

Sport, Exercise, and Recreation Participation in Malaysia 2023: The Engagement Pattern According to Demographics, Participant Characteristics and Social Groups

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Abstract:

Malaysian Sports Culture Index 2023 (MSCI'23) measures Malaysians' participation level in sports, exercise and recreation activities based on two domains, namely the participation domain and the sporting spirit domain. There is one indicator under the participation domain: activeness, and four indicators under the sporting spirit domain: volunteering, dedication, expenditure, and contribution. This study uses quantitative methods through a self-designed questionnaire. The quantitative data was collected among 7,015 people aged 13 and above through a face-to-face approach. A multi-cluster random sampling selection across Malaysia was facilitated by employing the block enumeration (BE) and residence area (RA) methods, aided by the iGREAT Survey Management System (IYRES) for online recording of respondent feedback. Descriptive analyses were conducted on quantitative data. The analysis shows that 52% of Malaysians engage in sports, exercise, and recreational activities at least once a month. A total of 48% are not involved in any sports-related activities. The level of activity among the people involved shows that 11.8% are at an active level, 68.8% are moderately active and 19.4% are less active (WHO, 2020). Involvement in sports and

exercise are the two main choices of Malaysians over recreational activities. The sporting spirit is measured based on indicators of volunteering, dedication, spending and contributions. Voluntary activities are a catalyst for sporting spirit and the main indirect contributor to the MSCI'23 score compared to the other three indicators. The findings of this study also show that gender, ethnicity, marital status, and age influence the score of the index. In terms of age for example, the younger the more active they are. While urban and rural locations do not show a real difference. This study identified and outlined five main themes that influence the participation of Malaysians in sports, namely, individual intrinsic motivation, proper and holistic education, facility condition and management, individual goal priorities and dynamic creative media use. These themes could help stakeholders to determine the types of programs to cultivate sports in Malaysia. Many positive signs show Malaysia's sports culture will continue to improve in the coming years. The completion of the sports program is recommended to focus equally on the domains of participation and sporting spirit.