

2022 VOLUME 11

ISSUE 1

## EDITORIAL POLICY

The *International Leisure Review* is the official refereed journal of Taiwan Leisure Association. It has a large, worldwide and otherwise diverse readership composed of researchers, scholars, educators, policy-makers and managers in the commercial, public and voluntary sectors, who work in the arts, the media, sport, tourism, community recreation, therapeutic recreation and other specific fields, and in leisure in general.

The *Journal's* policy is to publish papers that will be of interest to this readership. Authors are necessarily from particular countries and particular academic disciplines, and often have special interests and expertise in the arts, sport, tourism etc, but can still have important things to say that are relevant to the entire readership. We publish papers arising from narrowly-wider interest alongside theoretical contributions where the arguments are relevant to people working in any of the various fields of leisure and whatever the country. The *Journal* also publishes state of the art reviews dealing with specific forms of leisure, the leisure of particular socio-demographic groups, or leisure in particular countries or world regions. The *Journal* also welcomes reviews of the state of leisure research and teaching in particular countries or groups of countries. Contributions are welcome from authors in cognate (to leisure) fields such as health, migration, family and youth studies, and criminology. Offers of sets of papers addressing a common issues or topic, possibly arising from workshops or conferences, are also welcome.

The papers selected for publication are typically 4000-7000 words in length but the *Journal* will also consider shorter research notes, contributions to debates and responses to papers in previous issues, plus occasional longer contributions where the content and relevant to the readership justify the length.

# International Leisure Review



ISSN 2222-775X

<http://taiwanleisure.org.tw>

E-mail : [taiwanleisure@gmail.com](mailto:taiwanleisure@gmail.com)

# International Leisure Review

- Editor-in-Chief** CHIUNG-TZU LUCETTA TSAI, National Taipei University, Taiwan
- Guest Editor** MARIE YOUNG, University of the Western Cape, South Africa
- Editorial Board**
- CHRISTOPHER R. EDGINTON, University of Northern Iowa, USA  
KARLA A. HENDERSON, North Carolina State University, USA  
MIKLOS BANHIDI, Szechenyi University, Hungary  
FRANCIS LOBO, Edith Cowan University, Australia  
RICARDO R. UVINHA, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil  
LAWAL MARAFA, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, SAR  
STEPHEN C. ANDERSON, East Carolina University, USA  
CARIE AUTRY, East Carolina University, USA

## International editorial advisory board

MING-KAI CHIN, HOPSports, Inc., USA  
YU-JEN WU, National Chung-Cheng University, Taiwan  
LUMINITA GEORGESCU, University of Pitesti, Romania  
ROGER COLES, Central Michigan University, USA

**Editorial Assistant RYAN CHU**

**The *International Leisure Review* is the official fully refereed journal of  
Taiwan Leisure Association**

**<http://taiwanleisure.org.tw>**



# International Leisure Review

Issue 1/2022

Volume 11

ISSN 2222-775X

## Table of Contents

1 *Guest Editor's Comments*

5 *Information for contributors*

### *Research Paper*

8 HORSE RACING AS AN ANCIENT  
GREEK AND ROMAN LEISURE  
PASTIME

*ILANZA PEROLD AND MARIE YOUNG*

22 YOGA IN UNIVERSITY SPORTS:  
EFFECTS ON SPIRITUALITY,  
WELL-BEING, AND PHYSICAL  
SYMPTOMS AMONG STUDENTS - A  
QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

*GUSZTÁV JÓZSEF TORNÓCZKY, MIKLÓS  
BÁNHIDI, SÁNDOR RÓZSA AND  
HENRIETT NAGY*

48 YOUTH, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND  
LEISURE: AN ANALYSIS OF A YOUTH  
PROGRAM IN BRAZIL

*ALIPIO RODRIGUES PINES JUNIOR,  
MARIE YOUNG A AND RICARDO RICCI  
UVINHA*

### **SECRETARIAT:**

Taiwan Leisure Association  
Secretariat  
#9F-1, 293-3, Fuxing S. Rd.,  
Sec. 2, Taipei, 106, Taiwan,  
R.O.C.

<http://taiwanleisure.org.tw>  
[taiwanleisure@gmail.com](mailto:taiwanleisure@gmail.com)

### **EDITOR:**

Marie Young  
University of the Western Cape,  
South Africa

Email: [myoung@uwc.ac.za](mailto:myoung@uwc.ac.za)

**68 THE INTEGRATION OF PHILIPPINE  
GAMES AND FILIPINO POP-DANCE IN  
THE FOCUS DANCE MOVEMENT  
EXPLORATION MODEL**

***ALBERTO DIMARUCUT AND GEOFFREY  
ALUNAN***

**79 YOUTH SPORTS AND LEISURE  
ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC SPACES:  
CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL  
INCLUSION**

***RAÚL HERNÁNDEZ-VILLASOL***

**INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW** is published two issues per year and issued members of the Taiwan Leisure Association. For libraries, contact Taiwan Leisure Association's Secretariat for current subscription rates at the address above. Articles published reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Taiwan Leisure Association. All published articles are peer reviewed. Information for contributors can be found on the back cover.

*The Vol. 12, Issue 1 International Leisure Review is funded by the Chinese Taipei Waterski and Wakeboard Federation, Taiwan*

# **Leisure past or Leisure today, who cares? Leisure Matters!**

**Marie E. M. Young**

*University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa*

Leisure is a fundamental right of every human, irrespective of age, gender, culture or religious beliefs. As stated by O'Sullivan (2013: 7), leisure can "take people from the cradle to the grave". The World Leisure Organisation Charter for leisure notes that it is a person's right to relax and choose to freely engage in leisure activities, including activities forming part of a community's social and cultural life. These engagements allow for participation as an active participant, learner, spectator, member of an audience, or unpaid volunteer (Sivan & Veal, 2021). Leisure also serves as a tool that can execute other rights and benefits such as physical, mental, emotional and social development, to mention but a few. These rights and benefits have historical roots in leisure development over the centuries.

Although not much attention was given to the history of leisure in the past, reflecting on the development of leisure, it was evident that even in ancient times, leisure was seen as a fundamental human right, with the work-leisure relationship being a factor of origin to consider (Snape, 2018). Taking a tour through history, prehistoric societies were concerned with survival. Their primary activities were hunting and gathering objects that could be transformed into tools, using their free time for rituals and ceremonial acts or teaching children responsibilities (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013). The Ancient Egyptians were well developed on the leisure front, and with the developed class system, the upper class thrived on entertainment. In contrast, the lower class provided entertainment as athletes and sports participation (Buhungiro, 2017). During Ancient Greece (1200-500 B.C.), the societal structure influenced leisure development, with a well-rounded person rather than an expert. During these times, athletic games were an essential part of the ancient Greek culture to celebrate religious rites and heroes for entertainment and pleasure (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2018). From these games emerged the historic Olympic games that in the modern world is now a significant international sporting event that attracts many participants, spectators, academics and volunteers from the global community (Buhungiro, 2017). Ancient Rome (265 B.C) emerged as a dominant society and influenced the view on leisure. This era was recognised by leisure participation as a period of rest from work and was limited to those with appropriate resources. The play served a functional role in preparing their soldiers for their crusades to dominate foreign cultures. Leisure time also increased during that time, leaving the people bored, and as a result, the Roman empire created several public holidays and game days. Leisure activities had great entertainment value and became quite shocking to

keep it interesting (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013). Buhungiro (2017) further raised an interesting matter in that many recreational games as we know them today, including board games, ball games, running and swimming, originated from Egypt, Greece and Rome and were developed by 641AD.

The Industrial Revolution and urbanisation period during the 18th and 19th centuries brought about social challenges and required practices of leisure to change, addressing these social matters (Snape, 2018). These practices shaped the modernisation of leisure with practices bound to time. People had to segment their time to be at leisure, which mostly happened on Saturdays. In addition, people from the middle and higher income class received an income allowing them to purchase their leisure. New leisure pursuits developed such as spending money on tobacco, gambling, alcohol, food, sport and holidays. In the 19th century, leisure and recreation became more commercialised, resulting in job creation to serve the rising demands for recreational activities. Nonetheless, certain activities such as music, dancing, and sport remained integral to cultural traditions. Although these older collective traditions resulted in the structuration of these activities and the creation of clubs, that in return resulted in competition (Cymru, 2020). The 19th century also brought about the development of new sports and games. The 20th century was faced with globalisation, technological changes and transformation. Leisure pursuits changed dramatically with the possibility of being at leisure playing computer games or games on electronic devices (Cymru, 2020). However, there is still the need to connect socially, participate in activities for healthy living, and connect to the outdoors.

This brings us to the current issue of the International Leisure Review, the first one of 2022, providing us with an overview of leisure pursuits during historical times, leisure interests and practices for cultural, social and mental health promotion, as well as the stimulation of participation in physical activities among youth.

In "Horse Racing as an Ancient Greek and Roman Leisure Pastime", authors Perold and Young reflected on sport as a leisure pastime and fundamental human right. More specifically, horse racing was a sport during the ancient Greek and Roman Empires. It conceptualises the relationship between horses and humans and recognises horse racing as not just a global sport but also one of the eldest sports in humankind.

The study of Tornóczy, Bánhidi, Rózsa and Nagy leads the reader to the present by examining how yoga, as a leisure activity practised in physical education settings, promotes physical and mental health among university students in Hungary. Yoga is known for its spiritual uses and benefits. This study proved that yoga provides similar physical and mental health effects on students to sports activities and recommends that yoga can be used in physical education settings yielding the same required results.

Pines, Young and Uvinha, take the reader to the festive scenery of Brazil. Their study also highlights physical activities as leisure options for young people and how the SESC offers programmes. Youth and SESC managers were interviewed on how the offering of

physical activity programmes at SESC stimulated the leisure interests of youth to participate in leisure activities. They concluded that youth want to participate in physical activities but did not see it as a priority. However, they enjoyed the amusement factor of the activities and the casualness of participating in the activities. The SESC programmes provided several attributes that can be incorporated into the everyday life of young people.

Leisure pursuits are highly embedded in the cultural traditions of a nation. That is no different for the Filipinos who developed the Philippine Games and Filipino pop-dance to have people spend more time at leisure. These games are also meant to enhance friendships, strengthen family ties and develop social relationships. Dimaricut and Alunan noted that the Philippine Games and the Filipino pop-dance improved participants' mental, physical, social, and emotional skills. At the same time, it remains to preserve the Philippine culture of games and dance when it is included in the Focus Dance Movement Exploration Model.

Hernández-Villasol builds on the importance of preserving the cultural values brought along by participation in physical activities during leisure time as well as how it fosters the notion of social inclusion among youth. The author took an ethnographic approach to conduct the study by becoming part of a group of young people participating in sports and physical activities in open spaces. These young people represented different gender, ages, and socio-cultural backgrounds. The study showed that participation in sports and physical activities in public open spaces enables teenagers to develop creative and autonomous activities and cultural relationships.

The studies included in this issue reiterated that leisure has historical roots and has been used for many purposes, showing that leisure matters irrespective of time and place.

## References

- O'Sullivan, E. (2013). *Power, Promise, Potential, and Possibilities of Recreation and Leisure*. In Tapps, T. & Wells, M. (Eds) *Introduction to Recreation and Leisure* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Champaign, Illinois, Human Kinetics. Pg 3-20.
- Buhungiro, E. (2017, May 03). *Origins of ordinary things: Leisure and recreation*. New York Times. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/211689>
- Cymru, H. (2020, April 15). *A very brief history of recreation in the modern world*. Martin Johnes. <https://martinjohnes.com/2020/04/15/a-very-brief-history-of-recreation-in-the-modern-world/>
- Genoe, M.R., Kennedy, D., & Singleton, J.F. (2017). *History of Recreation*. In Tapps, T. & Wells, M. (Eds) *Introduction to Recreation and Leisure* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Champaign, Illinois,

Human Kinetics. Pg 21-37.

Sivan, A. & Veal, A. J. (2021) Leisure and human rights: the World Leisure Organization Charter for Leisure: past, present and future. *World Leisure Journal*, 63(2): 133-140. DOI: 10.1080/16078055.2021.1918755

Snape, R. (2018, June 26). *Leisure studies, leisure history and the meanings of leisure*. LSA <https://leisurestudies.org/leisure-studies-leisure-history-and-the-meanings-of-leisure/>



# **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

## **Vol. 11, ISSUE 1**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS**

#### **Deadline: April 15, 2022**

### **INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS**

The International Leisure Review invites papers on all aspects of leisure, recreation, and related issues from authors throughout the world. The Journal aims to publish studies of theoretical, applied and professional interest. Contributions may be in the form of original articles reporting the author's research, reviews of a topic or issue, or case studies. Proposals for sets of papers addressing a common theme or issue are also encouraged. Instructions for presentation are provided below. Manuscripts and other proposals, and books for review should be sent to the Guest Editors, Dr. Marie Young at the address below.

Material will be considered for publication on the understanding that such material is original and unpublished work, not currently under review by any other journal or publisher, or already accepted for publication elsewhere. The author warrants that the material submitted does not infringe copyright of any other work. The author shall be responsible for all statements made in the material submitted.

Authors must submit by email, word processed in double-line spacing, justified and in Times 12 font, preferably in Microsoft Word, conforming to the general style described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed., 2001). Manuscripts should normally be of 4000-7000 words.

Articles should include the following components, each to begin on a new page, in this sequence: title page; abstract and key words; text; acknowledgments; references; tables – each table, complete with title and footnotes, on a separate page; legend for illustrations. The page number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of each page, following the title page.

*The title page* should contain the title, which should be brief but informative; name(s) of author(s): first name, middle name or initial, and last name, with the highest academic degree(s) and principal position, title, and/or affiliation; name of department(s) and/or institution(s), if any, to which the work should be attributed; name, postal and email address of author responsible for correspondence about the material; the source(s) of support in the form of grants or equipment.

*Abstract and keywords:* The second page should carry an abstract of not more than 200 words indicating the purpose of the study or investigation, the basic procedures used, the main findings and the principal conclusions, emphasizing new and important aspects. Below the abstract authors should state 3 to 10 keywords or short phrases that will assist indexers in cross-indexing the article.

*The text* should usually be divided into sections with into sections with headings (e.g., Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion).

*References:* note especially the proper style (APA) for references, both in the text and references lists.

*Tables* should be numbered consecutively, each given a brief title, and presented in the APA style. Each table should be cited in the text in consecutive order. Tables should be used only when necessary to clarify important points in the text.

*Figures and illustrations* should be provided as black and white prints or drawn in solid black ink on good quality white paper. Indicate approximate location in the text.

*Review of manuscripts:* The anonymous review process will be assisted if authors submit initial copies of their manuscripts with all author-identified passages and references removed. Please inform the editor-in-chief if such material has been edited-out of the copy submitted.

Upon acceptance of the article for publication, authors should submit by email the final copy of the work with any revisions.

Contact address:

Prof. Marie Young

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Email: [myoung@uwc.ac.za](mailto:myoung@uwc.ac.za)

*Research Paper*

---

INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW No. 1/2022©Copyright by the author

DOI: 10.6298/ILR.202206\_11(1).0001

---

## **Horse Racing as an Ancient Greek and Roman Leisure Pastime**

**Ilanza Perold**

*Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa*

**Marie Young**

*University of the Western Cape, South Africa*

### **Abstract**

This paper highlights the significance of leisure pursuits, specifically horse racing events, since ancient Greek and Roman times. As a sport and leisure pastime, horse racing was an unrestricted passion during the ancient Greek and Roman Empires. Horse racing events serve as an occasion for people to embrace their fundamental right to leisure. As a result, it also affected the views of horse racing as a leisure pastime activity. This paper conceptualises the relationship between horses and humans since ancient Greek and Roman times as a leisure pastime activity. It is not only a recognised sport globally but also known as one of the eldest sports in humankind. Since the domestication of horses, people wanted to distinguish who had the fastest and greatest horse, resulting in the origin of horse racing events. While the Greeks and Romans had different perspectives on the meaning of leisure, both these empires hosted events, such as horse racing, for entertainment and pleasure.

**Keywords:** *Horse racing, Ancient Greek, Ancient Roman, Leisure, human-animal interactions*

\* \* \*

### **Introduction**

This paper conceptualises the relationship between horses and humans since ancient Greek and Roman times as a leisure pastime activity. Leisure was deemed

## **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

essential to the Greek society believing that leisure activities were the route to happiness and fulfilment (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013, Torkildson, 2005). For the Roman empire, leisure participation was restricted to the wealthy with ample time away from work, and the owners exploited slaves for their pleasure. The Roman Government also used leisure events to control the crowds due to decreased daily work (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013). While the Greeks and Romans had different perspectives on the meaning of leisure, both these empires hosted events, such as horse racing, for entertainment and pleasure.

Horse racing events serve as an occasion for people to embrace their fundamental right to leisure (Lee, 2016). The connection between humans and horses is long and intricate as the emphasis on horses within the human paradigm moved from utility-based to consumption-based. Consequently, it is grounded in the leisure, tourism, and sports continuum (Dashper, 2014). Danby, Dashper and Finkel (2019: 291) state that “leisure is a multispecies practice...[as] leisure practices and spaces often involve multiple species, sometimes acting together, sometimes separately and sometimes in opposition”. The human-animal interaction is undervalued within the leisure context as the latter is dominated by the human-centric practices of leisure (Danby, Dashper & Finkel, 2019).

Horse racing events, dating back to an era of ancient Greek and Roman times, provided leisure opportunities for both participants and spectators while simultaneously encouraging people to travel to attend these events (Kranjcevic, 2017). To put the foregoing in perspective, the first Olympic Games took place in 776 BC, encompassing competitive horse racing, one of humankind’s most ancient sports (Brown et al., 2004:280; Surujlal et al., 2011:131; Tassiopoulos, 2011:4). Surujlal et al. (2011:131) state that tribe members domesticated the first horse about 4500 BC, and evident to the competitive nature of humans, the search for the fastest horse began, leading to the establishment of racing events and festivals to provide opportunities for spectators to spend their leisure time at such events. The new social realm for horses is limited primarily to sport, leisure, and recreation pursuits, especially in developed countries due to industrialisation (Ollenburg, 2004; Gilbert & Gillett, 2012, Dashper, 2017). Therefore, it becomes apparent that horses and humans have had a connection for many centuries while horse racing has played a pivotal role as a sport and leisure activity using events that have encouraged people to travel to various destinations.

### **Research Approach**

Limited scholarly research exists on this topic. Therefore, gaps in the literature exist regarding the human-animal interaction due to the human-centred approach in leisure studies (Danby, Dashper & Finkel, 2019). This paper examines the evidence to connect these shortcomings. Secondary data sources were selected, analysed, and

incorporated to make our arguments (Wewers, 2007). This is a conceptual paper using conceptual modelling as a research design (Jaakkola, 2020). This method is used to build a theoretical framework to predict relationships between the human-animal interaction and human-centric practices of leisure as constructs. It has the potential to explain why a sequence of events led to a specific outcome.

In this study, the history of the relationship between humans and horses, since the domestication of horses, created leisure pursuits during ancient times that focus on the human-animal interaction, which is often overlooked due to the human-centeredness of modern-day leisure practices. The following sections will address the historical relationship between humans and horses while contextualising horse racing events as leisure pastimes during ancient Greek and Roman times.

### **Horses in History**

Horses are not only significant on race tracks and as leisure pastimes but also in religion (e.g., Al-Barak, a horse carrying Prophet Mohammed to heaven); history (e.g., Xanthus was the horse of Achilles), and mythology (e.g., the legend of the Trojan horse) (Braswell, 1987; Piepenbring, 2016; Aziz, 2019). To this end, it is unsurprising that throughout history, horses have played significant roles in the development of humans and their leisure pursuits (Monterrubio & Perez, 2020). According to Dashper (2017), the role of horses in human societies has undergone a dramatic transformation and altered the basis of the horse-human relationship.

During ancient times, horses were hunted for meat, and while following wild horse herds, they discovered that they could interact with them if they provided them with food (Briggs, 2012; Stark, 2019). Reports exist that horses also provided milk to the hunters' families as they realised that they could milk lactating mares if they provided them with fodder (Langlois, 2011). Regardless of the latter, controversy exists about the precise time when horses were domesticated and first ridden; simultaneously, whether horses were first ridden or first used to pull wheeled vehicles is also unclear as all of the latter happened before writing originated (Stark, 2019). As a result, to understand the chronological order of these events, archaeological evidence needs to be consulted. Parker (1998), Surujlal *et al.* (2011), Rowley (2012), and Fabiansson (2016:12), amongst others, share the view that the first horse was domesticated by roving tribes in Central Asia around 4 500 BC, while Stark (2019) reports on horse dung that was found inside what appeared to be a stable in current Kazakhstan, dating back to 5 000 BC. Thus, the inference can be made that the domestication of horses took place between 5 000 BC and 4 500 BC.

The use of horses not only improved communication and transportation but also contributed to the development of cities, facilitated colonisation and nation-building,

## **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

remodelled warfare, made contributions to the field of medicine, aided with the transformation of agriculture while also being used for leisure purposes (Austin, 2013; Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013; Tarasport, 2017; Stark, 2019). By 2 400 BC, horses were put into harnesses, as one horse had the power to conduct the work of fifty men. From there, the term 'horsepower' was derived, which extensively improved farming efficiency (Austin, 2013). In addition, horses provided the initial mode of transport, covering great distances at a greater speed than travelling per foot (Austin, 2013; Tarasport, 2017; Stark, 2019). According to Stark (2019), the Greek historian Herodotus referred to horses' capabilities to cover great distances by stating that "there is nothing that travels faster than these Persian couriers." It generally took 90 days to cover 1700 miles by foot to deliver a message or parcel, while on horseback, the same distance was covered in seven days. Henceforth, horses enabled soldiers to alter their battle tactics. Alexander the Great, a Greek conqueror and well-known horseman had a reputation during the Hellenistic Age (between 323 BC and 146 BC) as one of the most victorious military commanders in history based on his competent use of horses in battle (Austin, 2013). Griffiths (2016) adds to the previous when stating that equestrians perfected the skills they needed for battle using games and races.

Evident to the nature of humans, since the taming of horses, people wanted to distinguish who had the fastest and greatest horse, and it resulted in the origin of horse racing events; allowing for the evaluation through a race to determine the winner (Tarasport, 2017; Surujlal et al., 2011:131). The word of these races quickly spread amongst people, as friends and relatives invited one another to attend the races and view and be part of the spectacle and experience of the quest to determine the winner (Balint, 2010; Denton, 2016). It could therefore be referred to as a social get-together (event) scheduled during times when people could attend and support these races (during their leisure time), as there is no fun in determining a winner without an encouraging crowd (Surujlal et al., 2011; Denton, 2016). Cvitanovich (2017) supports the latter and states that "humans have a strong need to feel connected, be part of something greater, be something more than just an individual on an island." Thus, sports events, such as horse racing, benefit, among other things, group affiliation since the first social race took place. It is still relevant and a growing phenomenon today.

### **Horse Racing during Ancient Greek and Roman Times**

Horse racing is not only a recognised sport globally, but it is also known as one of the eldest sports in humankind, dating back to ancient Greek and Roman times (Kreel, 1993:2; Parker, 1998; Denton, 2010:300; Surujlal et al., 2011:130; Rowley, 2012; Cassidy, 2013). Once humans started keeping records in writing, horse racing was already an established organised sport in every part of all the leading countries located

between the Mediterranean and Central Asia (Rowley, 2012). There were, however, differences between horse racing during Greek and Roman times.

### ***Ancient Greek era***

Leuven (2012) affirmed the importance of horse racing as the most prominent competition during the ancient Greek Olympics. He claims that despite only wealthy people being able to afford the expenses of owning racehorses (mainly attributable to the high costs of transporting them to Olympics games or other competitions), the games attracted masses of visitors (also known as spectators in a sports context) who attended either to support specific athletes (including jockeys) or purely to enjoy and take part in the ambience of the event (Leuven, 2012). Some visitors travelled from neighbouring areas, and others covered great distances to attend while simultaneously being limited by the significant expense of travelling. Leuven (2012) states that the visitors were mostly rich men (in those times, females were not allowed to attend) and included *inter alia* fortune-tellers, merchants, philosophers, politicians and writers who attended the horse races with the expectation to gain fame while concurrently utilising the opportunity to conduct business. The inference can thus be made that during ancient Greek times, event visitors attended horse races based on individual needs and motives, with specific expectations to enjoy the event experience during their leisure time.

Horse racing events mainly pertained to mounted horse races, chariot races, and kalpe races being introduced in the Ancient Greek Olympics. Keeping in mind that the Ancient Greek Olympics lasted for more than a thousand years, but as the Romans took over Greece during the second century BC, the spirit and sacred traditions of the Games were destroyed and officially abolished in 394 A. D. (Athens Environmental Foundation, 2017). Table 1 indicates when certain horse racing events were first introduced to the Ancient Greek Olympics to place the previous in perspective.

**Table 1: Timeline of horse racing events during the Ancient Greek Olympics**

Timeline	Type of race	Description of Race
648 B.C.	Mounted horse races	A horse racing with a rider on its back.
638 B.C.	Chariot races (two-, four-, or six-horse teams)	A popular competition and feature in the ancient Olympic Games as well as Greek religious festivals, between small, two-wheeled vehicles drawn by teams of horses, either two, four or six horses.
Between 496	Kalpe races	Leuven (2012) states little is known about



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

B.C. and 444 B.C.		the kalpe races, except that it was a race of riders on mares in which the riders had to jump off their horses during the last round and run beside their horses.
256 B.C.	Mounted horse races for foals	A foal is a baby thoroughbred horse, despite being male or female.
394 A.D.	The Ancient Greek Olympics are officially closed down	

(Leuven, 2012; Rowley, 2012; Griffiths, 2016; Ray, 2017; Ancient Olympic Games, 2020a)

Stemming from Table 1, it becomes apparent that mounted horse racing (see Figure 1) was the first type of horse racing during the Ancient Olympic Games. Following this, chariot races (See Figure 2), kalpe racing (of which very little is known), and eventually mounted horse races, especially for foals of thoroughbred horses, were introduced.



*Figure 1: Ancient Greek Olympic horse racing Source: Hatzoglou (2017)*



*Figure 2: Chariot races in Ancient Greece Source: Ancient Greece Facts (2017)*

During this timeline, horse races took place in ancient Greek stadiums, also known as hippodromes, deriving from the Greek words, *'hippos'* meaning horse, and *'dromos,'* meaning course (Griffiths, 2016; Britannica, 2019). Leuven (2012) reports that simple hippodromes were easily erected for single events, only requiring a flat surface wide enough for up to fifty participants while spectators had to stand and watch from surrounding hills. Most hippodromes had an oval shape and were surrounded by staged seating from where the spectators could watch the races and at the same time be safe from, especially, chariot crashes (Griffiths, 2016). The frequent crashes resulted in an altar being put up to Taraxippus, a Greek word devoted to ghosts who disturb horses during chariot races, at both ends of hippodromes. The altars marked the most dangerous parts of the track and simultaneously provided evidence of the sport's danger. The latter is supported by Excell (Ancient Olympic Games, 2020b), describing a chariot race as:

*“...one of the most thrilling, visceral and danger-filled sports ever invented by man...[it] was the most popular, prestigious and long-lasting event on the equestrian programme at the Ancient Games”.*

While noticing the dangers of chariot races, horse racing was equally dangerous because Greek jockeys rode without saddles and stirrups. The races tended to follow chariot races on the race programme (Griffiths, 2016). Additionally, chariot races mixed and disturbed the even racing ground and left jockeys and horses with an unpredictable and uneven surface to race on, covering a distance of approximately 1.2km, which could have potentially injured and/or killed them (Griffiths, 2016). Leuven (2012) states that horse owners did not participate in the races in person, as a jockey rode the horse on their behalf. Griffiths (2016) affirms the latter by stating that wealthy horse and chariot owners occasionally took part in the events. However, more often than not opted to appoint charioteers or other riders to participate on their behalf. It resulted in opportunities for children, women, and even cities to become Olympic champions, as the horse owner claimed the success of the victory despite the dangers the riders had to face during the races (Leuven, 2012). Leuven (2012) concludes that the popularity of Greek races declined from the Roman era onwards, mainly because the contest circuit became more international, but it was also less costly and effortless for single athletes to travel compared with the high expenses and difficulty to travel and transport horses.

### *Roman times*

As a sport and leisure pastime, horse racing was an unrestricted passion during Roman Empire times. It provided event visitors various benefits *inter alia*, including a sense of belonging, strengthening their self-esteem, escaping from their daily work and

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

personal problems, and creating a sense of pride (Balint, 2010; Rowley, 2012). These competitions offered significant social and/or leisure activities where participants were presented with the opportunity to relax, have fun, and gamble (if they wanted to) while enjoying the action that the racing horses provide and athletic jockeys (Parker, 1998; Surujlal et al., 2011:130; Akhoondnejad, 2018:48). Leuven (2012) states that the Roman spectator-driven approach also affected the race track infrastructure. The Greek hippodrome was merely a racing track, without proper buildings and seats, and not sufficient for the Romans, whose aim was the entertainment of the sports event visitors. It developed one of the largest sports arenas ever built: the Roman circus (also known as Circus Maximus), under the emperor Septimius Severus in AD 203 and completed in 330 by Constantine (Leuven, 2012; Britannica, 2019; Anderson, 2019). The Circus Maximus was an intricate building with seating for thousands of spectators (Leuven, 2012). Anderson (2019) states that Julius Caesar rebuilt it during the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to accommodate approximately 150 000 spectators. During the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, under the reign of Constantine, it was enlarged to have a seating capacity of 250 000 spectators. It hosted sports events and military triumphs, various ceremonies, public executions, and political demonstrations.



***Figure 3: An image of a Roman hippodrome in the ancient city of Aphrodisias, Turkey***

***Source: Griffiths (2016)***

### ***Greek and Roman horse races comparisons and differences***

Differences are noted in the views of Greeks and Romans on sport and leisure. From a leisure perspective, the ancient Greeks saw leisure as part of an individual's holistic development, while leisure during the Roman times was explicitly referred to as "rest from work" (Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton, 2013:24). As a result, it also affected the views of horse racing as a leisure pastime activity. The Roman horse races played a role in the decline of mounted horse races, even though horse racing and

chariot racing, although varying in form, intent, and outcome, were equally enjoyed by the Romans and Greeks (Leuven, 2012; Griffiths, 2016).

In a horse racing dispensation, the Romans drove two-horse and four-horse chariots, like the Greeks, but they did not have many competitions between horses with riders on their backs. Greek races were not predominantly organised for the enjoyment of the spectators but rather for the participants, who spent much money to participate and receive status and prestige (Leuven, 2012). In contrast, the Romans organised sports events specifically to entertain the spectators. The authorities provided money to entertain both horse races and gladiator fights, and the participants were slaves and freedmen. The horses were not privately owned or raced to increase individual prestige or status (Leuven, 2012). Four different coloured stables (also referred to as factions) existed (white, red, green, and blue), and the crowd supported a specific colour, faction or stable and not an individual chariot (Leuven, 2012). These factions were all managed by different contractors and associations, while politicians also used their support of a specific coloured team in attempt to improve their popularity (Tikkanen, 2019). Leuven (2012) reports that the blue and green factions were the most influential teams, even during the Byzantine period, while Tikkanen (2019) confirms the latter by stating that these factions played parts in both political and religious debates during later Empires. Based on the differences between horse racing during Greek and Roman times, as discussed above, the following inferences about ancient horse racing can thus be made:

- horse racing of all types derives from impromptu competitions between riders of horses or drivers of chariots;
- horse racing provided entertainment for crowds who travelled various distances to either support the athletes and horses or to enjoy the atmosphere of the races purely;
- Both eras enjoyed chariot races, but individual horse and jockey races declined during the Roman era due to the ease of individuals travelling globally and thus resulting in a change in the competitive landscape;
- In the Greek era, horse races focused primarily on the participants' status and prestige;
- During the Roman era, races focused primarily on the spectators and their enjoyment;
- The different focus areas resulted in different infrastructural needs, changing from hippodromes to Roman stadiums such as the Circus Maximus;
- Event visitors in both eras enjoyed the excitement of horse races and attended them in masses, both as a leisure activity or by competing;
- Event visitors in ancient times already determined if they were attending the events based on specific individual needs, motives, and expectations.

Despite the differences mentioned above and similarities between the Greek and Roman eras, limited information existed, until recently, on the actual rules of horse racing during ancient times (Rowley, 2012).

### *Rules of horse racing during the ancient times*

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2016 a unique artefact in the form of a tablet was discovered in the ancient Roman hippodrome city of Aphrodisias, Turkey (Griffiths, 2016; Klimczak, 2016). The tablet contained valuable information about the exact rules of horse racing during ancient times (Griffiths, 2016; Klimczak, 2016). Griffiths (2016) reports that the Greeks used the hippodrome (Figure 3) for horse racing and chariot racing. Klimczak (2016) reports that the tablet used to be part of the Lukyanus Monument (Figure 4), which is speculated to be erected in memory of a jockey named Lukyanus, who died at an early age around two thousand years ago. Klimczak (2016) states that the tablet, with its Greek caption (Figure 5), is rare, as it is the oldest rules of the sport ever found, marking a significant discovery that will assist historians with the understanding of the rules of this ancient sport.



**Figure 4: An image of the part of the larger monument in which an ancient tablet outlining the ancient rules of racing was discovered (Klimczak, 2016)**





**Figure 5: Greek inscription stating that “winning horses and other animals in the winning owner’s stables are banned from racing again, giving others a chance of glory” (Klimczak, 2016)**

Based on Figure 4 and Figure 5, Klimczak (2016) reports:

*“[T]here are horse racing rules on the tablet...It says that if a horse comes in first place in a race it cannot participate in other races, while another horse of the winning horse’s owner also cannot enter another race...in this way, others were given a chance to win...this was a beautiful rule, showing that unlike races in the modern world, races back then were based on gentlemanly conduct”.*

Harvey (2017) supports those mentioned above by stating that ancient races were based on courteous conduct by providing platforms for all competitors to win, differing significantly from modern-day races.

## **Conclusion**

Horses played an integral role in the development of humans and assisted human societies in transforming. The relationship between horses and humans originated when horses were hunted for meat and milk. After that, since the domestication of horses between 5 000 BC and 4 500 BC, the human-animal relationship evolved, as horses assisted in improving communication, transportation, colonisation, the development of cities, nation-building, warfare, battle tactics, the field of medicine, farming, agriculture as well as leisure games and races. It is reported that human-animal leisure activities were significant during both the Greek and Roman empires, as both eras hosted events, such as horse racing, for their entertainment and pleasure.

This paper highlights the significance of leisure pursuits, specifically horse racing events, since ancient Greek and Roman times. Furthermore, while contributing to the broader field of human-animal studies, it adds to the evolving field of knowledge on multispecies’ interactions. Modern-day leisure research predominantly focuses on

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

human actions, interactions, and behaviour, while limited research exists within the human-animal, multispecies continuum. The research of multispecies insights on leisure is relatively emergent. It has potential for further studies contributing to the knowledge and practical development in the broader field of human-animal studies.

### References

- Abdel Aziz, L. 2018. The sport of kings. <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/24491.aspx> [Accessed: 24 April 2019].
- Akhoondnejad, Arman(2017). Loyalty formation process of tourists in sporting event: The case of Turkmen horse races. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 34:48-57.
- Ancient Greece Facts. 2017. Chariot racing in Ancient Greece. <http://www.ancientgreecefacts.com/chariot-races/chariot-racing/> [Accessed: 27 April 2019].
- Ancient Olympic Games. 2020a. [Online]. Welcome to the ancient Olympic Games. Available from: <https://www.olympic.org/ancient-olympic-games/history>. [Accessed: 10 November 2020].
- Ancient Olympic Games. 2020b. Thrills, spills and crashes guaranteed at the chariot races. [Online]. Available from: <https://www.olympic.org/ancient-olympic-games/chariot-racing#:~:text=Chariot%20racing%20is%20one%20of,a%20half%20thousand%20years%20later>. [Accessed:10 November 2020].
- Anderson, M. 2019. Hippodrome. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/hippodrome-architecture#ref4013> [Accessed: 4 May 2019].
- Athens Environmental Foundation. 2017. The original Olympic Games. <https://www.athensenvironmental.org/ancient-olympic-games.php> [Accessed: 26 May 2019].
- Austin, G. 2013. Equine Heritage Institute: Horses in History. <http://www.equinheritageinstitute.org/horses-in-history/> [Accessed: 26 April 2019].
- Balint, E. 2010. The Psychology of sports: why do fans care so much? <https://www.cantonrep.com/x1350924790/The-psychology-of-sports-Why-do-fans-care-so-much> [Accessed: 26 April 2019].
- Bertrand Langlois. The History, Ethnology and Social Importance of Mare's Milk Consumption in Central Asia. *Journal of Life Sciences*, 2011, 5 (10), pp.863-872. *ffhal-01001395f*
- Braswell, N. 1987. A horse racetrack for the San Antonio Area. *Texas (United States): Texas Tech University. (Bachelor of Architecture)*.
- Britannica. 2019. Circus Maximus. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Circus-Maximus#ref39805> [Accessed: 4 May 2019].
- Brown, G., Chalip, L. & Jago, L., Mules, T. 2004. Developing Brand Australia: Examining the Role of Events. *Destination Branding: Creating the Unique Destination Proposition*. Page 279-281.
- Cassidy, R. 2013. The Cambridge Companion to Horseracing. *New York: Cambridge University Press*.
- Dashper, K (2017) Listening to horses: Developing attentive interspecies relationships through sport and leisure. *Society and Animals*, 25 (3). pp. 207-224. ISSN 1568-5306 DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1163/15685306-12341426>
- Dashper, K. (2014). Tools of the trade or part of the family? Horses in competitive equestrian sport. *Society & Animals*, 22(4), 352–371.
- Denton, J. 2016. 5 Reasons people go to sporting events. <https://www.eventb>

rite.com/blog/ds00-5-reasons-people-go-to-sporting-events-and-what-we-can-learn-from-them/ [Accessed: 26 April 2019].

Fabiansson, C. 2016. *Pathways to Excessive Gambling: A Societal Perspective on Youth and Adult Gambling Pursuits*. Published by Routledge, New York, USA <https://books.google.co.za/books?id=8r8oDAAAQBAJ&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=%22domesticated+the+horse+about+4500+BC%22&source=bl&ots=A0kZv0rImF&sig=ACfU3U1JZeH5FHwmz3rubRWJ2nod0EN08w&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjt1NGesenhAhXYQxUIHXC1DlkQ6AEwAnoECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22domesticated%20the%20horse%20about%204500%20BC%22&f=false>

Genoe, Kennedy & Singleton (2013) History of Recreation in Human Kinetics (Eds) Introduction to Recreation and Leisure. *Illinois: Human Kintetics*. 21-38.

Gilbert, M., & Gillett, J. (2012). Equine athletes and interspecies sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(5), 632–643.

Griffiths, M., Parke, A., Wood, R. & Parke, J. 2006. Internet gambling: an overview of psychosocial impacts. *Gaming Research and Review Journal*. 27(1):27-39.

Hatzoglou, S. 2017. Horse in ancient Greece: The Significance of the Horse in Ancient Greece. <https://stasaart.wordpress.com/2017/02/09/horse-in-ancient-greece/> [Accessed: 27 April 2019].

Jaakkola, E. (2020) *Designing conceptual articles: four approaches*. AMS Rev10, 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-020-00161-0>

Klimczak, N. 2016. One of a Kind Ancient Tablet with Horse Racing Rules Unearthed in Turkey. Ancient Origins: Reconstructing the story of Humanity's Past. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/one-kind-ancient-tablet-horse-racing-rules-unearthed-turkey-005816> [Accessed: 27 April 2019].

Kranjčević, J. (2017) The relation between sport and tourism at the beginning of tourism development – the case of Croatia. *European Journal of Tourism Research* 16, pp. 19-31.

Kreel, L. 1993. The Racetrack: A Scientific Approach. Cape Town (Cape Town): University of Cape Town. (Master of Science).

Lee, M. A. (2016).. From paddocks to postdisciplinarity: Comprehending agency among leisure-seekers within Australian thoroughbred horseracing [online]. In:

Scerri, Madalyn (Editor); Hui, Lee Ker (Editor). CAUTHE 2016: The Changing Landscape of Tourism and Hospitality: The Impact of Emerging Markets and Emerging Destinations. Sydney: Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, 2016: 202-216. Availability: <<https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=900125705491195;res=IELIAC>> ISBN: 9780987050793. [cited 03 Nov 20].

Leuven, K.U. 2012. Ancient Olympics: Horse races. <http://ancientolympics.art.s.kuleuven.be/eng/TC008EN.html> [Accessed: 27 April 2019].

Ollenburg, C. (2005). Worldwide structure of the equestrian tourism sector. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 4(1), 47–55.

Parker, M. 1998. The History of horseracing. <http://www.mrmike.com/Explore/rhist.htm> [Accessed: 22 April 2019].

Paula Danby, Katherine Dashper & Rebecca Finkel (2019) Multispecies leisure: human-animal interactions in leisure landscapes. *Leisure Studies*, 38:3, 291-302.DOI: 10.1080/02614367.2019.1628802.

Piepenbring, D. 2016. To Heaven with Buraq, and Other News. Available from: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/09/23/heaven-buraq-news/>

Ray, R. 2017. The language of horse racing: 127 Horse Racing Terms Defined and Explained.<https://www.gamblingsites.com/blog/127-horse-racing-terms-defined-expl>



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

aine d-29198/ [Accessed: 27 April 2019].

Rowley, C. 2012. Short History on horse racing. <https://carmelrowley.com.au/blog/?p=3723> [Accessed: 24 April 2019].

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2009. *Research methods for business students. 5th eds: Pearson.*

Silver, C. 2016. Taraxippus, the Terrifying Horse Scarer: Apparition Appeared Across Racetracks in Ancient Greece. Ancient Origins. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/taraxippus-terrifying-horse-scarer-apparition-appeared-across-racetracks-ancient-021142> [Accessed: 26 May 2019].

Stark, P. 2019. A Little Big History of Horses. <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/big-history-project/expansion-interconnection/other-materials8/a/a-little-big-history-of-horses> [Accessed: 24 April 2019].

Surujlal, J., Mosai, W. & Dhurup, M. (2011). "Sport of King": Analysis of motives for gambling on horseracing. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance, September (Supplement 1), 130-144.*

Tarasport. 2017. Man and horses – riding through history. <https://www.tarasportrafting.com/blog/man-and-horses-riding-through-history> [Accessed: 24 April 2019].

Tassiopoulos, D. (ed). 2011. *Events Management: A developmental and managerial approach. 3rd ed. Claremont: Juta & Co Ltd*

Tikkanen, A. 2019. Chariot-racing. <https://www.britannica.com/sports/chariot-racing> [Accessed: 4 May 2019].

Torkildsen, G. (2005). *Leisure and recreation management. Psychology Press.*

Wewers, D. 2007. Writing center brief guide series: A brief guide to writing a history paper. Writing Center at Harvard College. [https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/bg\\_writing\\_history.pdf](https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/bg_writing_history.pdf) [Accessed 10 November 2020]

\* \* \*

**Corresponding Author: Marie Young**

**Email: [myoung@uwc.uc.za](mailto:myoung@uwc.uc.za)**

*Research Paper*

---

INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW No. 1/2022©Copyright by the author

DOI: 10.6298/ILR.202206\_11(1).0002

---

# **Yoga in University Sports: Effects on Spirituality, Well-Being, And Physical Symptoms Among Students - A Quasi-Experimental Study**

**Gusztáv József Tornóczy**

*Hungarian University of Sports Science, Budapest, Hungary*

**Miklós Bánhidi**

*Hungarian University of Sport Science, Budapest, Hungary*

**Sándor Rózsa**

*Washington University School of Medicine, USA*

**Henriett Nagy**

*Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary*

## **Abstract**

According to international studies, practising yoga has positive effects on the mental and physical health of the young generation and adults. Our study aimed to examine how yoga practice in physical education settings affects the subjective assessment of spirituality, the different aspects of well-being (subjective, psychological) and the physical symptoms, and how the values of yoga practitioners differ from control (sports) with similar frequency. In the study, 290 Hungarian university students (234 women, 81%) participated in a 10-weeks study, and the mean age was 21.47 (SD = 1.71) years. Spirituality was measured with the Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM). Well-being was assessed with Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB), WHO Well-Being Index shortened version (WBI-5), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The physical symptoms were measured with the Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic Languidness

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

(PILL). Intra-group changes were tested with Wilcoxon signed ranks tests and between group comparisons with Mann-Whitney  $U$  tests. The results showed significant positive intra-group change in yoga group on spirituality (SHALOM) general factor ideal assessment  $T = 1858.5$ ,  $z = -2.052$ ,  $p = .040$ ,  $d = .22$  and experienced assessment  $T = 2197$ ,  $z = -2.064$ ,  $p = .039$ ,  $d = .22$ . Among dimensions of spirituality the personal (ideal)  $T = 959$ ,  $z = -2.19$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $d = .17$  and transcendental (experienced)  $T = 1097$ ,  $z = -2.17$ ,  $p = .030$ ,  $d = .16$  values showed positive effects. In the case of physical symptoms (PILL) the sport group showed negative change  $T = 10568.5$ ,  $z = -3.158$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $d = .22$ , this indicates better health. No other intra-group changes were observed. Between group difference was detectable in spirituality (SHALOM) personal and environmental dimensions during post-test, yoga group with higher level. The sports group showed fewer physical symptoms (PILL) than the yoga group in the pretest and post-test. According to our study, the spiritual well-being of university students increases through the yoga PE classes. The effect of sports PE classes is more pronounced in promoting more favourable physical symptoms. Overall, there is no significant difference between the measured effects of yoga and sports exercise among students. Therefore yoga could be recommended as one of the practices in university PE classes.

**Keywords:** *physical education, university students, yoga, sport practice, spirituality, mental health, physical health.*

\* \* \*

### Introduction

It is well known that physical activity (PA) benefits physical-, mental- and social health (Black et al., 2015; Eime, Young, Harvey, Charity, & Payne, 2013). Several studies highlight the important role of PA in chronic disease prevention and rehabilitation (Alves et al., 2016; Harvey et al., 2018; Moholdt, Lavie, & Nauman, 2018). It has also been shown that physical inactivity is one of the primary causes of most chronic diseases and influences the lifestyle negatively (Booth, Roberts, & Laye, 2012; Pucsok et al., 2020). PA has a positive effect on the somatic health of individuals in the areas of cardiovascular health, body composition, metabolism, bone health, psychological well-being and functional capacity (Cress et al., 2005). In addition, subjective happiness and life satisfaction can also be enhanced by various physical activities in all age groups (Shaw, Gorely & Corban, 2005; Veal, 2012).

Leisure researchers state that different leisure activities can promote health and

well-being (Edginton, DeGraaf, Dieser, & Edginton, 2006). It can be an essential part of the health care system with the effectiveness of enhancing life and reducing the effects of lifestyle illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Henderson, 2014). A wide and varied range of leisure activities, among them the yoga practice, can evoke experiences of freedom and enjoyment (Gibson, 2018; Nagla, 2011). It is stated that consciously designed leisure practices generally enhance people's quality of life (Mansfield, Daykin & Kay, 2020).

As recommended by the European Union Working Group "Sport & Health" (EU Physical Activity Guidelines, 2008), physical education classes in educational institutions play an important role in improving the health and fitness of young people. Therefore daily physical education is highly recommended. In Hungary, the daily physical education classes introduced in primary and secondary schools have been implemented but organised PE programs have limited opportunities to include in higher education curriculums (Lökös, 2018). At most universities, students can register for physical education classes 90 minutes per week, which can also positively affect the physical fitness level of young adults (Pucsok et al., 2020). Students can choose various sports during these classes, such as ball games, swimming and aerobics, to but name a few. Some universities also provide yoga as part of PE classes.

According to Eurobarometer statistics (Eurobarometer, 2017), 53% of the Hungarians never exercise or play sport regularly, compared to the EU average of 46%. The proportion of those who exercise regularly is also lower (24%) than the EU average (33%). However, the proportion of regularly active people is higher among Hungarians (9%) than the EU average (7%). In the 15-24 years age group, those who never or rarely play sports have an EU average of 29%, while in Hungary it is higher with 31%, which draws the attention to how important it would be to promote and do more physical activity. Interestingly, the largest percentage of the physically active population exercise at home (59%) in Hungary. In comparison, the EU average is just over half (32%) that in Hungary in that case. In the EU, the most popular location for PA is in the park and outdoors (40%), while in Hungary, it is much lower (17%).

Students in Hungary usually like to use the opportunities to participate in PE, which can teach them techniques to improve their motor abilities and physical and mental skills. Among different types of sports, yoga can also provide practical exercises that are easy to learn and can be practised anywhere (Park, Riley, & Braun, 2016; Ward, Stebbings, Cherkin, & Baxter, 2014).

As a mind-body practice, yoga originated in India and has a history of several millennia. Different trends have emerged. Different hatha yoga styles are most prevalent in Western societies as modern yoga practice (Tornóczy, 2013). Yoga is not a homogeneous practice but consists of sub-components (Bussing, Hedtstuck, Khalsa,

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Ostermann, & Heusser, 2012) such as physical postures (asana), breathing exercises (pranayama), relaxation and meditation (dhyana), furthermore lifestyle habits and spiritual teachings. De Michelis (2004) mentions that modern yoga practice has a 'two-faced' method: 1. as a health and fitness activity, 2. and as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Among the CAM methods, yoga is one of the mind-body interventions (MBI) in addition to other procedures such as meditation, various relaxation techniques, Tai Chi and Chi Kung (Weber, Schnorr, Morat, Morat, & Donath, 2020; Yang, Koh, Sung, & Kang, 2021). Yoga's popularity is growing worldwide, and more and more people are practising this leisure time (Hendriks, de Jong, & Cramer, 2017). Yoga practice has also become fashionable in Hungary among students, so, understandably, more and more people are registering for classes.

### *Yoga and spirituality*

Initially, yoga can be considered a connection with our spiritual nature and the Supreme. On the other hand, yoga can be vital for aligning the body, mind, spirit and soul (Feuerstein, 1998; Tornóczy, 2013). For this reason, it is not surprising that more research is examining spirituality among yoga practitioners. According to a 6-month study, conscious interactions/compassion, religious orientation, lightheartedness/relief and mindfulness have significantly increased among yoga teacher-training participants (Bussing, Hedtstück, Khalsa, Ostermann, & Heusser, 2012). The results have shown that intensive yoga practice may significantly increase specific aspects of spirituality, mindfulness, and the mood of the practitioners. Another study examined the effects of yoga on transcendence, spirituality, and self-improvement in a penitentiary setting (Griera, 2017). Most inmates who practice yoga identify „transcendence experiences” as the most singular aspect of yoga. This study found that „according to the inmates’ narrations, yoga can transport inmates to a “finite province of meaning” where reality has a different taste, texture, and color” (Griera, 2017, pp 96.). A systematic review of empirical research on the relationship between yoga and spirituality shows that yoga practice seems to be positively associated with various aspects of spirituality and could evoke spiritual interest and contributes to spiritual well-being and health (Csala, Springinsfeld, & Köteles, 2021). According to this review, although physical fitness is emphasised in Western societies, spiritual benefits can also be observed as an effect of yoga.

### *Yoga and mental well-being, life satisfaction*

The effects of yoga have been studied on mental well-being, both in clinical trials and in general populations. Among children and adolescents, regular practice of yoga contributes to relieving symptoms of anxiety and depression (James-Palmer,

Anderson, Zucker, Kofman, & Daneault, 2020). For female university students, yoga practice has shown a positive effect on reducing social state anxiety and increasing body satisfaction (Gammage, Drouin, & Lamarche, 2016). The systematic review results show that practicing most yoga styles is associated with a reduction in stress in healthy adults (Wang & Szabó, 2020). Other clinical and healthy sample studies have shown that yoga and meditation positively affect individuals in treating stress and related mental disorders (e.g., anxiety and depression). Further, these practices have few or no side effects (Kaushik, Jain, Agarwal, Joshi, & Parvez, 2020). A four-week study on the effects of a combined yoga and mindfulness intervention among health care workers showed that anxiety and negative effect decreased and their quality of life indicators increased (La Torre et al., 2020). All this supports the effectiveness of the method even in a stress-saturated environment.

A systematic review investigated the possible effects of yoga on positive mental health among healthy adults and found yoga practice contributes to a significant increase in psychological well-being compared to no intervention but not physical activity (Hendriks, de Jong & Cramer, 2017). In the case of life satisfaction (emotional well-being) and social relationships (social well-being, no significant effects were found. Another publication has explained that yoga has promising results in improving well-being across office-based settings (Abdin, Welch, Byron-Daniel, & Meyrick, 2018). This result indicates that yoga and other PAs can improve the well-being of the employees.

A research study in China shows that yoga as a leisure exercise can be helpful for second-time mothers to develop identity (Liu, Jia, & Wang, 2022). Liu et al. (2022) explored that yoga has positive relations with identity development in four ways: affirming self, approaching self, transforming self, and balancing self of second-times mothers. The study mentioned that these results can be helpful for mothers because they have conflicts with career identity and personal identity and recommends yoga as a helping tool for mothers.

Although the positive results of research on the psychological well-being of yoga (in clinical trials) have been demonstrated, it should be noted that the majority of these studies have used inactive controls, and there is a shortage in comparisons with other physical activities (Field, 2016; Hendriks et al., 2017).

### *Yoga and physical symptoms*

Yoga has a positive effect on yoga practitioners' general health and physical and psychosocial health. However, less than a third have experienced a few adverse effects (e.g., injuries, pain, emotional irritability) during exercise (Park et al., 2016). The majority of yoga practitioners (96.1%) describe themselves as having good or very good

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

general health, and 87.7% believe that their health has improved since starting yoga (Cramer et al., 2019). Yoga practitioners believe that yoga improves their overall health (89.5%), energy levels (84.5%), sleep quality (68.5%), and healthier body weight (57, 3%). These observations were independent of gender and ethnicity (Ross, Friedmann, Bevans, & Thomas, 2013).

An interesting result from clinical trials is that any style of yoga (e.g., hatha yoga, Iyengar yoga, yoga therapy), practised by individuals has positive effects on physical symptoms. These include eating disorders, high blood pressure, and asthma. Therefore, any yoga style is recommended for practice (Cramer, Lauche, Langhorst, & Dobos, 2016).

Somatisation is one of the most common physical symptoms associated with stress. Although the effects of yoga on stress have been studied in numerous cases, only a few studies have aimed to investigate somatisation (Yoshihara, Hiramoto, Oka, Kubo, & Sudo, 2014). Among the symptoms of somatisation, the most common complaints are headache, abdominal pain, or various pains in the limbs, which are often associated with other mental disorders, primarily anxiety disorders (Tamás, Perczel-Forintos, Máté, & Gyenge, 2020). A 12-week yoga intervention without prior yoga experience in healthy women has shown a reduction in some somatic symptoms such as headache, dizziness, chest pain, low back pain, and nausea; and the alleviation of psychological complaints such as anxiety, depression, anger, and hostility; and more favourable mental health status (Yoshihara et al., 2014). According to intervention results, the stress-related somatisation and anxiety of the yoga participants decreased, and their quality of life and sleep also improved compared to inactive controls (Telles, Singh, Yadav, & Balkrishna, 2012). A review of the results of clinical trials shows that yoga interventions improve physical function and health-related quality of life in healthy adults over sixty years of age (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2019).

Based on scientific research, it appears that yoga can be recommended to all adults ages to improve and maintain mental and physical health.

### *The effects of yoga on college students*

The literature can be found in research on the effects of yoga on undergraduate students. Yoga as a mind-body technique, can positively contribute to the well-being and can be effective on stress release (Prasad, Varrey, & Sisti, 2016), anxiety (Stern, Khalsa, & Hofmann, 2012; Gammage, Drouin, & Lamarche, 2016) and can improve the overall well-being. Reducing stress through yoga and other techniques can be important and helpful, especially for first-year college students (Park et al., 2017). Yoga strengthens entrepreneurial psychological and cognitive attributes and could be introduced as a compulsory/optional subject in teaching from primary school to

university (Marques, Ferreira, Rodrigues, & Ferreira, 2011). Yoga intervention could also improve self-compassion and mindfulness among nursing students (Mathad, Pradhan, & Sasidharan, 2017).

#### *Aims of the present study*

The present research aims to assess the effects of 10 sessions of yoga in university physical education classes (1 x 90 minutes per week). The following health-related areas were surveyed: spirituality, psychological and general well-being, life satisfaction, and physical symptoms and sensations. Although several studies have examined the different effects of yoga on these variables, relatively few results are available compared with an active control group (Field, 2016; Hendriks et al., 2017).

Our research contributes to further expanding the results revealed by the comparative studies, in our case, comparing yoga practitioners and sports practitioners. We want to assess whether there are measurable changes in the variables since the start of practice after the 10th time. Our primary research tasks were: what effects can be found on yoga practitioners compared with other sports practitioners, and what are the specific and common effects of yoga and sports. Based on the objectives of the research, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1) Positive change in spirituality is conceivable as a result of practising yoga, while no such effect is expected from sports;

H2) Improvements in psychological and general well-being and life satisfaction are expected as a result of both yoga and sports practice;

H3) Practicing yoga and sports both make a positive contribution to reducing physical symptoms;

H4) Overall, no significant difference exists between yoga and sports groups based on pre-and post-test results among students. Yoga could be a possible exercise method for PE classes for university students.

## **Materials and Methods**

### *Procedure*

A quasi-experimental test method was used in the research. A paper-based questionnaire was distributed among students. Data were collected before the first and at the end of the 10th PE class of the semester. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous for students, and their intention to participate was indicated by signing the consent statement. The questions were focused first on socio-demographic data: gender, age, family status, financial status, and current place of residence, then on the body weight, height, physical activity habits and previous yoga practice. All monitored



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

students participated in the instructed yoga or sports classes for 1,5 hours a week for ten weeks. At the end of the program, the trials were required to fill out the questionnaires again. Based on their answers, none of the students in yoga classes had been practising yoga in the last six months before the present research. The intervention happened as follows:

1. The yoga class started with the whole body-moving introductory parts and continued with different postures (asanas). The execution of postures was done following the rhythmic alternation of adequate exhalations and inhalations. The yoga classes closed with 15 minutes of relaxation. Qualified yoga instructors taught yoga.
2. In the sports classes, the warm-up was performed, then continued with sport-specific exercises and ended with cool-down activities. PE teachers at the university held physical education classes.

The difference between yoga exercises from physical exercise is that it emphasises the importance of regulated breathing and mindfulness and the persistence of various postures.

The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Eötvös Loránd University (Ethical License Number 2015/49).

### *Participants*

Full-time students of Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Special Education and the University of Debrecen, Faculty of Economics, participated in the study during the spring semester of 2015. The selection criteria for the sample were adults above the age of 18. In the first step, 437 university students completed the questionnaires from a base of 617 (total number of students in PE classes). In the second step - after the 10th week - 318 students who had been continuously participating in all 10 provided classes filled the survey again. A total of 28 individuals were excluded from further analysis, of whom 26 had incompleting questionnaires and a further two who were extreme outliers. A total of 290 students (234 women, 81% and 65 men, 19%) form the study sample. Individuals were between 19-29 years of age ( $M = 21.47$  years;  $SD = 1.71$ ) and unmarried except for one woman.

From the 290 participants, 87 people (30,0%) were doing yoga and 203 (70,0%) different sports in classes. The sport classes offered: aerobics ( $n=91$ , 31,4%), swimming ( $n = 30$ , 10.3%), volleyball ( $n = 26$ , 9,0%), sports games ( $n = 19$ , 6.6%), basketball ( $n = 18$ , 6,2%), spine-exercise ( $n = 14$ , 4,8%) and TRX training ( $n = 5$ , 1.7%). Respondents were asked if they performed any other physical activity except the PE classes. Nearly half of the students (47.6%) did not exercise outside of PE classes, while the other half

have done other physical activities: 1-2 times a week (36.9%), 3-4 times a week (11.7%) and almost every day (3.8%).

## **Measures**

### *Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM)*

The Four Domains Model of Spiritual Health and Well-Being was used to develop the 20-item questionnaire by Fisher (2010). This scale is comprised of 20 items - five items for each domain, and measures the quality of relationships of each person with themselves (Personal domain), other people (Communal domain), the environment (Environmental domain) and/or God (Transcendental domain). Fillers on a five-point Likert scale indicate (A) How important you think each area is for an ideal state of spiritual well-being (Ideal assessment); and (B) How do you feel each item reflects your personal experience most of the time (Experienced assessment): (1) very low; (5) very high. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire proved to be appropriate, and the questionnaire can be used to demonstrate different dimensions of spiritual well-being (Fisher & Brumley, 2008). The authors adapted the measuring instrument to the Hungarian language for this sample, which is currently accepted and is ahead of publication (Tornóczy et al., 2022). In the Hungarian version, the bifactor model showed the best fit, with four primary and one general factor: spirituality. In the present sample, the confidence indicator proved to be adequate for Ideal (A) factors ( $0.70 < \alpha < 0.97$ ) and for Experienced (B) factors ( $0.73 < \alpha < 0.95$ ), and also for the general factor (spirituality): Ideal  $\alpha = 0.87$ , Experienced  $\alpha = 0.86$ .

### *Scales of Psychological Well-Being (SPWB)*

The 18-item self-describing questionnaire measured six distinct dimensions of well-being: Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations with Others, Purpose in Life, and Self-Acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Participants responded on a six-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree; (6) strongly agree. In our research, we considered the total score of the six scales of the questionnaire as the indicator of positive psychological functioning (SPWB total score). A higher total score indicates a higher level of psychological well-being. The reason for our decision was that several previous studies (e.g., Abbott, Ploubidis, Huppert, Kuh, & Groudace, 2010; Springer, Hauser, & Freese, 2006) questioned the six-factor structure of the scale and the subscales' internal reliability. The instrument is reliable, and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.78 in a Hungarian sample (Nagy & Gyurkovics, 2016), in our sample  $\alpha = 0.81$ .

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

### *WHO (Five) Well-Being Index (WBI-5)*

The 5-item version of the WHO Scale of Well-being (Bech, Gudex, & Johansen, 1996) provides information on the general well-being of individuals over the past two weeks. The test contains statements that can be judged on a 4-degree Likert scale (not at all typical / barely characteristic/characteristic / completely characteristic). Higher scores mean a more positive, more favourable psychological state of the person. The internal consistency (Cronbach-alpha = 0.85) and the homogeneity of the questionnaire are confirmed in a Hungarian sample (Susánszky, Konkoly Thege, Stauder, & Kopp, 2006), in our case  $\alpha = 0.69$ .

### *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*

The SWLS assess global life satisfaction using five statements concerning the quality of life, on the degree of agreement with claims on a seven-point Likert-type scale: (1) strongly disagree; (7) strongly agree. The scale score is the sum of the answers to the items. Higher scores indicate greater life satisfaction (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The internal reliability of the questionnaire proved to be excellent (Cronbach-alpha = 0.84 - 0.89) in Hungarian samples (Martos, Sallay, Désfalvi, Szabó, & Ittész, 2014). In the present sample  $\alpha = 0.79$ .

### *Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic Languidness (PILL)*

The 54-question self-test measures people's tendency to notice and report a broad array of physical symptoms and sensations (e.g. racing heart, upset stomach, headache, back pains) over an unspecified time period in the past using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) have never or almost never experienced to (5) more than once a week (Pennebaker, 1982). Those with high symptom reports tend to be more nervous, distressed, and unhappy. The questionnaire evaluated a general propensity to report physical symptoms and is conceptualised as a trait-like symptom scale. The scale had a high internal consistency and sufficient reliability (van Wijk & Kolk, 1996). Hungarian research results also supported the high reliability and applicability of the measuring instrument, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.73 - 0.79 (Rózsa et al., 2008). The value of reliability in the present sample is  $\alpha = 0.88$ .

### *Statistical analysis*

Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, v25.0 (IBM Corp. Released 2017 Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.). Measurements were made two times: T0 (baseline) and T1 (10 weeks later). A comparison of results measured at times T0 and T1 were made by taking into account the categorisation of each group. Our independent variables were the two groups based of the different exercises: group 1

doing yoga and group 2 doing sports. We performed the normality test with the Shapiro-Wilks test to analyse the data, which showed that the measured dependent variables (spirituality, subjective and psychological well-being, physical symptoms) did not show a normal distribution according to the examined groups (yoga, sports). The Wilcoxon signed ranks test was used to compare the results of the dependent variables measured before the start of yoga practice (pretest) and after the 10th time (post-test). To examine the differences between the yoga and sports groups along with the measured variables, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney  $U$  test was used. The data do not contain missing data and extreme outliers. The effect sizes were calculated using the effect size index  $d$  recommended by Cohen (Cohen, 1988) in the Wilcoxon rank test (Fritz, Morris, & Richler, 2012). The magnitude of the effects was considered to be the following:  $0.3 > d$  (small effect),  $0.3 < d < 0.5$  (medium effect),  $0.5 < d$  (large effect). In statistical analyses, the fixed level of significance was  $p = .05$ .

## **Results**

### *Yoga and Sports intra-group changes in spirituality*

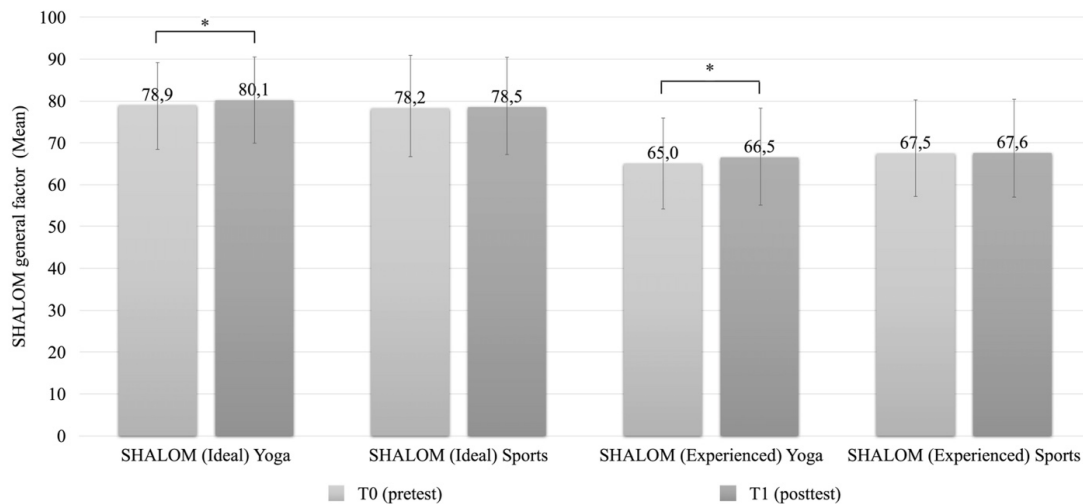
In order to evaluate if there were any changes in the values of spirituality (SHALOM) and its dimensions as a result of attending yoga practice ( $n = 87$ ) in the university's regular PE classes (10 times) a Wilcoxon signed rank test was calculated. The results (Figure 1.) revealed a statistically significantly positive change in spirituality (general factor) Ideal assessment,  $T = 1858.5$ ,  $z = -2.052$ ,  $p = .040$ , with a small effect size ( $d = .22$ ) and also in spirituality (general factor) Experienced assessment,  $T = 2197$ ,  $z = -2.064$ ,  $p = .039$ , with a small effect size ( $d = .22$ ).

For the sports group ( $n=203$ ), there was no statistically significant change in the values of the general factor of spirituality for any of the evaluation assessments (Ideal, Experienced).

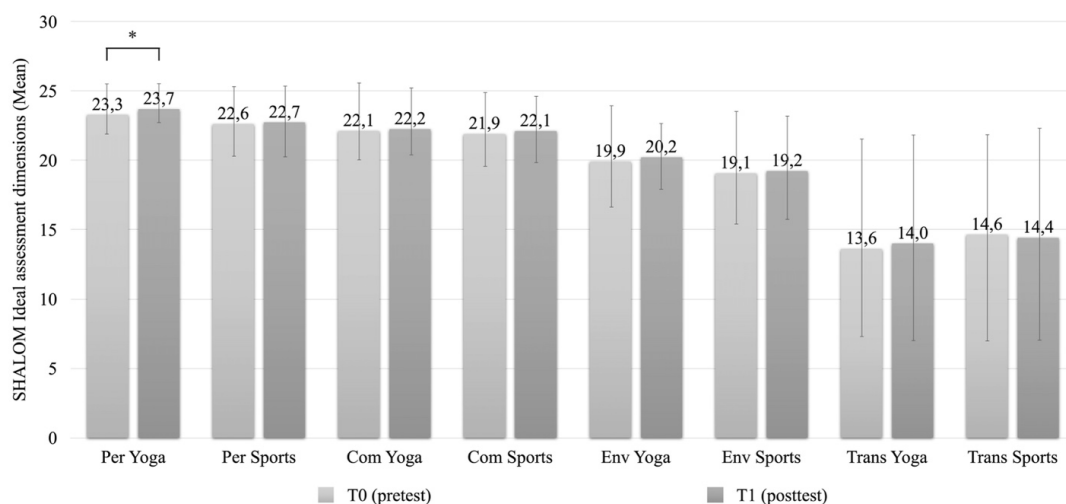
According to the results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, there was a statistically significant positive change in the Personal dimension of the spirituality (SHALOM) Ideal assessment after the 10-week yoga exercise  $T = 959$ ,  $z = -2.19$ ,  $p = .029$ , with the following small effect,  $d = .17$ . There was no statistically significant difference in the other Ideal assessment dimensions (Communal, Environmental, Transcendental) in the yoga group compared to the start of the exercise (Figure 2.).

There were no statistically significant differences between the pre-and post-test values within the sports group for any of the dimensions of the Ideal assessment of spirituality.

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

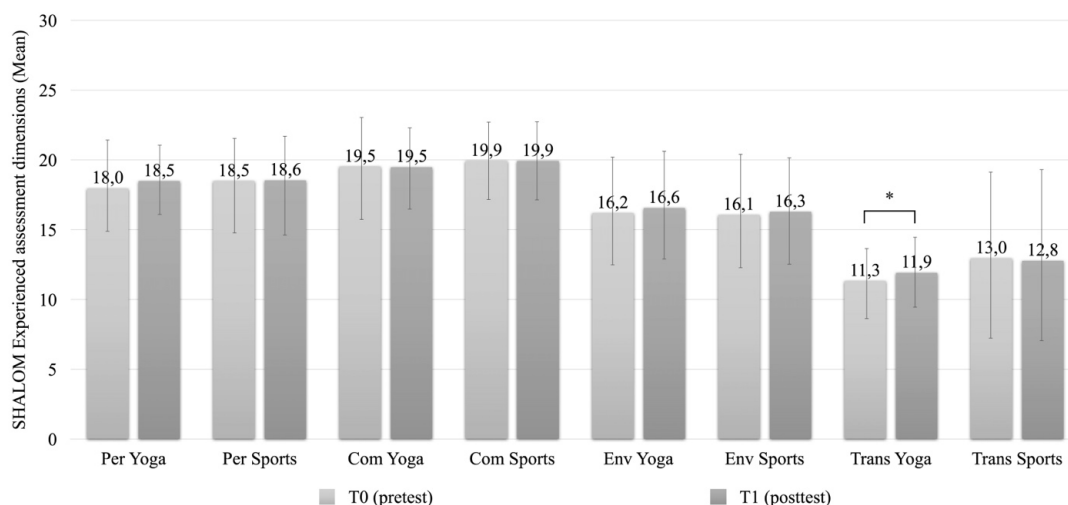


**Figure 1.** Wilcoxon signed ranks test results: Yoga and Sports group mean scores in the SHALOM general factor (spirituality)



**Figure 2.** Wilcoxon signed ranks test results: Yoga and Sports group mean scores in the SHALOM Ideal assessment four dimensions (Per = Personal, Com = Communal, Env = Environmental, Trans = Transcendental)

One of the four dimensions of spirituality (SHALOM), the Transcendental dimension of Experienced assessment, showed a statistically significant positive change after ten weeks of yoga exercise,  $T = 1097$ ,  $z = -2.17$ ,  $p = .030$ , with small effect size,  $d = .16$ . There were no statistically significant changes in the other Experienced assessment dimensions (Personal, Social, Environmental) compared to the start of the exercise (Figure 3.).



**Figure 3.** Wilcoxon signed ranks test results: Yoga and Sports group mean scores in the SHALOM Experienced assessment four dimensions (Per = Personal, Com = Communal, Env = Environmental, Trans = Transcendental)

In the case of the sports group (active control) no statistically significant change was observed in the values of the Experienced assessment's four dimensions.

The obtained results confirm the first hypothesis of the research; there are statistically significant changes in the values of spirituality after attending yoga exercises in the regular PE classes, and no such changes were observable in the sports group. Overall, the ideal and experienced evaluation of spirituality (general factor) changed positively. The Personal dimension of ideal assessment and the Transcendent dimension of the experienced assessment showed similar positive changes. However, not all of the spiritual dimensions (other than those mentioned) were significantly changed in the yoga group. The magnitudes of the effects sizes are small in all statistically significant results by the yoga exercise group, but this is not surprising in the case of the once-a-week exercise.

#### *Yoga and Sports intra-group changes in subjective and psychological well-being, and life satisfaction*

According to Wilcoxon signed-rank tests results, there were no statistically significant changes in any of the variables; psychological (SPWB) and general (WBI-5) well-being and satisfaction with life (SWLS); between the results measured at the beginning of the semester and after the 10th time in the yoga group.

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

The same result was observed for the sports group. None of the variables showed a statistically significant change between pretest and post-test results of university students.

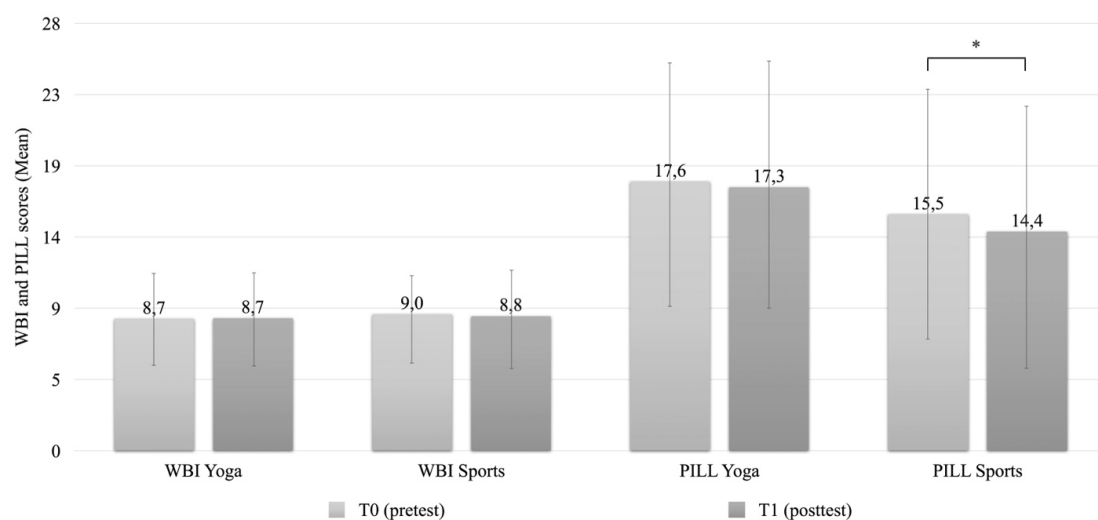
The present results do not support the second hypothesis that improvements could be expected in psychological and general well-being and life satisfaction due to both yoga and sports PE classes.

### *Yoga and Sports intra-group changes in physical symptoms*

In the case of physical symptoms (PILL), there was no statistically significant change in the values as a result of attending yoga practice ( $n = 87$ ) in the university's regular PE classes (10 times) according to Wilcoxon signed ranks test.

For the sports group ( $n = 203$ ), the physical symptoms showed a statistically significant negative change after 10 weeks of sports exercise with  $T = 10568.5$ ,  $z = -3.158$ ,  $p = .002$ , with a small effect size,  $d = .22$  (Figure 4.). This negative change has a positive meaning, as decreased physical symptoms indicate better physical health. The small effect size is understandable due to the once a week exercise, yet it is a good indication of the direction of change.

The third hypothesis, formulated prior to the study, that the practice of both yoga and sports contributes positively to reducing physical symptoms was only partially fulfilled. There was no detectable change in yoga practitioners while doing sports effectively relieves physical symptoms. At the same time, it is worth noting that based on the values, the decrease was the direction of change in the case of yoga, too, although this extent did not reach the magnitude of the statistically significant difference.



**Figure 4.** Wilcoxon signed ranks test results: Yoga and Sports group mean scores in WBI-5 and PILL

*Yoga and sports between group differences*

After analysing the within-group differences, the between-groups differences were also examined. To analyse the difference between the yoga and sports groups, we used the Mann-Whitney *U* test, which compares data measured simultaneously, during the pretest (T0) and post-test (T1). In general, the results showed that for most of the measured variables, there was no statistically significant difference between the yoga exercise group and the sports exercise group (Table 1., Table 2., Table 3.).

When comparing the pretest, there was a statistically significant difference between the yoga group and the sports groups in terms of physical symptoms (PILL),  $U(1) = 7016.00$ ,  $n_1 = 87$ ,  $n_2 = 203$ ,  $z = -2.446$ ,  $p = .014$ . The level of physical symptoms in the sports group was lower (Table 1.), thus showing a more favourable value at the beginning of the semester (they already had better physical symptoms).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney *U* test results in WBI, PILL, SWLS, SPWB

*Table 1.* Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney *U* test results with pairwise comparisons between groups in general well-being, physical symptoms, satisfaction with life, and psychological well-being

	Yoga (n = 87)		Sports (n = 203)		<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD	
WBI pre	8.65	2.59	8.96	2.47	.327
WBI post	8.701	2.64	8.84	2.78	.798
PILL pre	17.64	8.04	15.49	8.22	.014
PILL post	17.28	8.11	14.36	8.62	.003
SWLS pre	24.66	5.57	24.31	5.31	.513
SWLS post	24.41	6.16	24.65	5.53	.917
SPWB pre	83.39	10.29	81.50	10.54	.086
SPWB post	82.31	10.19	81.31	9.71	.263

Comment. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, WBI = WHO Well-Being Index, PILL = Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic Languidness, SWLS = Satisfaction with Life Scale, SPWB = Scales of Psychological Well-Being, pre = pretest, post = posttest

Several statistically significant differences were detected between the two groups when comparing the post-test. There was a difference between the yoga group and the



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

sports groups in the ideal assessment of spirituality (SHALOM): for the Personal dimension,  $U(1) = 7215.00$ ,  $n1 = 87$ ,  $n2 = 203$ ,  $z = -2.535$ ,  $p = .011$ ; and in the value of the Environmental dimension,  $U(1) = 7219.00$ ,  $n1 = 87$ ,  $n2 = 203$ ,  $z = -2.011$ ,  $p = .044$ . The values of the yoga group's personal and environmental dimensions are higher, suggesting better spirituality (Table 2.).

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney  $U$  test results in SHALOM Ideal assessment

*Table 2.* Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney  $U$  test results with pairwise comparisons between groups in SHALOM Ideal assessment dimensions and general factor

	Yoga (n = 87)		Sports (n = 203)		$p$
	M	SD	M	SD	
SHALOM P pre	23.26	1.81	22.61	2.53	.092
SHALOM P post	23.69	1.43	22.72	2.54	.011
SHALOM C pre	22.11	2.81	21.91	2.68	.463
SHALOM C post	22.24	2.40	22.10	2.42	.610
SHALOM E pre	19.91	3.67	19.06	4.06	.131
SHALOM E post	20.21	3.54	19.23	3.73	.044
SHALOM T pre	13.62	7.16	14.62	7.48	.227
SHALOM T post	13.99	7.45	14.42	7.64	.602
SHALOM gen.f	78.91	10.45	78.21	12.10	.904
SHALOM gen.f	80.13	10.46	78.48	11.71	.412

Comment. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, SHALOM = Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure, P = Personal, C = Communal, E = Environmental, T = Transcendental, pre = pretest, post = posttest, gen.f = general factor (spirituality)

Comparing the post-test values of physical symptoms (PILL), there was a difference between the yoga group and the sports groups,  $U(1) = 6633.50$ ,  $n1 = 87$ ,  $n2 = 203$ ,  $z = -2.989$ ,  $p = .003$ . The level of physical symptoms in the sports group showed a more favourable, lower value at the end of the semester (Table 1.). In the experienced assessment of spirituality, no statistically significant between-group differences were observed (Table 3.).

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney *U* test results in SHALOM Experienced assessment

*Table 3.* Descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney *U* test results with pairwise comparisons between groups in SHALOM Experienced assessment dimensions and general factor

	Yoga (n = 87)		Sports (n = 203)		<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD	
SHALOM P pre	17.98	3.30	18.49	3.41	.259
SHALOM P post	18.48	3.50	18.55	3.59	.972
SHALOM C pre	19.52	3.68	19.94	2.79	.871
SHALOM C post	19.50	2.90	19.93	2.83	.265
SHALOM E pre	16.19	3.89	16.07	4.08	.968
SHALOM E post	16.57	3.88	16.29	3.84	.693
SHALOM T pre	11.33	5.98	12.96	6.70	.071
SHALOM T post	11.93	6.14	12.79	6.68	.330
SHALOM gen.f	65.02	10.99	67.46	11.54	.077
SHALOM gen.f	66.49	11.58	67.57	11.71	.411

Comment. M = mean, SD = standard deviation, SHALOM = Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure, P = Personal, C = Communal, E = Environmental, T = Transcendental, pre = pretest, post = posttest, gen.f = general factor (spirituality)

There was a significant difference between the yoga and sports groups regarding pretest results for only one variable (physical symptoms). According to the post-test results, there was a detectable difference between the two groups for three variables (Personal and Environmental dimension of spirituality, physical symptoms), taking into account 28 variables (pre-and post-test). Based on these, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the two groups examined seems to be confirmed.

## Discussion

The strength of this research is that we have made intra-group and between group comparisons on the benefits of yoga and various sports classes among Hungarian university students to explore the potential benefits of different exercises. This study investigated the potential effects of 10-week yoga practice in a school sports setting on spiritual, psychological and general well-being, life satisfaction and physical symptoms

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

and sensations. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first research in Hungary that examined the effects of yoga and sports on university students in PE class settings. In the present research, we examined four hypotheses, two of which were met. One was partially fulfilled, and another was not fulfilled.

### *Yoga, sports and spirituality*

Observing the changes within the yoga group, it was shown that a positive change in the general factor of spirituality (SHALOM) was observed after ten weeks. This development in spirituality has been observed in yoga students regarding how important spirituality is in their lives (ideal assessment). In practice, this means that compared to the condition before yoga began, after ten weeks of yoga, yoga practitioners value spirituality as more important to them in their lives than before. The same change has been observed because students who practice yoga have also progressed in their lived experiences of spirituality. Their lived spirituality (experienced assessment) has also increased according to their confessions. This second change in experience is perhaps more valuable and tangible from a practical point of view. These results can also be considered essential because the participants in the research did not do yoga before the start of the university physical education classes. Considering the four areas of spirituality, it was observed that after ten weeks, yoga practitioners considered their relationship with themselves more valuable and important (personal dimension) in their personal lives. According to members of the yoga group, spirituality has evolved in the relationship with the transcendent (transcendental dimension), which is also in line with the originally transcendent orientation of yoga (Feuerstein, 1998). For the sports group, there was no change in either the spirituality in general or the dimensions of spirituality (personal, communal, environmental, transcendental) after the 10 PE classes.

These results are consistent with international research that has also found that yoga increases spiritual well-being (Bussing et al, 2012; Grier, 2017; Csala et al., 2021). Former results stated (Csala et al., 2021) that yoga improves several aspects of spirituality: spiritual aspirations, a search for insight/wisdom, existential thinking, a sense of meaning and peace, and the feeling of faith and hope, and compassion. Our present study found that spirituality in general and two dimensions of spirituality have been increased: the connection with ourselves and with transcendence. In connection with hatha yoga practised in the Western world, it can also be said that it proves to be effective in developing spirituality. However, many people initially do not have spiritual motivation, e.g. they start exercising because of physical fitness (Csala et al., 2021). In the present study, we also found that yoga students consider spirituality to become more important in their personal lives than before (ideal assessment). In a study conducted by

Griera (2017), inmates gave interviews about yoga and compared it to sports (which they can also practice), and one inmate stated: „This is something different. When you do sport you can stretch but here you see your own true self” (Griera, 2017, pp. 96.). Although much of yoga, like sports, consists of physical exercises (asana), there seems to be more to yoga. Regarding to spiritual well-being, our research has confirmed the positive relationship between yoga and spirituality in line with international research.

*Yoga, sports and subjective and psychological well-being; and life satisfaction*

Our expected results were not met in either the yoga or sports groups in the following areas of mental well-being: psychological (SPWB) and general (WBI-5) well-being, and satisfaction with life (SWLS) when comparing each of the group's pre-and post-test results. This result contradicts most studies, where researchers have found that both yoga (Hagen & Nayar, 2014; Hendriks et al., 2017; Ross et al., 2013) and sports (Garcia et al., 2015; Hale, Colquhoun, Lancaster, Lewis, & Tyson, 2021; Ho, Louie, Chow, Wong, & Ip, 2015) contribute to higher levels of these indicators.

A review on non-clinical adult populations found that yoga effectively increases psychological well-being (Hendriks et al., 2017). Yoga can be a practical tool for stress management, self-regulation and health improvement, although research is still at an early stage (Hagen & Nayar, 2014). US yoga practitioners reported that there are positive associations between yoga and health. Many agreed or strongly agreed that yoga practice has improved their general health, happiness and interpersonal relationships (Ross et al., 2013). Other yoga practitioners reported that the practice positively influenced their physical and mental health conditions (Cartwright et al., 2020).

Hale et al. (2021) examined the effects of physical activity on adolescents (11-19 years) in mental health and well-being. According to their review, interventions help improve psychological well-being and quality of life, but evidence for self-esteem is mixed. Another study among pupils (ages 16–19) found that frequent and intensive exercise behaviour was positively correlated with well-being and academic achievement (Garcia et al., 2015). A study in adolescents (12–14 years) found a significant positive association between physical activity levels and mental well-being (Ho et al., 2015). A possible reason for the positive results of the research listed earlier and the changes that the present research cannot detect may be that the exercise performed once a week is too low to affect the measured well-being variables significantly.

*Yoga, sports and physical symptoms*

We expected that both yoga and sports reduce the physical symptoms in the study, but this assumption was only partially met. Although these symptoms have been

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

reduced in both yoga and sport practitioners, the level among yoga practitioners was not as high as we expected. This shows that exercising sports is more effective in reducing these health-related physical health symptoms.

Several studies stated that yoga practice is positively correlated with decreased levels of somatisation and improved health (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2019; Telles et al., 2012; Yoshihara et al., 2014). There can be a positive relationship between physical activity and self-reported health status (Granger et al., 2017). Our present results confirm that physical activity plays a vital role in improving and maintaining physical health and alleviating somatic symptoms. It is also important to note that even low-frequency physical exercise can be effective. As can be seen from a review, although international guidelines recommend a goal of 150 min/week of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity, even becoming physically active can have clinically relevant health benefits (Warburton & Bredin, 2017).

### *Comparison of yoga and sport groups*

Overall, the yoga and sports groups have not shown significant differences before the start of the study. An exception to this was in the area of physical symptoms. Based on the tests completed before registering for PE classes, the sports group showed a more favourable (lower) physical symptoms (PILL) value than the yoga group. Individuals with more significant physical symptoms seem to have chosen to practice yoga for PE among college students. Similarly, at the end of the study, the sport group showed less physical symptoms than the yoga group.

Based on the assessment of spirituality (SHALOM) after the 10-week intervention, the yoga group showed better value in the relationship with ourselves (personal dimension) and with the environment (environmental dimension) than the sports group. The higher value of spirituality indicates a higher level of spiritual well-being.

Overall, in the areas of spirituality, subjective and psychological well-being, life satisfaction and physical symptoms we measured, there was no considerable difference between yoga and sports groups during the pre-and post-tests (10th PE class). Therefore, it can be said that with yoga classes students can gain similar positive effects than with sports classes.

Research revealed that the predictor of favourable health indicators related to yoga was primarily the frequency of weekly exercise rather than the number of years spent in yoga (Ross, Friedmann, Bevens, & Thomas, 2012). Other studies in yoga research also strengthen this positive relation between frequency of yoga practice and psychological and physical health variables (Cartwright, Mason, Porter, & Pilkington, 2020; Cramer et al., 2019). Therefore, it is worth mentioning that exercising once a

week is already valuable, but more frequently (e.g. 3-5 times) could cause stronger positive changes in mental and physical health levels.

### **Limitations and future directions**

As with any study, this research has limitations that merit attention. The obtained results should be interpreted with caution because the ten-week yoga intervention is relatively short, and once a week activity is not that intensive. The students in the sample were predominantly female participants, so the gender ratio was unbalanced, although in the case of yoga practitioners and adults, this ratio is similar. In addition, the measurement tools used in the study were self-administered questionnaires, and no objectively measurable physiological markers of health were included.

An experimental longitudinal study is recommended involving an inactive control group to further explore the relationships between the variables studied. A study with a larger number of sample sizes and long-term follow-up measures should also be considered.

The present study was based on a healthy sample; an intervention in a clinical sample would be more reliable in exploring the potential positive effects of yoga and how long the effects could last. It would be useful to explore the potential positive experiences of yoga users in more detail as a future in-depth interview. A combination of subjective and objective measures such as heart rate variability (HRV) or salivary cortisol could be used in future research for more objective results.

### **Conclusion**

According to our study, the spiritual well-being of university students increases through the yoga classes relating to the importance of spirituality in their lives and increased spiritual experiences. The effect of sports classes is more pronounced in promoting more favourable physical symptoms than yoga. Our results suggest that 1.5 hours of physical education once a week is a low weekly frequency for the magnitude of the effects to be significant. Overall, there is no significant difference between the measured effects of yoga and sports exercise among students. Therefore yoga could be recommended as one of the practices in university physical education classes. On the other hand, as it is outstanding in Hungary for the adult population to perform physical activity at home, it is worth teaching yoga. It is a leisure exercise that can be easily practised at home.

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

**Authors' note:** This study was presented at the 7th Conference of the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport - Sport in changing social, economic, political and cultural contexts, on November 14, 2015 in Budapest, Hungary.

**Acknowledgments:** The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of PhD. Katalin Tóth-Kälbli at the Faculty of Special Education, Eötvös Loránd University and PhD. Szilvia Perényi at the Faculty of Economics, University of Debrecen for help with the sampling.

**Disclosure statement:** No competing financial interests exist.

### References

Abbott, R., Ploubidis, G., Huppert, F., Kuh, D. & Groudace, T. (2010). An evaluation of the precision of measurement of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scales in a population sample. *Social Indicators Research*, 97(3), 357-373.

Abdin, S., Welch, R. K., Byron-Daniel, J. & Meyrick, J. (2018). The effectiveness of physical activity interventions in improving well-being across office-based workplace settings: a systematic review. *Public health*, 160, 70-76.

Alves, A. J., Viana, J. L., Cavalcante, S. L., Oliveira, N. L., Duarte, J. A., Mota, J., . . . Ribeiro, F. (2016). Physical activity in primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease: Overview updated. *World J Cardiol*, 8(10), 575-583.

Bech, P., Gudex, C. & Johansen, K. S. (1996). The WHO (Ten) well-being index: Validation in diabetes. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 65(4), 183-190.

Black, S. V., Cooper, R., Martin, K. R., Brage, S., Kuh, D. & Stafford, M. (2015). Physical Activity and Mental Well-being in a Cohort Aged 60-64 Years. *Am J Prev Med*, 49(2), 172-180.

Booth, F. W., Roberts, C. K. & Laye, M. J. (2012). Lack of exercise is a major cause of chronic diseases. *Compr Physiol*, 2(2), 1143-1211.

Bussing, A., Hedtstuck, A., Khalsa, S. B. S., Ostermann, T. & Heusser, P. (2012). Development of Specific Aspects of Spirituality during a 6-Month Intensive Yoga Practice. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, eCAM*, 2012, 981523.

Cartwright, T., Mason, H., Porter, A. & Pilkington, K. (2020). Yoga practice in the UK: a cross-sectional survey of motivation, health benefits and behaviours. *BMJ Open*, 10(1), e031848.

Cramer, H., Lauche, R., Langhorst, J. & Dobos, G. (2016). Is one yoga style better than another? A systematic review of associations of yoga style and conclusions in randomized yoga trials. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 25, 178-187.

Cramer, H., Quinker, D., Pilkington, K., Mason, H., Adams, J. & Dobos, G. (2019). Associations of yoga practice, health status, and health behavior among yoga practitioners in Germany-Results of a national cross-sectional survey. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 42, 19-26.

Cress, M. E., Buchner, D. M., Prohaska, T., Rimmer, J., Brown, M., Macera, C., Dipietro, L. & Chodzko-Zajko, W. (2005). Best practices for physical activity programs

and behavior counseling in older adult populations. *Journal of aging and physical activity*, 13(1), 61-74.

Csala, B., Springinsfeld, C. M. & Köteles, F. (2021). The Relationship Between Yoga and Spirituality: A Systematic Review of Empirical Research. *Frontiers in psychology*, 12, 695939.

De Michelis, E. (2004). *A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism*. Continuum, London: Bloomsbury

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J. & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49(1), 71-75.

Edginton, C.R., DeGraaf, D.G., Dieser, R.B. & Edginton, S. (2006). *Leisure and life satisfaction: Foundational perspectives* (4th ed). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

Eime, R. M., Young, J. A., Harvey, J. T., Charity, M. J. & Payne, W. R. (2013). A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for adults: informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*, 10, 135.

EU Physical Activity Guidelines, Recommended Policy Actions in Support of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity, approved by the EU Working Group "Sport & Health" at its meeting on 25 September 2008, Confirmed by EU Member State Sport Ministers at their meeting in Biarritz on 27-28 November 2008, pp 23-25.

Eurobarometer, New Eurobarometer on Sport and physical activity, 2017. Available from: <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/news/new-eurobarometer-on-sport-and-physical-activity> [accessed: March 13, 2022].

Feuerstein, G. (1998). *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice*, Hohm Press.

Field, T. (2016). Yoga research review. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 24, 145-161.

Fisher, J. (2010). Development and Application of a Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire Called SHALOM. *Religions*, 1(1), 105-121.

Fisher, J. & Brumley, D. (2008). Nurses' and carers' spiritual wellbeing in the workplace. *Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 25(4), 49-57.

Fritz, C. O., Morris, P. E. & Richler, J. J. (2012). Effect size estimates: current use, calculations, and interpretation. *Journal of experimental psychology. General*, 141(1), 2-18.

Garcia, D., Jimmefors, A., Mousavi, F., Adrianson, L., Rosenberg, P. & Archer, T. (2015). Self-regulatory mode (locomotion and assessment), well-being (subjective and psychological), and exercise behavior (frequency and intensity) in relation to high school pupils' academic achievement. *PeerJ*, 3, e847.

Gibson, H. (2018). Chronicling the use of life satisfaction, quality of life, wellness and wellbeing in leisure research. *Presented at the 20th Leisure, Recreation and Tourism, Research Symposium and International Forum*, September 29-30th, 2018. Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan National University.

Granger, E., Di Nardo, F., Harrison, A., Patterson, L., Holmes, R. & Verma, A. (2017). A systematic review of the relationship of physical activity and health status in adolescents. *European journal of public health*, 27(suppl\_2), 100–106.

Griera, M. (2017). Yoga in Penitentiary Settings: Transcendence, Spirituality, and Self-Improvement. *Human Studies*, 40(1), 77-100.

Hagen, I. & Nayar, U. S. (2014). Yoga for Children and Young People's Mental Health and Well-Being: Research Review and Reflections on the Mental Health Potentials of Yoga. *Frontiers in psychiatry*, 5, 35.



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Hale, G. E., Colquhoun, L., Lancaster, D., Lewis, N. & Tyson, P. J. (2021). Review: Physical activity interventions for the mental health and well-being of adolescents - a systematic review. *Child and adolescent mental health*, 26(4), 357–368.

Harvey, S. B., Overland, S., Hatch, S. L., Wessely, S., Mykletun, A. & Hotopf, M. (2018). Exercise and the Prevention of Depression: Results of the HUNT Cohort Study. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 175(1), 28-36.

Henderson, K. A. (2014). Promoting health and well-being through leisure: introduction to the special issue. *World Leisure Journal*, 56(2), 96.

Hendriks, T., de Jong, J. & Cramer, H. (2017). The Effects of Yoga on Positive Mental Health Among Healthy Adults: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J Altern Complement Med*, 23(7), 505-517.

Ho, F. K. W., Louie, L. H. T., Chow, C. B., Wong, W. H. S. & Ip, P. (2015). Physical activity improves mental health through resilience in Hong Kong Chinese adolescents. *BMC Pediatr*, 15, 48.

James-Palmer, A., Anderson, E. Z., Zucker, L., Kofman, Y. & Daneault, J. F. (2020). Yoga as an intervention for the reduction of symptoms of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 8, 78.

Kaushik, M., Jain, A., Agarwal, P., Joshi, S. D. & Parvez, S. (2020). Role of yoga and meditation as complimentary therapeutic regime for stress-related neuropsychiatric disorders: Utilization of brain waves activity as novel tool. *Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine*, 25, 1-12.

Liu, H., Jia, S. & Wang, J. (2022). Yoga leisure and identity development of Chinese second-time mothers. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 53(1), 56-74.

Lőkös, D (2018). The state and aims of physical education in public and higher education. [A testnevelés helyzete, céljai a köznevelésben és a felsőoktatásban]. *Egészségfejlesztés*, 59(3), 17-23.

Mansfield, L., Daykin, N. & Kay, T. (2020). Leisure and wellbeing. *Leisure Studies* 39(1), 1-10.

Martos, T., Sallay, V., Désfalvi, J., Szabó, T. & Ittész, A. (2014). Psychometric characteristics of the Hungarian version of the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS-H). [Az Élettel való Elégedettség Skála magyar változatának (SWLS-H) pszichometriai jellemzői]. *Mentalhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika*, 15(3), 289-303.

Moholdt, T., Lavie, C. J. & Nauman, J. (2018). Sustained Physical Activity, Not Weight Loss, Associated With Improved Survival in Coronary Heart Disease. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 71(10), 1094-1101.

Nagla, M. (2006). Yoga, health and leisure: attitudes of women in Haryana. *World Leisure Journal*, 48(2), 23-34.

Nagy, H., & Gyurkovics, M. (2016). The relationships between sociodemographic factors, big five, optimism and psychological well-being. [A pszichológiai jóllét szociodemográfiai korrelátumai, kapcsolata a big five vonásokkal és az optimizmussal]. *Mentalhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika*, 17(3), 195-214.

Park, C. L., Riley, K. E. & Braun, T. D. (2016). Practitioners' perceptions of yoga's positive and negative effects: Results of a National United States survey. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, 20(2), 270-279.

Pennebaker JW (ed) *The Psychology of Physical Symptoms*. Springer, New York, 1982.

Pucsok, J. M., Balogh, L., Ráthonyi, G. G., Varga, K., Bíró, E., Perényi, G. & Puskás, A. L. (2020). The effect of physical education and sport on fitness status of university students. [Egyetemi testnevelés és sport hatása a hallgatók fittségére]

állapotára]. *Stadium-Hungarian Journal of Sport Sciences*, 3(2), 1-10.

Ross, A., Friedmann, E., Bevens, M. & Thomas, S. (2012). Frequency of Yoga Practice Predicts Health: Results of a National Survey of Yoga Practitioners. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, Article 983258.

Ross, A., Friedmann, E., Bevens, M. & Thomas, S. (2013). National survey of yoga practitioners: Mental and physical health benefits. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 21(4), 313-323.

Rózsa, S., Kő, N., Krekó, K., Unoka, Z., Csorba, B., Fecskó, E. & Kulcsár, Z. (2008). Attributions of common somatic symptoms: adaptation of Symptom Interpretation Questionnaire. [A mindennapos testi tünetek attribúciója: Tünetinterpretáció Kérdőív hazai adaptációja]. *Pszichológia*, 28(1), 53-80.

Ryff, C. D. & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(4), 719-727.

Shaw DF, Gorely T, Corban RM eds. Sport and Exercise Psychology. BIOS Scientific Publishers, New York, 2005.

Sivaramakrishnan, D., Fitzsimons, C., Kelly, P., Ludwig, K., Mutrie, N., Saunders, D. H., et al. (2019). The effects of yoga compared to active and inactive controls on physical function and health related quality of life in older adults- systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 16(1), 33.

Springer, K.W., Hauser, R.M. & Freese, J. (2006). Bad news indeed for Ryff's six-factor model of well-being. *Social Science Research*, 35, 1120-1131.

Susánszky, É., Konkoly Thege, B., Stauder, A. & Kopp, M. (2006). Validation of the short (5-item) version of the WHO Well-being Scale based on a Hungarian representative health survey (Hugarostudy 2002). [A WHO Jól-lét Kérdőív rövidített (WBI-5) magyar változatának validálása a Hugarostudy 2002 országos lakossági egészségfelmérés alapján]. *Mentalhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika*, 7(3), 247-255.

Tamás, R. B., Perczel-Forintos, D., Máté, O. & Gyenge, Zs. (2020). Treatment of somatic symptom disorder in childhood: evidence-based psychotherapy interventions. [Szomatizációs zavarok kezelése gyermekkorban: bizonyítottan hatékony pszichoterápiás módszerek]. *Orvosi Hetilap*, 161(25), 1050-1058.

Telles, S., Singh, N., Yadav, A. & Balkrishna, A. (2012). Effect of yoga on different aspects of mental health. *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*, 56(3), 245-254.

Tornóczy, G. J. (2013). History of Yoga. [A jóga története]. *Rekreacio.eu*, 3(2), 10-13.

Tornóczy, G. J., Bánhidi, M., Nagy, H. & Rózsa, S. (2022). Adaptation and psychometric analysis of the Hungarian version of the Spiritual Health and Life-Orientation Measure (SHALOM). [A Spirituális Egészség és Élet-Orientáció Kérdőív magyar változatának (SHALOM) adaptációja és pszichometriai elemzése]. *Mentalhigiéné és Pszichoszomatika*, accepted: april 30., 2022.

vanWijk, C. & Kolk, A. M. (1996). Psychometric evaluation of symptom perception related measures. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 20(1), 55-70.

Veal, A. J. (2012). The leisure society II: the area of critique, 1980-2011. *World Leisure Journal* 54(2), 99-140.

Wang, F. F. & Szabo, A. (2020). Effects of Yoga on Stress Among Healthy Adults: A Systematic Review. *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 26(4), 58-64.

Warburton, D. & Bredin, S. (2017). Health benefits of physical activity: a systematic review of current systematic reviews. *Current opinion in cardiology*, 32(5),

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

541–556.

Ward, L., Stebbings, S., Cherkin, D. & Baxter, G. D. (2014). Components and reporting of yoga interventions for musculoskeletal conditions: a systematic review of randomised controlled trials. *Complementary therapies in medicine*, 22(5), 909–919.

Weber, M., Schnorr, T., Morat, M., Morat, T. & Donath, L. (2020). Effects of Mind-Body Interventions Involving Meditative Movements on Quality of Life, Depressive Symptoms, Fear of Falling and Sleep Quality in Older Adults: A Systematic Review with Meta-Analysis. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(18), 6556.

Yang, H. J., Koh, E., Sung, M. K. & Kang, H. (2021). Changes Induced by Mind-Body Intervention Including Epigenetic Marks and Its Effects on Diabetes. *International journal of molecular sciences*, 22(3), 1317.

Yoshihara, K., Hiramoto, T., Oka, T., Kubo, C. & Sudo, N. (2014). Effect of 12 weeks of yoga training on the somatization, psychological symptoms, and stress-related biomarkers of healthy women. *Biopsychosoc Med*, 8(1), 1.

\* \* \*

**Corresponding Author: Gusztáv József Tornóczy**

**Email: [gustav.tornoczy@gmail.com](mailto:gustav.tornoczy@gmail.com)**

*Research Paper*

---

INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW No. 1/2022©Copyright by the author

DOI: 10.6298/ILR.202206\_11(1).0003

---

## **Youth, Physical Activity and Leisure: An Analysis of a Youth Program in Brazil**

**Alipio Rodrigues Pines Junior**

*University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

**Marie Young**

*University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa*

**Ricardo Ricci Uvinha**

*University of Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo, Brazil*

### **Abstract**

This paper aims to study the interest of young people between 12 and 18 years to engage in physical activity as a leisure option and to verify the influence of the “SESC Summer” program in stimulating the physical activity practices of young people. This study consists of a qualitative study, interviewing young participants of the “SESC Summer” and managers linked to this program’s organisation, using a semi-structured interview procedure. Findings showed that young people are interested in physical activity as a leisure option, though it is not a priority, and its practice is aimed at amusement and casualness. The program has several attributes that may attract young people to practice physical activities at SESC, giving the program a transformative potential of young people’s reality and showing them different physical activities that can be incorporated into their daily lives.

**Keywords:** *adolescent, leisure activity, physical activity, qualitative research.*

\* \* \*

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The young Brazilian population is going through an unprecedented historical moment. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2012), the Brazilian population has 24,033,747 people aged between 12 and 18 years. Of this total, 51% of Brazilian youth are overweight or obese (IBGE, 2010). This is a worldwide public concern, with studies showing that at least 31% of the global population does not meet the recommended physical activity standards (Nardo et al., 2016) and an increase in obesity among youth (Onagbiye et al., 2019). These health risks could lead to chronic illness and disease affecting the quality of life of individuals, what is more lead to premature deaths (World Health Organization, 2018; Guthold et al., 2018).

Physical inactivity is a global pandemic that requires urgent public health intervention (Sallis et al., 2016). A study conducted by the Ministry of Sports (Brasil, 2015) showed that 45.9% of Brazilians are sedentary. In this survey, it was reported that in the age group between 15-19 years, the percentage of people who declared themselves to be sedentary corresponded to 32.7%, and the larger the age group, the higher the percentage of sedentary life, reaching 64.4% in the between 65 and 74 years.

Brazil's 2016 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (Nardo et al., 2016) also highlighted that 23,8% of their children and youth live sedentary lifestyles. This was reiterated in a study by Alberico, Schipperijn and Reis (2017), showing that adolescents in Brazil spent 60% of their time being sedentary. Although Da Silva et al. (2022) confirmed that adolescents spent most of their time being sedentary, the sedentary activities also shifted from less screen time to higher levels of educational, cultural, and social activities. The Brazil 2016 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (Nardo et al., 2016, p. 106) concluded: "that young people with sedentary risk behaviour were more prone to gain weight, to be overweight or obese, and to have poor performance on physical fitness tests, higher levels of blood pressure, total cholesterol and triglycerides, higher chances of showing depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, aggressiveness, inappropriate social behaviours, and poor academic performance." The study of Lourenço and Mendes (2021) confirmed that the higher levels of BMI distribution among Brazilian youth were related to a sedentary lifestyle.

The study conducted by the Ministry of Sports (Brazil 2015) questioned people asking why they do not engage in sports and/or physical activity if they were aware of the risks of sedentary life. The answers showed that only 16.9% were unaware of the risks; 12% know about the risks but dislike playing sports and/or physical activity; 5.5% answered "yes" but say they cannot afford the practice. The most alarming is the following two responses: 27.2% know about the risks but say they do not have time to

practice, and 35.7% know about the risks, but they do not show any effort to practice (Brasil, 2015). This shows that most people interviewed who do not practice physical activity know the risks but have a reason not to practice, be it time, money, or lack of will.

Another highlight (Brasil, 2015) was the age group in which the abandonment or interruption of the practice of sports and/or physical activities occurred. 26.8% dropped out until age 15, while 45% dropped out of practice between 16 and 24 years. The primary reason listed by 69.8% of respondents was the lack of time and dedication to other priorities, such as family, studies, and work. Berria et al. (2018) believed that the probability of adolescents dropping out of physical activities or active lifestyles increases as their age increases. Berria et al. (2018) further noted that socio-demographic data predicted the risk of dropping out of physical activities. In the study of Da Silva (2019), higher dropout rates were more prevalent among Brazilian girls from an active lifestyle or physical activities between childhood and adolescence. Further, if the adolescents had both parents living a sedentary lifestyle, they were more prone to drop out of sports or other physical activities.

Initiatives of various scales are carried out to promote physical activity during the leisure time of the population. The Brazil 2016 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (Nardo et al., 2016) notes that comprehensive programmes are offered in Brazil for children and youth to participate in physical activities and organised sports. However, very little evidence is documented on these programmes. Therefore, as a delimitation of the problem in this work, the research question of this study is: *Do the incentive programs to practice physical activity contribute to its incorporation as a leisure option in the daily life of young people?*

With this in mind, this study aimed to explore the physical activity and leisure interests of young participants in the “SESC Summer” program. More specifically, to verify the influence of “SESC Summer” in stimulating physical activity practice for young people. Social Service of Commerce (SESC) is a Brazilian non-profit institution upheld by business people in the trade of goods, services, and tourism, focusing on the welfare of employees and their families through the provision of programs (SESC, 2020).

## **Methods**

This study used a qualitative methodological approach seeking to explore the phenomena in question (Flick, 2004). Creswell & Creswell (2014) notes that qualitative research is used to explore and understand a social problem not well known to the researcher and allows the researcher to interpret and make sense of the data. The study follows the exploratory design, which according to Gil (2011: 27), aims to “provide an

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

approximate overview of a certain fact”, and therefore “is done especially when the theme chosen is little explored, and it becomes difficult to formulate precise and operable hypotheses”. Therefore, this study made use of a research question: *Do the incentive programs to practice physical activity contributes to its incorporation as a leisure option in the daily life of young people?*

### Sample

The participants in this study were 12 young people aged between 12 and 18 years who participated in the activities proposed by the “SESC Summer” program in 2016 and managers of SESC Sao Paulo. The program is developed by SESC Sao Paulo, which includes various sports activities, experiences, facilities, chats, meetings with athletes, sports demonstrations, and exhibitions (SESC Verão, 2012). The program has been offered every year in Brazilian summertime from January to February (except in 2021 and 2022 due to the pandemic).

It is important to note that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities of “SESC Summer” were adapted. Many activities took place in the digital environment, and few in a face-to-face mode, with restrictions on participation (SESC Verão, 2021). Allied to this fact, the profile of the regular public is similar between the editions, which does not invalidate the data collected in this study.

The sample was non-representative, using purposive sampling to select participants. According to Marshall (1996), this sampling approach was deemed most appropriate due to the accessibility of the participants since it would be impractical to conduct interviews with all the participants of the project “SESC Summer” in the city of São Paulo and establish a representative sample.

### Instruments

An interview was carried out to “obtain information and/or knowledge about a problem, for which a response or hypothesis is sought” (Marconi & Lakatos, 2010, p. 169). A semi-structured interview schedule (see Tables 1 and 2) was used to obtain the information needed for this study, which is a category within unstructured interviews (Marconi & Lakatos, 2010). In this type of script, key issues were listed whose themes guide the work. From the questions formulated, the researcher can deepen the discussion if needed, elaborating on other complementary questions.

**Table 1.** *Semi-structured interview schedule for young people*

<b>1</b>	<b>What does it mean to you to be young?</b>
<b>2</b>	Do you consider yourself young? Why?
<b>3</b>	What do you usually do in your leisure time?
<b>4</b>	Is this your first time participating in “SESC Summer” ?
<b>5</b>	How did you hear about “SESC Summer” ?
<b>6</b>	What led you to participate in “SESC Summer” ?
<b>7</b>	Would you participate in “SESC Summer” again? Why?
<b>8</b>	Do you practice any physical activity elsewhere, other than SESC? If yes, where do you practice? What kind of physical activity do you practice? And where do you prefer to practice? If not, why not practice elsewhere?

---

**Table 2.** *Semi-structured interview schedule for SESC managers*

<b>1</b>	<b>Tell us a little about the “SESC Summer” program (origin, objectives, target audience, editions, activities).</b>
<b>2</b>	What is SESC's conception of young people?
<b>3</b>	Do you believe that “SESC Summer” meets the interests of young people in physical activity as a leisure option?
<b>4</b>	How do you qualify the physical, material and human resources destined for “SESC Summer” to provide physical leisure activities for its participants?
<b>5</b>	What is the adherence of the young public to “SESC Summer” ?
<b>6</b>	Where do you think the young participants of “SESC Summer” come from? Do you believe that the equipment can meet the young population of the surroundings in terms of the expectation of leisure-time physical activity?
<b>7</b>	In your opinion, does “SESC Summer” have any influence on young people in terms of having physical activity as a leisure option? If yes, how does the program influence?

---



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

### **Validity and Transferability**

Trustworthiness and credibility were ensured through membership checks, giving the transcribed data back to the participants to reflect on the accuracy of the recordings. The researchers adopted a reflective attitude to prevent bias, using peer reviews and debriefing sessions.

### **Procedure**

At first, the Physical-Sports Development Management (GDFE) of SESC Sao Paulo was contacted to gain permission to carry out the research. After this permission was granted, a pre-test was carried out. After the application and analysis of the pre-test results, data were collected for the research.

The interviews were conducted with twelve young people and three SESC Sao Paulo managers as key informants. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Accessibility criteria and data saturation defined the number of respondents.

The young people were approached at the Belenzinho and Itaquera units of SESC, both located in the East Zone of the city of Sao Paulo. Due to time constraints to conduct the study, it was impossible to include all SESC units throughout the State of Sao Paulo. In this sense, the approach was defined in those units of the city of Sao Paulo.

Before starting the data collection, contact was made, both by e-mail and in person, with the supervisors of each unit's programming division to explain the objectives and procedures of the research.

In approaching young people, care was taken to check whether parents or guardians were present so that they could be aware of the youth's participation. With the consent of the parents or guardians, the youths were asked if they were interested in participating in the research, explaining the purpose of the interview and how it would happen. If the young person refuses to participate, his / her wishes will be respected. If he/she accepted, the research would be continued, with the participant's completion and signing of the Informed Consent Form (TCLE) and the person responsible. Once consent was provided, interviews were conducted.

When transcribing the interviews, pseudonyms were allocated to each participant to ensure anonymity, preserve participants' identities and keep data confidential. In transcribing the data from the interviews with young people, participants' gender was identified and the SESC unit where the interviews were conducted.

From a constructivist paradigm, staying objective in a qualitative study is challenging as the researchers have to rely on the participants' subjective experiences (Creswell & Creswell, 2014; Bumbuc, 2016). Additionally, the researchers had to be cognisant of their background and experiences that shape their interpretation (Creswell

& Creswell, 2014). The intention was to focus on the truth as a social construct and make sense of the meaning of the responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2009; Bumbuc, 2016).

It is worth highlighting the limitations of the study. Due to its qualitative nature, the research portrays a specific reality of the young participants of the “SESC Summer”, and it is not possible to generalise the youth in Brazil towards the program. Another limitation concerns the units served. It was unfeasible to include all the State of Sao Paulo units, which also makes a partial view of the program linked to the object of study. The work was submitted and approved by a Research Ethics Committee, n. 47356715.3.0000.5390.

### **Analysis**

Three steps were followed to analyse the data obtained in the interviews: reduction, presentation, and conclusion (Gil, 2011). In the reduction step, the data were selected and simplified into themes, allowing to categorise the results. In the presentation, the data were organised into topics as described in the Table 3, making it possible to analyse their similarities, differences, and interrelationships:

**Table 3.** *Findings and discussion's topics*

<b>1</b>	<b>Knowing the “SESC Summer” program</b>
<b>2</b>	What is to be young in Brazil?
<b>3</b>	Meeting the interest of young people
<b>4</b>	Qualification of “SESC Summer” resources
<b>5</b>	Participation in “SESC Summer”
<b>6</b>	Where do young people come from?
<b>7</b>	Meeting the expectations of young people
<b>8</b>	Where do you prefer to practice physical activity?

Finally, at the conclusion, a review of the data was carried out to ensure minimal biases and changes in the meanings of the original data.

### **Findings and Discussion**

The data obtained in the interviews of the young participants and the “SESC Summer” program managers will be discussed. The question topics will be stated as subsections to make the reading easier.

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

### *Knowing the “SESC Verão” program*

Initially, managers were asked to speak a little about the program. Monica, who has been working at SESC since 1998, commented that “SESC Summer”: “is a project that is turning 21 years old. It has come of age, and it is a project that emerged in SESC in Physical Fitness Development with the main objective of sensitising people, in general, about the importance of sports and physical activity in everyday life. So, since “SESC Summer” began, the idea has always been to pass a message to people on the importance of inserting sport and physical activity for quality of life”.

Jessica, who has worked at SESC for nine years, adds that the program is an opportunity to show SESC to the community, taking actions not only within the unit: *“So, taking an activity to the municipal boardwalk, for example, is a way for people to know and see the SESC as a possibility of a place to practice exercise, some leisure practice, and not only there for the physical-sports, but to watch a theatre, see a music presentation”*.

The comment of Jessica coincides with some authors (Camargo, 2003; Dumazedier, 1980) regarding the manifestation of the physical-sporting interest of leisure. Not necessarily do people need to practice a specific physical activity or a sport to configure their participation in a leisure activity, but when watching a film or sports presentation already characterises the manifestation of such interest in the scope of assistance.

It can also be noted that SESC's approach to sports activities is not competitiveness, but rather an incentive for everyone's participation, regardless of ability or physical condition. This is evident in the comment of the Jessica: *“And you can go to a place that has an activity that you identify that you can play football the way you want, the way that you are not excluded by its greater ability, by its smaller ability, that this is essential in SESC”*.

When asked about the project's target audience, both managers responded concisely, saying that the program has activities for all age groups. Given this answer, it was questioned how SESC managers understand the concept of the youth. João, currently retired but who worked at the SESC from 1975 until 2003, presented a historical view of the institution: *“From the historical perspective, the SESC always considered the young people as a public to be very well attended, right? This is a bit obvious because the organisation has always been concerned with attending well to all age groups ... Now, the first idea with which SESC has always worked is also of great character, which is as follows: being a transient situation, SESC then always attempted to keep in its technical teams a work approach that sought to analyse the changes, preferences, and interests of these young people”*.

From this response, it is possible to infer that there is a consonance of the SESC vision with what some authors (Abramo, 2008; Becker, 1986; Brenner, Dayrell & Carrano, 2008; Edginton, Kowalski & Randall, 2005; Stoppa & Delgado, 2006) have about youth being a moment of transition from childhood to adulthood. This is a period in which young people undergo several changes, not being something rigid and fixed. João can reinforce this: *“So, it is not possible to work with young people today like working with young people there 40, 50 years ago, 30 years ago. ... The very basic idea of working with young people is exactly this: always consider that one must observe the preferences, expectations, values, and motivations of young people when working with them. Because it is very likely that in five years from now, 10 years from now, changes will occur”*.

Monica adds a vision of GDFE in the definition of programming: *“it is considered young people between 11 and 15 years. From the age of 16, the young person can already participate in adult activities, being considered as such for the programming”*. This corroborates with the discussion of the difficulty in establishing an age group that is understood as being youth (Abramo, 2008; Becker, 1986; Edginton, Kowalski & Randall, 2005; Pais, 2009; Uvinha, 2001). Furthermore, some bodies worldwide have dissonance in this regard (Brasil, 1990; World Health Organization, 2015).

#### *What is it to be young in Brazil?*

The question was posed to young people, how they perceive youth? José points out that being young: *“It is to be able to enjoy life, to study also, to be able to guarantee its future, but to enjoy the youth well”*. His response reflects one of the yearnings of youth, the professional life in the future, which was pointed out in a survey conducted by Instituto Cidadania (2004). Alex pointed to another question related to age. For him: *“Being young is that age between being a child and being an adult”*.

Alex's response is in line with what was discussed by Stoppa and Delgado (2006, p. 66) when the authors point out that it is necessary to analyse their relations between *“the adult's world and the distance that he maintains with the infantile universe”* to characterise the young person.

It is worth emphasising a recurring response from young people. Six of the respondents indicated that the term ‘youth’ meant to ‘enjoy life’. Ricardo points out that being young: *“is to enjoy a phase of life that has not yet arrived, which is maturity. Not that being young is not being mature, but that it's a way to enjoy life, you know? From starting, everything that is important”*. In this report, it is possible to evident that youth is seen as a phase of experimentation, in agreement with studies conducted by Abramo (2008), Edginton, Kowalski and Randall (2005) and Uvinha (1996).

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

After questioning the interviewees about what it is to be young, they wondered if they considered themselves as being 'young'. Eleven young people reported that they consider themselves to be 'young'. When asked why they thought they were young, some mentioned the age group and the fact that they can enjoy life without many responsibilities.

These answers align with the survey conducted by the Instituto Cidadania (2004). The results of the study by the institute indicate that young people do not always take responsibility (45%), enjoy life/live with joy (40%), participate in leisure/entertainment activities (26%), study/acquire knowledge (26%) and having freedom (22%).

However, it is worth emphasising the response of Julia. She replied that she sometimes considered herself young. When asked 'why?' she said: *"Because there are times that responsibility calls out louder. But we cannot let responsibility take your whole head. You must enjoy it, and occasionally, I do not enjoy as much as I would like. Then I'm half young"*.

Her answer relates to what Stoppa and Delgado (2006) say about analysing the young people's distance from the world of children and the adult world. In this case, it is noted that she is conflicted because she has responsibilities that must be fulfilled as an adult, distancing herself from the youth.

These responses demonstrate different points of view about what it is to be young and consider themselves young. According to Abramo (2008), Becker (1986), Pais (2009), and Uvinha (2001), youth is not unanimous in its characteristics and can be modified according to the influence of the environment in that people live.

Recalling the importance of verifying the characteristics of youth, Jessica talks about the Management of Socio-Educational Programs, a sector of SESC that prepares specific programs for this public. The manager highlighted another important point: *"So, we understand youth as an excellent opportunity to plant the seed of physical activity, cultural practice... If you sensitise a young person in this age group, for sure it will be an active adult, he will have more possibilities to know and understand the culture more broadly"*.

This statement is in line with the authors' intention to address the issue of including the practice of physical activities and sports during adolescence to perpetuate this practice in other phases of life (Garcia & Fisberg, 2011).

### *Meeting the interest of young people*

When questioning managers if they believed that "SESC Summer" meets the interests of young people for physical activity as a leisure option, all of them indicated that they believe "SESC Summer" does meet young people's interest in participating in

physical activity as a leisure option. João points out an interesting aspect of SESC: in addition to norms, regulations, and guidelines, there is an organisational culture about experimentation in creating projects and programs. According to his account: *“At SESC in Brazil, there has always been a great opening for experimentation, for people to experiment, to create experiences. But the idea present in the organisational culture has always been this: do the experiment, do it well. Ask for all the resources that are needed. [...] This has always been part of organisational culture, and I believe that, although historical, I'm sure it continues until now”*.

With this view of João, it is suggested that SESC offers resources (material, human or financial) for the full realisation of the programs and projects in its units and adequate attendance to its participants.

A fact emphasised by Monica and Jessica was that the period of project realisation takes place during January school vacations, and it is then a good time for young people to participate in SESC activities. Both managers mentioned that young people have good adherence to radical activities such as skateboarding, skating and climbing, and collective sports such as volleyball, basketball, handball, and soccer. These statements corroborate the authors' views about youth preference for activities that challenge their limits, such as extreme sports and group activities in the case of collective sports (Becker, 1986; Edginton, Kowalski & Randall, 2005; Stoppa & Delgado, 2006; Uvinha, 1996; Uvinha, 2001).

An interesting fact was highlighted by Monica when questioned about the activities being a factor in the adhesion of young people to participate in the program: *“We have, I do not know if it's a difficulty, or if we do not... It's still not quite right, what it is... Ah... You know that “cat leap” story to involve young audiences in an activity, the teenager mainly? It is apparent for us, for example, to carry out an activity for a child. Children have a greater willingness to engage in physical and sports activities. The adults just look for activities for necessity, health reasons, or even form groups to relate. Then, the group of friends are friends of volleyball, anyway. The elderly are very present in the SESC, and in the “SESC Summer”, it is no different: they continue attending the activities. Nevertheless, the young audience... we have a great presence of the young public in the units, mainly in fast activities, right? So, a table tennis match, or skateboarding. When there is a ramp at SESC, this skateboarding galley stays at SESC in the morning, afternoon and evening, if you let them, right? But it is because it is a group that is already, let's say, adept at this practice. We still have many young people circulating in SESC who do not want to do anything, who just want to be at SESC”*.

This section again portrays the difficulty of establishing a panorama of the interests of young people, in agreement with what was seen by some authors (Brenner,

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Dayrell & Carrano, 2008; Liikkanen & Pääkkönen, 2005; Ruskin & Sivan, 2005; Samuel, 2005; Sivan, Robertson & Walker, 2005; Veal, 2005). However, as Monica points out, while not easy, they have been more successful in programming for young audiences. Perhaps the “cat leap”, as said by the manager, could be more easily achieved through dialogue with the program's young participants since this audience has multiple interests related to leisure activities.

This can be glimpsed in young people's responses about what they usually do in their leisure time. Several youngsters have undertaken physical activities such as skateboarding, playing basketball, football, handball, volleyball, table tennis and swimming. It is worth highlighting the responses of some young people who pointed to other activities. Bete reported that she usually tidies up the house and watches television during her leisure time. This highlights the leisure constrict on the gender issue, which becomes a limiting factor in the enjoyment of their leisure time.

Sabrina said she likes to use her cell phone, practice some sports and stay with friends. Alice added that she likes to go to the movies. Renato said he likes to play video games and on weekends play sports at SESC, a similar response from Thiago. In turn, Lucas claims to play table tennis. He said, *“Let's suppose that more than half of my life is playing table tennis”*.

The multiplicity of interests of young people makes the task of finding the “cat leap”, reported by Monica, challenging indeed. Suppose in a universe of twelve young people interviewed, there was this range of activities they usually do and enjoy doing during their leisure. How many other activities can occur among the young participants of “SESC Summer” in all units of Sao Paulo? It is thus of importance to take note of the interests of young people to develop programs.

### *Qualification of “SESC Verão” resources*

The next question addressed to the managers was about the quality of the physical structure and material resources and the qualification of human resources destined to “SESC Summer” to meet the participants' demand for leisure physical activity. In the previous response of João, it is inferred that SESC usually invests in leisure programs and projects to attend to its public, which was possible to observe at “SESC Summer”.

At “SESC Belenzinho”, a specific arena was set up for the activities of Beach Volleyball and other beach modalities. Similarly, “SESC Itaquera” has set up an official handball court for youth and adults, a mini handball court and a ball pool with handball goals for children.

Monica and Jessica reported a very intense and complex planning and implementation process for the program's execution, considering it is carried out in 32

units in the State of São Paulo. The estimated audience to be served is approximately two million people in all units, which is the representative public demanding such an effort.

All this care in the planning of “SESC Summer” activities and programming becomes necessary since the program's scope is unique as it carries activities that the public usually does not have access to in various parts of the State of São Paulo. Besides, as indicated by Jessica, the other SESC centres’ activities do not stop. Therefore, the service to the other users who do not participate in the “SESC Summer” activities should continue with the same quality standard of SESC, such as artistic presentations and exhibitions.

In this regard, specialising companies are hired for some program activities for which the SESC team is not equipped to provide adequate and quality services to the public. Jessica shows this in her account: *“The care with the attendance with the public that this for us is very valuable: how we attend and welcome our public”*.

Such care is also taken concerning physical space and materials, which, according to Jessica, differentiates SESC’s from other leisure facilities. How do young people notice this?

#### *Participation in “SESC Summer”*

When asked if this was the first time they participated in “SESC Summer” activities, only three young people reported being the first time they participated. This may indicate that “SESC Summer” may influence young people to engage in physical activity at their leisure, as most of the respondents returned to participate in the project activities.

Then the young people were asked how they heard about “SESC Summer”. Many reported that it was through relatives (father, mother, or siblings) or friends. One response worth noting was that of Bete. This was the first time she visited SESC and, consequently, the first time she attended “SESC Summer”. She heard about the program from her sister participating in the activities. Some young people have known of the program by participating in the internal activities of SESC, or through excursions in groups or external courses. This shows that SESC's internal disclosure about the program was more effective than external disclosure through the website and graphic material.

Continuing the questions for young people, they were asked if they would return to “SESC Summer”. Everyone said yes. Most young people responded that the program would make them re-join the program. Ricardo said he would return to participate: *“Because I know it will be exciting... Every day, they innovate and innovate in a good way for us”*.



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Alex emphasised that he would return from activities because: *“In addition to encouraging children to have fun, (it) involves adults with children, and that's a good thing”*.

Other reasons to return to the project were the structure made available to the participants (José), the presence of the instructors (Julia) and the possibility of creating new friendships (Lucas). Thus, the young people's responses justify the managers' view on the importance of care with the resources made available to the project. These were the main factors why the young people would return to participate in the “SESC Summer”.

### *Where do young people come from?*

The next question was about the origin of the young participants in the program. When questioning whether the service would be regional, that is, more targeted to the public around each unit, or if the units were able to attract people from other locations. Both managers stated that there is a mix of the public, with the presence of young people who live in the unit's surroundings with young people coming from other regions to participate in a particular program, which Monica called “itinerants.” According to her: *“Some groups, for example, practice volleyball in more than one SESC unit. Then he goes in the morning in a unit and plays volleyball; in the afternoon, he goes in another; From Tuesday it goes on one; on Thursday, he goes on another. That is, they are people who circulate through the units, behind the practice that matters most”*.

It was possible to note two nuances regarding the neighbourhood where the young people interviewed lived. With SESC Belenzinho, it was possible to verify a greater variety of localities, and only one of the young people interviewed reported living next to the facility.

Regarding SESC Itaquera, all young people interviewed live in the neighbourhoods. What can support such a phenomenon? One of the explanations may be the ease of access of the units. While SESC Belenzinho can be reached on foot from the subway station, to reach SESC Itaquera, it is necessary to use buses that arrive at the facility. Someone who needs to use the subway uses at least two modes to get to the unit.

In this way, it can be shown that the programming of the units becomes an attraction for the young participants who go after activities that meet their wishes. This may indicate that the units have a pulling power beyond the geographical boundary of their environment.

*Meeting the expectations of young people*

When inquiring from Monica if SESC can meet the expectations of the young people concerning the physical activity in the leisure, she said that the answer is not straightforward since dealing with expectations is very relative and complicated. However, she believes that SESC meets expectations, using the massive presence in the activity as stated below: *“Now, why don't we have younger ones? Why do we still have these young people running around the units, but not engaging in regular physical activity, for example? There's no way I can answer you”*.

This report reveals the difficulty of understanding the wishes of the young people again. In the last question, managers were asked if they think that “SESC Summer” influences the young person in the sense of having physical activity as a leisure option. The response of João shows evidence that there is a national need: *“In Brazil, there is no culture of evaluation of what is done. Because the evaluation of what is done is not knowing whether people liked it or not, or else you make an assessment to know if the person, the professional worked well or not. It is not that. [...] There is a need to evaluate the intended results of what you do. Because pretensions are usually so, they are beautiful, beautiful pretensions, sometimes even grandiose. But it never meant whether what was meant to be accomplished or happened. Then there is a culture of evaluation. And evaluation can only be done in a professional, objective, coherent and effective way if you work with indicators. You must do a challenging job for this, but once it's ready, it makes everything you do to build these indicators”*.

However, even empirically, Monica points out that: *“There are numerous people who come, they discover the SESC on holiday, and they end up enrolling in regular courses and attend regular sports activities”*. This can indicate the program's influence on the young person engaging in physical activity during their leisure time.

Jessica emphasises that influencing not only the young person but also all the public to have physical activity as a leisure option is the main objective of SESC. She points out that this edition of “SESC Summer”, when working with Olympic and Paralympic modalities, is to sensitise the public to the practice of physical activity.

Thus, managers believe that “SESC Summer” influences young people. In the sense that they have physical activity as a leisure option, mainly due to the conditions offered by SESC, such as programming, quality of resources physical, material and human resources offered for the practice of the activities.

*Where do you prefer to practice physical activity?*

To not direct the answers to the young people, they were asked if they practiced physical activity or sport elsewhere besides SESC. Seven young people reported practicing physical activity outside SESC. They practice at the Unified Educational

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Centre (CEU), the soccer field close to home, School Clubs, schools, and streets near their homes.

When asked which of the sites they preferred, five reported preferring SESC. Among the reasons, José stressed that the infrastructure of SESC is better. Ricardo has emphasised that in SESC, there are instructors who teach the modality. According to him: *“They teach from the beginning to the end, both sport and education”*.

For him, this makes the difference by choosing SESC as his preferred practice site. In turn, Alex prefers SESC because of the activities, which are not repetitive and change every year. Clara prefers SESC because being together with the family makes the practice more fun. Young people need to be part of a group because, in addition to serving as a source of motivation for the practice of physical or sports activities, “the group ... helps the individual find his identity” (Becker, 1986, p. 43).

Sabrina and Alice mentioned that they do not have a preference between SESC, the school or the street. According to Sabrina, this is because: *“everyone has something different that makes us go”*. Alice said that *“Ah, playing is fine, right?”*

Regarding the five young women who do not practice physical activity outside SESC, when they ask why Bete reports that she does not often leave the house as she has other tasks to complete before leaving the house.

Renato and Thiago reported that they study in a State Technical School (ETEC). The teaching is full-time, so they hardly have time to engage in physical activity during the week and take advantage of the weekends to go to SESC. Lucas, in turn, said that SESC is more reserved, an enclosed site and that this makes the practice better.

Julia's response also deserves attention. She said that she hardly practices physical activity in other places, except when she goes to work, during the week, or to the park instead of going to SESC. For her, there is not much preference between the park and SESC because in one place, she likes to do more free outdoor activities (park), and in another, she likes the guidance and teaching given by the instructors at SESC.

The answers show a multiplicity of opinions that corroborate the authors' discussion about the difficulty of establishing a closed concept about youth. What is perceived, from the answers, is that SESC is an excellent attraction for young people, for different factors, among them, the programming and the facilities that it offers and the presence of the instructors, which emphasises the care with the material, physical and human resources evidenced by the managers interviewed. This can influence young people to have physical activity as a leisure option.

## Conclusions

As pointed out, this paper aimed to study the interest of young people to participate in physical activity as a leisure option. Moreover, the specific objective was

to verify the influence of “SESC Summer” in stimulating the practice of physical activity of young people. The interviews showed the multiplicity of interests and anxieties that this public has. These characteristics are different according to the inferences received from the place where they live, the family structure they have, and the people who live together, among other factors. By relating young people's responses and theoretical approaches, it was possible to verify that young people identified some factors that characterise youth, their wants, and desires. These include aspects such as the transition from a child's world to that of an adult, to be free to make some decisions and worry about the future.

It would be presumptuous to believe that it is possible to universalise the interests of young people to produce solutions and sell them as if they were a product. Each reality must be well studied, and after this, the most appropriate strategies for each case can be elaborated. Thus, it was observed that these young people are interested in physical activity as a leisure option to relax, enjoy life and make new friends. Of course, this is not limited only to physical-sporting activities but all activities that young people do during their leisure.

The young people reported several positive aspects of their participation in “SESC Summer”. Among them, the infrastructure offered and the set-up programming and the instructors of the units were the main highlights. These elements and the possibility of making new friendships make young people interested in participating in the program. However, as pointed out by the managers and the authors analysed in the literature review, young people have multiple interests. It is often challenging to elaborate programming that contemplates such interests.

Conversely, one way of attenuating the distance between what young people desire and what is offered to them is to listen to them, to give voice to these actors, who may bring nuances that may not have been previously thought. SESC, in general, provides the opportunity for young people to find the possibilities of developing their individualities and their multiple identities. The “SESC Summer”, in turn, offers the opportunity for people, in general, and young people, more specifically, to have contact with various sports practices, which can suddenly be internalised, so that young people can practice them in their daily lives.

It is worth mentioning the fact that, in the entire East Zone of Sao Paulo, with a population of 4,009,059 people, 1,053,979 of which are children and youths, there are only two SESC units. So, these facilities have an important role for this population, which does not find many sports facility options with programming for all audiences.

From this study, it was possible to identify a transformative potential that the program has relating to young people concerning the potential of leisure education, which has the possibility of accompanying the youth and influencing them to have

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

physical activity as a leisure option throughout their life. As previously mentioned, programming becomes an attraction for this audience, who has the possibility of practising a sport or physical activity that they appreciate but don't find other places to carry out such an activity. And this fact has implications for different leisure policies, whether public or private, in understanding that participatory planning can be more significant than the decision made only by the administrators of leisure facilities.

Another factor that reinforces the potential of the program is the participation of young people in more than one edition of the event. That way, if a work of awareness of the benefits of practising physical activity is performed, the chances of success will be greater. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the results obtained here sketch a specific reality, and it cannot be generalised. Other studies, with different approaches (quantitative, qualitative, ethnographic, among others), with a different geographic scope (including other SESC units and even other similar SESC programs beyond the State of Sao Paulo) should be carried out so that the results can complement each other and have a more objective reality of the program.

### References

Abramo, H. W. (2008). Condição juvenil no Brasil contemporâneo. In H.W, Abramo & P. P. M, Branco (Eds.). *Retratos da juventude brasileira: análises de uma pesquisa nacional* (pp. 37-72). São Paulo: Perceu Abramo Foundation.

Alberico, C. O., Schipperijn, J. & Reis, R. S. (2017). Use of global positioning system for physical activity research in youth: ESPAÇOS Adolescentes, Brazil. *Preventive Medicine*, 103, S59-S65. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2016.12.026>.

Becker, D. (1986). *O que é adolescência*. (3rd ed.). São Paulo: Brasiliense.

Brasil. Civil House. Law no. 8,069 of July 13, 1990 [online]. Brazil: Civil House, 1990. Recovered from: [http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/Leis/L8069.htm](http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Leis/L8069.htm). Accessed on: 17 September 2021.

Brasil. Sport Ministry. National Diagnosis of Sport – Book 1 [online]. *Brazil: Sport Ministry*, 2015. Recovered from: <http://esporte.gov.br/diesporte/2.html>. Accessed on: 17 September 2021.

Brenner, A.K., Dayrell, J & Carrano, P. (2008). Culturas do lazer e tempo livre dos jovens brasileiros. In H.W, Abramo & P.P.M, Branco (Eds.). *Retratos da juventude brasileira: análises de uma pesquisa nacional* (pp. 175-214). São Paulo: Perceu Abramo Foundation.

Bumbuc, Ş. (2016,). About subjectivity in qualitative data interpretation. In *International Conference Knowledge-Based Organization*, 22(2): 419-424. <https://doi.org/10.1515/kbo-2016-0072>

Camargo, L.O.L. (2003). *O que é lazer*. (3rd ed.). São Paulo: Brasiliense.

Da Silva, D.R.P., Werneck, A.O., Collings, P., Fernandes, R. A., Ronque, E. R. V., Sardinha, L. B., & Cyrino, E. S. (2019). Identifying children who are susceptible to dropping out from physical activity and sport: a cross-sectional study. *Sao Paulo Medical Journal*, 137, 329-335. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1516-3180.2018.0333050719>

Da Silva, M.P., Guimarães, R. D. F., Bacil, E.D.A., Piola, T.S., Fantinelli, E.R.,

Fontana, F.E., & Campos, W.D. (2022). Time spent in different sedentary activity domains across adolescence: a follow-up study. *Jornal de pediatria*, 98, 60-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jped.2021.03.007>

Dumazedier, J. (1980). *Valores e conteúdos culturais do lazer*. São Paulo: SESC.

Edginton, C. R.; Kowalski, C. L. & Randall, S. W. (2005). *Youth work: emerging perspectives in youth development*. Illinois: Sagamore Publishing.

Flick, U. (2004). *Uma introdução à pesquisa qualitativa*. (2nd ed.). Porto Alegre: Bookman.

Garcia, L. M. T. & Fisberg, M. (2011). Atividades físicas e barreiras referidas por adolescentes atendidos num serviço de saúde. *Revista Brasileira de Cineantropometria e Desempenho Humano*, 13(3), 163-169. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-0037.2011v13n3p163>

Gil, A. C. (2011). *Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social*. (6th ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.

Guthold, R. et al. (2018). Worldwide trends in insufficient physical activity from 2001 to 2016: a pooled analysis of 358 population-based surveys with 1·9 million participants. *The Lancet Global Health*, 5(10), e1077-1086. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(18\)30357-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30357-7)

IBGE. *Demographic census 2010: general characteristics of the population, religion, and people with disabilities*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2012.

IBGE. *Family Budget Survey 2008-2009: anthropometry and nutritional status of children, adolescents, and adults in Brazil*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010.

Instituto Cidadania. (2004). *Perfil da juventude brasileira*. São Paulo: Criterium Assessoria em Pesquisas.

Liikkanen, M. & Pääkkönen, H. (2005). Finland. In G. Cushman, A.J. Veal and J. Zuzanek (Eds.). *Free time and leisure participation: international perspectives* (pp. 61-74). United Kingdom: CABI Publishing.

Lourenço, C. L. M. & Mendes, E. L. (2021). Sedentary behavior and physical activity are independently associated with obesity in Brazilian adolescents: a quantile regression analysis. *Revista Contexto & Saúde*, 21(44), 265-278.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21527/2176-7114.2021.44.10337>

Marconi, M. A. & Lakatos, E.M. (2010). *Fundamentos De Metodologia Científica*. (7th ed.). São Paulo: Atlas.

Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 522-526. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522>

Nardo, N., Silva, D. A. S., de Moraes Ferrari, G. L., Petroski, E. L., Pacheco, R. L., Martins, P. C., Oliveira, L. C., Araújo, T. L., Mendes, A. A., Lazarin, S. P. B. and Dos Santos, T. L. C., 2016. Results from Brazil's 2016 report card on physical activity for children and youth. *Journal of physical activity and health*, 13(s2), pp. S104-S109. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2016-0398>

Onagbiye, S., Rampou, M., Andrews, B. & Young, M. E. M. (2019). Physical Activity and Non-communicable disease risk factors: Knowledge and Perceptions of youth in a Low resourced Community in the Western Cape. *The Open Public Health Journal*, 12: 558-566. <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874944501912010558>

Pais, J. M. (2009). A juventude como fase de vida: dos ritos de passagem aos ritos de impasse. *Saúde Social*, 18(3), 371-381. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-12902009000300003>

Ruskin, H., Sivan, A. (2005). Israel. In G. Cushman, A.J. Veal & J. Zuzanek (Eds.). *Free time and leisure participation: international perspectives* (pp. 141-152). United

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

Kingdom: CABI Publishing.

Sallis, J. F. et al. (2016). Progress in physical activity over the Olympic quadrennium. *The Lancet*, 388(10051), 1325-1336. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(16\)30581-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)30581-5)

Samuel, N. France. In G. Cushman, A.J. Veal and J. Zuzanek (Eds.). *Free time and leisure participation: international perspectives* (pp. 75-100). United Kingdom: CABI Publishing.

SESC. (2020). *About SESC*. Retrieved from [http://www.sesc.com.br/portal/sesc/o\\_sesc/](http://www.sesc.com.br/portal/sesc/o_sesc/).

SESC Verão (2021). *Sesc Verão 2021: taking care is good*. Retrieved from <https://www.sescsp.org.br/sesc-verao-2021-cuidar-faz-bem/>.

SESC Verão (2012). *Sport with pleasure*. Retrieved from [https://www.sescsp.org.br/online/artigo/5583\\_ESPORTE+COM+PRAZER](https://www.sescsp.org.br/online/artigo/5583_ESPORTE+COM+PRAZER).

Sivan, A., Robertson, N.B. & Walker, S. (2005). Hong Kong. In G. Cushman, A.J. Veal and J. Zuzanek (Eds.). *Free time and leisure participation: international perspectives* (pp. 127-140). United Kingdom: CABI Publishing.

Stoppa, E.A. & Delgado, M. (2006). A juventude e o lazer. In N.C. Marcellino (Ed.). *Lazer e recreação: repertório de atividades por fases da vida* (pp. 65-69). Campinas: Papirus.

Uvinha, R. R. (2001). *Juventude, lazer e esportes radicais*. São Paulo: Manole.

Uvinha, R. R. (1996). O corpo-imagem jovem e o fenômeno do consumo. *Movimento*, 3(4), 49-51. <https://doi.org/10.22456/1982-8918.2207>

Veal, A. J. (2011). *Metodologia de pesquisa em lazer e turismo*. São Paulo: Aleph.

Veal, A. J. (2005). Australia. In G. Cushman, A.J. Veal and J. Zuzanek (Eds.). *Free time and leisure participation: International perspectives* (pp. 17-40). United Kingdom: CABI Publishing.

WHO – World Health Organization (2018). *Global action plan on physical activity 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

WHO – World Health Organization (2015). *Adolescent health*. Retrieved from: [http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/adolescent_health/en/).

\* \* \*

**Corresponding Author: Alipio Rodrigues Pines Junior**

**Email: [alipio.rodrigues@gmail.com](mailto:alipio.rodrigues@gmail.com)**

*Research Paper*

---

INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW No. 1/2022©Copyright by the author

DOI: 10.6298/ILR.202206\_11(1).0004

---

# **The Integration of Philippine Games and Filipino Pop-Dance in The Focus Dance Movement Exploration Model**

**Alberto Dimarucut**

*University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines*

**Geoffrey Alunan**

*University of the Philippines Diliman, Philippines*

## **Abstract**

Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance have been a form of leisure for Filipinos. Numerous benefits of dancing and engaging in games can be seen in the physical, social, and emotional domains. Dance Movement Exploration (DME) is within the Focus DME model in this study. Therefore, this study aims to determine the use of Philippine games (PG) and Filipino pop dance (FPD) in the Focus DME model. This study analysed the documents from the selected DME session conducted in the Philippines. Fifty-four (54) students and eighty (80) indigenous people participated. Documents from the DME session were used to identify the (a) DME session, (b) PG and FPD used, and (c) questionnaire used to identify the experiences of the participants after the session. Data from a and b were summarized, while inductive thematic analysis was utilized to analyze c. The results indicated that PG and FPD were adequate as the main activities during the DME session. The experiences of the participants were generally positive after the session. In conclusion, PG and FPD can be included in the Focus DME model as one of its activities while preserving the Philippines' culture of games and dance.

*Keywords: Dance Movement Exploration, Focus DME model, students, indigenous people, Filipino culture*

\* \* \*



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

### Introduction

Philippine games were the games developed by Filipinos in the past, particularly in the 2000s. It has been known to be a famous way to spend time as leisure, enhance friendship, develop social relationships, and strengthen family ties among Filipinos (Balite & Robles, 2020). The structure of the games was influenced by the Spaniards and Chinese, whom the Filipinos interacted with (Lopez, 1980). The games were usually conducted in open spaces (i.e. streets and fields) and did not require any money to play. Usually, it requires “native materials, instruments, or animals/insects” (Balite & Robles, 2020, p. 48).

The format of the games can be classified as either “mock warfare, racing games, or formula games” (Balite & Robles, 2020, p. 48). Teamwork is necessary to win the game and involves the person's physical, mental, and social skills. The event of two (2) or more teams competing with each other during the Philippine games is done for “entertainment, recreation, socialization, and relaxation” (Balite & Robles, 2020, p. 48). Moreover, the Philippine Indigenous Games Preservation Act of 2017 (p.3) identifies the Philippine Games as a “platform for promoting peace, harmony, goodwill, and camaraderie” among communities in the Philippines. Hence, participation in these games positively affects the people who participate (Lopez, 2018).

Dance was considered a popular leisure activity (Markula, 2020). In the Philippines, Original Philippine Music (OPM) emerged around the 1970s (Cosper, 2013). Along with this, dances were created to supplement the music developed by Filipinos. Commonly, this was known as the Filipino Pop dance, where the dancers create choreography based on OPM. Since dance involves movement of the limbs, dance is considered a form of physical activity (Alpert, 2011). The benefits of dance include “increased flexibility, increased muscle strength and tone, increased endurance, balance and spatial awareness, and a general feeling of well-being” (Alpert, 2011, p. 155). Moreover, the beneficial effects of dance on well-being include the emotional, physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of the human (Murcia et al., 2010). However, no known studies have used Filipino pop-dance as the intervention. Based on the results from other studies, it is hypothesized that the Filipino pop-dance will have the same beneficial effects.

With these effects of the Philippine games and dance, the researcher aims to integrate these into Dance Movement Exploration (DME). In the Philippines, Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) is DME (Dimarucut, Uy, & Santos, 2014). Dance Movement Therapy was “the relational and therapeutic use of dance and movement to further a person's physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural functioning” (DTAA, 2022, par. 1). It combines “the elements of dance, movement systems, creative processes, and psychological and scientific theories, to address the specific needs of

groups and individuals” (DTAA, 2022, par. 3). Dance Movement Exploration is “the search for the inner self leading to a better understanding of one’s emotions and behaviours, an approach in Discovering Meanings in Existence (through de-stressing movement experiences)” (Dimarucut, Uy & Santos, 2014, p.33). DME was developed based on the results of the unpublished thesis of Dimarucut (2014) on the application of DMT to dance physical education classes. Dance Movement Therapy helps students experiencing academic stressors cope with stress. The results sparked the expansion of DME into the Focus DME model applied to communities of survivors of disasters and violence. Thus, DME was developed into the Focus DME Model with therapeutic interventions that may alleviate the adverse effects of shocks. The Focus Dance Movement Exploration Model, which is contextual in its approach, deals with the potential of dance and movement as a means of empowerment and healing.

The DME in Focus DME model consists of three (3) methodological and theoretical bases: Dance Movement Therapy (DMT), Psychosocial Theories (PST), and Physical Activity (PA). The use of PST helped determine the approach of the DME activities based on the psychological development of the participants (based on the age group) (Erikson, 1950). Lastly, PA was conceptualized as “people moving, acting, and performing within culturally specific spaces and contexts, and influenced by a unique array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions, and relationships” (Piggin, 2020, p.1). Intensities can also categorize physical activity as low-intensity, moderate-intensity, and high-intensity, depending on the heart rate and movement of the individual. These methodological and theoretical bases were utilized further in exploring the Focus DME Model.

Philippine Games and the Filipino pop-dance were planned to include in the Focus DME model for the participants to have a tight grasp of the activities presented. Further, it will help preserve the Philippine culture of games and dance. Moreover, to improve various aspects of the person such as mental, physical, social, and emotional skills.

### **Purpose**

This study aimed to determine the use of Philippine games and Filipino pop dance in Dance Movement Exploration with the students and indigenous people that experience conflict. Moreover, highlight the experiences of the students and indigenous people from the DME session.

### **Methods**

#### *Research Design*

The focus of this study was analyzing the documents from the selected DME session conducted in the Philippines. These documents were part of a case study

## **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

conducted by the researcher. The data includes the documentation of the components of the selected DME session and the questionnaire distributed to the students to gather their experiences on the session. To present the data methodologically from the documents, this study utilized a descriptive research design to identify what and how Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance were used in DME. Further, identify the experiences of the students after DME.

### *Sampling Design*

Based on the documents, convenience sampling was used to recruit participants for the DME session. Fifty-four (54) students; and eighty (80) indigenous people experiencing conflict participated in the DME session. Further, the students co-facilitated the Philippine games and Filipino pop dance, where the interaction between the students and indigenous people happened.

### *Research Instruments*

The researcher analyzed the documents by categorizing them through a deductive approach. The researcher set categories on what data needed to be collected from the selected DME session conducted in the Philippines. The data collected were (a) Dance Movement Exploration (DME) session, (b) Philippine Games and Filipino pop-dance used in the DME session, and (c) questionnaires used to identify the experiences of the students and indigenous people after the DME session. The DME session was collected to identify the specific activities, including the Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance incorporated. The questionnaire aimed to capture the students' experiences and the indigenous people after the DME session.

### *Data collection procedure*

The procedure started with organising the documents from the DME session. Then, the researcher selected the data based on the following categories: (a) DME session, (b) Philippine Games and Filipino pop-dance used in the DME session, and (c) questionnaire used to identify the experiences of the students and indigenous people after the DME session. Afterwards, specific data was collected for the DME session. The information collected was (a) Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) creative process, (b) intensities of physical activity, (c) identified age and psychosocial development of the participants, (d) sequence of DME session structure, and (e) specific activities used in DME and its procedures. Subsequently, the Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance used were identified. Finally, the questionnaire used to identify the students' responses from the DME session was organised.

*Data Analysis*

A narrative synthesis was used to summarize the data from the DME session, and the Philippine Games and Filipino pop-dance were used in the DME session. Further, inductive thematic analysis was incorporated into the students' responses. There were six (6) phases that were utilized in the inductive thematic analysis, namely: Phase 1- Familiarizing of the Transcription; Phase 2- Generating Initial Codes; Phase 3- Searching for Themes; Phase 4- Reviewing Themes; Phase 5- Defining and Naming Themes; and Phase 6- Producing the Report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

**Results**

This section was divided into Dance Movement Exploration Session and Responses of the Students. The Dance Movement Exploration Session presents the results of what was identified from the documents on (a) Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) creative process, (b) intensities of physical activity, (c) identified age and psychosocial development of the participants, (d) sequence of DME session structure, and (e) specific activities used in DME and its procedures. On the other hand, the responses of the students' section present the results of the thematic analysis from the student's responses.

*Dance Movement Exploration Session*

Table 1. highlights the DME session, which includes the stage of the DMT creative process, the projected intensity of physical activity based on the intensity of the movement, the identification of the psychological stage, DME structure for the sequence of activities and the activities used in the session. The facilitator of the session was the researcher of this study.

The first phase of the DMT creative process was the preparation stage. This stage aims to prepare the participants physically and mentally for the activities. For the opening, the facilitator utilized the group circle to familiarize the participants and introduce the activities and dances to be included. Also, it was the invocation of brotherhood and sisterhood to acknowledge the presence of each participant in the group. Further, this is the time to identify the range of ages participating in the group so that the facilitator can adjust the activities. To warm up the mind and the body, the facilitator used activity #1 (Magic thread and mirroring) and dance #1 (community dance) to prepare the participants. The use of breathing, tapping, brushing, shaking, and grounding prepared the body for movement and dance. The magic thread and mirroring were movement activities to explore their self-discovery. This was performed to know which role they gear more towards, being a leader or a follower. All activities were conducted at low intensity to ensure that the participants were adequately warmed up

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

**Table 1**

*Dance Movement Exploration Session Activities*

DMT Creative Process	Physical Activity	Psychosocial Theory	Sequence	Activity
Preparation & Incubation	Low - intensity	Identification of age and psychosocial development	Opening	Group circle
			Introduction	Introduction to the activities and dance to be conducted
			Warmup	Breathing, tapping, brushing, shaking, and grounding
			Activity #1	Magic thread and mirroring → debriefing Preparatory for dance
Incubation	Moderate to High intensity		Dance #1	Community dance Circle dance (for solidarity); no music.
			Activity #2	<b>Philippine Games</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Agawan panyo (Rivalry in stealing the handkerchief)</li> <li>b. Sack racing</li> <li>c. Coin in Flour</li> <li>d. Calamansi race</li> </ul> Other games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Tug of war</li> </ul>
			Dance #2	Line dance (structured dance) <b>Filipino pop dance</b> (choreography by Filipinos)
Illumination & Evaluation	Low - intensity		Relaxation / Closing	Listening to music while eating snacks
			Goodbyes	Sharing in a small group of their experiences with the session then goes to a big group for appreciation

## **A. Dimarucut and G. Alunan**

---

before the moderate to high-intensity activities in activity #2 (Philippine Games) and dance #2 (Filipino pop dance).

The second phase of the DMT creative process was the incubation phase. The goal was for the participants to be fully attuned to the present and their bodies during the activities. This was where the Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance were integrated into the DME session as part of the physical activity. Both were introduced to release the suppressed feelings of anger and hate, as the activity required a vigorous execution within a fun modality. Also, both were used as a way of social interaction among the participants. Activity #2 was the Philippine games and consisted of agawan panyo (rivalry in stealing the handkerchief), sack racing, coin in flour, and calamansi race. Agawan panyo was done with two (2) groups wherein each participant had a number. Usually, the chronological order of the participants determines their number (number one is closer to the handkerchief and the farther you are from the handkerchief, the higher your number is).

One (1) facilitator held the handkerchief and was the one who was calling out the numbers. If your number was called, you must run to the handkerchief and try to grab it and go back to where you came from without being tagged by the other team. The facilitator can call another group of numbers if the current participants cannot steal the handkerchief without being tagged. The next game was sack racing. This also involves two (2) teams where the fastest team wins.

Both teams should have the same number of members. The first-in-line for both teams readied themselves by going inside the sack. Then, as the signal was fired, the participants hopped until the designated marker and then did a U-turn to go back to the starting line. Once the member reaches the starting line, he/she removes the sack and gives it to the next member in line. All of the members must complete this. The fastest team was the one that won the race.

Furthermore, the coin in flour was also time-based, but this time, the participant had to use their mouth to get the coin from the flour. Two (2) or more teams can be used in this activity, and all of the members of the teams must complete the activity. The fastest team to complete wins. Finally, the calamansi race was also a two (2) or more group game wherein the fastest team wins. The mechanics of this game was that using a spoon placed in the mouth, you must transfer the calamansi from the front to the back. The way to pass the calamansi was to transfer it to the spoon of your teammate.

For dance #2, a Filipino pop-dance was implemented. Line dance was used to adjust to familiar and unfamiliar patterns on different rhythms. This was a form of synchronous expression, as the movement patterns were the same routine repeated- in different directions. This strived to see them dancing in unison, which creates a strong cohesiveness. Further, the song's lyrics used for the Filipino pop-dance include a

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

reflective bond as a Filipino. The song lyrics point to the fact of acceptance and empowerment of oneself. In addition, the chorus indicates the pride of being a Filipino wherein the participants, as Filipinos, should be one and should not be afraid to show what they are capable of.

The last phase of the DMT creative process was illumination and evaluation. The goal of this phase was to uncover the realizations of the participants after the activity and evaluate the session itself. Listening to soft music while conversing and having food in a small group was supplementary to releasing calm and peaceful emotions. Closing in a big group was to declare their appreciation to one another, allowing them to acknowledge their bodily presence. This indicates their relationship with themselves as they revealed their strengths and weaknesses as human beings.

### *Responses of the Students*

The themes extracted from the students' responses to the post-interview question on the DME are presented in Table 2.

Based on the students' observations and experience, both groups had fun. They demonstrated several positive emotions: enjoyment, excitement, being competitive, smiling, cheering, easy to socialize with, attentiveness, and unity. The shyness and nervousness of the indigenous at the start of the activity changed into confidence and determination to learn and explore. Moreover, the recorded remarks from the students, the narratives of the indigenous people, and the reflexivity of the facilitator support the transformation. Below are some of the quotations:

1. *“Nalingaw gyud mi sa inyong giandam na dula para sa amua!” (We really had fun playing the games you prepared for us!)*
2. *“Nalingaw kaayo ko kay daghan kaayo ta na nanayaw.” (I really had fun dancing because we were too many.)*
3. *“Wala gyud ko kakita na ingani kalipay ang mga bata ug tiguwang sukad nahitabo ang insidente. Mao nang nagpasalamat gyud mi sainyong pagpahalipay sa amoa.” (I never saw these kids/teens and adults this happy again after that tragic incident. That's why we thank you for making this happen.)”*
4. *“Nakakatuwa ‘to, nakakawala ng problema” (This is fun, it makes my problems go away)*
5. *“Sana ganito nalang palagi, walang problema, walang inaalala” (I hope this happens often. No problems, no responsibilities).*

The transformation translated to words: fun, participation, cooperation without judgment, enjoy life, happy, forget problems, priceless experience, smile with problems, thankful, proud, do not judge the book by its cover, honored, and heart-warming

## A. Dimarucut and G. Alunan

experience. These were indications that DME elicited positive emotions from the study participants.

**Table 2**

*Thematic Analysis - Free Coding of the Personal Aspect Experience of the students*

Question	Thematic Analysis (The letters enclosed in parentheses represent the student-respondent.)
State some quotations you have taken from the session (at least 5 quotations shared by the indigenous people about their experience with the games and dance).	"Babawi kami" (We are going to make a comeback), "Hindi kami magpapatalo" (We will not let ourselves lose), "Kaya natin 'to!" (We can do this!), "Yes! nanalo kami!" (Yes, we won!), "Kahit may babae sa amin, hindi kami papatalo!" (Even though there is a woman in our team, we will not lose!), "Masaya" (Happy), "Nalingaw gyud mi sa inyong giandang na dula para sa amua!" (We really had fun playing the games you prepared for us!), "Ganahan kayo ko sa kanta sa atong gisayaw, unsay ngalan anang kantaha?" (I really liked the song that we danced. What's the title of that song?), "Nalingaw kaayo ko kay daghan kaayo ta na nanayaw." (I really had fun dancing because we were too many.), "Wala gyud ko kakita na ingani kalipay ang mga bata ug tiguwang sukad nahitabo ang insidente. Mao nang nagpasalamat gyud mi sainyong pagpahalipay sa amoa." (I never saw these kids/teens and adults this happy again after that tragic incident. That's why we really thank you for making this happen), "Salamat gyud kay nihatag mo ug oras para lang muhatag ug kalipay sa amua." (Thanks for giving us your time to share and give happiness among us), "We love to dance, especially the elderly.", "The dance is easy and fun.", "I got hurt but it's okay, I'm having fun.", "My slippers snapped but it's okay.", "It's okay to lose, we just have to try.", "Nakakatuwa 'to, nakakawala ng problema" -35 year old indigenous woman, "Salamat at pinasaya nyo kami. Ang dami nyo nang naitulong, sobrang salamat mga anak" - 40-year-old indigenous man, "Ate! Ate! Ang saya naman po ng sayaw na 'to" -12 year old indigenous boy, "HAHAHA panalo ulit kami" - satisfied 19 year old indigenous boy, "Sana ganto nalang palagi, walang problema, walang inaalala" -taken from a 30 year old indigenous man
What were your significant observations with the indigenous people during the session?	Smile with problems (a, b), Cheering (b), Attentive (c, d), Competitive (c, d, h, j), Shy but became confident later (d, k), Determined to learn (d, j), Smiling (d), Easy to socialize with (e, k), Exploration (e), Enjoy (e, i), Innocent (f), Passionate (f), United (h)
What is your reflection of the overall experience in playing and dancing with the indigenous people?	Fun (a, b, c, e), Participation (a), Cooperation without judgment (b), Enjoy life (b), Happy (c, e, g), Forget problems (c), Priceless experience (d), Smile with problems (d), Thankful (e), Proud (e), Do not judge the book by its cover (f), honored (j), heart-warming experience (k)



## **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

### **Discussion**

The results showed that the students and the indigenous people elicited positive emotions during DME. The Philippine Games, which require two teams to compete, put on view socialization. The Filipino pop-dance was performed with music that highlights the pride of being a Filipino. While performing the activities, the participants' minds focused on doing the games and dance, leading to numerous positive emotions, including fun, happiness, forgetting problems, thankfulness, and priceless experience. Balite & Rosales (2020) notes that the Philippine games are for “entertainment, recreation, socialization, and relaxation”.

Moreover, the Philippine Indigenous Games Preservation Act of 2017 (p.3) highlights Philippine games promote “peace, harmony, goodwill, and camaraderie”. Furthermore, it was identified that dance has numerous benefits in the emotional, physical, social, and spiritual domains (Murcia et al., 2010). More benefits include “increased flexibility, increased muscle strength and tone, increased endurance, balance and spatial awareness, and a general feeling of well-being” (Alpert, 2011, p.155).

Aside from the context of Philippine games and Filipino pop dance, it is generally known that being physically active can provide numerous benefits to the person. In terms of mental health, physical activity helps reduce anxiety, depression, and negative mood by improving self-esteem (Guszkowska, 2004) and cognitive function (Callaghan, 2004). Moreover, exercise can improve the following: sleep, cardiovascular endurance, stress, mood, energy, and reduced tiredness (Sharma, Madaan, & Petty, 2006; National Institute of Aging, 2020).

The facilitator intended to include Philippine games and Filipino pop dance as an activity in the Focus DME model to release the suppressed feelings of anger and hate. The activity required a vigorous execution within a fun modality. Within all the DME activities that involve movement, Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance were able to achieve the intended DME outcome based on the observations of the students.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, Philippine games and Filipino pop-dance can be included in the Focus DME model as one of its activities while preserving the Philippines' culture of games and dance. Positive feedback from students' experiences and observations was identified during the interaction with the indigenous people.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher recommends more DME sessions conducted to explore the utilization of various Philippine games and Filipino pop dance in the Focus DME model. In addition, it is recommended to explore the outcomes of different Philippine games,

Filipino pop dances, and Philippine dances when integrated to the DME session. Further, quantitative measures must be implemented to objectively measure the change from pre- to post-test in the participants' physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects.

## References

- Alpert, P. T. (2011). The health benefits of dance. *Home Health Care Management & Practice*, 23(2), 155-157.
- Balite, P. H. & Robles, S. (2020). Philippine Games: On the Contemporary Awareness and Involvement of University Students. *TALA: An Online Journal of History*, 3(1).
- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Callaghan, P. (2004). Exercise: a neglected intervention in mental health care? *Journal of psychiatric and mental health nursing*, 11(4), 476-483.
- Cosper, A. (2013). *History of Philippine Pop Music*. Retrieved from: <https://www.playlistresearch.com/article/phillipinepop.htm>
- Dance Movement Therapy Association of Australasia (DTAA). (2022). *What is Dance Movement Therapy?* <https://dtaa.org.au/therapy/>
- Dimarucut, A., Uy, G. & Santos, J. (2014). Dance Movement Therapy in the Philippines: The Journey From 'DMT' To 'DME'. *DTAA Journal Moving On*, 12(1), 33-35.
- Erikson, E.H. (1950). *Childhood and Society*. Norton & Co.
- Guszkowska, M. (2004). Effects of exercise on anxiety, depression and mood. *Psychiatria polska*, 38(4), 611-620.
- Lopez, M. L. (1980). A study of Philippine games. University of the Philippines Press.
- Markula, P. (2020). Dance, movement and leisure cultures. *Leisure Studies*, 39(4), 465-478.
- National Institute of Aging (NIH). (2020). *Real life benefits of exercise and physical activity, Philippine Indigenous Games Preservation Act of 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/real-life-benefits-exercise-and-physical-activity>
- Piggin, J. (2020). What is physical activity? A holistic definition for teachers, researchers, and policy makers. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 2, 72.
- Quiroga Murcia, C., Kreutz, G., Clift, S. & Bongard, S. (2010). Shall we dance? An exploration of the perceived benefits of dancing on well-being. *Arts & Health*, 2(2), 149-163.
- Sharma, A., Madaan, V. & Petty, F. D. (2006). Exercise for mental health. Primary care companion to the Journal of clinical psychiatry, 8(2), 106. <https://doi.org/10.4088/pcc.v08n02.08a>

\* \* \*

**Corresponding Author: Geoffrey Alunan**

**E-mail: [geoffreyalunan@gmail.com](mailto:geoffreyalunan@gmail.com)**

*Research Paper*

INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW No. 1/2022©Copyright by the author

DOI: 10.6298/ILR.202206\_11(1).0005

**Youth Sports and Leisure Activities in Public Spaces:  
Cultural Production and Social Inclusion****Raúl Hernández-Villasol***Universitat de Barcelona, Spain***Abstract**

In changing contexts, youth cultural patterns are subject to the existing dynamism between cultural production and cultural reproduction. In this work, we analyzed and compared how youth game and sport practices can be self-managed and developed autonomously, without adult supervision. We observed public spaces, such as open basketball courts, from two different locations: Terrassa (nearby Barcelona, Spain) and Athens (Greece). The framework is based on the right to leisure as provided in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of the United Nations 1989. The ethnography at hand shows that peer contact in a shared space can produce more inclusive activities in informal practices than in source formal ones, hence diversity and inclusion across gender, age, and socio-cultural background is better preserved. Also, among young informal groups, a conducive environment is established which enables teenagers to develop creative and autonomous activities and cultural relationships.

**Keywords:** *Teenagers, leisure, interculturality, games, youth cultural productions*

\* \* \*

**Introduction**

Getting young people with different backgrounds to play and produce new games together requires a common time and space. This research was developed with two different youth groups as study subjects from two locations: Terrassa (nearby Barcelona, Spain) and Athens (Greece). In the two cases studied, informal groups were formed by young people using a common space—a sports field—to play together. The time these groups shared in that space is considered as *free time*.

The concept of *Youth* is taken as a reference based on the Anglo-Saxon

terminology, and it refers to the age that lies between childhood and adulthood, and that corresponds to the age range between 13 to 18 years old (James & James, 2009). This age range covers a period of growth and change associated with words such as *puberty* or *adolescence*. Throughout that period, the subject is self-constructed physically and socially. Teenagers may start leaving their family environment during these years—either temporarily or permanently—and social experimentation and identity increase and invigorate. This age is also associated both with rebellion and adventure. Due to multiple factors, young people depend longer on adults in social and economic terms, affecting youth in their social agency. This situation might extend even into their late 30s.

One of the interests of this study is to observe the presence of young people in urban public spaces. During the last two centuries, children and youth have been increasingly domesticated (James, Jenks & Prout 1998; Zelizer, 1985, Bernstein & Díaz, 1985, Singh, 2020). As a result, the presence of children and youth in public spaces has been undermined, a trend observed at different levels in both observed locations. This trend occurs mainly among middle classes from developed countries, which enjoy a certain degree of well-being. Also, the trend is marked by a progressive loss of social coexistence between children and adults, as Philippe Ariès (1962)<sup>1</sup> explained. Urbanism tackled this situation and as early as 1945, when Lewis Mumford highlighted the neglect of children when planning cities (1945). In Spain, Jordi Borja reports on a breach of the right to the city that children and young people suffered by administrations in the old and new urban construction projects (2004). The project undertaken by the Italian educational psychologist Francesco Tonucci was called *The City of Children*. Tonucci took his report and complaints draft and child participation project to the city's government from his hometown, Fano, and to different parts of the world (1997).

Existing discourses among public opinion to explain children and young people's depopulation of public spaces focus on three types of arguments:

- The first argument is related to the new ways used by youth to socialise and play. This argument can be contrasted with Aarsand and Aronsson research, which analysed this trend implication, increasing nowadays due to the social change brought by the new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and these spaces negotiations within families (2009).
- The second argument is associated with the lack of free time since young people are overloaded with extracurricular activities at different levels of formality (Molins, 2009; Trilla & Rios, 2004).

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Ariès' childhood history, trend reversal appears by mid Modern Age, progressively evolving into a new model of coexistence between children and adults by separating their cohabitation in activities (1962).

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

- Finally, yet importantly, the third argument links young people with risks, fears, and dangers (Alfonso & Lladó, 2010, Jociles, Franzé & Poveda, 2011; Morrow, 2007)

To contrast these discourses, we should analyse the agency<sup>2</sup> of young people during the development of their activities and social dynamics in informal spaces. The analysis is based on the intersection of two primary lines of research referring to juvenile agency and informal space, two key concepts related to youth. The first concept comes from the constructionist theoretical orientation, led by Allison James and Alan Prout, representing, alongside Chris Jenks, what they call 'the new paradigm for the sociology of childhood' (Gaitan, 2006). In childhood research, they propose a boost for ethnographical approach and encompass this age as the culture to which individuals with ages comprised between 0 and 18 years old belong. To implement this approach, ethnography requires specific cultural contexts from young people. At the very beginning of this research proposal, James, Prout and Jenks preferred spaces such as school and youth clubs (Gaitan, 2006).

The research in question aims to study sports courts in what is meant by *public space*. However, it is more accurate to speak of *informal space* from an anthropological perspective since *public space* does not refer to the type of activities practised. It is recommended to distinguish between space and place, as proposed by Giddens (1990). When we refer to *place*, we mean the social setting of social activity, placing its geographical location. However, when we allude to *space*, we mean the spatial location in terms of social relations. Notably, the term *space* goes beyond the physical location, as it may have symbolic meanings, such as *public space*, *masculine space*, *youth space*, *sports space*, *playing space* and *informal space*.

That being said, it will be in these informal spaces where the idea of youth agency would become critical in terms of welfare and participation. Gill Valentine's work (1997) is very noticeable in the study of informal space concerning childhood and youth culture. Much of his production has addressed urban culture and consumption, relating effort to understand the culture of childhood and its implications with competition, negotiating spaces beyond of the formal activities conducted. These leisure activities tend to have a more significant impact and generate higher levels of satisfaction if they are produced through self-management by the youth group (Lazcano, Madariaga, Romero & Kleiber, 2022).

Based on the remarks we made during our research, the data obtained between 2008 and 2010 analysed the relationship between youth agency and the space where their informal activities occurred.

---

<sup>2</sup> The term 'Agency' refers to the ability of some individual to act independently (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998).

Activities produced in these informal settings, such as games, are conceived from anthropology as *youth cultural production*. Adolescents learn how to play a game or a sport, then once the original activity is done, they show the ability to adapt it. The group might replicate parts of the initial game, but often they take ownership of the game and space to tailor them to their needs and preferences. The idea of the child and adolescent as a passive subject to whom culture is transferred has been revised from a historical perspective of the Anthropology of childhood (Bertran & Carrasco, 2002). There were some precedents among the classic references carried out in the 70s (Whiting & Whiting, 1975) and 60s (Opie & Opie, 1960) where the existence of a 'cultural unconscious child' reproduced without adult intervention was already defended.

The purpose of analysing the game focuses on assessing young people as active producers of culture. This is opposed to the preconceived idea, from an educational point of view, which understands young people as passive subjects to whom culture is transmitted. We observe how there is a youth awareness of the living conditions of its existence. However, relationships between cultural production and social reproduction by subordinates' subjects, such as young people, can be identified through play activities. This objective has its origins in Paul Willis' works (2005, 2006). The conceptual relationship between social reproduction and youth cultural production is already analysed in these works. It found symbolic creativity in activities, as shown in the multiple works of Willis (1998), which is crucial for creating and sustaining the identities of groups and individuals.

This article aims to delve into the interculturality of these games practised by young people since dialogue between different cultural aspects in spaces of equality is required. Otherwise, we would be talking about an issue that has more to do with an ideology, *interculturalism*, than with an analytical concept, *interculturality* (Carrasco, 2005).

## **Methods**

For the first experience in Athens, a sport area within a central park in a popular neighbourhood was selected. In that location different groups of youths gather together to play basketball during the afternoons of their school summer break. During a 4-month stay in the country, it was possible to interact with the group on a daily basis. The group consisted of 17 teenagers from a variety of backgrounds. It was a gender-mixed group of 12 boys and 5 girls. The second experience had a similar length—around 4 months— a the space chosen was also a public sports court located within a central park. The court was in a working-class neighbourhood in the town of Terrassa, where groups of boys played basketball during the afternoons. There were 11 boys and

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

1 girl from different backgrounds.

During the search process to select locations and groups to conduct fieldwork, basketball practice turned to be an effective resources to establish a first contact. By taking part of the games, it was possible to gain access to the informal group. In this way, a communication path was set, which allowed gathering enough data to answer the initial research questions. Given that establishing bonds of trust with the group was crucial for the research, playing games and practicing sport were used as tools to generate connections. In both cases, researcher lived in the same areas as the adolescents studied for the duration of the observations.

Including the initial approach, participant observation continued to be the methodology used throughout this fieldwork—a characteristic method of ethnographic fieldwork. In this case, the anthropological approach consisted, most of the time, of playing as one of the group. In these two case studied, it was found that informal sports practice, which is part of the mainstream leisure activities with male predominance, is in itself a favourable context to connect with adolescents and a projective technique.

During the game activity, there were intervals and breaks, which in most cases were used to evoke conversations. It was therefore the right time to pose questions related to the information already analysed through the field diary. These interviews mainly targeted those who were considered ‘key informants’ due to the level of trust and engagement established during observations.

But, how to formulate questions in these informal contexts about the relevant research topics? Sport itself played a key role to start the conversation, taking it as a *total social phenomenon* (Elias & Dunning, 1986) that may have connections with different existing phenomena in society, such as: group relations, identities, education, future prospects, spaces to conduct activities in the city, immigration, leisure time, work, school, gender relations, status within the social structure, and so on.

There are key references in qualitative research pointing out effective activities to foster adolescents sharing their insights (through play, drawing, conversation, photography, video, theatre, walks). This information gathering through participating and multimodal techniques has been previously used in reference research such as the project ‘Children of the Millennium’, a longitudinal study that took over 15 years with two groups of children in Peru. In this case, the great usefulness of these forms of data collection can be appreciated when it is necessary to complement fieldwork conditioned by difficulties of time and resources (Ames, Rojas & Portugal, 2010).

Informal sports practice, which is part of the dominant leisure activities of certain age and gender groups—among children and young people—constitutes in itself a context that facilitates rapport and a projective technique such as photography (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2008), video or theatre (Roerig, 2011). If

sport is understood as a total social phenomenon, which can have connections with many existing phenomena in society, analogies can be drawn and bridges can be built from it to carry out comparisons from the experience of the participants. In this research, in a systematic way, it has been possible to apply it successfully to a wide range of thematic areas: group relations, identities, immigration, intercultural relations, leisure time, work, school, family relations, gender relations, social positions, future perspectives, and so on. In this way, this research aimed to focus on the subjective experience of adolescents themselves and their present reality, insisting in the interest of studying adolescent culture in itself and not exclusively in relation to its social construction by adults (James & Prout, 2003).

## **Results**

The spaces where activities are developed meet standard features. We can even say that both locations share the same type of space since, as we shall see, the same type of activities were practised there. From the point of view of young people, these spaces are determined by their informal use. The division between formal and informal spaces in a young world lies in the ability of young people to practice non-regulated activities or activities not controlled by adults (Ponferrada, Carrasco, Gomez-Granell, Villà & Miró, 2006). Household spaces or school facilities are two clearly defined formal spaces, but clubs or sports schools, music conservatories or leisure centres could also be considered formal ones.

These young people shared spaces and activities produced together. Cadence varied between the two locations. In Athens, youth presence was persistent, meeting even four or five times a week almost daily. In Terrassa, the frequency was not daily but neither occasional, meeting around 2 to 4 times per week. Now, we will explain the findings of this research by classifying them by three comparable contextual characteristics of the selected spaces:

1. Symbolic contexts. Weather—allowing to occupy outdoor spaces for much of the year. Cold, rain, and snow complicate the use of the space. Hence, in some parts of the world, the amount of daylight during the afternoon is an advantage to consider, as young people understand sunset as a symbolic curfew (Willis, 2005). After sunset, youth presence with no adult supervision diminishes.

In addition, it is necessary to analyse the existing boundaries in these spaces. Both spaces were separated from the street by a symbolic boundary in one form or another. A cage-looking fence limited the court in Athens, and in Terrassa, limitations were determined by a 1-meter-high outer fence. According to youths from the two different locations, those boundaries were essential to carry out their games safely. Boundaries were beneficial when chasing the ball, preventing incidents with car traffic



## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

or pedestrians, and avoiding pet presence on the court.

2. Sports contexts. Informal groups of young people in this space conduct effective practices, but in the present case, we will focus on those related to basketball in some way. Basketball is a sport created by James Naismith, a Physical Education teacher at the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) Training School in Springfield (Massachusetts). Initially, it was created for indoor playing; but later on, most of the courts were outdoors. This sport was remarkable both in Europe and all over the world. Basketball was first practised in Catalonia, back in 1913, at the Vallparadis school, located in Terrassa (Verdaguer, 1991, 1992) and in Greece, back in 1918, led by the YMCA. It grew fast in so many countries that the International Basketball Federation was formed in 1932, and the sport was admitted into the Olympics in 1936 (Betancort & Almeida, 2000).

The two areas in the cities observed shared the same purpose: playing basketball. Both have the necessary codes so that users (players) can identify the space as an ideal space to play basketball (Willcocks, 2008). Concrete pavement and two baskets were a rule, one against the other. However, they differ in the lines painted on the floor. While the court in Athens featured boundary lines for formal sports practice, the court in Terrassa was not painted, and spatial boundaries were defined by the end of the pavement. This made a difference when playing. Because in Athens, players could follow formal limitations to adapt the existing codes in space, while in Terrassa, players had to agree about limits and boundaries. In Athens, this difference did not make games resulting from basketball to become more formal. We must carefully consider that formality of codes is not an important issue but its relationship with users' social space (Lefebvre, 1991).

With this historical background of basketball in the two different studied locations, we can consider basketball as inherent to a global culture developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Observations determined that the activities practised there were casual game. Understanding informal game as a youth cultural production where the game is adapted to participants and space. Players agreed on the rules together, and usually, those rules applied to ball games. The closer formal practice games were, the worse it was for creativity. Furthermore, competitiveness increased, leading to intense arguments between players to agree on decisions caused by the lack of arbitration as a formal sport. In both areas, it was found that players determine the game and factors as number or type.

3. Changing contexts —given that both spots belong to areas with continuous migratory movements in recent years, youth cultural diversity has been produced. Although Athens and Terrassa are two geographically distanced locations, they share similar characteristics. In these changing contexts, youth cultural patterns are subject to

the dynamics between *cultural production* and *cultural reproduction*.

- The group in Athens was composed of young people from three different origins: Greece, Albania, and the United States (two of the four Americans were of Greek origin, spending their holidays in the country).

- The group in Terrassa was composed of young people from three different sources: Catalan (belonging to second or third generation of domestic migrations in Spain), Moroccan, and Senegalese.

Regarding gender, the space in Terrassa could be considered a male space, while in Athens, despite a male majority, represents a gender-mixed space better. We will discuss further the implications of these factors in the activity development within spaces. Female absence is a recurrent event in sporting public spaces in cities. Anna Vilanova and Susana Soler (2008) have shown in their respective studies how negotiating spaces can be created, allowing the female practice of sports.

As part of this projects, it was observed how youth activities are developed through the informal group. Formal playing can be classified as cultural reproduction with no ability to act outside the rules. Global culture is shown in practices, objectives, and values. It is no trivial matter that basketball, like many other sports, was spread around the world with a pedagogical willingness by religious institutions. Youths were led to reproduce the values of the new industrial society, such as sharing of household duties, competitiveness, effort, self-improvement, gentlemanly or theoretically equal opportunities (Betancort & Almeida, 2000). In contrast, most of the games practised by the informal groups had a recreational purpose, often with no winners or losers. In the case of Athens and Terrassa, sports played were considered national sports as these were fully assimilated by the group. In reality, however, the sports practised were originally imported from the United States.

Basketball was one of the few sports that was developed simultaneously in both female and male versions. A lower level of aggressiveness explains this. Basketball is a sport that avoids contact and promotes technique (Betancort & Almeida, 2000), but unlike korfbal, it fails as a gender-mixed sport. In the two countries where the research was conducted, female basketball has a high presence in its formal practice. However, this is not the case in the informal practise in urban public spaces.

In the study mentioned above by Anna Vilanova and Susana Soler (2008), we see that women's presence in public spaces has been growing throughout the last thirty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, this growth has been reflected in sports activities such as inline skates or rock climbing, not in mass sports. Taking this into account, we studied the implications of female presence in the group of Athens, where the more casual the games were, the more gender-mixed the activity was, frequently leading to gender parity. The reason for that is the dynamics of youth cultural production.

## **INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW**

Basketball as a formal sport is not gender-mixed. When games are based on a cultural reproduction that youths have learned from, there is a clear male appropriation of space. This reflects the power of male basketball elsewhere such as television, government facilities, championships, or federations.

In each case study, we still observe one more example of inclusiveness in casual games: the possibility of including players belonging to different age ranges. Given that the groups were composed of young people from 13 to 18 years old, diversity of physical development due to the different ages caused similar segregation to that of gender. It is interesting to note that the youth agency reflected in the casual game was able to produce a playful culture for all ages and gender through a process of dialogue between the diversity of the users.

### **Discussion**

In an increasingly pedagogized society (Bernstein & Díaz, 1985) there are also increasingly less spaces available for youths to develop leisure and game activities autonomously. It comes at no economic cost and without the mediation of adults, who try to contain the playful purpose in exchange for training adolescents for adult life and social fit through targeted practices. In the research, the space where these activities are conducted is the informal space, without the authority of adults and where young people have the capacity to act autonomously.

We aimed to determine whether informal playing—based in basketball and practised by youths from different cultural backgrounds—could be treated as intercultural playing. In short, interculturality as a product is not present in youngsters since the amount of culture shared is higher than in non-shared culture. Modern sport is shared by young people's cultural backgrounds on the basketball courts in the cases studied. Cultural products can be intercultural when dynamism is expressed in them. We identify gender and age in this dialogue process and the youthful creative production through casual games.

Nevertheless, we determine that segregation by gender and age in sports reproduces inequality in society despite improving educational outcomes. We see that the existing regulations in many modern sports set quotas between local and foreign people, and this criterion does not impose a gender parity quota. Moreover, sports remain one of the few contemporary institutions that still practice segregation between men and women, reproducing the existing society at the time of sports creation. If we describe the sport as an educational tool for social reproduction, we will understand youthful games as an autonomous cultural production of informal youth groups. These casual games are part of youth culture of resistance and, in some cases, are produced through intercultural dialogue, such as gender sports cultures.

Many of these spaces used for sports practice often become male spaces. This phenomenon is different if we analyze formal spaces for gender-biased sport practice. Sports fields in public spaces in cities are not usually occupied in a gender-mixed way, but rather by means of male predominance, which reproduces patriarchal power structures. On the other hand, these youth groups do not have any kind of action capacity to modify or design the space and adapt it to their preferences, since there is no willingness from the public administration to take their opinion into account.

## **Conclusion**

The existence of public spaces in cities arranged for children and youngsters can cause conflicts, however the absence of these spaces reproduces social inequality in the use of these spaces. The possibility of sharing spaces to produce games or activities autonomously is essential to tackle inequalities and weave a coexistence that manages diversity. We must consider how young people live interculturality in changing contexts, since it is a stage of life where contact with diversity is normalised. Also, sharing school or high school approaches is their contact because both are the only public establishments compulsory for the entire young population. Conflictive situations in public spaces show their use and force us to negotiate space. Absence does not generate any conflict but, at the same time, allows possible contact and negotiation. Therefore, this trend of youth absence in city public spaces does not face reality, just avoids it.

## **References**

- Aarsand, P. A. & Aronsson, K. (2009). Gaming and territorial negotiations in family life. *Childhood*, 16(4), 497-517.
- Alfonso, O. R. & Lladó, A. P. (2010). *Jóvenes y riesgos: ¿unas relaciones ineludibles?* Bellaterra.
- Ames, P., Rojas, V. & Portugal, T. (2010). *Métodos para la investigación con niños: lecciones aprendidas, desafíos y propuestas desde la experiencia de Niños del Milenio en Perú*. GRADE
- Ariès, P. (1962). *Centuries of childhood*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bernstein, B. & Díaz, M. (1985). Hacia una teoría del discurso pedagógico. *Revista colombiana de educación*, 15, 105-153.
- Bertran, M. & Carrasco, S. (2002). "La evolución de la teoría de la enculturación y el redescubrimiento de la infancia" en González, A.; Molina, J.L. (coord.) (2002) *Abriendo surcos en la tierra*. Investigación básica y aplicada en la UAB. Barcelona, UAB Servei de Publicacions.
- Betancor, M.A. & Almeida, A. (2000). Orígenes Histórico-educativos del baloncesto, en *VEGUETA*, n.5 p.259-274
- Borja, J. (2004). *Los derechos en la globalización y el derecho a la ciudad*. Fundación Alternativas.
- Carrasco, S. (2005). Interculturalidad e inclusión: principios para evaluar la acogida al alumnado de origen extranjero. *Aula de innovación educativa*, 147, 64-68.

## INTERNATIONAL LEISURE REVIEW

- Curry, T.J. (1986). A visual method of studying sports: The photo elicitation interview. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 3, 204-216.
- Elias, N. & Dunning, E. (1986). *Quest for excitement. Sport and leisure in the civilizing process*. Basil Blackwell.
- Epstein, I., Stevens, B., McKeever, P. & Baruchel, S. (2006). Photo elicitation interview (PEI): Using photos to elicit children's perspectives. *International journal of qualitative methods*, 5(3), 1-11.
- Gaitan, L. (2006). La nueva sociología de la infancia. Aportaciones de una mirada distinta. en *Política y Sociedad*, Vol. 43 Núm. 1: 9-26
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- James, A. & James, A. L. (2009) *Key Concepts in Childhood Studies*, London: SAGE. 149-152.
- James, A. Jenks, C. & Prout A. (1998). Theorizing Childhood. Cambridge: Polity Press, *Acta Sociologica* October 1998 41: 395-398,
- James, A. & Prout, A. (2003). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*. Routledge.
- Jociles, M. I., Franzé, A. & Poveda, D. (2011). *Etnografías de la infancia y de la adolescencia*. Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata.
- Lazcano, I., Madariaga, A., Romero, S. & Kleiber, D. (2022). The importance of self-management in the leisure activities of young people. *World Leisure Journal*, 64(1), 23-34.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of Space*. London: Blackwells publishing.
- Molins, C. (2009). "Els patis escolars a Catalunya: diagnosi dels usos i de les possibilitats de joc i aprenentatge" a: *V Congrés Català de Sociologia. Immigració i societat catalana*. Bellaterra 17 y 18 de Abril 2009.
- Morrow, V. (2007). No Ball Games. Child space: an anthropological exploration of young people's use of space. En K. M. (Ed), *Child Space. An Anthropological Exploration of Young People's Use of Space*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Mumford, L. & da Silva, N. R. (1945). *La cultura de las ciudades*(Vol. 3). Buenos Aires: Emecé.
- Opie, I. A. & Opie, P. (2001) [1960]. *The lore and language of schoolchildren*. New York Review of Books.
- Ponferrada, M., Carrasco, S., Villà, R., Miró, M. & Gómez-Granell, C. (2006). *Convivència i confrontació entre iguals als centres educatius*, Síndic de Greuges- Defensor del Menor & Institut d'Infància i Món Urbà, Informe d'investigació.
- Roerig, S. (2011). Dutch Children: 'the happiest in the world'. Using Theatre Elicitation to get insights into children's understandings of happiness. *Centre for the Study of Childhood and Youth Postgraduate Summer School 05/07/2011*.
- Singh, P. (. (2020). *Basil Bernstein, Code Theory, and Education: Women's Contributions*. Routledge.
- Soler, S. & Vilanova, A. (2008). Las mujeres, el deporte y los espacios públicos: ausencias y protagonismos. *Apuntes. Educación física y deportes*, 91, 29-34.
- Tonucci, F. & Bobbio, N. (1996). *La città dei bambini: un modo nuovo di pensare la città*. Roma: Laterza.
- Trilla, J. & Rios, O. (2004). Les activitats extraescolars. Diferències i desigualtats. *Informe Infància, famílies i canvi social a Catalunya*. CIIMU.
- Valentine, G. (1997). "Oh Yes I Can" "Oh No You Can't": Children and Parents' Understandings of Kids' Competence to Negotiate Public Space Safely. *Antipode*, 29: 65-89.
- Verdaguer, J. (1991). Terrassa, bressol del bàsquet a Espanya. A: "*Terme*", núm. 6, p. 58-59.
- Verdaguer, J. (1992). *El bàsquet a Terrassa 75 anys d'història*. Terrassa: Arxiu Tobella, D. L.
- Vilanova, A., & Soler, S. (2008). Las mujeres, el deporte y los espacios públicos: ausencias y protagonismos. *Apuntes Educación Física y Deportes*, (91), 29-34.

Willcocks, M. (2008). Los códigos visuales asociados al deporte: una interpretación del espacio público. *Apuntes. Educación física y deportes*, 89.

Willis, P. (2005) [1977]. *Aprendiendo a trabajar. Cómo los chicos de clase obrera consiguen trabajos de clase obrera*. Akal. Madrid

Willis, P. (2006) [1981]. “Producción Cultural no es lo mismo que Reproducción Cultural, que a su vez no es lo mismo que Reproducción Social, que tampoco es lo mismo que Reproducción” en *Lecturas de antropología para educadores*, Ed. Trotta, Madrid.

Willis, P. (1998) [1990]. *Cultura viva. Una recerca sobre les activitats culturals dels joves*. Diputació de Barcelona. Barcelona

Whiting, B. B., & Whiting, J. W. (1975). *Children of six cultures: A psycho-cultural analysis*.

Zelizer, V. A. R. (1985). *Pricing the priceless child: The changing social value of children*. Princeton University Press.

\* \* \*

**Corresponding Author: Raúl Hernández-Villasol.**

**E-mail: hvraul@gmail.com**