

## **Exploration of Element Risk Management Outdoor Education in Technical and Vocational Education**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The objective of Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) is to form individuals who have good technical skills. Various efforts have been made in TVET to prepare individuals who are skilled, knowledgeable and capable and who can apply what they have learnt in outdoor education. Risk management is important in outdoor education to ensure a safe environment for every programme that is run outdoors. Risk management seeks to control, prevent and reduce the occurrences of accidents and injuries. This study was conducted to explore Risk Management Elements in Outdoor Education (RiMOE). The study employed the qualitative method to obtain data by using semi-structured interviews to explore the risk management elements that could further function as expert evidence and be aligned with the thoughts, ideas and opinions generated from experts in the field of outdoor education. The analysis showed that this study had successfully determined four dominant elements associated with risk management in outdoor education. Therefore, this study showed the RiMOE elements required by the lecturer, with the dominant elements being identification, selection of operations, implementation and evaluation.

*Keywords:* Lecturer, outdoor education, risk management, Technical and Vocational Education (TVET)

### **INTRODUCTION**

Risk is part of human experience and exists in nearly every environment and event (Conrow, 2003; Blaikie, Cannon, Davis, & Wisner, 2004). Risk management focusses on how to be safe from dangers; in education, sport and recreation, risk management concerns safe practices to avoid or prevent injury to the body. Risks

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can be categorised as high or low; high-risk physical activities are sport or adventure activities, while low-risk physical activities are light sport or adventure activities e.g. a bushwalk. Risk management in education covers a very wide spectrum of risks from high to low levels of risk.

According to the International Risk Management Standard, ISO 31000, risk management covers legal issues, the activities carried out and the design of programmes from weather factors to scenario analyses of events (Dickson & Gray, 2012). Risk management is the best way to manage weaknesses during outdoor education sessions while maximising zero risk during each activity (Eng, 2013). Other than that, according to the national standards of Australia and New Zealand, risk management is a process that includes identification, analysis, evaluation, treatment and monitoring of risks proactively. The risk management process, in fact, can be used in any situation. In the context of education, it is ultimately a step approach towards developing risk management strategies.

The aspects of risk and safety have always been an emphasis in outdoor education. Scotland, for instance, introduced two safety guidelines specifically for outdoor educational activities, the Outdoor Education, Safety and Good Practices guidelines and the Safety in Outdoor Education guidelines. The safety measures contained in the Outdoor Education, Safety and Good Practices guidelines focussed on the supervision of student engagement

against losses that occurred, while those contained in the Safety in Outdoor Education focussed on the diversity of activities and locations implemented by lecturers (Higgins, Loynes, & Crowther, 1997, p. 26–27).

Scholars recognise that outdoor education programmes are very effective in creating a positive impact on the development of the individual, society and the state (Edward & George, 2008; Priest & Gass, 2005). Indeed, extra-curricular activities have long been emphasised in teaching and learning processes abroad. Extra-curricular activities have been proven to generate a positive attitude, good values and the ability to solve problems wisely (Marsh & Kleitman, 2009). This indicates that the learning process continues over time, including during periods of rest and during holidays from studies. Therefore, students gain by improving their skills and knowledge during holidays through activities that cannot be developed in the classroom. This ensures that students are not overly stressed and that they spend their holidays in a productive manner.

However, risk management is not emphasised in education by lecturers, and this has led to accidents during outdoor activities and has raised concerns among students when it comes to participating in outdoor activities (Zimmerman, 2007). Lecturers play a dominant role in the process of teaching and learning and in sharing knowledge of risk management, particularly that concerning outdoor activities (Attarian,

2012). Lecturers also have the responsibility to mitigate risks that can occur during an event.

In modern education, outdoor education is designed to enable students to learn outside the framework of formal education in order to enrich and to enhance skills, knowledge and experience. The organisation of outdoor education is a great challenge and a matter of concern as most lecturers are responsible for happenings during outdoor activities; they will be held accountable for incidents and accidents involving students when outdoor activities are carried out. According to Esa and Mustaffa (2015), risk management is very important in sport and outdoor activities. The Guidelines for Prevention of Accidents in the Workplace defines accidents as mishaps that can lead to injury, illness, death or damage to property, while risk is the probability of a hazard to cause harm.

Risk is a key element used in outdoor education for the development of individual potential. Outdoor education exposes students to the element of risk. However, the risk element can be prevented in many ways, and some agencies have been established in Malaysia to prevent the risk of accidents in rural education. Among the agencies are the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), the Social Security (SS) Services and the Ministry of Health (MOH). These agencies have functions within their own security perimeters.

In this study, the researchers applied Chickering's Theory. The theory of psychosocial development by Chickering states that the involvement of students in outdoor education is a very important dimension. Chickering's Theory is effective in implementing programmes or activities in outdoor education. The Chickering Model (1993) outlines seven stages (vectors) that can be used for conducting outdoor education, namely, (1) develop competence, (2) manage emotions, (3) motivate oneself, (4) build mature interpersonal relationships, (5) build an identity, (6) build purpose and function, and (7) build integrity. The Chickering Model encourages continuous learning through knowledge, experience and environment in the development of students' personality.

Other than that, outdoor activities can improve soft skills such as problem solving, risk intake, teamwork, self-esteem and interpersonal communication. Their advantages include participation in higher learning by trainers, the opportunity to experience real emotions and adopt a new mindset, the ability to encourage experimentation in problem solving and the promotion of awareness and confidence in a group.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This study determined the research methods deemed appropriate to explore the elements of risk management in outdoor education from lecturers' perspective.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of a study indicates the direction and guidance for

researchers for carrying out research. The conceptual framework of this study is shown in Figure 1.

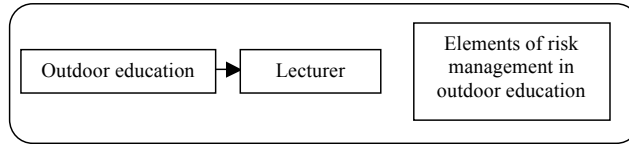


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

**METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the researchers used the qualitative method to collect data. There are three types of interview for research, the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview. For this study, the researchers decided to use the semi-structured interview. The researchers asked the subjects a number of structured questions before the interviews were conducted in order to probe each answer more deeply.

The interview approach, one of the main methods of gathering information in this study, was used to support the findings of the instrument. Before the interviews were conducted, the researchers made

appointments with the respondents for the interviews. During the interviews, the researchers used the recording process to collect and preserve information.

The respondents of this study consisted of experts who were directly involved in outdoor education. Their selection was based on their area of expertise and their ingenuity in TVET. The criteria for their selection were: (i) a trainer of curriculum/ education who has served for more than 10 years and is directly involved in teaching and supervision of risk management education, and (ii) is directly involved in outdoor education. The number of experts in this study was three. Table 1 shows the analysis method used in this study.

Table 1  
Data analysis methods

Experts	Text	Element
Expert 1	“hmm...risk management is very important for student and lecturer during carried out outdoor activities. The main element of risk management outdoor activities are...hmm...identification the equipment and facilities, evaluation, election of operation and also implementation..”	1) Identification 2) Election operation 3) Implementation 4) Evaluation

Table 1 (continue)

Expert 2	“ooo...very important for lecturers...must have the element of risk management...example, identification, the implementation, evaluation, election operation and also treatment the risk...”
Expert 3	“mmm for me...a risk is a key element used in outdoor education for the development of individual potential..the main element includes identification, implementation for the safety training and staffing, election operation of risk, evaluation...”

**RESULTS**

This study found four elements of risk management in outdoor education. Each element has its own function and construct. Identification, selection of operations, implementation and evaluation were the

main elements contained in risk management in outdoor education. These four elements of risk management in outdoor education are required by lecturers to avoid accidents during outdoor activities, as shown in Figure 2.

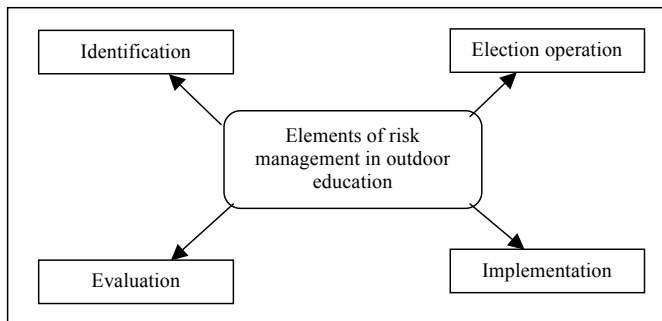


Figure 2. Elements of RiMOE

**DISCUSSION**

Risk management is indeed important in outdoor education. This study successfully determined the appropriate research methods to pin-point the risk management elements in outdoor education for lecturers. The research questions developed for this study were answered. The emphasis on risk management in education helps students in TVET to understand and use their skills

and knowledge for activities carried out in outdoor education to reduce the risk in such activities to zero. In addition, this knowledge can help improve their employability in securing a job in the future (Esa, Padil, & Hassan, 2015). The researchers hope that this finding will help students to improve their soft and extra-curricular skills, thus reducing the accident rate during outdoor activities.

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