

Sport Tourism Pursuit: Malaysian Women's Perspective

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Abstract - Leisure constraints experienced by Malaysian women differed significantly from those experienced by the general population as they have to adhere to cultural tradition to a greater extent than others. This study explored the leisure constraints and negotiation strategies experienced by Malaysian women in creating positive sport tourism pursuits. Besides that it assists in understanding the evolution of leisure in general as research of different cultural backgrounds would greatly enhance the leisure constraints literature. The hierarchical model of leisure constraints developed by Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) was used as the guiding theoretical base. A self-administered questionnaire was developed for this study. Multistage cluster random sampling with proportion design was used to draw samples and data collected from 636 respondents were analyzed using SPSS-PC. Some of the findings challenge the results of previous leisure studies by revealing that interpersonal constraint was the main component of leisure constraints perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation. It was also identified that cultural constraint plays important role in deciding the levels of sport tourism participation among Malaysian women. Findings do, however, support previous researches that unavailability of time, lack of transport, ignorant about availability of leisure activities, lack of funds, and lack of convenient facilities are commonly perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism pursuit. A combination of interpersonal coordination, skill acquisition, financial resources, and time management strategies place some Malaysian women in a better position to negotiate leisure constraints in sport tourism with majority adopting interpersonal coordination strategies. As sport tourism is capable of rejuvenating other sectors of the economy, this study could guide sport tourism operators in formulating strategies to enhance competitiveness on the multiracial markets.

Keywords—Sport Tourism; Leisure Constraints; Cultural Constraints; Negotiation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Today, sports are being considered the world's biggest social phenomenon (Kurtzman & Zauhar, 2003) while tourism as the largest industry (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006) which are able to contribute ample amount of profits, besides attracting media's attention and also participants and political interest. As both sport and tourism complement one another, they become more lucrative and culturally influential. Sport tourism is identified as all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated either casually or in an organized way for non-commercial or business reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality (Standevan & De Knop, 1999). In Malaysia, sport tourism contributes about 20 percent of the billions annual tourism earning with yearly growth of eight to ten percent (Tourism Malaysia, 2007). Hence research into this domain is extremely critical and timely. Furthermore for the past two decades, research on women's leisure constraints and negotiation strategies experienced in sport tourism participation have been overlooked. Local researchers (e.g. Aminuddin Yusof & Mohd Soffian Omar Fauzee, 2001; Chee, 2001; Lim, 2004) mainly focused on leisure constraints of the general population without much attention on women population. The current study is to fill this gap as it focuses on Malaysian women, specifically on the leisure constraints and negotiation strategies experienced in sport tourism participation.

The hypotheses generated were:

- (i) There is difference in each component of leisure constraints perceived by Malaysian women participating in sport tourism in terms of age, ethnic, marital status and monthly family income groups, and
- (ii) There is difference in each component of negotiation strategies adopted by Malaysian women participating in sport tourism in terms of age, ethnic, marital status and monthly family income groups.

METHODS

Data were collected using adapted self-administered questionnaire, administered to a sample of 636 Malaysian women from all walks of life using multistage cluster random sampling with proportion design. The measurement scale is adapted from Crawford et al.'s Hierarchical Model of Leisure Constraints (1991), Chick and Dong's (2003) leisure constraints across culture scale, and Hubbard and Mannell (2001) negotiation strategies scale. Samples involved full-time students at Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Malaya, and Universiti Sains Malaysia and their female family members. The female family members of the university students were included as samples since each Malaysian family consisted of members of

different marital status, different age, and also different occupation with different incomes (Second Malaysian Family Life Survey, 1988). Data from the questionnaire were coded and analyzed using SPSS-PC version 15.0 for Windows.

RESULTS

i. Leisure Constraints Perceived by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation

Malaysian women identified structural constraints, cultural constraints, interpersonal constraints, and intrapersonal constraints as the components of leisure constraints perceived in sport tourism pursuits. Specifically, Malaysian women were highly constrained by interpersonal and structural constraints. The interpersonal factors experienced are mainly related to information constraint and commitment with other activities, while the structural constraints are related to factors such as time and money constraints, lack of public and private transport, no opportunity to participate, activities are too crowded and poor weather. Among the intrapersonal factors perceived are related to skill constraints and having to work hard to save for children's future. Among the entire constraints factor, the cultural obligation to visit parents/grandparents during holidays is highlighted as the main leisure factor perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation.

ii. Negotiation Strategies Adopted by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation

Findings observed that Malaysian women adopted interpersonal coordination as prime component of negotiation strategies in overcoming leisure barriers in sport tourism pursuits. They mainly adopt strategies which allowed them to focus mainly on activities suitable with their skills, besides preference to participate along with people who shared the same interest and of similar gender. They also adopted skill acquisition strategies such as participate in activities suitable to their age, do their best in order to participate, or asking for assistance in acquiring skills needed to engage in the desired sport tourism activities. The financial resources strategy adopted related to participating according to their means, using the equipments and attires available to them, or budget to save for sport tourism engagement, while the time management strategies adopted were related to sharing family commitments with family members, participate during the school holidays, allocating at least one week in a year to participate in sport tourism, and stop temporarily until their children are able to look after themselves.

iii. Leisure Constraints Perceived by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation in Terms of Age, Ethnic, Marital Status and Monthly Family Income Groups

Age factor influences the leisure constraints experienced by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation from the structural and intrapersonal aspects. The group aged 50 years and above perceived significantly high intrapersonal

constraints on factor related to working hard to save for children's future, while women aged between 40 - 49 years old were mainly constrained by shyness to involve in sport tourism activities.

Ethnic factor influences the perception of leisure constraints experienced by Malaysian women in sport tourism pursuits in the entire components. The Malay group are structurally constrained as they feel uneasy being attended by male facilitators in sport tourism activities, while the Indian and Chinese Malaysian women were highly constrained by the lack of time. Culturally, the Malay and Chinese Malaysian women perceived significantly high constraints as they are obliged to visit their parents/grandparents when during their holidays. Besides that, they feel uneasy having to wear particular sports attire to participate in sport tourism activities, a feeling shared along by the Indian and other races group. The Indian group was also experiencing the problem of not having the opportunity to choose their sport tourism choice. Intra-personally, the Indian, Malay and Chinese Malaysian women were highly constrained by the fact that as women they are too shy to involve in sport tourism activities.

Marital status does influence the perception of leisure constraints perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism participation in the structural aspect where married Malaysian women are highly constrained by the lack of time to participate in sport tourism activities.

Monthly family income only correlates with leisure constraints from the structural aspect, where those with monthly family income of less than RM1000 are constrained by lack of money and also not having personal transportation to participate in sport tourism.

iv. Negotiation Strategies Adopted by Malaysian Women in Sport Tourism Participation in Terms of Age, Ethnic, Marital Status and Monthly Family Income Groups

Although age factor affects the adoption of interpersonal coordination strategies, no age group was precisely identified as the main perceiver of the interpersonal coordination strategies.

On the other hand, ethnicity does influence the adoption of financial resources, skill acquisition, time management, and interpersonal coordination strategies experienced by Malaysian women in sport tourism pursuit. The Malay Malaysian women mainly learned to live within their means in negotiating financial problems. Besides that, they adopt the strategies of either learning the new activities or asking for help with the required skills to participate in sport tourism leisure activities. They also adopt interpersonal coordination strategies by participating in activities joined by women and activities suitable to their skill. The Malay group also allocated at least one week in a year to participate in sport tourism. On the other hand, women of other races mainly budget their money to save for sport tourism besides using the equipment and/clothes that they have. They also take part in sport tourism during the school holidays. The Chinese Malaysian women prefer to do the best that they can to participate in sport tourism, while the Malaysian Indian women prefer to stop temporarily until their children are able to look after themselves.

Marital status does influence the adoption of skill acquisition and time management strategies by Malaysian women in sport tourism pursuit. To pursue their interest in sport tourism, the single Malaysian women mainly learn the new activities or ask for help with the required skills, while the married Malaysian women will stop temporarily until their children are able to look after themselves.

Monthly family income did influence the adoption of financial resources, skill acquisition, and interpersonal coordination negotiation strategies. Malaysian women with monthly family income of RM1001 - RM1500 usually work extra time to save money for sport tourism pursuit. Besides that, they learn the new activities and also ask for help with the required skills to participate in the leisure sport tourism activities of their interests.

DISCUSSION

Results revealed that Malaysian women do experience multiple leisure constraints in sport tourism participation and they are able to negotiate the constraints to maintain their involvement. Malaysian women are inhibited in their ability to act out their leisure preferences in sport tourism by a combination of interpersonal constraints, structural constraints, intrapersonal constraints, and cultural constraints with interpersonal constraints as the main barrier.

The identification of the cultural constraint factor reading "I am obliged to visit my parents/grandparents when I have holidays" as the main constraint influencing Malaysian women's sport tourism pursuit indicates that cultural constraints do influence Malaysian women's decision in sport tourism pursuit. Therefore the inclusion of cultural constraints as an important component of leisure constraints perceived by women residing in the Eastern region could be considered one of the most important addition to the knowledge of sport tourism field. Among all the influencer, ethnic factor places important effects on all the components of leisure constraints perceived by Malaysian women in sport tourism pursuits. Findings also revealed that married Malaysian women are highly constrained by the lack of time to participate in sport tourism activities.

In general, Malaysian women adopted interpersonal coordination strategies to negotiate leisure constraints perceived in sport tourism, including participating in activities suitable with their skills, along with people who shared their interests and of similar gender, a finding which is at variance with previous leisure studies which revealed that participating with partners of the same physical fitness and well being, and sharing the challenge and enjoyment of the same interest has impacts on the participation in various sport tourism activities. Among all the strategies, Malaysian women preferred to participate in activities suitable to their age, possibly because of their physical fitness and personal constraints.

Specifically, monthly family income factor influenced Malaysian women's adoption of interpersonal coordination strategies, financial resources and skill acquisition strategies in sport tourism pursuit. While age factor influenced the adoption of interpersonal coordination strategies, marital status factor does influence the adoption of skill acquisition and time management strategies. Among all the factors, it was found

that ethnic factor placed important effects on all components of negotiation strategies adopted.

CONCLUSION

The findings have significant implications for the sport tourism operators in Malaysia to identify and to satisfy the multiracial sport tourists' demands. The insights gained from this study have the potential to enhance the theoretical understanding of the relationship between leisure constraints and negotiation strategies in leisure sport tourism pursuit. It is important to ensure the strategies for maintaining involvement in leisure sport tourism throughout women lifespan are to be successful as physical activities are essential for promoting active lifestyles and the health benefits they offer.

In view of the evidence obtained from this study that the world of sport tourism is highly impacted by "dollar driven society" and the influence of culture on Malaysian women's decisions in sport tourism pursuits, it is felt that further research be undertaken to determine where differences in outcomes of the four components of constraints may exist and whether each type of constraint carries with it different behavioral outcomes. All these possible quantitative and qualitative future studies are apparent in helping sport tourism researchers to have a better understanding of leisure constraints among women and for planners and operators of sport tourism to provide desired leisure opportunities for women.

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