

# Outdoor adventure physical activities (OAPA) and working out in fitness centres: reasons for engaging in and benefits ensuing from their practice

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this qualitative-quantitative study was to compare the most significant reasons for people to engage in outdoor adventure physical activities and for working out in fitness centres as a recreational practice, and the ensuing physical and psychological changes and benefits brought by their regular practice. Forty semi-structured interviews were carried out with 20 OAPA practitioners and with 20 individuals working out in fitness centres. Data was descriptively analysed through Content Analysis.

**Keywords:** Sports. Nature. Fitness centres. Recreational activities.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Presently, there are countless factors that hinder the quality of life of human beings, e.g. urban pollution and violence, sedentarism and bad eating habits, stress and negative psychological impacts, to mention but a few.

Quality of life is a desired state for most of the population and is also a pressing need, as stated by Nahas (2006) and Saba (2001), where they show how people are interested in practicing physical activities and adopting healthy habits in order to attain better health and quality of life as a whole.

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Within this context, different aspects need to be addressed, one of which is Recreation. On this matter, Schwartz (2002) points out the need of individuals to effectively participate in significant recreation-related activities, in that some of their characteristics, i.e. freedom, pleasure, playing, are important elements that foster maximum *joie de vivre* and intervene directly on well-being.

This trend can be observed by the growing and significant number of individuals engaged in activities during their free time due to a wide range of possible experiences whereby they can fully express themselves.

Of the many ways of engaging in leisure activities nowadays, a new field of study and investigation is worthy of note by different investigators, such as Betrán (2003), Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003), Cater (2006), and Marinho and Bruhns (2006). They purport the relationship between leisure and human participation in venues represented by nature with aims at experimenting different outdoors adventures.

This study uses the expression Outdoor Adventure Physical Activities (OAPA), thus corroborating the definition originally proposed by Betrán (1995), as it encompasses any type of practice that awakens the instinct for adventure and that is strongly associated with nature representing a recreational activity where the body is not a means, but rather an end in itself because it experiences emotions and sensations.

The elements that are common to the different reasons for engaging in OAPA are the study focus of some researchers, among which are Tahara (2006) and Lacruz and Perich (2000), who address the theme at hand; they are not innovative in their essence, but were recently systemised within the context of Recreation.

Other favourable elements to new solutions that can meet the expectations and desires of the population are

artificial venues, i.e. creating activity centres that can provide significant experiences to practitioners.

In this light, fitness centres are the venues that represent this new mindset on exercising, which also offer to urban populations the possibility of undertaking physical activities regularly. However, the growing trend of joining a fitness centre also has different reasons.

Factors related to engaging in activities offered by fitness centres are many and represent the theme focus of some studies, such as by Saba (2001), Santos and Knijnik (2006), Rojas (2003), to mention but a few; however, they should be addressed in a new light and comprehensively.

Hence, the purpose of this study was to compare the main reasons why individuals engage regularly in outdoor adventure physical activities with those who work out in fitness centres as part of a recreational practice, as well as possible physical and psychological changes ensuing from exercising regularly.

## **2 METHODOLOGICAL OPTIONS**

### **2.1 Nature of the study**

The nature of the study was qualitative-quantitative oriented, as it is conducive to applying certain quantitative analyses and multi-method investigations, including both qualitative and quantitative aspects, which has become a common practice in the academic-scientific milieu.

On this matter, Thomas *et al.* (2007) points out that the qualitative investigation does not exclude the quantitative analysis and that by combining both methodological techniques it is possible to identify the convergence points of different models more easily, thus generating significant information and extracting from data as much meaning as possible.

Creswell (2007) supports that strategies for assumptions (or paradigms) and the method help determine the nature of the investigation, and that the significance of the three approaches affect the growing interest in applying the qualitative investigation, the ongoing use of traditional means of quantitative delineation and the emergence of multi-method approaches. The author points out that the multi-method study (qualitative-quantitative) is defined as that where the investigator tends to support his or her assumptions on pragmatic fields by using strategies that involve data collection, both simultaneously and sequentially, to better understand investigation hindrances. Data collection involves both numeric and textual information in order to provide better understanding about the universe under investigation.

The study was carried out in two stages, where the first addresses the bibliographical review involving the assessment of different OAPA practice and working out in fitness centres, and the second corresponds to the exploratory investigation in order to come closer to the investigated universe. Marconi and Lakatos (2002) are emphatic in their affirmation that this type of investigation aims at finding ideas and discernment, as well as becoming familiar with the phenomenon, thus obtaining an innovative concept on the matter.

## 2.2 Tool

The data collection tool applied was a semi-structured interview containing four open-end questions, e.g. a) Which OAPA modality and/or workout in fitness centres are you engaged in? b) For how long have you been engaged in OAPA and/or working out in a fitness centre? c) Why did you engage in OAPA and/or working out in a fitness centre? d) What were the physical and psychological benefits that you got from regularly engaging in OAPA and/or working out in a fitness centre?

Initially, a pilot-interview was drafted and presented to three judges who were experts in the field at hand to validate

the tool and verify if it met investigation requirements. The best questions identified by the judges as capable of meeting the proposed objectives were chosen to be included in the final tool, which was applied by the investigator to the study subjects.

Marconi and Lakatos (2002) point out that the semi-structured interview is a type of tool that enables questions to be focused on the interviewee in order to develop the right situation for him/her; hence, the interviewer can explore a certain open-ended question during an informal conversation.

Rampazzo (1998) affirms that a relevant aspect of the interviews is that they enable more flexible answers, where the interviewer can repeat, clarify or rephrase the questions depending on the needs of the interviewees, thus giving verbal relevant and necessary information for the study.

## 2.3 Participants

Study subjects were 20 individuals engaged in OAPA and 20 individuals engaged in working out in fitness centres, randomly chosen among adults of both genders from the 21-55 age bracket that have been engaged in either type of physical activity addressed by the study.

It should be noted that the randomisation approach applied, was due to the fact that on the days when the interviews were held (one day in the city of Brotas, in the State of São Paulo, and two days in Rio Claro, also in São Paulo), the number of individuals slightly exceeded the number of participants determined for the study; hence, they were chosen randomly at the data collection phase.

## 2.4 Procedures

The investigator started the exploratory investigation by contacting tour operators who handle outdoor activities located in the city of Brotas in the State of São Paulo. This city was

chosen because it is considered an important location where different OAPA modalities are practiced. At the same time, they contacted two fitness centres in Rio Claro/SP, where the investigation took place. The justification for choosing both locations is down to their consent to carry out data collection. Prior to the actual data collection phase, four OAPA tour operators were contacted in Brotas/SP, and four fitness centres in Rio Claro/SP, but only the establishments that were part of the study gave permission for the investigators to interview their patrons.

The investigator scheduled prior technical visits and collected information about each venue's activities and timetables. On the actual day of data collection, subjects were asked if they would like to join the study and were given the necessary information depending on when they agreed, where they entered an Informed Consent Form. After the form was signed, participants answered the questions of the semi-structured interview after they had done their activity/workout.

Mean time of interviews for OAPA subjects was seven minutes and fifty seconds at the site of the operator, immediately upon their return from the guided outdoor activity. Subjects involved in fitness centre workout had a six-minute and forty three second mean time interview in that same venue after their practice.

All answers were stored via a Panasonic tape recorder model RN-305 and transferred to a computer via GoldWave software, and fully transcribed to facilitate analysis and access to complete answers.

The interview started by asking the subject's age, gender, place of birth, and the actual questions were made after this information was obtained.

## 2.5 Data analysis

All data collected was descriptively assessed via the Thematic Content Analysis that enabled viewing only the most relevant answers.

The Thematic Content Analysis is a tool that provides the description, analysis, understanding and classification of the subjects' experiences, as shown by Richardson (1999), thus assimilating only the aspects that are relevant for the study at hand.

Contents were classified according to Bardin (2004), which implied classifying the elements that are part of a group according to their differences, and then by analogy, based on previously defined criteria.

Classification may follow semantic aspects (themes), syntactic aspects (verbs and adjectives), lexical aspects (the meaning of words) or expressive aspects (language disorders). This study applied the Analysis Unit and the thematic analysis. Indicators were then established to guide how answers should be grouped under similar thematic categories, e.g.: reasons for engaging in OAPA (escape from routine; challenge and risk; adrenaline rush; gender; media; appearance). Reasons for joining a fitness centre (appearance; quality of life; socialisation; adrenaline rush; physical conditioning and muscle strength; rehabilitation. Benefits from engaging in OAPA (wellbeing/pleasure; self-esteem; socialisation; physical conditioning and muscle strength; appearance; no change). Benefits ensuing from working out in a fitness centre (appearance; self-esteem and wellbeing/pleasure; life quality; socialisation; moving in general; physical conditioning and muscle strength).

Information and collected data complemented this descriptive analysis by including frequency or tabulation in order to simplify their interpretation and understanding.

Tables of frequency are not uncommon in qualitative studies, according to Thomas *et al.* (2007), where usually frequency is converted into percentage to show the extent of certain behaviours or to make comparative statements between the investigated object or phenomenon.

Marconi and Lakatos (2002) advocate that the results should be presented in tables, in that it is a statistical analysis technical process that facilitates the interpretation of data inter-relationship.

### 3 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In terms of the preferred OAPA, it was observed that some individuals were engaged in more than one modality. Hence, percentages were based on the total number of thirty answers related to different types of outdoor activities engaged in by twenty of the investigated subjects. Rafting was mentioned by 26.67% (n=8) as the most recurrent activity, followed by rappelling, with 20% (n=6). Mountain biking (16.67%; n=5) was the third most practiced activity; 13.33% (n=4) mentioned tubing; 10% (n=3) preferred trekking along the trails in the woods; 6.67% (n=2) were partial to canyoneering, where the same percentage was noted for subjects that enjoy tree climbing (3.33%) (n=1) and different forms of outdoors racing (3.33%) (n=1).

In terms of how long they had been engaged in the activities, time varied between 1 and 10 years, where 40% (n=8) of interviewees have been engaged in their activities for 1-2 years; 25% (n=5) for 3-5 years; 20% (n=4) for 6-7 years and 15% (n=3) dedicate themselves to OAPA for a long time, e.g. 8 to 10 years.

Interviewees declared their most popular forms of working out in fitness centres, e.g. 40% (n=8) muscle-building and 30% (n=6) aerobic practices, such as swimming and jogging, to mention but a few. Workout for specific body parts

was preferred by 20% (n=4) of subjects, and lastly, different forms of fighting sports and martial arts were preferred by 10% (n=2).

In terms of how long subjects have been working out in a fitness centre, data collection points out that 25% (n=5) of the target-audience has been working out for at least four years and 20% (n=4) for six years. Two years, eight years and ten years show similar percentages (15%; n=3), as do three years and one year (5%; n=1) for subjects interviewed under the study.

Factors conducive to engaging in OAPA revealed that subjects are concerned about quality of life and wish to experience an adrenaline rush, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1** – Reasons for engaging in OAPA

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Nº Answers</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Desire to escape from the urban routine, attempting to acquire better quality of life.	7	35
Like to experience risk and danger, and the challenge of overcoming limits imposed by the natural environment.	4	20
Possibility of experiencing new desires and emotions, unlike those available when working out in an urban environment.	3	15
Desire to engage in an activity that is mostly male-oriented.	3	15
Curiosity to experience a new activity that is the trend.	2	10
Expectation of improving his/her appearance.	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

Studies by Lacruz and Perich (2000) point out different reasons for engaging in OAPA, where one of the most

outstanding is the wish to break away from the routine of urban living and to get closer to nature and fully enjoy its features and peculiarities, in order to create new opportunities that lead to a calmer and more peaceful life.

Statements given by the subjects under the study clearly show this aspect: “I truly wish to leave behind the madness of my city life; by engaging in radical outdoors sports I intend to improve my quality of life, at least temporarily.” ( S7)

Schwartz (2002) takes this approach to the next level by stating that when subjects are engaged in recreational experiences they seek activities that will distance them from their humdrum routine. In this sense, they opt for venues that are unlike their urban routine, where they can reunite with nature in order to face risks and find new emotions and adventures, as intense as or exceeding those of everyday life.

The role of recreation professionals, including those graduated in Physical Education that work in this field, is decisive if personal and educational experience are to be available to all, leading to the learning of values, attitudes and behaviours that enable human beings to enjoy pleasures, emotions and risks typical of outdoor activities.

Of the different characteristics of the OAPA, one is related to risk-taking, which is a determining factor for some interviewees to take it up in order to overcome their personal limits in situations of danger, as shown in Table 1.

According to Costa and Tubino (1999), calculated risk is part of the fascination of vertigo, a symbolic challenging of death that strengthens and personalises the intense pleasure of heights, speed and free-falling; in sum, situations that constantly create intense and significant emotions.

For Swarbrooke *et al.* (2003), organizations that offer these activities (agencies and tour operators) acknowledge the fact that risk is the main driver of interest for tourists. However, they need to be managed efficiently, or four negative consequences will occur, e.g. loss of their patrons,

reputation and reliability, loss of their team because of the loss of patrons and/or incur in disciplinary actions, and loss of income ensuing from having to reimburse patrons.

Le Breton (2006, p. 97) complements the notion of the relation between risk and OAPA: “[...] risk is simulated in these activities, where the idea of risk is emulated... risk is desired, but without actual risk.” He further observes that in their discourse, subjects state that these practices are a means whereby they can test their personal value all the time.

Two subjects give a clear idea of this notion: “[...] and I also love the feeling of danger that I get from rappelling, I love the feeling that I’m always at risk when I have to face the challenges that go with this activity” (S11)

“When I was going down the rapids for the first time, I felt butterflies in my stomach, but with the passing of time, the feeling becomes more and more amazing. It’s sheer adrenaline, risk is always there, sitting right next to you in the raft...” (S6)

Risk is inherent to human beings in any aspect of their life, and it is no different in relation to sports, even when practiced for fun, where risk is calculated to the last detail. In the case of OAPA, the fascination for extreme vertigo in high risk activities seems to be an attraction for people that like to live dangerously in situations that are conducive to extreme challenges.

A curious aspect in Table 1 that calls one’s attention is the last engagement factor, i.e. appearance, which influences only one of the participants in the investigation.

The interest in valuing appearance was not expressive under this study, as individuals who regularly engaged in OAPA seem to be concerned with other aspirations and needs, enjoying from nature much more than the chance of obtaining a stereotyped body appearance. This shows a desire to enjoy nature in a special way, valuing psychological aspects, such as wellbeing and pleasure.

However, in terms of reasons for working out in fitness centres, health related issues and those pertaining to current aesthetics seem to stand out in the results, as shown in Table 2. It can be noted that there was a measure of balance in terms of the goals desired by investigated subjects.

**Table 2** – Reasons for working out in a fitness centre

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Nº Answers</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Desire to improve body appearance and have a better-looking body.	6	30
Expectation to improve quality of life.	5	25
Opportunity to spend time with their social peers and to improve self-esteem.	3	15
Enjoyment of pleasurable sensations yielded by working out.	3	15
To improve overall physical fitness.	2	10
To rehabilitate different injuries.	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

The growing number of magazines specialising in appearance is worthy of note, where they encourage the adoption of imposed standards, showing on each page perfect, fit bodies. In relation to this aspect, one of the subjects of the study states that:

[ ...] as well as looking at many magazines and watching movies where men and woman have fit, trim and well-defined muscles, I look at myself and realise I have a little pouch going on. I joined the fitness centre to see if I can get as trim as possible, and I have got rid of a lot of bad stuff from my diet. (S17)

In a day and age when there is a cult of the body, where appearance is over-valued, people end up as victims of well-defined beauty standards set by the media. However, appearance standards imposed by society lead many people to

go through whatever it takes them to reach an “ideal” body, even if it means compromising their health.

Then again, it is worth thinking about the role of the Physical Education professional, who should be aware of his or her role as an educator, associated with fostering healthy habits for people who engage in recreational physical activities. They should also oppose making sacrifices to reach the “perfect” body model, acting ethically and informing the layperson that certain drastic behaviours can seriously affect their health.

According to Saba (2001), modern day men and women are excessively concerned with body appearance, engaging in physical activities in fitness centres for this purpose.

Nahas (2006) clarifies that people workout for difference reasons, usually for a combination of them, despite the fact that in modern societies weight control and the excessive concern with appearance arise, often considered as the goal to wellbeing and to improve quality of life.

On this subject, a subject shows her exaggerated concern: “I don’t even like to think I put on some weight; I immediately start eating just fruit and vegetables for a week. If I’m not thin, I think my life is bad and boring, that I’m not enjoying total quality of life.”(S10)

Data presented in Table 2 show there is a trend to include all benefit-related aspects under the title “quality of life improvement”. It is interesting to note that social interaction was mentioned outside the item ‘quality of life’, albeit it is part of the life’s qualitative elements.

Santos and Knijnik (2006) affirm that socialisation is one of the main factors leading to engaging in physical activities in fitness centres, where some interests mentioned are to avoid loneliness, make new friends and peer-support.

Hence, moved by their desires and expectations, whether to overcome their personal limits or those imposed by society, whether to experience creative recreation time in a fitness centre or any other place, individuals meet in the same venue and generate new opportunities to share feelings, emotions and add value to their relationships.

Under this analysis approach, Wankel (1993) stresses that social interaction represents a strong determining factor to join and to continue with their physical practices, where people obtain greater enjoyment and are more attracted to the proposed activity when group members share rapport and know each other.

The last issue addressed in both interviews aimed at clarifying the possible physical and psychological changes ensuing from regularly engaging in the activities. It should be noted that in terms of benefits ensuing from engaging in OAPA, percentages were based on the twenty five answers provided by the twenty subjects under investigation.

Table 3 shows that levels of wellbeing and personal satisfaction improved from the time the subjects started to enjoy nature in order to engage in outdoor physical activities.

Bruhns (2003) purports that outdoor activities can generate a purifying effect (cathartic), leading people to wellness and happiness, where they can be fully immersed in nature, e.g. fauna, flora, heights and other peculiar aspects that are conducive to causing a catharsis that produces pleasure and a feeling of lightness to the body of adventure aficionados.

These positive aspects are related to personal satisfaction and wellbeing in OAPA and can be better perceived in the following statements: [...] and when I'm facing a problem, I think about that wonderful moment when I walk down a trail and see a beautiful waterfall – then I wind down and feel well enough to face all my problems. (S17)

**Table 3** – Possible physical and psychological changes since engaging in OAPA

<b>Answers</b>	<b>N° Answers</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Yes, psychologically speaking, the level of personal satisfaction and wellbeing increased with my engaging in outdoors activities.	7	28
Yes, aspects such as greater freedom, courage to overcome challenges and increased self-esteem arose more recurrently.	5	20
Yes, sprit de corps, cooperation and respect for other people and the natural environment are now more recurrent in the lives of each one.	4	1
Yes, increased muscular strength and improved fitness.	4	16
No, possible changes were practically unnoticeable.	3	12
Yes, aspects related to body appearance, such as weight loss and defined muscles.	2	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

“Whenever I’m practicing a radical sport I feel so great that sometimes I can actually feel the benefits of being close to nature two days before I take off...” (S5)

In continuation to the discussion, Betrán (2003) clarifies that OAPA is a combination of enjoyment, fun and adventure, where they can be translated into feelings that lead to wellbeing and pleasure, where the direct contact with nature becomes an important catalytic element.

The appearance issue is once again discussed, which was addressed by a minority of subjects as the main change ensuing from regularly engaging in OAPA, as shown in Table 3.

It should be noted that this level of body valuing became the reason of engagement for the minority of interviewees, as previously mentioned in relation to Table 1; although it is not a basic concern, physical changes ensuing from regularly engaging in outdoor activities were noticed, according to the statement given by one of the subjects: “Although I was never worried about it, I noticed that my legs got stronger and more shapely after I started doing it regularly; I also lost some weight because of the long trails I walk every weekend.”(S14)

In relation to the ongoing discussions, Capuano (2000) clarifies that there are many benefits yielded by engaging in outdoor activities, one of which is improved body appearance due to many and vigorous physical activities undertaken to overcome the proposed challenges.

Villaverde (2006, p. 119) declares that:

[...] recreation-related activities, mainly those related to the outdoors, can be considered a fertile space-time feature for practicing new ways of living and relating to other people, which can open that road to other ethical behaviours and build freer and more creative friendships.

Albeit the social relationship aspect was not the most noted in the answers of subjects in Table 3, this element is still relevant, and one of the subjects gives his opinion about group bonding, which is representative of the discussion at hand:

“[...] when the whole group is united I feel more confident to overcome challenges, no matter how big they are. Also, sometimes I get to meet other people who also like adventure, and maybe next time they can also join my group.” (S1)

In terms of OAPA, Lacruz and Perich (2000) declare that the significance of social interaction is clearly perceived, where certain groups are formed by people that share the same

taste for adventure, where sociability and collectivity stand out.

An example of this discussion is that OAPA activities require at least two people, as in the case of climbing or rappelling, in order to ensure that safety levels are in place and to decrease the risk of accidents. Hence, it is natural for intense contact and the integration process to occur, which fosters the development of solidarity and the spirit of cooperation between participating individuals.

Table 4 shows the relationship between working out in fitness centres and the perception of psychological or physical changes after engaging in the activity, where a new balance in the percentage of collected answers is attained.

**Table 4** – Possible physical and psychological changes since working out in a fitness center

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Nº Answers</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
Yes, there was an added motivation to work out because the appearance-related objectives started to show results.	5	25
Yes, aspects related to improved self-esteem and satisfaction ensuing from physical activities.	5	25
Yes, stress levels declined and life quality improved as a whole.	3	15
Yes, there was a higher level of social interaction.	3	15
Yes, the subject acquired higher levels of motivation to face other day-by-day activities.	3	15
Yes, overall physical fitness improved, e.g. aerobic resistance and muscle strength.	1	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the findings by Santos and Knijnik (2006), despite the fact that the main reason for these individuals to engage in the abovementioned activities is not related to their appearance, they revealed a measure of concern with how society perceives their body, consciously or unconsciously. This can be confirmed by one of the subjects, as follows: “[...] when I look at my well-defined biceps and triceps I notice I still have some more working out to do to look like this. If I used to come here (the fitness center) four times a week, now I want to come six times. (S13)

The influence of regular working out has an impact on self-esteem and self-perception, as well as on monitoring how the activity is progressing, which are considered important elements to maintain the practice of physical activities (TAMAYO *et al.*, 2001).

Nahas (2006) justifies that enjoyable physical activities can help reduce stress-inducing agents and can interfere in the life quality e self-esteem of human beings. He also reinforces the idea that working out regularly should foster the good control of psychological and physiological levels of individuals that engage in this activity.

Wankel (1993) believes that one of the main elements conducive to regularly working out in fitness centers is the possibility of improving interpersonal relationships, as other individual traits, such as self-esteem, self-image and self-knowledge are notably improved, according to one of the subjects: “For me, coming to the gym is a wonderful part of my day, because I get to do my daily workout routine and meet a whole lot of friends and catch up. And I can even meet new people and make new friends”. (S9)

These factors are also mentioned by Dishman (1998) when addressing the regular engagement in physical activities as a means of acquiring perfect physical and psychological health.

In the case of fitness centers, regardless of the modality, instructors should be perceived as competent and charismatic enough to inspire in their students the added desire to be active and to persist in their workout, whereby they will have greater chances of living a fuller and healthier life.

The pleasure derived from sharing similar ideals with their peers and the possibility of sharing values and experience are important elements to maintain friendship between the patrons of fitness centers, given the positive psychological effects, encouraging investigators to assess these issues.

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The assessment of the objective of this study denotes that there are important differences when comparing the reasons that lead individuals to engage in a certain OAPA or to workout in a fitness center.

It is interesting that individuals that regularly engage in OAPA are concerned with different desires and objectives that meet their need to escape from routine as a means of improving life quality and to obtain a “nicer” body. On the other hand, appearance was much-valued by individuals who work out in fitness centers, as they envisage the possibility of attaining a trimmer and “nicer” body; this is their driving reason to go to the fitness center as a recreational activity.

In relation to the possible benefits ensuing from regularly engaging in OAPA or joining a fitness center, it was noted that most of the subjects felt psychological improvements, but with some different features. The group of subjects engaged in OAPA associate psychological improvement with improved wellness and pleasure, while fitness centers aficionados focus on the relationship between psychological issues and motivation to workout due to physical improvement attained. Hence, it is noted that appearance drives individuals to engage in physical activities

in fitness centers, and also keeps them motivated to do it regularly because of the successful body improvements they attain.

The growing engagement in recreational physical activities, whether outdoors or in fitness centers, requires supervision by professional who can intervene constructively with individuals engaging in both types of exercising.

In the light of the above, the Physical Education professional who works with recreation must be accredited and qualified to monitor both the biological and motor aspects of each area at hand, as well as the affective-emotional aspects that can motivate individuals to engage in physical activities, whereby they can attain physical and psychological benefits that can significantly help improve the levels of optimum life quality.

**Atividades físicas de aventura na natureza (AFAN) e academias de ginástica: motivos de aderência e benefícios advindos da prática**

**Resumo:** O objetivo desta pesquisa quali-quantitativa foi investigar, na visão de praticantes regulares, os principais fatores de aderência às atividades físicas de aventura na natureza (AFAN) e aos exercícios praticados em academias, no âmbito do lazer, bem como as possíveis alterações físicas e psicológicas advindas da prática regular. A entrevista semiestruturada foi aplicada a uma amostra formada por 20 sujeitos praticantes de AFAN e por 20 adeptos de exercícios em academias e, os dados coletados, foram analisados descritivamente, utilizando-se a técnica de Análise de Conteúdo Temático.

**Palavras-chave:** Esportes. Natureza. Academias de ginástica. Atividades de lazer.

**Aventuras en la naturaleza e actividades en gimnasios: adherencias e beneficios con la practica**

**Resumen:** El objetivo de esta pesquisa cuali-cuantitativa fue investigar en la percepción de lo practicantes las principales causas y factores para la adherencia en las actividades de aventura en la naturaleza y a los ejercicios en los gimnasios, así como las alteraciones psicológicas de una práctica regular. Fueron realizadas 40 entrevistas semi-estructuradas con 20 practi-cantes de actividades físicas en la naturaleza y

20 con adeptos a ejercicios en gimnasios y los resultados fueron analizados utilizando la técnica de "Análise de Conteudos Temáticos".

**Palabras clave:** Deportes. Natureza. Centros de acondicionamento. Actividades recreativas.

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