

Interview Analysis

To help me gain valuable insight into the subculture of CRCE (Campus Recreational Center East), I interviewed a member of the subculture. The purposes of this interview were to learn and analyze the “insider” language and get a first-hand account on their personal views of the subculture and field site.

Fortunately for myself, the person who I met at CRCE and requested an interview from lived at my residence hall. This made it much easier to schedule an interview and also made the interview that much more comfortable. By having similar housing arrangements it gave a much more informal feel to the interview, sort of like having casual conversation with a neighbor about the local fitness center. In my opinion, I felt that this type of environment opened up the member to the interview and I was able to get more detailed answers on how the member really felt. We met at a common lounge in our housing facility, which was empty during the time of the interview.

The first question that I asked was about the member’s frequency of use of the fitness center, and he replied that on a typical week he went there about four times. Going for over half the week shows some kind of commitment to facility and program that he follows. His next response showed that he was more of a weightlifter than a cardio person at first glance. But after asking him if he performed any cardio exercises or activities he replied that he did. According to the member, cardio workouts were well incorporated into his fitness program, and he performed them on a regular basis according to his schedule. When asked about his cardio activities in detail, he replied

that he preferred to run outside and that only weather conditions would sway him to do those activities indoor.

Indoor facilities like CRCE usually offer a synthetic running track as well as cardio machines. There are different types of machines such as the treadmill, which simulates walking, jogging, or running. There is the also elliptical machine, which simulates cross-country skiing. This is a newer machine which has all of the good benefits of cardio exercises while providing less stress on the lower body and back, especially the knees. The reason for this is because the machine is a little to none impact workout; the person's feet never leave the pedals. The last major cardio machine is the stationary bike, which is also a low to zero impact machine because the rider never leaves the pedals. This machine is not as efficient as the other two, but gives an alternative to the other machines.

The member's preference when it comes to the track or fitness machines is definitely the track. As more of a psychological reason, the member said he likes to feel "as though he is going somewhere" while running, and the treadmill certainly didn't give him this feeling. There are times though when his legs do feel weak from running, and that is when he uses the elliptical to give him an increased heart rate for his workout with less stress on the body.

For technology, the member uses an mp3 player whenever he is running or using a machine, but doesn't use it while lifting weights. To him, it becomes more of a distraction while weightlifting. As for watching the TV's that CRCE provides for its cardio machine users, the member replied that his general lifestyle doesn't really include watching TV, and that this mentality carries over into his workout periods.

I then changed subjects in the interview and started talking about CRCE. Just recently, CRCE was renovated and now offers 110,000 square feet of activity space. Its features now include an aquatic center, three basketball courts, a synthetic track and new fitness and weightlifting machines. I asked what the member thought of the atmosphere of CRCE and his reply was that it is a much newer building than IMPE (Intramural, Physical Education, the other fitness center on campus), and that it offered newer equipment. He used the term “aesthetically pleasing” to help describe the atmosphere of the facility. He also feels he is getting more out of the facility at CRCE than another place on campus.

After doing a little research on fitness centers in general, I learned that a fitness center’s structure could have a significant effect on an exerciser there. The idea of an open space for working out and seeing everyone else doing similar activities can be very influential. CRCE has a unique set up where the weightlifting and cardio machines are on a balcony above the basketball courts. There is also a track that goes around the whole facility on the second level. This setup allows for everyone to see each other while in their own respective activities. A setup like this is supposed to give people extra motivation as they see others around them working out and engaging in physical activities also. I expressed this idea to my interviewee and asked him if he thought it was true and that there was some effect. His response was that working out was more of a personal thing and that one just has to find their rhythm. He said that he didn’t like comparing himself with others or finding motivation in them. Finding motivation in yourself was really important. I realized that it wasn’t the question I was trying to get

across and tried to clear up the confusion by asking if it was the type of environment that gave motivation. He replied with the same answer.

The last question that I had time for during the interview was similar to the one before it. I asked the member what it was about the CRCE facility that attracted him to it. He replied that CRCE was obviously his first choice because of its proximity to his housing facility. He says that the atmosphere of CRCE is good, emphasizing adequate lighting and joking about the greenery.

At a later time I was able to ask the member another question pertaining to his feeling of belongingness to the subculture. Unfortunately the interview was interrupted and I wasn't able to record this part but in response to my question of any feelings of belongingness to the group, he replied that all his motivation was derived from internal matters and he didn't share anything with the other people of that subculture.

The interview was indeed successful in getting a first-hand opinion of the subculture and what they do. It was informal and had a comfortable feel to it as we both had things in common. Hopefully that casualness translated into more honest and open responses to the questions posed to the member. Overall it was very helpful and will definitely help others and myself in understanding the subculture.