



## Horseback Riding Activities Helps in Co-Curricular Development

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### ABSTRACT

An equestrian sport is one of the interesting outdoor activities. This sport is one of the expensive co-curricular activities but the benefits are undeniable either to normal people or disable. The purpose of this study is to enlighten on the advantages that we get from participating in this sports, in terms of health, personal skills and even horses were used as a medium to help people with disabilities. This co-curricular activities also can help us to improve our skills either generic skills or technical skills.

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### Introduction

Horseback riding were a well-known sport in Malaysia and its community has been exposed to the advantages of this sport. This can be seen when some universities have taken the initiative by development of a sports center for Equine Sport Academy such as Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The establishment of the Equine Academy at UTM is in line with the recommendation of the Malaysian Council of Equine which requested UTM to provide a horse education program and research program on horses besides learning to ride horses and equestrian to be offered to the public (Abdullah, 2017).

Horseback riding is a sport that requires the skill of riding, driving, jumping hurdle or vault the horses. Horseback riding is an activity that is carried out during leisure time as a hobby or the favourite sports (Santoso & Ahmad, 2016). This sport activity also can enhance the vitality of the body, although basically we only see the horse doing the exercise, but in facts the horse's movements effects our body system (Breene, 2012). In addition, horse riding also helps us to be more calm and relaxed. An equestrian sport is not only good for normal person, but it is very suitable for people with disabilities (Rubinga Heritage, 2017).

According to Chassigne, horseback riding is a great activity to improve balance, strengthen muscle, build focused, patience, have discipline, cooperation, increase level of independent and cognition and also forming emotional bonds between rider and horse (Bahaudin, 2017). This activity is suitable for all level of age. People who have problem in learning, lazy and has trouble to build confidence and courage will develop positive attitude, respect others, and adhere to disciplines and etc through this equestrian activities.

As we know, nowadays the society mix or mingles less with fellow citizen (Esa et. al., 2015). Thus, this sport also can be used as one of the alternative way to strengthen the relationship among them. Through horseback riding activity, we can develop the social and emotional bond between

participants, volunteer coach and equine as well. This can help in developing and improving the generic skills or the employability skills such as communications skill, teamwork and other skills. Sports activity can decreases the chances to get any disease like heart attack and obesity, produce a generation that adopting a healthy lifestyle and free from the grip of dangerous disease.

Horseback riding is good for human health. This is due to while the horse gait, gallop provide the sensory input through motion which are rhythmic and repetitive. There are a lot of benefits derived from participation in horseback riding activities, especially in terms of mental or psychological and physical health. From this sports activity, we may build and increase our confidence level, self-efficacy, trust skills and social skills (Edward & Simpson, 2009). For physical benefits include balancing, posture, sensory processing and joint range of movements.

The horse plays an important role in improving a rider's posture, coordination, balancing, flexibility and muscle tone (Borzo, 2002). This is because of the horse's gait provide a precise and smooth patterns of movement that is similar to the mechanics of human gait (Zadnikar & Kastrin, 2011). Riding encourage us to work with our hands, connected with horses and people, exercise, learn new skills and gain confidence.

In addition, equestrian sports also have a therapeutic approach known as hippotherapy that helps children with disabilities including physical, cognitive, behavioral and communicative (Brady et. al., 2005). Horseback riding for disable is one of the programs of developmental vaulting, driving, recreational riding, riding as sports and so on (DePauw, 1986). Indirectly, from this kind of activities, it will helps us in improving and strengthen our inner skills. This is because while doing this sports activity, we are dealing with people and animals.

So, from this activity we will interact with them through communications. We have a few techniques in communication that are communication through writing, communication through nonverbal sign language,

communication through oral and so on.

Co-curricular activity is one of the best platforms to improve the generic skills among students (Esa et. al., 2015). Communication skills, teamwork skills, confidence level are the elements of generic skills that need to be polished. This is because the industry and employers are starting to voice out on behalf of higher education institutions to produce graduates with marketable talents so that they are no longer burdened with the problem of graduates who are lacking of generic skills (Lowe & Cook, 2003). If the generic skills have been practiced, they will know where and when they will apply this skills in line with development and advancement of the country (Esa and Mustafa, 2010).

### Conclusion

Horseback riding can improve our skills, wellness maintained, gaining a new experience, can create new network and so on. Horseback riding is one of the expensive sports but the effect that we can get from, it is valuable and suitable for all stage of people.

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