

How do sports influence young adults traveling with the motivation of doing and watching sports events?

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Abstract:

Background: This paper examined the research gap that motivates young adults' passive tourism participation based on their sportive roots. Passive sports tourism is increasing fast and is forecasted to quadruple within the next decade¹. Due to the size of this segment of travelers, it is essential to understand their travel motivations.

Materials and Methods: The quantitative research was based on the literature-suggested questionnaire with 395 respondents' opinions. With face-to-face surveying, authors could lessen those submissions that have not been filled in completely, as they had a chance to look at the handed-in papers right at the scene. As a model to follow, the authors used the Leisure and Sport of the International Social Survey Programme² to identify young adults' active and passive sports consumption. Most of the questions were 5-point Likert-scale to help a deeper understanding of the differences of the sample. For the regression analysis, SPSS 18.0 was used.

Results: The results show that the sociocultural environment, particularly the family and the school, significantly contribute to the engagement towards sports and healthy lifestyles that influence young adults' travel habits in the future. The earlier they started doing sports, the more likely they are eager to visit sports events as spectators. The implication of this research is twofold; on one side, it is helpful for sports developers and organizations on which sports and their facilities need to focus. Conversely, sports travel organizers and organizations promoting healthy lifestyles and physical leisure activities can quickly and more effectively find passive sports travelers and build their market campaign.

Conclusion: The implication of this research is twofold; on one side, it is helpful for sports developers and organizations on which sports and their facilities need to focus. Conversely, sports travel organizers and organizations promoting healthy lifestyles and physical leisure activities can quickly and more effectively find passive sports travelers and build their market campaign.

Key Word: sports tourism, travel, sports events, motivation, young adults, marketing

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I. Introduction

In the pre-Covid era, sports tourism was one of the most rapidly improving sectors of the industry³, attracting more and more participants, both those who travel with their major motivation of visiting destinations with the purpose of either sport (professional or amateur level) or attending sports events there⁴. Active and passive sports travelers' involvement has constantly increased in the industry. Even in these turbulent times, The Business Research Company¹ estimated the size of the global spectator sports market's value as it was 164.9 billion USD in 2021 and is forecasted to grow by 354 billion by 2026 and 597.5 billion by 2031, respectively. Meanwhile, the number of spectators of the top 10 most popular sports, based on 14 strict criteria, was estimated at 14.25 billion people, which suggests that many sports fans are visiting multiple sports events, and the total number, including all sports, is much more considerable sum⁵. Knowing the estimated size of passive sports consumption in the world, we are investigating the smaller slice of this massive number of people, who are the core of further in this paper.

Sports events mostly positively contribute to local communities, authorities, and stakeholders⁶, and the expanding number of sports events drives the growth of the industry most significantly, also involving the capacity increase of sports events and government support⁷. This report also suggests that virtual reality (VR), even in its initial stage, may bring a remarkable contribution to this growth in the future, providing an advanced level of viewing sports events. Due to these factors, the sports industry's size constantly grows significantly and forecasted a 12.88% CAGR between 2022-2027⁷. These are quite excellent and hopeful perspectives for the future.

However, as in other parts of the tourism and travel industry, Covid-19 influenced sports events and the possibility of traveling for such purposes⁶. The pandemic regulations included all sports events, regardless of the type: indoor or outdoor, the extent: local, regional, national, international, or global, the form: individual or team

sports, the level: elite or amateur, have been all canceled^{8,9}. Only a few mega sports events, such as Tokyo 2020, were postponed due to their economic, political, and sport-related importance¹⁰. The latter, the most popular and widely broadcasted sports event in the world, was organized in 2021 with stringent regulations, and the 32nd Summer Olympic Games 2020 had to be organized without fans who could cheer their favorite sportspeople or sports teams. That badly influenced the entire atmosphere of the event, losing its vital component, the cheering of the spectators.

II. Literature Review

Sport and travel motivation

Sports tourism, as a domain, went through many approaches throughout the years and got into the focus from the 1990s. The precise definition of sports tourism is as complex and sometimes contradictory as it regards other disciplines¹¹, mostly due to the fact that it has also been developing. As a beginning, Leiper's¹² classic tourism framework defined the tourism attraction system that has three parts: (1) the sports tourist of the sending area, (2) a central sport element in the visited region, and (3) an informative element (marker) that generates the sporting experience (and attracts the sports traveler).

There is a common agreement among scholars that sports tourism can be separated into active and passive^{13,14,15,16,17}. The different involvement of active sports travelers (leisure-recreational, athletes, and competitors) considering performance orientation and comparability as a basis is prevalent^{15,18}. The latter authors¹⁸ indicate the difference by defining soft and hard sport tourists). Gibson¹³ further sophisticated the motivations of sports tourism, generating other categories, such as nostalgia, those who pay their respects who played sports, and active sports tourism participants for those who travel to sports events and competitions¹⁹.

The sport is widely known as a travel-motivating attraction, and Hinch & Higham²⁰, Higham & Hinch²¹ classified the importance of sports as a motivating factor. They differentiate primary, secondary, and tertiary attractions based on the purpose of visiting a destination. The motivation for sports tourism is diverse, raising questions from different industry stakeholders, including development and marketing strategies²¹. The recent development of sports, mostly making them more attractive (e.g., supporter-friendly broadcasting, simplifying the rules) or creating new, sometimes hybrid ones, all aim to make them more popular and easier to sell to broader segments of consumers²¹. The same authors stated about the involvement, that if an athlete starts his/her first stage of doing sport, the likeliness of being a repeating traveler is high.

This research focuses on passive sports tourists, one of the four major demand groups related to sports activities Maier & Weber²² already described at an early stage, and described as they are interested in the destination's experience as well. Weed & Bull¹⁷ interpret sports tourism as a unique interaction between activities, people, and places.

Sports events' spectators visit

Regardless of being active or passive sports people, fans are also considered enthusiastic spectators cheering their teams and playing a considerable portion of passive sports tourism. Most of the time, these fans are playing or have been playing earlier the adored sport they are visiting. Bilyeu & Wann¹³ declared that fans' major motivations represented similar groups of people with much in common. Most travel with friends²⁴ and share their experiences and values²⁵, which might generate emotional bonds among the spectators²⁶. Previous research in college sports events^{27,28} identified that sports marketing should concentrate on fans' loyalty toward their university's team(s) they have an emotional connection with to motivate further travels to their matches. Ramshaw & Gammon²⁹ added to this the importance of the memories of the event and the pride of their team(s).

Doing sports also brings passion, engagement, and love to the activity, and it also builds sociocultural connectivity towards the sport itself, sportsmen/women, or sports teams/clubs³⁰. Socialization, especially the connectivity with family or other sport-lovers, is an additional attraction towards sports events^{31,32}. Regarding the motivations of spectators, Neale & Funk³³ measured five factors: players' interest, socialization, vicarious achievement, entertainment value, and drama. These explain the different levels of attraction to sports events by the people doing sports and those who are spectators and visiting them with fellow fans.

Several research examined Taiwanese people's travel habits in domestic³⁴ and outbound dimensions^{35,36}. According to Hsu et al.³⁷, every fourth outbound traveling Taiwanese (2.8 million people) visited Japan in 2014. Meanwhile, another study concluded that Taiwanese travel significantly more frequently to domestic destinations (93%) and seldom abroad (7%)³⁶. The same authors found that if Taiwanese travel, they stay longer (9.3 nights) than at home (1.5 nights) and spend 3.8 times more than at home.

Taiwanese sports spectators like to travel, especially abroad, and the stronger the relationship with the teams, the stronger support they show³⁸. Taiwanese fans were primarily interested in NBA and MLB matches, as these were the most popular sports involving active and passive sports tourism, especially if they had native sportsmen or sportswomen to cheer for³⁰. Funk et al.³⁹ and Kim et al.⁴⁰ investigated this direct sign and appearance of national pride among Asian sports fans. Following Hinch & Higham's¹⁵ categorization, with taking a 14-day-

long holiday, a small minority of the Taiwanese would travel purely with primary sports tourism, as the average traveler would involve 1-2 days only attending sports events⁴⁰.

The sports events' location has been observed from the point of view of destination image^{41,42}. The latter authors⁴² highlighted – besides the destination image – the past experience the destination has to offer for sport-doers, mostly understood as nostalgia mentioned above¹³, as a strong motivation for such visits. Those who have previous visits or memory related to a sports team, destination, or a sports-related attraction are easier to target for revisiting⁴³. This was confirmed by Cunningham & Kwon's⁴⁴ research that examined past behavior in context with sports event attendance, concluding the previous (good) experience may positively influence the re-consumption of the product, in another way, the revisit of the event. Kaplanidou & Gibson⁴⁵ underlined that the past experiences of visiting sports events contribute to nostalgic feelings.

Most of the research focused on larger or mega events attracting more participants, spectators, sponsors, businesses, and media attention internationally; however, spectators visiting all-size of events, such as small-scale ones^{19,45,46,47} pointed on. So many university-related sports events are small-scale, involving all aspects of sports tourists (passive, active), and most of the time, these are family events when children compete, and parents support them¹⁹.

Young adults' leisure and health consumption

Participating in sports events actively or passively depends on the constantly changing environment; sports and leisure activity consumption lead to a health-conscious lifestyle, and all generations are involved⁴⁸. Regarding sports participation, their involvement in sports activities drastically changes as graduating high-school teenagers drop out of club sports and turn to less organizational form⁴⁸. The constant change in needs, demands, and wishes drives this transition according to the life stages⁴⁹. The value of being engaged in sports is established in childhood and adolescence; the sociocultural environment influences it, and it is essential to keep it stable⁵⁰. However, on the other hand, the younger generations' lifestyle change (internet, mobility) also decreases their physical activity participation⁵¹.

The positive impacts of sports on youth's leadership efficacy increased significantly^{52,53}, and students studying were also influenced by participation in sports⁵⁴. However, Kim et al.⁵⁵ date back to childhood the importance of early-stage sports for later stage better performance, and Eime et al.⁵⁶ state the positive influence of sports on all stages of life. Students' social roots and development also impact their participation in local events⁵⁷.

The awareness of healthy leisure time spending strengthened in the last two decades, including physical (sport), fitness⁵⁸, and wellness activities⁵⁹. Health cautiousness is another motivator why people do sports: keep themselves fit, be sportive, good-looking, and preventive against illnesses. The importance of early-stage involvement in sports activities has been explored⁶⁰. The earliest is the better proven that childhood sports have a long-range influence on early adult activities⁵⁵. Weed⁶¹ emphasized the enormous contribution of sport tourism to individuals' physical and mental well-being. This latter can be achieved with the natural environment surrounding the sports activities and providing a positive *mise-en-scène*⁶⁰.

This paper aims to fill the gap in young adults' engagement in passive sports tourism and investigate how their participation in sports events as visitors (passive sports travelers) is motivated. Are there any correlations between doing sports (earlier or at present) and visiting sports events, and if so, what other factors may have similar influences? Based on the literature review, the following research questions were set up:

RQ1 – How much do sports influence young travelers' decision-making on traveling with the purpose of visiting sports events?

RQ2 – Can the individual's sports history influence their visiting sports events?

Both of these questions are important for the tourism industry as they can provide insights into developing marketing strategies to achieve potential tourists (RQ1). They also help us understand passive sports tourism and what motivates young people to travel to attend sports events (RQ2).⁵⁰

III. Methodology

Quantitative research methods have been conducted to collect young adults' active and passive sports and travel habits. We implemented the previously created Leisure and Sport of the International Social Survey Programme² to follow the theories and involve all the potential sports people do. This survey collected and grouped 44 different sports that people do worldwide. This international categorization helped us to use a reliable and full-scale list of sports that can be used worldwide and provide comparable results regardless of the place of the research.

The questionnaire covered the types of activities, the enjoyment they provided to the individuals, the respondents' participation in sports and other (e.g., social, religious, etc.) activities at home or during their travel, and their leisure time.

Data collection and analysis

For the detailed analysis, we used the SPSS 18.0 version provided by their university and ran simple and multiple regression analyses among the theoretical factors of other research. The hard copies of the ISSP questionnaires were shared among students of I-Shou University, Taiwan, in 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out. With face-to-face surveying, we could lessen those submissions that have yet to be filled in completely, as they had a chance to look at the handed-in papers right at the scene. Through this process, 395 respondents shared their experiences and relationship with active and passive sports tourism and travel. The majority of the questions were 5-point Likert scale ones.

Most respondents were females, 68.86% (correlates with Gibson et al. ¹⁹), and the remaining were males, 31.14%, respectively (See Table 1). The age proportion included respondents between 1983 and 2001; however, only five were born until 1989, and 98.73% of the sample was born in 1990 or after. The sample contains two generations, such as 36.46% were Gen Y (born 1981-1996) and 63.54% were Gen Z (born 1997-2012), though the survey was not targeting generational differences. This age group as the sample determined the further demographic data that shows 97.97% of the respondents related to the target group, students.

Their highest educational degree was secondary level (high school), 98.23%, and the remaining seven respondents had third-level (university) degrees.

The composition of nationalities splits up among the following groups; Taiwanese (59.5%) representing the bigger share of the sample, Indonesian (11.65%), Malaysian (8.10%), Vietnamese (5.57%), and Chinese (2.78%). The remaining 12.40% was a mixture of other countries representing the origins of the international students.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the sample (N=395) Own compilation

Characteristics	Variant	Proportion person/(%)
Gender	Male	123 (31.14%)
	Female	272 (68.86%)
Age	Generation Y	144 (36.46%)
	Generation Z	251 (63.54%)
Nationalities	Taiwanese	235 (59.50%)
	Chinese	11 (2.78%)
	Vietnamese	22 (5.57%)
	Malaysian	32 (8.10%)
	Indonesian	46 (11.65%)
	Other	49 (12.4%)
Education	Primary level	0
	Secondary level	388 (98.23%)
	Third level	3 (0.7%)
	Post-Graduation	2 (0.5%)
	Other	2 (0.5%)
Profession	Students	387 (97.97%)
	Pensioner/Retired	0
	Manager	3 (0.7%)
	Clerical	0
	Self-employed	1 (0.2%)
	Skilled worker	3 (0.7%)
	Unskilled worker	0
Place of living	Capital	128 (32.40%)
	Other cities	201 (50.88%)
	Village	58 (14.68%)
	Other	8 (2.02%)
Expenses	I am not able to do that	14 (3.54%)
	Hardly able to do that	22 (5.56%)
	So-so	133 (33.67%)
	I can manage it	173 (43.79%)
	Without any problem	21 (5.31%)
	I do not know	32 (8.10%)

Source: Own dataset and compilation

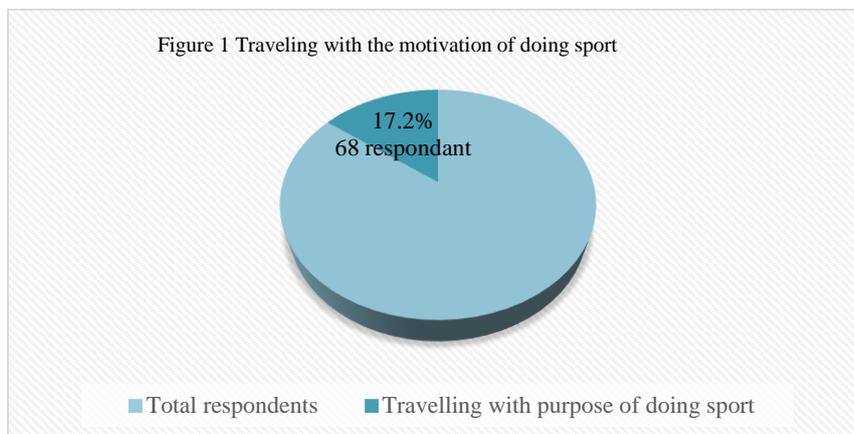
According to our plans, the surveyed young adults' professional status is almost entirely students (97.97%). Considering their expenses, 43.79% have manageable life based on their living expenses, and 5.31% without any problem. However, on the other side, the financial exposure explains that one-third of the respondents have "so-so," 9.1% have difficulties, and 8.1% cannot evaluate their situation. Therefore, the exposed ones, almost half the sample, can work part-time besides their obligations.

IV. Findings

1. Analyzing the factors influencing the decision to travel with sports

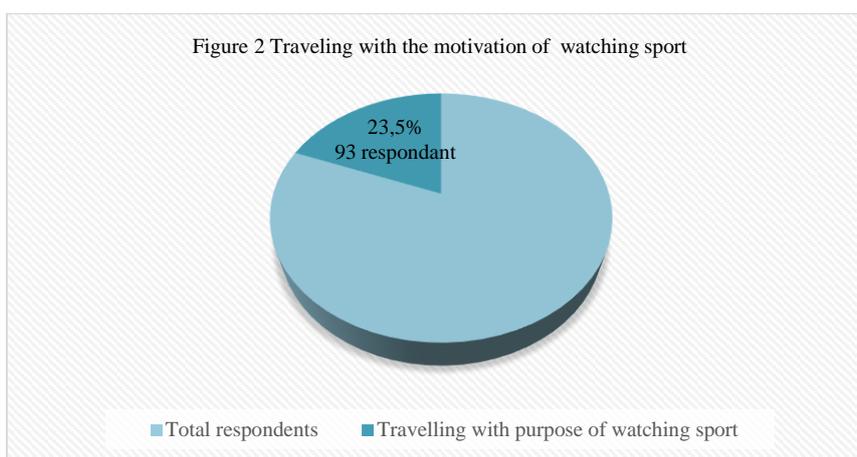
The first step related to active sport tourism was identifying the market share for those traveling to do sports in the visited destinations. We used 5-point Likert-scale questions to measure the agreement level of the respondents in particular questions.

From the answers to the questions about how much they agree with the statement “*I frequently travel with the purpose of doing sport in my country/abroad*”, we classify as travelers with a purpose of doing sport. Of those who answered “Strongly agree” and “Agree”, 68 of all 395 respondents responded that they agree or strongly agree with the statement “*I frequently travel of doing sport*” in both at home and foreign countries. This represents 17.2% of all respondents, as presented in Figure 1. Therefore, one of every six potential tourists is directly intended to travel to do sport.



Source: Own research and compilation

In order to identify passive sports tourism and its scale from the sample, the question, “*How much do you agree with the following statement: I frequently travel with the purpose of watching sport*”, needed to be examined. It showed a slightly different scale than active sport tourism, as the respondents, who traveled home and abroad to watch sports events, were a little higher; 23.5% (93 out of 395) answered strongly agree or agree (See Figure 2).



Source: Own research and compilation

Almost one of every fourth people travels with the purpose of watching sport. This presents great potential for sports tourism. Our interest is to find out what are the motivations of these people to travel with the purpose of doing sport. We expect that the importance of sport in their past and current life may be a decisive factor in their initiative to undertake travel to do sport. In order to analyze these factors influencing their decisions, we apply five one-factor linear regressions. We regress their answers for their traveling habits and respondents' involvement with sports activities and their traveling habits. Therefore, our dependent variable is their travel mode with the purpose of doing sport. Our independent variables are the five factors related to the importance of sport

in people’s lives: if they practiced some sport during childhood if they continue to practice it now, if they value sport in their lives, if they learned sports practice from family or school. The results are presented in Table 2.

First, for all five factors’ the p-value indicated statistical significance, and therefore, the factors are significant predictors of potential tourist behavior. We found that these factors can be used for developing efficient marketing strategies by tourist and travel organizations.

Second, the intercept level is between 1.45 and 1.87, indicating that the whole respondent sample is not highly involved in active sport tourism. Without the influence of analyzed factors, people are indifferent toward sports tourism. This illustrates the necessity for factors to be analyzed to explain motivation among the people practicing active tourism.

Table 2 Factors influencing the decision to travel with the motivation of doing sport

Factors	Intercept	Slope	p-value	R ²
1. I did a lot of sports in my childhood	1.87	0.20	0.00000	5.8%
2. I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood	1.54	0.34	0.00000	15.2%
3. Sport plays important role in my life	1.48	0.33	0.00000	12.1%
4. I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves	1.45	0.39	0.00000	17.0%
5. I learnt from school that regular sport is important	1.83	0.21	0.00004	4.2%

Source: Own research and compilation

Third, the slope represents the strength of the factors’ influence over the decision of travelers to practice active sport tourism. Here we observe three groups of factors. The first group consists of the two factors, and their influence over the decision to travel with the purpose of doing sport is relatively low. Factor 1 is “*I did a lot of sports in my childhood*”. This factor has a beta of 0.2. Factor 5, “*I learned from school that regular sport is important*”, has a beta of 0.21. Although these coefficients are not too low, they are among the lowest in our study. The universality of the factors can explain this – almost every child practiced sports during childhood, and education almost always emphasizes the importance of sports in schools. Overall, active sports practice during childhood and active promotion at school have a moderate, stable influence on active sport tourism decisions. We can expect that people whom sports have remarkably influenced in their childhood are more open to travel with the purpose of doing sports^{55,48}.

The second group of factors is factor 3, “*Sport plays important role in my life*”, and factor 2, “*I still do the same sport I did in my childhood*”, with slopes respectively 0.33 and 0.34. The value of these coefficients is logical and precisely according to our expectations. They explain figuratively that active people, who practice sport and are convinced that sport is essential in their lives, are more inclined to travel with the purpose of doing sport⁴⁸.

The factor with the highest beta coefficient is “*I learned from my parents to do regular sport as they did themselves*”, with a slope of 0.39. This factor is the most important for decision-making when it is about being involved in active sports traveling. Our study indicates that an active sports environment in the family is the highest motivation to undertake active sport tourism. People growing up with sport-active parents accepting the culture of sports activity are the most motivated to travel to do sport later on, too^{55, 60}.

To distinguish active sport travels from passive sport travels, we examined the same five factors for those who prefer to travel with the purpose of watching sports events as spectators. Starting with simple regression, we also found that all five factors’ p-value indicated statistical significance, and therefore, we can also use these factors for predictions of potential tourist behavior (See Table 3.).

Among the passive sports travelers, we see that the intercept level is higher than it was for the active sports travelers, measured between 1.50 and 2.21. This indicates that the respondent sample is not highly involved in active sport tourism. Therefore, we needed to examine and compare their motifs for being spectators.

Without the influence of the analyzed factors, people are indifferent toward sports tourism. This emphasizes the necessity for factors to be analyzed and explain motivation among the people practicing passive tourism, or in another way, being a spectator of sports events.

Factor 1, “*I did a lot of sports in my childhood*”, shows the lowest beta of all, 0.14. This indicates the most negligible impact of traveling to a sporting event as a spectator and also suggests that passive sports consumption relies the least on a very long time ago did sports (e.g., childhood), as people’s behavior and circumstances may change throughout the decade(s)^{31,60,55}.

Table 3 Factors influencing the decision to travel with the motivation of watching sport

Factors	Intercept	Slope	p-value	R ²
1. I did a lot of sports in my childhood	2.21	0.14	0.00162	3%
2. I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood	1.65	0.35	0.00000	14%
3. Sport plays important role in my life	1.50	0.36	0.00000	13%
4. I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves	1.81	0.31	0.00000	10%
5. I learnt from school that regular sport is important	1.57	0.32	0.00000	9%

Source: Own research and compilation

Factor 4, “I learned from my parents to do regular sport as they did themselves”, and factor 5, “I learned from school that regular sport is important”, are slightly lower, 0.31 and 0.32, compared to the remaining two. Interestingly, factor 5 has more influence on passive than active sport tourism, which means learning the importance of sports in school, and its impact on physical and mental health (Weed, 2020), motivating more people to travel as spectators for sports events. The Asian school systems emphasize everyday activities, even as people cheer for others^{62,30}.

However, factor 4 has a stronger influence than factor 5, as its beta value of passive sports travel (0.31) is lower than active sports travel’s (0.39). This means the family’s influence on active sport tourism is stronger than the passive one, and the school’s impact is rather focused on passive sport travels^{19,32}.

The most significant influence on traveling as a passive sports tourist factors 2 (“I still do the same sport I did in my childhood”) and 3 (“Sport plays important role in my life”), which have a slightly more substantial impact on passive sports travels (0.35 and 0.36) than the active (0.34 and 0.33). That means passive sports travelers need current involvement in sports activities (either active or passive ones), and being a sportive person that may raise the level of being a supporter at sports events^{38,30}.

Factor 5, “I learnt from school that regular sport is important”, shows that the influence of school is stronger among those traveling to sports events as spectators than those who are active sports travelers. It reflects that young adults’ passive sports involvement has more vital tights to their schools, where there is no need for sports, but they can still build emotional bonds with those teams^{33,30}.

To summarize this comparison of these five factors, passive sports tourists visiting sports events (domestic and abroad) have a higher influence than active participation. This correlates with Kaplanidou & Gibson⁴⁵ as the involvement of passive sports travels does not need that much preparation.

We also apply multiple factors regression, and the results are more or less in accordance with our findings through one-factor linear regressions. For travelers with the purpose of doing sports, the model increases R-squared to 23%, while for the purpose of watching sports, it increases to 21%.

During calibrating the multiple regression model, we found that factors 1 and 5 do not show statistical significance for active travelers and even sometimes are with negative coefficients. As we mentioned before, these two factors are too general, and their influence on the decision to travel is fading because of the popularity of these statements. Because of that, we exclude them in our model, trying to concentrate on the most critical factors motivating young people to travel to do or watch sports. All but one coefficient (factor 3 for the model about traveling for doing sport) are statistically significant and positive. The final model is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Multiple factors influencing the decision to travel with the motivation of watching sport

	With the purpose of doing sport		With the purpose of watching sport	
	Coef.	p-value	Coef.	p-value
R-squared	23%		21%	
Intercept	0.912	0%	0.914	0%
2. I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood	0.178	0%	0.201	0%
3. Sport plays important role in my life	0.116	4%	0.188	0%
4. I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves	0.253	0%	0.129	1%

Source: Own research and compilation

This model presents the three most important factors shaping young people's decision-making process: current practicing sport, the significance of the sport in the personal value system, and the strong influence of

family active sports environment. They all have positive beta coefficients, varying between 0.116 to 0.253. For traveling to do sport, the most influential factor is the culture of doing sport obtained by the young people from families. This factor builds a strong behavior model in young people, which also involves deep motivation for traveling for the purpose of doing sport. Moreover, it seems natural – if young people learn to practice sports actively, they will not only include sports in their activities. At the same time, they travel, but they will be more motivated to accept doing sports as a purpose of travel. Our model for traveling with the purpose of doing sport describes that those young people with a strong family culture of practicing sport (b=0.253) and who still practiced sport are the most motivated tourists with the purpose of doing sport³¹.

For our model for traveling to watch sport, all coefficients here are statistically significant, and the most critical factor is the current practicing sport (b=0.201). The model describes that for traveling to watch sport, the highest motivation for young people is practicing sport, which values sport highly in their life and which has influenced by an active sports family environment. Factors such as practicing sports in childhood and school-influenced sport culture do not influence the decision-making process about sports tourism in both active and passive versions.

2. Market segmentation of the travelers with the motivation of doing or watching sport

It is supported that sport is an essential initiator and stimulator for undertaking travel and tourism¹⁹. Moreover, the present study proves in a compelling way that belief. As we have already presented in Figure 1, the percentage of people highly motivated to travel to do sport is 17.2%. This suggests that sports tourism has massive potential for the tourism industry, knowing that every sixth people is ready to initiate traveling based on an interest in visiting sports events. This opens several questions, most notably for developing a precise marketing strategy that could be applied to reach these potential travelers. Although it seems that sport is a good stimulator for travel, it would be an expensive marketing strategy if it targeted the people who travel to do sport among all potential tourists. The marketing messages would be too broad, and the chance of being successful would be only 17.2%. Therefore, we need to seek further segmentation of this potential market to make it more efficient and practical to advertise or involve them. We can improve the probability of achieving the target based on the factors that influence people’s decisions to travel with the purpose of doing sport. Table 5 presents our findings.

This table details the changes in the efficiency of a marketing strategy depending on the respondents’ involvement in doing sport(s). Only 68 out of 395 respondents answered (as introduced in Figure 1) that they agree or strongly agree with the factor that *they frequently travel with the purpose of doing sport*. Therefore, the default probability of achieving people who travel for this purpose is 17.2%, the same for each factor we analyzed. Of 395 respondents, 236 agree or strongly agree that they “*did a lot of sports in their childhood*”. However, 54 gave a positive reply to both questions, representing that 22.9% of all people who did a lot of sport in their childhood are traveling to do sport. This result is significant - the marketing strategy for reaching potential active tourists can be improved. Suppose the marketing strategy aims to get people motivated to travel to do sports. In that case, it should not use general marketing messages among all potential tourists – in this case, the strategy could be only 17.2% effective. Instead of targeting all people intending to travel, such a strategy should target the market segment of people who did a lot of sport in their childhood. By provoking memories of their childhood, the effectiveness of the marketing strategy could be increased from 5.7% to 22.9%.

Following factor 2 (“*I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood*”) in Table 5, 157 respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, and 38 of them responded positively to both questions representing that almost every fourth (24.2%) of all people who are still doing the same sport(s) are traveling for the purpose of doing sport. By keeping and sticking to their physical activities started in their childhood, the marketing plan’s effectiveness could develop from 7.0% to 24.2% respectively.

183 out of 395 respondents agree or strongly agree that “*Sport plays important role in their life*”. These people are very health-centered and focused on keeping themselves in good condition. Forty-four responded positively to both questions representing 24.0% of all people who think sport is essential in their life and also traveling for the purpose of doing sport. Following this mentality, the marketing plan’s effectiveness could develop from 6.8% to 24.0%, almost four times more. The awareness of a healthy and sportive lifestyle keeps young people attached to their sports, staying fit and good-looking⁵⁸.

Table 5 Clustering the travelers with the motivation of doing sport

	# of respondents	Positive Answers	Default Prob.	Joint positive answers	Updated Prob.	Net effect
1. I did a lot of sports in my childhood	395	236	17.2%	54	22.9%	5.7%
2. I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood	395	157	17.2%	38	24.2%	7.0%

3. Sport plays important role in my life	395	183	17.2%	44	24.0%	6.8%
4. I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves	395	120	17.2%	38	31.7%	14.5%
5. I learnt from school that regular sport is important	395	242	17.2%	51	21.1%	3.9%

Source: Own research and compilation

In the fourth factor (“*I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves*”), 120 respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement, and 38 of them responded positively to both questions representing almost one-third (31.7%) of all people. Their sportive lifestyle originated from deep; they learnt it from their parents and are traveling intending to do sports. The deep-rooted physical activities doubled the marketing plan’s effectiveness, from 14.5% to 31.7%^{31,55}.

The most significant growth in the effectiveness of a marketing strategy related to those people who “*learnt from school that regular sport is important*”. The growth is almost 5.5 times in their case, emerging from 3.9% to 21.1%. Two hundred and forty-two respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement (factor 5), and 51 gave positive feedback to both questions. It also emphasizes the educational importance of schools as they are the primary channel for people to meet such physical activities, especially if the families have not involved their children in sports yet⁵⁶.

As the research targets passive sports tourism and travel, we continued the analyses by clustering the same factors. This part tries to find the influences of passive sports tourism decision-making on visiting sports events as spectators. As “*Traveling with the purpose of watching sports events*” (Figure 2) shows above, there are respondents who traveled home and abroad with the purpose of watching sports events, 23.5% (93 out of 395), they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Therefore, the default probability of achieving people who travel for this purpose is 23.5%, which is the same for each factor in Table 6.

According to Gibson¹³, passive sports tourism also includes nostalgia towards long-happened sports events or activities. Based on the first factor, “*I did a lot of sports in my childhood*”, was the one where the growth of efficiency of any marketing strategy increased 2.7 times, more than in the other cases (3, 4, 5). It relates partially to the memories of past sports activities. This factor had the second most respondents agreed or strongly agreed on, 236 respectively, and 64 had positive feedback on both questions, which caused this huge efficiency jump. This correlates with previous research, e.g., Cho et al. ⁴³, Eime et al. ⁵⁶.

Table 6 Clustering the travelers with the purpose of watching sports

	# of respondents	Positive Answers	Default Prob.	Joint positive answers	Updated Prob.	Net effect
1. I did a lot of sports in my childhood	395	236	23.5%	64	27.1%	9.9%
2. I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood	395	157	23.5%	45	28.7%	11.4%
3. Sport plays important role in my life	395	183	23.5%	63	34.4%	17.2%
4. I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves	395	120	23.5%	42	35.0%	17.8%
5. I learnt from school that regular sport is important	395	242	23.5%	77	31.8%	14.6%

Source: Own research and compilation

The second factor (“*I still do the same sport(s) I did in my childhood*”) has the second largest (2.5 times better) probability update regarding any marketing strategy, from 11.4% to 28.7%. This statement got 157 responses, and 45 were positive for both. It strengthened the importance of childhood involvement, as early-stage involvement in any activities that impact the future lifestyle, activities, or hobbies is obvious and echoes the finding of Eime et al. ⁵⁶.

One hundred eighty-three respondents agreed with the third factor (“*Sport plays important role in my life*”), and 63 positively responded to both statements, whether they wanted to visit sports events during their travels, too. The importance of a sportive, proactive lifestyle shows a good segment, and targeting them with a proper marketing strategy can increase their effectiveness (17.2% to 34.4%) and considers the common sport and travel buddies, like friends and former teammates²⁴.

The fourth factor also showed doubled the net effect of marketing strategies (17.2 to 35.0%); however, this already had the highest value and also got the highest probability. Of 395, 120 respondents agreed or strongly agreed to “*I learnt from my parents to do regular sports as they did themselves*”, and 42 answered both questions positively. These joint positive answers were the lowest among the five (42). Comparing the lowest number of responses to the fifth factor, with the most significant number of respondents, explains the school-related sports

activities' importance in this age group. Mainly as such, cohesion with schoolmates builds a robust emotional bonding opportunity during cheering together the beloved sports team^{23,33,30}.

The fifth factor had the largest number of respondents (242) who agreed/strongly agreed with the factor ("I learnt from school that regular sport is important") and had a positive attitude towards traveling and watching sports events in the visited destination. Respondents also chose this statement with the most positive responses (77) in both questions. Being a passive supporter at the university is quite a common way of socializing with others, as they represent their communities²³.

In sum, we concluded that the increase of effectiveness in traveling with the motivation of passive sports tourism was much lower than traveling active sports tourism.

V. Conclusion

First, this research within passive sports tourism points to those five factors that have influenced the decision-making process of doing sports in the young adult age group. It helps marketers find, easier and more precisely, those who can potentially be involved in active sports tourism when people travel with the primary motivation of doing sports in the visited destination.

This study's second conclusion is that it is better to use market segmentation instead of doing an anonymous marketing strategy without knowing the market itself. In this case, the factors influencing the decision-making process should be focused on.

The third important finding was to identify the critical decision-making factors that significantly impact involving these people in active sport tourism: travel to other destinations to do sport there.

Although this research only partially focused on active sport tourism, we were seeking passive sports tourists and their decision-making process. Regarding this group of people who travel to watch sports events (not actively participating in the sport itself), there is a huge potential as they have numbers that could contribute significantly to the local economies.

Managerial and theoretical implementations

The managerial implementation can contribute to both sport management and recreational sports professionals. The first group may benefit from additional information that helps them plan, organize, and prepare marketing strategies for the distinguished activities^{24,63,64}. Recreational sports professionals may benefit by focusing on designing and managing sports programs for the public⁶⁵. The latter's purpose is to involve and encourage more and more young adults to participate in activities.

The theoretical implementation of this paper is that it confirms the importance of that latent demand that may generate additional consumption for passive sports tourism on one side and highlights the added value of this extra potential these people represent.

Limitations and future research

This research also has limitations, as it involves several nationalities of young adults, which is not a homogenous sample, with a majority of Taiwanese. The unequal proportion of nationalities was not emphasized for the same reason, and their responses need to be separated or grouped. Although it is common in research^{66,67} that female respondents are more open to surveys, the imbalance between the genders should be mentioned as another limitation.

On the one hand, the pre-Covid status may be a reference for further studies; however, it may be considered a limitation for this study. On the other hand, it can be an excellent starting point for a longitudinal study in the post-Covid period as future research.

Further research should involve more nationalities and also more generations. Other perspectives could be redoing the survey with the post-Covid era, comparing and analyzing the samples, and looking for a deeper understanding of the changes the global pandemic brought into everyone's life. The sample covers two generations that could be examined in the future, and gender-based analysis, as the involvement of males and females may vary^{68,67}. The study can be expanded by the popularity of different sports, too.

Disclosure statement

The authors report no potential conflicts of interest.

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