

YOUNG MALAYSIANS' PARTICIPATION IN TENNIS: MOTIVES
AND CONSTRAINTS



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ABSTRACT

Background. Sports is important in both developed (Gill, 2000) and developing countries (Leeder, 2004) including Malaysia (Siti Sa'aidah, 1997). Apart from producing international calibre athletes, participation in sports leads to improve health and reduce the healthcare cost of a nation (Ampofo-Boateng, Mustafa & Vincent, 2003). The current study extends this line of research by examining the motives and constraints that govern young Malaysian's participation in tennis.

Aims. The aims of the present research were two-fold: (a) to investigate the motives and their attendant demographic variables that affect young Malaysians' participation in tennis; and (b) to examine the constraints and their accompanying demographic variables that influence young Malaysians' participation in tennis.

Sample. Young Malaysian tennis players aged 8 to 17 years participated in the study. They were recruited for the study by means of convenient sampling from among young Malaysian tennis players who participated in tennis tournaments in Malaysia. Three hundred young tennis players comprising of 202 males and 98 females participated in the study.

Method. The research involved the administration of a questionnaire to each of the 300 participants to complete. The questionnaire comprised of three sections. Section A, was based on Gill, Gross, and Huddleston's (1983) Participation Motive Questionnaire, Section B, was based on the Constraint Instrument of Alexandris and Carroll (1997a, b), and Section C, covered demographic profile of respondents.

Results. Principal component analysis followed by univariate ANOVA and independent *t*-tests showed that young Malaysians had 7 motives of Status Attainment, Learning Platform & Physical Improvement, Mental & Physical Health, Building Teamwork, Outgoing, Adventurous & Restless, and Making & Meeting Friends for participating in tennis, while their constraints were 6, Lack of Confidence & Physical Inabilities, Transportation & Lack of Partners, Risky & Uninterested, All-in-One, Time, Facilities & Family, and Time Constraints. The motives and constraints were in turn significantly influenced by the demographic variables of gender, age, ethnic background, parental income, type of encouragement to participate, educational level, and level of competition.

Conclusions. The implications of the results are discussed as they relate to the existing literature and recommendations made for practical application of the results.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

1.1 Background of the Study

There is now a phenomenal interest in participation in sports worldwide (Ampofo-Boateng, Mustafa & Vincent, 2003a). Many people, especially in developed countries are participating in sports (Pargman, 1998; Willis & Campbell, 1992) resulting in a diversification of the types of sports that people participate in (Mull, Bayless, Ross, & Jamieson, 1997). Of great interest to participants are, invariably, the types of sports that enhance overall health and promote physical fitness (Gavin, 1992; Wann, 1997; Willis & Campbell, 1992), as there are many benefits attained through participation in sports, including prevention of disease, improvement of health and quality of life of participants (Gavin, 1992; Mull *et al.*, 1997; Pargman, 1998). Other health benefits associated with participation in sports are the strengthening of the cardiovascular system, and the prevention of cardiac disease (Pargman, 1988), which has been identified as the greatest killer disease (Gavin, 1992; Leeder, 2004; Pargman, 1998; Siti Sa'aidah, 1997). Further, the World Health Organization has observed that premature coronary heart disease that contributed to 80% of deaths was attributable to a combination of unhealthy eating habits, minimal involvement in physical activities and smoking (Gill, 2000).

Most developing countries, including Malaysia, are now aware of evidence relating to the health benefits attained from participation in sports, and are embracing sport participation as a means of improving the health of their citizens, and help to reduce healthcare costs. The Malaysian government has, also, over the years spent and continues to spend millions of dollars in providing world-class stadiums and allied sports infrastructure in the country. The promotion of sports in Malaysia by the