

## **A COMPARISON BETWEEN CENTRE-BASED AND EXPEDITION-BASED (WILDERNESS) ADVENTURE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING REGARDING GROUP EFFECTIVENESS: A MIXED METHODOLOGY**

Gustav GREFFRATH\*, Charlé Du P. MEYER\*, Herman STRYDOM\*\* & Suria ELLIS\*\*\*

\**Physical Activity, Sport and Recreation, Faculty of Health Science, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, Potchefstroom, Republic of South Africa*

\*\**Department of Social Work, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, Potchefstroom, Republic of South Africa*

\*\*\**Department of Statistics, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, Potchefstroom, Republic of South Africa*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of a centre-based adventure program with an expedition-based wilderness program with regard to group effectiveness. For comparisons, this study made use of a crossover experimental design combined with a mixed-method approach. Participants were 28 third-year students (14 men and 14 women), aged 20-23 years ( $21.6 \pm 0.7$ ) of the North-West University. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used to gather the data. The results indicated medium ( $d=0.5$ ) to practically significant ( $d \geq 0.8$ ) differences mostly in favour of the centre-based adventure program (communication abilities, productiveness and competition within the group). Only 'group morale' was in favour of the expedition-based wilderness program, which showed a medium effect ( $d=0.5$ ). A significant sequence effect in favour of first attending the centre-based adventure program and thereafter the expedition-based wilderness program was documented, which led to the conclusion that the two programs should be used in combination. Although both programs were rated very efficient for the improvement of group effectiveness, it is strongly recommended that a centre-based adventure program be used – mainly on account of active involvement, intensive social interaction and continuous group discussions.*

**Key words:** Group effectiveness; Ropes course; Challenge course; Wilderness experience program; Wilderness therapy.