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OUTDOOR RECREATION AND PARK VISITATION AMONG STUDY ABROAD

MALAYSIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Despite the substantial research on the leisure of international immigrants, limited efforts have been devoted to understanding a community of international students residing in the United States, who are primarily classified as temporary migrants and/or students. This study attempts to fill this gap by assessing outdoor recreation participation rate and national/ state park visitation among Malaysian undergraduate students who spend 3 to 4 years of study abroad at United States universities. The theories of acculturation, transnationalism, transformative power of study abroad and socialization were employed as the theoretical framework to explain the changes of leisure behavior and intention of Malaysian students. The data were obtained through an online questionnaire responded by Malaysian students enrolled in United States universities. Subjects' participation rate in outdoor recreation and visitation to national/ state parks before they came to United States, during their years in United States and their intentions upon returning to Malaysia were queried; subjects' acculturation and socialization, too, were measured. The findings revealed that Malaysian students who were more acculturated to the American culture and had higher level of university club involvement reported more frequent episodes in outdoor recreation and park use during their study abroad. Transnationalism and transformative power of study abroad were also evidenced as study results showed that the United States experience had some impact on their outdoor recreation and park perspectives as well as their behavioral intentions upon returning home. The university curricula, leisure and recreation providers and students' home country government are encouraged to promote outdoor recreation and park visitation in order to provide a better quality of study abroad experience and welcome them back with more participation in nature-related recreation activities upon return home.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Immigration and Leisure

In the past decade, the total number of international migrants to United States has increased from an estimated of 1.05 million in 2002 to 1.06 million in 2011 (Department of Homeland Security, 2012). Similarly, short-term student immigration (e.g., study abroad) also has shown a significant increase over the past few years. For example, there were 2.5 times more students entering the United States in 2011 compared with 2007; the amount increased from 787,756 to an estimated 1.7 million students (Department of Homeland Security, 2012). The reason for short term student migration is to engage in study abroad experiences and/ or to achieve a post-secondary degree at the host country. These experiences are typically government-sponsored, university-sponsored or family-sponsored and allow students to not only earn a degree, but to learn about other cultures. To better understand the implications of immigration, whether short or long term, a body of research has studied immigrants' post arrival lifestyle sociologically, economically, psychologically and physiologically (Galler & Sher, 2010; Lake Snell Perry Mermin/Decision Research, 2006; Pumariega, Rothe & Pumariega, 2005).

While it is well-documented that immigrants encounter personal challenges and changes post immigration to include issues such as language difficulties (Lake Snell Perry Mermin/Decision Research, 2006; Li & Stodolska, 2006), separation from family and friends (Lake Snell Perry Mermin/Decision Research, 2006; Li & Stodolska, 2007), leisure too, may be constrained or facilitated as a result of their immigration experience. Indeed, literature about post immigration leisure and recreation has emerged as a separate topic of inquiry within leisure studies and has matured over the last decade (Stodolska, 2000; Li & Stodolska, 2006; Li &

Stodolska 2007; Stodolska, 2007) For example, Stodolska (2000) indicated that there were changes in leisure participation patterns of Polish after immigration to Canada with environmental differences (e.g., wilderness areas in Canada, unmarked trails) being one of the main reasons that eliminate some leisure opportunities among these migrants. Other than environmental differences, lacking English language skills and conversational topics with mainstream Americans had also influenced immigrants' leisure (Stodolska, 2007). In some cases, discrimination was reported to be a reason that inhibited immigrants' participation in certain leisure and recreation activities (Oyapero, 2012; Stodolska, 2007). On the other hand, immigrants who were more acculturated or culturally assimilated were reported share more similar leisure and recreational activities with the local residents (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005).

While literature regarding post immigration leisure and recreation has emerged as a separate topic of inquiry and has matured over the last decade, leisure and recreation patterns and intentions of study abroad students who migrate to countries for an extended period of time is yet to be explored. Study abroad program durations range from a semester to four years, some might be even longer. Although international students who come to United States are not technically immigrants, the long period that they are going to stay in United States earns them another unique status; that of a temporary migrant. Correspondingly, study abroad students "are likely to face a plethora of constraints similar to the ones experienced by permanent immigrants" (Li & Stodolska, 2007, p. 108).

Study Abroad – The Case of Malaysians

Although substantial research has developed on the leisure of international immigrants (e.g. Stodolska, 2000; Stodolska, 2007; & Oyapero, 2012), limited efforts have been devoted to

understanding a community of international students residing in the United States, who are primarily classified as temporary migrants and/or students. This particular group of people will have a new life experience in a different setting and exposure to different social groups, co-curricular activities or even travelling opportunities. For instance, international students might only learn about American Football and university tailgate activities after they come to United States as it is a popular team sport/community activity in this country, but not others. Study abroad experiences might open new doors to expand cultural and leisure opportunities, including exposure to outdoor recreation behaviors and park settings that may or may not be available or be a tradition in their home country.

One study addressed the issues of leisure experiences of Chinese graduate students in United States (Li & Stodolska, 2006). They found that heavy workloads, language barriers and limited social networks had significant impacts on their leisure lifestyle post arrival to the states (Li & Stodolska, 2006). In spite of all the mentioned literature, potential leisure changes and behaviors among study abroad student *after* arriving in the United States and upon return to their native homes have received surprisingly little attention. Given the recent increase in student migration from South East Asia countries (Department of Homeland Security, 2012), this is a fertile area for inquiry. Student migrants from this particular region come from different countries (e.g., Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia) with varying cultural backgrounds which may have distinctive influences on their post-immigration behaviors in terms of their daily lifestyle as well as leisure and recreation patterns. To document South East Asia students' potential leisure changes and behaviors after residing in United States during their study abroad, Malaysian undergraduate students are primarily chosen as the focus of this research. Focusing on this population allows us to better understand the leisure behaviors of this relatively unexplored

group of transnational migrants and may provide further insights regarding the effects of acculturation, socialization and transnationalism on their leisure behaviors and intentions in the United States and upon their return home to Malaysia.

To address these gaps, the purpose of this study is to obtain a better understanding of leisure patterns among Malaysian study abroad students. In particular, it focuses on outdoor leisure behaviors (e.g., outdoor recreation participation levels) and park use of this population after their arrival in the United States as well as their behavioral intentions upon return to Malaysia. It is critical to examine potential outdoor recreation and park visitation patterns post arrival among these students because of the inherent differences in United States and Malaysia's park and recreation systems, leisure and recreation practices, cultural backgrounds and the availability of organized university clubs to socialize students into recreation activities. This study will examine whether or not these factors are associated with the students' outdoor recreation and park behaviors during their study abroad experience and whether they correspond with student intentions to continue outdoor recreation and park use upon return to Malaysia.

Study results may inform university curricula such as academic programs, international programs, and student clubs/associations to purposely organize outdoor recreation activities or park visitation trips in order to cater to the leisure desires of a growing number of international students and to encourage them to participate and engage in outdoor recreation/park visitation upon return to their home countries. By giving equal opportunities to international students take part in nature-related activities, it might stimulate and increase their participation, help promote a greater diversity of friends, increase their awareness of environmental issues, and inspire them to be more engaged in parks, environmental causes, and outdoor recreation activities upon their return to their home country. By helping and enriching international students' cross cultural

experience, it could also enhance the professional image of the institutions as they become more diverse and globally inclusive.

Moreover, these findings might encourage the governments of students' home countries, to leverage not only on the intellectual capital that these students bring back, but also their heightened awareness of/interest in outdoor recreation and parks as a way of improving park and outdoor recreation opportunities within their native country. To achieve study objectives, this research poses a series of descriptive and comparative research questions focused on outdoor recreation and park behaviors/intentions of Malaysia study abroad students in the United States.

Research Questions

Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Use in the United States

Research Question 1a. Do Malaysian study abroad students report participating in outdoor recreation more frequently during their time in the United States?

Research Question 1b. Do Malaysian study abroad students report visiting national or state parks more frequently during their time in the United States?

Intentions to Participate in Outdoor Recreation and Visit Parks Upon Return to Malaysia

Research Question 2a. Do Malaysian study abroad students intend to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 2b. Do Malaysian study abroad students intend to visit national or state parks in Malaysia more frequently upon their return home?

Impact of Study Abroad Experiences on Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Use upon Return to Malaysia

Research Question 3a. To what extent have Malaysian study abroad students' experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged them to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 3b. To what extent have Malaysian study abroad students' experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged them to visit national or state parks in Malaysia more frequently upon their return home?

The Relationship between Malaysian Student Acculturation on Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Use Behaviors/Intentions

Research Question 4a. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate significantly to their outdoor recreation participation during their time in the United States?

Research Question 4b. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate significantly to their park visitation during their time in the United States?

Research Question 4c. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate significantly to their intentions to participate in outdoor recreation upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 4d. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate significantly to their intentions to visit national or state parks in Malaysia upon their return home?

Research Question 4e. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate to them being motivated or encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 4f. Do Malaysian study abroad students' perceived level/type of acculturation relate to them being motivated or encouraged to visit national or state parks in Malaysia upon their return home?

The Relationship between Malaysian Student Socialization on Outdoor Recreation

Participation and Park Use Behaviors/Intentions

Research Question 5a. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate significantly to their outdoor recreation participation during their time in the United States?

Research Question 5b. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate significantly to their park visitation during their time in the United States?

Research Question 5c. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate significantly to their intentions to participate in outdoor recreation upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 5d. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate significantly to their intentions to visit national or state parks upon their return home?

Research Question 5e. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate to them being motivated or encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation upon returning home to Malaysia?

Research Question 5f. Do Malaysian study abroad students' socialization (measured through level of involvement with a university club) relate to them being motivated or encouraged to visit national or state parks in Malaysia upon their return home?

Theoretical Framework

This research will be guided by theories of acculturation and socialization as a means to better understand outdoor recreation of Malaysian students in the United States. Acculturation of international students will be studied because “it involves changes that take place as a result of continuous and direct contact between individuals having different cultural origins” (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000, p.49; as cited in Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Furthermore, college students' exposure to new activities, organizations, interpersonal connections and other resources within the university environment could be a contributing factor to socialization, which in turn might influence outdoor recreation intentions and behaviors (Cooper, 2012). Thus, it is important to better understand socialization and acculturation of international students or temporary migrants during their studies as these two aspects might potentially influence or even change student intentions to participate in outdoor recreation and visit national or state parks upon their return to their home country.

Definitions

Acculturation: Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936) defined this process as involving changes that take place as a result of continuous and direct contact between individuals having different cultural origins (as cited in Ryder, Alden & Paulhus, 2000). To find out any changes or influence on Malaysian students that study abroad in the United States, acculturation of Malaysian students will be measured using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation developed by Andrew, Lynn, and Delroy (2000).

Socialization: Scholars state that socialization, “is the process by which a person learns and generally accepts the established ways of a particular social group, or society” (as cited in Taormina, 1997, p.29). Likewise, sociologist Frederick Elkin referred it as “the learning and internalizing of appropriate patterns, values and feelings” (as cited in Cooper, 2012, p.9). To study how socialization influence Malaysian students’ study abroad experience in the U.S., this concept was measured by their level of involvement with a university club(s).

Outdoor Recreation: “Outdoor recreation, broadly defined, is any leisure time activity conducted outdoors” (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013, p.2). It can generally be subdivided into “resource-based” and “user-oriented” recreation. Resource-based outdoor recreation depends mostly on the nature setting such as the natural and cultural environments that are difficult to be replica by man (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013). In contrast, user-oriented recreation can generally be provided anywhere, assuming the availability of space and funds for development (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013). In this study, participation rates in any type of resource-based outdoor recreation such as hiking,

fishing, rock-climbing, canoeing and others will be assessed among Malaysian students before and after their arrival to the States, as well as their intentions to participate in these types of activities upon their return to home country.

Park: The National Recreation and Park Association defined a public park as “any area or portions of areas dedicated or designated by any Federal, State or local agency primarily for public recreational use” (NRPA, 2014). In this study, other than national, state and local parks, designated natural places such as forest reserves, nature reserves and sanctuaries will be also included as examples to inform Malaysian students’ park visitation responses.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a general view of leisure and recreation in Malaysia, comparisons of outdoor recreation and national/ state park visitation in both United States and Malaysia, public parks in Malaysia and the leisure patterns/experiences of immigrants in North America will be discussed. Furthermore, the key aspects that might influence study abroad students such as acculturation, transnationalism, transformative power of study abroad and socialization will be discussed.

Leisure and Recreation in Malaysia

After gaining independence from British's ruling from 1786 to 1957, Malaysia underwent tremendous growth and prosperity (Embong, 1996). Its unique combination of tropical climate and abundant rainfall also made the country one of the world's greatest centers of biodiversity, along with a rainforest that is claimed to be left untouched since 130 million years ago (USAToday, 2012; Malaysia National Park & Preserves, 2012). However, not until the early 1990s, did leisure and recreation provision receive serious consideration and investment (Cousinean, 1995). Leisure and recreation is still considered a new and developing concept in Malaysia compared to United States, where the leisure and outdoor recreation field was established since the early 20th century. In Malaysia, there is not a word can literally translate directly to 'leisure and recreation' based on Malaysia's national language, although the perception of most Malaysians towards leisure is implied to be free time (Aman, Omar Fauzee & Mohamed, 2007). A Malaysian study mentioned that the youth in East Asia typically spend averagely only 4 to 5 hours per week on leisure activities while the youth in United States have half of their waking time free for leisure (A. Rahim, Abdul Kadir, Wan Mahmud, Mohamed, & Chang, 2011).

In contrast with the lack of awareness about the significance of leisure and recreation in Malaysia, sports is a more recognized, organized and institutionalized concept than are parks and outdoor recreation activities (e.g., hiking, camping, nature watching). A Malay (national language) word is also available to translate the term, sport from English. The concept of sport is more familiar and sport activities are highly valued compared to leisure and recreation (Aman, Omar Fauzee & Mohamed, 2007). This may partially explain why there is lack of the terms leisure and recreation in Malaysia compared to sport. With the newly introduced concept of leisure and outdoor recreation and its potential significance for Malaysia, it is important to understand how it might affect or be shaped by Malaysian students' leisure perceptions, attitudes and behaviors during their stay in United States, where leisure means not only discretionary free time, but also recreation activity and a state of mind (Ruth, 2009).

Aside from the difference of leisure hours between the youth in East Asia countries and United States, participation in outdoor recreation and park use is distinct too. Outdoor activities such fishing, running, camping, bicycling and hiking are popular choices in United States while activities participated in Malaysia are likely to be different. However, there is no specific data that identifies the most popular leisure activities or outdoor recreation pursuits in Malaysia. Cousinean (1995) said that with casual observation, "watching television, visiting friends and family, shopping in larger cities and spending time socializing around food are probably the most time consuming leisure activities in Malaysia" (Cousinean, 1995, p.10). This assumption is further supported by a survey done by the Goethe Institute in Malaysia. It shows that the favorite activities done by young Malaysians during their leisure time are watching TV (75%), listening to music (61.7%), surfing the Internet (52.3%), reading magazines or newspapers (47%), taking a walk (39.9%) and activities with family members (36.1%) (Goethe Institute Malaysia, 2013). In

summary, there are likely to be distinctive differences in leisure and recreation between Malaysia and United States. Hence, it is vital to understand whether there will be any significant changes of leisure and recreation participation patterns among Malaysia students during their stay in United States given that different setting and opportunity cultures might influence on leisure choices.

Outdoor Recreation and Park Visitation in United States and Malaysia

According to the Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report (2012), the most popular adult outdoor activities in the United States are fishing, running, jogging/ trail running, camping, bicycling and hiking (Outdoor Foundation, 2012). On the other hand, although Malaysia is very ideal for nature oriented activities with its tropical climate, coastline, jungle and cool mountains, there is no specific finding or reports that document Malaysian's most favorite or popular activities (Cousineau, 1995). However, as mentioned earlier, it is claimed that the most time spent on leisure activities in Malaysia are to watch television, visit friends and family, shop in larger cities or spend time socializing around food (Cousineau, 1995).

It is well recognized that United States has the oldest and most developed park system in the world since Yellowstone National Park established in 1872. Millions of domestic visitors and international tourists flock to the national or state parks annually for recreational purposes. In 2013, there was more than three million visitors went and visited Yellowstone National Park (National Park Service, 2014). On the other hand, with regard to park visitation in Malaysia Rahman (2011) reported that there were fewer Malaysian visitors to *Taman Negara* (Malaysia National Park) in 2007 compared to the increase of foreign visitors (pg. 207). The dearth of Malaysian use of *Taman Negara* could probably be explained by their perceptions of these natural areas. For example, Cousineau (1995) noted that many Malaysians are afraid to go to

natural areas because of the superstition associated with the forest, where they believe evils spirits stay. For instance, it is a common practice for most Malaysians to refrain from calling out one's real name in the forest and a simple praying gesture needs to be carried out to the surroundings before excreting in the forest. To find out the activity preferences of Asian international and domestic American university students, a report shows that American college students rated visiting a national or state park as their preferred activity higher than the Asian international students' rating (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002).

As there are different preferences and perceptions for outdoor recreation and park visitation, a systematic effort is needed to examine whether acculturation and socialization of study abroad students might influence their intentions upon their return to Malaysia given that they are potentially exposed to different cultural settings and with new leisure (specifically outdoor recreation and park) opportunities.

Public Parks in Malaysia

In Malaysia, there are Peninsular Malaysia (West) and East Malaysia, which are separated by South China Sea. In Peninsular Malaysia, the Department of Wildlife & National Parks under Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment is responsible for the protection, management and preservation of wildlife and national parks. A total of seventeen parks (5 national parks, 5 state parks, 7 forest reserves and sanctuaries) are designated in Peninsular Malaysia. In East Malaysia, also known as Malaysia Borneo is governed by the states itself – Sabah and Sarawak. Alone in the Sarawak state, there are eighteen national parks and four other nature reserves and sanctuaries which are under the governance of the Forest Department of Sarawak.

While for Sabah state, Sabah Parks, Sabah Forestry Department and Sabah Foundation together manage a national park, six state parks and eleven other nature reserves and sanctuaries

respectively. According to the Sabah Parks' visitor statistics 2013, there were more international visitors, 260,119 visited Tunku Abdul Rahman Park compared with Malaysian's 130,574 (Sabah Parks, 2014). Similar phenomenon also shown in the Mountain Kinabalu (highest mountain in the South East Asia), where there were 22540 international climbers and only 21346 Malaysian registered in 2013 (Sabah Parks, 2014). In comparison, the statistics indicated that Malaysians were less involved in park visitation compared with international visitors.

Immigrant Leisure in the United States

Although the literature about leisure behaviors among international students who study in the United States has matured, documentation to understand leisure behaviors and attitudes of international students from South East Asia is limited. Little has been explored about what they do upon their arrival and e.g., subsequent time abroad in the United States or whether they behave differently after returning back to their home country. Stodolska (2000) indicates that there were significant changes in leisure participation patterns of Polish immigrants after moving to Canada. The new living environment in Canada was stated to be directly responsible for their leisure changes because certain leisure activities provided are more expensive, time-consuming, perceived to be more dangerous or no longer available in the new settings (Stodolska, 2000). For instance, some Polish immigrants did not feel safe to go camping due to the unmarked trails, abundance of potentially dangerous wildlife and wilderness areas in Canada (Stodolska, 2000). Stodolska (2000) shows that 46.6% of Polish respondents stopped participating in at least one recreational activity and 51.5% began to participate in at least one recreational activity after settling down in Canada (pg. 49).

Similarly, leisure lives of Chinese graduate students in the United States are greatly affected too. Chinese graduate respondents pointed out that they were very involved in leisure

and sport activities back in China; it was only after they came to the United States that they became passive, “laid back” and “lazy” (Li & Stodolska, 2006). Reasons such as heavy workloads and studies, language barriers and limited social network have been greatly inhibiting them to actively participate in leisure activities (Li & Stodolska, 2006). Instead, their main leisure activities were watching television, listening to music and surfing the internet in order to escape from the pressures of work and study as they perceived leisure more as a feeling of relaxation (Li & Stodolska, 2006). Moreover, it is reported that their strong desire to focus on studies and achieve high academic performance within the expected time frame are the key influencing factors (Li & Stodolska, 2006). The strong work ethic and negative attitude held towards leisure have caused them to feel guilty when spending time on leisure activity while it could be utilized for work-related matters (Li & Stodolska, 2006; Wang & Stringer, 2000). This general concept of how Asians view leisure is further reinforced with the research done by Walker, Jackson and Deng (2007), which shows that only 13% of Mainland Chinese students agree that leisure time was very important compared to 42% of Canadian students.

Furthermore, Stodolska (2007) examined leisure behaviors of immigrants from Korea, Mexico and Poland and found that lacking English language skills and conversation topics with mainstream Americans, discrimination, as well as the fear of the unknown were the common explanations that alter their leisure behaviors (pg. 306). Ultimately, those reasons have led them to mingle with similar ethnic friends as they share the common culture and have similar immigration experiences (Stodolska, 2007). Interestingly, discrimination is also cited in Oyapero (2012) as one of the factors that contribute to the leisure changes among Nigerian Canadians (Oyapero, 2012). When Nigerian Canadian immigrants experienced more discrimination, they were found to be involved more in ‘passive’ leisure activities such as listening to music and

watching movies at the theatre (Oyapero, 2012). While several studies have been done to understand the leisure behaviors and attitudes of international migrants from East Asia, Europe, Africa and North America, no such acculturation studies focused on temporary student migrants from the growing South East Asia immigrant population, particularly Malaysia.

Acculturation

Gordon (1964) explained that, acculturation, also known as cultural assimilation, refers to the acquisition of cultural characteristics by the minority group from the majority group such as language, diet and religion (as cited in Flyod, 1999). The concept of acculturation or cultural assimilation is often employed in leisure studies of minority groups, ethnicity and immigrants (Flyod, 1999; Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005; Aung & Allison, 2011).

Nonetheless, many scholars have recognized the fact that education abroad programs might acculturate study abroad students (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Mei-Yen, Niehaus & Skendall, 2012). The cultural immersion experiences are found to “increase students’ flexibility and openness, knowledge of cultural relativism, cultural adaptability and ability to personalize people from other cultures” (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Mei-Yen, Niehaus & Skendall, 2012, p.202). To provide a better illustration, if study abroad students’ leisure attitudes and behaviors towards outdoor recreation and park use changed due to the immediate contact with the adopted society - United States, it is suggested that they are going through an acculturation process (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005).

For instance, Chinese immigrants in Canada who were more acculturated tended to visit national parks more often than those who were less acculturated (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005). This implies that the acquisition of cultural characteristics from the majority group, local Canadians, influenced and changed Chinese immigrants’ park visitation pattern after they moved

to Canada. When acculturation takes place, they may undergo partial loss of their origin's cultural traits and values while gaining those of the host culture (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005). It is reported that Chinese immigrants in Canada who were male, younger, more highly educated and more highly acculturated tended to visit national parks more often than females, older people, less highly educated and less acculturated Chinese immigrants (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005).

Transnationalism

Due to the forces of globalization, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton proposed the concept of transnationalism, suggesting that a new migrating population has emerged in 1992 (as cited in Li & Stodolska, 2006). This population of migrants is people that bring two nations' cultures into a single social field and embrace the practices, networks and patterns of life in *both* their resided and home countries (Li & Stodolska, 2006). Transnationalism rationalizes the experience of being migrant. It links and fosters the exchange and interaction across the countries up from the economic contribution and political mobilization down to ideas, values and practices (International Dialogue on Migration, 2010). While the concept of transnationalism has often been employed to examine the effect of transnational status on migrants' everyday experience and life quality, the focus on their leisure and recreation is scarce. Due to this paucity, Li & Stodolska (2006) studied the leisure of Chinese graduate students residing in the United States, classifying them as "transnational migrants" because of their temporary stay in the U.S. and examining the connections maintained with their home country (China). According to Remennick (2002), cultural hybridism has been developed by many trans-migrants as they mix the lifestyles and languages of the host and home countries (as cited in Li & Stodolska, 2006). In fact, transnationalism might affect or be present in acculturation perceptions of student migrants

who are temporary residents in the United States. Thus, the present study seeks to assess acculturation perceptions of both cultures (mainstream and heritage) as they relate to outdoor recreation and park visitation.

Transformative Power of Study Abroad

A recent report states that study abroad group travel students demonstrated higher support for environmental policies after an educational travel program; however its effects depended on several factors such as program destination, major of study and gender (Tarrant, Stoner, Borrie, Kyle & Moore, 2011). The research (2011) claimed that study abroad represents the opportunities for unique dynamics leisure and educational experience for the students, who are exposed to the host country's culture, physical environment and interaction with local people. Each student's different personal background and self-perception will also have certain degree of influence towards their study abroad experience. Hence, the combination of personal background, self-perception and interaction with people, physical environment and events during the study abroad could be impactful on these students' emotion and behavior (Tarrant, Stoner, Borrie, Kyle & Moore, 2011).

For example, a number of students mentioned that spending 3 to 6 months overseas changed their perspectives and behaviors on matters such as the philosophy of life, consumption patterns, health/ diet, and environment (Fry, Paige, Jon, Dillow & Nam, 2009). One study abroad student justified that she has been using a bicycle as her main transportation after she came back from Antarctica because "she wants the penguins to live" (p.45). This indicates students might have undergone certain values or perspective transformations due to the influence and exposure of other cultures (Fry, Paige, Jon, Dillow & Nam, 2009).

Similarly, other studies also referred that education abroad is a powerful influence on students (Braskamp, Braskamp & Merrill, 2009). It is widely believed that study abroad is a transformative learning experience as many students had responded with a new perspective and a new sense of purpose upon returning to their home countries (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Ireland, Niehaus & Skendall, 2012). Collectively, these and other studies suggest that a study abroad program is able to transform one's worldview and behaviors. Perhaps socialization with the locals or other students through the study abroad experience is the transformative catalyst. Given the power of the study abroad experience upon changing environmental attitudes and behaviors, this study focuses on study abroad students as they relate to outdoor recreation and park use both in the host country and upon return to students' home country.

Socialization

Research found that one of the most significant factors shaping high levels of acculturation, social support and success among study abroad students is the friendships and social connections they form at their foreign university (Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune, 2010). Friendships with the host nationals are critical to the acculturation and adaptation of study abroad students during their stay (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). For instance, a study done by Zhang & Brunton (2007) showed that Chinese international students who had more than two host national (New Zealand) friends were involved in more leisure activities with the locals (Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

In fact, socialization could occur through the extracurricular activities (e.g., club, society, organization or association) provided at these universities (Foubert & Grainger, 2006). Participation in extracurricular activities is perceived to be the major contributor on college students' cognitive, affective development, social and personal growth (Foubert & Grainger,

2006; Foreman & Retallick, 2012). Improvements such as interpersonal skills, cultural participation, attitudes and personality disposition are the positive outcomes associated with club/ organization participation (Foreman & Retallick, 2012). As cited in Cooper (2012), Field and O'Leary asserted that, "it was the social group, not the activity that determined an individual's leisure behavior" (Cooper, 2012, p.20). Moreover, college environment is an ideal place for students to participate in new outdoor recreation or adventure activities because they are not restrained from any major financial, professional or familial responsibilities (Cooper, 2012). With the new opportunities such as academic, professional and social group experiences provided to the students within the university environment, it could be the main reason fostering recreation socialization among the college students. Therefore, it is useful to examine Malaysian students' level of club involvement and see how the socialization within the context influences their outdoor recreation and park use.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter will describe the methods employed in this study to collect data of Malaysian students' outdoor recreation and national/ state park visitation in both United States and Malaysia, their acculturation and socialization post arrival to United States. It is structured into several sections: sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Sample

This study focused on undergraduate study abroad students from one country in Southeast Asia, Malaysia, to examine how time spent in the United States might influence outdoor recreation participation and park visitation behaviors. Malaysian undergraduate students who were enrolled in universities and colleges in the United States, who had a student visa and who intended to return to their home country represented the target population ($N=1000$ students). This sample group was obtained through cooperation with Education Malaysia based in Washington, District of Columbia, specifically the Public Service Department. The department shared the contact information and records of current students enrolled in U.S. universities/ colleges to assist in the research process. The common study abroad duration for this group of subjects is typically between 3 to 4 years (Malaysia Public Service Department, 2014). Students who were neither born and raised in Malaysia nor enrolled in any institution of higher learning (e.g., college, university) in the United States were excluded in this study to confounding relationships in the data.

Instrumentation

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to address the research questions posed in this thesis. The questionnaire contained four parts: background information (including the

socialization measure of university club participation), outdoor recreation behaviors and intentions, park visitation behaviors and intentions and as well as perceived acculturation levels associated with mainstream and heritage cultures. In the first part of the questionnaire, basic information was obtained from the subjects with questions regarding their sex, university of enrollment, major/ minor field of study, length of residence in United States to date, area of hometown in Malaysia, and participation in student-related associations. It was important to obtain this background information because such variables might play a role in influencing the Malaysian students' choice to participate in outdoor recreation and visit state or national parks (hereafter denoted as simply "parks").

Subjects' participation in university club/ organization and their level of club involvement was primarily used as a means to assess their level of socialization in University and American culture. The respondents were asked the question, "Are you involved with or a member of a student-related association at your University (e.g., club, society, organization)?" Response options for the question was either "yes" or "no." Respondents who indicated that they were a member of a student-related association at university were then asked one of the follow-up questions; "How involved or active are you in those student-related associations?" Response options for the question were "not really involved," "somewhat involved," or "very involved." Respondents who indicated they were neither involved with nor a member of a student-related association were later on computed and recoded into a new variable in the measurement of level of club involvement as "no involvement/ non-member."

Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Visitation Measures.

Outdoor recreation participation and frequency of participation were assessed through several questions. The respondents were asked the questions, "Prior to your study abroad here in

the US, have you participated in any type of outdoor recreation (such as hiking, bicycling, camping, canoeing, etc.)?” and “Prior to your study abroad here in the US, have you visited any national, state or local parks?” Response options for both questions were either “yes” or “no.” Respondents who indicated that they had participated in outdoor recreation were then asked the follow-up question; “How frequently did you participate in outdoor recreation prior to coming to the United States?” Respondents who indicated they had visited a park were then asked the follow-up question, “How frequently did you visit parks prior to coming to the United States?” Response options for both questions were “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” or “almost always.”

Respondents were then asked similar questions about their outdoor recreation behaviors while studying in the United States. Specifically, they were asked “During your time in the United States, have you participated in any type of outdoor recreation (such as hiking, bicycling, camping, canoeing, etc.)?” and “During your time in the US, have you visited any type of national, state, or local park?” Again, response options were either “yes” or “no.” Respondents who indicated participation in outdoor recreation or visitation to parks in the United States were then asked “How frequently did you participate or visit?” with the same “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” or “almost always” response options. Respondents who indicated they neither participate in outdoor recreation nor visit parks were later on computed and recoded into a new variable as “non-participant/ non-visitor”.

A key purpose of this study was to assess whether outdoor recreation participation and park visitation increase among Malaysian students while studying abroad in the United States. Thus, the following questions were asked: “Would you say that your participation in outdoor recreation has increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the time that you’ve been in the United States” and “Would you say that your visitation or use of parks/forests has increased,

decreased, or stayed the same since you've been in the United States?" Response options for both questions were "decreased," "stayed the same," or "increased."

This study also sought to assess behavioral intentions with regard to outdoor recreation and park visitation upon return to Malaysia (after studying abroad in the United States). Thus, respondents were asked the questions, "Do you intend to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon your return to Malaysia?" and "Do you intend to visits parks more frequently upon your return to Malaysia?" Response options for both questions were "yes" or "no". Each respondent who indicated that they intend to participate in outdoor recreation or visit parks more frequently upon their return to Malaysia was asked, in follow-up open-ended questions, "If yes, why?" or "If no, why?" Respondents were provided space on the questionnaire to type in their responses to these follow-up questions.

A final purpose of this study was to explore the extent that Malaysian student study abroad experiences in the United States inspired them to participate in outdoor recreation or visit parks upon their return to their home country. To address this issue, survey respondents were asked the question, "To what extent have your experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged you to participate more frequently in outdoor recreation upon your return to Malaysia?" Response options ranged from 1 = not at all to 5 = definitely. Likewise, respondents would be asked the question, "To what extent has your experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged you to visit parks more frequently upon your return to Malaysia?" Again, response options ranged from 1 = not at all to 5 = definitely.

Acculturation Measure

Malaysian study abroad student perceived level of acculturation was measured using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (*see Appendix A.*) developed by Ryder, Alden and Paulhus

(2000). This index was chosen because it was one of the most common measures; considered the gold standard in measuring acculturation level. There were 20 items (10 domains each for Malaysian and American cultures) listed to assess respondents' views concerning both United States and Malaysia's cultural practices. Modifications were made to fit the context in this study. North American culture (mainstream culture) was changed into American culture, given the focus of this study; while heritage culture was modified to specifically identify Malaysian culture given that all respondents were from Malaysia. For example, "It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my heritage culture." was modified into "It is important for me to maintain or develop Malaysian cultural practices." The similar modification was made towards the North American culture domains, "I enjoy social activities with typical North American people." was changed into "I enjoy social activities with typical American people." Response options ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Data Collection

After the research proposal was reviewed and approved by the Penn State Institutional Review Board (IRB), emails including the research purpose and survey link were sent out to the target population through the distribution list provided by the Malaysia Public Service Department in the Washington, District of Columbia. A web-based survey program (Qualtrics) was used to obtain data because of its capability to reach out to the population dispersed widely across the United States; who typically maintains access to the internet.

Subjects were contacted four times via email (over a two-month period) to reduce non-response. The first email served as an introductory overview for the target population about the study purpose and the basic information of the researcher. Subjects who were willing to participate and clicked on the survey link would be led to the informed consent form. Subjects

who agreed to the informed consent form would be forwarded to the online questionnaire. In the questionnaire, skip/ display logic was used to customize which questions a subject would receive. Based on these initial responses, subjects would then be asked additional questions related to their experiences. The target population was reminded three times over a two-month period after the first email sent. This process resulted in 265 responses (26.5%), 247 of which were complete and usable (24.7%).

Data Analysis

The survey results were automatically recorded by Qualtrics once the subjects completed the survey. The data was then downloaded from Qualtrics and uploaded to SPSS in order to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, means and standard deviation were used to address research questions 1 to 3. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were computed to study the relationship of socialization/ acculturation levels with the students' participation/ visitation rate during their time in the states and the impact of study abroad experiences on their outdoor recreation and park use upon return home. Independent samples t-tests were employed to determine the relationship between socialization/ acculturation levels and students' outdoor recreation participation and park use intentions upon return to Malaysia.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The objective of this study was to assess changes in outdoor recreation participation and park visitation of Malaysian study abroad undergraduate students in the United States and the extent to which their study abroad experience (along with their level of acculturation and socialization) were associated with outdoor recreation/park behaviors and intentions. Study participant outdoor recreation behaviors and parks visitation prior to coming to the United States, during their time spent in the United States, and their intentions upon returning home to Malaysia were measured. There are four main sections describing these results. First, the sample of Malaysian undergraduate student study participants will be described, followed by acculturation and socialization. Then, results will be presented according to the research questions provided in Chapter 1.

Sample

There were a total of 247 survey respondents included in this study. Respondents were all born and raised in Malaysia and were currently enrolled in a university/college undergraduate program in the United States. Fifty-three percent of respondents were male. A significant amount of respondents (37 percent of the sample) were from either The Pennsylvania State University or Vanderbilt University while the balance of the sample (64%) was from other universities or colleges across the United States. Respondents' academic major or area of study was reported to be mainly engineering (41%), business (21%) or the biological Sciences (15%). The average length of stay (or duration of study) in the United States was 20 months with a range of 3 to 56 months.

Acculturation

The acculturation of Malaysian students in the United States was measured using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation. Results showed that the mainstream and heritage domains were moderately reliable with Cronbach's Alphas of .783 and .850, respectively. There were ten domains each for heritage (Malaysian) and mainstream (American) cultures to assess Malaysian students' acculturation (total 20 items). Overall, Malaysian students' self-reported heritage acculturation (mean= 4.0; Table 1) had a higher score than the mainstream acculturation (mean= 3.56; Table 1).

Malaysian students scored high on a variety of heritage acculturation items, specifically in the items of marriage (mean= 4.26; Table 1) and friends (mean =4.35; Table 1). The heritage items that has the lowest scores were the traditions (mean= 3.69; Table 1) and entertainment (mean= 3.47; Table 1). In contrast, for mainstream acculturation, Malaysian students scored the highest in the items of entertainment (mean= 4.16; Table 1) and friends (mean= 4.46; Table 1) while the lowest scores are items traditions (mean= 2.88; Table 1) and behavior (mean= 2.88; Table 1). In fact, results indicated that only two mainstream domains – entertainment and friends, had a higher score than the heritage domains.

Table 1. Descriptive Findings from of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Item Domain ^a	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Traditions (Heritage)	1.3	4.4	35.0	42.0	17.3	3.69	.854
2. Traditions (Mainstream)	5.8	22.1	50.9	20.4	0.9	2.88	.825
3. Marriage (Heritage)	0.4	1.3	13.3	41.6	43.4	4.26	.771
4. Marriage (Mainstream)	4.9	10.2	39.4	32.7	12.8	3.38	.997
5. Social Activities (Heritage)	0.4	1.3	14.8	50.2	33.2	4.14	.746
6. Social Activities (Mainstream)	0.4	4.4	31.1	48.0	16.0	3.75	.792
7. Comfortable (Heritage)	0.9	0	16.8	50.0	32.3	4.13	.746
8. Comfortable (Mainstream)	0.9	2.7	28.4	52.0	16.0	3.80	.769
9. Entertainment (Heritage)	5.3	12.8	29.2	35.0	17.1	3.47	1.088
10. Entertainment (Mainstream)	0	3.1	14.6	45.6	36.7	4.16	.784
11. Behavior (Heritage)	0.9	4.4	36.3	37.6	20.8	3.73	.871
12. Behavior (Mainstream)	5.3	23.6	50.7	18.2	2.2	2.88	.842
13. Practices (Heritage)	0	2.2	23.5	46.0	28.3	4.00	.780
14. Practices (Mainstream)	1.3	7.1	50.0	35.4	6.2	3.38	.764
15. Values (Heritage)	0.4	0.9	20.8	50.0	27.0	4.04	.750
16. Values (Mainstream)	4.4	13.3	50.9	25.7	5.8	3.15	.882
17. Humor (Heritage)	0.9	2.2	12.4	50.4	34.1	4.15	.784
18. Humor (Mainstream)	1.8	7.1	26.7	47.1	17.3	3.71	.897
19. Friends (Heritage)	0.9	0.4	7.1	45.8	45.8	4.35	.711
20. Friends (Mainstream)	0.4	0	5.3	41.2	53.1	4.46	.640
Heritage						4.00	.534
Mainstream						3.56	.482

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

Heritage $\alpha = .850$; Mainstream $\alpha = .783$

Socialization

The socialization of Malaysian students in the United States was measured by club participation. There were 203 respondents (84% of the sample) who reported that they were involved in student-related organizations in their universities and 92% of these individuals were a member of a Malaysian student association. There were 123 respondents (62%) who indicated that they participated in student-related organizations other than a Malaysian student association; primarily academic/professional, religious/spiritual, and other international/multicultural associations. The level of involvement reported by study participants in these student-related associations ranged from 4% who indicated “Not really involved,” 57% indicating “Somewhat involved,” and 39% reporting that they were “Very involved.” After recoding this club participation measure level of participation across the entire sample (e.g., including non-participants), 16% of the sample were classified as non-participants, 3% were classified as not really involved, 48% were classified as somewhat involved, and 33% were classified as very involved.

Research Questions Revisited

Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Use in the United States

This study assessed self-reported outdoor recreation participation (Research Question 1a) and park visitation (Research Question 1b) among Malaysian study abroad students during their time spent in the United States. Results indicated that Malaysian students’ outdoor recreation participation did not generally participate in outdoor recreation more frequently during their time in the United States than they had in Malaysia. Their outdoor recreation participation levels had mostly remained the same (31.7%) or had decreased (36.7%; Table 2). Results also showed that

there is no drastic increase of Malaysian students' outdoor recreation participation (31.7%; Table 2). Similar results were evident in their park visitation frequency as well. Here, respondents reported that their frequency of visiting parks once in the U.S. had remained the same (42.7%) or had decreased (28.9%; Table 3). Consistent with these findings, a majority Malaysian students (72%) reported that they sometimes to almost always participated in outdoor recreation in Malaysia prior to their study abroad while only 64% of them did so post-arrival to the United States. This same pattern was found with park visitation (65% of the Malaysian students sometimes to almost always visited park prior to their study abroad while only 56% of them did so post-arrival).

Table 2. Frequency of outdoor recreation participation in the United States compared to Malaysia

	N	%
Decreased	88	36.7
Same	76	31.7
Increased	76	31.7
Total N	240	100%
Mean Score = 2.12 Standard Deviation = 0.78		

Table 3. Frequency of park visitation in the United States compared to Malaysia

	N	%
Decreased	67	28.9
Same	99	42.7
Increased	66	28.4
Total N	232	100%
Mean Score = 1.93 Standard Deviation = 0.74		

Intentions to Participate in Outdoor Recreation and Visit Parks Upon Return to Malaysia

This study also assessed intentions to participate in outdoor recreation (Research Question 2a) and to visit parks (Research Question 2b) more frequently upon their return home to Malaysia. Results indicated that a majority of the sample reported they intend to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently (82.5%) and intend to visit parks more frequently (73.2%) when they return home to Malaysia (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4. Intentions to participate more frequently in outdoor recreation upon return to Malaysia

	N	%
Yes	188	82.5
No	40	17.5
Total N	228	100%

Table 5. Intentions to visit parks more frequently upon return to Malaysia

	N	%
Yes	164	73.2
No	60	26.8
Total N	224	100%

Impact of Study Abroad Experiences on Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Use upon Return to Malaysia

Although student intentions in participate/visit were generally high, they do not provide insights into whether the U.S. study abroad experience had influenced these student behaviors and intentions. This study assessed the degree to which study abroad motivated or encouraged these students to participate in outdoor recreation (Research Question 3a) or visit parks more frequently (Research Question 3b) upon their return home to Malaysia. Results indicated that a majority (83%) felt that their experiences in the United States had somewhat or definitely

motivated them to participate upon returning home (Table 6). Likewise, a similar majority (89%) reported that experiences in the United States have somewhat or definitely motivated them to visit parks upon return home to Malaysia (Table 7).

Table 6. Extent that experiences motivated outdoor recreation upon return home to Malaysia

	N	%
1 (Not At All)	15	6.5
2	25	10.8
3 (Somewhat)	92	39.8
4	65	28.1
5 (Definitely)	34	14.7
Total N	231	100%
Mean Score = 3.34 Standard Deviation = 1.06		

Table 7. Extent that experiences motivated park visitation upon return home to Malaysia

	N	%
1 (Not At All)	25	10.9
2	0	0
3 (Somewhat)	118	51.5
4	51	22.3
5 (Definitely)	35	15.3
Total N	229	100%
Mean Score = 3.31 Standard Deviation = 1.09		

The Relationship between Malaysian Student Acculturation on Outdoor Recreation

Participation and Park Use Behaviors/Intentions

Students' perceived acculturation levels (e.g., mainstream and heritage) were compared against their outdoor recreation participation (Research Question 4a) and park visitation during their time in the United States (Research Question 4b). Results indicated a positive and

significant relationship of mainstream (American) acculturation levels with the frequency of outdoor recreation participation ($r=.201$, $p=.002$) and park visitation ($r=.192$, $p=.004$) during their time in the United States (Table 8). The more that students perceived themselves to identify with American culture, the more likely they were to report frequent episodes of outdoor recreation participation and park visitations. The relationship of heritage (Malaysia) acculturation approached, but did not relate significantly with outdoor recreation participation ($r=.126$, $p=.058$) or park visitation ($p=.113$, $r=.092$; Table 8).

Table 8. Correlation matrix: Relationships between Heritage and Mainstream Acculturation with outdoor recreation and park visitation variables.

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Heritage (1)				
Pearson Correlation	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)				
N	225			
Mainstream (2)				
Pearson Correlation	.421**	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
N	225	225		
Outdoor Recreation in US (3) ^a				
Pearson Correlation	.126	.201**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.058	.002		
N	225	225	240	
Park Visitation in US (4) ^b				
Pearson Correlation	.113	.192**	.594**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	.004	.000	
N	225	225	232	232

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Non-participant, 2 = Rarely participate, 3 = Sometimes participate, 4 = Often participate, and 5 = Always participate

^b Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Non-visitor, 2 = Rarely visit, 3 = Sometimes visit, 4 = Often visit, and 5 = Almost always visit

Beyond participation/visitation frequency during students' time the United States, this study also compared student acculturation perceptions against their intentions to participate in outdoor recreation (Research Question 4c) and visit parks (Research Question 4d) upon return

home to Malaysia. Here, heritage acculturation was significantly and positively related to outdoor recreation participation ($t=2.81$, $p=.005$) and park visitation ($t=3.02$, $p=.003$) intentions upon return to Malaysia (Table 9). Students who intended to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon returning home had a higher heritage score (mean=4.05) than students who did not intend to participate more frequently upon return home (mean=3.78; Table 9). Likewise, students who intended to visit parks in Malaysia more frequently upon return home had a higher heritage score (mean=4.07) than students who did not intend to visit parks more frequently upon return home (mean=3.82; Table 10). While these tests indicated the significance of heritage acculturation with regard to future intentions, mainstream acculturation did not demonstrate similar effects. Mainstream acculturation was not significantly related to outdoor recreation participation and was not significantly related to park visitation intentions upon return home (Table 10).

Table 9. t-test comparisons of intentions to participate in outdoor recreation upon return to Malaysia by heritage acculturation and mainstream acculturation.

	Intends to Participate			Does not Intend to Participate			t-test Summary		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	df	t-value	p
Heritage ^a	4.05	.48	183	3.78	.71	37	218	2.81	.005
Mainstream ^a	3.57	.46	183	3.50	.59	37	218	0.85	.394

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 10. t-test comparisons of intentions to visit parks upon return to Malaysia by heritage acculturation and mainstream acculturation.

	Intends to Visit			Does not Intend to Visit			t-test Summary		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	df	t-value	p
Heritage ^a	4.07	.46	160	3.82	.67	58	216	3.02	.003
Mainstream ^a	3.57	.46	160	3.54	.55	58	216	0.42	.674

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree

Students' perceived acculturation levels (e.g., mainstream and heritage) were compared against whether their study abroad experiences motivated them to participate more frequently in

outdoor recreation (Research Question 4e) and visit parks (Research Question 4f) more frequently upon return home to Malaysia. Results indicated a positive and significant relationship between mainstream (American) acculturation levels and the extent that their time in the United States motivated them to participate more frequently in outdoor recreation ($r=.235$, $p=.000$) and visit more frequently parks ($r=.160$, $p=.017$) when they return home (Table 11). Likewise, there was a positive relationship of heritage (Malaysian) acculturation levels with being motivated to participate more frequently in outdoor recreation ($r=.220$, $p=.001$) and visit parks more frequently ($r=.291$, $p=.000$) upon return home (Table 11). The more students perceived themselves to identify with both American and Malaysian culture, the more likely they were to say that their experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged them to participate more frequently in outdoor recreation when they return home.

Table 11. Correlation matrix: Relationships between Heritage and Mainstream Acculturation with motivation to participate in outdoor recreation and visit parks upon return home to Malaysia

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Heritage (1)				
Pearson Correlation	1			
Sig. (2-tailed)				
N	225			
Mainstream (2)				
Pearson Correlation	.421**	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
N	225	225		
Motivated to Participate in OR upon Return (3)^a				
Pearson Correlation	.220**	.235**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		
N	223	225	231	
Motivated to Visit Parks upon Return (4)^b				
Pearson Correlation	.291**	.160*	.646**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.017	.000	
N	223	223	229	229

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Not at all, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = Definitely

^b Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Not at all, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = Definitely

The Relationship between Malaysian Student Socialization on Outdoor Recreation

Participation and Park Use Behaviors/Intentions

Students' socialization (i.e. club participation) was compared against their outdoor recreation participation (Research Question 5a) and park visitation (Research Question 5b) while in the United States. Results indicated a positive and significant relationship of club participation levels with the frequency of outdoor recreation participation ($r=.310$, $p=.000$) and park visitation ($r=.324$, $p=.000$) during their time in the United States (Table 12). The higher that students' involvement in the club activities, the more likely they were to report frequent episodes of outdoor recreation participation and park visitation.

Table 12. Correlation matrix: Relationships between Malaysian student level of socialization (i.e. club participation) and outdoor recreation and park visitation during their time in the United States

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Club Participation (1)			
Pearson Correlation	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)			
N	240		
Outdoor Recreation in US (2) ^a			
Pearson Correlation	.310**	1	
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
N	232	240	
Park Visitation in US (3) ^b			
Pearson Correlation	.324**	.594**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N	232	232	232

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Non-participant, 2 = Rarely participate, 3 = Sometimes participate, 4 = Often participate, and 5 = Always participate

^b Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Non-visitor, 2 = Rarely visit, 3 = Sometimes visit, 4 = Often visit, and 5 = Almost always visit

Statistical comparisons between students' socialization (as measured by their level of university club involvement) and their outdoor recreation participation (Research Question 5c.) and park visitation (Research Question 5d) intentions when they return home were also

examined. Level of club involvement or participation was significantly and positively related to outdoor recreation participation ($t=2.13$, $p=.035$) and park visitation ($t=2.06$, $p=.041$) intentions upon return to Malaysia (Tables 13 and 14, respectively). Those reporting higher levels of club participation/involvement were more likely than those reporting lower levels to indicate more frequent outdoor recreation participation and park visitation intentions.

Table 13. t-test comparisons of intentions to participate in outdoor recreation upon return to Malaysia by level of university club participation.

	Intends to Participate			Does not Intend to Participate			t-test Summary		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	df	t-value	p
Club Participation ^a	3.05	.98	180	2.68	1.10	40	226	2.13	.035

^a Measured on a 4 point scale where 1 = No involvement/non-member, 2 = Not really involved, 3 = Somewhat involved, and 4 = Very involved

Table 14. t-test comparisons of intentions to visit parks upon return to Malaysia by level of university club participation.

	Intends to Visit			Does not Intend to Visit			t-test Summary		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	df	t-value	p
Club Participation ^a	3.07	.31	164	2.77	.31	60	222	2.06	.041

^a Measured on a 4 point scale where 1 = No involvement/non-member, 2 = Not really involved, 3 = Somewhat involved, and 4 = Very involved

Finally, Malaysian students' socialization levels (as measured by club participation) were compared with their perceptions of time spent in the United States as motivating/encouraging outdoor recreation (Research Question 5e) and park use (Research Question 5f) upon return to Malaysia. Results indicated a positive relationship of club involvement levels with the extent of motivation in outdoor recreation participation ($r=.281$, $p=000$) and park visitation ($r=.215$, $p=.001$) upon their return (Table 15). The more involved that students were in university club activities, the more likely they were being motivated or encouraged to participate in outdoor recreation and visit parks more frequently upon return.

Table 15. Correlation Matrix: Relationships between club participation with motivation to participate in outdoor recreation and visit parks upon return home to Malaysia.

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Club Participation (1)			
Pearson Correlation	1		
Sig. (2-tailed)			
N	240		
Motivated to Participate in OR upon Return (2) ^a	.281**	1	
Pearson Correlation	.000		
Sig. (2-tailed)	231	231	
N			
Motivated to Visit Parks upon Return (3) ^b	.215**	.646**	1
Pearson Correlation	.001	.000	
Sig. (2-tailed)	223	229	229
N			

^a Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Not at all, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = Definitely

^b Measured on a 5 point scale where 1 = Not at all, 3 = Somewhat, and 5 = Definitely

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Visitation

Study results indicated that a majority of the Malaysian students' outdoor recreation participation and park visitation had either stayed the same or decreased since they arrived in the United States. Such results are generally consistent with the findings of Stodolska (2000), Li and Stodolska (2006), Stodolska (2007) and Oyapero (2012). Like immigrants, Malaysian study abroad students' leisure behaviors had too, changed post-arrival to the United States. Malaysian students (who are as well transnational migrants) face similar challenges in their leisure as they study abroad. These changes could be explained by environmental differences, heavy school work, limited social networks, lack of English language skills and conversational topic; or even discrimination faced during their stay in the States (Stodolska, 2000; Stodolska, 2007; Li & Stodolska, 2006; Oyapero, 2012). Similar to Li & Stodolska (2006), this study found evidence that decreased participation of Malaysian students in both outdoor recreation and park use was due to the heavy workloads, lack of friends as well as other related factors. The following open-ended comments from this study provide some insights into this phenomenon:

“I miss nature. Although I really want (to visit parks) but it's very hard for me to travel around the US due to packed schedule and lack of companion and transportation. So I will do it when I'm back home”.

“...I know I would visit parks here in the States in the near future. It's just I don't find the time to do so yet”.

Nonetheless, reported intentions to participate in outdoor recreation and visit parks upon return to Malaysia were relatively high among these transnational students. When study participants were asked to further explain these intentions, the most frequently mentioned

reasons were health and fitness, socialization, exploration and personal interest. The following comments are indicative of these types of responses:

“It's a good way to meet friends and stay healthy at the same time”

“It's a great way to relax, learn something new and enjoy leisure time. Also, the weather is great for outdoor recreation in Malaysia compared to the US where it's favorable only during certain portions of the year”

The Transformative Power of Study Abroad

Despite the challenges associated with outdoor recreation and park visitation while studying in the United States, this study did find preliminary evidence that time spent in a new culture could have a transformative power to inspire/change behavior. Such findings are consistent with other work conducted with more permanent immigrant populations (Deng, Walker & Swinnerton, 2005). For example, a large majority (83%) agreed that their U.S. experiences had “somewhat to definitely” encouraged or motivated them to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon returning home. Further, 89% reported that their experiences in the United States had encouraged them to visit parks upon return home. These findings were further substantiated by respondent open-ended comments about the impact of their study abroad experience on appreciated/seeking out the opportunities available in their native country.

The following comments are representative of these opinions:

“I feel like I appreciate outdoor recreation more now and I'm interested to see what I've been missing out in Malaysia”

“After visiting the parks in US, I would like to visit parks in Malaysia, to experience the differences between both of them”

“Experiencing the beauty of parks in the states has made me more open and excited to explore more parks in Malaysia”

“People in the US, especially Bloomington, are very keen on participating in outdoor recreation and it inspires me”

“Outdoor exploration in the States has made me feel the thrill and excitement of being outside as well as the appreciation toward nature”

“After exploring the parks in the states, I've grown to love nature and realized that I haven't explored Malaysia's rich nature parks”

In summary, although Malaysian students showed no drastic increase in outdoor recreation participation and park visitation during their studies in the U.S., a majority reported high intention to do both upon their return home. Moreover, the evidence from this research suggests that time spent living in another culture (in this case, the United States) had been a transformative learning experience for the Malaysian students and inspired them to explore parks and outdoor recreation opportunities upon return home. These types of intentions/perspectives were likely influenced by exposure to the parks and recreation in the United States as evidenced by the quantitative findings and open-ended commentary provided and are consistent with the findings of Fry et al. (2009), Tarrant et al. (2011) and Jones et al. (2012) who generally found that study abroad is able to transform one's worldview and behaviors.

Based on these findings, the Malaysia government is encouraged to find ways to reach out to the transnational student upon their return to Malaysia and engage them in work to promote parks or suggest areas where they can participate in outdoor recreation in Malaysia.

Acculturation

In the case of Malaysian study abroad students, those who were more acculturated to the mainstream (American) culture had participated in outdoor recreation and visited parks more in the states than did those who were less acculturated to the United States. The result is consistent with Deng, Walker, Swinnerton's (2005) findings with regard to Chinese immigrants living in Canada. In the present study, results indicated that Malaysian students were going through an

acculturation process as their leisure attitudes and behaviors towards outdoor recreation and park changed due to the immediate contact with the host country (i.e., United States). For example, as noted earlier one of the subjects said, "...experiencing the beauty of parks in the states has made me more open and excited to explore more parks in Malaysia". It is undeniable that the cultural immersion experiences in the United States had increased students' flexibility and openness and cultural adaptability (Jones, Rowan-Kenyon, Mei-Yen, Niehaus & Skendall, 2012). They had become more accustomed to the local practices and quality of leisure/recreation during their stay in the United States. On the other hand, Malaysian students who had high-heritage (Malaysian) acculturation did not show strong levels of outdoor recreation participation and park use in the United States compared to subjects reporting high-mainstream acculturation.

Contrary to the researcher's initial expectations, the level of mainstream acculturation did not demonstrate a similar effect on Malaysian students' high intention to participate outdoor in recreation and visit parks upon their return home. Rather, study findings revealed that high-heritage acculturation was a more robust correlate than mainstream acculturation in their intentions to participate/visit upon return home. In fact, it is possible that Malaysian students' high intention to participate upon return home could be due to their strong identification with their nation's culture (e.g., strong heritage acculturation). Such students would like to discover the opportunity and value back home after being exposed to leisure and recreation culture in U.S. and would like to see the differences between their host and home country. Respondents indicated a recognition of what their home area has to offer regardless of their acculturation perceptions. For example, the following are subjects' responses regarding to their intentions.

"I really enjoy being in the outdoors and should begin explore more of the outdoor activities in my own home country".

“I’ve always known that Malaysia has an abundance of beautiful forests and I think it’s high-time that I experience them for myself”.

“To explore the beautiful landscapes Malaysia has to offer. We have richly dense, full of species and breathtaking rainforests back home”.

Furthermore, transnationalism was evidenced by the relationships between cultural identification and the extent that their time in the United States inspired them to participate/visit upon return home. The more Malaysian students identified themselves with American and Malaysian cultures, the more likely they were to feel that their study abroad experiences in the United States motivated them to visit parks and participate in outdoor recreation upon return home. This finding is consistent with the work of Li & Stodolska (2006) who noted that transnationalism might affect (or be present in) the acculturation perceptions of student migrants who temporarily reside in the United States (Li & Stodolska, 2006). Transnationalism or cultural hybridism might have occurred on the Malaysian students as they interact with the park and recreation culture in the U.S. and incorporate them into their lifestyle at both the host and home countries.

In summary, level of acculturation was significantly associated with Malaysian students’ outdoor recreation participation and park use behaviors and intentions. Malaysian students who were more acculturated to the American culture had higher outdoor recreation participation and park visitation rates in the United States; while those who had high-heritage (Malaysia) acculturation showed high intention upon their return to Malaysia. Evidence of transnationalism was present in that Malaysian students who had both high mainstream and heritage acculturation level reported that their U.S. experience motivated or encouraged them to participate in outdoor recreation and visit parks more upon return home.

These findings could be used as references for the university curricula such as academic programs, international/ global programs and student clubs/associations or broadly, the park and recreation providers to improve and offer a better study abroad experience. It suggested that the university curricula and the park and recreation providers should find ways to promote United States cultural assets (parks, outdoor recreation) to Malaysian students. By promoting the cultural assets, it could help increase Malaysian students' acculturation to the United States that could better integrate them into the American culture, which might further help them to overcome the leisure constraints, or the challenges of living in a foreign country (United States). Aside from that, the Malaysia government should highlight opportunities for the students upon their return to visit or become more engaged in their home country's public parks or in outdoor recreation participation. For example, specific actions could be taken by improving the park (facilities, safety, and trails) and outdoor recreation opportunities within the country.

Socialization

In addition to acculturation, this study also found that one form of socialization (participation in a University club) was a significant influencer in Malaysian students' leisure behaviors and intentions. The more involved Malaysian students were in university clubs activities, the higher their outdoor recreation participation and park visitation during their stay in the U.S. and the higher their intentions to participate upon return home. Those who were more involved and active in university clubs and organizations were also more likely to agree that their study abroad experience in the United States had motivated and encouraged them to visit/participate upon return to Malaysia. These findings are consistent with the findings of Foreman and Retallick (2012) and Foubert and Grainger (2006), who demonstrated the positive effects of club involvement on students' values, aspirations, and cultural participations, personal

and social growth. Preliminary evidence from the current study suggest that Malaysian students' change of leisure behaviors, intentions and perspectives during their study abroad were most likely influenced through the socialization provided by these university extracurricular activities.

Previous researchers have stated that the lack of social networks, mainstream conversational topics and language difficulties are leisure constraints for immigrants and international students' upon arrival to a foreign country (Stodolska, 2000; Li & Stodolska, 2006; Stodolska, 2007). It is also important to note, however, these leisure constraints could be overcome by becoming actively involved in a university club and other extracurricular activities. It is widely reported that friendships and relationships between international students and local students/host nationals form during involvement and participation in these university clubs and organizations (Foreman & Retallick, 2012; Foubert & Grainger; 2006). University clubs and organizations not only serve as a socialization platform for the two parties to come together, but also allow peer-to-peer interactions and cultural exchange; which may increase understanding of one another's cultures. Preliminary evidence from this study suggests that club involvement can be a catalyst to socialize them better with the mainstream American culture and can foster meaningful host country connections to overcome the leisure barriers/ constraints of these transnational study abroad students.

These findings implied that participation in clubs and levels of involvement reflect Malaysia students' leisure behaviors/intentions. It would be fair to suggest that the Malaysian students are encouraged to take part in clubs, not just the Malaysian club, but other more general university offerings (e.g., Outing Club). On the flip side, it is incumbent upon university clubs to provide a welcoming environment to international students and identify friends who will show these study abroad visitors "the ropes" to help them better adjust and adapt in a new culture.

According to Hendrickson, Rosen & Aune (2010), friendship formation of international students is indeed one of the most important factors of acculturation when they study abroad. Therefore, it can be concluded that through the involvement in university clubs and organizations, the Malaysian students socialized and made connections with the host nationals (American). The overall relationships made with the host nationals had promoted Malaysian students' acculturation process, which further influenced their leisure behaviors and intentions during and after their stay in the United States. The relationships between socialization and acculturation could be examined in further detail in future studies.

Study Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Despite providing evidence that study abroad experiences (through acculturation and socialization) correspond with outdoor recreation and park behaviors; both in the host country and upon return home, this study was subject to a number of limitations that temper these conclusions and set the stage for additional research.

The biggest limitation associated with this study was the limited measure of socialization. Subjects' participation in university club/ organization and their level of club involvement was used as the only means to assess their level of socialization in university and American culture. The two variables alone might not justify Malaysia students' socialization entirely. Other measures such as social support, relationships with people on-campus (peers, professors and staff members), working and volunteering experience could have captured, more fully, their level of socialization. Future studies may want to incorporate these variables to measure study abroad/ international students' socialization in universities/ colleges.

In addition, this study could be limited by the social desirability which affected subjects' opinion when answered the questionnaire. Outdoor recreation and park use are perceived as a

good form of leisure and subjects might tend to favor the research topic. However, the open-ended comments showed that there was a good balance from those who intended to participate in outdoor recreation and visit park upon return home and those who did not. Moreover, this study was also limited by the data collection timeline. The online survey was sent out to the target population via email between mid-December to mid-February. The response rate might be affected as most of the university students at this period of time were either preparing for final exam or having winter break. Higher response rate could have been obtained if a more appropriate timing was chosen.

Now that the study showed significant relationships between level of club involvement and Malaysian students' outdoor recreation participation and park use, it is important for future studies to look into the importance of university club functions towards international students' adjustment and participation in leisure and recreation post arrival to the study abroad countries. Also, open-ended questions or a qualitative study could be used to access study subjects' opinions and suggestions for North America universities to improve or create a better quality study abroad program for the international students; not only in academic, but also in providing specific and structural program/ activities that aim to bring international students and local students into a single social circle. Other than acculturation and socialization, many other factors could shape outdoor recreation participation and park visitation post arrival to the states such as study subjects' environmental perception, attitude and awareness. Future studies may incorporate these perception/ attitudes into the study design.

Conclusion

To summarize, the two independent variables in this study, level of acculturation and socialization (university club involvement) had generally positive associations with Malaysian

students' participation and intentions in both outdoor recreation and park use during and after their study abroad. The concept of transnationalism and the transformative power of study abroad were also indicated through the case of these Malaysian study abroad students. It appeared as if their U.S. experience had some impact on their outdoor recreation and park perspectives as well as their behavioral intentions upon returning home. Malaysian students who were more acculturated to the American culture and had higher levels of university club involvement reported more frequent episodes in outdoor recreation and park use during their study abroad. Thus, it is incumbent upon university student affairs officers from both countries to promote meaningful leisure and recreation opportunities for these students during their study abroad. Doing so may better help international students to overcome their leisure constraints, ensure a more well-rounded study abroad experience, and set the stage for increased appreciation of the assets provided (but perhaps underutilized) in their home countries.

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APPENDIX A.
VANCOUVER INDEX OF ACCULTURATION

UNIDIMENSIONAL VERSUS BIDIMENSIONAL ACCULTURATION

Appendix

Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Please answer each question as carefully as possible by circling *one* of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement. Many of these questions will refer to your *heritage culture*, meaning the culture that has influenced you most (other than North American culture). It may be the culture of your birth, the culture in which you have been raised, or another culture that forms part of your background. If there are several such cultures, pick the one that has influenced you *most*. If you do not feel that you have been influenced by any other culture, please try to identify a culture that may have had an impact on previous generations of your family.

Use the following key to help guide your answers:

Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral/ Depends		Agree		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

1. I often participate in my *heritage cultural* traditions.
2. I often participate in mainstream North American cultural traditions.
3. I would be willing to marry a person from my *heritage culture*.
4. I would be willing to marry a North American person.
5. I enjoy social activities with people from the same *heritage culture* as myself.
6. I enjoy social activities with typical North American people.
7. I am comfortable working with people of the same *heritage culture* as myself.
8. I am comfortable working with typical North American people.
9. I enjoy entertainment (e.g., movies, music) from my *heritage culture*.
10. I enjoy North American entertainment (e.g., movies, music).
11. I often behave in ways that are typical of my *heritage culture*.
12. I often behave in ways that are 'typically North American.'
13. It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my *heritage culture*.
14. It is important for me to maintain or develop North American cultural practices.
15. I believe in the values of my *heritage culture*.
16. I believe in mainstream North American values.
17. I enjoy the jokes and humor of my *heritage culture*.
18. I enjoy typical North American jokes and humor.
19. I am interested in having friends from my *heritage culture*.
20. I am interested in having North American friends.

Researchers studying acculturation in other mainstream contexts may wish to change "North American" to another descriptor such as "American" in the United States or "British" in Great Britain. Copyright 1999 by Andrew G. Ryder, Lynn E. Alden, and Delroy L. Paulhus.

APPENDIX B.
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER



Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: **Outdoor Recreation and Park Visitation among Study Abroad Malaysian Students in the United States**

Principal Investigator: **LeeYing Hng**
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Advisor: **Dr. Andrew J. Mowen, Ph.D.**
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1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is to assess the extent that Malaysian students in the United States visit parks and participate in outdoor recreation.
2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to complete an online survey with 24 questions about your outdoor recreation behaviors and park visitation in Malaysia before you came to the United States as well as during your time here in the United States.
3. **Duration/Time:** 10 minutes will be required to complete your participation in this research.
4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is confidential. The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses.
5. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Lee Ying Hng, Undergraduate Honors student and principal investigator at (814)-777-8036 or Andrew J. Mowen, Honors Advisor, at (814) 965-2012 with questions about this study.
6. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion of the survey implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

APPENDIX C.
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Outdoor Recreation Participation and Park Visitation:
A Survey for Malaysian Study Abroad Students**

Hello, My name is Lee Ying Hng and I'm a Malaysian study abroad student working on my undergraduate honors thesis at The Pennsylvania State University. The purpose of my study is to assess the extent that Malaysian students visit parks and participate in outdoor recreation.

I am asking you to participate in my study by completing an online survey. This study is being conducted for research purposes and will ask you 24 questions about your outdoor recreation behaviors and park visitation in Malaysia before you came to the United States as well as during your time here in the United States. If you are interesting in participating in this study, please click on the link below. You will then be forwarded to the first page of the online questionnaire, which will ask for your consent to participate.

Please note that you do not have to answer all questions and no personal identifiers will be collected or connected to you. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is confidential. The survey does not ask for any information that would identify who the responses belong to. In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared because your name is in no way linked to your responses. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used in this online survey. Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Completion of this online survey implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. Please keep this e-mail message for your records or future reference. If you have additional questions about this study, please contact Lee Ying Hng at (insert phone number and email).

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Lee Ying Yng

Part One: Information about Yourself

1. Are you a citizen of Malaysia (e.g., were you born and raised in Malaysia)? – Check one

Yes (go to Question 2)

No (skip to last page – Thank You for Participating Page on the Online Survey)

2. Gender

Female

Male

3. Are you currently enrolled at an institution of higher learning (e.g., college, university) in the United States? – Check One

Yes (go to Question 4)

No (skip to last page – Thank You for Participating Page on the Online Survey)

4. What University are you enrolled in?

5. Please describe your major, degree of study, or field in the space below (Please spell out)

6. Approximately how many total months have you been studying abroad in the United States? (please include the total time spent in the United States during your entire studies, not just this semester) – Enter number of months below.

_____ total months studying abroad in the United States

7. Are you involved with or a member of a student-related association at your University (e.g., club, society, organization)?

_____ Yes (If Yes, please go to Question 8)

_____ No (Please skip to Question 10)

8. What type of student-related association are you involved with (or a member of)? – Please check all that apply below.

_____ Malaysian student association

_____ Other type of association or club (If checked, please spell out the name of the club(s) _____)

9. How involved or active are you in those student-related associations? – Please check a single response below that best describes your level of involvement or engagement.

_____ Not really involved (I do not attend their meetings, events or activities)

_____ Somewhat involved (I attend a few meetings, events or activities)

_____ Very involved (I attend many meetings, events or activities)

10. How would you describe your home town where you grew up in Malaysia? – Please check one

_____ rural

_____ small town

_____ suburban (small city)

_____ urban (big city)

Part Two: Your Participation in Nature-based Outdoor Recreation

The following questions ask about your free time spent outdoors doing nature based outdoor recreation activities. Specifically, I'm interested in your participation in outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling for recreation, picnicking, camping, canoeing, etc. The following questions will ask you to reflect on your past outdoor recreation participation while you were living in Malaysia and your outdoor recreation participation now that you are here in the United States.

11. Prior to your time here in the United States, had you participated in any type of outdoor recreation (such as hiking, bicycling for recreation, picnicking, camping, canoeing) in Malaysia?

Yes (go to Question 12)

No (skip to Question 13)

12. How frequently did you participate in any type of outdoor recreation prior to your study abroad in the United States? Please check the box that best describes your prior participation in Malaysia.

I rarely participated in outdoor recreation in Malaysia

I sometimes participated in outdoor recreation in Malaysia

I participated in outdoor recreation often in Malaysia

I participated in outdoor recreation almost always in Malaysia

13. During your time here in the United States, have you participated in any type of outdoor recreation? (Can be by yourself, with groups, club, etc.)

Yes (Go to Question 14)

No (Skip to Question 15)

14. How frequently do you participate in outdoor recreation during your time here in the United States?

I rarely participate in outdoor recreation in the United States

I sometimes participate in outdoor recreation in the United States

I participated in outdoor recreation often in the United States

I participated in outdoor recreation almost always in the United States

15. Would you say that your participation in outdoor recreation has increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the time that you've been in the United States? (please check only one)

My participation in outdoor recreation has decreased since coming to the United States

My participation in outdoor recreation has stayed the same (no change) since coming to the United States

My participation in outdoor recreation has increased since coming to the United States

16. Do you intend to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon returning home to Malaysia?

Yes (If Yes, why? _____)

No (If No, why? _____)

17. To what extent have your experiences here in the United States motivated or encouraged you to participate in outdoor recreation more frequently upon your return to Malaysia? (circle the response below that best describes your opinion)

Not at all		Somewhat		Definitely
1	2	3	4	5

Part Three: Your Use/Visitation of Parks

The following questions ask about trips you make to visit or use parks. Parks can include local community parks as well as state parks, forests, and National Parks. These questions will ask you to reflect on your prior visits to parks in Malaysia as well as trips to parks during your time in the United States.

18. Prior to your time here in the United States, had you visited any type of park or forest in Malaysia?

- Yes (go to Question 18)
 No (skip to Question 19)

19. How frequently did you visit parks in Malaysia prior to your time here in the United States? Please check the box that best describes your prior use of parks in Malaysia.

- I rarely visited parks in Malaysia
 I sometimes visited parks in Malaysia
 I visited parks often in Malaysia
 I visited parks almost always in Malaysia

20. During your time here in the United States, have you visited any type of park or forest within the United States?

- Yes (Go to Question 21)
 No (Skip to Question 22)

21. How frequently do you visit parks during your time here in the United States? Check the box that best describes your use of parks in the United States

- I rarely visit parks in the United States
 I sometimes visit parks in the United States
 I visit parks often in the United States
 I visit parks almost always in the United States

22. Would you say that your visitation or use of parks/forests has increased, decreased, or stayed the same since you've been in the United States? (check one)

- My visitation or use of parks/forests has decreased since coming to the United States
 My visitation or use of parks/forests has stayed the same (no change) since coming to the United States
 My visitation or use of parks/forests has increased since coming to the United States

23. Do you intend to visit parks or forests more frequently upon returning home to Malaysia?

- Yes (If Yes, why? _____)
 No (If No, why? _____)

24. To what extent has your experiences in the United States motivated or encouraged you to visit parks/forests more frequently upon your return to Malaysia (circle the response that best describes your opinion)

Not at all		Somewhat		Definitely
1	2	3	4	5

You are almost done with this survey. Thanks for your patience! Just a few more questions to go...

Part Four: Your Perception of Malaysian and of American Culture

25. The next series of items assess your perception of the culture in Malaysia and the United States of America. Please answer each question as carefully and honestly as possible (there are no “right answers”) by circling one of the numbers to the right of each item to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement based on how you feel now. These statements will refer to Malaysian culture as well as American culture (American culture refers to the culture of the United States).

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Depends	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I often participate in Malaysian cultural traditions	1	2	3	4	5
I often participate in mainstream American cultural traditions	1	2	3	4	5
I would be willing to marry a person from Malaysia	1	2	3	4	5
I would be willing to marry a person from America	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy social activities with people from Malaysia	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy social activities with American people	1	2	3	4	5
I am comfortable working with Malaysian people	1	2	3	4	5
I am comfortable working with American people	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy entertainment (e.g., movies, music) from Malaysia	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy entertainment (e.g., movies, music) from America	1	2	3	4	5
I often behave in ways that are typical of Malaysian culture	1	2	3	4	5
I often behave in ways that typically American	1	2	3	4	5
It is important for me to maintain Malaysian cultural practices	1	2	3	4	5
It is important for me to develop American cultural practices	1	2	3	4	5
I believe in the values of Malaysian culture	1	2	3	4	5
I believe in mainstream American values	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy the jokes and humor from Malaysian culture	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy American jokes and humor	1	2	3	4	5
I am interested in having friends from Malaysia	1	2	3	4	5
I am interested in having American friends.	1	2	3	4	5

You are now finished with the survey! Thank you very much for your participation!

**APPENDIX D.
SURVEY OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES**

Reasons given by the subjects who were intend to participate in outdoor recreation or visit parks and forests more frequently upon returning home to Malaysia.

Outdoor Recreation Participation	Park Visitation
<p>Interest and friends companion Outdoor activities keep me in track of a healthier lifestyle because it help me to explore new things and meet new people I haven't gone to the parks in Sabah and Sarawak yet and I plan to do so upon returning home. Health and other reasons. Being in another country makes you appreciate more of what you have in Malaysia, so I will like to explore the nature while having fun in Malaysia. The weather is more suitable - warm Because from that event, it allows me to meet new people Easy to travel I realize that I should lead a healthier lifestyle. That's the only way I find it a fun way to stay healthy and keep myself maintained in term of self-performances It's fun Because I love it I miss the adventurous feelings I had when doing all the outdoor activities. I have more leisure time and most of my friends will be there to accompany me. why not? They are fun. because I want to hike and observe the nature with my geo-scientific knowledge! I prefer Malaysian parks more The nature here is so breathtaking! It is the way I find peace and tranquility Because resources are easily available Its important in keeping you healthy. Socializing with people is another advantage. And it's cheaper in Malaysia. Malaysia is beautiful Because outdoor activities are refreshing Explore Malaysia as never before since I haven't had the chance. I love adventures. I've discovered more interesting places to explore keeps you fit and helps u meet new ppl For fitness I feel like I appreciate outdoor recreation more now and I'm interested to see what I've been missing out in Malaysia I have always been a fan of outdoor activities I have my own transportation It is beneficial to the individual and the public. Promotes good health and forms unity amongst society I have more time after graduate from university.</p>	<p>Cooling atmosphere Because I just love nature and enjoy the nature-sightseeing activity as my favorite past time. it helps me to relax and have fun Because I haven't explored all the parks and forests in Malaysia yet. Increased interest in wildlife and nature. It's natural resources and it helps me to lower down my level of stress Malaysia has good activities plus waterfalls I have learnt to appreciate the beauty of nature more. It's beautiful Because it's the best thing to do I miss nature. Although I really want it but it's very hard for me to travel around the US due to packed schedule and lack of companion and transportation. So i will do it when I'm back home. Greenery is soothing why not? After visiting the parks in US, I would like to visit parks in Malaysia, to experience the differences between both of them. Yes! Why shouldn't I? I prefer parks in Malaysia more It is beautiful I love nature some of the parks are pretty nice I love nature I haven't had the chance or the ability to do it before I love nature. Parks are relaxing places It's fun but depend on how hot it is Not sure why? I've always known that Malaysia has an abundance of beautiful forests and I think it's high-time that I experience them for myself. It depends To explore the beautiful landscapes Malaysia has to offer. We have richly dense, full of species and breathtaking rainforests back home To explore more on nature. Same answer as before Malaysia's forest is so mystery. Fun Experience To appreciate the natural beauty and the green environment. I can feel a sense of tranquility surrounded by the forest. But it also depends on the place I live. I always had an interest in parks and nature so therefore I wish to explore more parks and forests. Yes, because I love the nature.</p>

<p>It's in my blood To stay healthy There are a lot of recreation places in Malaysia which I am not discover yet. Health To stay healthy. There are lots of places which I wish I could explore! I feel more comfortable and have a lot more people that I know I can spend time for outdoor activities Yes, because I like to do outdoor activities. I love outdoor activities. I just love it I like to see more parks in Malaysia and explore them Because I can get to see beautiful scenery It's a kind of leisure activity Appreciate the nature Yes, I like it Because Sabah has lots of interesting outdoor recreation places! :)) Interesting! One of the great ways to release stress, get to know new people. And simply because I love to do something adventurous. Because I really love being outdoors. it is my passion to do outdoor activities! If I have free time, why not? More time & friends to do the outdoor activities together. I enjoy outdoor activities US makes me more Adventerous because badan sihat, otak cergas! Malaysia has a lot of recreation activities that have not been discovered yet. It's a great way to relax, learn something new and enjoy leisure time. Also, the weather is great for outdoor recreation in Malaysia compared to the US where its favorable only during certain portions of the year Because, it is my plan after finishing degree. I personally enjoy sports, and I see outdoor recreation as a form of sports. And also as a retreat from the city. it's my thing. i can't do much here coz my uni is kinda segregated from outside world.. lol It is fun !! People in the US, especially Bloomington, are very keen on participating in outdoor rev and it inspires me. More free time to do so. it is fun It's a good way to meet friends and stay healthy at the same time it's fun and creates networks, will be having more friends, relaxing Heavy student workloads to improve my social skills Get in touch with the mother nature To appreciate nature more</p>	<p>Yes. It is fun to be with nature. I want to go there doing more recreational stuffs I want to compare how beautiful is our park compare to those in Arkansas (The nature state) Because I've never tried before Yes Nature I'm definitely going to do this as I can get to appreciate the forests back home. My childhood was mostly spent in the forests and my dad was raised in this setting (village in the forests). I love greenery and I love being outdoors. Same, if I have free time. More time & weather more suitable for outdoor activities compared to now (winter/fall). I want to explore more Many parks and forests in Malaysia that offer unique biodiversity There are much more opportunities to appreciate parks and forest in Malaysia with its rich biodiversity. It is in my plan Visiting parks may be part of leisurely time with family or friends, but doing activities in forests may be more challenging and I personally love adventures. Malaysian forest is better.. diversity of flora etc I love nature..haha I think I will have more chance to visit a forest upon returning since I will be older by then. Relaxation it is good to be with nature I love nature! Student work loads and financial issue because parks and forests are beautiful and the nature should be appreciated. Appreciate the Malaysian nature more warm weather There are more green in Malaysia Because I love it. Yes, I would love too because the time taken to get to park in Malaysia is less than in United States. There are so many great natures that I haven't enjoyed in Malaysia yet I've only come to appreciate greenery after the long months of winter. If I feel like it. That's what I do with family Because I love nature It's fun experiencing the beauty of parks in the states has made me more open and excited to explore more parks in Malaysia increase financial ability that comes along with permanent employment very diverse jungles Depends on friends to see the beauty of the nature</p>
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<p>warmer weather I really enjoy being in the outdoors and should begin explore more of the outdoor activities in my own home country. I like the outdoors Because I love it. Yes, because I felt like I have to do more outdoor activities to expose myself more to society. And because I found out that there places that can only be found in Malaysia. As Malaysia has beauty natures. To keep my body fit I want to take better care of my health. Also, after over a year living in a quiet and more tranquil campus, I've come to appreciate nature compared to life in the city I enjoy it. Because I think it is a good form of activity for youth like me It's fun Outdoor exploration in the States has made me feel the thrill and excitement of being outside as well as the appreciation toward nature permanent employment increases financial means to do more activities Depends on friends To increase fitness I have my own group of friends that does outdoor activities with me. Transportation options are more available for me in Malaysia to get to these outdoor sites and the charges are relatively cheaper. Additionally, I would feel more motivated to participate in outdoor recreation together with my family and friends in Malaysia. Warmer weather to enjoy if there are nice places with scenic view, I will definitely go. yes, to stay healthy and fit Because Nature is dying :(Because the temperature is good all year round Good for health It's fun! To be healthy To stay fit.</p>	<p>To embrace nature To explore more places Because I should appreciate my home country's forest more. After exploring the parks in the states, I've grown to love nature and realized that I haven't explored Malaysia's rich nature parks. I didn't have the chance when I was little, but now that I've become an adult I'll have more freedom to do so. yes, i love staying close to the nature. Because nature is dying :(To appreciate nature more Parks is a nice place to relax, and enjoy the scenery i miss home To get a peace of mind from hectic daily life I enjoy doing all these activities more with my high school friends That is where I have my weekly exercise before coming to USA it would be great to do so My park visits in the US are fun and could definitely be as fun in Malaysia to experience the atmosphere of nature As a leisure Nature observations and relaxation purposes Because again, it is relaxing and calming It is refreshing. I like doing outdoor activities It's relaxing yes, it's a new thing for me yes because I just realized how beautiful is Malaysia Malaysia has one of the greatest parks on earth! Interested to participate more in outdoor activities I have more time and the cost is cheaper</p>
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ACADEMIC VITA

LeeYing Hng
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Objective:

To better connect people to nature and raise their awareness of environmental conservation.

Education:

The Pennsylvania State University - University Park, PA
B.S. Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management- Outdoor Recreation
Expected Graduation: August 2014, with honors; Schreyer Honors College

Environmental Experience:

Elijah Clark State Park - Lincolnton, GA (Summer 2014)

Programmer/ Interpreter: Designed, promoted, organized and conducted all summer programs and events directed towards families/ guests of the park; Planned and managed the 2nd Annual Junior Ranger Day Camp program; Piloted new project to the park - Herb Garden.

Shaver's Creek Environmental Center - Petersburg, PA (Fall 2013 – Spring 2014)

Outdoor School Camp Instructor: Designed, taught lessons and led activities for the campers and provided guidance and help to the camp counselors.

Bald Eagle State Park - Howard, PA (Fall 2012)

Programmer: Designed, promoted, implemented and evaluated an Outdoor Educational event for more than 50 home schoolers.

Leadership Experience:

Vice President of Malaysian Students Club, 2013/2014

- Managed and organized cultural and recreational activities for 150 members.

Director of Malaysian Night Cultural Event, 2013

- Organized the event logistics, supervised and worked with 107 committee/ performers.

Treasurer of Swing Dance Club, 2012/2013

- Managed club finances (finding sponsorship, collecting fees & paying bills).

Awards and Recognition:

- Malaysia Public Service Department Scholar
- Schreyer Honors College Scholar
- Dean's Honor List Student

Work Experience:

- Student Employee – Food Services Residential Dining, Penn State University, 2011-2014
- General Clerk – Golden Success Employment Agency, Malaysia, 2011
- Waitress – Tao Japanese Buffet Restaurant, Malaysia, 2010