SPORT TOURISTS’ PREFERRED EVENT ATTRIBUTES AND MOTIVES: A CASE OF SEPAK TAKRAW, MALAYSIA

This study investigates differences in motives, event attributes and information sources which influenced sport tourists’ decision and attendance at the Sepak Takraw event in Malaysia. Data was collected from 224 domestic sports tourists and 92 foreign sports tourists. Findings show that domestic and foreign sports tourists significantly differed in their motives and preferred event attributes. Domestic sports tourists indicate using mass communication items in their decision making to attend the event. Social networking was the most important information source for foreign sports tourists. Practical implications for local sports-tourism marketers within small-scale sports-events in Malaysia are discussed.

Keywords: Sepak Takraw event, sport tourists, attendance motives, event attributes, information sources

INTRODUCTION

Small-scale sports-events generate more positive benefits for the host region (Gibson, Kaplanidou, & Kang, 2012), with fewer detrimental environmental effects (e.g. traffic congestion) as opposed to mega sports-events such as the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Korea (Kim, Gursoy, & Lee, 2006). There is also less concern about the financial burden and utility of the facilities after the event as with bigger sports events such as the 2014 Olympic Games in Russia (Müller, 2014). Further, it can cause less domestic displacement as was the case with the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney (Hall & Hodges, 1996). Higham (1999) developed the concept of small-scale sports-events which include regular season tournaments, international sport fixtures, domestic competitions and people with disability sports. He argues that small-
scale sports-events not only attract frequent domestic visitors but also provide the potential in attracting non-local tourists.

‘Sepak Takraw’ is a small-scale sports-event, introduced as an important sports and tourism event in Malaysia (Megat & Virdati, 2012). Sepak Takraw means ‘kick ball’ as ‘Sepak’ comes from the Malay word meaning kick and ‘Takraw’ is a Thai word used for a rattan ball. The International Sepak Takraw Asian Federation (ISTAF) and Persatuan Sepaktakraw Malaysia (PSM) played a major role in establishing small-scale sports tourism in Malaysia. ISTAF was formed in 1988 with five member countries including Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia and Myanmar. Currently, this organization consists of about 25 member associations including Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Korea, Brunei, China, Laos, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Japan, Switzerland, China, the United States, the Philippines, Canada, Iran, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Vietnam, Brazil, and Germany. The King’s Cup Sepak Takraw World Championships, ISTAF World Cup and ISTAF Super Series, have attracted international, local tourists and competitors to Malaysia (ISTAF, 2018). This calls for Malaysian authorities to analyse event attendees’ profiles. This not only helps in implementing effective market segmentation, but also in promoting Malaysia as a tourist destination.

Sport tourists’ behaviour requires an understanding of the human, nucleus and marker components of Leiper (1990) tourist attraction system. In human component, a sports tourist can be defined according to his/her behavior and demographic profile. Sports tourists profiling based on the origin of the place (geographic segmentation) helps to understand sports tourists’ behavior more efficiently (Kotler, 1980) as it divides the tourism market into a small group with similar motives and needs (Blann & Armstrong, 2007; Smith, 2012). Nucleus or event attributes include the features of a sports-event or a place (Leiper, 1990). Event attributes directly influence sports tourists’ decision making, where the attributes of the place fulfil a functional purpose (Ramkissoon, Mavondo, & Uysal, 2018). The specific attributes of Sepak
Takraw can be marketed as a central attraction for attracting sports tourists and promote place dependence (Ramkissoon, Smith, & Weiler, 2013), where the sport attendee might be unwilling to change the venue for another since it meets the individual’s desired outcomes (Jiang et al., 2017). Sepak Takraw is considered globally as one of the roughest sports which include a spectacular combination of such sports as volleyball, football, martial arts and gymnastics requiring physical fitness in a wide range of forms and movements. Finally, a marker contributes to connect tourists and the component of nucleus for personal experience (Leiper, 1990). A marker is defined as pieces of information which influence tourists’ travel behavior, choice of destination or sports-event and trip planning (Ramkissoon et al., 2018).

Sports tourists’ behavior is an important concept that directly affects attendance, in the context of motivational factors (e.g. Motlagh, 2013) and preferences of events attributes (e.g. Byon, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010). There’s a poll of studies investigating differences in particular sports (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989), gender of sport participants (Ferreira & Armstrong, 2004), typologies of sport tourists (e.g. Yusof, Shah, & Geok, 2012), demographic and psychographic segmentations (e.g. Woosnam, McElroy, & Van Winkle, 2009), and behavioral bases (e.g. Newland & Aicher, 2018). However geographic segmentation is scant in event-tourism literature (e.g. Dolinting, Yusof, & Soon, 2013). This study bridges the gaps in literature by investigating: (1) domestic and foreign sports tourists’ demographic profiles and motives (human element) (2) preferred event attributes by domestic and foreign sports tourists (nucleus element) (3) domestic and foreign sports tourists’ information sources about the event (marker element).

The findings of this paper will allow sports managers to consider Sepak Takraw as a tourist attraction in implementing management strategies associated with each of Leiper’s three components. It is a good practice to divide the market into domestic and foreign sports tourists in order to understand their motives and preferences in event attributes efficiently when attending Sepak
Takraw event. They may want to pay more attention to information sources which link sport tourists to the event destination.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: TOURIST ATTRACTION SYSTEM (LEIPER, 1990)

Leiper’s ‘Tourist attraction system’ with the tourist or human component, a nucleus component and a marker component has been considerably examined by subsequent studies. Accordingly, “a tourist attraction comes into existence when the three elements are connected” (Leiper, 1990, p. 371). Higham and Hinch (2003) refer to the Rugby Super 12 as a primary tourism attraction in increasing attendance of domestic and foreign tourists traveling long distances. Popa, Yusof, and Geok (2015) argue that Muay Thai event was a central tourist attraction which influenced sports tourists’ attendance. Yusof, Shah, and Geok (2010) and Yusof et al. (2012) show how the three elements of Leiper motivate tourist behavior in relation to sports tourists’ profiles.

Human Component or Sports Tourists

A tourist as the first principle of this model generally is the subset of travelers. Tourists are classified in a variety of groups according to their behaviors. This classification in the current sports-tourism literature is close to the type of sports tourists’ behavior (e.g. Hinch & Higham, 2011). Nogawa, Yamaguchi, and Hagi (1996) identify an event spectator as an individual whose main purpose of travel is to watch an organized sports event, while event participants’ primary purpose is to participate in an organized event. Robinson and Gammon (2004) define sports-tourism as a sort of tourism where sports is the primary purpose of traveling, e.g. people travel to and/or stay in places outside their usual environment and actively or passively participate in a competitive sports-event as a primary activity.
Consumers are also defined as spectators, fans and sports supporters, sports participants and volunteers, sports services consumers, and sports goods consumers in the sports marketing field (Blann & Armstrong, 2007). Market segmentation categorizes the groups of sport consumers with similar needs or wants based on demographic, geographic, psychographic characteristics, and behavior (Kotler, 1980). Kotler (1980) also proposed that markets, based on geography segmentation could be divided into different groups: international, national or local regions.

Attendance Motives

‘A motive is an internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person’s behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1980, p. 230). In sports marketing, there is a need to approach the reasons regarding purchase by consumers with enticing marketing (Smith, 2012). Knowledge of the sports consumer’s behavior helps to identify the motives of spectators or fans’ buys and their consumption patterns. Behavioral choice is important to understand the reasons behind individuals’ decisions to be involved in particular types of sports-tourism (e.g. Gibson, 2004). Many scholars have found attendance motives which are perceived as entertaining e.g. for university students at university events (Wann, 1995), among sports tourists, local spectators and other tourists across the Champions Youth Cup (Yusof et al., 2010), and for sports spectators at British Classic and the World Match play (Wasserberg, 2009). Motlagh (2013) indicates the highest levels of motivations for the entertainment, self-esteem, eustress, and group affiliation were for spectators across Dart event.

However, event-tourism literature shows that tourists’ behavior is mostly investigated based on demographic and psychographic segmentations (Woosnam et al., 2009; Yu, 2010), followed by behavioral base (e.g. Newland & Aicher, 2018). Dolinting et al. (2013) argue that domestic and international climbers perceived different travel motivations at Mount Kinabalu. Further
studies are needed on geography segmentation (Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008), especially at sports-events (Funk, Alexandris, & Ping, 2009) for more conclusive findings.

This paper studies domestic and foreign sport tourists’ motives in attending Sepak Takraw event using Wann (1995) Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS). Wann (1995) examined the relationship between SFMS and the sports involvement of university students across local university’s sports-events. His first dimension ‘entertainment’ considers sports-events as one of the favourite pastimes for people. ‘Escape’ describes sports as fans’ escapades when people or fans may be dissatisfied with their ordinary and dull life routine. Eustress is known as a positive form of encouragement which stimulates excitement and anxiety. ‘Aesthetic’ refers to a group of fans who are in search of enjoying the game beauty or appreciating the athletic attitude. Group affiliation is motivation in a healthy relationship to share the joy, excitement and experience. ‘Self-esteem’ is defined as desires to enhance a positive concept in a fan’s team, to achieve accomplishment and maintain the great feeling. ‘Family motive’ is defined as the desire to spend time with family members, and the last dimension, ‘economic’ describes people who search for an opportunity to bet or arrange the game results.

Nuclei or Event Attributes

The nucleus as the second component of Leiper’s model involves any attribute or characteristic of a destination which a tourist considers visiting or actual visits and experiences. A sports-event can be considered as a primary attraction which affects a sports tourist’s decision to visit a destination. In sports marketing, sports consumers buy products or services to satisfy their needs (e.g. Crompton & McKay, 1997). Previous studies have found different event attributes explaining sports tourists’ preferences and differences. Hansen and Gauthier (1989) indicate that the most important contributor affecting attendance of different leagues was related to the rivalry of opponent teams. Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) report that college students are
affected by physical contact motives at men’s and women’s hockey and basketball games. Promotion of sales and advertising influenced spectators’ attendance of professional sports-events and Major League Baseball (Zhang, Piatt, Ostroff, & Wright, 2005). The game itself is another important factor that is frequently reported at different small-scale sports events such as baseball, professional events, minor league hockey (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Byon et al., 2010; Zhang, Smith, Pease, & Jambor, 1997).

Sports facilities have a significant influence on the spectators’ overall satisfaction and expectations at the American hockey league (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; King, 1999). However, few scholars have studied differences in sports tourists’ preferred event attributes based on the origin of place residency. Dolinting et al. (2013) argue there’s a difference in the climbers’ perception of destination attributes. Yusof et al. (2010) argue attributes of athleticism and team quality were important for sport tourists, local spectators and other tourists; they did not differ however in the choice of the event attributes. Popa, Yusof, and Geok (2017) report physical contact as the most important factor affecting domestic and foreign sport tourists attendance of Muay Thai event. Kaplanidou (2009) found that differences in event images of infrastructure and organization between Asians, Europeans and North Americans across the Olympic Games.

This paper investigates domestic and foreign sports tourists’ preferred event attributes for attending Sepak Takraw event using Ferreira and Armstrong’s (2004) event attributes scale. In Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) study of college students’ preferences and behavior related decisions to attend baseball and hockey games, the first dimension, sport popularity included variables such as crowd and popularity of game. Game attractiveness reflects the performance and quality of home team or opposing team. Free offering and promotion refers to the concerns of economic issues related to event products. Sports facility refers to the stadium infrastructures. Entertainment is depicted as an event, performance or activity designed to
entertain sports tourists. The degree of physical contact is related to body activities. Accessibility and convenience is the ability to reach the sports-event. Finally, cost includes the value and price of the sports-event.

Markers or Information Sources

A marker is described as the item of information about any phenomenon in nuclear. Leiper (1990) developed detached marker which includes two types of markers. Generating marker refers to information received about nuclei attraction at homes, such as receiving stories from friends about attractions, travel agencies’ consultants, televised advertisements and publicity, and radio. Transit marker is information gathered in transit to the event, for instance, billboards and pictures leading to specific attractions. There is also contiguous marker which functions at the nucleus in which they refer. Information by a tour guide and tour escorts, signs attached to museums and pictures, and some media categorised as this markers, in pre-trip, during-trip and post-trip, a guide book or magazine of events, sightseeing and whatever may be read by tourists (Ramkissoon et al., 2018; Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011).

Information sources studies have mostly dwelled on sports tourists’ pre-trip information search behavior using external sources such as mobile phones or websites (e.g. Law, Chan, & Wang, 2018), media coverage, and participant enhancement (e.g. Slak Valek, 2018) despite focusing on popular markers from sports tourists’ perspectives. Hinch and Higham (1999) indicate that newspapers’ sponsored promotions and advertisements were mostly used for Rugby League. Popa et al. (2015) found sports tourists are often informed about the event at their home or office by mass communication, electronic information and word of mouth. Yusof et al. (2012) suggest that the word of mouth from relatives and friends are important sources for sports tourists. Yusof et al. (2010) report that most foreign sports’ tourists received information from friends, media advertisements and newspaper articles. In the current paper, generating, transit
and contiguous markers are considered information sources which include electronic, mass, and word of mouth communications, and advertisements about the Sepak Takraw event recognized by sport tourists at home, at the stadium or in transit to the stadium.

Tourists’ Travel Decisions

Leiper’s (1990) model indicates that markers have a wider variety of roles such as motivation-related trip, destination selection, and itinerary planning which help the tourists decide about their travel. In the first stage, it could not be possible for tourists to form positive expectations about the place to visit unless they receive information by at least one generating marker, related to what they want to experience somewhere. Selecting a destination is about where tourists want to go. The generating and transit markers are categorized in the detached markers which affect tourists’ visit decisions which may be formed in pre-trip or during trip. Finally, the planning of itinerary needs different sorts of detached markers for multi-destination trip itineraries plan. This involves recognizing the places which can be visited for tourist leisure purposes.

Drawing on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There are significant differences in motives of foreign and domestic sports’ tourists attending Sepak Takraw event (human component).

There are no significant differences in motives of foreign and domestic sports’ tourists attending Sepak Takraw event (human component).

H2: There are significant differences in the attributes between foreign and domestic sports’ tourists attending Sepak Takraw event (nucleus component).

There are no significant differences in the event attributes between foreign and domestic sports’ tourists attending Sepak Takraw event (nucleus component).
H3: There are significant differences in information sources of Sepak Takraw event received by foreign and domestic sports’ tourists (marker component).

There are no significant differences in information sources of Sepak Takraw event received by domestic and foreign sports’ tourists (marker component).

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 shows how the components of tourist attraction system (Leiper, 1990) including a human, a nucleus and a marker are connected in this study. The process is started when sports tourists with sports needs are informed about a Sepak Takraw event by a generating marker before deciding to set out for the event’s site, where they are satisfied with their expected needs. They are motivated to explore toward the attributes of the Sepak Takraw event while the transit marker function along with the trip. At the nucleus or the Sepak Takraw event, the sports tourists encounter experiences in the event attributes while the contiguous marker operates.

RESEARCH METHOD

A questionnaire was developed measuring demographic profiles, motives, event attributes and information sources related to attending Sepak Takraw event. The measurements used for motives and event attributes were borrowed and adopted from Wann (1995) Sports Fan Motivation Scale and Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) study. These measurements have been widely tested and are reliable instruments (e.g. Motlagh, 2013; Popa et al., 2015; Wasserberg, 2009; Yusof et al., 2010).
Survey Instrument

The survey questionnaire includes 82 multiple items in English and Malay languages. Both versions were evaluated by five English and Malay language experts, who were familiar with sports management concepts. The screening question was: \textit{are you going back to your home town tonight? 1=yes, 2=no}; \textit{Is the event the primary purpose of your trip to attend the event? 1=yes, 2=no, if no, what are the reasons for your trip? (1-Visiting family/friends, 2-Shopping, 3-Business, 4-Sightseeing, 5-Relaxing in warm place, 6-Meeting local people, 7-Others (please specific)} (Nogawa et al., 1996).

The demographic section captured 10 items related to gender, age, ethnic, status, permanent place of residence, monthly income, education, occupation and trip expenditure.

‘Attendance motives’ were measured using 23 items adopted from the eight motives of Sports Fan Motivation Scale with an eight-point Likert scale. Dimensions included the following: entertainment, escape, self-esteem, family group affiliation, eustress, aesthetic, and economic. The ‘event attributes’ were measured using 42 items with a seven-point Likert scale. The dimensions were physical contact, sports popularity, accessibility and convenience, game attractiveness, sports facility free offering and promotion, entertainment, and cost.

‘Information sources’ was measured by five questions asking respondents where they were informed about the event, the sources of information measure (1) generating marker such as at home or office; (2) a transit marker such as in transit to the event; and (3) contiguous marker such as at the event stadium. The items are word-of-mouth communication, electronic communication, mass communication, and advertisement (Yusof et al., 2012).

Data Collection

Data was collected between 31st October and 3rd November, 2013, for ISTAF Super Series, organized by the International Sepak Takraw Asian Federation (ISTAF) at Likas Complex.
Stadium in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Kota Kinabalu is the capital city of Sabah, located on the tropical island of Borneo, the second tourism destination after Kuala Lumpur. Likas Sport Complex is recognized as the most popular venue in this region.

The tournament included 12 men’s and 5 women’s national teams from different countries including Indonesia, Brunei, Vietnam, Iran, India, US, Malaysia, Thailand, Germany, Switzerland, Singapore, and the Philippines. The questionnaire booklets were handed out to respondents on-site by a team of four graduate students who were responsible for distributing and collecting self-administered questionnaires and answering the respondents’ questions.

The population for sample size of this research was 1500 based on stadium capacity. According to Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) sample size, for a population of 1500, a maximum sample of 306 is required at population proportion of 0.05. A convenience sample of 400 subjects at population proportion for p=0.05 was used in the present study. The respondents were sports tourists (being over 18 years old) who resided in Kota Kinabalu at least for one night for attending Sepak Takraw event. They received booklets over several days in three time frames: (1) pre-game or 1 hour before the kick-off at 9 a.m when spectators were seated; (2) during the half-time break of the event, and (3) during the fifteen-minute team change period.

Incomplete questionnaires and non-sports tourists were excluded. A total of 316 respondents completed questionnaires were retained in two categories: domestic (n=224) and foreign sports tourists (n=92). Domestic sports tourists were those from Malaysia and foreign sports tourists were from foreign countries who resided in Kota Kinabalu for at least 24 hours to view the Sepak Takraw event (Robinson & Gammon, 2004).

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages, means, standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics including independent samples t-test and
MANOVA. The principal component method with Varimax rotation was performed on the importance of attendance motives and sport attributes. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse sports tourists’ demographic characteristics. Means, standard deviations and t-test were also calculated for age, income and trip expense. Regarding the first and second hypotheses, the attendance motives and event attributes were analyzed by mean and standard deviation to identify the importance of each factor influencing visit decisions of sports tourists. MANOVA was also used to test differences between domestic and foreign sports tourists. The third hypothesis was analysed by frequencies and percentages to identify the type of information sources used by domestic and foreign sport tourists.

Description of the sample

This study presents results on 316 subjects, with 224 (71.89%) of domestic sports tourists and 92 (29.11%) of respondents as foreign sports tourists (Supplement Table 1). Most of domestic sports tourists were male (82.1%), with 59.8% being married. About 76.1% of foreign sports tourists were also males: single (49.9%) and married (48.9%). The two groups significantly were of similar age (p=0.387, t=0.867). The mean of 34.4 between the ages 19-59 was reported for domestic sports tourists and the mean value of 33.2 between the ages 19-58 for foreign sports tourists. Domestic sports tourists largely came from the states of Sabah (79.5%) with ethnic background as Asian (55.8%) and Malay (41.5%). Foreign sports tourists of 12 foreign countries included Indonesia with 22.8%, and Singapore, Iran and India, each with 13% had the highest attendance. They were mostly from Asian ethnicity (59.8%) followed by White or Caucasian (18.5%).

Supplement Table 1
Education levels completed by sports tourists were as follows: those with no bachelor’s degree: domestic (70%), foreign (44.6%) and those with a bachelor’s degree: domestic (21.1%), foreign (29.3%). Sports tourists were mostly employed in full time occupations (domestic=56.7%, foreign=43.5%). Domestic sports tourists mostly indicated average monthly income of RM 1762 and foreign sports tourists had an income of RM 3533.5 which was significantly different (p=0.013, t= -2.544) (Supplement Table 2). Trip expenditure significantly differed between the two groups indicating a medium expenditure of RM 261.2 for the domestics and at about RM 1944.7 for the foreigners (P=0.001, t= -9.952).

Supplement Table 2

FINDINGS

Description of Sport Fan Motivation Scale

Descriptive statistics for the sport fan motivation scale (SFMS) dimensions are presented in Supplement Table 3. Of the 8 dimensions, 5 had a mean score greater than 5.14 (total mean on the 7-point Likert scale), indicating that all dimensions were considered important when making a decision to attend a Sepak Takraw event (entertainment M= 6.44; SD = 1.26, eustress, M=6.10, SD=1.09, aesthetic M=5.99, SD=1.19, self-esteem M=5.82, SD=1.43, group-affiliation M=5.29, SD=1.11). Three dimensions (family M=4.62, SD=1.50, escape M=4.1, SD=1.74 and economic M= 2.83; SD =1.79) had a mean score that was lower than the total mean.

Additionally, the values of Kurtosis and Skewness for sport fan motivation scale (SFMS) were examined. The values met the critical values (+1.96, -1.96), indicating that the data were normally distributed at the level of 0.5 (Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2009). The Skewness and Kurtosis for each dimension of SFMS are: economic (Skewness= 1.106, Kurtosis= 0.182), group-affiliation (Skewness= - 0.408, Kurtosis= 0.024), eustress
Results on 8 dimensions of event attributes are reported in Supplement Table 4. Respondents perceived 5 variables above the total mean score (5.49). Physical contact (M=5.93, SD=1.02), game attractiveness (M=5.88, SD=0.86), accessibility and convenience (M=5.68, SD=1.05), sports facility (M=5.65, SD=1.21), and sports popularity (M=5.55, SD=0.94) had the high mean score. Three dimensions of cost (M=5.29, SD=1.62), promotions and free offering (M=5.2, SD=1.1), and entertainment (M=4.77, SD=1.60) had the low mean scores. In addition, all skewness and kurtosis values for the event attributes dimensions were well within the acceptable threshold (+1.96, -1.96). The values for each dimension of event attributes are: accessibility and convenience (Skewness= - 0.732, Kurtosis= - 0.136), physical contact (Skewness= - 1.064, Kurtosis= 1.203), promotions and free offering (Skewness= - 0.546, Kurtosis= 0.409), game attractiveness (Skewness= - 0.953, Kurtosis= 0.719), sports facility (Skewness= - 1.008, Kurtosis= 0.830), sports popularity (Skewness= - 0.753, Kurtosis= 0.697), entertainment (Skewness= - 0.317, Kurtosis= 0.409), cost (Skewness= - 0.513, Kurtosis= - 0.446).

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the validity of the questionnaire’s variables. For sports fan motivation scale (SFMS), the value of 0.82 was obtained for Kaiser-
Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (> 0.6). As a result, the factorability of data was appropriate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Moreover, the value of zero was obtained for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (< 0.05), indicating that the samples were not equal variances that reject null hypothesis of test and therefore the data was appropriate for factor analysis.

Principal component with direct oblimin rotation was performed on 23 variables of attendance motives (Table 1, Supplement Table 5). After rotation, eight factors were extracted with a total of a cumulative percentage of 78.51% variance explained and the eigenvalue greater than 1. Eight factors assigned to the categories were: (1) economic, (2) group affiliation, (3) self-esteem, (4) eustress, (5) entertainment, (6) escape, (7) family and (8) aesthetic. The criterion of factor loadings equal to or greater than 0.5 was considered. One variable, ‘entertainment value’ was eliminated and 22 substantial loadings of variables were onto eight factors.

Table 1, Supplement Table 5

Factor 1 labelled as economic factor with four variables accounted for 28.30% of the total variance, eigenvalue of 6.22 and Cronbach value of 0.81. Gambling is the most important for fan, being enjoyable only if one can bet (gamble) on the outcome, and making wagers were similar to those extracted in the study by Wann (1995). There are three variable loadings on factor 2, group affiliation with 19.99% of the total variance, eigenvalue of 4.39 and Cronbach value of 0.85. This factor with three variables, i.e. to be with other people, fans’ friends, and to be with a large group of people did fit with the results of the study by Wann (1995). Factor 3, self-esteem had loadings from three variables accounting for 6.443% of the total variance, the eigenvalue of 1.41 and Cronbach value of 0.78. This factor with three variables, i.e. increasing self-esteem, it makes me feel good when my team wins, successes and losses of favorite team, clearly provide a good fit to the original measurement. Three variables which loaded on factor 4, eustress accounted for 5.836% of the total variance, eigenvalue of 1.28 and Cronbach value
of 0.80. Three variables, i.e. attend for physiologically aroused by the competition; pumped up and stimulation.

Factor 5, labelled as entertainment accounted for 5.441 percent of the total variance, eigenvalue of 1.19 and Cronbach value of 0.81. The two variables, i.e. have a good time, and a form of recreation constituted factor 5. One variable, i.e. I enjoy sepak takraw event because of its entertainment value, was eliminated from the original study by Wann (1995) in this analysis. There are three variables identified in loadings on factor 6, escape that accounts for 4.797 percent of the total variance, eigenvalue of 1.055 and Cronbach value of 0.81. The loadings of these variables, i.e. escape life’s problems, forget my problems, and being away from life’s hassles aligns with Wann (1995). Factor 7, family includes three variables which accounted for 4.231 percent of the total variance, eigenvalue of 0.93 and Cronbach value of 0.80. The variables, to be with my spouse, and to be with my family were similar to the findings by Wann (1995). Aesthetic (factor 8) identified two variables which accounted for 3.506 percent of the total variance, eigenvalue of 0.77 and Cronbach value of 0.84. The two loading variables, i.e. a form of art, the artistic value; however, had only one item, i.e. I attend Sepak Takraw event because I enjoy the beauty and grace of the event and was eliminated from the original questionnaire used by Wann (1995).

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the validity of the questionnaire’s variables. Computed value of zero was obtained for Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (< 0.05), the samples are not equal variances that reject null hypothesis of test and therefore the data was appropriate for factor analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The value of 0.89 obtained for Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (>0.6), indicated that factorability of data was appropriate. Principal component method with oblimin rotation was also performed on 42 event attributes variables. Eight factors extracted explained 67.85% of total variance with eigenvalues greater than 1 (Table 2, Supplement Table 6). Based on the criteria of a factor loading equal to or greater
than 0.5, a total of 30 variables were loaded on eight factors. However, twelve variables were eliminated: the amount of physical contact, the amount of violence, quality of player and teams support, crowd density, crowd noise, amount of advertisement, presence of rivalry, concessions, athleticism displayed, tailgating, players’ physical attractiveness, and the duration of event. The last three items were also deleted in the original scale by Ferreira and Armstrong (2004). Thirty variables loading on eight factors were labelled as (1) accessibility and convenience, (2) physical contact, (3) promotions and free offering, (4) attractiveness of game, (5) pre-game and in-game entertainment, (6) sports facility, (7) popularity of sports and (8) cost.

Table 2, Supplement Table 6

Factor 1, accessibility and convenience, was identified with seven mix loadings, accounting for 33.202 % of total variance, eigenvalue of 10.95 and Cronbach value of 0.95. The first two items, i.e. opportunity to watch Sepak Takraw on TV and the pace of the game are related to ‘popularity of sports’. The last five items including parking–accessibility, location convenience, seating arrangements for spectators, seats location (sightlines), and schedule convenience were related to ‘accessibility’ and ‘convenience’, similar to Ferreira and Armstrong (2004).

The second factor, ‘physical contact’ accounted for 9.451% of total variances, eigenvalue of 3.119 and Cronbach value of 0.75 and had five substantial mixed loadings. The last three variables, i.e. the kicking strategy in Sepak Takraw, the jumping strategy in Sepak Takraw and the high level of skills displayed by player explain the attractiveness of game category. This factor provided the first two features, i.e. the amount of speed displayed and the amount of action in Sepak Takraw for measuring physical contact, whereas two variables including
amount of violence and amount of physical contact from the original scale used by Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) were eliminated from the current analysis.

Four variables have substantial loadings on factor 3, namely free offering and promotion with 6.767% of total variance, eigenvalue of 2.23 and Cronbach value of 0.92. ‘Free offering and promotion’ had all variables, including offering free t-shirts, offering free tickets, charitable or socially responsible promotion, and promotions on concessions (food and beverage), with the exception of offering prizes that loaded on factor 4, i.e. ‘popularity of sports’. In comparison with the findings of Ferreira and Armstrong (2004), only the ‘concessions’ variable was not extracted in the current analysis.

‘Game attractiveness’ had four variables, accounting for 4.466% of total variance, 1.47 of total eigenvalue and Cronbach value of 0.956. The last extracted variable loaded on ‘promotion and free offering’. Six variables signified factor 4, i.e. ‘attractiveness of game’; three items, i.e. quality of opposing teams and players, the reputation of team and player that you support (cheer-up) and the reputation of opposing teams and players loaded onto factor 4; three out of six variables, i.e. the kicking strategy in Sepak Takraw, the jumping strategy in Sepak Takraw, the high level of skills displayed (by players) had mixed loadings on factor 2 - ‘physical contact’. Three specific variables, i.e. players’ physical attractiveness, quality of player and teams you support, and athleticism were not loaded in this analysis, similar to Ferreira and Armstrong (2004) study.

Factor 6, ‘sports facility’ loaded with two specific variables accounting for 3.901 percent of total variance, eigenevalue of 1.28 and Cronbach value of 0.947. This factor produced two variables, i.e. newness of facility and niceness of facility, also similar to those reported in the study by Ferreira and Armstrong (2004). Factor 7, ‘sports popularity’ accounted for 3.283 percent of the total variance, 1.08 of total eigenvalue and Cronbach value of 0.94. Three variables were included in factor 7. Two of three variables were related to ‘popularity of
sports’, but the last variable was associated with ‘promotions and free offering’ factor. Factor 7, i.e. ‘popularity of sports’ included the popularity of Sepak Takraw, player’s and team’s popularity, opportunity to watch Sepak Takraw on TV, and the pace of the game, but the last two variables had mixed loadings on factor 1- ‘accessibility and convenience’. However, four variables, i.e. crowd density, crowd noise, amount of advertising, and presence of rivalry included in the study by Ferreira and Armstrong (2004), were eliminated in the current factorial analysis. Factor 8, ‘cost’ accounted for 2.725% of total variance, eigenvalue of 0.89 and Cronbach value of 0.92 with two variables ‘price of tickets’ and ‘ticket package options’ (Ferreira & Armstrong, 2004).

Description of Attendance Motives

Hypothesis 1 was tested using descriptive analysis to investigate differences in domestic and foreign sports tourists’ reasons and motives behind their leisure behaviors for attending Sepak Takraw event. Supplement Table 7 indicates that the 22 behavioral motives influenced domestic sports tourists’ attendance with mean values ranging from 6.68 to 1.18. Twelve motivational items had mean scores above the total mean (M=4.80), while ten motivational reasons were found below the mean (M=4.70).

Supplement Table 7

Supplement Table 8 summarizes important and less important attendance motives by dimension that primarily affected domestic sports tourists’ intentions with mean scores ranging from 6.54 to 2.19. Five dimensions had mean scores greater than the total mean (M=4.99) over entertainment (M=6.54, SD=1.347), aesthetic (M=6.397, SD=1.519), eustress (M=6.183, SD=1.146), self-esteem (M=5.72, SD= 1.53), and group affiliation (M=4.98, SD=1.23) for
domestic sports tourists. The lowest response rates below the total mean were perceived in family (M=4.11, SD=1.45), escape (M=3.81, SD=1.93) and economic (M=2.19, SD=1.71).

Supplement Table 8

Supplement Table 9 shows foreign sports tourists’ behavioral motives according to their mean values. The mean values of 22 motives ranged from 6.36 to 2.88. Thirteen motivational items had mean scores greater than the total mean of 5.14, however mean values of nine motives were lower than the total mean (M=5.13).

Supplement Table 9

The importance level of the 8 behavioral motives that influenced foreign sports tourists ranged from 6.34 to 3.47. The five motive factors had mean values higher than the total mean (M=5.31) (Supplement Table 10). These 5 most important motivators were: entertainment (M=6.34, SD=1.17), eustress (M=6.021, SD=1.03), self-esteem (M=5.90, SD=1.32), group affiliation (M=5.60, SD=0.98) and aesthetic (M=5.57, SD=0.87). Family (M=5.14, SD=1.37), escape (M=4.42, SD=1.55) and economic factors (M=3.47, SD=1.87) ranked as the least important motivators.

Supplement Table 10

Description of Event Attributes

The second hypothesis sought to investigate differences in the attributes of Sepak Takraw event that influenced sports tourists’ primary decisions. The importance of event attributes for domestic sport tourists’ choice of attending Sepak Takraw is illustrated in Supplement Table 11 with thirty sports event attributes with mean scores ranging from 6.33 to 4.17. Eighteen
sports event attributes had mean scores above the mean (M=5.50). Twelve event attributes items were identified to have mean scores below the mean (M=5.50).

The information on the eight dimensions of sports event attributes were classified based on their importance for domestic sports tourists’ attendance with mean values ranging from 5.99 to 4.56 (Supplement Table 12). Five dimensions were above the total mean (M=5.46), and three lower, for domestic sports tourists. ‘Game attractiveness’ (M=5.99, SD=0.87), ‘sports facility’ (M=5.90, SD=1.12), ‘accessibility and convenience’ (M=5.85, SD=1.00), ‘physical contact’ (M=5.84, SD=1.10) and ‘sport popularity’ (M=5.63, SD=0.98) were ranked high as important attributes in the decision making. However, ‘promotions and free offerings’ (M=5.15, SD=1.07), ‘entertainment’ (M=4.74, SD=1.02) and ‘cost’ (M=4.56, SD=1.83) were less important attributes for attending.

Supplement Tables 11&12

Supplement Table 13 presents the degree of importance for all thirty event attributes, rated by foreign sports tourists with mean values ranging from 6.18 to 4.48. Thirteen event attributes had mean scores above the total mean (M=5.43), seventeen sports event attributes were reported with mean values lower.

As shown in Supplement Table 14, foreign sports tourists scored the eight dimensions with mean scores ranging from 6.02 to 4.82. Four dimensions were above the total mean of 5.40 over ‘physical contact’ (M=6.02, SD=0.94), ‘game attractiveness’ (M=5.77, SD=0.85), ‘accessibility’ and ‘convenience’ (M=5.51, SD=1.10) and ‘sport popularity’ (M=5.47, SD=0.91). In contrast, they rated four dimensions below the average mean which were perceived as weak factors: ‘sport facility’ (M=5.39, SD=1.31), ‘promotions and free offering’ (M=5.24, SD=1.13), ‘cost’ (M=5.02, SD=1.42) and ‘entertainment’ (M=4.82, SD=1.38).

Supplement Tables 13&14
Markers or Information Sources

The third hypothesis examined information sources that influenced domestic and foreign sports tourists’ behavioral motives (Supplement Table 15). About 80.8% of domestic sports tourists were informed about the event by mass communication (80.8%), word of mouth (74.6%), and using electronic information (70.5%) in their homes before departing to the event. Foreign sport tourists were mostly influenced by electronic (75%) and mass communications (71.7%) when they were at home destination.

Supplement Table 15

MANOVA Findings

Hypothesis 1 also tested differences in attendance motives between domestic and foreign tourists using MANOVA test. There is a statistically significant difference in motives at significance level of 0.05 (Table 3). The factors ‘Economic’, ‘family and escape’ were mostly perceived by foreign sport tourists, while domestic sport tourists rated ‘aesthetic’ as the most important motive for their attendance. ‘Economic’ was shown to be significantly different (F (1, 313) =34.35, p=0.000, partial eta squared=0.100). According to the mean values, the foreign group (M= 3.47, SD=1.87) perceived this factor as an important motive more than the domestic group (M=2.19, SD=1.71); this is reflective of being sports fans who are interested in gambling on game for their favourite teams. Another difference was also shown for family (F (1, 313) = 17.72, p=.000, partial eta squared=0.054) which the foreign group (M=5.14, SD=1.37) rated higher than the domestic group (M=4.11, SD=1.45) suggesting they considered this event as family vacation in order to spend more time with their family members. The next difference was for ‘escape factor’ (F (1, 313) = 8.51, p=.004, partial eta squared=0.027); foreigners (M=4.42, SD=1.55) were more interested than the domestic (M=3.81, SD= 1.93). This is not surprising as they travelled miles away from homes to forget daily problems. The only factor
‘aesthetic’ significantly (F (1,313) = 20.36, p=.000, partial eta squared=0.062) motivated domestic group (M=6.40, SD=1.52) more than foreign tourists (M=5.58, SD=1.87), suggesting that domestics are more familiar with traditional Sepak Takraw sports and expect more from the teams’ player performance.

Table 3
Hypothesis 2 was tested by using MANOVA analysis on event attributes to test differences between domestic and foreign sports tourists. There is a statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level over sports facility (F (1, 310) = 10.14, p=0.002, partial eta squared= 0.031) which the domestic group perceived more important than the foreign group (Supplement Table 16). Most domestic sports tourists perceived ‘sports facility’ for their attendance rather than foreign sport tourists as they were the residents of Sabah State.

Supplement Table 16

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS
This study examined the importance of motives, event attributes and information sources on domestic and foreign sports tourists’ attendance of Sepak Takraw event. Our findings show that the tourist attraction system model of Leiper (1990) was applicable in understanding Sepak Takraw event as a small-scale sports event. The links between motives and the event attributes of nucleus for sports tourist’ experiences by the major function of markers supported Leiper’s basic premise that sports tourists were attracted towards Sepak Takraw event.

Human Component or Sports Tourists
The findings reject the null hypothesis 1 as domestic and foreign sports tourists’ demographic profiles and motives differ. The profile of respondents shows that only 29.11 % were foreign sports tourists. This is in line with previous studies showing small-scale sports events involve
a great number of host event communities compared with mega sports-events (e.g. Higham, 1999; Popa et al., 2017; Yusof et al., 2010). Findings show that foreign sports tourists also spent seven times more for their trip to Sabah State, compared to the domestic group. This was expected as the site of the event was more easily accessible to the domestic tourists than the foreigners. Most of the foreign tourists also came from other neighbouring Asian countries such as Indonesia. These findings have important implications for destination marketers. There is a need to invest in marketing efforts to increase the level of foreign tourists’ attendance, especially from Indonesia, through the positioning of the next Sepak Takraw events e.g. in Kota Kinabalu. Persatuan Sepaktakraw Malaysia and International Sepaktakraw Asian Federation in collaboration with Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board, Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia need to showcase the image of Malaysia as a sports tourist destination by offering quality sports-events, accommodation, and transportation promotions, and hospitality services. Both market segments consist of respondents aged between 19 and 58 years of age (domestic) and between 19 and 59 years of age (foreign) with educational attainment below bachelor’s or at bachelor’s degree level, who have full time jobs or are students. This could help the tourism authority target organizations like schools, universities, and government departments.

Attendance Motives

Our findings showed that motives had a major role in sport tourists’ attendance decision-making for the Sepak Takraw event. Both domestic and foreign sports tourists perceived ‘entertainment’, ‘aesthetic’ and ‘eustress’, ‘self-esteem’ and ‘group-affiliation’ as important motives for their attendance. This was consistent with Motlagh (2013) findings for sports spectators across the Dart event. The two groups ranked ‘entertainment’ as most important motive in their initial decision-making, aligning with previous studies’ findings for spectators.
attending different small-scale sports events (Wann, 1995; Wasserberg, 2009; Yusof et al., 2010).

Four factors namely, ‘economic’, ‘escape’, ‘family’, and ‘aesthetic’ were found with significant differences between the two groups for attending the Sepak Takraw event. ‘Escape’ was the only significant factor, aligning with Yusof et al. (2010) findings. Our results suggest foreign sports tourists were more interested in the chances for gambling on the outcomes of the event, being away from daily pressure and being with family members and spouses. This suggests it is important to package these events as family entertainment to create memorable experiences (Buonincontri, Marasco, & Ramkissoon, 2017), with a chance for escaping the dreariness of their everyday lives and find new personal experiences (Ramkissoon et al., 2018).

In contrast, domestic sports tourists were more in search of aesthetic motives through players and teams’ performance and movements in terms of beauty and artistic values. Unfortunately, sport marketers have little control on the aesthetic pleasure of the game. Nevertheless, team officials can focus on maintaining a high level of skills and the beauty of movements among players.

Nucleus or Event Attributes

Our findings reject the null hypothesis 2. Event attributes significantly differed between domestic and foreign sports tourists. The unique characteristics of Sepak Takraw provided a variety of attractions for sports tourists’ experiences which influenced their attendance. Domestic and foreign tourists ranked ‘game attractiveness’, ‘physical contact’, ‘accessibility and convenience’ and ‘sport popularity’ as important factors. However, the most important event attributes to domestic sports tourists were game attractiveness and sports facility while ‘physical contact’ and ‘game attributes’ were most prominent to foreign sports tourists. A number of studies argue ‘game attributes’ (Bernthal & Graham, 2003; Byon et al., 2010; Zhang
et al., 1997), ‘sports facilities’ (Greenwell et al., 2002; King, 1999) and ‘physical contact’ are important factors on different smaller sports-events (Ferreira & Armstrong, 2004; Popa et al., 2017).

‘Sport facility’ was more important to domestic sports tourists as they mostly came from Sabah state in Malaysia. This was paralleled with Kaplanidou (2009) findings between Asians, Europeans and North Americans on event images related to infrastructure and organization across Olympic Games. These findings suggest that ISTAF managers should provide more sports facilities to domestic sports tourists in future Sepak Takraw event in Kota Kinabalu. There is a need to also consider access requirements to stadiums and provisions of facilities (e.g. sports courts, and sports equipment) when hosting the events.

Markers or Information Sources

Both groups of sports tourists reported to make more use of the event information by generating markers. This means they had decided to attend the event before departing from home. This suggests event organizers need to focus pre-trip information sources when marketing future events (Ramkissoon, Uysal, Brown, 2011). Our findings are in line with Popa et al. (2015) study on sports tourists’ decision-making to attend the Muay Thai event.

Our findings in differences between the two groups of sports tourists reject the null hypothesis 3. Domestic sports tourists relied on media communications as important information sources for attending the event aligning with past studies on small-scale sports-events e.g. Rugby League (Hinch and Higham, 1999; Yusof et al., 2010). The domestic group was also influenced by communicating with a friend, family, school and travel agency which is consistent with Yusof et al., (2012) for both active and passive sport tourists through smaller sports events.

The foreign group mostly used electronic information including social networks such as facebook and website. These findings suggest to ISTAF managers that advertisements and
broadcasts through TV companies, newspapers and magazines for domestic sports tourists and social networking websites for foreign sports (Chanchaichujit, Holmes, Dickinson, & Ramkissoon) may engage them further in future events.

CONCLUSION

This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on small-scale sports event decision-making. It explores Sepak Takraw as a tourist attraction in Malaysia using the human, nucleus and marker components of Leiper’s (1990) model. The differences in demographic profiles, attendance motives, event attributes and information sources between domestic and foreign sports tourists were investigated across ISTAF Super Series. The results confirmed that domestic and foreign sports tourists differ in their small-scale sports event attendance decision-making. Domestic and foreign sports tourists significantly differ in their choice of motives namely: ‘economic’, ‘aesthetic’, ‘family’, and ‘escape’. The event attributes also captured significant differences between foreign and domestic sports tourists’ choices of experiences over sports facility attributes. The importance of geographic segmentation towards event attendance is also highlighted as it seems to directly influence sport tourists’ motives and preferences in event attributes. Our findings have important practical implications. Event organizers and sports marketers can implement geographic market segmentation by targeting the profitable attendees. They can provide information about the Sepak Takraw event to potential domestic sports tourists through a variety of media sources including radio and television advertisements, brochures, newspaper stories, magazine advertisement which present the aesthetic aspects of Sepak Takraw. The websites and other social networks can also position sports event tourism as a type of family vacation, gambling and entertainment for
attracting more foreign tourists. Marketing strategies should pay attention to providing more sports facilities to domestic sport tourists in Kota Kinabalu.

Our study’s limitation is that it focused only on one traditional sports event which can limit the generalizations of the results to similar events. The data can also only be generalized to sports tourists who attend the Sepak Takraw event in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia as a convenience sampling method was applied. Regarding the event type, this was a traditional sports event and, as such, the findings may not be applicable to non-traditional sports events. Future studies can apply Leiper’s (1990) Tourist Attraction System Model to different traditional sports. Researchers could build on the study’s findings and explore the interplay of relationships between sports event satisfaction, service quality and core product and overall satisfaction. Researchers would also benefit from future avenues of research on the social, environmental and economic impact of traditional small-scale sport events.
REFERENCES


Figure 1. The Contribution of Human, Nucleus and Marker Components of Tourism Attraction System model at Sepak Takraw Event

Generating markers

Sport tourists with sport wants and needs

Travel Decision

Other conditions such as economic

Transit markers

Sport tourists are motivated to search of satisfaction at Sepak Takraw event

Nucleus
Sport tourists experience any attributes of Sepak Takraw

Contiguous markers
Table 1 Full loadings Matrix of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for Attendance Motives: Principal Component Extraction with Oblimin Rotation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factors 1</th>
<th>Factors 2</th>
<th>Factors 3</th>
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<th>Factors 5</th>
<th>Factors 6</th>
<th>Factors 7</th>
<th>Factors 8</th>
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Table 2 Full loadings Matrix of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results for Event Attributes: Principal Component Extraction with Oblimin Rotation

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*P < 0.05