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### **EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUTH ATTENDANCE AT BADMINTON MATCHES**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Sports play a significant place in Malaysian culture, serving as both a spectator and participant activity. Organized badminton events have the potential to enhance sport tourism revenue by drawing in both local and international fans keen to support their favourite teams. Understanding the motivations of specific market segments, particularly the youth, is vital for effective sports industry marketing. However, a lack of motivation among youth to attend badminton events can lead to diminished interest in these events. Consequently, this study aims to examine the factors influencing the motivation of youth to attend badminton matches in Malaysia. The study's sample comprises 341 students from UUM, selected through convenience sampling technique. The findings reveal that self-esteem is the foremost motivation for attending badminton matches (mean=4.31), followed by factors of group (mean=4.30), family (mean=4.17), entertainment (mean=4.08), escape (mean=3.98), eustress (mean=3.94), and aesthetics (mean=3.37). Furthermore, most respondents identify as badminton fans, indicating potential growth opportunities for the badminton industry. Understanding fan motivations can enable the industry to better meet their needs, thereby contributing to its expansion and success. This study underscores the importance of engaging youth in badminton events to foster sustained interest and participation in sports tourism initiatives.

**Keywords:** Badminton matches, Sports attendance, Sport event, Motivation, Youth.

## INTRODUCTION

Sports events can be classified as 'presentational' festivities, where there is a clear distinction between the actors (active participants, such as professional athletes) and the audience (passive participants, who merely watch). However, they can also be 'participational' festivities to some extent, where amateur athletes both play and form a significant part of the audience (these are referred to as sports-recreational events). These events encompass a wide variety of activities that captivate audiences globally, often balancing between 'presentational' festivities, with professional athletes as the main performers, and 'participational' festivities, where amateur athletes both participate in and observe the event (Gibson, 1998). Characterized by their creative and dynamic content, sports events are meticulously organized not only to entertain but also to generate significant social and economic benefits for their host communities (Bjelac & Radovanovic, 2003). In Malaysia, sports hold a profound significance within the cultural fabric, serving as a vital component of societal engagement and national identity (Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, 2020). The 21st century has witnessed a remarkable surge in the sports sector, with a growing number of individuals traveling to attend sporting events, predominantly as spectators. This trend is exemplified by Malaysia's successful hosting of major sporting spectacles such as the 1998 Commonwealth Games, Le Tour de Langkawi, and the PETRONAS Grand Prix Formula 1, all of which have garnered immense enthusiasm from both local and international audiences (Low et al., 2018).

Furthermore, sports engagement in Malaysia extends beyond mere entertainment; it plays a pivotal role in fostering physical activity and overall personal development (Jaitman & Scartascini, 2017). Government initiatives like the "one student, one sport" policy have been instrumental in bolstering student participation in sports activities. Malaysians exhibit unwavering support for a diverse range of sports, among which badminton reigns supreme, hailed as the nation's premier sport owing to its remarkable international achievements (Malaymail, 2015). Major badminton events, including the Malaysia Open, Commonwealth Games, Southeast Asian Games, and Thomas Cup Badminton Finals, command significant attention and fervor from enthusiasts, both locally and globally. Each year, Malaysia hosts numerous badminton events, such as the Perodua Malaysia Masters, Petronas Malaysia Open, Purple League, and Sukan Malaysia (SUKMA), many of which are held at the esteemed Axiata Arena Bukit Jalil, boasting a seating capacity of 16,000 (Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, 2024). The hosting of such events not only propels sports tourism but also augments local and international fan engagement, thereby contributing substantially to the economic growth of the sports industry (Smith & Stewart, 2021).

Understanding the motivations driving individuals to attend sporting events, particularly badminton matches, is paramount for organizing engaging and successful gatherings. Each attendee possesses unique motivations, ranging from the thrill of witnessing intense matches to the desire to support favorite players (Wafi et al., 2017). Recognizing these factors is crucial for event organizers and marketers, as it enables them to tailor strategies to meet the diverse needs of attendees, ultimately enhancing event appeal and bolstering attendance rates (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Despite the pivotal role of badminton matches in Malaysian sports culture, empirical research on the factors influencing youth motivation to attend such events remains limited. This research gap impedes event authorities from devising effective market segmentation and targeting strategies. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the factors shaping the motivation of youth in Malaysia to attend badminton matches. By unravelling youth motivations, organizers can better cater to the preferences of youth, thereby amplifying event allure and bolstering attendance rates.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This research aims to address a significant gap in understanding the motivational factors that influence Malaysian youth to attend badminton matches. Despite badminton's prominence in Malaysian sports culture and its potential to drive sport tourism, there is a notable lack of empirical research on what motivates youth to attend these events (Hassan & Ahmad, 2019). Government initiatives, such as the "one student, one sport" policy, aim to promote sports participation among students, potentially influencing attendance at sporting events (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2020). However, despite such initiatives, recent trends indicate a decline in youth attendance at badminton events. This decline raises concerns about the effectiveness of current strategies and highlights the need for a deeper understanding of youth motivations to develop more targeted and engaging approaches.

Recent data from the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) and event organizers reveal a noticeable fluctuation in attendance at major badminton events in the country. For instance, the 2023 Malaysia Open, part of the BWF World Tour, saw an average attendance of about 6,000 spectators per day. While this represents a modest increase of 5% from the previous year, youth attendance specifically has seen a decline. Surveys conducted at the event revealed that only 35% of attendees were under the age of 25, compared to 45% three years prior. Similarly, local tournaments such as the Malaysia Masters have reported a decline in youth attendance. Despite the overall growth in badminton's popularity, the youth demographic seems less engaged. Attendance by youth (aged 15-24) at these matches has dropped by approximately 12% over the last five years, according to a 2022 report by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia.

The decline in youth attendance at badminton matches in Malaysia suggests a potential issue that needs to be addressed. Several factors might be contributing to this trend, including increased competition from other sports and entertainment options, a potential mismatch between event marketing strategies and youth interests, and changing preferences in how young people spend their leisure time.

This research aims to explore the motivational factors influencing youth attendance at badminton matches to provide insights into how to attract and retain young spectators. Understanding these factors is critical for developing targeted interventions and marketing strategies that resonate with the youth demographic.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Understanding Visitor Motivation in Sports Events**

Visitor motivation at sports events is influenced by several factors, including the appeal of the sport, individual preferences, origin, and socioeconomic status (Wafi et al., 2017). Motivation is a critical variable that shapes the psychological behaviour of tourists attending sports events, influencing their travel decisions, event preferences, and the types of events they choose to attend (Kim, Kim, & James, 2019). This underscores the importance of understanding motivation to fully comprehend the behaviour of sports spectators.

A significant number of recent studies have examined why individuals engage in sports tourism and other events (Kapur, 2018). In their study of running events, Aicher et al. (2015) noted that a deeper understanding of sport tourist motivation should be the starting point for determining why people attend an event. Despite using a range of methodologies, researchers consistently found that visitors attend events for various reasons, including escapism, excitement, learning and discovery, participation, prestige, and sociability (Gibson et al., 2012; Kim & Jun, 2019; Ritchie & Adair, 2004). However, Brian (2016) identified four major categories of visitor motivations for attending events: social, organizational,

physiological, and personal. Social motivations involve the desire to interact with others and partake in the collective spirit of the event. Organizational goals may include seeking status or recognition through participation in a sponsored or locally supported event, thereby indirectly benefiting the community by appearing to contribute to the neighbourhood. Personal motives refer to individual reasons that vary for each traveller, while physiological factors relate to needs for rest, food, and entertainment. For instance, some travellers seek new experiences, while others pursue activities they have always wanted to try.

Understanding the motivations of visitors is crucial for event organizers and marketers to create engaging and successful gatherings. Each individual or group has distinct motivations for attending sports events, including badminton matches, and these motivations can significantly influence their behaviour during the events (Wafi et al., 2017). Since motivations for attending sporting events vary among individuals, comprehending these factors is essential for event organizers and marketers (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017). Additionally, understanding the underlying factors that drive people to attend sporting events, such as the excitement of witnessing intense badminton matches or the desire to support their favourite players, can directly affect visitor behaviour and future attendance rates. This understanding is particularly important because successful sporting events, including badminton matches, can enhance a destination's appeal, encourage visitors to stay longer, and promote repeat visits (Peña-García et al., 2020).

### **Understanding Youth Motivation in Sports Events**

Understanding visitor motivation in sports events, particularly among youth, is essential for event organizers, marketers, and researchers. Numerous studies have investigated the factors driving youth to attend sporting events, offering valuable insights into their motivations and behaviours. For instance, Wafi et al. (2017) conducted research that highlighted the influence of various factors such as the appeal of the sport, individual preferences, origin, and socioeconomic status on visitor motivation in sports events. The study underscored the importance of comprehending these motivations to fully grasp the behaviour of sports spectators. Similarly, Sato et al. (2018) examined the motivation of sports tourists, indicating that perceived needs play a crucial role in guiding their decision-making processes and intention to participate in sports events.

In the youth context, research has demonstrated that personal connections and admiration for favourite athletes or teams are significant motivators for attendance at sports events. Youth are often compelled by the opportunity to witness their idols in action, fostering a sense of excitement and connection to the sporting event. Additionally, peer influence and socialization processes play a role in youths' decisions to attend sports events. Coakley (2007) emphasized the influence of family, peers, and media in shaping youths' sports preferences and affiliations, indicating that youth frequently adopt the sports fandom of their social circles. Furthermore, studies by Lee (2015) and Tajri and Iskandar (2021) identified elements such as enjoyment, entertainment value, and a sense of belonging as crucial factors influencing youths' decisions to participate in sports events. These findings suggest that youths seek both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from attending sports events, including the pleasure of the game itself and the social connections it provides.

Understanding the motivations of youth sports spectators is pivotal for event organizers and marketers in curating engaging and prosperous gatherings. By aligning with the preferences and interests of youth sports events can amplify their allure and foster sustained engagement. Moreover, insights gleaned from research on youth sports fandom can serve as valuable foundations for crafting targeted marketing strategies tailored to this demographic, thereby fostering the expansion and enduring viability of the sports industry.

### **Motivational Factors Influencing Engagement in Sports Events**

People attend sports events for various reasons, which can be classified into two distinct types: sport spectating and sports participation. Sport spectating involves traveling to observe sports, recreational, leisure, or fitness events, whereas sports participation entails traveling to actively engage in a sport, recreation, relaxation, or fitness activity (Mishra et al., 2021). The factors influencing their motivation to participate are rooted in these types of involvement, whether as spectators or participants. Numerous scholarly publications have studied the motivating aspects of sports events. External variables seem to play a significant role in influencing motivation for athletics (Petranichuk, 2019). According to Hwang et al. (2017), the opportunity to spend quality time with family, friends, and coworkers motivates both observers and players alike. Peer and familial relationships within the context of sports and social interaction have been identified as factors that bolster participant performance. Furthermore, Jereb et al. (2022) noted that motivational factors traditionally associated with explaining sport participation could also be applied to sports spectatorship. Several studies have indicated that involvement in sports is strongly driven by a desire for self-actualization. Arroba-Jaroso et al. (2021) suggested that enhancing fan team identification could potentially increase attendance rates and generate positive word-of-mouth.

Lee (2015) identified numerous factors that shape individuals' engagement with sports events, encompassing the thrill of embracing challenges, the cultivation of positive ethical values, the inherent enjoyment derived from sporting activities, and a profound sense of community and inclusion. Additionally, individuals may be drawn to sports spectating due to its meaningful connection to tradition, fostering feelings of nostalgia and anticipation for future involvement. Moreover, the influence of social dynamics, such as peer influence and past participation experiences, can significantly impact individuals' inclination to reengage with the sport. Complementing this perspective, Tajri and Iskandar (2021) revealed that enduring loyalty to specific teams and the perceived entertainment value of the event emerge as primary determinants shaping spectators' attendance decisions. When it comes to engaging during badminton sports events, attendants can actively participate in various ways. For example, cheering and supporting their favourite players can create a lively atmosphere and enhance the overall experience (Smith & Stewart, 2023). Additionally, event organizers often provide interactive activities such as fan zones, meet-and-greet sessions with players, and opportunities to participate in mini-games or contests (Jones & Taylor, 2022). These activities not only increase engagement but also create memorable experiences for the attendees.

Engagement during the event can also be facilitated through social media platforms, where spectators can share their experiences in real-time, post photos and videos, and interact with other fans online (Kim & Lee, 2021). This digital interaction extends the event's reach and fosters a sense of community among fans. Moreover, the use of mobile apps and event-specific hashtags can further enhance engagement by providing real-time updates, exclusive content, and opportunities for fans to win prizes or participate in polls (Wang & Xu, 2020). An array of factors influences individuals' decisions to participate or spectate in sports events, underscoring the importance of discerning motivational disparities between active participants and passive observers. Understanding these factors can help event organizers create strategies to increase engagement and attendance at badminton matches, ultimately contributing to the sport's growth and sustainability.

### **Motivations for Sport Fandom among Youth**

Sports fandom among youth is a subject of significant interest, with research exploring how they engage with sports and develop fan identities. Coakley (2007) conducted a study that highlighted the socialization

processes through which youth become involved in sports fandom. The research emphasized the influence of family, peers, and media in shaping youth sports preferences and affiliations. Coakley noted that youth often adopt the sports fandom of their families or peer groups, contributing to the transmission of sporting traditions across generations. Furthermore, studies by Wann and Branscombe (1993) discussed the psychological aspects of sports fandom among youth, focusing on how fan identities are formed and the impact of sports involvement on self-concept. Their research revealed that sports fandom provides youth with a sense of belonging and social identity, influencing their self-esteem and social interactions. Additionally, Funk et al. (2009) explored the motivations underlying sports fandom among youth, highlighting the role of socialization, peer relationships, and personal experiences in shaping their sports preferences. The study found that youth often develop sports fandom as a means of social bonding and identity formation within their peer groups.

One prominent motivation for youth in sports fandom is the desire for social belonging and identity formation. Youth often use sports affiliation as a way to connect with their peer groups, establish social hierarchies, and feel a sense of belonging within their communities (Wann, 2018). Supporting a sports team or athlete often becomes a central aspect of their identity, impacting their social interactions, fashion choices, and leisure activities (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Moreover, the emotional connection and enjoyment derived from sports spectatorship play a significant role in fostering fandom among youth. Research consistently demonstrates that youth fans develop strong emotional bonds with their favourite teams or athletes, experiencing a range of emotions, such as joy, excitement, disappointment, and pride, based on their performance (Funk et al., 2009). This emotional investment often extends beyond the sports arena, affecting youths' mood, self-esteem, and overall sense of well-being (James, 2017).

The Sport Fan Motivation Scale, developed by Wann (1995), offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the diverse motivational factors that influence sports fans. This scale encompasses dimensions such as eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economics, aesthetics, group affiliation, and family reasons. These dimensions prove particularly valuable for analysing the motivations youth attending badminton matches in Malaysia. The scale has undergone extensive validation and application in numerous studies aimed at comprehending sports fan motivations. Wann, Schrader, and Wilson (1999) affirmed the scale's reliability across various sports and demographics. Trail and James (2001) further validated its utility by incorporating it into a broader model of sport fan motivation. Funk, Ridinger, and Moorman (2004) demonstrated its effectiveness in studying women's professional sports spectators, while Melnick et al. (2008) confirmed its relevance in capturing social motivation among international students. Additionally, Kim and Trail (2010) verified the scale's robustness in explaining college football fan behaviour. Collectively, these studies underscore the scale's efficacy in capturing the intricate nature of sports fan motivation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sampling Technique**

This quantitative study was undertaken to explore the factors influencing Malaysian youth attendance at badminton matches. A convenience sampling technique was employed, involving 341 respondents from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). This demographic was chosen due to their alignment with the youth category as defined by the Malaysian Youth Policy, which was adopted in 2015 and categorizes youth as individuals aged 18-30 years. However, the application of this new definition started in 2018. Additionally, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) defines youth as persons between 15-24 years. In the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), youth are defined based on each

country's laws and regulations, with the organization classifying youth as individuals aged 15-35 years. The United Nations and the Asian Development Bank use the same categorization of youth as the DoSM, while the Commonwealth identifies youth as individuals aged 15-29 years (Islamic Development Bank, 2019).

To ensure respondents are qualified to answer questions about their enjoyment of badminton matches, screening criteria were applied. Specifically, respondents were required to have attended at least one badminton match, confirmed through initial screening questions integrated into the survey instrument. The justifications for the selection of respondents are determined based on certain criteria. University students, representing a key segment of the youth population, offer valuable insights into the factors influencing attendance at sports events due to their active engagement in various extracurricular activities, including sports. UUM students, in particular, come from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, providing a rich and diverse sample for understanding broader trends in sports fandom and attendance among youth. Additionally, the convenience of accessing students on campus and their availability to participate in studies significantly facilitated the data collection process.

These factors collectively ensure that the sample is both representative and valuable for understanding the motivations driving youth to attend badminton matches in Malaysia. The questionnaire was disseminated to the respondents through a Google Form link, utilizing a survey as the research instrument to gather information from UUM students. The collected quantitative data underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, facilitating the generation of descriptive statistics.

### **Instrument**

The survey instrument consisted of two sections: Section A focused on demographic profiling, while Section B investigated factors influencing UUM students' motivation to attend badminton matches in Malaysia. Section B utilized the Sport Fan Motivation Scale by Wann (1995), encompassing seven dimensions: eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economics, aesthetics, group affiliation, and family reasons. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. Additionally, the Sport Fandom Questionnaire (SFQ) by Wann (2018) assessed participants' identification with badminton fandom. Quantitative data collected via Google Forms were analyzed using SPSS version 26 to generate descriptive statistics, highlighting factors driving young adults' attendance at badminton matches.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 1 illustrates that female respondents constituted 64.5% of the sample, while male respondents comprised 35.5%. In terms of age distribution, the majority fell within the 21 to 23-year-old bracket (64.8%), followed by the age groups of 24 to 26 years old (22.6%), 18 to 20 years old (11.4%), and 27 years old and above (1.2%). Moreover, Malay respondents constituted the largest proportion of the sample (54.5%), followed by Chinese respondents (28.4%), Indian respondents (15.5%), and respondents from other ethnicities (1.5%). Given that the survey primarily targeted university students, the overwhelming majority of respondents were single (99.1%), with only three respondents indicating that they were married.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Profile*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender	Male	121	35.5
	Female	220	64.5
Age	18-20	39	11.4
	21-23	221	64.8
	24-26	77	22.6
	27 and above	4	1.2
Race	Malay	186	54.5
	Chinese	97	28.4
	Indian	53	15.5
	Others	5	1.5
Marital status	Single	338	99.1
	Married	3	0.9
Level of education program	Undergraduates	323	94.7
	Postgraduates	18	5.3
Current study year	Year 1	49	14.4
	Year 2	85	24.9
	Year 3	110	32.3
	Year 4	90	26.4
	Year 5 and above	7	2.1
Frequency of attending badminton matches	1-3 times	242	71.0
	4-6 times	68	19.9
	7 times and more	31	9.1

In regards to educational background, the majority of respondents are undergraduates (94.7%), with the remaining being postgraduates (5.3%). Moreover, the findings indicate that Year 3 students make up the largest proportion of respondents (32.3%), followed by Year 4 students (26.4%) and Year 2 students (24.9%). Additionally, 14.4% of respondents were Year 1 students, while 2.1% were Year 5 and above students who participated in this study.

**Factors that influence the youth motivation to attend the badminton matches in Malaysia**

*Sport Fan Motivation*

This section assesses seven aspects of fan motivation, namely (1) escape, (2) eustress, (3) aesthetics, (4) group affiliation, (5) entertainment, (6) self-esteem, and (7) family, as factors influencing the motivation of youth to attend badminton matches in Malaysia. Each of these seven fan motivational characteristics was examined independently to understand their influence on youth motivation to attend badminton matches in Malaysia.

**Table 2**

*Sport Fan Motivation*

<i>Sport fan motivation</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>		
<b>1 Factor of entertainment</b>						<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.233</b>
I enjoy badminton because of entertainment value			0.3	84.5	15.2	4.15	0.365
I enjoy watching badminton because it gives me a good time			0.9	96.2	2.9	4.02	0.194
Watching badminton is a form of recreation to me			0.6	90.3	9.1	4.09	0.300
<b>2 Factor of aesthetics</b>						<b>3.37</b>	<b>1.02</b>
I attend badminton matches because I enjoy the beauty and grace of the event.		28.4	21.1	30.2	20.2	3.42	1.105
I attend badminton events for artistic value		29.3	23.5	31.1	16.1	3.34	1.066
I enjoy watching badminton because to me badminton is a form of art		27.9	23.8	33.1	15.2	3.36	1.046
<b>3 Factor of group</b>						<b>4.29</b>	<b>0.64</b>
I am the kind of person who likes to be with		5.9	7.6	41.6	44.9	4.26	0.835
I enjoy watching badminton matches more when I am with a large group of people		4.1	5.9	42.5	47.5	4.33	0.767
I attend badminton events because my friends are badminton fans.		1.2	1.8	64.2	32.8	4.29	0.558
<b>4 Factor of family</b>						<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.65</b>
Attending badminton matches allows me to be with my spouse	0.3	10	3.8	52.5	33.4	4.09	0.890
I attend badminton matches because it allows me to be with my family		1.8	3.2	62.5	32.6	4.26	0.602
<b>5 Factor of eustress</b>						<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.70</b>
Attending badminton matches allows me to be physiologically aroused by the competition		4.1	17.3	52.8	25.8	4.00	0.773
I attend badminton events because I got pumped up when watching my favorite team play	0.9	3.5	18.8	55.4	21.4	3.93	0.786
I like the stimulation I get from watching badminton		4.4	17.3	61.9	16.4	3.90	0.711
<b>6 Factor of escape</b>						<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.51</b>

Attending a badminton match allows me to forget about my problems	2.3	21.4	54.3	22	3.96	0.726
Attending badminton matches takes me away from life's hassle	2.6	22.3	50.1	24.9	3.79	0.761
Attending a badminton match gives me the opportunity to temporarily escape life's problems		2.6	93.5	3.8	4.01	0.254
<b>7 Factor of self-esteem</b>					<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.48</b>
I attend badminton matches because it makes me feel good when my team wins		5	64.2	30.8	4.26	0.540
My favourite team's success is my success	0.3	4.7	45.7	49.3	4.44	0.599
Watching badminton because it increases my self-esteem	0.3	4.1	66.9	28.7	4.24	0.532

Note: SD=strongly disagree, D=disagree, N=neutral, A=agree, SA=strongly agree

### ***Factor of Self-Esteem***

Table 2 shows that self-esteem was a significant motivator for attending badminton matches among respondents, with a mean score of 4.31. The self-esteem motive involves enhancing the spectator's self-esteem, particularly when their team performs well or wins. When the viewer's team achieves success, they may experience a sense of achievement and heightened engagement. According to the findings regarding self-esteem, the majority of respondents mentioned that they watch badminton matches because it boosts their mood when their team emerges victorious (mean=4.26). Additionally, respondents stated that watching badminton enhances their self-esteem (mean=4.44), as they perceive their favorite team's success as a reflection of their own achievements.

This finding is consistent with Wann et al. (1999) who conducted a comprehensive study on sports fans' motivations, emphasizing the role of the self-esteem motive in driving fan engagement. This finding is consistent with the study by Wann et al. (1999), which underscores the significance of sports spectatorship in elevating individuals' self-esteem through identifying with successful teams or athletes vicariously. Moreover, research by Hunt et al. (1999) found a connection between team performance and fan attendance at sporting events, highlighting the impact of perceived success in motivating fans to attend games. Furthermore, studies by Smith and Stewart (2010) found the psychological effects of sports fandom among youths, stressing the influence of sports affiliation in shaping individuals' self-concept and identity.

### ***Factor of Group***

The group factor emerged as the second most significant motivation, with a mean score of 4.30. The group factor indicates that a majority of respondents prefer to watch badminton matches when surrounded by a large group of people (mean=4.33), while others enjoy the camaraderie of being with others (mean=4.26), and some attend badminton events because their friends are fans (mean=4.29). This aligns with prior research highlighting sports serve as a shared experience for family and friends (Phillip Bang and Paul O'Connor,2022). Moreover, Wasserberg (2009) emphasized the role of group membership in

strengthening social bonds through shared experiences at sports events. The author highlighted how attending sporting events with friends or family members contributes to a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Additionally, research by Smith et al. (2018) investigated the social motivations of youth attending soccer matches and found that many were driven by the desire to socialize with friends and be part of a larger community of fans.

### ***Factor of Family***

Family-oriented motivations ranked third, with a mean score of 4.17. Many respondents attended badminton matches to spend time with family (mean = 4.26) and spouses (mean = 4.09). This finding aligns with a study conducted by Wann (2008), which underscored the significance of family motives in sports consumption, emphasizing the desire to spend quality time with family members. The author highlighted that attending sporting events together serves as a means for families to bond and create lasting memories. Moreover, research by Thompson et al. (2019) found that the influence of family on youth sports participation and found that parental involvement and support significantly impact children's engagement in sports activities. Furthermore, studies by Johnson et al. (2017) examined the impact of family support on youth sports participation and found that parental encouragement and involvement positively influence children's enjoyment and commitment to sports. This underscores the importance of family-oriented motivations in shaping youths' attitudes towards sports spectatorship, including attending badminton matches.

### ***Factor of Entertainment***

Entertainment was a significant motivator, with a mean score of 4.08. A majority of respondents indicated enjoying badminton because of its entertainment value (mean=4.15). Following closely behind is the recreational aspect, with a mean score of 4.09, indicating that spectators find enjoyment in the sporting activity itself. Additionally, respondents also cited the overall experience of attending badminton matches as providing them with a good time, with a mean score of 4.02. This finding consistent with finding by Johnson et al. (2016), who examined the motivations of youths attending basketball games and found that entertainment was a primary factor driving their attendance. They observed that youths were drawn to the excitement and thrill of live sports events, which provided them with an enjoyable and engaging experience. Furthermore, research by Smith et al. (2018) investigated the motivations of youth attending soccer matches and identified entertainment as a key driver of their spectatorship behavior.

### ***Factor of Escape***

The escape factor was another significant motivator, with a mean score of 3.98. The majority of respondents agreed that attending a badminton match provides them with the opportunity to temporarily escape life's problems (mean=4.01), allows them to forget about their problems (mean=3.96), and takes them away from life's hassle (mean=3.79). This finding is consistent with previous studies by Wann et al. (1999), which explored the motives of sports spectators and identified the escape motive as a significant factor driving fan engagement. They emphasized that attending sporting events offers individuals a chance to temporarily break away from the pressures and concerns of daily life, enabling them to immerse themselves in an enjoyable pastime or hobby. Moreover, research by Thompson et al. (2018) investigated the psychological benefits of sports participation and spectatorship among youth,

highlighting the role of sports as a coping mechanism for managing stress and anxiety. Furthermore, studies by Martin et al. (2016) examined the impact of sports involvement on mental health outcomes among youths, emphasizing the importance of sports participation and engagement in promoting emotional resilience and coping skills.

### ***Factor of eustress***

Eustress emerged as a motivator with a mean score of 3.94, indicating that respondents enjoyed the physiological arousal and excitement of competitive matches (mean = 4.00) and they get pumped up when watching their favorite team play (mean=3.93). Additionally, respondents appreciate the stimulation they receive from watching badminton (mean=3.90). This finding is consistent with Wasserberg (2009), who emphasized the concept of eustress in sports consumption, highlighting its role in creating a sense of psychological well-being among spectators. The author suggested that experiencing positive stress during sporting events contributes to the enjoyment and entertainment value of the experience. Furthermore, research by Wann et al. (1999) investigated the motives of sports spectators and identified eustress as a significant factor driving fan engagement. The study emphasized the value of excitement and stimulation derived from sporting events, highlighting the role of eustress in enhancing the overall spectator experience. Additionally, studies by Thompson et al. (2018) explored the psychological benefits of sports participation and spectatorship among youth, highlighting the role of eustress in promoting mental well-being and emotional satisfaction. The research underscored the importance of positive stress experiences in fostering a sense of excitement and engagement with sports activities.

### ***Factor of aesthetic***

Aesthetics was the least motivating factor, with a mean score of 3.37. The results indicate that respondents watch badminton matches because they appreciate the sport's grace and beauty (mean = 3.42), followed by the belief that badminton is a form of art (mean = 3.36). Additionally, respondents attend badminton matches for their artistic value (mean= 3.34). These findings regarding the aesthetic motivations for attending badminton matches among youth are consistent with previous research conducted in similar contexts. Agas et al. (2012) examined the aesthetic motives of youths attending various sporting events and found that many were attracted to the high level of skill and competence displayed by athletes and teams. Moreover, Wann et al. (1999) explored the aesthetic appeal of sports and found that individuals are drawn to the grace and beauty inherent in certain sports, such as ballet or gymnastics. Furthermore, research by Smith et al. (2017) investigated the aesthetic motivations of youth attending tennis tournaments and found that many were captivated by the visual spectacle of the sport, including the athleticism and skill displayed by players.

In summary, the findings highlight several key motivators for respondents attending badminton matches. Firstly, self-esteem emerges as a significant factor, with students experiencing a sense of achievement when their team succeeds. Secondly, group affiliation plays a crucial role, as students enjoy the social aspect of attending matches with friends and in large groups. Thirdly, family-oriented motivations are evident, as students value the opportunity to spend quality time with family at sporting events. Fourthly, entertainment is a prominent driver, with students seeking excitement and enjoyment from live matches. Additionally, students use sporting events as a means to temporarily escape the stresses of daily life. Furthermore, the thrill of competition (eustress) and the aesthetic appeal of the sport also contribute to

attendance motivations. Understanding these diverse motivations can enable organizers to tailor experiences that enhance attendance and engagement at badminton matches.

**Sport Fandom**

In this study, Sport Fandom is measured using the Sport Fandom Questionnaire (SFQ), consisting of five questions designed to determine individuals' identification with their role as sports enthusiasts. Responses to these questions were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

**Table 3**

*Sport Fandom*

Sport Fandom	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
	SD	D	N	A	SA		
1 I consider myself to be a badminton fan	0.6	4.4	8.5	71	15.5	3.96	0.685
2 My friends see me as a badminton fan	1.5	5.3	16.1	61.3	15.8	3.85	0.801
3 I believe that following badminton is the most enjoyable form of entertainment	0.9	5	14.4	63	16.7	3.90	0.762
4 My life would be less enjoyable if I were not able to follow badminton		5.9	18.8	59.8	15.5	3.85	0.746
5 Being a badminton fan is very important to me	0.6	5.9	19.4	58.9	15.2	3.82	0.777

*Note: SD=strongly disagree, D=disagree, N=neutral, A=agree, SA=strongly agree*

Sport fandom questions were integrated into the survey to evaluate their influence on the decision-making of respondents regarding their attendance at badminton matches. Table 3 showcases five questions tailored to badminton specifically. The examination demonstrates that the majority of respondents in this study self-identify as badminton fans (mean=3.96), suggesting a significant attachment to the sport. This finding resonates with prior research by Wann (2018), which extensively explored sport fandom, emphasizing the deep bond individuals frequently form with sports they avidly follow.

Furthermore, respondents expressed that following badminton is the most enjoyable form of entertainment (mean=3.90). This study's findings are supported by James (2017), whose research on sports fandom underscored the emotional attachment and pleasure derived from engaging with sports as a spectator. The study highlighted how sports spectatorship serves as a source of entertainment and emotional fulfillment for individuals, contributing to their overall well-being and quality of life. Additionally, respondents indicated that their friends recognize them as badminton fans (mean=3.85) and that their life would be less enjoyable if they were unable to follow badminton (mean=3.85), emphasizing the significance of badminton fandom in their lives (mean=3.82). In conclusion, the study validates the significant impact of badminton fandom among youth on their motivations and behaviors regarding match

attendance. The results emphasize the necessity of understanding the multifaceted nature of sport fandom, especially among youth, to refine event marketing strategies and encourage sustained engagement. Insights gleaned from this research can empower event organizers and marketers to customize their approaches, better aligning with the preferences of youth sports enthusiasts and ultimately enhancing event appeal and attendance rates.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study identifies several significant motivators driving youth to attend badminton matches. Self-esteem emerges as a prominent factor, with students feeling a sense of achievement when their team succeeds. Group affiliation also holds sway, as students prefer attending matches in the company of friends and peers, fostering social connections. Family-oriented motivations are notable, with students valuing the opportunity to spend quality time with family members at these events. Entertainment value is another key driver, as students derive excitement and enjoyment from live matches. Moreover, attending matches provides a means of escapism from the stresses of daily life. The thrill of competition (eustress) and the aesthetic appeal of the sport further contribute to attendance motivations. Understanding these drivers can enable organizers to tailor experiences effectively, enhancing attendance and engagement levels.

Furthermore, this study examined the influence of sport fandom on youth participation in badminton matches, uncovering a strong attachment to the sport. Most respondents self-identify as badminton enthusiasts and perceive it as their preferred source of entertainment, confirming findings from prior research on sport fandom. They also express a sense of acknowledgment from peers regarding their fandom and believe that their enjoyment of life would diminish without engaging with badminton, highlighting the sport's considerable importance in their lives. From a practical standpoint, this study provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the sports industry, helping them understand current concerns and shed light on the factors driving youth attendance at badminton matches. Additionally, youth who may be unfamiliar with motivation-related issues gain valuable insights through this study. This understanding may inspire further research efforts among youth, particularly students as respondents, thereby enhancing the study's credibility and expanding its reach. Moreover, raising awareness among youth about the factors shaping motivation emphasizes its significance in badminton match attendance. This benefits youth in their efforts to organize sports programs and also provides advantages to the sports event industry in Malaysia as a whole.

Future research could explore the motivational factors influencing youth attendance at badminton matches in Malaysia by examining specific regional differences within the country. Investigating how cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic variables affect youth attendance in various states could provide a more nuanced understanding of their motivations. Additionally, future studies might focus on the impact of marketing strategies, social media influence, and the role of family and peer groups in shaping attendance behavior. Longitudinal studies tracking changes in motivational factors over time, especially in response to major badminton events or campaigns, would also offer valuable insights for event organizers and policymakers aiming to increase youth engagement in sports events across Malaysia.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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