

Enhancing Life Effectiveness Skills: Impacts of Length of Program in Outdoor Education Camp

Muhammad Wafi Bin A. Rahman¹, Nelfianty Binti Mohd Rasyid², Ahmad Bin Hashim³, Md Amin Bin Md Taff⁴, Mohd Helme bin Basal⁵, Mohd Shariman Shafie⁶

*^{1,2,3,4}Fakulti Sains Sukan & Kejurulatihan,
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. Perak.*

*⁵Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation
UiTM Shah Alam*

*⁶ Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation,
UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan Kampus Seremban
Negeri Sembilan.*

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*Muhammad Wafi Bin A. Rahman
Nelfianty Binti Mohd Rasyid
Ahmad Bin Hashim
Md Amin Bin Md Taff
Fakulti Sains Sukan & Kejurulatihan,
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris. Perak.*

*Mohd Helme bin Basal
Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation
UiTM Shah Alam*

*Mohd Shariman Shafie
Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation,
UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan Kampus Seremban
Negeri Sembilan.*

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the effects of length of outdoor education program on life effectiveness skills among two public universities students in Malaysia. Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ-H) was administrated among 256 participants who were chosen as a sample by using purposive sampling. The data were analysed using MANOVA analysis. The result showed that there was a statistically significant difference for overall psychological factor of life effectiveness on length of program for both universities outdoor education program. The implication of the findings provides evidence on the effectiveness duration of outdoor education program in improving students' life effectiveness. This study provides useful input for Ministry of Higher Education, universities and outdoor. education practitioners. This study also provides an empirical data for future study in this field.

Keywords: *Life effectiveness skills, Outdoor education program, Program length.*

Introduction

Outdoor education was highlighted education for, in and about the outdoors, which take place primarily through the exposure in both natural settings and human made environments (Rowley, 2010). Outdoor education approach can be applied into formal and informal curriculum which relate between learner, subject and the environment. The aims of outdoor education are to improve one's social and personal, outdoor adventure and environmental commitment skills (Md Taff, 2010). Based on National Education Philosophy in Malaysia, education system should developing the potential of individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balance and harmonious. However, the issues on this objective of education system have been query due to education system nowadays are more focus on academic (Shahaliza, 2011).

There are also several parties give a negative reaction towards outdoor education by assume that outdoor education as non-academic subject (Shahrifuddin, 2002). Even though outdoor education

has good values on interpersonal growth, developed on environmental education and outdoor pursuit but as consequently this subject is become less important hierarchy especially among institute of higher education (Md Taff, Aziz and Zakaria, 2011). Recently, researchers has proven that graduates produced by the institute of higher education was lack of knowledge and skills that required by the labour market (Ismail, 2012). Based on these trends, it clearly showed that highly skilled workers are still required by the job market (Mohd Izwan et al., 2016). Thus, according to Zaini Ujang (2009), the issue of unemployed graduates has become a greater challenge to the university and the industry in which they need to find a solution together on this matter.

Therefore, many researchers have highlighted the importance of outdoor education program (Allen- Craig and McLeod, 2005). In Malaysia, outdoor education program is not a new thing among institute of higher education. This is a core subject for sport science and physical education students in public higher education. Furthermore, previous researcher in Malaysia also found the benefits and impact of outdoor education program towards student development (Mazuki 2005; Md Amin, 2007; Jaffry, 2008; and Mohd Taib and Norlena, 2014).

Program Length

Some researchers believed that length of program plays role towards the significant of life effectiveness skills among participants in outdoor education program (Khamis, 2009). Furthermore, in the study done by Neill (1999) found that long duration of program (9 to 10 days) showed significant effects than shorter program (2 to 8 days) for participants of outdoor education programs in Outward Bound. According to Neill (2003), short term outdoor education produce weak life effectiveness effects compared to long term outdoor education programs. In addition, Lane (2008) in his study found that participant who involves an adventure travel summer camp program showed that longer trips have a more lasting effect on participants. However, this idea was disproved by Yoshino (2005) in his study found that short term (five days) residential outdoor education programs was more effective in enhancing positive environmental attitudes compared to long term program (three weeks). In support, Beamish et al (2009) found some improvement for students who participate in short term camp towards life effectiveness skills.

Furthermore, in the previous study there are also outdoor recreation program which conducted less than eight days. The result showed that five days Outward Bound Challenge Course indicated positive effects on participants' self-esteem, social skills, interpersonal skill and leadership Wang et al. (2004). They also found that significant effects on experiential learning are more beneficial when the participant attend for longer program rather than shorter program. Based on the previous studies, researchers believe that length of program give an impact towards participants' life effectiveness.

Life effectiveness

Life effectiveness is the capacity of a person to adapt survive and thrive and it refers to how well that person able to overcome the demands of life (Neill, 2008). In order to become a successful student they need life effectiveness skills as guideline for them to be success. According Sibthorp and Arthur-Banning (2004), life effectiveness is a dimension for people to trust themselves to success in life. In line with the definition, Culhane (2004) states that both personal and professional components are the aspects that involved in life effectiveness. Johnson (2012) also describes that life effectiveness outcome is greater than other parallel construct for instance self-esteem or self-concept. Life effectiveness is a useful tool that has been used as measurable outcome in a number of studies to examine the process of experience based program (Sibthorp & Banning, 2004).

The Dimension of Life Effectiveness

The following section highlights the dimension of life effectiveness. Based on literature, life effectiveness has widely discussed and yet a better understanding towards life effectiveness dimension is needed.

Table 1: Dimensions of Life Effectiveness (Neill, 2008)

| Dimension | Description |
|--------------------------|---|
| Achievement Motivation | Encouraged to succeed excellence and put the necessary determination into achievement to attain it. |
| Active Initiative | Starts action in new circumstances. Likes to be active, |
| Emotional Control | Keep cool in new, changeable or hectic circumstances. |
| Intellectual Flexibility | Adjusts thoughtful and put up dissimilar viewpoints when presented with greater thoughts. |
| Self Confidence | Uses individual capabilities with great expectation of achievement in personals' actions. |
| Social Competence | Efficient in connections with people surrounding. |
| Task Leadership | Be a leader and encourages other person efficiently when a job needs to be completed. |
| Time Management | Creates best, effective usage of time. |

Methods

Quantitative method is also referred to as traditional or positivist approach in research. It is commonly used to describe existing conditions or phenomenon, investigate relationships between variables and explore causes and effects relationships between phenomena (Leary, 2004). The instrument used was adapted from the *Life Effectiveness Questionnaire* (LEQ H). Respondents were also required to provide some background information such as gender, education background, current university and experiences in outdoor education so that the information obtained can be compared, but still maintain the confidentiality of the respondents. Researcher has administered all data collection for pre-test and post-test personally at the venue itself. The researcher explains the objective and the goal of this study and requests the respondents to response the question according to what they thought and all the information is totally confidential.

Data analysis

In this study researcher utilized MANOVA analysis. According to Pallant (2010), define MANOVA is an extension of analysis of variance for use when you have more than one dependent variable. These dependent variables should be related in some way, or there should be some conceptual reason for considering them together.

Result

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate length of program in outdoor education differences in psychological factors of life effectiveness. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. Bonferroni adjusted method was used to see the significant differences of length of program in outdoor education towards eight dimension of life effectiveness. The significant level is $p < .006$ (.05 divided by eight dependent variable).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistic for Each Dependent Variable Based on Length of Program for Both 10 days (UPSI) and 5 days (UiTM) Outdoor Education.

| Dependent variables | Program length | Mean | SD | Sig. |
|--------------------------|----------------|------|------|-------|
| Time Management | 10 days | 6.45 | .937 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 5.97 | 1.11 | |
| Social Competence | 10 days | 6.52 | .817 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 6.00 | .962 | |
| Achievement Motivation | 10 days | 7.11 | .835 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 6.72 | .814 | |
| Intellectual flexibility | 10 days | 6.87 | .798 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 6.46 | .927 | |
| Task leadership | 10 days | 6.39 | .967 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 5.87 | 1.13 | |
| Emotional control | 10 days | 6.43 | 1.19 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 5.87 | .984 | |
| Active initiative | 10 days | 7.01 | .971 | .001* |
| | 5 days | 6.57 | 1.08 | |
| Self-confidence | 10 days | 6.99 | .874 | .000* |
| | 5 days | 6.54 | .861 | |

*significant ($p < .006$)

The MANOVA analysis results suggest that there was a statistically significant difference between 10 days and 5 days of outdoor education program on the combined dependent variables: $F(8, 247) = 3.15, p = .002$; Wilks' Lambda = .907; partial eta squared = .93. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, overall psychological of life effectiveness mean difference reach statistical significance, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of .006, were time management; social competence; achievement motivation; intellectual flexibility; task leadership; emotional control; active initiative; and self.

An inspection of the mean scores indicated that 10 days outdoor education program reported higher levels of time management ($M = 6.45, SD = .937$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 5.97, SD = 1.11$); social competence ($M = 6.52, SD = .817$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 6.01, SD = .962$); achievement motivation ($M = 7.12, SD = .835$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 6.72, SD = .814$); intellectual flexibility.

($M = 6.88, SD = .798$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 6.46, SD = .927$); task leadership ($M = 6.39, SD = .967$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 5.88, SD = 1.13$); emotional control ($M = 6.44, SD = 1.19$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 5.87, SD = .984$); active initiative ($M = 7.01, SD = .971$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 6.57, SD = 1.08$); and self-confidence ($M = 6.99, SD = .874$) than 5 days of outdoor education program ($M = 6.54, SD = .861$).

Discussion

Based on the findings, ten days outdoor education program indicated higher level of overall factors of life effectiveness than five days outdoor education program. Supporting this finding, Neill (1999) in his study for participant in outward bound and other outdoor education program found that longer programs have a greater improvement. These results suggest that longer program are expected to have positive influence on life effectiveness. Moreover, Neill (2003) believe that shorter program will give weak outcomes of life effectiveness. Previous researchers had long proposed that longer residential outdoor education duration had more positive effects on environmental attitudes and knowledge (Stern et al., 2008).

Thus, length of program had influence participants life effectiveness and it is potential for a longer program to give a greater impact and long lasting effects rather than shorter program. As a result, they probably develop the sense of friendship, teamwork with the natural surroundings. Thus it strengthens the sense of development of togetherness as mention by Md Amin (2009) in his study that longer camp duration allows greater exposure and direct experiences for the students and develops the sense of togetherness with the natural surroundings. Based on the researcher findings ten days outdoor education program reach statistical significance for overall psychological factors of life effectiveness compared to five days outdoor education program.

Summary

This study confirmed that length of program is effective in enhancing participants' life effectiveness skills. The natural setting surroundings, implementation of experiential learning process and outdoor recreation activities that enhance factors of life effectiveness skills may have significantly influenced on this finding. To conclude the researcher proposed that outdoor education camps is among the most influential medium in enhancing participants' life effectiveness skills. This study also promote that a natural setting of the program is suitable to enhance life effectiveness skills since the participants involved with environmentally and back to basic lifestyle with less technologies influence.

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Corresponding Author:

Muhammad Wafi bin A. Rahman

Tel.: +60192872628

e-mail address: wafi.252@gmail.com