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EQUESTRIAN SPORT PARTICIPATION MODEL: THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT, SERVICE QUALITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY MEDIATED BY THE INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN EQUESTRIAN SPORTS IN NORTH SUMATRA

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Abstract

Equestrian sport is an activity with the potential to be developed for recreation, entertainment, and cultural purposes, as well as a component of sports tourism. However, public participation in equestrian sports in North Sumatra Province remains relatively low. This situation is thought to be linked to internal and external factors, including exercise motivation, social support, service quality, and the accessibility of equestrian facilities. This study aims to analyze the influence of exercise motivation, social support, service quality, and accessibility on the intention to engage in equestrian sports, as well as the influence of that intention on actual participation. It also examines the role of exercise intention as a mediating variable in the relationship between these factors and participation in equestrian sports. The study employs a quantitative approach with an associative research design. The population consists of 187 individuals—members of the public or equestrian communities—participating in equestrian activities in North Sumatra Province. The sample was determined using simple random sampling with Slovin's formula at a 10% margin of error, resulting in 65 respondents. Data were collected via a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis is planned using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach with the aid of SmartPLS software. The research model is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that intention is a crucial factor in the formation of actual behavior. This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of equestrian sport participation in North Sumatra.

Keywords: Motivation, Social Support, Service Quality, Accessibility, Intention to Exercise, Equestrian Sports Participation

INTRODUCTION

Sport plays an important role in improving the quality of life and well-being of society, not only by promoting physical health and fitness but also by serving as a means of recreation, social interaction, cultural preservation, and economic development. One sporting activity that embodies these multidimensional aspects is equestrian sport. Beyond emphasizing competition and technical skills, equestrian sport also offers recreational entertainment, prestige, and opportunities for social interaction among individuals and communities (Riess, 2016; Snell et al., 2024). At the international level, equestrian sport has developed into an integral part of the sports industry, involving professional athletes, enthusiast communities, and the general public participating in recreational activities. Furthermore, equestrian activities are closely associated with the development of sport tourism and have the potential to generate economic value through the provision of sports facilities and infrastructure, the development of horse-breeding businesses, the empowerment of micro-enterprises, and the growth of tourism in areas surrounding event venues (McManus et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, equestrian sport began to develop during the Dutch colonial era and was initially associated with social status and certain segments of society (Bakar, 2023; Snell et al., 2024)Over time, its role expanded beyond competitive sport to include entertainment and recreational activities for the public in various regions,

including North Sumatra. Nevertheless, the development of equestrian sport continues to face several challenges, including limited supporting facilities, inadequate accessibility, service quality issues, and relatively low levels of public participation (Arima & Tarsyad Nugraha, 2021). These conditions indicate the need for more targeted development efforts, particularly through improvements in facilities and service quality, enhanced accessibility, and the implementation of strategies designed to strengthen the appeal of equestrian sport and encourage broader public participation.

North Sumatra Province has considerable potential for the development of equestrian sport, particularly in the Siborongborong area of North Tapanuli Regency. Horse racing and other equestrian activities continue to be organized in this area as forms of public entertainment and expressions of local traditions. However, this potential has not yet been fully reflected in optimal levels of public participation. The relatively low level of community involvement is associated with several potential factors, including limited public motivation, insufficient social support, suboptimal service quality, and accessibility constraints in reaching equestrian facilities (Sinurat et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the development of equestrian sport across North Sumatra remains challenged by limited public exposure, the availability and quality of supporting facilities, accessibility, and relatively low levels of community engagement. Strengthening the promotion of equestrian events, improving service quality and supporting infrastructure, and encouraging participation through family activities, community networks, and local cultural events could help expand public interest. Furthermore, integrating equestrian activities with sports tourism and regional cultural promotion offers opportunities to increase visitor engagement, support local economic activities, and preserve the region's equestrian traditions. These developments highlight the importance of understanding the economic, social, and cultural factors that shape people's intentions and decisions to watch equestrian sport in North Sumatra.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation to engage in sports is one of the factors that encourages individuals to participate in sporting activities. Motivation can originate from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, such as enjoyment, personal interest, the desire to improve skills, health benefits, new experiences, and encouragement from the surrounding environment. According to Deci & Ryan, (2012) and Mitchell (2013), the application of Self-Determination Theory to equestrian activities highlights the importance of motivation in shaping individual engagement in horse-related activities. In addition to motivation, social support also plays an important role in shaping people's willingness to participate in equestrian sport. Support from family, friends, and communities can provide encouragement, information, companionship, and a sense of belonging within the sporting environment. Furthermore, service quality, encompassing facility comfort, arena safety, trainer professionalism, event management services, cleanliness, and the availability of adequate facilities, can influence people's experiences when participating in equestrian activities. These relationships can be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991), which proposes that individual behavior is preceded by intention, while intention is influenced by attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, motivation is associated with attitudes toward equestrian sport, social support relates to subjective norms, while service quality and accessibility are associated with individuals' perceptions of the ease of engaging in equestrian activities.

Previous studies have shown that motivation plays an important role in engagement in equestrian sport (Bornemann, 2025), while social support is associated with well-being and participation (Schwarzmüller-Erber et al., 2021; Snell et al., 2024)). The quality of facilities and services also influences public interest (Alfreado et al., 2024; Sinurat et al., 2025). Furthermore, public perceptions, social interactions, and accessibility are associated with interest in and participation in equestrian activities (Monterrubio et al., 2023; Patterson & Hodge, 2022; Sitindaon et al., 2024; Suwarno et al., 2024). However, these studies have not yet integrated motivation, social support, service quality, and accessibility into a single research model incorporating sports participation intention as a mediating variable to explain participation in equestrian sport, particularly in North Sumatra. Therefore, this study addresses this research gap by developing a model of equestrian sport participation based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), with sports participation intention serving as a mediating variable.

The research model assumes that sports motivation (X1), social support (X2), service quality (X3), and accessibility (X4) influence the intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z). Furthermore, the intention to participate in equestrian sport is expected to influence actual participation (Y). In addition, participation intention serves as a mediating variable that links the four independent variables to participation in equestrian sport. Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

1. H1: Motivation to participate in equestrian sport (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z) in North Sumatra Province.
2. H2: Social support (X2) has a positive and significant effect on the intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z) in North Sumatra Province.
3. H3: Service quality (X3) has a positive and significant effect on the intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z) in North Sumatra Province.
4. H4: Accessibility (X4) has a positive and significant effect on the intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z) in North Sumatra Province.
5. H5: The intention to participate in equestrian sport (Z) has a positive and significant effect on participation in equestrian sport (Y) in North Sumatra Province.
6. H6: Motivation to participate in equestrian sport (X1) has a positive and significant indirect effect on participation in equestrian sport (Y) through participation intention (Z) as a mediating variable.
7. H7: Social support (X2) has a positive and significant indirect effect on participation in equestrian sport (Y) through participation intention (Z) as a mediating variable.
8. H8: Service quality (X3) has a positive and significant indirect effect on participation in equestrian sport (Y) through participation intention (Z) as a mediating variable.
9. H9: Accessibility (X4) has a positive and significant indirect effect on participation in equestrian sport (Y) through participation intention (Z) as a mediating variable.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative, associative research approach aimed at analyzing the relationships and influences among exercise motivation, social support, service quality, accessibility, intention to participate, and actual participation in equestrian sports in North Sumatra Province. The study population consists of 187 individuals—comprising the general public and community members—who engage in equestrian activities. A simple random sampling technique was used, applying Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 65 respondents.

Data were collected via questionnaires administered to the respondents. The research instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale, ranging from a score of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The variables measured include equestrian exercise motivation as the first independent variable (X1), social support (X2), service quality (X3), accessibility (X4), intention to participate in equestrian sports as the mediating variable (Z), and equestrian sports participation as the dependent variable (Y). Motivation indicators include interest, enjoyment, the desire to improve skills, the drive to gain experience and achieve success, and the influence of external support; social support indicators cover support from family, friends, the community, and the social environment, as well as invitations or recommendations; while service quality indicators encompass facility comfort, arena safety, trainer professionalism, organizer service, and facility cleanliness and completeness.

Furthermore, accessibility was measured based on location convenience, transportation, cost, activity timing or scheduling, and information availability. Intention to participate was measured through the desire to engage in the sport, level of interest, plans to participate, willingness to allocate time, and willingness to seek information; meanwhile, actual participation was measured based on active involvement, activity frequency, community engagement, consistency, and commitment to the sport.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of the SmartPLS software application (Ghazali, 2014; Hair et al., 2011). The analysis was conducted by evaluating the outer model to assess the validity and reliability of the instruments, and the inner model to examine the relationships between variables. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was evaluated via cross-loadings and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Sholihin & Ratmono, 2013). Construct reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Furthermore, hypothesis testing was performed based on path coefficients and the significance of relationships between variables; this included testing for indirect effects to determine the role of exercise intention as a mediating variable between motivation, social support, service quality, and accessibility regarding participation in equestrian sports (Ismail et al., 2024). The use of PLS-SEM aligns with the research design, which examines both direct and indirect relationships between constructs within the research model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the respondent distribution, the largest age group was 20–30 years, accounting for 36.9% of respondents, followed by those aged 31–40 years at 27.7%, 41–50 years at 15.4%, below 20 years at 10.8%, and above 50 years at 9.2%. In terms of educational attainment, most respondents held a bachelor's degree, representing 49.2%, followed by high school or equivalent qualifications at 24.6%, postgraduate degrees at 15.4%, diplomas at 7.7%, and other educational qualifications at 3.1%. This composition indicates that the respondents were predominantly of productive age and had bachelor's-level education, suggesting that their demographic characteristics were generally relevant to the research context concerning intention and participation in equestrian sport.

Data Analysis

Measurement model (outer model) testing is conducted to ensure that the research instrument used measures the constructs reliably and validly. Evaluation is performed through Construct Reliability and Validity testing by examining the values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a), Composite Reliability (rho_c), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of these tests serve as the basis for confirming construct suitability before proceeding to further testing of the structural model (inner model) and research hypotheses.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Konstruk	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Motivation X1	0,876	0,877	0,910	0,669
social support X2	0.722	0.739	0.814	0.669
service quality X3	0.896	0.899	0.924	0.708
accessibility X4	0.737	0.768	0.820	0.678
Participation Y	0.700	0.714	0.803	0.652
Intention Z	0.612	0.617	0.763	0.694

Based on the construct reliability and validity test results, all research constructs—namely Motivation (X1), social support (X2), service quality (X3), accessibility (X4) and Participation (Y), Intention (Z)—demonstrated good levels of reliability. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.612 to 0.896, while Composite Reliability (rho_a) values ranged from 0.617 to 0.899, and Composite Reliability (rho_c) values ranged from 0.763 to 0.924. Consequently, all constructs met the acceptable reliability criteria, as the Composite Reliability (rho_c) values for all constructs exceeded 0.70. Constructs Motivation (X1), social support (X2), service quality (X3), accessibility (X4), and Intention Y also exhibited Cronbach's Alpha values of ≥ 0.70; although construct Z had a value of 0.612, it could still be considered to meet an acceptable level of reliability.

Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test results indicated that all constructs had values above 0.50: X1 at 0.669, X2 at 0.669, X3 at 0.708, X4 at 0.678, Y at 0.652, and Z at 0.694. This demonstrates that all constructs met the convergent validity criteria, as the AVE value for each construct exceeded 0.50. Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement model in this study satisfied the criteria for reliability and convergent validity, allowing the research to proceed to the structural model testing and hypothesis testing stages.

Adjusted R-square Construct

R-square (R^2) testing is conducted to determine the ability of independent variables to explain the variation in the endogenous variable within the research model. The R-square value indicates the proportion of change in the endogenous variable that can be explained by the exogenous variables in the model, whereas Adjusted R-square represents the R^2 value adjusted for the number of predictors used. The higher the R-square value, the greater the model's ability to explain the endogenous variable.

Tabel 2. Adjusted R-square Construct

Konstruk	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Y	0.620	0.607

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Konstruk	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Z	0.897	0.891

Based on the R-square table, the R-square value for construct Y is 0.620, with an Adjusted R-square of 0.607. This indicates that the variables influencing Y within the model account for 62.0% of the variation in Y, while the remaining 38.0% is explained by factors outside the research model. These values demonstrate that the model's explanatory power regarding Y is quite strong or substantial. Furthermore, construct Z has an R-square value of 0.897 and an Adjusted R-square of 0.891. This means that the variables influencing Z explain 89.7% of the variation in Z, while the remaining 10.3% is attributed to factors outside the model. Thus, the model's explanatory power regarding construct Z is very strong, and overall, the structural model demonstrates good explanatory capability regarding the endogenous variables**.**

Outer Weights – Confidence Intervals

he Outer Weights – Confidence Intervals analysis is used to evaluate the contribution of each indicator in forming and measuring its respective construct in the research model. The confidence intervals are examined to determine the statistical stability and significance of the estimated outer weights. An outer weight is considered statistically significant when its confidence interval does not include zero, indicating that the indicator makes a meaningful contribution to the formation of the construct. Conversely, if the confidence interval includes zero, the contribution of the indicator may not be statistically significant. Therefore, this analysis provides additional evidence for assessing the relevance of each indicator and supporting decisions regarding indicator retention in the measurement model.

Tabel 3. Outer Weights – Confidence Intervals

Indicator	Outer Weight	CI 2,5%	CI 97,5%	Valuation
X11	0.254	0.224	0.299	✅ good
X12	0.248	0.210	0.288	✅ good
X13	0.231	0.202	0.268	✅ good
X14	0.243	0.207	0.289	✅ good
X15	0.247	0.216	0.286	✅ good
X21	0.288	0.071	0.479	✅ good
X22	0.327	0.125	0.541	✅ good
X23	0.380	0.256	0.643	✅ good
X24	0.284	0.172	0.428	✅ good
X25	0.152	0.190	0.316	✅ good
X31	0.229	0.203	0.258	✅ good
X32	0.253	0.225	0.296	✅ good
X33	0.251	0.230	0.282	✅ good
X34	0.232	0.207	0.260	✅ good
X35	0.222	0.196	0.252	✅ good
X41	0.148	0.056	0.299	✅ good

Based on the Outer Weights – Confidence Intervals table, all indicators have positive outer weight values, ranging from 0.148 to 0.380. Indicator X23 has the highest outer weight value of 0.380, followed by X22 at 0.327 and X21 at 0.288. These findings indicate that the three indicators make relatively greater contributions to the formation of their respective constructs. Meanwhile, indicator X41 has the lowest outer weight value of 0.148, although it still demonstrates a positive contribution. Furthermore, the 95% confidence intervals show that the lower

and upper bounds of all indicators are above zero. For example, X11 has a confidence interval ranging from 0.224 to 0.299, while X23 has a range of 0.256 to 0.643. Similar patterns are observed for all other indicators, including X24, X25, and X41. Since none of the confidence intervals includes zero, all indicators can be considered to have statistically significant and stable contributions to their respective constructs. Therefore, all indicators from X11 to X41 listed in the table can be retained, and no indicators need to be eliminated based on the confidence interval results.

Outer Loadings

The Outer Loadings analysis is used to assess the extent to which each indicator reflects its corresponding latent construct in the measurement model. Higher outer loading values indicate that an indicator has a stronger relationship with the construct it measures. In general, an outer loading value of 0.70 or higher is considered desirable, as it indicates that the construct explains a substantial proportion of the indicator's variance. Indicators with loading values between 0.40 and 0.70 may be retained or removed depending on their impact on composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and the theoretical relevance of the indicator. Therefore, evaluating outer loadings is essential for establishing convergent validity and ensuring that the indicators adequately represent their respective constructs before proceeding to the structural model analysis.

Tabel 4 Outer Loadings – Mean, STDEV, T Values

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Construct	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
X11 ← X1	0.848	0.847	0.032	26.382	0
X12 ← X1	0.819	0.814	0.047	17.415	0
X13 ← X1	0.801	0.797	0.051	15.744	0
X14 ← X1	0.782	0.78	0.051	15.48	0
X15 ← X1	0.837	0.834	0.041	20.239	0
X21 ← X2	0.618	0.598	0.129	4.788	0
X22 ← X2	0.73	0.716	0.103	7.084	0
X23 ← X2	0.766	0.768	0.068	11.217	0
X24 ← X2	0.721	0.681	0.143	5.033	0
X25 ← X2	0.57	0.523	0.191	2.976	0.003
X31 ← X3	0.811	0.808	0.044	18.483	0
X32 ← X3	0.848	0.847	0.03	27.814	0
X33 ← X3	0.885	0.885	0.029	30.796	0
X34 ← X3	0.851	0.849	0.037	23.298	0
X35 ← X3	0.809	0.805	0.05	16.246	0
X41 ← X4	0.635	0.615	0.123	5.155	0
X42← X4	0.762	0.749	0.077	9.891	0
X43← X4	0.669	0.654	0.114	5.89	0
X44 ← X4	0.757	0.757	0.064	11.868	0
X45 ←X4	0.623	0.611	0.103	6.026	0
Y1← Y	0.756	0.746	0.09	8.371	0
Y2←Y	0.693	0.684	0.095	7.304	0
Y3 ←Y	0.61	0.596	0.128	4.757	0
Y4 ←Y	0.491	0.536	0.139	3.526	0
Y5 ←Y	0.721	0.7	0.104	6.926	0
Z1 ←Z	0.64	0.63	0.119	5.364	0
Z2 ←Z	0.563	0.561	0.113	4.997	0
Z3← Z	0.578	0.57	0.113	5.112	0
Z4 ←Z	0.628	0.616	0.105	5.987	0
Z5 ←Z	0.716	0.714	0.073	9.824	0

The Outer Loadings results indicate that the indicators generally demonstrate satisfactory relationships with their respective latent constructs. For the motivation construct (X1), the outer loading values range from 0.782 to 0.848, indicating strong relationships between the indicators and the construct. For social support (X2), the values range from 0.570 to 0.766, while service quality (X3) shows values between 0.809 and 0.885, representing the strongest overall indicator loadings among the independent constructs. Accessibility (X4) has loading values ranging from 0.623 to 0.762, whereas the participation construct (Y) ranges from 0.491 to 0.756, and the intention construct (Z) ranges from 0.563 to 0.716. The highest outer loading is observed for indicator X33 (0.885), while the lowest is Y4 (0.491). Regarding statistical significance, all indicators have t-statistics greater than 1.96 and p-values below 0.05, indicating that their relationships with the respective constructs are statistically significant. However, several indicators have outer loading values below the recommended threshold of 0.70, particularly X25, Y3, Y4, Z1, Z2, Z3, and Z4. These indicators should be evaluated further based on their theoretical relevance and the overall reliability and convergent validity of their constructs. Overall, the findings provide evidence that the indicators

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contribute significantly to measuring their respective constructs, although further assessment is necessary before confirming the adequacy of the measurement model.

Tabel Total Effects

Total effects testing is conducted to determine the magnitude of the overall influence of one construct on another within the research model. This test accounts for both direct and indirect effects present in the model. The significance of the influence is assessed based on T-statistics and P-values, with a relationship considered significant if the T-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05.

Tabel 5. Total Effects

Relation	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
X1 → Z	0.439	0.434	0.074	5.908	0.000
X2 → Z	0.129	0.132	0.055	2.319	0.020
X3 → Z	0.495	0.487	0.073	6.778	0.000
X4 → Z	0.020	0.031	0.045	0.436	0.663
Z → Y	0.522	0.555	0.077	6.788	0.000

The Total Effects results indicate that Motivation (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports (Z), with a coefficient of 0.439, a T-statistic of 5.908, and a P-value of 0.000. Social Support (X2) also has a positive and significant effect on the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports, with a coefficient of 0.129, a T-statistic of 2.319, and a P-value of 0.020. Furthermore, Service Quality (X3) exerts a positive and significant influence on the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports, with a coefficient of 0.495, a T-statistic of 6.778, and a P-value of 0.000. Meanwhile, Accessibility (X4) does not have a significant effect on the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports, showing a coefficient of 0.020, a T-statistic of 0.436, and a P-value of 0.663. Finally, the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Participation in Equestrian Sports (Y), with a coefficient of 0.522, a T-statistic of 6.788, and a P-value of 0.000. Thus, the higher an individual's intention to engage in equestrian sports, the greater their tendency to participate in such sports.

Specific Indirect Effects

Testing for specific indirect effects is conducted to determine the indirect influence of each exogenous variable on the endogenous variable via the mediating variable Z. This test is crucial for ascertaining whether Z acts as a mediator in the relationship between the independent variable and Y. An indirect effect is considered significant if the T-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is less than 0.05.

Tabel 6. Specific Indirect Effects

Indirect Effects	**Original Sample (O)**	**Sample Mean (M)**	**Standard Deviation (STDEV)**	**T Statistics**	**P Values**
X3 → Z → Y	0.259	0.270	0.053	4.870	0.000
X4 → Z → Y	0.010	0.017	0.025	0.407	0.684
X1 → Z → Y	0.230	0.241	0.054	4.270	0.000
X2 → Z → Y	0.067	0.073	0.033	2.047	0.041

The specific indirect effects test results indicate that Horse Riding Intention (Z) mediates the effect of Motivation (X1) on Horse Riding Participation (Y), with an indirect effect value of 0.230, a T-statistic of 4.270, and a P-value of 0.000. Z also mediates the effect of Social Support (X2) on Horse Riding Participation (Y), with a coefficient of 0.067, a T-statistic of 2.047, and a P-value of 0.041. Furthermore, Horse Riding Intention (Z) mediates the effect of Service Quality (X3) on Horse Riding Participation (Y), with a coefficient of 0.259, a T-statistic of 4.870, and a P-value of 0.000. However, Horse Riding Intention (Z) does not mediate the effect of Accessibility (X4) on Horse Riding Participation (Y), as the T-statistic is only 0.407 and the P-value is 0.684.

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Structural Model

A structural model analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between variables in the study—specifically, how Motivation (X1), Social Support (X2), Service Quality (X3), and Accessibility (X4) influence the Intention to Engage in Equestrian Sports (Z), and how this intention subsequently drives actual Participation in Equestrian Sports (Y). This model illustrates the factors that shape an individual's desire to engage in equestrian sports and how that desire translates into actual participation. Thus, the analysis not only examines the direct influence of each factor but also provides insight into the role of intention as a variable linking external and internal factors to participation behavior.

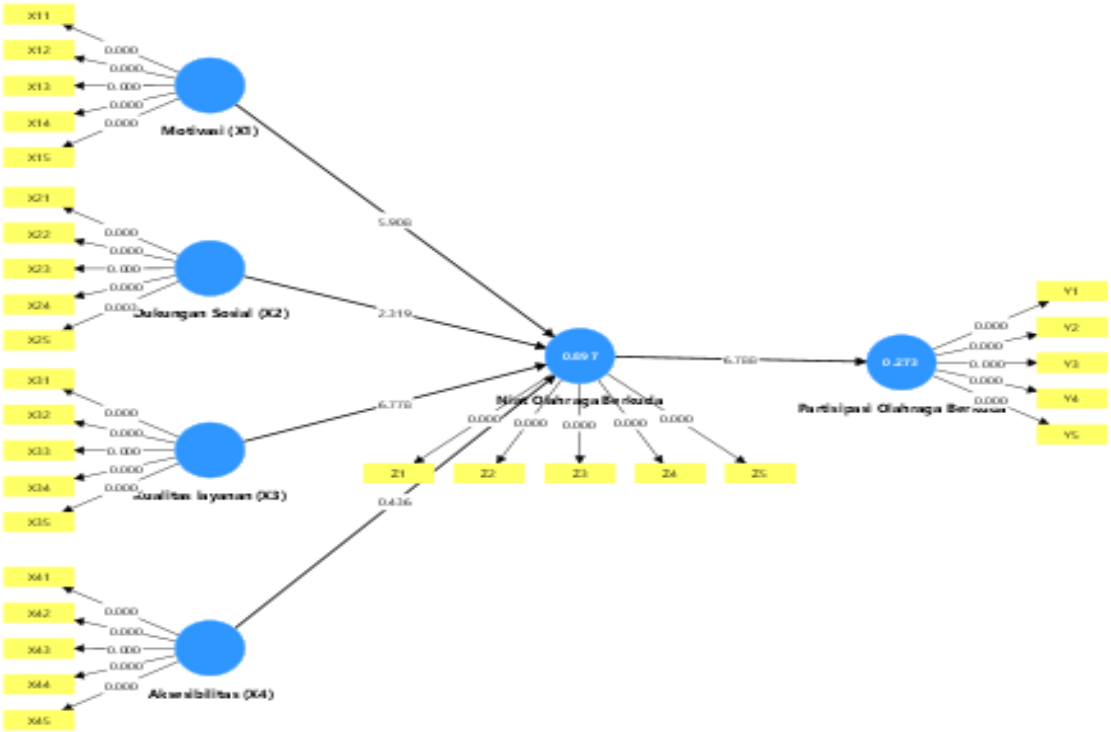


Figure 1. Structural Model Analysis with Bootstrapping

Overall, the model results show that Motivation, Social Support, and Service Quality are factors that play an important role in forming Equestrian Sports Intentions, while Accessibility has not shown a significant role in forming intentions. Furthermore, the intention formed is an important factor in encouraging Equestrian Sports Participation. This relationship pattern shows that increasing participation is not enough to simply provide facilities or increase ease of access, but also needs to be directed at strengthening individual motivation, creating social support, and improving service quality. It is hoped that this approach will be able to build stronger intentions so that in the end it can increase community involvement in equestrian sports in a sustainable manner.

Discussion

The research results indicate that motivation, social support, and service quality play pivotal roles in shaping an individual's intention to engage in horseback riding. These findings can be explained through Self-Determination Theory, which positions motivation as a crucial factor in driving individuals to participate actively and sustainably in an activity. Motivation stemming from interest, enjoyment, perceived benefits, or the desire to develop skills can strengthen an individual's willingness to engage in the sport. Furthermore, social support fosters a sense of relatedness and provides psychological encouragement. Conner, (2020) emphasizes that supporting psychological needs—specifically autonomy, competence, and relatedness—can enhance both motivation and individual engagement in an activity. The findings also highlight service quality as a critical factor; positive experiences regarding services, facilities, instructors, safety, and comfort help shape a favorable perception of horseback riding. The concept of service quality underscores the importance of consumer perception as the basis for evaluating the experience received.

The finding that accessibility does not significantly influence the intention to engage in horseback riding is intriguing, as it suggests that ease of access is not necessarily the primary determinant of intention in this specific sporting context. This may indicate that horseback riding possesses unique characteristics; individuals with high motivation and interest remain willing to participate even if factors such as location, distance, or facility accessibility are less than optimal. Conversely, the significant influence of intention on participation reinforces the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that intention is a key predictor of actual behavior Ajzen, (1991). Thus, the theoretical implication of this study is that participation in horseback riding is best understood not merely through situational factors like accessibility, but rather through a combination of psychological, social, and service-related factors that collectively shape the initial intention to participate. These findings also extend the application of behavioral theory to the context of equestrian sports by positioning intention as a crucial mechanism driving participation behavior.

Regarding practical implications, facility managers and equestrian event organizers should look beyond merely providing venues and ensuring accessibility; instead, they should place greater emphasis on strategies for boosting motivation, fostering community, and enhancing service quality. Equestrian programs can be developed through enjoyable experiences, educational activities, progressive training, equestrian communities, and shared activities that strengthen social support. Managers must also ensure high-quality instruction, safety, facility comfort, friendly service, and a positive user experience to foster interest and the intention to participate again. These strategies align with the view that environmental conditions supporting competence, autonomy, and relatedness can strengthen individual motivation and engagement (Bornemann, 2025; Mitchell, 2013).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that motivation, social support, and service quality are key factors in shaping the intention to engage in horseback riding, whereas accessibility has not demonstrated a significant role in boosting such intention. Furthermore, the intention to ride has been shown to drive actual participation; thus, the stronger an individual's intention, the greater the likelihood of translating that intention into concrete participation. Overall, efforts to increase participation in horseback riding should focus on strengthening individual motivation, fostering a supportive social environment, and enhancing service quality and the riding experience, while positioning accessibility as a supporting factor for the sport's sustainable development. More broadly, the findings indicate that increasing participation requires an approach oriented toward shaping intention, rather than relying solely on the provision of physical access.

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that equestrian sports managers and stakeholders prioritize strategies to boost motivation, social support, and service quality as a means to strengthen intentions and increase public participation in the sport. Managers can develop more engaging and enjoyable programs, foster the equestrian community through the involvement of family and friends, and enhance the quality of instructors, safety standards, facility comfort, and participant services. Although accessibility was not found to have a significant impact on intention, the ease of access—including location, information availability, and service accessibility—should still be addressed to support sustained participation. Future research is advised to consider other variables that may influence intentions and participation in equestrian sports, as well as to utilize a broader scope of respondents and research locations to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

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