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## MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE-BASED OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

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Outdoor recreation is an important component of American society. Currently, its popularity is increasing as social acceptance grows in the form of media support, an increasing number of therapeutic outdoor programs, and a broad array of corporate adventure training programs (Dubin, 2002; Ewert, 2001; Martin, 2003). Outdoor adventure programs offered by colleges and universities across North America represent another area of recent growth (Attarian, 2001). While a number of works have addressed leisure motivation in an outdoor recreation setting (Anderson, Anderson & Young, 2000; Driver, 1977, 1983; Ewert 1985, 1993; Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1989; Hornibrook et al., 1997; Manfredi, Driver & Tarrant, 1996; Manning, 1986; Mills, 1985; Sugerman, 2001), a gap exists with respect to students in college-based outdoor adventure programs.

This study identified important motives for participation in college-based outdoor adventure programs. In addition, significant differences were determined across experience, participation levels, and credit allocation. By understanding motives important for outdoor adventure programs, this research provides empirical evidence for the management decision making process regarding course offerings and marketing strategies.

Motives were measured by a survey containing the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales developed by Driver (1983). Although the REP has proven to be a valid and reliable instrument to quantify motives for outdoor recreation in many areas, it has seen little use in the setting of college-based outdoor adventure programs. Therefore, a pilot study ( $n = 36$ ) was administered to ascertain Cronbach's Alpha for reliability of REP scales specific to this population. A revised survey was then distributed to a college-based outdoor adventure program at a large mid-western university during September and October of 2003. Surveys were distributed ( $n = 130$ ) to courses/trips that included, rock climbing, sea kayaking, rafting, backpacking, map and compass, surfing, canoeing, whitewater canoeing, and mountain biking.

Descriptive statistics and MANOVA were used to analyze the data and determine any significant differences in participant motives. The data indicated the most important motives were "Escaping Social Pressures," "Enjoying Nature," and "Meeting New People." Least important were "For the Credit," "Escaping Family," and "Teaching/Leading Others." In addition, the MANOVA suggested statistically significant ( $p = .05$ ) differences across experience, participation level, and credit allocation. There were no statistically significant differences across gender.

Within the limits of generalizability, implementations for this research include developing promotional materials directly relating to important motives for participation. Also, future courses/trips should be designed explicitly to meet participants' motives for participation through specific program design. Future study should measure motives for participation at additional

college-based programs and should be more specific on quantifying subject level of outdoor experience.

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