



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF SPORT TOURISTS VISITING  
SABAH, MALAYSIA***

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**TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF SPORT TOURISTS VISITING SABAH,  
MALAYSIA**

**By**

**ERICA E DOLINTING**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

**May 2014**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF SPORT TOURISTS VISITING SABAH,  
MALAYSIA**

By

**ERICA E DOLINTING**

**May 2014**

**Chairman : Professor Aminuddin bin Yusof, PhD**

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The knowledge on sport tourist behaviours is essential as it can be used as a basis for market segmentation, product positioning, destination development and marketing strategies in tourism. While there is no doubt that Malaysia has a huge potential for arrivals of sport tourists to Sabah showed positive growth in spite of the research of sport tourism in Malaysia still at low. The knowledge on the sport tourism in Sabah is still at scarce making it difficult to implement right marketing strategy without the availability of latest sport tourism data. Therefore, it is of extreme importance the information on the sport tourists to be discovered. So, the purpose of this study was to gain knowledge on the sport tourist behaviour based on their desire and needs for travelling and factors that attracted them to visit Sabah. The demographic profiles and travel characteristics were also used for segmenting sport tourism market. The push and pull theory was adopted as research framework. The Leisure Motivation Scale and 23-semantic differential scale instrument were utilized to measure the push motives and pull factors. Analyses of data include descriptive statistics, t-test and logistic regression.

A total sample of 301 active sport tourists was drawn from two sport tourism destinations of different districts in Sabah (Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu). It was found out that, in both locations, majority of the respondents were international active sport tourists. Comparison between domestic and international active sport tourists were carried out as it would provide a better picture on how much sport tourism market affected the economy of Sabah. Statistically, at Sipadan Island, domestic active sport tourists were significantly more motivated by four push motives than international sport tourists. The four push motives include competence-mastery, intellectual, stimulus avoidance and social factors. The main push factor behind active sport tourists visiting Sipadan Island was intellectual motive or the associated feeling of satisfying curiosity, learning new things and expand knowledge as well as learning about self. At Mount Kinabalu, domestic active sport tourists were significantly more motivated by the competence mastery and social motives

compare to international active sport tourists. With respect to the pull factors, analysis of result from the logistic regression shows there was no significant difference in perceptions of Sipadan Island between the domestic and international active sport tourists. However, there were few attributes which has been identified to possess impacts at Mount Kinabalu which include busy, crowded, inland, individualistic, adult oriented, inexpensive, safe, far away and international for the international active sport tourists. The domestic active sport tourists on the other hand, perceived Mount Kinabalu as quiet, coastal, deserted, group and family oriented, expensive, risky, close to home and domestic.

The findings of this study not only provides theoretical implications but as well implied some practical implications such as (1) certain push motives should be emphasized and then effectively promoted to fulfil the various needs of active sport tourists visiting Sabah at different destinations; (2) market segmentation for sport tourism in Sabah may also be made based on age group and travel characteristics which include type, size and length of vacation and (3) the identification of different perceptions of Mount Kinabalu by domestic and international active sport tourists can be used as a tool for product positioning by tourism marketer.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**MOTIVASI PERJALANAN PELANCONG SUKAN MELAWAT SABAH,  
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Pengetahuan terhadap tingkah laku pelancong sukan adalah penting kerana ia boleh digunakan sebagai asas untuk segmentasi pasaran, kedudukan produk, pembangunan destinasi dan strategi pemasaran dalam pelancongan. Tidak dinafikan bahawa Malaysia mempunyai potensi besar untuk pelancongan di dunia terutama dalam pelancongan sukan. Kebelakangan ini, kedatangan pelancong sukan ke Sabah menunjukkan pertumbuhan positif walaupun kajian mengenai pelancongan sukan di Malaysia masih kurang menyebabkan kesukaran untuk melaksanakan strategi pemasaran yang tepat tanpa adanya data terkini berkenaan pelancongan sukan. Oleh itu, adalah menjadi satu kepentingan bagi maklumat tentang pelancong sukan ini untuk dikenalpasti. Maka, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mendapatkan pengetahuan mengenai tingkahlaku pelancong sukan berdasarkan keinginan dan keperluan perjalanan serta faktor-faktor yang menarik mereka untuk melawat Sabah. Profil demografik dan ciri-ciri perjalanan juga digunakan untuk pengsegmentasian pasaran pelancong sukan. Teori tolakan dan tarikan telah digunakan sebagai kerangka kajian untuk mengkaji motivasi perjalanan pelancong sukan melawat Sabah. *Leisure Motivation Scale* dan instrumen *23-semantic differential scale* telah digunakan untuk mengukur motif tolakan dan faktor tarikan. Analisis data termasuklah statistik deskriptif, ujian t dan regresi logistik.

Sejumlah 301 sampel pelancong sukan aktif telah diambil daripada dua destinasi pelancongan sukan di daerah yang berlainan di Sabah (Pulau Sipadan dan Gunung Kinabalu). Kajian mendapati di kedua-dua lokasi, majoriti responden adalah pelancong sukan aktif antrabangsa. Secara statistik, di Pulau Sipadan, pelancong sukan aktif domestik secara signifikannya lebih bermotivasi dengan keempat-empat motif tolakan iaitu faktor *competence-mastery*, intelektual, *stimulus-avoidance* dan sosial. Faktor menolak utama di pelancong sukan aktif melawat Pulau Sipadan adalah motif intelek atau perasaan yang berkenaan dengan memuaskan rasa ingin tahu, mempelajari perkara baru dan mengembangkan pengetahuan dan juga mempelajari tentang diri. Di Gunung Kinabalu, pelancong sukan aktif domestik

secara signifikannya lebih bermotivasi dengan motif *competence-mastery* dan sosial berbanding pelancong sukan aktif antarabangsa. Berkenaan dengan faktor tarikan, hasil analisis regresi logistik menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi terhadap Pulau Sipadan di antara pelancong sukan aktif domestik dan antarabangsa. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat beberapa atribut yang telah dikenalpasti untuk memiliki impak di Gunung Kinabalu termasuklah sibuk, sesak, pedalaman, individualistic, berorientasikan dewasa, murah, selamat, jauh dan antarabangsa kepada pelancong sukan aktif antarabangsa. Bagi pelancong sukan aktif domestik, Gunung Kinabalu dilihat sebagai sunyi, pinggir pantai, terasing, berorientasikan kumpulan dan keluarga, mahal, berisiko, dekat dengan rumah dan domestik.

Dapatan kajian ini bukan sahaja menyediakan implikasi secara teoritikal malah menyarankan beberapa implikasi praktikal seperti (1) motif tolakan tertentu perlu ditekankan dan seterusnya dipromosikan secara efektif bagi memenuhi pelbagai keperluan pelancong sukan aktif yang melawat Sabah di destinasi yang berbeza; (2) segmentasi untuk pasaran pelancongan sukan di Sabah juga boleh dibuat berdasarkan kumpulan umur dan ciri-ciri perjalanan seperti jenis, saiz dan tempoh percutian dan (3) pengenalpastian persepsi yang berbeza terhadap Gunung Kinabalu oleh pelancong sukan aktif domestik boleh digunakan sebagai alat untuk penempatan produk oleh pemarkas pelancongan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 May 2014 to conduct the final examination of Erica E Dolinting on her thesis entitled "Travel Motivations of Sport Tourists Visiting Sabah, Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WTO	World Tourism Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
WTTC	World Travel Tourism Council
LMS	Leisure Motivation Scale
DI	Destination Image
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background

Tourism is an activity that occurs outside the routine setting, for a specific reason at a certain period of time (WTO, 1995). It has been recognized to serve various purpose of travelling such as for business, healthcare or sport for not more than a consecutive year. For over a period of time, tourism which is happening world-wide has undergone continued development. Today it appears to be one of the largest and important sectors in the world with the amount of US\$1.3 trillion in exports and 5 to 6 billion of domestic tourists in 2012 (WTO, 2013).

According to WTO (2013), the arrivals of international tourist in 2012 showed positive growth in every region and the percentage of increase was 4%, reaching billion figures for the first time (1.035 billion). It also has become a major player in the international commerce and become highly competitive as it brings direct impacts to various sectors especially in the service sector of the economy. Its significance as an economic drive especially in creating job opportunities, international exchange and development in the destination and transportation infrastructures (Kim et al., 2012; WTO, 2012) were among many reasons for many countries to treat tourism as the main income sources including Malaysia.

Malaysia was listed in the top ten international tourism destinations in 2009 to 2011 which indicated that the country was ranked as the ninth most visited place in the world (WTO, 2012). In 2012, a total of 7% of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was the result of direct contribution from the Travel and Tourism making the total FR Q W U L E X W L R Q R I (WTTTC 2013), As the international tourist arrivals to Malaysia continue to increase, there is no doubt that Malaysia has a huge SRWHQWLDO IRU WKH ZRUOG ¶ V WRXULVP 7KH JRYHUQP to grow and contribute greatly to the socio-economy especially as a leading generator of jobs in the country (WTTTC, 2013). Continuous demand from the growing market has tourism as one of major diverse industry in Malaysia today.

Of all components in tourism, sport tourism appears to be the most emerging tourism portion in Malaysia (Ong HW DO 0DOD \ VLD ZDV DZDUGHG I Sports Tourism Destination in 2011 by the World Travel Awards. As the country offers a wide range of outdoor adventure sports, active sport tourism is by far the most diverse and draws the most participants. It is supported by Yusof et al (2009) stating that the fact that sport tourism in Malaysia has been increasingly growing is not new especially in the participatory sports.

In Malaysia, the state of Sabah depends on tourism as its largest industries to support its economy (Norton, 2010). Sabah is recognized to offer very special places for sport tourism experiences. It covers a range of opportunities from coastal/island to highland activities which include the Sipadan Island for scuba diving and snorkeling activity and mountain climbing at Mount Kinabalu (Lew, 2011; Ong & Musa, 2011). Sipadan Island which appears to be one of the most popular scuba diving islands in Malaysia (Ong & Musa, 2011) is located in the Celebes Sea off the east coast of Sabah, East Malaysia. The amazing diversity and abundance of various types of marine life like thousand species of fishes, hundreds species of corals and turtles (Ong & Musa, 2011). The island has also been acknowledged to attract international scuba divers since 1980s (Musa, 2002). The highest mountain in South East Asia, Mount Kinabalu is also located in Sabah. Mount Kinabalu which dominates most of the Kinabalu Park World Heritage site is the home for great diversity of flora and fauna. The climbing trails comprise both lower elevations which are mostly soils and the granite rock on the summit plateau. Mount Kinabalu is also the host for the yearly world class sport event, the International Climbathon.

Recall from tourism description earlier, sport tourism is a form of activity that involves people travelling away from primary residence for the purpose of participating in a sport activity for recreation or competition. It is also include travelling for the purpose of watching sport events or visiting sport attractions at a specific time (Gibson, 1998). Specifically, Hinch & Higham (2011) suggested there were two types of sport tourism; active sport tourism and passive sport tourism. Active sport tourism is related to the participation of tourists to the sporting experiences while passive sport tourism concerned with the activity of attending and observing the sporting events (Hall, 1992).

As participants are the main character in the active sport tourism activity, it is important to recognize who this people are. Participants are referred to the active sport tourism market which includes individual or group who travel for the purpose of pursuing physical involvement in the sporting experiences (Hinch & Higham, 2011). Gibson (1998) specified the people whose purpose was to engage in leisure-based activity while on vacation (activity participants) as the active sport tourist. Gammon & Robinson (2003) make the distinction of participants by focusing at their primary motivation for travelling using the hard and soft definition of sport tourism. The hard definition is related to the two types of participants at competitive sporting event, namely active and passive sport tourists. Meanwhile, there is only the primarily active participant in the soft definition which is known as active sport tourist who engages in the recreational sport.

### 1.1.1 Travel Motivation

People travel for several different purposes. The sport tourists are without exceptions possess diverse reason for travelling. Gibson (2004) in his study on explaining sport tourists behaviour described that the purpose of travelling was related to motivation.

She mentioned that the reason why people choose to travel can be simply explained IURP WKH μPRWLYDWLRQ¶ SRLQW RI YLHZ \$V KDUG D motivation in the general tourism, same scenario occurs in the context of sport tourism due to reason not all sport tourist perceive motives in the same way.

Travel motivation has been discussed by many scholars in various approaches (Cohen, 1972; Pizam, 1999; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Dann, 1981). Cohen (1972) YLHZHG WUDYHO PRWLYDWLRQ WR EH D UHVSQRQVH WF Pizam (1999), deli QHDWHV WUDYHO GHVWLQDWLRQ DV <sup>3</sup>D V predisposes a person to act in a specific touristic goal- GLUHFWHG ZD\ ` \$QRV particular explanation of travel motivation was done by Crompton & McKay (1997). They defined it using the concept of homeostasis. According to this concept, SV\FKRORJLFDO VWUDLQV GLVHTXLOLEULXP ZLWKLQ I or needs in life. In order to neutralize the disequilibrium, a decision to travel to fulfil the desire and need is made. For example, travel is a response to the desire for relaxation. In other words, the need for relaxations can be fed via travelling activity.

'DQQ FDPH XS ZLWK GHILQLWLRQ RI WUDYHO PRW PLQG ZKLFK DGHTXDWHO\ GLVSRVHV DQ LQGLYLGXDO simplified travel motivation by making distinction on two things, in which he came up with specific terms for his idea namely, push and pull factors (Dann, 1981). From 'DQQ¶V SHUVSHFWLYH RI WUDYHO PRWLYDWLRQ SXVK what makes people travel and what makes them choose a particular destination over another (McCabe, 2000; Snepeger et al., 2006). Dann also rationalized that the descriptions of these two factors could lead to explanation on overall travel motivation. They as well may provide insight to the decision making process of the traveller (Kim et al., 2012). The push factor which is also known as motives can be understood by taking the following scenario as an example; individual need to be motivated (having desire) by something in order for him to travel. For example, the GHVLUH <sup>3</sup>WR EH DFWLYH´ ZLOO EH UHVSQRQGHG WR E\ <sup>3</sup>W particular sport tourism destination (pull factor). Specifically, the pull factors could explain the attractions or attributes of destination which suits the interest of the individual (climate, culture, safety, people and more).

Stimulus avoidance and competence mastery were examples of push factors identified by Beard & Ragheb (1983). Crompton (1979) discovered seven socio-psychological motives associated with tourism which includes escape, self-exploration, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relations and social interaction were related to individual behaviour. In response to this push motives, the decision to travel was carried out. Crompton (1979) however termed pull factor as cultural motives (e.g., novelty and education). In some other tourism research cases, pull factors can also be seen as destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Crompton, 1979; Esper & Rateike, 2010).

Destination image is important as it describes the distinction and appealing features of a destination. It provides information on one specific place based on the psychological and functional characteristics together with attributes and holistic impressions (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). As tourism industry has been evolved through centuries, more areas across the globe are developed for this purpose.

Crompton (1979) stated that the building of destination image consume a lot of money from most sections in the tourist industry. He refers destination image as an individual collection of opinion on beliefs, ideas and impressions of one destination.

Since a variety of destinations exist across the globe, alternatives for active sport tourism opportunities grow vigorously and created great challenges in the tourism marketing (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Hence, tourism marketers now need to deal not only with the complexity of push motives but also with competitions from other destinations. In addition, Weed & Bull (2004) remarked some opinion on the participation in the active sport tourism such as the awareness for healthy lifestyle. As many people are increasingly aware about the benefits of wellness, the market for active participation has increased which has led to the development of the activity-based vacations all over the world.

While demands from the sport tourism market are growing, the need for appropriate supply of sport tourism products and services are crucial. Today, the abundance of sport tourist destinations exist around the globe offering various and unique sport experiences to attract visitors. This phenomenon created tough competition among the sport tourism destinations because potential tourists have the opportunities to choose a destination that best suits their interest. A destination needs to be favourably distinguished from its competitors through effective positioning as well as right promotions in this regard. Attaining a universal structure in destination image perception may be difficult given that each destination has a unique social and natural environment and each tourist has their own perceptual filters such as age and nationalities.

However, as far as it is accepted that motivational theories would assist in explaining sport tourism behaviour, motivation alone is complicated. The idea to anticipate demographic and travel characteristics for greater understanding on the influential factors of travel decision making process should as well be considered (Gibson, 2004). As revealed by literatures (Mohammad & Som, 2010; Gibson, Willming & Holdnak, 2003; Jang & Cai, 2002) profiles and preferences of sport tourists need to be recognised, studied and documented so that destination marketers can establish a strong correspondence between the push motives (intellectual or social motives) and pull factors (price, destination attributes).

For this study, the state of Sabah was chosen because of its potential to offer perfect opportunities for adventurer and sport activity participation compared to the other states in the country. Particularly, there were several spots in Sabah which has been recognized as world-class sport tourism destination. These include Sipadan Island as RQH RI WKH WRS GLYLQJ VLWHV LQ WKH ZRUOG ferrata for mountain torq at Mount Kinabalu certified by Guinness World Records. The existence of abundant natural resources and their physical significance assists Sabah economy to get more travel deals (Som et al., 2012) aiming especially at the international tourists.

Many studies have focused on to XUL VWV¶ PRWLYDWLRQ \HW OLWWO GLVWLQFWLRQV EHWZHHQ QDWLRQDO JURXSLQJV 'HPR of a destination vary according to country of origin (Jönsson & Devonish, 2008; Armstrong et al., 1997; Danaher & Arweiler, 1996). In the sport tourism context,

Musa, Kadir & Lee (2006), discovered that sport tourists from Eastern market (China, Korea and Japan), European market and domestic market requires different needs and services in the scuba diving activity.

7KHUHIRUH WKH QHHG WR DGGUHV V RQ ERWK GRPHV motivations is crucial because it is improper to assume that all type of tourists have the same reasons to visit (Knop, 1999). Besides, in order to obtain more comprehensive data on push and pull factors, it would be worthwhile to include and compare both domestic and international tourists (Prayag, 2012). This comparison is beneficial as it contributes insights to the economic development. For example, the failure to maintain the positive growth of international arrival would consider disadvantage as international receipts can be increased especially through international passenger transport (WTO, 2012).

Thus, it is critical to understand factors that would move people to travel and choose a particular destination in order to understand sport tourism behaviour. Once the knowledge of the behaviour is captured, the information could be used as a basis for market segmentation, product or destination development and marketing strategies.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Sport tourism is an important global phenomenon in which many have studied this topic (Lamont & McKay, 2012). 'HVSLWH WKH VLJQLILFDQFH RI RSS tourism, little interest was given to active sport tourism in Sabah in terms of academic status. Yusof et al., (2009) in their study on sport tourists at Lake Kenyir, Malaysia reported travel motivations of three types of sport tourists (sport excursionist, passive and active sport tourist). Another sport tourism studies on scuba divers by Musa (2006) in Layang\_Layang Island and Musa (2010) in Sipadan Island both reported satisfaction of divers to the respective islands in general. Other domestic studies on travel motivations was carried out by Yousefi & Marzuki (2012) focusing on the international visitors to Penang, Malaysia and Abd Aziz, Sulaiman & Musa (2010) in their travel motivation study on domestic (Malaysian) travellers alone. Generally, all these studies managed to identify the distribution of domestic and international visitors in terms of their demographic profiles. However the comparison on their push and pull factors for travelling to Malaysia is missed out specifically previous studies did not compare the motivations and perceptions of domestic and international sport tourists. As people are unique, came from different cultures and places (Hofstede, 1991), their motivations are also diverse. Thus, it would be interesting to understand what differentiate between domestic and international sport tourists. Without this information, it is impossible to address any practical issues concerning the development and marketing matters.

As much as the information on sport tourism behaviour is affecting the tourism marketing activities, its effects on the economy sector also essentially yet still unknown. A distinction between the domestic and international sport tourist would provide a better picture on how much sport tourism market affected the economy of

Sabah. Nationalities may determine the extent of common resemblance between a  
GHVWLQDWLRQ DQG WKH WRXULVW ¶V KRPH FRXQWU \ I  
influencing destination choice for those seeking familiar experiences. In short,  
undertaking cross- QDWLRQDOLW \ JU R X S e j u e d E s a h S t d i t i v e Y a r k t  
VHJPHQDWLRQ YDULDEOH DQG I n d i v e x o g H e r e v e s D Q G L Q J  
in terms of pull factors, particularly destination attributes (Prayag & Ryan, 2011).

Accordingly, the result of this study would be a useful resource by offering potential  
directions to respective practitioners. It can be a tool for the marketers to classify  
tourists and understand their behaviour (market segmentation). Destination planners  
FDQ D F F X U D W H O \ P D W F K W K H G H V W L Q D W L R Q W e p a r t i c u l a r V H U Y L I  
type of tourists. As a result, the full potential of sport tourism market in the state can  
be achieved at its optimum level in the future. Therefore, in a very competitive sport  
tourism market, the purpose of this current study is to gain understanding and  
knowledge on the sport tourism behaviour based on their desire and needs for  
travelling and factors that attracted them to visit Sabah (pull). This study contributes  
to that end.

### 1.3 Research Objectives

1. To identify the demographic and travel characteristics of sport tourists visiting Sabah.
2. To identify the recreational tourism activities engaged by sport tourists visiting Sabah.
3. To compare the push motives of sport tourists visiting Sabah.
4. To compare the pull factors of sport tourists visiting Sabah.

### 1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the demographic profiles of sport tourists visiting Sabah?
2. What are the travel characteristics of sport tourists visiting Sabah?
3. Are there any significant differences between domestic and international sport tourists with respect to the push motives of visiting Sabah at Sipadan Island?
4. Are there any significant differences between domestic and international sport tourists with respect to the push motives visiting Sabah at Mount Kinabalu?
5. Are there any significant differences between domestic and international sport tourists with respect to the pull factors of visiting Sabah at Sipadan Island?
6. Are there any significant differences between domestic and international sport tourists with respect to the pull factors of visiting Sabah at Mount Kinabalu?

## **1.5 Significance of Study**

This study is significant in that it is consistent with previous tourism research focusing on the motivational factor for tourists to visit places (Dann, 1977; Crompton 1979; Ryan, 1998; Mohammad & Som, 2010). It contributes to the body of knowledge by using the push and pull theory to identify tourist motivation and opinion of tourists on destination attributes in the sport tourism setting. The research also attempts to make a contribution in the literature by being the first to adopt push and pull theory in examining the sport tourist motivations in Malaysia.

With the growth of sport tourism in Sabah, it is crucial to know what the sport tourism industry is able to contribute to the destination. This research provides practical value by gathering information on push-pull factors, demographic profile as well as travel characteristics.

Thus, it may be possible to identify accurately the sport tourist now. This is essential for the marketing purposes especially targeting the international market as domestic and international sport tourists definitely in favour different types of necessities while travelling. From the findings of the study, it will provide insights and recommendations to the tourism authority in terms of destination development and sport marketing strategy so that the positive growth of tourist arrivals can be maintained and weaknesses on the pull factors can be improved.

## **1.6 Limitations**

According to Campbell & Stanley (1963), identification of sources of invalidity in a study is significant as the limitations provide information about quality of the conditions under which the study took place. The results of the study were limited by few factors.

First, according to the Hawthorne Effect, individual behaviours may be altered as they know they are being study (Adair, 1984). Respondents could falsify their responses to provide only socially acceptable responses.

Secondly, in terms of instrumentation, the destination attributes and leisure motivations are measured by scale items (close-ended). Some personal motives or rare attributes felt by the sport tourists that are not included in the questionnaires items will be missed therefore the overall push and pull factors of the destination could not be measured. In addition, the Push-Pull Instrument will be translated from English to Malay language so the original meaning of certain terms in the instrument may differ with the new translated version. Since, the instrument will only be in a form of Malay and English language, those sport tourists who cannot read and write in any of this language will definitely be excluded.

Thirdly, potential bias might be occurred because first-time respondents and repeated tourists respondents were not separated. According to Milman & Pizam (1995), these



W Z R J U R X S V J D Y H G L I I H U H Q W V H W R I S H U V S H F W  
questionnaires which were more than 40% incomplete were excluded for analyses.

Fifth, different loss of respondents from the comparison groups of domestic and international sport tourists were obvious (30-70). Sixth, some respondents found that some items/ words in the questionnaire were not well-termed. These lacks of realism issue cause respondents to provide irrelevant response categories. Moreover, since the pilot study and real data collection was conducted by the researcher herself, it is unavoidable that in this study, certain degree of subjectivity can be found.

Lastly, as the instrument has ten pages of close ended questions, it could lead to demoralization. Respondents could get bored while filling up the questionnaire which prevents them to provide honest opinion. They might simply give the answer without reading the items properly. However, no time restriction was given for them to complete the questionnaire, for the researcher to get more accurate data. Also, research assistants were always available to assist the subjects and clarify any questions they do not understand. In addition, the reliability test (internal consistency) was run to make sure the scales used in this instrument were reliable.

## 1.7 Delimitations

Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu were chosen as the main sites of survey because they are the primary destinations for sport tourists visiting Sabah. This study attempts to include both domestic and international sport tourists as respondents. However, samples were not randomly drawn as the convenience sampling technique was used due to the difficulty to get samples and time constraint. However, many have used this sampling procedure especially in the sport tourism setting (Funk, Toohey & Bruun, 2007; Yusof et al, 2012; Hsu & Huang, 2012).

Next, the data collection was conducted over a period of a week which permitted only tourists who travelled/ were travelling during the period of the data collection to be included. This is because of the year round sport tourism because it is only represent from one particular set of tourists (temporal generalization).

Also, it does not include every sport tourism sites in Sabah due to distance and financial constraint (environmental generalization). Last but not least, the results of the proposed study would not be generalized to sport tourists who had previously visited Sabah (population generalization).

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

### 1. Travel Motivation

A meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an individual or group to travel as measured (Dann, 1977). For the purpose of this study, travel motivations refer to the push motives and pull factors that influence sport tourists to visit Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu.

### 2. Push Factors

Any physiological and psychological factors (desires or needs) that exist in an individual that dispose and lead a travel decision making to be carried out (Dann, 1977). In this study, the push factors (the need for competence-mastery, social, stimulus-avoidance and intellectual) of sport tourists visiting Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu were measured by using the total of 32 Leisure Motivation Scale items (Beard & Ragheb, 1983).

### 3. Pull Factors

Factors that lead a person to choose one destination over another once the decision to travel have been made for the purpose to fulfil the needs in the push factors (Dann, 1977). The 23 semantic scales instrument by Attle (1996) was used to measure the (pull factors) destination images and attributes of Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu.

### 4. Destination Image

An individual collection of opinion on beliefs, ideas and impressions of one  
G H V W L Q D W L R Q & U R P S W R Q , W U H I H U V W R W K  
beliefs and impressions of Sipadan Island and Mount Kinabalu.

### 5. Active Sport Tourist

Individuals or groups of people who, while getting a temporary displacement (travelling) and spending time at the destination, actively participate in the recreational sport (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). For this study, the active sport tourists were those people who travel and stay in Sipadan Island or/and Mount Kinabalu for the purpose to actively participate in scuba diving, snorkelling or/and mountain climbing.

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