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## **EFFECTS OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION ON GROUP COHESION AMONG SECOND YEAR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER TRAINEES FROM SELECTED TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN MALAYSIA**



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By

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Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



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**MAZUKI BIN MOHD YASIM**



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Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## **EFFECTS OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION ON GROUP COHESION AMONG SECOND YEAR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHER TRAINEES FROM SELECTED TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN MALAYSIA**

By

**MAZUKI BIN MOHD YASIM**

**July 2016**

**Chair: Azlizam bin Aziz, PhD**

**Faculty: Forestry**



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The study seeks to investigate the effect of outdoor education camp toward group cohesion on the second year undergraduate teacher trainees from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia. It also examines the socio-demographic influences and sequence of activity that encourage group cohesion improvement. The study also attempts to shed light upon the delayed effect after two months completion of the camp. A pre-test and post-test approach with non-equivalent control group was utilised among 350 second year undergraduate students from four selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia. Meanwhile, there is no control group used for the delayed post-test. A modified version of Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) and open ended questionnaire were used to gather data from pre, post and delayed post-test. Results from MANCOVA procedures suggested that the camp had positively improved the experimental group's group cohesion. Previous experience, place of residence, gender and camp location were found to have significant influence on the improvement of group cohesion. However, the study also revealed that this gain diminished over the two month period as measured by the delayed post-test. Responses from teacher trainees found that sequence of activity from low to high risk activity is the appropriate and influenced students' group cohesion improvement.



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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## KESAN PENDIDIKAN LUAR TERHADAP KESEPADUAN KUMPULAN DALAM KALANGAN GURU PELATIH TAHUN DUA DARI INSTITUT PENDIDIKAN GURU MALAYSIA TERPILIH

Oleh

**MAZUKI BIN MOHD YASIM**

**Julai 2016**

**Pengerusi: Azlizam bin Aziz, PhD**

**Fakulti: Perhutanan**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kesan perkhemahan pendidikan luar terhadap kesepaduan kumpulan guru pelatih tahun dua dari Institut Pendidikan Guru terpilih di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga turut mengkaji pengaruh sosio-demografi dan urutan aktiviti semasa program perkhemahan yang menggalakkan peningkatan perpaduan kumpulan. Selain itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk memberi penerangan tentang kesan ujian pasca yang dilewatkan selama dua bulan selepas kem perkhemahan berakhir. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah ujian pra dan pasca dengan menggunakan kumpulan kawalan. Data kajian dipungut daripada 350 pelajar tahun dua dari empat Institut Pendidikan Guru Malaysia yang terpilih. Soal Selidik Persekitaran Kumpulan (GEQ) dan soalan terbuka telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data dari ujian pra dan pasca. Manakala tiada kumpulan kawalan digunakan bagi ujian pasca yang dilewatkan. Analisis MANCOVA menunjukkan bahawa perkhemahan pendidikan luar ini telah berjaya meningkatkan secara positif perpaduan kumpulan guru pelatih. Penglibatan aktif dalam aktiviti luar, lokasi tempat tinggal, jantina dan lokasi perkhemahan didapati mempunyai pengaruh yang besar ke atas peningkatan kesepaduan kumpulan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian itu juga mendedahkan bahawa melalui ujian pasca yang dilewatkan mendapati kesan perkhemahan pendidikan luar menjadi semakin berkurangan selepas tempoh dua bulan. Selain daripada itu, kajian itu turut mendapati bahawa urutan aktiviti dari yang berisiko rendah kepada aktiviti berisiko tinggi adalah amat bersesuaian dan mempengaruhi peningkatan perpaduan kumpulan guru pelatih.





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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATG-S	Attraction to Group Social
ATG-T	Attraction to Group Task
BIG	Bina Insan Guru
CAT	Corporate Adventure Training
CGCM	Carron's Group Cohesion Model
ELM	Experiential Learning Model
GEQ	Group Environment Questionnaire
GI-S	Group Integration Social
GI-T	Group Integration Task
MOE	Ministry of Education
MPIK	Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas
OB	Outward Bound
OBEPM	Outward Bound Educational Process Model
PLKN	Program Latihan Khidmat Negara
TED	Teacher Education Division
UiTM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPSI	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Outdoor education is a form of learning process conducted in both outdoor and indoor settings which involves challenging or adventure activities as a medium to foster individual, personal and social growth (Fiskum & Jacobsen, 2012; Foley, 2009). It has been proven useful in promoting academic achievement, work commitment, critical thinking, and in preventing delinquency (Ewert, 2005). According to Foley (2009), outdoor education is interchangeable with other terms and often referred to as adventure education, adventure programming, outdoor learning, outdoor school, adventure therapy, adventure recreation, adventure tourism, expeditionary learning, challenge education, experiential education, environmental education, and wilderness education. Typically, the stated objectives of outdoor education are improving group cohesion, leadership skills, improving problem-solving skills, self-conceptualization, increasing trust, and improving communication (Bobilya, Holman, Lindley, & McAvoy, 2010; Shivers-Blackwell, 2004). In other words, the emphasis on interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships is frequently considered to be the primary focus of outdoor education (Priest & Gass, 2005; Zink & Boyes, 2006).

One of the most popular programmes in outdoor education is outdoor education camping (Baghani, 1981; Mohd Taib & Norlena, 2014). Outdoor education camping at higher institution currently encompasses a wide range of opportunities for students development (Uhls et al., 2014). The main goal of these generally focuses on students' group cohesion, leadership, self-esteem, character development and their personal and social development (Martin, 2010). Therefore, these programmes are typically expected to translate into lower student attrition rates, increase level of cohesion, increase academic performances, greater levels of emotional and social developments, and more positive attitude toward the institution that they are newly entering (Michael, Daniel, & Deborah, 2003; Shayne, 2000).

In Malaysia, outdoor education has been developed as a consequence of Razak Report 1956 which stressed on national unity through the education system (Ministry of Education, 1956). As the first education report, Razak's Report highlighted the importance of educational development in Malaysia. This was then followed by the National Education Policy (Education Act 1961) which strengthens the importance roles of education as a tool for national unity and nation building has become a tool of social system (Ishak, 2005). Thus the Ministry of Education had launched the National Education Philosophy that focuses on the development of physical, emotional, spiritual and socially well-balanced individuals through indoor and outdoor teaching strategies (Ministry of Education, 2013a).





To achieve these objectives, the creation of quality and excellent teachers is the goal and the mission of the Teacher Education Division (TED), at the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Teacher quality is fundamental aspect of the success of the newly launched National Education Policy (Abu Bakar, 2002 cited in Azita, 2007). In line with the goal, the TED has set the philosophy of teacher education which outlines:

*Teacher, who is noble in character, progressive and scientific in outlook, committed to uphold the aspirations of the nation, and cherishes the national cultural heritage, ensures the development of the individual and the preservation of a united, democratic, progressive and disciplined society (Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 15).*

Hence, the TED has prepared the curriculum and syllabus based on the philosophy outlined which includes the three components that have an equal weightage of academic, co-curricular and practicum to be applied in Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia (Azita, 2007). One of the academic components contained in the curriculum is outdoor education subject which focus to develop well balanced teacher trainees (Ministry of Education, 2001). The syllabus requires teacher trainees to attend outdoor education camping programmes for six days.

In these six days outdoor education camping programmes, the teacher trainees are exposed to outdoor pursuit activities in which the main objectives are to gain their personal and social development, outdoor pursuit skill and management skill. Traditional base camp approach is applied with teacher trainees need to sleep in tents with their group members and prepare their own meals. Meanwhile, during day time they are required to experience outdoor pursuit activities and management skills. On the other hand, at night they are encouraged to have a series of group discussion, games and presentations to maximise the outcomes.

The outcome of the outdoor education camp is also found to be linked with enhancement in personal and social development, adventure experience and environmental education (Lynch, 2011). From the perspective of benefits on personal and social development it is suggested that outdoor education camp may generate positive results in group cohesion (Boyle, 2002; Chang & Bordia, 2006; Eys, Ritchie, Little, Slade, & Oddson, 2008; Gass, 1987; Gass, Garvey, & Sugerman, 2003; Jaffry, 2012; Malcarne, 2012; Mazuki, 2010; O'Bannon, 2000; Paisley et al., 2014).

However, in contrast, there are some researchers who argued and found contradictory results that outdoor education camp can significantly influenced group cohesion (e.g. Bailey, 2000; Bjorklund & Bering, 2008; Lane, 2008; Murphy, 2001). In general, they claimed that after one week of outdoor education camp, no significant change was found.

Therefore, amidst all the inconclusive findings, there is a need for a systematic research to gather empirical evidence in order to support the claims that outdoor





education camp in the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia have a major enduring effects on group cohesion (Sheard & Golby, 2006b).

This study plans to examine the impacts of outdoor education on group cohesion among participants from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia. It also increased our understanding on the relevance of providing outdoor educational experiences for those students. This inquiry will help the particular tertiary educational institutions that are involved in the study and the Ministry of Education, in order to make a new policy regarding outdoor education camp in the future.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Several outdoor educators and researchers have proposed that participation in outdoor education camps is effective in fostering participants' group cohesion (Boyle, 2002; Bunting, 2006; Chang & Bordia, 2006; Garst, Baughman, Franz, & Seidel, 2013; Hatch & McCarthy, 2005; McKenzie, 2000b; Stroud, 2006). This assumption was made as outdoor education emphasized on the importance of interpersonal relationship and group cohesion (Sibthorp, Furman, Paisley, & Gookin, 2009).

Based on these assumptions, the Malaysian Ministry of Education had highlights the importance of outdoor education camps to foster group cohesion among Malaysian students. This was done through the establishment of National Services Programme (PLKN), Co-curricular Centre, the enactment of outdoor education topic in physical education subject in school, and the inclusion of outdoor education subject in Teachers Training curriculum.

However, the effectiveness of outdoor education camps as a catalyst for the formation of group cohesion is debatable, due to inconsistent findings. For instance, several studies in outdoor education camps found insignificant results of group cohesion enrichment, and inconsistent finding on task and social aspects that influences group cohesion (Borland, Burton, & Kane, 2014). While others reported participants did not show any changes after experiencing learning in environmental setting due to lack of classroom reinforcements (Knapp, 2000), less effects on behavioural outcomes (Tannenbaum, Beard, & Salas, 1992), lack of appropriate sequence of activities and insufficient transfer of learning (Bisson, 1997; Furman & Sibthorp, 2012)

These inconsistent findings posed a challenge to the implementation of outdoor education in Malaysian educational system, especially the socio-economic aspects of the subject. As camping involves abundant time of planning, resources and finances, the current scenario of inconclusive effects of camping is tapping outdoor education subject at stake.

To date, the National Services programs which focus on outdoor education approach as a medium of national cohesion building were put on halt for a year. Plus, budget cut in Malaysia education sector might affect the implementation of





outdoor education camps in schools and Teachers Training Institute as it involves extensive amount of money. In addition, the delayed effects of outdoor education camping especially in Teachers Training Institute towards group cohesion were rarely examined in Malaysia (Md Amin, Azlizam, Jaffry, 2011).

To address these knowledge gaps, this study is researching the short-term and long-term effects of outdoor education camps in Teachers Training Institute towards group cohesion. The Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia was chosen as a research subject because teaching is now widely acknowledged to be the most important factor influencing implementation of outdoor education in school. The current study is also examining claims made by several researcher from higher institution in Malaysia about the effectiveness of their outdoor education camps in nurturing positive group cohesion (Amy, 2007; Jaffry, 2012; Mazuki, 2010; Muhammad Norazizuddin, 2013).

Specifically, the current study posed several critical questions to the implementation of outdoor education camps in Teacher Education Institute of Malaysia: (1) Does outdoor education camp effectively improve the Teacher Education Institute of Malaysia students' group cohesion? (2) Can the group cohesion gained from the outdoor education camp transferred into participants' daily life and effective in long-term? (3) Are there any social demographic influences on the development of group cohesion among students? (4) What is the sequence of activities in outdoor education camp that might be influential in enhancing group cohesion?



Finding from this research will underline the future body of knowledge, curriculum and practices of outdoor education camp on group cohesion in Teacher Education Institute of Malaysia.

### 1.3 Justification and Significance of the Study

One of the trends in the field of outdoor education is a need for evaluation of programmes' effectiveness (Attarian, 2001; Bobilya et al., 2010; Johnson, 2012). A number of groups are increasingly interested in having programmes outcomes measured through evidence-based evaluation (Sibthorp, 2009). Since outdoor education is claimed as a powerful medium for learning process, many studies have been conducted in examining the effects of outdoor education, especially on participants' personal and social development (American Institute for Research, 2005; Boyle, 2002; Shivers-Blackwell, 2003; Williams, Graham, & Baker, 2003).

However, the effectiveness of outdoor education in improving group cohesion does not remain longer and criticized by many researchers (Boulware, Forgey, & Martin, 2003). There are various studies radically questioned such influences by requesting for empirical evidences rather than only assuming such positive outcomes. Bogner (2002), for instance judged any demonstrable positive effects of outdoor education camp as ill-founded. Yet, the evidences supporting the positive impacts of the outdoor experience are often incomplete, anecdotal, and





based on studies involving small and restricted populations. This lack of sufficient and rigorously derived data has been particularly evident in the case of the impacts of outdoor education camp on group cohesion (Cumming & Corney, 1987).

In addition, this is the first study that explores the delayed effect of outdoor education on group cohesion in a broader context in the Malaysian outdoor education settings and thus could form the basis for a future longitudinal study. Therefore, this research will be a unique contribution to the growing body of literature on outdoor education camp and learning communities in higher education in Malaysia in proving the effects of outdoor education on group cohesion. The outcome of this study also can be used as an indicator for outdoor educators in Malaysia and as useful information for the Malaysian Ministry of Education to enhance the syllabus of the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia if needed. Furthermore, to better understand the effects of group cohesion in outdoor education at the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia, empirical research is needed.

#### 1.4 Research Question

The following research questions are the central interest of this study:



1. Do outdoor education camps in selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia affect teacher trainees' short term group cohesion?
2. Do outdoor education camps in selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia affect teacher trainees' group cohesion affect after two months after program completion?
3. How do the changes in teacher trainees' group cohesion influenced by their socio-demographic variables?
4. What sequence of activities in the outdoor education camps do the participants perceived as influencing their group cohesion?

#### 1.5 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the effect of outdoor education camp on group cohesion among outdoor education students from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia. More specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- (a) to determine the short-term effects of outdoor education towards group cohesion in selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia,
- (b) to determine the delayed effect of outdoor education camp on group cohesion,
- (c) to determine the influences of socio-demographic variables on teacher trainees' group cohesion, and







- (d) to identify sequence of activities in the outdoor education camp programmes that might influence teacher trainees' group cohesion.

## 1.6 Limitation

Several limitations were identified in this study on group cohesion as a result of participation in the outdoor education camp.

- (a) This study is limited to the four campuses of the selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia as was declared by The Ministry of Education as the niche area for Physical Education campuses.
- (b) This study is limited to the camp location as decided by each campus according to the criteria given by the Ministry of Education.
- (c) This study is limited to purposive sampling techniques where the four campuses of the selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia were chosen to form the sample that is representative of the population. The technique was chosen as more convenient (to include people of interest) and economical but it did not contribute to generalisation (Babbie, 2012).
- (d) The study of delayed effect is limited to two months due to time constraint. A two-month length of time was chosen as the follow up administration period for two reasons. First, a two-month length was the first interval at which long term gains were found in Priest (1996) and Priest's (1998b) studies and was between the time intervals in which long-term gains dissipated in Priest and Lesperance's 1994 study. Second, a two month delay was the latest possible point at which participants in this study could be assessed after completion of the camp due to a long semester break.
- (e) The presence of the researcher in each outdoor education camp may have influenced directly how each camp was facilitated. Therefore, to minimise the issue, the researcher make sure the camp programme is accord with the tentative.
- (f) The presence of the researcher in each outdoor education camp may have influenced participants to provide socially desirable responses to the questionnaire. To minimise the issue, the researcher did not mention post-test and delayed post-test in order to minimize the halo effect. Halo effect is the tendency of a research population to let current rating influence future rating (Baumgartner & Hensley, 2006).

## 1.7 Delimitation

The following delimitations are placed on this study:

- (a) The study is delimited on the subject of outdoor education from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia as announced by the Ministry of Education.





- (b) Group cohesion is accessed by the Group Environmental Questionnaire (GEQ) (Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985).
- (c) The study is delimited to the six days and five nights' outdoor education camping programmes.
- (d) This study is delimited to the response of outdoor education students from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia on student group cohesion only.
- (e) This study is delimited to the responses of outdoor education teacher trainees from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia for two months delayed effect without any control group.

## 1.8 Definition and Measurement of Key Terms

Given below are operational definitions as they are used in this study.

### Outdoor education

Outdoor education refers to the use of the outdoors for educational purposes. Outdoor education often involves small groups that are actively engaged in adventurous activities for personal growth under the guidance of an instructor or leader (Neill, 2008). Operationally, in this study it refers to the outdoor education camping programmes for students from the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia which composed of several campuses namely Perlis Campus, Tun Abdul Razak Campus and Raja Melewar Campus.

### Outdoor Education Camp

Operationally, it refers to the continuous six days and five nights outdoor education camp for the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia students that take outdoor education subject.

### Group cohesion

A dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency of a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives (Carron, Burke, et al., 2002). Operationally, it refers to the tendency of a group of students from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia to stick together in their final outdoor education camp. Group cohesion is measured by using Group Environmental Questionnaire (GEQ) which consists of four dimension constructs namely group integration-task (GI-T), group integration-social (GI-S), individual attraction to the group-task (ATG-T), and individual attraction to the group-social (ATG-S) (Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1987).

### Natural Environment

Natural environment is commonly referred to simply as the environment, encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally on earth or some







region thereof (Place, 2004). Operationally, it refers to the surrounding environments which the outdoor education camp was held.

### **Physical Education and Health**

Physical education also known in many Commonwealth countries as physical training is an educational course related to the physique of the human body. It encourages psychomotor learning in a play or movement exploration setting to promote health (Amusa, Toriola, & Goon, 2013). Operationally, it refers to the academic programme enrolled by the experimental group from selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia. The focus of the programme is more on scientific study in sports, leisure, games and recreation.

### **Social Studies**

Social studies are the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as linguistic, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. Operationally, in this study, it refers to the control group students in the selected Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia.

### **Teacher trainees**



Operationally, it refer to the Teacher Education Institutes of Malaysia undergraduate students that enrolled in physical education and social studies (February 2013) at selected campuses.

### **Delayed effect**

It refers to the effects obtained in the delayed post-test which are indicators for the long-term effect. It also refers to the effects that are the results of intervention two months after completion of the outdoor education camp.

### **Sequence**

It refers to a series of adventure and/or educational activities arranged through a linear period of time (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

### **Outdoor Pursuit Activities**

It refers to the self-propelled activities performed in an outdoor setting (Priest, 1990). These activities typically include kayaking, camping, survival, orienteering and abseiling.





## Socio-demographic Variable

It refers to a group defined by its sociological and demographic characteristics (Veghari et al., 2010). Operationally, in this study it refers to the three categories of factor namely, personal factors, environmental factors, and team factors.

### Personal Factor

It refers to the individual characteristics of group members such as individual ability, personality, and interpersonal compatibility (Carron et al., 1985). Operationally, in this study it refers to previous experience, place of residence and gender.

### Environmental Factor

It refers to the social and physical characteristics of the environment and included aspects such as outdoor environment (wilderness, camp, etc.) and all of its various forces, programmes components, territoriality, spatial behaviour, environmental stress, time demand, and fear or anxiety (McAvoy, Mitten, Stringer, Steckart, & Sproles, 1996). Operationally, it refers to the camp location.

### Team Factor

It refers to the group composition (Herre, 2010) for instance, group size, and group organization (McGrath, 1964). Operationally, in this study it refers to the camp location.

## 1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter lays the foundation for the thesis. It first introduces the research background and points to the current issues of outdoor education camp towards group cohesion before presenting the problem statements, research objectives and research questions. Next, the research significance is identified before the delimitation and definition of key terms are drawn. In short, on this basis, the study proceeds with a foundation and detailed description of the research.

