

Factors influencing people's behavioral motivation to travel for
sport tourism in Thailand



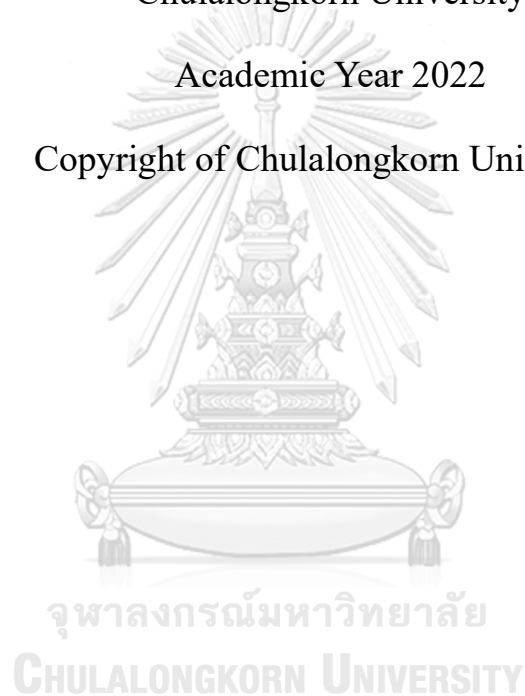
An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Business and Managerial Economics
Field of Study of Business and Managerial Economics

FACULTY OF ECONOMICS

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Sport tourism is a combination of sport and tourism that has gained increasing attention among multiple parties, government, academics, and market participants. Sport tourism has showed a positive business outlook that can support Thai tourism sector's sustainable development. However, current research is more focused on the concept of sport tourism, less emphasized on sport tourist's motivation. This study used quantitative method with the tool of ordered logit regression and descriptive analysis with figures and tables to investigate the factors that can influence people's motivation to travel for sport tourism in Thailand. A questionnaire including questions related to social demographic, travel & sport, sport tourism destination and sport tourism motivation scale was applied to collect original data. This study found that the image of sport tourism destination and quality of sport tourism offer can influence people's motivation. Tourist's features: such as pursuing sport event's competition, concerning convenience of transportation, preferring to travel with companion and improving relationship with family, can give enlightenment for sport event and sport destination management, and improve sport tourism practitioner's understanding of sport tourist's portrait and thoughts.

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I still remembered how inspiring I was when my friend informed me that he was studying Master of Arts in Business and Managerial Economics program in Chulalongkorn University. I have worked for ten years since the completion of my undergraduate program. I felt so lucky that I was admitted to Chulalongkorn University and could study Master of Arts in Business and Managerial Economics program to realize my dream of sitting in a classroom to study new things. MABE program has not only provided me broader and deeper knowledge about economics and business management that brings great benefits to my work, but also improved my communication and cooperation skills that will be truly helpful for my whole life. The journey of studying MABE program in Chulalongkorn University is a priceless experience and memory for the rest of my life. There are many people who I would like to give my gratitude for their help and support.

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Introduction

The tourism sector is one of the key engines for the growth of Thai economy, which directly and indirectly contributes to 20% of the country's GDP in 2019 (Nivhaphat Surawattananon, 2021). Thai tourism has faced a difficult time during the pandemic of COVID-19, and the pandemic has made a tremendous impact on the travel trend, which shows a new normal of behaviors and preferences of tourists. One of the new trends is that tourists prefer to closer-to-home trips and is highly likely to shift from mass to niche travel: travelling in smaller groups and seeking more customized experience (Nivhaphat Surawattananon, 2021). In the post-pandemic time, Thai tourism must adapt itself to the new trend by the means of expansion of high-quality market base and creating high-quality tourism product to increase the volume of the tourist's expenditure that are the missions set by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (2021-2022).

The World Tourism Organization points out that sport tourism is one of the fastest growing segmentations in tourism sector, more and more tourists are interested in sport activities during their trips whether sports are the main objective of travel or not¹. Globally, the value of sport tourism market in 2019 is capped at USD 562 billion and estimated to grow with a CAGR of 35.2%². In USA, the sports tourism sector's direct spending impact was USD 39.7 billion which generated a total economic impact of \$91.8 billion in 2021³. In Thailand, the Tourism and Sport Ministry is promoting Thailand as a sport tourism destination and has set a target of 40 billion Baht in revenue from sports tourism in 2023⁴. According to the National Statistical Office, the international tourist arrivals to Thailand in 2019 with the purpose of sport amounts to 453,399 that is more than twice over the number in 2018⁵. The contribution of sport tourism to Thai tourism has been increasing.

For example, Phuket held the 2022 Spartan Asia Pacific Championship race that attracted almost 10,000 athletes and their supporters from 26 countries⁶. In the Amazing Thailand Marathon Bangkok 2022, more than 21,000 participants were involved, and more than 500 million Bhat was generated⁷. In December 2019, TAT

¹ <https://www.unwto.org/sport-tourism>

² <https://www.vynzresearch.com/consumer-goods/sports-tourism-market>

³

<https://www.sportseta.org/blog/2022/05/04/state-of-the-industry-report-for-the-918-billion-sport-tourism-industry>

⁴ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2427910/ministry-sets-b40bn-sports-tourism-target>

⁵ National Statistics Office, <http://statbbi.nso.go.th/staticreport/page/sector/en/17.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.nationthailand.com/thailand/general/40022482>

⁷ <https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/2468965/giving-sports-a-fighting-chance>

initiated the “Thailand Road Racing Standard”, a major campaign to hold five competitive marathons on an annual basis, with the aim of making Thailand to be the first ASEAN country to host marathon event across the country⁸. Along with the growing awareness of health and fitness, the growing trend of lifestyle sport, and the characteristics of high sport tourist expenditure, as a combination of sport and tourism, sport tourism would be a valuable niche market for the sustainable development of Thai tourism.

Sport tourism is gaining more attention from the government agency, academics, and business operator. Sport tourism can bring social and economic benefits (Hritz & Ross, 2010). Nevertheless, most of research are more focused on the conceptual work of sport tourism, limited research has been conducted on the tourist’s motivation to travel for sport tourism. The purpose of this study is to investigate the key factors that can influence people’s behaviors motivation to travel for sport tourism, to gain an in-depth understanding of what they concern most in the consideration of travelling for sport tourism. Sport tourism practitioner or marketer can make use of the study to gain more insight on customer targeting, marketing strategy design, product management and innovation, and sport tourism destination development. Since sport tourism combines sport and tourism, this study is endeavored to explore the sport tourism market that can cover more population, it made the research on travel for mass sport event, such as marathon, hiking, biking, swimming, which can attract more people, not like luxury sports, such as golf, horseback riding, which are only accessible and affordable for a small group.

Literature review

Sport tourism

(Gibson, 1998) defined sport tourism as travel with the main purpose of leisure, tourists attend fitness activities, or watch sport activities or visit attractions related to sport activities, generally, sport tourism can be categorized as three types: Sport event tourism, active sport tourism, and nostalgia sport tourism. Active sport tourism refers to people who travel to take part in sport, for example, engaging in a Marathon, Cycling, attending sport training; Event sport tourism refers to travel to watch a sports event, for example, the Olympic Games, World Cup; Nostalgia sport tourism, refers to visits to sports related attractions, such as sport museums and fame halls. Some

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<https://www.tatnews.org/2019/12/tat-backs-campaign-to-make-thailand-top-marathon-destination-in-asean/>

studies divided sport tourism into five categories from the other viewpoint: 1) Natural Sports Tourism, refers to organizing sports activities using natural venues such as cycling, marathon, the Thailand World Mountain & Trail Running Championships in Chiang Mai is a good example of natural sports tourism; 2) Man-made Sports tourism, refers to using man-made venues for sport activities, such as golf, football, the Ferrari World theme park in Abu Dhabi is a good example; 3) Natural and man-made Sports Tourism, refers to developing natural attractions as a venue for occasional sporting events such as a marathon in the resort; 4) Sport Tourism Event, refers to sport event attracting both athletes and spectators, such as Olympic Games; 5) Traditional Sport Tourism, refers to sport activities attracting tourists to visit or join national or local sports, such as Muay Thai (Worapinij, Jantarakolica, & Kanittinsuttitong, 2017). Netherlands government agency CBI (2023) segmentate sport tourism into nine niche markets that are sports tourism trips, running, golf tourism, ski tourism, cycling tourism, water sports, diving, fishing, adrenaline activities⁹.

Sport tourism destination

Generally, a higher-order destination is a specific place where natural features and developed infrastructure and services are present (Higham & Hinch, 2018). Research found that the image of the sport tourism destination and experience with the destination significantly influenced intentions to revisit the destination for sport tourism activities and influenced the sport tourist behaviors (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Research indicated that destination perceived quality has significant, positive, and direct effect to tourist satisfaction and could influence the word-of-mouth (Wang, Tran, & Tran, 2017). Research found that sport tourism destination competitiveness is consisted of four key attributes: 1) tourism attractions 2) sports attractions 3) destination management, and 4) demand condition (Jirasanyansakul & Vongsaroj, 2019). The TAT's project study demonstrates that many entrepreneurs have turned their focus on the adventure tourism activities such as kayaking, rafting, rock climbing, trekking, the activities were developed according to the needs of tourists¹⁰, these activities can also be defined as sports tourism activities such as natural sport tourism.

⁹ <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/sport-tourism/market-potential>

¹⁰ Project to study the situation and opportunities to promote the ecotourism and adventure tourism market, TAT intelligence center, <https://intelligencecenter.tat.or.th/articles/1446>

Sport tourist motivation

Sport tourism can be divided into diverse niche market segments since the tourist experiences are varied with the diversities of motivations. The expectation of professional athletes, amateur, sport enthusiastic, and mass tourist who is primarily just seeking for recreation not for sport itself shall be different, which raises challenges for the sport tourism business about how to meet the changing and diverse sport tourist's preferences and how to manage the service quality when marketing across different segments. In the Sport Tourism Development (Higham & Hinch, 2018), it pointed out that there are three dimensions for sport tourist from the demand-side: 1) status of sport activity in the tourist's motivation, sport is the primary motivation compared with other tourism activities, or secondary elements, or just incidental component of tourist expectations; 2) degree of engagement in the sport activity, the tourist has a high or low degree of participation in the sport activities; 3) the competitive or non-competitive nature of the sport activity. (Higham & Hinch, 2018) also pointed that sport tourism market may be segmented into niches markets or demand groups, which differ in many ways.

(Berkman, Lindquist, & Sirgy, 1997) defined motivation as the drive to satisfy both physiological and psychological needs of people by consuming products or services. (Roberts, Nerstad, & Lemyre, 2018) stated that two theories predominate in explaining the motivation in sport: Achievement Goal Theory and Self-Determination Theory, which both point to the same result, such as increased achievement striving, sustained behavior change, and perceptions of well-being. (Crompton, 1979) and (Dann, 1981) suggest that push motives represent the internal drives such as travel to escape from the present environment, or to seek for evaluation of self and relaxation, pull motives relate to destination, the attractiveness, and attributes of the tourism destination. Pull motives is a response and reinforcement of Push motives, which determines when and where to travel.

Studies frequently applied method of sport tourism motivation scale to investigate and understand what motivates people to travel for sport tourism. (Yusof & Shah, 2008) applied Leisure motivation Scale to study the sport tourist motivation, which divided leisure motivation into four sections: 1) intellectual, motivation to engage in leisure activities that involve substantial mental activities such as learning, exploring, discovering; 2) social, including two basic needs: friendship and interpersonal relationships, esteem of others; 3) competence-mastery, to achieve, master, challenge, and compete, the activities are usually physical in nature; 4) stimulus-avoidance, to escape and get away from overstimulation life situations. (Seo et al., 2019) employed an eight-factors motivation scale for participation sport tourism (MSPST) that are: Friendship, Family, Solitude, Challenge, Intrinsic factor, Achievement, Nature,

Competition, to gain a greater understanding of sport tourists' behaviors. (Hungenberg, Gray, Gould, & Stotlar, 2016) constructed a nine-factors sport tourism motivation scale (STMS): Self-enrichment, Travel exploration, Skill mastery, social needs, Destination attributes, Stress relief, Aggression, Competitive desire, and Physical fitness to examine the motives underlying active sport tourist behavior for different sport tourism segmentation.

A recent market research found that European sports tourists are generally active sport tourists, who are very interested in immersive experiences, and are very inclined to know the destination and enjoy all kinds of side activities¹¹. In the USA sport tourism market, active sports tourism is the most preferred tourism and package travel will lead the USA sport tourism market, men dominate but women are surging in the market, and the age group of 26-35 has the highest market share¹².

Method and Procedure

This study is aimed at gaining knowledge about the factors influencing people's behavioral motivations to travel for sport tourism in Thailand, to provide findings and reference for sport tourism practitioners to target their customer, select appropriate marketing plan, and design tailor-made package. Literature review shows sport tourism motivations scale (STMS) is a workable tool for investigation and evaluation. There are both overlap and difference of factors in different articles, and the items under each factor can also differentiate because of the difference of study purpose and tourism destination. This study utilized survey questionnaire to collect original data and make quantitative analysis.

Questionnaire

This study determined the questions for survey based on individual interview and literature review. A random interview in Benchasiri Park was performed, the interview results indicated that status of marital has no significant effects on participation in sport tourism, but people who has child is prone to be less motivated to attend the sport tourism activity since most of their leisure time must be spent with their child, and their preference for tourism is to travel with family in the purpose of leisure. In the existing research about effect of social demographic factor on

¹¹ Netherlands government agency CBI 2023,

<https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/sport-tourism/market-potential>

¹² <https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/usa-sports-tourism-market>

participation sport, event sport, general tourism, and sport tourism, gender, age, level of education and income are identified as the significant factors. In (Gibson, 1998)'s research, it comments that sport tourists are prone to be healthy, financially secure, well educated, and (frequently) male. (Guzmán & Kingston, 2012)'s research insisted that people's motivation and intention to practice sport was decreased with increased age, but there are no differences related to gender. In the meantime, in recent years, from the observation and academic research, more female participates in sport activities. Above-mentioned (Seo et al., 2019)'s motivation scale for participation sport tourism (MSPST) and (Beard, 1983)'s Leisure Motivation Scale (LMS) was applied in this study.

Based on the result of interview and literature review, in the end, the survey questionnaire consists of four sections, sub-divided into six factors with 29 items selected. The first section adapts social demographic factor with 10 items: age, gender, nationality, marital, education, employment, household income, Children. The second section is to explore the pull motives composed of two factors: sport & travel-related factor with 4 items: frequency of exercise, experience of sport tourism, length of travel, who to travel with, and destination attribute factor with 5 items: preferred place to hold mass sport event, convenience of transportation, cost of travel for sport tourism, reputation of sport tourism activity, and other tourism attraction. The third section is to explore the push motivation to travel for sport tourism in a psychological way, which includes four types of factor: social (3 items: To interact with others, To improve relationship with family in the sport tourism, To gain a feeling of belonging), escape (3 items: To relieve stress and tension, To relieve stress and tension, To get close to nature), competition (3 items: To enjoy physical competition, To get a feeling of achievement, To test my limit), and intellectual (2 items: To discover new thing, To seek a stimulation). The last section contains only one question that is whether the respondent has the interest in attending mass sport event held in Thailand in future.

Sampling

In this study, sampling is targeted at the group who exercise in daily life. It utilized two channels to distribute the questionnaire: face to face survey, and online survey. The face-to-face survey was conducted in two scenarios, the first scenario was in Benchasiri Park and Benjakiti Park, where the respondent is the runner or jogger who has finished the exercise, 30 samples were collected in this way. The second scenario was in two local commercial banks, the reason for this scenario is the consideration of level of education and incomes, targeted respondents are the staff who exercises in daily life, 55 samples were collected in this scenario. The online survey was conducted by friends' post and share in social media platform such as Facebook, Line. 25 samples were collected, 10 questionnaires were discarded

since some answers are obscure or blank, such as prefer not to answer the gender, and level of education, or no exercise in daily life. Finally, 15 respondents' information in this part of survey was useful for analysis.

In the end, the study collected 100 effective questionnaires for data analysis. This study applied Cochran's formula¹³ to calculate the potential sample size with unknown population size. The formula is as below:

$$X = Z_{\alpha/2}^2 * p * (1-p) / e^2$$

Where:

e is the margin of error,

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population which has the attribute in question,

q is 1 – p.

The confidence level is set at 95%, so $Z_{\alpha/2}$ value is 1.96. The Margin of error is estimated as 5.3%. It assumed that 95% of time, 5.3% of the research's result would differ from the real population value. According to the data survey from Statista website, in Thailand, in the year of 2021, for the age between 15-59 years, the number of people having regular exercise and playing sports is 3.63million¹⁴. According to the data from National Statistical Office, for the age between 15-59 years, the number of people is 46.31 million¹⁵. Therefore, the proportion of people between the age of 15-59 years who have regular exercise is around 7.8%. According to the Cochran's formula, the acceptable sample size of this survey is 98. The actual sample size of this study is 100 that can be acceptable.

Analysis instrument

The analysis of social demographic factors is the first step to get an initial and basic outline of the potential sport tourists. This study examined the descriptive characteristic of the social demographic items, compare, analyze, and rank the breakdowns of age, gender, level of education and income, and seek out the relationship among these social demographic factors and their relationship with sport tourism participation.

The second step is to paint a portrait for the sport tourists by analyzing the pull motives: sport-related, travel-related, and destination attribute factors, asking the questions about how frequently they exercise, who they prefer to travel with, how long they are willing to travel, whether they have participated in the sport tourism,

¹³ <https://www.statisticshowto.com/probability-and-statistics/find-sample-size/>

¹⁴ **Number of people having regular exercise and playing sports in Thailand in 2021, by age**

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1309643/thailand-number-of-sporty-people-by-age/>

¹⁵ Number of Population from Registration by Age, Sex, Region and Province: 2021

<http://statbbi.nso.go.th/staticreport/page/sector/en/01.aspx>

what they expect for the sport tourism destination. According to the definition and characteristics of sport tourism, it should represent two distinct foundations: sport activities and tourism activities (Seo et al., 2019).

The last step is to explore what are in customer's mind and heart to push their motivation to participate in sport tourism activities. Sport tourism motivations scale (STMS) is applied in this study, 11 questions are inserted in the questionnaire for STMS, which utilized 1-5 scores to grade the answers for the STMS, "strongly disagree" means 1 point of score, "disagree" means 2 points of score, "neutral" means 3 points of score, "agree" means 4 points of score, "strongly agree" means 5 points of score.

This study utilized the instrument of Ordered Logit Regression to examine whether there is significant relationship between sport tourism motivation and social-demographic factor, travel-related factor, sport related factor, social factor, Escape factor, Competition factor, Intellectual factor, and determine the regression equation that could show how the factors with significance affect the sport tourism motivation. In the regression model, the dependent variable was entered by asking the question whether the respondent has interest in participating in sport tourism in the future that could reflect their sport tourism motivation and the questions in each factor were selected as independent variables. This study also draw graphic to demonstrate sport tourist's characteristics from the view of social-demographic factor, travel-related factor, and sport-related factor.

Research Hypothesis

At the 5% significance level, the Null Hypothesis was as follow:

H1: Among social demographic factors, age, gender, income, education level, number of children, have significant relationship with sport tourism motivation.

H2: the relationship between sport tourism motivation and sport related factors, travel related factors are significant.

H3: the relationship between social factors and sport tourism motivation is significant.

H4: the relationship between escape factors and sport tourism motivation is significant.

H5: the relationship between competition factors and sport tourism motivation is significant.

H6: the relationship between intellectual factors and sport tourism motivation is significant.

Research Result¹⁶

Figure 1

Result of Ordered Logit Regression for factors influencing people's motivation to travel for sport tourism

Dependent variable: You have the interest in attending mass sport event

	coefficient	std. error	z	p-value
What is your age	-0.910421	0.299605	-3.039	0.0024 ***
What is your gender	0.281528	0.467037	0.6028	0.5466.
What is your education level	-0.378943	0.321832	-1.177	0.2390
What is your annual income	0.00772437	0.190745	0.04050	0.9677
How many children do you have	-0.389572	0.297765	-1.308	0.1908
How frequently do you exercise	0.151895	0.154260	0.9847	0.3248.
If you are going to attend	-0.0171830	0.0197228	-0.8712	0.3836
The destination is convenient to arrive	0.848331	0.368398	2.303	0.0213 **
The sport travel cost is affordable	-0.400816	0.422869	-0.9478	0.3432
The destination is attractive	-0.549225	0.354032	-1.551	0.1208
The specific sport event has high reputation	0.695977	0.343032	2.029	0.0425 **
To improve relationship with family	0.726413	0.289638	2.508	0.0121 **
To avoid the hustle of daily life	0.136571	0.301626	0.4528	0.6507
To test my limit	0.679384	0.346126	1.963	0.0497 **
To seek stimulation	0.292329	0.375726	0.7780	0.4365

In figure 1, with the significant level of 5%, there were totally five independent variables that showed significant relationship with the dependent variable, that are age, the destination is convenient to arrive, the specific sport event has high reputation, to improve the relationship with family, to test my limit. Age was negative related with a slope of -0.91, p-value is 0.0024, which mean people's motivation to travel for sport tourism would be decreased 0.91 unit when their age moves to next range (10 years for each range, such as 26-35, 36-45). The travel related item of the destination is convenient to arrive is positive related with a slope of 0.85, p-value is 0.0213, which mean people's motivation to travel for sort tourism would increase 0.85 unit when the convenience of travel destination improved. The specific sport event has high reputation was positive related with a slope of 0.7, p-value is 0.0425, which mean people's motivation to travel for sort tourism would increase 0.7 unit when the specific sport event has a higher reputation. To improve the relationship with family is positive related with a slope of 0.73 p-value is 0.121 which mean people's

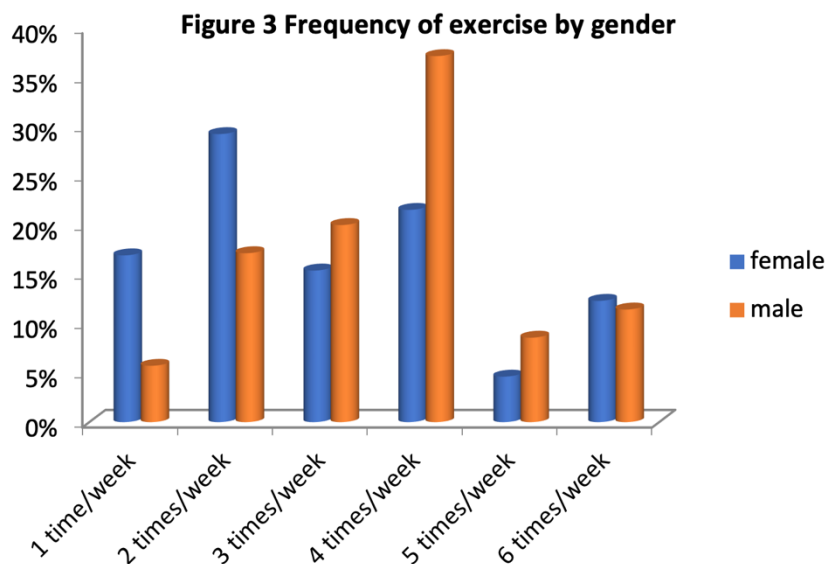
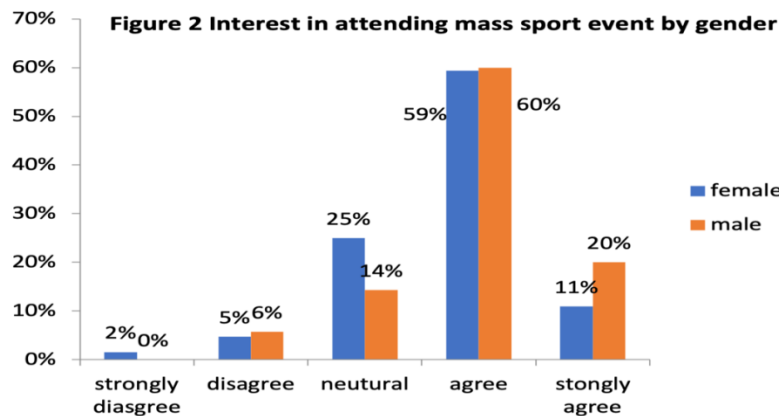
¹⁶ Data source for all figures in "Research result": original data from questionnaire survey and calculated by author.

motivation to travel for sort tourism would increase 0.73 unit when the sport tourism activities can improve their relationship with family. To test my limit is positive related with a slope of 0.7 p-value is 0.0497 which mean people's motivation to travel for sort tourism would increase 0.7 unit when the sport tourism activities can test their limit.

Generally, people's physical condition shows decline with advancing age. As (Guzmán & Kingston, 2012)'s research insisted that people's motivation and intention to practice sport was decreased with increased age. In (Hossein, Chin, & Maryam, 2013)'s research, interest in sport is indicated as a factor that can influence people's motivation to travel for sport tourism. Therefore, it can be inferred that people's motivation to travel for sport tourism is weakened with increased age.

In figure 1, it also illustrated that there is no significant relationship between gender and interest in attending mass sport event, the p-value is 0.5466, which can be further explained by the result in graphic 2 and graphic 3. Graphic 2 showed that female's interest in participating in mass sport event is approximately equal to male's interest, which is aligned with the opinion in (Guzmán & Kingston, 2012) 's research indicating that people's motivation and intention to practice sport is not related to gender. The portion of male and female who don't have much interest (respondent with strongly disagree, disagree) are almost the same (female with 7%, male with 6%). 59% female agree that they have interest in attending mass sport event, for male that is 60%. Male who demonstrates strong interest in mass sport event takes 20% that is higher than female's proportion that is 11%.

The research result in figure 2 was in line with the result in figure 3 that demonstrated frequency of exercise per week for male and female. According to graphic 3, female's frequency of exercise is close to male's frequency. There are approximated 15% female do exercise three times per week, for male that is 20%. The proportion of exercise 2 times per week for female is 29% that is higher than the proportion of male (17%). But more male (37%) do exercise 4 times per week, for female that is 22%. It is inferred that people do exercise regularly can indirectly indicate that they have interest in sport.



Combining the result in figure 2 with result in graphic 3, it is inferred that motivation to travel for sport tourism is not influenced by gender.

Figure 1 indicated no significant relationship between interest in participating in mass sport event and education level that can be explained by the limitation of the survey that made the sample from two commercial banks and two public parks at the central area in Bangkok, 96% respondent are well educated with bachelor or above degree, which showed less sensitivity between education level and interest in participating in mass sport event. However, according to the sample data, for the respondent with bachelor or above degree, 72% of them showed intention in participating in mass sport event who answered “agree” or “strongly agree”, 21% of them replied “neutral”, only 7% of them showed no interest, which could be supported by the existing research that sport tourist is supposed to be well educated.

Figure 1 showed no significant relationship between interest in participating in mass sport event and income. The result is aligned with the result of no significant

relationship between interest in participating in mass sport event with the factor of affordability of travel for sport tourism in figure 1. People can have the motivation to participating in sport tourism activities but may not have the ability to make it reality which means people with different payment ability can have the similar level of interest in sport tourism activities. In other words, low-income and high-income people can have similar level of interest in sport tourism activities.

In Maslow's Theory of Motivation, people's needs are divided into eight types that can be described in a hierarchy based on the need's importance, such as physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization need. The physiological needs include air, heat, water, clothes, food, shelter, etc., is the most basic needs. People should be less motivated to pursue higher levels of needs if their physiological needs are not satisfied. In this study, most of the respondent were from two commercial banks or lived near Benchasiri Park and Benjakiti Park which are in the rich area of Bangkok, whose income was expected to be not bad, which could infer that the basic physiological needs are not their main goal, they are more likely to be desired for higher needs. Motivation is the inner driving force, when people has stepped into the higher level of needs, the affordability would not be the most concern, which could explain why income is not significant related with people's interest in participating in sport tourism activities in this study, since most of the respondent were well-paid and seeking for higher needs. As showed in figure 4, 61% respondent had an annual income more than THB 500,000, 36% respondent's annual income exceeded 1MB.

Figure 4 annual income survey

annual income (THB)	# of respondent	proportion
<500,000	39	39%
500,000-1,000,000	25	25%
1,000,000-2,000,000	13	13%
2,000,000-5,000,000	14	14%
5,000,000-10,000,000	8	8%
>10,000,000	1	1%

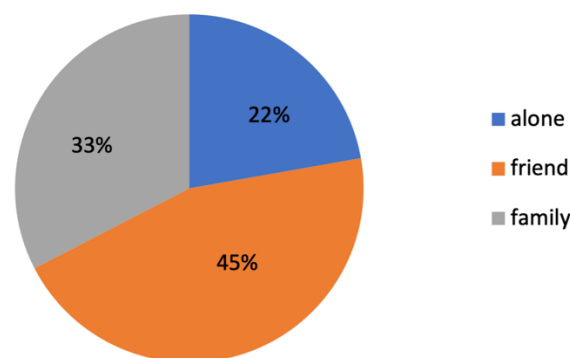
In the meantime, when the effect of non-economic factors, such as awareness of health and fitness is amplified, the effect of cost or income can be diminished. A survey including 8000 respondent (1025 respondent from Thailand) across eight countries conducted by the agent of Amway in late 2021 indicated a positive change in health and fitness behaviors since Covid-19, 64% Thai respondent reported an improving diet (50% globally), 58% Thai respondent reported fitness routine (48%

globally)¹⁷. In (Nieman & Sakaguchi, 2022)'s research, it stated that several epidemiological research has been conducted during Covid-19 that provided more supportive evidence about the positive effect of physical activities, physical fitness on the respiratory infection risk or severity. Therefore, income may be not significant related with motivation as the research result in this study.

Additionally, motivation is a different concept with consumer behavior. In (Jisana, 2014)'s research, motivation is thought as one of the factors influencing consumer behavior. People can have the motivation to participate in sport tourism activities pushed by their concern of inner peace, pursue of health and fitness and sport enthusiasm, etc., but people may still not participate in the sport tourism activities due to other constrains, such as convenience of destination, reputation of the sport event and family features. This study also made effort to explore what other factors can influence people to participate in sport tourism activities except for motivation, which would be discussed in the latter part and would be beneficial for policymaker and marketers to get more understanding about how to design and promote specific sport tourism activities.

Figure 1 indicated no significant relationship between interest in participating in mass sport event and number of children, which seems to be inconsistent with the interview in Benchasiri Park at the stage of questionnaire design. The reason was thought to be the limitation of the survey, as 74% respondent had no child. For those who raise child, only 13% respondent preferred to travel alone, 47% respondent preferred to travel with family, and 40% preferred to travel with friends. The percentage of respondent preferring to travel with family was higher than whole sample as presented in figure 5 that could indicate that people with child would pay more attention to family.

Figure 5 Who are you travelling with



¹⁷ Covid-19 ups health consciousness amongst Thai, Bangkok post, Dec 2021,

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/pr/2228611/covid-19-ups-health-consciousness-amongst-thais>

Figure 5 showed people were more preferring to travel with companion. 45% respondent demonstrated that they preferred to travel with friends, 33% showed they preferred to travel with family. In certain level, the result is in line with the new travel trend post-covid 19 that more people are preferring to travel. Add new trend of travel evidence.

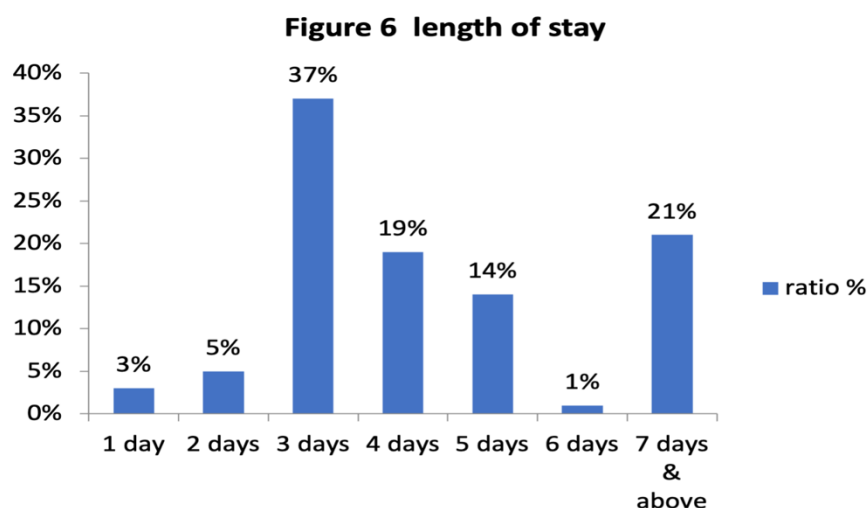


Figure 6 showed that 3 days was the most popular length of stay (37%), followed by 7 days and above (21%), 4 days (19%), 5 days (14%). It could infer that 3-5 days could be more suitable for short-distance travel with clear and specific purpose, such as attending sport event. 7 days of length of stay was also a good option for immersing travel.

According to data from National Statistics Office as showed in figure 7¹⁸, for the year from 2011 to 2020, in the whole kingdom, Thai domestic tourist's average length of stay is around 2.6 days. However, in Bangkok the average length of stay for Thai tourist is around 3.2 days except for 2.59 days in 2020. In Chiang Mai, the average length of stay is 3 days except for 2.72 days in 2020. In Phuket, the average length of stay is 2.9 days except for 2.57 days in 2020.

Figure 7 Thai tourist's average length of stay in 2011-2020

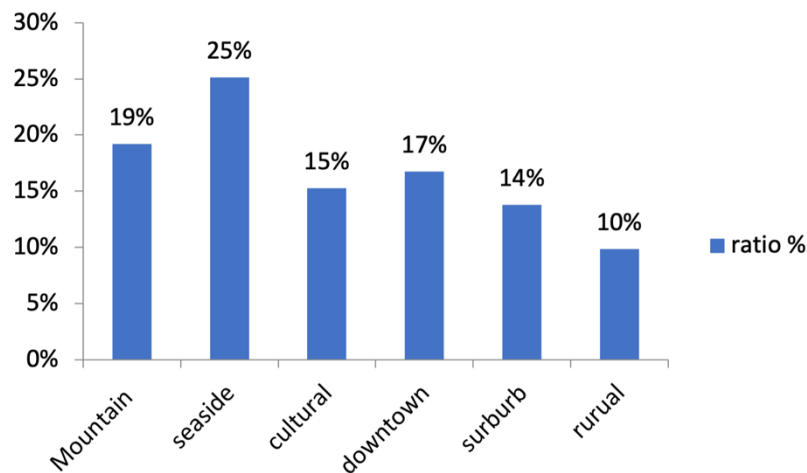
Region	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
whole kingdom	2.73	2.73	2.70	2.64	2.61	2.57	2.52	2.50	2.46	2.25

¹⁸ Data source: Tourism and Sport statistics, Situation Domestic Travelers by Province 2011-2020, <http://statbbi.nso.go.th/staticreport/page/sector/en/17.aspx>

Bangkok	3.39	3.38	3.35	3.30	3.36	3.29	3.20	3.13	3.09	2.59
Chiang Mai	3.24	3.26	3.19	3.12	3.11	3.05	2.94	2.93	2.86	2.72
Phuket	2.98	3.00	2.87	2.74	2.70	2.75	2.76	2.72	2.67	2.57

Figure 8 indicated that the top 3 preferred place to hold the mass sport event are seaside (25%), mountain (19%), and downtown (17%). In Thailand, Phuket, Rayong, Pattaya are popular destinations for marathon along seaside, such as Rayong Marathon, Laguna Phuket International Marathon, Pattaya Marathon, Bangkok is a popular marathon destination in downtown, such as BDMS Bangkok Marathon, Bangkok Midnight Marathon, Chiang Mai is a popular marathon destination with heritage and mountain. The research result in this study could be in line with the current marathon map in Thailand.

Figure 8 where do you prefer to organize the sport event



Discussions

(Andela 2019)'s research stated that sport tourism was a possible and useful way to minimize the negative effects from "seasonality of tourism", to diversify and improve the quality of tourism offer. As pointed out in (Nivhaphat Surawattananon, 2021)'s report, there are concentration risk of travelling seasons for Thai tourism sector with peak season in the first and fourth quarters. Promoting the development of sport tourism can be beneficiary to Thai tourism sector both in the short run and long run.

This study is aimed at exploring what can influence Thai people's motivation to travel for sport tourism in Thailand and identifying sport tourist's characteristics so that it can give implications for the policymaker and market participants to improve sport tourist targeting, to optimize tourist offer and improve the quality and attractiveness of sport tourism destination.

In (Jirasanyansakul & Vongsaroj, 2019)'s research, it found Thai sport tourism destination's competitiveness was consisted of four main features that are sport attraction, tourism attraction, destination management and demand condition. (Harrison-Hill & Chalip, 2005)'s research demonstrated that infrastructure and services' quality were the basic components to support the enhancement of sport tourists' experience and sport tourism marketing need sport host and sport tourism destination's collaboration to increase the cross leverage. According to the data analysis result in the survey, this study made discussion from three dimensions: 1) sport tourist's sociological and psychological characteristics; 2) sport tourism activities development; 3) sport tourism destination management.

Sport tourist

In the data analysis of social demographic factors, there is a negative relationship between age and sport tourism motivation. There is no significant relationship between sport tourism motivation and level of education, income. More female is participating in the sport tourism activity. People exercising regularly is more likely to have the motivation to participate in sport tourism activities. According to these findings, a typical portrait for sport tourist can be inferred that are good education background, doing exercise regularly, no gender difference and higher desire than basic physiological needs. The reasons behind these features are thought to be: 1) effect of non-economic factors is amplified, such as awareness of health and fitness, the effect of cost or income is to be diminished. Research has showed that people's consciousness of health and fitness has improved during the struggling with Covid-19, which stimulates them putting more concern on exercise and have more motivation to participate in sport tourism activities with less sensitivity on price when they step into the higher motivation level than basic physiological needs; 2) mass sport, such as marathon, hiking, triathlon, is not as expensive as luxury sport, such as golf, horseback riding, is not too difficult for ordinary people to acquire the skills, and is easier to get access to since there are plenty of mass sport events in different places and through the whole year; 3) female is becoming more active in the society as more female can get higher education, for example, in 2020, around 1.07 million female

enrolled in the higher education in Thailand, for male the number is 0.81 million¹⁹. The world bank statistic has showed population of female is 51.4% in Thailand and female population has been increasing in the past decades²⁰. Female is very prone to incorporate social media into their lifestyle, is more skilled at generating content about social life, such as food, travel, feelings. Sport tourism activities can be a good moment for social media communication.

The portrait of sport tourist can provide more information for sport tourism market participants to gauge what targeted sport tourist are. When the picture of targeted sport tourist is much clearer, a more effective marketing strategy can be come out to communicate with the targeted market accurately and directly. Sport tourism operators should put more efforts on the quality enhancement of sport tourism since the targeted customer is likely to be less sensitive to cost as they are well-educated and have a higher desire than basic physiological needs, who is more willing to pay for sport tourism provided that the value of the sport tourism can match with the cost. In other word, sport tourism participants should think about how to increase the contribution through the improvement of sport tourism's quality and experience, not rely on attracting sport tourist by low price strategy.

Sport tourism activities

In the data analysis of travel related factors, people prefer to travel with companion, friends, or family. Normally, 3-5 days length of stay for domestica travel is more popular for Thai people. People more anticipate sport event to be held along the seaside, near the mountain, or across the downtown. In the data analysis of Sport Tourism Motivation Scale, there is positive relationship between sport tourism motivation and “the specific sport event has high reputation”, “to test my limit”, “to improve relationship with family”. Positive effect of “to test my limit” shows that sport event should focus more on the competitiveness nature of sport to make sport participants enjoy the sport and get a feeling of challenge in the sport activity. For example, for the sport hotel, it should have a clear understanding of what sport facility it can provide and what the difficulty level of its training equipment and course are. In the meantime, people are very concerned about the reputation of the sport event organizer since a high reputation is more likely to provide higher guarantee on the quality and safety of the sport event. In other word, these findings can infer that sport event organizer should continue to improve the quality of sport event and promote the

¹⁹ Number of higher education students in Thailand in 2020, by gender, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1261687/thailand-number-enrolled-students-in-higher-education-by-gender/>

²⁰ Population, female (% of total population) – Thailand, The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.FE.ZS?locations=TH>

image of specific sport event to increase people's fondness and trust on its sport tourism offer. Travelling with family or friends, 3-5 days length of stay, and "to improve relationship with family" indicate that sport tourism market participants should not ignore the basic characteristic of sport tourism that is a combination of sport and tourism. Sport tourism offer should also take the travel demand of sport participant's companion into consideration. Other tourism activities can be provided, such as green tour, like farm and featured town attraction, local culture tour, like local heritage and dishes, to improve the attractiveness for family or friends, and increase overall quality of sport tourism offer as well as sport tourism's contribution to local community. On the other hand, more amazing tourism attractions or activities can also support the preference of 3-4 days length of stay.

Sport tourism destination

(Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977) stated that a destination image is a collection of knowledge, impressions, thoughts, imaginations, and feeling an individual or group might have of a particular place. People's attitude or expectation on sport tourism destination can dramatically influence their decision-making, experience, and evaluation in the sport travel. Promoting the image and improving the quality of sport tourism destination is a requisite for sport tourism's sustainable development. In this study, the research result showed that sport tourism motivation is positive related to "The destination is convenient to arrive". It will consume people's energy and reduce their excitement and expectation on the sport tourism activities when the inter-city transportation and intra-city traffic are not convenient enough. The condition of road, the diversity and convenience of vehicle are vital factors for a good travel experience, which plays an important role in people's decision for travel, especially for sport tourism since people would expect to save energy and time to participate in specific sport activities. No matter on the level of country, or on the level of city, improving the condition of transportation is vital for tourism sector's development. For sport tourism destination, compared with inter-city transportation improvement, it has more initiative to facilitate the intra-city traffic, such as public transportation supply in the city, road maintenance and development, convenient connection between sport event place and hotel.

Thailand has diversified and amazing tourism resources, its natural landscape, such as island, beach, mountain, impressive culture, such as heritage architecture, Buddhism temple, local folk sport, Muay Thai, and its popularity as global tourism destination, bring advantages for the sport tourism development. Except for the transportation improvement, sport tourism market participants should also put resources and make improvement on the hospitality service capability, sport tourism activity development, and sport infrastructure enhancement. To promote the image of sport tourism

destination, sport tourism market participants should make efforts to holding more international or regional sport events to improve Thai sport tourism destination's reputation, enhance people's trust and recognition on Thai sport tourism, such as motorcycle race, badminton competition, marathon. However, the hospitality service capability, such as accommodation, whether the number of rooms can be enough to serve all the sport participants and their family or friends, should be considered seriously, which obviously affects tourist's experience and satisfaction. In addition, except for large-scale sport event, it can make use of the abundant natural and cultural resources in Thailand to hold small-scale sport event that request less investment and make contribution to the local community and economy as well, such as marathon, triathlon along seaside to attract domestic sport tourist for 3 days stay. Furthermore, as government's promotion, Muay Thai can be an outstanding symbol for image development of Thai sport tourism destination.

In summary, sport tourism market participants, especially the government agency should make a systemic plan or strategy to develop sport event in Thailand, balance international sport event or large-scale sport event with small-scale sport event, facilitate transportation, improve sport infrastructure and facility, optimize sport tourism offer, and enhance overall hospitality service capability, to make use of limited resources to produce maximum contribution, improve the overall image and quality of Thailand as popular and world-class sport tourism destination.

Limitations

This study applied questionnaire survey to collect data which the samples were from two commercial banks and two public parks at the central area in Bangkok, 96% respondent are well educated with bachelor or above degree. The research result may be varied if the sample was expanded to different level of social class or extended to diversified group with different job, different education level. Furthermore, to narrow down the scope of sport tourism to simplify the questionnaire for respondent to answer, this study made the research on people's motivation to travel for mass sport event, such as marathon, hiking, biking, swimming, the research result may not suitable for some specific sport tourism activities, such as golf, horseback riding, which are only accessible and affordable for a small group.

Conclusion

This study is aimed at investigating what can influence people's behaviors motivation to travel for sport tourism in Thailand, gaining an in-depth understanding of sport tourist's portrait and the pull-push motives to travel for sport tourism. Survey questionnaire was utilized in this study to collect original data and make quantitative analysis. Three steps were utilized in the data analysis: first step was examining social demographic characteristics to get an initial and basic outline of sport tourists; second step was analyzing the pull motives: sport-related, travel-related, and destination attribute factors to paint a portrait for the sport tourists; third step was exploring what push their motivation to participate in sport tourism activities by performing Ordered Logit Regression to examine variables' significance and sign.

The research result illustrated the typical features of sport tourist are no gender difference, good education background, exercise regularly, more likely to be less sensitive to cost, and higher desire than basic physiological needs. Sport tourism market participant was recommended to highlight sport activities' nature of Competition to gain more fondness and trust since "to test limit" and "high reputation of sport event" are showed significant relationship in this study and diversify sport travel offer to match with sport tourist's features of 3-5 days stay, and preference of companion with friends or family. Furthermore, in this study sport tourism destination's development was thought to be a vital pull factor influencing people's motivation to travel for sport tourism. Sport tourism destination should facilitate transportation system, develop sport infrastructure, enhance hospitality service capacity, and hold international sport event and small-scale sport event, to improve its competitiveness and reputation as a premium sport tourism destination.

Along with the new travel trend and increasing consciousness of health and fitness, as a combination of sport and tourism, sport tourism is to be valuable niche market for Thai tourism's sustainable development. Sport tourism practitioner or marketer can refer to the research result in this study to improve customer targeting, optimize sport tourist offer manage the image of sport tourism destination. However, this study can't avoid the limitation from assumption, sampling and analyzing methods. More academic research and experimental analysis on sport tourist motivation should be conducted to further provide support for sport tourism's sustainable and competitive development.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Questionnaire: What can motivate you to participate in mass sport tourism

Mass sport tourism mainly indicates travelling to a destination to participate in a specific mass sport activity such as marathon, cycling, triathlon, etc.

Part1. Please answer the following questions to provide your basic information.

1. What is your age?
 - a. 18-25
 - b. 26-35
 - c. 35-45
 - d. 46-55
 - e. Above 55

2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Transgender
 - d. Prefer not to answer

3. What is your nationality?
 - a. Thai
 - b. Non-Thai

4. What is your education level?
 - a. High school
 - b. Bachelor's degree
 - c. Master's degree
 - d. Ph.D. or higher
 - e. Others

5. What is marital status?
 - a. Single
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Widowed
 - e. Others

6. What is your employment status?
 - a. Employed for government department or state-owner enterprise
 - b. Employed for non-state owned enterprise
 - c. Self-employed
 - d. Out-of-work
 - e. Homemaker
 - f. Student
 - g. Retired
 - h. Others

-
7. What is your annual household income?
 - a. Below THB 500,000
 - b. THB 500,000 – 1,000,000
 - c. THB 1,000,000 – 2,000,000
 - d. THB 2,000,000 – 5,000,000
 - e. THB 5,000,000 – 10,000,000
 - f. Above THB 10,000,000

 8. How many children do you have?
 - a. None
 - b. 1 child
 - c. 2 children
 - d. 3 children
 - e. More than 3 children

 9. How frequently do you exercise every week?
 - a. No exercise
 - b. 1 time
 - c. 2 times
 - d. 3 times
 - e. 4 times
 - f. Above 4 times

 10. Who are you travelling with? (You can select multiple choices)
 - a. Alone
 - b. Friend(s)
 - c. Family
 - d. Others

 11. Please select the length of stay you can accept for the travel domestically.
 - a. 1 day
 - b. 2 days
 - c. 3 days
 - d. 4 days
 - e. 5 days
 - f. 6 days
 - g. 7 days and above

 12. Have you ever participated in the mass sport event such as marathon, cycling, triathlon, hiking, etc. organized in Thailand?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

 13. If you are going to participate in a mass sport event such as marathon, cycling, triathlon, where do you prefer in the following places? (You can select multiple choices)
 - a. Downtown area
 - b. Suburb area

- c. Seaside area
- d. Mountain area
- e. Rural area
- f. Cultural area
- g. Others

Part2. Do you agree with the followings as the reasons when considering participating in a mass sport event such as marathon, cycling, triathlon, hiking, etc.

- 14. The destination is convenient to arrive.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

- 15. The travel cost can be affordable.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

- 16. The destination's tourism can be attractive. There are other attractions or activities in the destination except for the sport activity itself.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

- 17. The specific sport event has a high reputation, for example, organized for many years, some outstanding influencer participating in it.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

- 18. To interact with others.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

- 19. To improve relationships with family.

- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
20. To gain a feeling of belonging.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
21. To relieve stress and tension.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
22. To avoid the hustle of daily life.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
23. To get close to nature.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
24. To enjoy physical competition.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
25. To get a feeling of achievement
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

26. To test my limit.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
27. To discover new thing.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
28. To seek stimulation.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
29. Do you have the interest in attending mass sport event such as marathon, cycling, triathlon, etc. organized in Thailand in the future?
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

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