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The Role Of Motivation For The Engagement In Outdoor Recreation: Empirical Evidences From Higher Education Students

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ABSTRACT

A concept that has been researched in an in-depth manner in the tourism field is motivation. Motivation is concerned with the pull and push constructs and their relevant effect on student behaviour. This study's purpose is to investigate motivation and its role in terms of students engaging in outdoor recreation activities. A quantitative research approach was used in this research. Survey questionnaires were utilised to investigate motivation and its role in higher education students' engagement in outdoor recreation activities. The research reveals that there exists a pull factor of a certain level in students who are engaged in outdoor recreation activities. These activities also have a certain level of push factor for students who are engaged in them. In addition, a strong and positive correlation was shown to exist between the pull factor and the push factor for student engagement in outdoor recreation activities. A conclusion from this study is that when the pull factor and push factor are higher, students are better engaged in outdoor recreation activities. Nevertheless, certain elements

were also found to exist. These elements are not related to the reasons that motivated the journey (general factors), but they still have an effect on general satisfaction.

1. Introduction

The pursuits undertaken by people at times of leisure include such activities at home like reading and watching their favourite programs on the television or outdoor activities such as going to shows, the cinema, playing sports, or visiting new places; these recreational, leisure, and tourist activities are commonly studied by academics (Tribe, 2011). Recreation is an activity that people indulge in during their free time, as opposed to other activities to which they are 'highly committed', which include those like optional shopping, working overtime, second job, home upkeep, car maintenance, further studies, homework, child care, religious duties, and politics. The experience and enjoyment of leisure are considered to be gained through any recreational activity, though recreation is also considered as a social institution which is organised socially for social purposes (Brooker & Joppe, 2013).

In recent years, there has been an increased interest by people in exploring and studying leisure and recreation field. Recreation in general can be classified as activities voluntarily undertaken by people at their leisure and these activities are not something that is forced on them by others. Their leisure or free time are purposely fulfilled by the recreational activities which are associated with values that are positive and beneficial to them (Sidi & Radzi, 2017). Adventure recreational activities have been growing in number and many people now have access to mountain climbing, rock climbing, white-water rafting, kayaking at sea, stand up-boarding, trekking in the wild, and scuba diving (Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo, & Voight, 2013; Nik Hashim, Yusoff, Awang, Aziz, Ramlee, Bakar, Noor, & Fatt, 2019; Nik Hashim et al., 2020). All these recreational activities are believed to provide valuable experiences to those people involved as well as affecting them positively when they are outdoors. There has been a shift recently where people are getting interested in more sophisticated commercial recreation which is driven by demand for new types of recreation rather than the culture of simple non-commercialised outdoor recreation; this shift has resulted in a thriving outdoor retail industry and the growth of various businesses (Aziz, Hashim, Yusoff, Awang, Simpong, Omar, & Othman, 2020; Omar et al., 2020; Margaryan & Fredman, 2017).

2. Literature Review

Travel is mainly motivated by a need to go away, and to a lesser extent, travellers find that self-determination, a sense of competence, learning, exploration and relaxation, and social interaction at an interpersonal level are the rewards personally gained when travelling (Brooker & Joppe, 2013).

A review of the literature reveals that an individual’s actions are influenced by reasons that fall under motivation. Motivation has been researched extensively and it has been found that tourist motivation is the reason behind the travel industry’s existence (Aşan & Emeksiz, 2018; Nik Hashim, Velayuthan, Yusoff, Awang, & Muhammad Safri, 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020). When tourists are motivated to choose their own destination, a competition rises between destinations; the recreational locations’ attractions thus become the deciding factor (Crompton, 1992; Hashim, Awang, Yusoff, Safri, Fatt, Velayuthan, Hashim, & Novianti, 2020; Anuar et al., 2020).

Many previous studies have shown that the motivations behind an individual’s decision to participate in adventure recreational activities, based on professional practice and theoretical development, has become more important to understand, primarily where the experience has an inherent risk of potential injury or death (Ewert et al., 2013; Hashim, Ramlee, Yusoff, Naw, Awang, Zainuddin, Abdullah, Ahmad, Rahim, & Fatt, 2019). A previous similar work by Ewert and Hollenhorst (1989 as cited in Ewert et al., 2013), studied the idea of internal and external motivations in the context of adventure recreation. The Theory of Specialisation (Bryan, 1977) and the Adventure Recreation Model (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1989; Ewert et al., 2013) outline the association between an adventure-based activity’s level of engagement, its specific setting, and individual attributes which an individual seeks to find. In other words, an increased level of engagement results in a commensurate skill increase, participation frequency, internalised locus of control, and level of risk preferred (See Figure 1).

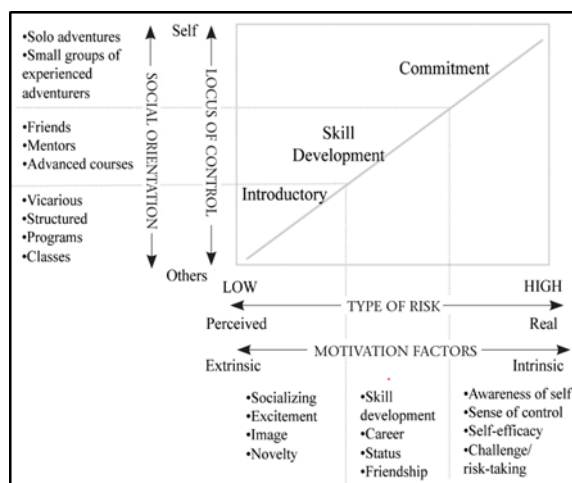


Figure 1: The Adventure Model Source: (Ewert et al., 2013)

The subject of tourism motivation as found in previous literature also shows that the reason for travelling is people are “pushed” to travel due to internal reasons or factors, or because destination attributes “pulled” them to travel

(Ap & Crompton, 1998; Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010). The push factor has been investigated by a significant number of studies which found it to be more related to internal or emotional aspects like the desire to get away, to rest and relax, finding adventure, or interacting socially with others. In contrast, internal motives or forces that cause tourists to seek activities to satisfy their needs are considered to be push factors (Gaffar, Yuniawati, & Ridwanudin, 2012). However, it has been found that push factors focus more on intrinsic instead of extrinsic motivators like the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure, and social interaction (Aşan & Emeksiz, 2018; Kutschera, 2019) as Figure 2 shows. Contrastingly, push factors as found in a number of studies are linked to external, situational, or cognitive aspects. Examples of these aspects are the chosen destination's attributes, infrastructure for tourists, and cultural or natural features. Push motivations may be reinforced by these destination attributes (Park, Lee, Choi, & Yoon, 2012; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015). A destination's attractiveness which include beaches, recreation facilities, and culture may cause pull factors to emerge. Push factors are also regarded as vital in the initiation of travel desire, while pull factors are found to be more influential in deciding the choice of destination (Bashar & Al-Ajloni, 2012).

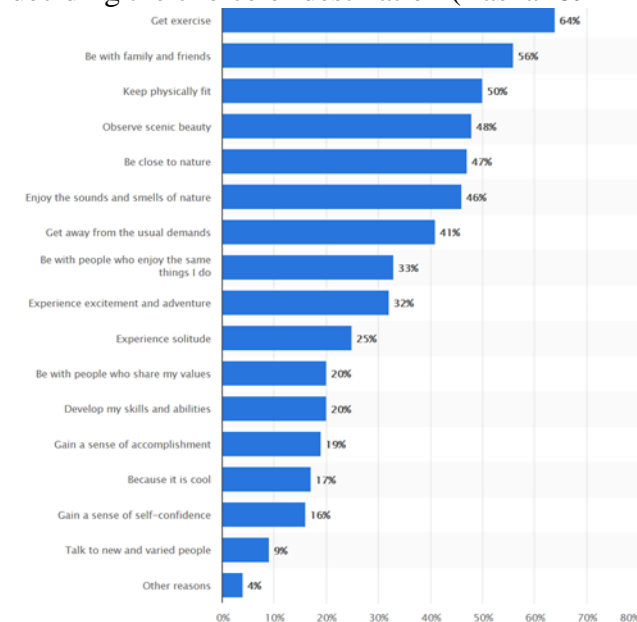


Figure 2: Motivations for engagement in recreation activities Source: (Kutschera, 2019)

It has been demonstrated by empirical studies that outdoor recreation activities in public facilities or in higher education institutions, especially those located in city centres, are challenging to carry out; these places have many physical developments around them and their buildings are compact with few available spaces for students or the local community to engage in recreational activities (Hagen & Boyes, 2016; Noor et al., 2018; Sidi & Radzi, 2017). The majority of both public and private higher education institutions also do not own recreational facilities. They have minimal

facilities within their buildings and their cities are also limited in recreational resources. University or college management should have in place various platforms and arrangements for recreational activities away from their campus areas so that student can engage in any outdoor recreational activities (Mohd Yusof, Wong, Ahmad, Che Aziz, & Hussain, 2020). This problem is a frequent occurrence in higher education institutions as they are limited in their ability to provide students with outdoor recreation activities because of the high cost required (Hagen & Boyes, 2016). It is incumbent on these institutions, however, to provide their students with sports and recreational activities to develop their mind and spirit.

The unique contribution of this study is the chance to consider motivation's role from the perspectives of push and pull factors that are primarily associated with outdoor recreation activities. This study is specifically interested in examining the role of motivation – as a trigger factor for the students' engagement in outdoor recreation. A higher understanding of student motivation in outdoor recreation may assist the students in fulfilling their need to be involved in outdoor recreation while at university (Noor et al., 2018). The management of the university also will be able to propose and plan for the relevant facilities, activities as well as procedure for outdoor activities.

3. Conceptual Framework

In order to address the objective outlined above, a research model was adopted to study the motivation factors that influence the engagement of higher education students' in outdoor recreation activities. Two independent variables were highlighted from the model: push factors (events and activities, culture, variety seeking, adventure, and natural resources) and pull factors (prestige fulfilment, enhancing relationships, relaxation, variety of sightseeing, and knowledge gain).

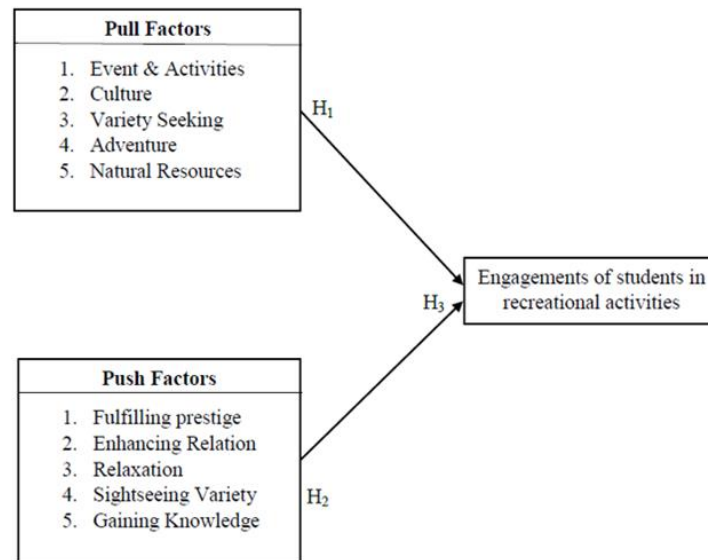


Figure 3: Motivation factors for student engagement in outdoor recreation activities

4. Methodology

After considering previous studies, a quantitative research approach was employed in this study. This approach used a survey questionnaire to investigate motivation and its role in higher education students' engagement in outdoor recreation activities. In addition, it has a significant impact as this approach more concentrated on numerical data collected through a large-scale survey. Students at a higher education institution in Kelantan were chosen as the study's target population. Approximately 306 students from the year one until year three were chosen as the sample size. The students from both genders were from various ethnicities. The probability sampling technique was used where the samples were selected using simple random sampling. A self-administered survey questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire consists of three main sections; sections A, B, and C. Section A concerns the demographic background of the students. Section B carries questions related to the independent variable. Section C includes the items on the dependent variable. Five-point Likert scale of the items was developed to obtain further information ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The data collected was analysed by using IBM SPSS version 24 to analyse the data using reliability, descriptive and Pearson Correlation. The reason for choosing reliability is to make sure all the variables and the items are reliable and valid to investigate. Descriptive is the summary of the variable and the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument applied. The reliability of the generated scale is indicated by a higher score, which means that the items have a high degree of inter-correlation. Based on Hair et al. (2015) rules of thumb, reliability score less than 0.6 is considered poor, 0.6 to < 0.7 is

moderate, 0.7 to < 0.8 is good, 0.8 to < 0.9 is very good and 0.9 above is considered excellent.

5. Results

Demographic profile of respondents and preferences result

Findings of demographic variables were used to determine whether some criteria, which were established for respondent selection, had been achieved. Gender in the sample was not balanced, with 36.3% male and 63.7% female participants. A full number of respondents represented female groups, and most of them are on average, between 21 to 25 years old. Out of all the questionnaires, 306 questionnaires were answered efficiently demographic characteristics included age, gender, programme, year, income, educational background, race and religion. The demographic profile of respondents involved in this study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondent

	N	(%)		N	(%)
Gender			Race		
Male	111	36.3%	Malay	243	79.4%
Female	195	63.7%	Chinese	26	8.5%
Total	306	100%	Indian	34	11.1%
Age			Others	3	1%
16 - 20	0	0%	Total	306	100%
21 - 25	306	100%	Income source		
26 - 30	0	0%	Parent	82	26.8%
Total	306	100%	PTPTN/ Loan	215	70.3%
Program of study			Scholarship	9	2.9%
Tourism	108	35.3%	Total	306	100%
Hospitality	91	29.7%	Year		
Wellness	107	35%	Year 1	32	10.5%
Total	306	100%	Year 2	75	24.5%
			Year 3	70	22.9%
			Year 4	129	42.2%
			Total	59	100%

Preferences result

Table 2 shows the frequency of respondents by question for the participation of 306 respondents. For the first question was “have you

joined or involved in any recreation activity?” showed all the answer is yes of 306 respondent which 100%. So, there are no respondents to answering no. For the second questions were “if yes, what type of activity?” showed the highest was adventure 206 respondents, relaxation 96 respondents and the lowest was other which four respondents. Thus, the percentage of respondents for adventure was 67.3%, relaxation 31.4% and others 1.3%. Question number three “how often you do engage in recreation activity?” showed that the highest was once a week for 147 respondents, 80 respondents answered more than two times a week, 63 respondents answered two times a week, and the lowest was every day with 16 respondents. Thus, the percentage for these respondents for once a week 48.0%, more than two times a week, 26.1%, two times a week, 20.6% and every day, 5.2%. The last question was “with whom you do engage recreation activity?” showed the highest was a friend; 262 respondents, family; 18 respondents, partner; 16 respondent and the lowest was alone which ten respondents. Thus, the percentage for these respondents for friends 85.6%, family 5.9%, partner 5.2% and alone 3.3%.

Table 2: Frequency of Respondents for Preferences

Characteristic	Frequencies	Percentage (%)	
Have you joined or involved in any recreation activity?	Yes	306	100
	No	0	0
If Yes, what type of activity?	Relaxation	96	31.4
	Adventure	206	67.3
	Others	4	1.3
	Everyday	16	5.2
How often you do engage in recreation activity?	Once a week	147	48
	Two times a week	63	20.6
	More than two times a week	80	26.1
	Alone	10	3.3
With whom you do engage in recreation activity?	Friends	262	85.6
	Partner	16	5.2
	Family	18	5.9
	Alone	10	3.3
	Everyday	16	5.2

Descriptive Analysis

Pull factor

Table 3 showed the mean and standard deviation statistics of respondents on the pull factors. Natural resources scored the highest mean value, which was 4.55, where the respondents agreed that the pull factor of natural resources to motivate respondents to engagement in a recreation activity. Meanwhile, the lowest mean was a culture with the mean value of 4.34, where the respondents agreed that the pull factor of culture motivates respondents to engagement in a recreation activity. Besides, the higher standard deviation is variety seeking, which was 0.54. The greater spread in data is indicated by the higher value of standard deviation. Therefore, for pull factors, respondents engage in natural resources in a recreation activity.

Table 3: Pull Factors Toward Engagement Recreation

Item	Mean	SD
Natural Resources	4.55	0.51
Adventure	4.47	0.53
Culture	4.34	0.52
Event & Activities	4.37	0.54
Variety Seeking	4.36	0.54
Total	4.42	

- Push factor

The mean and standard deviation of respondents on the push factors are shown in Table 4. Relaxation scored the most significant mean value, which was 4.58, where the respondents agreed that the push factor of relaxation to motivate respondents to engagement in a recreation activity. Meanwhile, the lowest mean was fulfilling prestige with the mean value of 4.24, where the respondents agreed that the push factor of fulfilling prestige to motivate respondents to engagement in a recreation activity. Besides, the higher standard deviation is fulfilling prestige, which was 0.552. The greater spread in data is indicated by the higher value of standard deviation. So, for push factors, respondents engage relaxation in a recreation activity.

Table 4: Push Factors Toward Engagement Recreation

Item	Mean	SD
Relaxation	4.58	0.49
Sightseeing Variety	4.44	0.53
Gaining Knowledge	4.41	0.54
Fulfilling Prestige	4.24	0.55
Enhancing Relation	4.40	0.55
Total	4.41	

Correlation Analysis

The relationship between push factor towards student engagement in outdoor recreation activities was analysed using Pearson correlation. Table 5 illustrates the result and shows that pull factor has a significant positive relationship with student engagement in outdoor recreation activities ($r_s(306) = .832, p < .001$). Based on Chua (2009), the correlation score of .832 is considered strong. This finding demonstrates that the higher the pull factor, the higher the student engagement in outdoor recreation activities.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficient for pull factors

		Pull Factor
Engagement Recreation	Pearson Correlation	0.832**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000

	N	306
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** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The relationship between push factor and student engagement in outdoor recreation activities was analysed using Pearson correlation. Table 6 indicates that push factor has a significantly positive relationship with student engagement in outdoor recreation activities ($r_s(306) = .827, p < 0.001$). Based on Chua (2009), the correlation value of .827 is considered strong. It is demonstrated that a higher push factor causes a higher student engagement in outdoor recreation activities.

Table 6: *Pearson Correlation Coefficient for push factors*

		Push Factor
Engagement Recreation	Pearson Correlation	0.827**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000
	N	306

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

6. Discussion

This work is aimed at examining the role of motivation in students' engagement in outdoor recreation activities. The contribution of this study lies in the sense that motivation factors (push and pull) of the students from the higher educational institute was examined empirically as well enrich the current body of knowledge. Gaffar et al. (2012) in their work showed that preference is regarded to be an element that is highly critical in understanding the behaviour of customers as the players in the tourism industry continue to try to understand tourist activities better. This can be done by segmenting the market based on activity preferences that divide customers based on activities behaviour patterns (Hashim et al., 2019; Pesonen, 2012). Focusing on activity preference, enjoying natural scenery appeared to have the highest score reported in this study. The respondents of the study claimed that adventure activities were one of their ways to feel close to nature; therefore, they did not feel the rush to finish the activities and did not mind making few stops along the way and going back without reaching the top.

Motivations factors are the reasons that indicate the respondents to engage in a recreation activity. There are two main factors to be considered to push factors and pull factors. The destination's attractiveness is the pull factor that promotes the student's interest in engaging in recreation. Pull factors include natural resources, culture, adventure, event and activities and variety seeking shows these factors show a strong relationship with engagement towards recreation activity (Ewert et al., 2013; Mackenbach et al., 2018). Meanwhile, push factor is the individual act that reacts to recreation activity and it includes relaxation, sightseeing variety, gaining knowledge, fulfilling prestige and enhancing relation also shows a positive relationship with

engagement towards recreation activity. From this result, it is clearly stated that the most influential factor for the students to engage in outdoor recreation activity is due to the natural resources which are slightly higher than the other factors in pull factors. Natural resources such as waterfall and rainforest are amongst the most attractive places for students to engage in an outdoor activity as compared to urban area likes the city centre.

The second highest result for pull factors is an adventure element. Amongst the best and popular activities for adventure activities are canoeing, white water rafting and scuba diving. As for push factors, the most influential factor is relaxation which this describes that student willing to engage towards recreation due to relaxation with their daily life or workload. This can be from the perspective of students which they are desired to appreciate the natural environment and escape from day by day life and to pursue intimacy. Previous studies such as Beggs and Elkins (2010), Noor et al., (2018); and Sidi & Radzi, (2017), they stated that relaxation was positioned the first in terms of significance, while learning and sociality was rank the second, followed by achievement and independence and personal development respectively. However, different studies demonstrated a different outcome.

Apart from motivation, studies in the past (Burr, Neidig, & Zeitlin, 2007) have also claimed that engaging in some leisure and recreation time can benefit a person in terms of reducing stress. Rewarding relationships with other individual are a social dimension and can be termed as relaxation factors that act to relieve the strain and stress of daily life (Beggs & Elkins, 2010). Engaging in leisure is thus indicated to reduce stress in a person where most people who engage in leisure for stress reduction are those with careers who wish to take a break. In addition, the outcome of leisure and recreation is humans learning and gaining experience about themselves through their participation. Gaining awareness and appreciation by tolerating and understanding as outlets for conflict resolution and cooperation are among the motivations for joining in leisure and recreation (Human Kinetic, 2006).

7. Conclusion

Leisure and recreation are motivated by many factors. Even though these various factors have been proposed, none can be considered as the absolute answer as different students may define leisure differently. All factors provided in this also normally exist in Malaysia but cannot be considered definitive due to the different points of view held by different researchers, scholars, professors, and authors. Moreover, the motivational influence of these factors is dependent on the profession, age, income, gender, status, economic situation, and environment of the users themselves. Recreational activity is an activity that gives better health or spirits, whether the activity is relaxation or enjoyment. Even though there are different types of

recreation activities, it still manages to create a better lifestyle. This study's results has unravelled and improved the understanding of recreation. Recreation is considered as an activity through which leisure is experienced and enjoyed. However, it is also regarded as a social institution that is organised for social purposes. The motivation factors that promote student engagement in outdoor recreation, specifically from the perspective of higher education, may be better understood through this finding. This study was limited to public higher education students in Kelantan, however it could be extended for further study to uncover the detail of this factors by comparing between public and private higher education.

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