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**STUDENT EXPENDITURE PATTERNS
IN PARTICIPATING RECREATIONAL RUNNING EVENTS:
A SPORTS MICROECONOMICS PERSPECTIVE**

Faisal Adam Rahman^{1*}, Amin Pujiati², Sugiarto³, Mohammad Hasan Basri⁴

^{1 2 3} Universitas Negeri Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia

⁴ STKIP PGRI Sumenep, East Java, Indonesia

^{*} *Coessponding Author:* faisaladamrahman@gmail.com

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Abstract

This quantitative study analyzed the spending patterns and microeconomic factors influencing the decisions of 100 high school students to participate in recreational running events. The results showed that the average expenditure per event reached IDR 300,000, allocated for registration fees, transportation, meals, and sports attributes. Based on multiple linear regression analysis, peer influence and perception of registration fees significantly influenced spending levels ($p < 0.05$), while monthly pocket money did not. This indicates that student consumption is driven more by social and emotional values than financial capabilities. Furthermore, this event had a positive impact on surrounding MSMEs. This study contributes to the microeconomics of sports and recommends organizing more student-friendly events.

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INTRODUCTION

The growing awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, especially among the younger generation, has fueled the growing popularity of recreational sports in Indonesia. One form of sporting activity that has grown rapidly is running events, such as fun runs, color runs, charity runs, and marathons. These activities are seen not only as a form of healthy living but also as a means of recreation and self-actualization (Sujana et al., 2021). According to data from the Indonesian Running Association (2020), the number of participants in recreational running events in Indonesia has increased by around 20% annually, reflecting the growing interest of the public, particularly students, in participating in these activities. These events serve not only as a venue for exercise but also as a social platform combining sport, entertainment, and social awareness, with many participants using them as a means of self-image, particularly on social media.

However, despite the growing popularity of recreational running events, few studies have examined the spending patterns of students involved in these activities. Most students participating in these events have limited financial resources, such as limited pocket money, but they still allocate a portion of their budget to participate in these activities. This raises questions about how students allocate their spending and what factors influence their decisions to participate in recreational running events.

From a microeconomics of sport perspective, student consumption patterns can be analyzed using basic economic concepts such as consumer preferences, allocation of limited resources, and external influences. Microeconomics of sport studies how individuals, including students, make decisions regarding the consumption of goods and services in the sports market. The decision to participate in recreational running events is influenced by several factors, including registration fees, peer influence, and non-economic benefits such as enjoyment, health, and social status. For example, research by Lam & Wang (2016) shows that social preferences and peer influence play a significant role in students' participation decisions in recreational sports activities.

From a microeconomics of sport perspective, students' decisions to participate in recreational running events can be studied as consumption behavior influenced by the cost-benefit principle (Slack & Parent, 2006). Aspects such as the elasticity of demand to registration fees, substitution with other forms of recreation, and social influence are interesting factors to analyze. Given that students generally have limited resources, it is important to understand how they allocate their spending to participate in these events.

Furthermore, although students often have limited budgets, they allocate spending on these sports activities as part of a short-term consumption strategy to improve their physical and social well-being. A study conducted by Prasetyo (2019) revealed that most students who participate in recreational running events view participation in these events as an investment in health and social relationships, which is more valuable than spending on other consumer goods.

This study aims to delve deeper into students' spending patterns in recreational running events and analyze the factors influencing consumption decisions from a microeconomic perspective of sport. Furthermore, this study will explore the microeconomic impact of student participation in these events, including contributions to the local economy, such as small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the employment opportunities created around the event locations. For example, research by Sari & Hermawan (2020) shows that recreational sporting events can create economic opportunities for the local tourism sector by stimulating local culinary and trade businesses.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of microeconomic theory of sport and enrich understanding of student consumption behavior in the context of recreational sport activities. These findings can also provide recommendations for sport event organizers to design more engaging programs for students, as well as for other stakeholders to develop policies that support the active participation of young people in recreational sports.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive quantitative approach, with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of student spending patterns in recreational running events and analyzing the microeconomic factors influencing these consumption decisions. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for describing socio-economic phenomena and identifying relationships between measurable variables (Sugiyono, 2019). Data collection was conducted through a survey using a questionnaire distributed to students actively participating in recreational running events in the city of Semarang.

The study population was high school students (SMA) aged 15 to 18 who actively participate in recreational running events. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific criteria (Etikan et al., 2016). The criteria for high school students were those who had participated in at least one recreational running event, with a sample size of 100 respondents. The sample size was determined based on research conducted by Sekaran (2016), which stated that for descriptive research with a relatively small population, a sample of 100 respondents is sufficiently representative to draw conclusions.

Data were collected through a multi-part questionnaire. The first section covered respondents' demographic data, such as age, gender, city of origin, and educational status. The second section focused on student spending patterns in participating in recreational running events, including registration fees, transportation, equipment, and other necessary additional expenses. The third section explored factors driving participation, such as motivation and social factors influencing decisions, such as peer influence and social media. The questionnaire also explored economic considerations, including expenditures and benefits, price elasticity, and activity substitution.

The questionnaire instrument was developed based on the microeconomic consumer behavior model (Case & Fair, 2014) and the behavioral theories of sports participation by Lam & Wang (2016) and Prasetyo (2019) regarding social influence and expenditure in recreational sports. Content validity was assessed through expert judgment (a lecturer in sports economics), and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value >0.70 being an indicator of good reliability (Hair et al., 2014).

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to calculate the average (mean), standard deviation, and percentage, which aimed to describe the overall pattern of student spending. This analysis also included a correlation test to identify the relationship between spending and social factors and student motivation. This method aligns with the approach used by Sekaran (2016) in consumer behavior research, which applies descriptive statistics to describe socio-economic phenomena. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was tested through validity and reliability tests. The validity test ensured the suitability of the questionnaire items to the research objectives, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with an expected value of more than 0.7 to indicate good internal consistency (Sekaran, 2016).

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

Results

Respondent Characteristics and Event Preferences

This study successfully mapped the characteristics of 100 high school students who actively participate in recreational running events in Indonesia. The respondents were predominantly female (60%), while male students comprised 40%, with the majority aged 16–18. In terms of experience, this activity appears to be a new trend attracting first-time participants, as evidenced by 43% of respondents who reported participating in a similar event for the first time. However, a minority group also demonstrated loyalty, with the remainder having participated two to three times, or even more than three times. Regarding event type, fun runs were the most popular

choice, enjoyed by 65% of respondents. This figure far outperformed other types of activities such as charity runs (20%) and color runs (15%).

Student Expenditure Patterns and Funding Sources

From a microeconomic perspective on sports, this study identified how students allocate their limited financial resources for recreational needs. Most respondents relied on their own pocket money as the primary source of funding to pursue this healthy lifestyle. This phenomenon is quite interesting because it indicates a rise in financial independence and a shift in priorities for budget allocation among teenagers. Only a small portion of respondents still rely on material support or additional funds directly from their parents to cover participation fees. These expenses encompass several crucial components, from investments in sports equipment and registration fees to supporting aspects on the day of the event. All these expenditure items form a structured consumption pattern among students.

Analysis of Determinants of Consumption and the Impact of MSMEs

Through multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that students' economic decisions were not significantly influenced by their monthly allowance. The most dominant determinants were the influence of their friendship circles (social factors) and their perceptions of the event registration costs themselves ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that consumption in the recreational sports sector for teenagers is driven more by emotional value and the fulfillment of existential social needs. At the macro-local level, these students' collective spending has been shown to have a positive microeconomic impact on the ecosystem surrounding the event location. The presence of hundreds of young runners creates significant cash flow, particularly in boosting the income of MSMEs providing food, beverages, and local transportation services.

Table 1. Average Student Expenditure on Recreational Running Events

No.	Expense Components	Average
1.	Registration Fee	175.000
2.	Transportation	20.000
3.	Consumption	30.000
4.	Attributes/Equipment	50.000
5.	Other (souvenirs, etc.)	25.000
Total		300.000

Discussions

Research shows that students are willing to allocate a substantial amount of money to participate in recreational running activities. This indicates that the benefits gained from these activities, whether physical, social, or emotional, are valued higher than the costs incurred. From a microeconomic perspective, this decision can be explained through the principles of consumer preference and utility maximization, where students choose to consume products (in this case, participating in events) that provide the greatest benefits within their budget (Case & Fair, 2014). Data collection results indicate that the average student expenditure for a single running event reaches approximately IDR 300,000. The largest components of this expenditure come from registration fees, transportation, meals, equipment, and merchandise purchases. Although the primary source of funds used by students comes from their own pocket money, most respondents stated that they did not mind spending this amount. This indicates that recreational running events have a high utility value in students' perceptions, exceeding purely economic value. Their choices reflect the basic principles of microeconomics regarding consumer preference and subjective utility, where consumption decisions are driven not solely by functional needs, but also by the social and emotional value attached to the activity. This phenomenon also demonstrates the positive microeconomic impact of recreational running events on the local economy, with most

student spending going toward transportation and food consumption near the event location. Data collected also revealed that most participants shopped at local stores for sports equipment or healthy food. This supports the findings of Sari & Hermawan (2020) which show that recreational sporting events can positively impact the local economy, including creating opportunities for MSMEs and the local tourism sector.

To analyze the factors that influence the amount of student expenditure in participating in running events, a multiple linear regression model was used. The results showed that peer influence and perception of registration fees significantly influenced spending decisions (significance value <0.05). Students who participated in events with friends tended to allocate more funds, both for appearance, consumption, and shared transportation. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of five variables on the amount of student expenditure in participating in recreational running events, namely: peer influence (X1), health motivation (X2), perception of registration fees (X3), frequency of participation (X4), and monthly pocket money (X5). The estimation results produced a regression equation: $Y = 35,210 + 12,840X1 + 9,760X2 + 14,530X3 + 10,320X4 + 0.042X5$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.64$) indicates that 64% of the variation in expenditure can be explained by the five variables in the model. Significance tests showed that peer influence (X1) and perceptions of registration fees (X3) had significant effects ($p < 0.05$), while the monthly pocket money variable (X5) was insignificant. The amount of monthly pocket money did not significantly affect spending levels. This finding is interesting, as it shows that students tend to make short-term consumption adjustments to meet their preferences for activities that are considered more socially and psychologically meaningful. This is in line with the study by Lam & Wang (2016) which highlighted the importance of social motivation in sports consumption behavior in adolescents.

Student participation in recreational running events is not only related to fitness or entertainment aspects but also reflects social and emotional investment. Sixty-five percent of respondents stated that they participated in the events because of invitations from friends or community members, and 42% attributed this participation to efforts to build self-image on social media. In other words, running events become a platform for representing the social identity of active, healthy, and digitally connected urban youth. This study reinforces the findings of Prasetyo (2019), who stated that student participation in recreational sports is a form of short-term social investment, perceived as more valuable than the consumption of conventional goods such as fashion or digital entertainment. Student participation in these events also has significant microeconomic implications for the local environment. Each running event is typically accompanied by crowds that stimulate economic activity, such as the sale of food, drinks, and merchandise by MSMEs. As Sari & Hermawan (2020) point out, even small-scale sporting events can have a multiplier effect on the informal sector and local tourism. Thus, student consumption behavior in recreational running events not only reflects individual preferences but is also connected to broader social and economic dynamics. These consumption decisions occur within a cost-benefit framework that simultaneously encompasses both economic and non-economic aspects. Overall, the results of this study provide important insights into how students view spending on recreational sporting events. Despite their limited financial resources, they have a strong understanding of the social and health benefits derived from participating in these events.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on student spending patterns in participating in recreational running events, it can be concluded that despite financial constraints, students still allocate a portion of their budget to participate in these activities. The average student expenditure for a single recreational running event ranges from IDR 100,000 to IDR 300,000, which includes registration fees, transportation, and additional consumption. The main factors influencing spending decisions are social influences, particularly peer encouragement and the motivation to appear on social media. Furthermore, some students also view these activities as investments in

health and improving social status. The recorded spending patterns indicate a shift in consumption priorities, where spending on recreational sports activities is considered more valuable than ordinary consumption. This study also shows that recreational running events have a positive microeconomic impact on the local sector, creating opportunities for MSMEs and the tourism sector around the event location. Thus, student participation in recreational running events not only provides personal benefits but can also contribute to the local economy. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for sports event organizers in designing more engaging and relevant activities for students, as well as assist policymakers in formulating strategies to support recreational sports activities among the younger generation.

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