

IMPACT OF COVID-19: A QUALITATIVE STUDY GOLFING ACTIVITIES FOR SPORTS TOURISM MANAGEMENT IN TERENGGANU

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Received date: 23/10/2021 | Accepted date: 24/11/2021 | Published date: 29/12/2021
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51200/bimpeagajtsd.v10i1.3624>

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore in determining safety guideline and standard operating procedures when conducting golf game activities during the Pandemic Covid-19. The goal of this exploratory study was to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of people who play and manage golf in a pandemic situation using a qualitative approach. Four (4) people male golfers were interviewed for this study and permission were given from the Kuala Terengganu Golf Resort Management (KTGR). The semi-structured interviews were guided by a set of core questions and were designed for the golfer who are directly involved in safety guidelines and standard operating procedures. The investigation showed that golf was a playable and manageable activity throughout the Pandemic Covid-19, and that it drew ongoing involvement, resulting in social relationships and improved well-being.

Keywords: Activity, Golf, Qualitative Study, Covid-19

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Movement Control Order (MCO) announced by the government on 18 March 2020 caused a major change in the living norms of individuals especially in sports activities. Most countries have also taken steps to implement Movement Control Orders (MCOs) to curb the spread of COVID-19 outbreaks as done by the Republic of Cameroon (Ikomey & George, 2020) which imposed social isolation or physical imprisonment orders aimed at breaking the chain of COVID-19 infection. (Hellewell et al., 2020). The application of strict isolation strategies to curb the spread of the virus has given rise to high anxiety as well as risk factor among the world's population (Burtscher J, Burtscher M, & Millet GP, 2020).

In Malaysia, the Movement Control Order (MCO) by the government in line with the closure of government and private premises as well as sectors that do not belong to important services for the country also caused unrest among the community in general. These include playgrounds and public recreation centers that serve as places of recreation and physical activity (Barkley, 2020) for the community in addition to the closure of sports sectors such as gyms and public facilities that usually serve as places of activity with friends and family. This causes, people feel stress and have fewer opportunities to remain physically active (Hall et al., 2020) although the World Health Organization (WHO) states that sports activities provide high health benefits to the heart, mind and body and improve individual well-being holistically (WHO, 2019).

Sports activities become a major protective factor for various types of non-communicable

diseases and improve health and well-being of life (WHO, 2019). WHO has recommended that adults do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity in a week or 500–1000 metabolic equivalent (MET) minutes per week (WHO, 2020). Nevertheless, it was found that there are still about 31% of adults do not achieve adequate sports activities although it is seen as a very important thing (Kohl et al., 2012) in improving quality of life as well as improving health regardless of age and individual status. Furthermore, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a sharp decline in sports activities (Hall et al., 2020) as communities perceive they have fewer opportunities to engage in sports activities due to social isolation or isolation orders imposed by the National Security Council (NSC).

The COVID-19 pandemic is caused by the coronavirus severe acute respiratory syndrome 2 (SARS-CoV2) and is an infectious disease that spreads through respiratory droplets from a person's cough or sneezing (WHO, 2020). Its primary mode of transmission is through respiratory droplets with an incubation time (1–14 days) similar to that of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARSCoV-1) (Emerenci et al., 2020). The disease spreads from human to human very rapidly and has recorded a very high number of deaths. Those who carry the virus usually experience symptoms of pneumonia with symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Most countries have taken proactive measures to curb the spread of the epidemic from continuing to occur with the cooperation of all parties, including the government and the private sector. Among them is to close government and private premises within a specified period except for important sectors of the country such as food, retail, security, health and water (Malaysia Kini News, 16 March 2020). The Movement Control Order (MCO) implemented by the government has indirectly restricted the movement of people from continuing to be active and many think they may have fewer opportunities to do sports activities when in a COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The impetus to remain consistent in performing sports activities despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic may be due to internal pressures that direct behavior to achieve set goals. This urge refers to the term 'desire' which is defined as an energy or urge from within those drives and directs human behavior to achieve a set of goal (Jamaris, 2010). There are two main factors that can be considered, namely the internal and external factors of an individual. These internal factors are referred to as intrinsic motivation while external factors are known as extrinsic motivation. In general, desire is part of an important psychological factor that helps individuals to continue to remain active doing sports activities.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory that underlies sports motivation to remain consistent in performing physical activities is self-efficacy or 'Self-Determination Theory' (SDT). SDT influences internal and external factors that drive persistent behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985) in practicing a healthy lifestyle. External factors are driven by efforts to achieve external rewards (Brown, 2006). Internal factors driven by internal rewards such as internally acquired interest support persistent behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Deci & Ryan (1985) proposed three key psychological requirements necessary to achieve optimal levels of intrinsic motivation, including competence, relationships and autonomy. Competence means that a person believes in one's ability to remain active in sports activities. Social connections will be acquired once they are active and involved in the community through involvement in sports activities while autonomy is an individual's control over decisions related to their sports activities.

One of the multidimensional constructs of SDT is the motive of sporting activity, which

encompasses motivations that arise from two internal and external factors (Ryan et al., 1997). Interest is an intrinsic motive from within and pleasure is related to the physical activity itself. Competence is another intrinsic motive driven by a person's desire to improve or master new sports physical activity skills (Geller k. Et al., 2018). From the three extrinsic motives which is appearance, motivates a person to continue doing sports physical activities because they want to develop, improve or maintain the physical body as well as control their level of health. Fitness is an extrinsic factor where to be healthy, strong and energetic and lastly is a social factor to interact, socialize with the community and meet new people while doing sporting activities. Based on the SDT, individuals who emphasize intrinsic motives more than extrinsic motives are expected to maintain healthy sports physical activity (Deci & Ryan 2000). However, evidence of intrinsic motives being a major pillar for keeping individuals active still lacks consistency.

Many researchers argue that there will be a decrease in sports activity involvement throughout the transmission of COVID-19. According to Arkaitz, Ane, Borja, and Aito (2020) there are two possibilities that will occur during the period of COVID-19 transmission. Individuals who were active prior to COVID-19 transmission will decrease their level of involvement during this transmission and individuals who were inactive prior to transmission, are unlikely to be more active during COVID-19 transmission. This is due to the limitations of doing sports activities in the new norm, especially in the early phases of the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO), where individuals have minimal opportunity to find alternatives to keep them active.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative method to describe the understanding of golfing activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic season mainly involving Safety Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). A total of 4 people were interviewed for this study and all of them were golfers. This permission was given by the Management Kuala Terengganu Golf Resort (KTGR) and the data were collected in June 2020.

The semi-structured interviews were guided by a set of core questions that took an approach on Safety Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Questions have been designed for golfers regarding the rules, responsibilities and social impact of the session. The question consists of 'Why every golfer should follow the social distancing guidelines before, during and after play?', 'Why does necessary to check the Golf Club website before starting game?', 'Do you agree to handle your own golf bag at all the times?', 'Why prioritize walking golf and "buggy" cars only for one golfer?' and 'In your opinion, how do you feel after attending playing golf by following the Safety Guideline and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)?'. The interview lasted about 40 minutes on average. To ensure that the data was accurate and accountable, interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed. The data were anonymized with removing the real names and replacing them with pseudonyms.

During the interview process, golfers frequently respond with one-word responses, fragmented words, or partial sentences. To guarantee that golfers' contributions can be included and noted throughout the study, we have merged the meanings of their verbal exchanges and non-verbal expressions using narrative writing rather than exact quotations. All of the direct citations in this study's conclusions came from semi-structured interviews, while the contextual data came from semi-structured interviews and observations. Before writing the findings, inductive thematic analysis utilizing the Braun and Clarke approach was utilized after data gathering (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The analysis found five emergent themes from the data collection:

(i) ' Why every golfer should follow the social distancing guidelines before, during and after play?'

Among the procedures that need to be followed at all times is social imprisonment of 1 meter between each individual. A social incarceration of 1 meter is expected to be able to break the network or viral infection that is plaguing around the world at the moment. In fact, this social imprisonment can be related to the meaning and understanding from a statistical point of view that is the value of the range. In other words, the distance range between two individuals must be the closest or the minimum allowable distance is 1 meter. This can be likened to each person wearing a large cardboard around his body with a radius of 1 meter. Of course, preventative measures are more effective. If other people also wear the same equipment with the assumption that it can overlap then the distance between the two people is still maintained at a minimum range of 1 meter.

"As a golfer, we should try to level this pandemic curve and one of the ways is to practice social distancing while playing golf. It can be done by being more selective and sensitive when the focus is on the game. We can choose to stop following individuals or groups who like to follow closely and cause us to feel disturbed or insecure" (Golfer 1).

If individuals who want to play sports, not all types of sports that can avoid the range between players is less than 1 meter, especially games that often occur body contact such as rugby, football, netball, hockey, wrestling, boxing and as such, it is impossible that the probability of no limb body contact is not going to be zero.

"This social distancing is a priority for all and it is important to considered the safety of others. We have a civic responsibility. If you're not healthy, you shouldn't go to the golf course to play and have fun. Sometimes individuals like to make denial or be selfish." (Golfer 2)

But there are also types of sports that can be done without contact rules such as golf, which is no handshake between players and also each bring their own equipment. There are sports that may not have direct contact between players but there is a sharing of equipment such as bowling and even badminton that may also be temporarily banned. To break a sweat, many other exercise activities that can be done individually such as doing cardio exercises are already sufficient.

"Set the time, which means, moving forward you need to give everyone space to play with your own time setting. This can be played a role in this by spacing the tee time to 12 and 15 minutes. If you're still using tee time at 10 minutes or less, consider playing at a time that tends to be less crowded situations." (Golfer 3).

"There is no reason not to accept this fact, this is good for all golfers. Not only golfers but staff, maintenance and everyone involved in the golf industry. The main purpose is to ensure that everyone is in good condition and can avoid getting Covid-19 infection during golfing activities." (Golfer 4)

(ii) 'Why does necessary to check the Golf Club website before starting game?'

Today, information technology has become a very important asset to a premise. Premises are likely to be less able to compete in a business environment if they do not have sufficient information in conducting business. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the delivery and dissemination of information is seen to be able to determine the success of an organization in its operations. Advances in communication technology such as telephone, television and the internet enable delivery and dissemination. Good Internet access has enabled the website to be used as a medium in conveying and disseminating information to customers and target groups.

"The main consideration to check is to ensure that there are no double bookings. As a general rule, golfers want to check the attendance of players on the day. In addition, you should also consider the safety level of the Golf Club at that time." (Golfer 1)

In the current era of mobilization and interactivity, the website is one of the main references in obtaining information related to an organization. Therefore, the content of the website must meet the needs of visitors from various levels and levels of literacy to give them confidence about an organization.

"Various information can be obtained by simply browsing the website without any charge and without time limit. The information obtained is not only in text form but also in pictorial form. Search engines such as google.com, search.com, yahoo.com and so on are used as a platform to obtain information. Golfers only need to use a search engine to get the information they want whether it is used to get information on golfing activities." (Golfer 2)

Therefore, have an effective website is an important aspect in determining the success of an organization to become an institution that is referenced, respected and known. However, keep in mind that a website can also damage the reputation of an organization if not maintained properly. Therefore, an organization's website must be constantly updated and protected to ensure the availability of access and integrity of its content.

"The using of this website has indirectly saved costs such as the cost of phone calls as well as other costs such as transportation. Golfer no longer needs to go to the Golf Club, as all the information has been stated. It even saves time." (Golfer 3)

In addition, the content of the website also plays an important role in the delivery of information to the target group. Accuracy of information and easy access to information can help internet users get the information they want, especially when they use search engines as the main medium of their information.

"A user -friendly website is one of the features that can attract many golfers constantly delivering the latest information. Difficulties for golfers in using a system or website can keep golfers from using the system or website." (Golfer 4)

(iii) 'Do you agree to handle your own golf bag at all the times?'

Efficient and effective management of golf equipment will ensure that the equipment is always in good condition and safe to use. Well -managed equipment can ensure the safety of the golfer and simplify the process of identifying the number of damaged or missing equipment. The golfer's appearance image can also be enhanced with efficient equipment management.

"Yes, I agree every golfer is obligated to manage their own golf equipment while playing. This is to ensure that the equipment is used individually not to be shared because in this pandemic season, rules to prohibit the sharing of equipment have been enforced and also to ensure the safety level of golfers is maintained." (Golfer 1)

The equipment must be appropriate to the age, height and physical ability of the individual for comfort while playing and will even be able to increase the motivation of the individual to continue to be involved in the sport of golf. There is no denying that the suitability of the equipment when playing golf is very important so that it can be used in the best way to improve the performance of a golfer. To ensure effectiveness, all golf equipment is placed in order and labeled with golfer name. For example, iron sets are arranged foreign and labeled on their respective counterparts. All golf equipment, especially bags, are named after the golfer so that there is no confusion.

"I strongly agree, to prevent infection if our teammates are infected with Covid-19. However, I recommend that every golfer first check their golf equipment so that it is always in a state of alert and clean." (Golfer 2)

"I agree, and every golfer needs to be honest and trustworthy when using equipment, always caring and responsible in managing their equipment. I advise that, after use the golfer should clean immediately to avoid any infection." (Golfer 3)

"I agree, golf is a game that emphasizes honesty and professionalism. The ethics of the use of golf equipment needs to be updated when the Covid-19 situation hits our Country. In my experience, golfers only bring the necessary equipment in this season to avoid sharing and so on." (Golfer 4)

(iv) 'Why prioritize walking golf and "buggy" cars only for one golfer?'

The United States Golf Association considers you to have to walk a golf course. Riding in a golf cart has become a favorite mode of transportation for many golfers every weekend but you have to try those legs again for a number of reasons. David Fay, former USGA president, has written, "We strongly believe that walking is the most fun way to play golf and the use of the car is detrimental to the game. This negative trend needs to be stopped now before it is accepted that riding in a car is the way to play golf. " Walking the golf course is good for your health, good for the health of the course and good for the health of the game.

"Walking while playing allows you to get closer to the golf course. That's not an almost-natural sentiment. This is a way to find out more about the golf course you play. In addition to maintaining social distancing while playing and also using a buggy, I feel one golfer one buggy should be implemented." (Golfer 1)

One of the reasons buggy cars were introduced in the first place was to allow more players to the course at the same time. And the cart does that by speeding up the time it takes the group on tee number 1 to reach his first shot of the day under the road. This will reduce the gap between tee times. But over the course of 18 holes, a group of four who shared two buggy cars wasted a lot of time driving from one rider's ball to another rider's ball.

"Maybe many cannot accept the change, when required to walk to play golf, in addition to health -improving factors, I think this effort is the best way to maintain the concept of safety of the golf game. Buggy car, I agree if only one person is required, the game process will run smoothly and finish quickly." (Golfer 2)

"Walking on a golf course of between 30 to 200 acres means you will be doing a lot of running and proper exercises that will ensure that you burn your calories properly. It is important to skip riding your buggy car and walk on an average course that measures about 6-7 Kms. If you decide to bring your own golf bag under 500 and a club, more calories you will be able to burn. Walking, carrying a bag, and pedaling your club while you take your shots are ways to burn up to 1000 calories in a game." (Golfer 3)

"Golf, have been shown to reduce stress and anxiety enjoying nature provides stress reduction and recovery from mental fatigue. Walking while playing and using a buggy car are different things. The most important thing for me is to maintain my health and safety while on the golf course." (Golfer 4)

(v) How do you feel after attending playing golf by following the Safety Guideline and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)?

Perhaps this is the wisdom of the Covid-19 disaster, finally the word SOP was elevated to its dignity so that it became a mantra word in everyday speech. The SOP that arrived also came in various forms. From matters of enforcement, festivals, industry, sports, to fake news having stories, the reasons remain the same, just want to take care of everyone's interests.

"This is good, feel better and I'm totally agreed with that, when a golf club is in your hands and you are ready to swing, it is your responsibility to make sure your playing partner is a safe distance from you. It's not too difficult, to keep track of everyone when your group may be only four or fewer golfers." (Golfer 1)

SOPs are not just what can and what is forbidden. SOPs should act as guidelines, instructions or instructions in general and specifically to all parties in carrying out their respective functions and roles in an organized and planned manner. The key to the success of good SOP planning depends a lot on the consistency of enforcement and the willingness of the people to comply with it.

"Be extra careful if you have to explore an adjacent walkway to take or play the wrong shot, or if you are close to an adjacent friend and the golfer at the hole is hitting towards you. And always keep a distance from golfers in your own group as they prepare to play strokes. Continue to adhere to the set SOPs." (Golfer 2)

It is observed that until today the most important aspect of the SOP itself has failed to be lived by the government well and effectively. Apart from the aspect of consistency, the aspect of protecting and avoiding failure and catastrophe from such failure also does not arise during its

implementation. What is displayed is perhaps the aspect of strict enforcement through the SOP, although it is clearly discriminatory and inconsistent, but the elements of humanity and manners that support the enforcement aspect of the SOP have disappeared. Elements of etiquette seek to protect and avoid failure due to non-compliance with SOPs.

"I hope that the SOP of the golf game can be implemented with success. Golfing is easily controlled and the laws are tightened to prevent bad things from happening. For me the SOP of playing golf always needs to be streamlined from time to time." (Golfer 3)

As the famous author of the book on ethics, Judith Martin, puts it: "Freedom will not function without rules and ethics, and societies will not function freely unless they are governed by ethics." That is an aspect that is perhaps being seen in SOP enforcement cases that ultimately makes compliance with the SOP often viewed with cynicism.

"Feel safe, secure and comfortable when visiting to play golf even in Covid-19 condition. Simply, just follow whatever SOP has been set by the Golf Club Management, most importantly we enjoy the golfing." (Golfer 4)

5.0 CONCLUSION

Live with new norms, golfers must adhere to established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to stop the spread of this dangerous virus. The investigation showed that golf was a playable and manageable activity throughout the Pandemic Covid-19, and that it drew ongoing involvement, resulting in social relationships and improved well-being. The normal changes that all golfers need to practice will make them more disciplined and respectful of each other. The use of some the challenges that golfers have to face in training, tournaments and is certainly difficult to burn with enthusiasm in achieving the dreamed success.

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