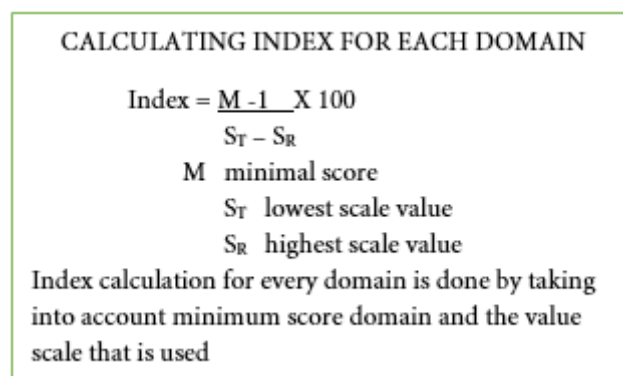


Figure 1: Malaysian Sports Culture Index Formula according to domains

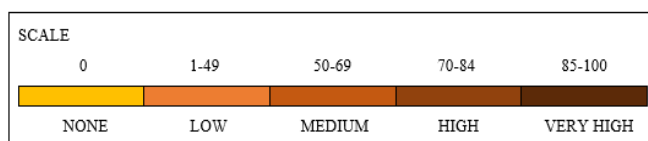


Figure 2: Total Malaysian Sports Culture Index according to domains

RESULT

The following are the study's findings on the level and trend of sports facilities derived from Malaysia's data. The data were analyzed based on demographic factors such as gender, age category, localities (urban-rural), marital status, and ethnicity. Descriptive analysis of the survey data on the location of sports activities, exercise, and recreational activities was also carried out in this study. The facility domain retains only one indicator by incorporating availability, attainability, security, suitability, and functionality.

Analysis based on domains and demographic factors.

The 2019 Malaysian Sports Culture Index Score analysis shows that the facility domain is at a lower level with 46.9. This proves that the use of existing facilities is still not fully utilized by the Malaysian community. The detailed analysis based on demographic factors found that facility utilization scores among male respondents (48.1) were higher than female respondents (45.8). The differences in the use of these facilities by gender are due to various factors. Women are usually burdened with daily routines at work and at home. Time to get involved in physical activity is limited

to women even if they have facilities near their residence. In terms of age categories, the facilities utilization scores of the 13-19-year-olds and the 30-39-year-olds reached the medium levels of 50.8 and 50.2, respectively, while the other age categories were in the low level. For the age group of 20-19, the mean score obtained was 42.6, while in the age group 40-59, the score is 45.9. For the age group above 60, the facilities utilization score showed the lowest achievement of 33.9 (Table 1). The trend shows lower age categories of higher usage of facilities, whereas higher age categories lower use of facilities.

Table 1: Facility Domain Scores by Age Category

Age group	13-19 years	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-59 years	More than 60 years
Score	50.8	42.6	50.2	45.9	33.9

The locality does not show significant differences. This means that consumers need the facility to practice sports culture regardless of their location in the urban or rural areas. The score was (48.1) for the urban community, while the rural community scored (45.8). The scores of facilities utilization based on marital status involving single, married, and separated groups. The use of facilities among the single group reached a moderate level with a score of 50.3, while the married group was still at a low level of 44.9. Next from the separated group showed a lower score of 38.0. The differences according to marital status groups in the use of facilities are significantly different. This finding shows that single-status respondents use sports facilities more often than married and separated respondents. Facility utilization scores based on the major ethnic groups of Malaysian below 50.0. The analysis showed a facility utilization score of 47.9 among Malays, Chinese 46.4, Indian 41.5, Bumiputera Sabah 46.5, and Bumiputera Sarawak 45.0. Indian ethnicity has the lowest score compared to others.

Location for sports activities

Based on table 2, The Malaysian Sports Culture Index 2019 shows that the top five locations for Malaysians to engage in sports activities are in the multipurpose hall and public facilities (39.3%), housing areas (13.1%), facilities at schools and institutions of higher learning (7.9%), public fields (7.6) and sports complex (6.9%). Efforts to improve the rules and regulations of the operations of the sports facilities should be undertaken by the major agencies of the country's sports facilities providers so that the level of usage will increase according to the population and the current needs of the local community.

Location for exercise-related activities

The top five locations for Malaysians to do exercise activities are in the residential area (27.9%), the multipurpose hall and public facilities (15.5%), the recreational park (12.8%), the gym (10.8%), and the house (8.4%). The residential area as a place for exercise is an excellent choice for Malaysians because it is convenient and comfortable for exercise. It does not require specific sports facilities as needed for

sports activities.

Location for active recreational activities

The top five locations for Malaysians to engage in active recreational activities are housing areas (32.1%), recreation areas (24.1%), multipurpose halls and sports facilities (9.5%), other places (8.8%), and sports and recreational clubs (7.8%). Once again, residential areas are a top choice for Malaysians as a place for active recreational activities. Recreational areas are the second choice. The recreation area comprises public parks, the surroundings of lakes and playgrounds within a community area.

Table 2: Facility location by activities in percentage (%)

Location	Sports N=3515	Exercise N=4350	Active Recreation N=1575
Multipurpose Hall and Public Facilities	39.3	15.5	9.5
Facilities at Workplace	3.8	3.3	1.4
Gymnasium	4.6	10.8	-
Residential Area	13.1	27.9	32.1
Sports and Recreational Clubs	5.7	3.0	7.8
Facilities In Institution of Higher Learnings	7.9	4.0	2.3
Facilities Under KBS	2.6	1.5	1.8
Sports Complex	6.9	4.3	4.1
Public Field	7.6	8.2	4.0
Water Recreational Centers	1.0	-	4.0
House	4.0	8.4	-
Recreational Parks / Area	2.3	12.8	24.1
Other Places	1.1	0.5	8.8

DISCUSSION

Although the sports facilities score index is lower, overall facility utilization and demographic analysis provide the impression that the level of usage and involvement in sports activities are positively correlated [4],[5]. On the other hand, if facilities are improved, then the people's sports participation level will also increase [7]. This does not mean that, by increasing the number of sports facilities, physical activity involvement can be overcome. Reviewing and restructuring the rules and operations of existing facilities and diversifying the types of facilities developed is also important [4],[5].

The aspects of the quantity of sports facilities, including their number and location, are of utmost importance in increasing usage, but more important is the attention towards quality aspects. Users and fans want a stadium that is organized, clean, and comfortable [9]. Footballers expect flat, 'soft' and well-cared fields. Bicyclists and pedestrians want a safe, shady, and protected path from traffic dangers [1]. Good quality facilities are an essential support environment for developing sports culture. This

is part of risk management to ensure public safety when using facilities in sports competitions or during exercise and recreational activities.

Multipurpose halls and public facilities are the major sports venues in Malaysia [4], [5]. Especially for popular and specific sports such as football, badminton, tennis, swimming, hockey, and netball. Multipurpose hall and public facilities are indispensable. Without these facilities, there is no place for them to play, practice, and compete. How can we develop the culture of a sport without its facilities? How can we build a swimming culture without a swimming pool? This is why swimming culture is not growing in Malaysia's rural areas due to the lack of facilities. Those who are actively involved in any sport require specific sports facilities. Developing sports facilities and maintaining them well will ensure the continuity and increase of participation in sports.

One of the findings of the descriptive analysis of sports facilities is that people need sports facilities to engage in sports activities; on the other hand, they do not necessarily need sports facilities for exercise and recreational activities [5]. Sport-specific facilities are a must for badminton players; they need a covered court, usually in a multipurpose hall. Also, football players need a field that is usually on the public and stadium grounds. Instead, exercise and recreation activities are more concentrated in residential areas. People can engage in activities in the form of exercise and recreation in the open spaces, along the street in residential areas, and recreational parks. They don't have to wait for a field and court to practice an active lifestyle [2].

The residential area is the principal place where Malaysians do exercise and recreational activities. Exercise and recreational activities become healthy lifestyle practices of families and neighbors in a community [8]. This development is similar to Singapore, where more than 53% of its people are involved in sports, exercise, and recreation using public amenities such as parks and trails along the coast [9]. Similarly, in New Zealand, where more than 70% of its people participate in sports, exercise, and recreation using public amenities such as walking trails, roads, public parks, open spaces in residential parks, as well as lakes and seaside areas [1]. Ensuring that residential areas are well equipped with adequate 'public facilities' for communities such as recreational areas, public parks, pedestrian and cycling lanes, and securing open areas such as lakes and hills is essential. Again, the safety and risk-free features of accidents should be kept in mind at all times.

CONCLUSION

The study of the Malaysian Sports Culture Index 2019 has identified that increasing sports facilities' usage is necessary to ensure that sports culture continues to grow in Malaysia. Looking more closely, Malaysians are involved in sports, exercise, and recreation activities in multipurpose halls and facilities in residential areas provided by the government or community. On the other hand, what about

those living in nearby sports facilities but not involved in any activities? The strategy of making sports culture in Malaysia in providing facilities has to come from several directions, not only in developing the facility but also in maintenance and sustainability. A culture of active living should continue to be nurtured until there is an awareness in every Malaysian involved in sports, exercise, and recreation activities, without excuses such as 'inadequate facilities,' inaccessibility of the facilities, facilities not well maintained and facilities away from home.

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