



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**MOTIVES AND PREFERENCES FOR PARTICIPATION IN OUTDOOR
RECREATION AMONG MEMBERS OF SELECTED YOUTH
RECREATION ASSOCIATIONS:
AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

LEE KWAN MENG

FH 2003 8

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By

LEE KWAN MENG

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

July 2003



DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to two special persons who inspired and supported me in the long process of completing this thesis, directly and indirectly.

The first dedication goes to my wife Sharon Koh Foh Geck who helped support me emotionally and financially throughout these five years of study, as well as for some of the resources and references I used in the thesis.

The second dedication goes to Mr. Wee Teow Soon of Penang who had the vision of recreation as a professional field to be developed in the 1970s, and was the person who introduced me to this fascinating world of recreation way back in 1975 at the Penang Youth Park. He trained me as an Honorary Recreation Leader (HRL), and his spiritual support behind the scenes expect me to be the first and probably the only former HRL to have come so far to earn a postgraduate degree programme in this discipline of recreation kept my spirits going, especially whenever it was down during this process of working on this thesis.

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

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2 July 2003

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Outdoor recreation activities are popular among most Malaysian youths. It is also being used to develop their personalities and competencies. Since recreation participation is voluntary, the youths must be motivated to participate. Their motivation is influenced by their behavioural patterns such as preferences and needs. The study was carried out to determine the pattern of their motives and preferences, and the profile of youths from selected youth recreation associations who participated in such activities, as well as to determine the variables that influenced their participation

Descriptive research design using self-administered questionnaire was adopted for this study. The purposive sample population came from members of selected youth recreation NGOs and youth NGOs, local institutions and other recreation programmes.

The respondents of the study reside in the Klang Valley. They comprised both the males and females, belong to youth with age groups of 15 to 25 years and 26 to 40 years. In addition, the respondents are mainly students from non-tertiary



and tertiary institutions, as well as youths who are employed in both public and private sectors.

The findings suggest that health and fitness, self-confidence, peace, developing skills, and nature appreciation are the top five predominant preferred motives for their participation in their personal development. The respondents regardless of their socio-economic background prefer to participate in outdoor recreation activities on weekends or a period of not more than 5 days, social participation with their friends and peers in pursuing recreation and through their association, or institutions which they belong to. They prefer to travel to destinations close to their homes of within 20 kilometres for their recreation using a combination of transportation means. Learning safety, camping and exploration skills are their main preferred training need. They prefer quality managers and good leaders for their activity delivery. Camping, swimming and flying are the most preferred activities. However, the main constraints to their participation are money, time, transport, equipment, companionship and lack of information about recreation programmes.

This study would serve as a framework for outdoor recreation programmers and leaders when they plan their activities, and to motivate the youths to participate in their activities. These leaders by understanding the behavioural patterns of the youths and their development needs, and the problems that prevent their participation, would be able to plan activities that address those problems. When the pattern of motives and preferences are understood, programmes and activities can be strategically planned and targeted to meet the satisfaction and development needs of the youth participants without unnecessary waste of resources.

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

**MOTIF DAN KEUTAMAAN PENYERTAAN DALAM KEGIATAN
REKREASI LUAR ANTARA AHLI-AHLI PERSATUAN REKREASI BELIA
TERPILIH: SESUATU KAJIAN PENJELAJAHAN**

Oleh

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Kegiatan rekreasi luar digemari oleh kebanyakan para belia Malaysia, serta juga digunakan sebagai sesuatu alat untuk membina peribadi dan kemampuan mereka. Oleh kerana penyertaan dalam rekreasi adalah sukarela, para belia harus dimotivasikan untuk menyertai kegiatan-kegiatan sebegini. Motivasi mereka dipengaruhi oleh corak kelakuan mereka seperti keutamaan dan keperluan. Kajian ini akan menentukan corak motif dan keutamaan serta profil belia-belia dari pertubuhan-pertubuhan belia terpilih yang menyertai kegiatan-kegiatan sebegini, termasuk juga menentukan pembolehubah yang mempengaruhi penyertaan mereka.

Bentuk kajian diskriptif dengan menggunakan borang soal-selidik di pakai untuk kajian ini. Sampel populasi purposive terdiri daripada ahli-ahli pertubuhan-pertubuhan rekreasi belia, institusi tempatan dan program rekreasi lain

Responden kajian ini menginap di kawasan Lembah Pantai. Mereka terdiri daripada kedua jantina lelaki dan wanita, merangkumi belia dalam lingkungan umur

15 hingga 25 tahun dan 26 hingga 40 tahun. Kebanyakan mereka juga adalah pelajar-pelajar institusi rendah dan tinggi, serta para belia yang bekerja dengan sektor-sektor umum dan swasta.

Kesimpulan dari kajian ini mendapati bahawa kesihatan dan kecergasan, keyakinan diri, keamanan, membina kemahiran dan menikmati alam semulajadi merupakan lima motif utama untuk penyertaan mereka. Responden-responden tersebut, tanpa mengira latar belakang sosio-ekonomi mereka, mengutamakan penyertaan mereka pada hujung minggu dan tidak melebihi 5 hari, penyertaan rekreasi dengan rakan-rakan mereka melalui sesuatu persatuan, atau institusi mereka. Mereka tidak akan menjelajah ke destinasi yang lebih dari 20 kilometer dari rumah mereka untuk kegiatan mereka tetapi akan menggunakan pelbagai bentuk pengangkutan. Mempelajari kemahiran-kemahiran keselamatan, berkhemah dan explorasi merupakan keutamaan mereka dalam keperluan latihan. Mereka mengutamakan pengurus yang berkualiti serta pemimpin yang baik untuk penyampaian aktiviti. Berkhemah, berenang, dan menerbang merupakan kegiatan-kegiatan yang utama bagi mereka. Namun demikian, halangan-halangan yang akan menjejaskan penyertaan mereka adalah wang, masa, pengangkutan, peralatan, teman dan kekurangan maklumat tentang program rekreasi.

Kajian ini boleh dijadikan sebagai sesuatu bentuk untuk perancang dan pemimpin rekreasi luar semasa merancang kegiatan mereka, supaya ia boleh memotivasikan penyertaan para belia untuk menyertai kegiatan-kegiatan mereka. Pemimpin-pemimpin tersebut dengan memahami corak kelakuan serta keperluan pembangunan para belia and masalah-masalah penyertaan para belia semasa merancang kegiatan untuk para belia secara strategik dan dapat mengatasi masalah-masalah tersebut untuk memenuhi kepuasan dan pembangunan peserta belia tanpa membazir sumber-sumber yang sedia ada.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Outdoor recreation was regularly used as a programme for developing youths. Godbey (1994) believes that teenagers are more likely to participate in most forms of outdoor recreation than those who are older, unless automobiles are involved. Activities in outdoor recreation have been found to be an effective instrument in development programmes (Krouwel & Goodwill, 1994; and Tuson, 1994). Edginton, *et al* (1995) was in agreement with Ralston (1986) who believes that outdoor recreational activities provide an extra dimension that indoor leisure activities do not. Ralston had suggested that life support, aesthetics, natural history, philosophical, religious, scientific, and other topics can all be pursued in leisure experiences in the out-of-doors, which also enhance participation. Organised youth programmes were always aimed at development.

Many studies have also demonstrated that outdoor recreation activities that focus on individual challenge and skill enhance the self-esteem and emotional well-being of youths, and with organised activities under adult supervision, youths are less likely to develop emotional and behaviour disorders. In addition outdoor recreation activities make young people feel connected, empowered, accepted, expressive, and special (OPHEA Journal, Autumn 1985, in www.lin.ca). In fact, recreation itself regardless of which forms or types of activities leads to development of various youth competencies (Edginton, *et al*, 1995; Laidlaw Foundation, 1999).



Many outdoor recreation programmes were organised by various Malaysian government agencies, state governments, local authorities, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Ministry of Youth and Sports established the National Youth Leadership Institute with facilities for camping and outdoor recreation activities in Port Dickson. Outdoor recreation programmes initiated by the Federal Government were also adopted by local authorities such as the Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya Municipal Councils. The authorities and the various youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organised such programmes with the aim of developing the youths towards a brighter future and neutralising negative elements that influence the youth.

According to Bammel and Bammel (1992), recreation and leisure play a major role in the social development of adolescents by fostering opportunities for social contacts, development and achievement. More specifically, recreation activities hold great potential for adolescent identity development (Grossman & O'Connell, 2000; Kivel & Kleiber, 1996; Iso-Ahola, 1980, in Ostiguy, 1995). This is because adolescents are seen to be the most active sub-population. They enjoy different types of activities. And recreational activities can help them to develop adequacy, self-respect, and self-confidence. Recreation also allow them to practise interpersonal skills, experience new environments, act autonomously, and experiment with a variety of roles with self, friends, family, and community (Grossman and O'Connell, 2000).

Recreation is any activity pursued during leisure, pursued freely, voluntarily and at individual discretion after fulfilling all obligatory duties (Fairchild, 1944), are restorative, and socially organised for social ends (Kelly, 1996). According to Godbey (1994), some types of recreation activities are effective in youth development programmes, especially recreation based on the "outward-bound type". This means programmes conducted that are based in outdoor settings or adventure-type activities such as camping, ropes course, obstacle course, campfire, orienteering, and expedition.

Youth is a great concern of human society. They inherit the legacies of the old generation, carry them and pass them on to the next generation. When the old generation passes away, a new generation takes over. The new generation is today's youth. They are the world's future residents and leaders. Continued progress and development in the world depends on the efforts of the youths today.

Issue of Youth

The issue of youth is a global one, not merely a concern of one nation like Malaysia. It involves not only a small human community in a nation, but also governments of the world, and at the highest international institution, that is, the *United Nations*. The issue of youth has become the concern of the world's premier institution.



The United Nations highlighted the importance of this issue of youth when they decided to declare the year 1985 as the '**International Year of the Youth**'. The United Nations at its 40th. General Assembly formulated a document entitled *Guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth (Agenda Item 3)* advising member governments of the United Nations and non-governmental organisations on matters relating to youth policies, actions at national, regional and international levels, roles of NGOs, public information and technical co-operation activities.

The theme of the 1985 International Youth Year was "*Participation, Development, Peace*". *Participation* means providing opportunities for individuals' involvement in activities that are meaningful to society. The *development* theme relates to two major aspects of youth: The growth of each person, and the process of local and national development of each society. It should be seen as a process of enhancing the capability of individuals to improve the well being of society as a whole, a process of social, economic and political change that enables each person to realise his or her full potential. It is the dynamic process of improving the quality of life for both the individual and the community.

The *peace* agenda calls for educating the youth in the spirit of respect for the dignity and worth of the human person, for tolerance, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and respect for equal rights of all nations, as well as appreciation for the importance of international co-operation, in accordance

with the principles of the *Charter of the United Nations*. Youths should be encouraged to contribute their energies, enthusiasm and creative abilities to the tasks of nation-building, the observance of the principles of the *Charter of the United Nations*, the realisation of the right to self-determination and national independence, the respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of each State, the economic, social and cultural advancement of peoples, the implementation of a new international economic order and the promotion of international co-operation and understanding to achieve the goals of the International Youth Year: '*Participation, Development, Peace*'.

This agenda stressed the importance of the involvement of youth in nation-building and international co-operation, as well as developing the youths in pursuit of these achievements. The document also pointed out problem areas affecting youth across the global spectrum such as peace, development, education and training, work, health, housing, family life, culture and environment.

The United Nations has also recognised the importance of leisure and recreation in society by according consultative status to the *World Leisure Association (WLA)*. The International Youth Year guidelines (Agenda Item 3) also invited member governments to promote and provide support for sports, recreation and cultural activities as part of their youth development programmes (Clause 57). In Clause 58, travel and tourism activities are advocated.

The importance of youth and sports are recognised by the Malaysian Government since 1964 when the then Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports was established. (The Culture Division was later separated to a new Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism. This is to enable the government to give greater focus on youth and sports matters.)

The youths are entrusted with the task of ensuring the sustained socio-economic status, the strong international recognition and standing, and the traditions of tolerance of respect. This is part of the goals envisioned in VISION 2020 (Suroya Selamat, Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia, undated).

The role of recreation comes under the purview of the *National Sports Policy* that was drafted and passed by the Cabinet on January 20, 1988. In this policy, recreation plays a contributory role towards sporting excellence through Sport for All programmes, and a promotion of an active lifestyle in the context of the “*Fitness Malaysia*” (or ‘*Malaysia Cergas*’) campaign.

The Policy on youth was initially formulated in the year 1985 in conjunction with the International Youth Year. This was *the National Youth Policy*. In 1995, this policy was re-evaluated and studied to keep it in context with the latest issues and concern of youth development. Finally, in 1997, a revised new policy called *The National Youth Development Policy* was formulated.

The objective of the *National Youth Development Policy 1997* was “to establish a holistic and harmonious Malaysian youth force imbued with strong spiritual and moral values, who are responsible, independent and patriotic; thus serving as a stimulus to the development and prosperity of the nation in consonance with the VISION 2020”. There are nine strategic objectives of VISION 2020, but those that concern the nation's youth development are:

- *Create a psychologically liberated, secure and developed Malaysian society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity;*
- *Establish a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards;*
- *Establish a mature, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creed are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs, and yet feel that they belong to one nation;*
- *Establish a caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.*

In the context of youth citizenship, the objectives of *VISION 2020* envisaged the youths of the nation to be **mature, liberal, caring, knowledgeable, moral and ethical, religious, independent, socially harmonious, resilient, robust, dynamic, and forward-looking.**

Based on these values and goals, the *National Youth Development Policy 1997* was formulated which outlined the strategies as **knowledge development, attitudinal development, vocational and entrepreneurial development, inculcation of a healthy lifestyle, facilities for social interaction, partnership in development, and international relations and networking**. Included in the plan of action to be used to achieve the National Youth Development Policy is the strengthening of 'leadership and self-development programmes that can further develop self-reliance, family, religious and societal institutions; thus enhancing the efficiency of roles played by the youth'. Another plan of action is the enhancing of 'volunteerism and patriotism through social, welfare and voluntary work'.

According to statistics by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia (1998), the percentage of young people in the 15-40 years age group in mid-year 1998 was about 43.0% of the total population, that is about 9.544 million of the total population of about 22.2 million. In the age group of 15-24 years of age, it is about 4.33 million (or 20% of the total population, and about 45% of the total youth population in the age range of 15 – 40 years).

Like most countries, Malaysia also has its share of youth problems. Among them are the ills of drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, social indiscipline, teenage rape, loitering, religious and sexual deviationary activities and the abandonment of babies (Suroya Selamat, undated).