

**MUSLIM MIGRANTS IN KUCHING, SARAWAK: EXPECTATION TOWARDS AND USE OF  
RECREATION AND LEISURE PROVISION**



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# 1. Report

## 1.1 Introduction

Leisure participation has multiple personal, family and community benefits including community integration. Kelly and Freysinger (2000) contended that participating in leisure and recreation gives opportunities for individuals or groups to experience and understand different cultures through social interaction with participants from different cultural backgrounds. In addition, people can share activities such as different games, entertainment, customs, resources and traditions arising from different ethnic identities, thereby encouraging social integration (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). Furthermore, the development of social integration through leisure and recreation participation helps migrants to adjust more easily to the adopted country and integrate more quickly into the new culture (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000).

However, to date, there is only limited research literature available on the adjustment of migrants to leisure and recreational activities in host countries. When migrants migrate to other countries, they take their behaviour patterns, expectations, needs and preferences to their new environments (Jackson, 1986). In order to integrate into the new environment, they have to go through changes in lifestyle including occupations, family status, and cultures. Adaptation of lifestyle, including participation in leisure activities, might be difficult or even impossible because of constraints that migrants encounter in the new environment. Specific cultural and religious practices of migrants might also lead a particular migrant group.

While there is much research on leisure and recreation participation among “native” residents of a particular area (Jackson and Henderson, 1995, Raymore et al., 1993), such research does not usually address the leisure needs of migrants (Kelly & Freysinger, 2000). Thus, there is still a lack of research on questions relating to whether there are specific leisure constraints and the type of opportunities for migrants including Muslim migrants, when participating in leisure activities in their host country.

## 1.2 Research objectives

The main objectives of this research are to investigate whether and how Muslim migrants take advantage of the recreation and leisure activities in Kuching provided by the public, and the voluntary sectors. This main objective is supported by intermediate objectives:

4.2.1 To determine how Muslim migrants in Kuching, Sarawak deal with settlement and adjustment issues in their lives in the host culture, with particular reference to leisure and recreational activity.

4.2.2 To investigate the views of Muslim migrants regarding their leisure and recreational opportunities and constraints.

## 1.3 Brief Literature Review

This literature examines two elements related to migrants' leisure participation. The first section discusses on ways to adapt to the host community, migrants leisure and recreation opportunities and the second section discusses barriers and constraints to leisure opportunities faced by migrants.

### **Adaptation to the host community**

Berry (1980, as cited in Watts, Whites and Trlin, 2002), identified four modes of acculturation namely 'assimilation', 'integration', 'separation' and 'marginalisation'. He defined *assimilation* as the situation where the acculturating individuals do not wish to maintain their previous cultural identity and seek daily interaction with members of the dominant society. *Integration* is the tendency of migrants to maintain both their original culture and develop daily interaction with members of the dominant society. When migrants place value on their original culture and avoid interaction with members of the dominant group, Berry calls this process *separation* or *segregation*. *Marginalisation*, occurs when there is little possibility of, or interest in developing relations with members of the other cultural groups because