

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF  
TRANSFORMATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP AND GROUP  
COHESION IN THE OUTDOOR  
RECREATION CURRICULUM AT  
UITM'S FACULTY OF SPORTS  
SCIENCE AND RECREATION**

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## ABSTRACT

Outdoor recreation programs at the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), are integral to experiential learning, promoting leadership development, teamwork, and personal growth. Recognizing the importance of effective leadership and cohesive group dynamics in such settings, this study investigates students' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours and their relationship with group cohesion in UiTM's outdoor recreation curriculum. Specifically, this research aims to: (i) identify students' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours and group cohesion values within the curriculum, (ii) examine the relationship between the four dimensions of transformational leadership which are idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individual consideration, and elements of group cohesion, (iii) compare perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours between male and female students, and (iv) compare perceptions of group cohesion between male and female students. The study involved 230 UiTM students (120 male, 110 female) from various campuses and academic levels. Data were collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) 5x-short and the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ). Findings revealed a significant relationship between transformational leadership dimensions and two group cohesion factors: individual attraction to the group-task (ATG-T) and group integration-task (GI-T). However, no significant gender differences were found in students' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours or group cohesion values. This research is important for FSR UiTM's curriculum development and instructional strategies. It highlights how transformational leadership can enhance group functioning, motivation, and collaborative learning in outdoor recreation contexts. By promoting such leadership traits, the faculty can cultivate more resilient, communicative, and adaptive student leaders capable of managing challenges in dynamic outdoor environments.

**Keywords:** Group Cohesion, Outdoor Recreation, Sports Science, Transformational Leadership, UiTM

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

Outdoor recreation is a concept based on experiential learning theory that incorporates various outdoor tasks and activities to facilitate management development and improve organizational processes. The popularity of expressive individuality and its primary principle of authenticity is evident in various management training programs. Scholars have underscored the importance of authenticity in leadership, highlighting its intrinsic relational nature and the difficulties individuals encounter when attempting to fully express themselves within organizational environments (Cha, Hewlin, & Roberts, 2024). Although authenticity is acknowledged as a desirable quality, there are reservations regarding its extremes and the potential negative repercussions it could have on the professional development of young managers and the effectiveness of seasoned executives (Freebairn-Smith, 2024; Schultz, 2015).

Depending on the context, the definition of outdoor recreation may vary. Outdoor recreation is recognized as a vital and immediate avenue for connecting with the environment, incorporating physical involvement and personal experiences with the natural habitat, and enhancing enjoyment and well-being through activities carried out in outdoor locations (Parkinson, Shen, MacDonald, Logan, Gorrell, & Lindberg, 2025). At the same time, a narrower definition encompasses activities that involve purposeful physical exertion and occur in natural surroundings outdoors. Generally, outdoor recreation refers to a wide range of activities that allow people to interact with the environment, enhance physical and mental well-being, and connect to the natural world. Moreover, outdoor recreation activities can also construct a short-term simulation for a group of people doing certain problem-solving activities.

Several researchers have explored the advantages of participating in outdoor recreation or learning in natural surroundings, with multiple studies indicating that exposure to outdoor environments and nature positively impacts academic development, personal growth, and the fostering of environmental responsibility (Kuo, Barnes, & Jordan, 2019). Additionally, Kuo et al. (2019) found that participation in outdoor recreation activities positively impacts skills such as persistence, problem-