

Discuss the value of outdoor adventure programmes in a post-modern society.

Living in a technology-driven post-modern society affects many people, including myself and those around me. Throughout this time, outdoor adventure programs offer a variety of beneficial outcomes. Whether one participates in a formal program or simply incorporates such activities into their daily lives can ultimately improve how each person views the world. Advancements and reliance on technology in relation to globalist agendas have led to the world experiencing a crisis of self-identity in many individuals (Kultenko, 2022). Technology has taken quite a toll on mental and physical health to the point where, if nothing is changed, there will be a downfall in humanity. Outdoor adventure programs suggest personal growth through experiential learning. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the lives of many, including access to natural spaces. For some, the outdoors became a gateway to escape from reality, and for others, especially those in cities, it was a place out of reach. "Post modernism examines the difference and similarity evolving from processes of globalization: likewise the accelerating circulation of individuals, the increasingly dense cross-cultural interactions, and also the unavoidable intersections of local and global knowledge" (Emeri and Olabiyi, n.d.). Outdoor adventure programs struggle with becoming known opportunities for people, while we are living in a world absorbed in devices. From my experience, a post-modern society *without* outdoor adventure programs would have a severe negative impact on tourism, child development, lack of education for all ages, and losing the sense of a community.

Traveling in a post-modern society expands the idea of tourism. Outdoor adventure when travelling brings about connections between people all throughout the world. Currently, "In an increasingly interconnected world, the need for cultural understanding and unity is more critical than ever. Outdoor activities offer a unique and compelling avenue to bridge cultural gaps, fostering understanding and respect among people from diverse backgrounds" (Fuentes, 2024). Cross-cultural connection is a huge value of mine. Growing up, I was immersed in Catalan culture through bonding with Joe, an exchange student from Barcelona who stayed with my family when I was four years old. Since then, I have been fortunate to visit his city and his family overseas. Joe is an adrenaline-seeking, plant physiology professor. Therefore, our time spent together consists of intellectual conversations while driving through the valleys, or stumbling upon artists' squat parties at the very top of a mountain. This type of human connection and sense of place can only be achieved through the lived experience, which is in contrast to the post-modern society. Adventure is a feeling and activity sought by everyone in a variety of forms. I've found from my experiences that a way to escape the negative impacts of tourism is to become overly immersed in the culture surrounding you.

The post-modern society we are living in today is a shock to those who grew up generations before. It was truly not long ago when there were no phones and children were told to be home before the streetlight came on. In my family, the traditions of exploring the trails behind my grandparents' old house lived on and were shared with me through storytelling and through the actual experience. Rather than playing video games or watching the television, my uncles would take my cousins and me on adventures in the woods they grew up exploring. They encouraged our imaginations through games and stories while running through the field, fishing in the pond, or following the sounds of flowing water. A backpacker states from her hike, “Despite the obvious differences in lived experiences, I’ve found generational gaps disappear almost entirely on a thru-hike. Even as it climbs, the trail has a way of flattening certain differences: No matter what age you are and what life experiences you’ve had, you’re all experiencing the same thing in the moment, walking in the same direction and climbing the same mountains” (Slepian, 2024). I believe my uncles discovered that re-tracing their steps on those trails, brought back that sense of adventure from their childhood. Sometimes, “A long-distance trail is about more than the hiking itself—it’s about the community. Socializing through the generational gaps enhances this even more” (Slepian, 2024).

Brains undergoing development while being exposed to an immense amount of technology have become an overlooked issue in this post-modern society. I have worked on an organic vegetable farm in Massachusetts called Holly Hill Farm for the past five years. At Holly Hill, we focus on maintaining sustainability in relation to a form of experiential learning. The mission behind the farm’s outdoor programs is seen as, “In a time where the natural world - and its changing climate - is of increasing importance, we know the educational programs we provide are especially critical. Whether we’re on the farm, or bringing our educational programming on the road to local classrooms, teaching in school gardens, and community locations, we are passionate about educating the next generation - and all ages - and helping to instill a lifelong love of the natural world” (Holly Hill Farm, 2025). Working with kids ranging from the ages of 3-12 and watching them thrive in the outdoors is extremely rewarding. Learning beyond classroom walls, apart from technology, expands imagination and creativity. I have come to know that children who take charge of their own learning paths will experience and benefit from firsthand trial and error. The results are so fulfilling, whether it is when the “quiet” kid becomes the group leader in a shelter building contest, or seeing the growth of a group as they circle together to navigate the woods using a map. The after-school adventure programs are a guaranteed time for children to stimulate their brains after sitting in a classroom all day. This type of learning offers the hands-on tasks that traditional schools lack, opening a new set of doors for kids to explore their likes and interests and supports the need for outdoor education in a postmodern society.

I attended no technology, nature boarding schools, Chewonki, and The Outdoor Academy, which were eye-opening experiences for me. Post-COVID, society had become so

acclimatized to devices that there were truly no signs of turning back. My life had gone from revolving around texting and doing chemistry work on my laptop, to living with strangers in a wood-framed cabin and circling around a fire pit for a species identification class. The outcomes that came from surrounding myself in these new environments were inspiring and rewarding. Chewonki's mission, "...inspires transformative growth, teaches appreciation and stewardship of the natural world, and challenges people to build thriving, sustainable communities throughout their lives" (Maine Coast Semester, 2022). Whereas, The Outdoor Academy focuses on the following: "...seven principles of simple living, work ethic, curiosity, integrity, stewardship, self-reliance, and gratitude" (Eagle's Nest Foundation, n.d.). Growing up in a traditional public school, I, amongst a handful of others, faced the daily struggle of sitting in a classroom all day. When I began nature school, I found myself not only driven to learn, but also growing my mindset and connection to the natural world as well. Lifelong learning in a post modern society is improved and elevated by outdoor education and experiences in the natural world.

Outdoor adventure programs across the world offer ways in which individuals are able to choose how to approach their future with the knowledge gained through the experience. Outward Bound, being one of the most widely known outdoor adventure organizations, holds very high percentages in the positive outcomes from their trips. On their website, it shows the impact data with 92% of students showing increased personal confidence, as well as 93% of students showing interest in learning more (Outward Bound, 2025). Outdoor adventure programs form connections face-to-face, undergoing real-life problem-solving. Trust plays a huge role in deepening connections in the outdoors. For example, having a partner for a group project in school ultimately can not form the same bond as one person climbing and the other belaying them. In adventure, trust comes down to keeping individual lives physically safe. The adrenaline that comes from that is a feeling that can't be taught within a classroom. As a result, the student feels a deep sense of community and connection, which is in contrast to the fragmented, tech-driven, post-modern society.

A post-modern society incorporating outdoor adventure programs has the potential for a lasting positive impact on child development, education, and community. People living in this society have been inundated with numerous technological advances that, over time, diluted people's links to reality. Instead, these technological environments are now perceived as their lived reality (Kultenko, 2022). Whether it is through education, work, or family traditions, time spent exploring and expanding my comfort zone in nature builds a sense of self in a post modern society that cannot be achieved in traditional learning environments. "What we need, in other words, is inspiring vistas that allow us to envision the world as it could be, rather than getting bogged down in the impossibilities that inherently accompany any problem" (Leonard, 2019). My hope is that when it comes to outdoor adventure, both individuals and groups will consider their own capacity for making even minor shifts in their thinking and will embrace a shift that breaks away from the tech-driven world.

Works Cited

Kultenko, V., Morska, N., Fesenko, G., Poperechna, G., Polishchuk, R. and Kulbida, S., 2022. The natural human rights within the postmodern society: A philosophical socio-cultural analysis. *Postmodern Openings*, 13(1), pp.186-197.

Emeri, P.N. and Olabiyi, O.B., EVOLVING FROM A POST MODERN SOCIETY: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GLOBAL CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION IN A POST COVID ERA. *International Journal of Youth Empowerment and Entrepreneurship Development*, pp.650-663.

Fuentes, Gem Roy. "How Outdoor Activities Can Bridge Cultural Gaps." 2024, <https://www.featherstoneoutdoor.com/blogs/all-blog-posts/how-outdoor-activities-can-bridge-cultural-gaps?srsItd=AfmBOopC4qq8-eni0y5Zn-cf3tCFjbxwRAv80xVuc5m3a7rw3Lk7pHZO>. Accessed 11 January 2024.

Slepian, Maggie. "Why Intergenerational Friendships Thrive on the Trail." 2024, <https://www.backpacker.com/stories/essays/why-intergenerational-friendships-thrive-on-the-trail/>. Accessed 11 December 2024.

Friends of Holly Hill Farms. "Education." *Holly Hill Farms*, 2025, <https://hollyhillfarm.org/education-1>. Accessed 5 November 2025.

Maine Coast Semester at Chewonki. 2022, <https://mainecoastsemester.chewonki.org/about/>. Accessed 5 November 2025.

Eagle's Nest Foundation. (n.d.) *The Outdoor Academy – Community*. Available at:

<https://www.enf.org/oa-explore/oa-community/> (Accessed: 7 November 2025).

Outward Bound (2025) *Educational Approach*. Available at:

<https://www.outwardbound.org/approach-and-impact/educational-approach/> (Accessed: 7 November 2025).

Leonard, M. (2019) *Post-postmodern human: aware of everything, willing to change nothing*. The

Correspondent. Available at:

<https://thecorrespondent.com/343/post-postmodern-human-aware-of-everything-willing-to-change-nothing> (Accessed: 7 November 2025).