

American Camp Association National Research Forum

Abstracts

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Dear Colleagues:

This book includes 16 abstracts that will be presented at the 2016 American Camp Association (ACA) Research Forum to be held during the ACA annual conference in Atlanta, GA from February 9-12. Twelve of these abstracts have been grouped into logical areas and will be verbally presented in four sessions. All abstracts will be on display as posters.

The Research Forum has grown in quantity and quality over the past decade. ACA's Committee for the Advancement of Research and Evaluation (CARE) has been instrumental in pushing this forum forward. Staff at ACA have been enthusiastically supportive including Amy Katzenberger and Melany Irvin. Boyd Hegerty, Jenn Piatt, and I provided peer-reviewed external evaluations for the selection of these 16 abstracts.

We look forward to presenting these papers at the 2016 Research Forum, but also recognize that many people cannot attend the annual meeting. We hope these 1500-word abstracts will provide information for those not able to attend. Please contact the authors if you have further questions.

Best wishes,



2016 ACA Research Forum Coordinator

The proper way to cite these abstracts using APA is:

Author name(s). (2016). Title of abstract. *2016 American Camp Association Research Forum Abstracts* (pp. x – x). Abstract retrieved from <http://www.....>

Example:

Baker, S., Morgan, C., & Santurri, L. (2016). A picture is worth a thousand words: Understanding campers' experience of nature at camp using photovoice. *2016 American Camp Association Research Forum Abstracts* (pp. 5 - 7). Abstract retrieved from <http://www.....>

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A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: UNDERSTANDING CAMPERS' EXPERIENCE OF NATURE AT CAMP USING PHOTOVOICE

Authors: Stacie Baker, Cass Morgan, Laura Santurri, Weber State University. Contact: Stacie Baker or Cass Morgan, 1435 Village Dr. Dept 2801, Ogden, Utah 84408.
staciebaker@mail.weber.edu or cassmorgan@weber.edu

Fueled by the nature movement, increased attention has been drawn to the benefits of youth spending time in nature. Connection to nature aids in physical, mental, cognitive, and socio-emotional health and development in youth (Mainella, Agate & Clark, 2011). Long-term interaction with nature also aids in resolving emotional disorders such as anxiety and depression (Mainella et al., 2011). Despite the known benefits of spending time in the outdoors, children are increasingly disconnected from the natural world (National Wildlife Federation, 2010). Summer camps, however, can serve as an important environment where youth can experience and connect to nature (Dressner & Gill, 2010; Schmillen & Jacobs, 2011).

Past research has explored youth's perceptions of nature and has found a number of constraints (e.g., discomfort, accessibility) that influence youth desire to spend time in the outdoors (The Nature Conservancy, 2012). Yet, little is known about how youth view and experience nature while at camp and the specific aspects of the outdoor environment that affect a campers' experience in nature. Understanding the aspects of nature that campers may enjoy or find unpleasant can be useful to determine ways to create positive changes in camp programming that facilitate a connection rather than a disconnection to nature. Other researchers have noted that one way to give youth voice during the research process is through photovoice (Johnston, Bialeschki, Henderson, & Ewing, 2004). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to use photovoice methods to explore campers' experience of nature in a summer camp.

Methods

Our study used a participatory qualitative methodology known as photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997). The photovoice technique focuses on empowering research participants to share and visually represent their perspective on specific issues using photographs and open dialogue (Wang & Burris, 1997). For this study, photovoice was used at a residential Girl Scout camp in Utah during the summer of 2015. Campers participating in a photography program were recruited to participate in the study. This approach was intentional to minimize the impact of data collection on regularly scheduled programming. The data collection process was streamlined into an existing program activity area. The sample consisted of 13 campers ages 11-17 years. All of the campers were from Utah.

The initial session with the campers included an overview of the cameras and photography techniques. Campers were given a sheet of paper with the following research questions: "While at camp, how do you feel when you are in nature?" and "If you could change anything about your outdoor experience at camp, what would it be and why?" Campers were then given a digital camera and instructed to take photos that captured their experience of nature while at camp as well as photos that addressed the research questions. Campers were asked to select three of their photos they felt best answered the research questions. Those images were then printed as 8"x10" photographs and mounted on poster board in preparation for the second session. This session was conducted with the same group of participants on a separate day. The session included a voice-recorded discussion where the campers shared their three photos and discussed how they related to the research questions.

Results

Participants' narrative and photographs were analyzed qualitatively for patterns and themes. These themes were then compared to the data until a coding scheme had been constructed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Data that provided no room for interpretation were coded as such. Data analysis revealed four major themes:

- Specific natural features of camp that impacted the camper's experience
- Positive and negative feelings about the outdoors
- Desire to go outside more, with structured and unstructured activities
- Awareness of the effects of technology

The results from this study indicated that the natural features such as the lakes, trees, sky, and terrain as well as time spent in nature contributed to the camper's overall experience, as expressed in this quote, "It's [nature] calming and once you look at it you realize there is more to the picture. There is more to the lake, more to the trees, more to everything in life." Although many campers expressed that they experienced positive emotions (e.g., calming, peaceful, stress-free) when they were in nature, other campers commented on experiencing negative emotions (e.g., too challenging, gross, uncomfortable). Campers also recognized their experience in nature at camp changed their perspective on and inspired them to spend more time outside at camp, as well as in everyday life. One camper explained, "This camp changed my opinion on nature. I feel like humans do belong on this earth because the way we interact with nature. It is natural for us." The campers also expressed their awareness of the overuse of technology in their everyday life contrasted with the limited use at camp as described in this quote, "I feel like here, I get used to being outside and everything so it will feel weird when I go home and watch T.V. and stuff. So I'll probably want to go back outside more. I think it's a good thing."

Discussion

The findings from this study illustrated how the natural environment of a camp setting can impact the campers' overall experience and can provide an important context in which campers can benefit from the positive outcomes of being in nature. Through photovoice, the campers were able to capture and express from their own perspectives the value of camp in their lives as well as some aspects of spending time in nature that were not as positive. This process gave the campers a voice to advocate for their ideal camp experience. Allowing campers to share their perspective on their experience with the natural environment opens a door for more effective planning and implementation of programs.

Implications for Camp

Based on the data from this study, camps should consider making adaptations to programming that happens indoors to better incorporate the natural environment. In this study, campers expressed a desire to spend more time outdoors during both structured and unstructured activities. This approach could include activities such as hiking, nature walks, time for exploring, and discovery. Arrangements could be made to take a mid-day break relaxing by a lake or in a shady grove of trees to allow campers to simply enjoy their environment. Activities that are normally done indoors can be adapted to take place in an outdoor setting. For example, more meals could be arranged to be eaten outdoors such as a barbecue or sack lunch. Arrangements could also be made to do art projects, games, or other typical indoor activities outside or away from the main structures of the camp.

Camp professionals should also consider using innovative methods of research, such as photovoice, as a way for campers to connect with nature. Using photovoice, campers can examine their own experiences and expose themselves to aspects of nature that they never realized were important to them. As campers creatively express their experiences and perspectives of the outdoors, they will become more aware of the details of their experience that often go unnoticed.

Understanding campers' perceptions of the camp environment is key to identifying ways to improve campers' negative perceptions of the outdoors and for camp professionals to work to change those perceptions. Further, one of the most valuable aspects of this study was learning how straightforward implementing photovoice can be to understand campers' perspective on their experience at camp. By embedding photovoice as part of scheduled camp activities, camps can minimize disruptions and use the process as a creative outlet to understanding campers' perceptions of their camp community.

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WHAT DO ENGAGED CAMP STAFF SAY, FEEL, AND DO?

Authors: Laurie Browne, California State University, Chico; Melissa D'Eloia, Western Washington University; Chase Michelotti, California State University, Chico. Contact: Laurie Browne, CSU, Chico 400 W. First Street, Chico CA 95929. lpbrowne@csuchico.edu

The purpose of this study was to better understand what engaged camp staff say, feel, and do. Although the benefits of working at camp are well documented (e.g., Browne & Heiser, 2015; Duerden et al., 2014; Powell et al., 2003), evidence suggests that camp staff experience stress and burnout (Paisley & Powell, 2007; Pavelka, 1993). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) contended that engagement is the opposite of burnout; others have demonstrated that engagement mitigates burnout (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). Engagement, broadly defined as a state of being fully present, is thought to promote a variety of benefits including optimal performance in school (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005) and job satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2006). Much of the research on engagement, however, has focused specifically on either college student engagement or employee engagement, and neither represents fully the unique characteristics of the camp context. Given the number of camps that hire college-age camp staff, it is possible that camp staff engage differently at camp than they would in school or in a non-camp job. This difference might be especially true among college-age staff working in a university-based day camp. A better understanding of camp staff engagement will give camp administrators a framework to effectively recruit, train, and retain high-quality staff.

Theoretical Framework

Engagement is thought to include both affective and behavioral components, but scholars interested in college student engagement and those interested in employee engagement approach the concept in different ways. Engaged college students, for example, were involved in educationally purposeful activities, (Kuh, 2009), while engaged employees felt dedicated to the organization (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Handelsman and his colleagues (2005) typified college student engagement into four domains: emotional engagement (feelings of connection and interest in learning), participatory engagement (interacting with instructors and peers), skills engagement (uses strategies known to promote academic success), and performance engagement (achieves academic success). Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) model depicted employee engagement as feelings of vigor, absorption, and dedication at work. Another way these approaches differ is related to the temporal nature of engagement. Some researchers conceptualized engagement as a relationship with the school or employer that was stable over time (e.g., Kuh, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002). However, Bakkar and Bal (2010) found that employee engagement varied from day to day. Our attempt to understand camp staff engagement focused specifically on university-based day camps because possibly the intersection between school and work might be particularly prominent in staff members' processes of being fully present in their camp counselor role.

Methods

Setting & Participants

Data were gathered using mixed methods, which included surveys, focus groups, and daily journals from a random sample of camp directors and from staff members. Staff ($n = 48$) from two university-based day camps that were similar in size and program structure were the primary participants in this study. One of the camps hired only students enrolled at that university and gives course credit for an 8-week staff training *course*. The other camp hired a combination of enrolled students as well as non-enrolled college-age individuals. Camp directors

($n = 500$) were randomly selected from all American Camp Association accredited camps in the US.

Measurement

To examine how camp directors conceptualized staff engagement, a single item, open-ended survey asked “What do engaged camp staff say, feel, and do?” was sent to camp directors. This survey was based on Handelsman et al.’s (2005) work exploring college student engagement. Access to university-based day camp directors exclusively was not available. Camp directors were emailed the question and asked to respond anonymously.

This question was also included as a part of an online survey administered to the camp staff members at the two camps. They were asked to share their age, the number of years worked at camp, if they were an enrolled college student, and why they took a job working at camp. In addition to this survey, staff at each site participated in a focus group and completed a daily journal where they rated their overall level of engagement for that day and described what specific things they did or felt that represented their level of engagement.

Data analysis procedures

Qualitative data from director and staff surveys were open coded and then organized into broad themes specific to each data set. The research team then discussed and compared themes, from which a total of five key themes related to camp directors’ perspective on engagement and six key themes related to staff members’ perspectives on engagement emerged. Because this difference emerged, Handelsman et al.’s (2005) model of college student engagement and Schaufeli et al.’s (2006) model of employee engagement were used as frameworks to compare directors’ and staff members’ perspectives on engagement. Focus group data with camp staff were transcribed and analyzed. The focus group data were open coding by three members of the research team and then themes were compared together as a team. Daily staff journals were analyzed by one member of the research team and used to augment survey and focus group data.

Results

A total of 131 camp directors responded to the single-item survey. In addition, 48 staff members between the ages of 18 and 24 years completed the survey, the journals, or participated in the focus group. The staff included 37 first-time staff members. Not all 48 staff members completed the survey, journals, and participated in the focus group due to absences and scheduling conflicts.

One of the key initial findings was that camp directors and staff members approached engagement differently. For example, when asked “What do engaged staff say, feel, and do,” a theme related to positive affect emerged from both the camp director and the staff member responses. However, many camp staff described affect as “feeling happy and having fun with the kids,” while several camp directors described positive affect toward campers, other staff, and the camp as a whole. Effort was another theme represented in both data sets, but camp directors described effort as “going above and beyond” and “asking ‘How can I help?’” Camp staff described effort as “getting in there with the kids” and “getting the kids to their activities on time.” Relationships was a third theme that emerged from both the camp director data and the camp staff data, but, with subtle differences. Camp staff, in the focus groups, described how the out-of-camp social connections with their co-workers was a part of their overall engagement in their job, while camp directors said that engaged staff “are connected to administrators.”

Weekly journals showed evidence of engagement as variable over time and related primarily to camper behavior and staff members’ physical/emotional wellness. In general, the research team determined that although similarities in how camp directors and camp staff

described staff engagement, staff members' descriptions of engagement fit into Handelsman et al.'s (2005) domains of college student engagement while directors' descriptions of engagement were more akin to Schaufeli's et al.'s (2006) concept of employee engagement.

Discussion & Camp Applications

This study provided an exploration of camp staff engagement with a specific focus on camp staff working at university-based day camps. Although exploratory, several implications for how camp directors approach engagement with their staff were evident. First, camp administrators might consider ways to frame camp employment as a learning and growth opportunity similar to school. Administrators might also consider ways to capitalize on staff members' engagement with the campers specifically, perhaps by equipping staff with effective behavior management skills and supporting staff wellness throughout the summer. Of additional consideration, based on this study, is the extent to which college-age camp staff engage with camp organizational features such as program design and camp mission. Possibly college-age camp staff engage most readily with their immediate tasks such as campers, activities, and their co-counselors, and do not engage as readily with camp administration and the organization as a whole. It is likely, though, that this engagement differs for staff working in camp settings other than university-based day camps. Research on day camps in general is limited. Thus, better understanding how staff engagement differs between day and resident camps is important. It is also important to note that the camp directors surveyed in this study included both day and resident camp directors, and the percentage of each is unknown. Future research is necessary to better understand how camp directors and camp staff approach engagement in similar or different ways that are specific to each of these settings.

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BENEFITS OF LONG-TERM PARTICIPATION IN CAMP EXPERIENCES FOR MILITARY YOUTH

Authors: Theresa M. Ferrari & Quinn Bailey Dybdahl, The Ohio State University.

Contact: Theresa M. Ferrari, 2201 Fred Taylor Dr., Columbus, OH 43210. ferrari.8@osu.edu

Since 9/11, a significant number of service members have experienced one or more deployment cycles (Department of Defense, 2010). Deployment affects not only the individual, but the entire family system (Lester & Flake, 2013; Lester, Paley, & Saltzman, 2013; Masten, 2013). Because adolescence is a particularly vulnerable time, some consider military youth to be an *at-risk* population because they experience the usual milestones of adolescent development coupled with additional stresses such as parental deployment and reintegration (Chandra et al., 2010; Cozza, Chun, & Polo, 2005; Millburn & Lightfoot, 2013). However, adolescents can also exhibit resilience in the face of risk (Easterbrooks, Ginsburg, & Lerner, 2013).

Attending camp has been linked to many positive outcomes (Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). The positive youth development outcomes derived from camp participation align with those desired for military youth (Huebner & Mancini, 2005; 2010). Previous studies of camps for military youth have found that participation reduced participants' stress level (Le, 2014; Marek, O'Rourke, & Moore, 2013). Campers have improved their communication, coping, and social skills, and one of the biggest benefits has been the connections built with other youth (Clary & Ferrari, 2015).

Because research on the outcomes of support systems for military youth is limited, we addressed some gaps in the literature. Previous studies have evaluated experiences at a camp's conclusion or shortly thereafter. Quantitative measures may not adequately capture the benefits. For example, a study using surveys to collect data found no significant differences in many of the areas of interest, whereas open-ended responses provided relevant insights (Chandra Lara-Cinisomo, Burns, & Griffin, 2012). Therefore, we decided to look more broadly than participation in one event, and we believed interviews with long-term participants would provide deeper insights than we could obtain from survey questions. The purpose of our study was to gain adolescent participants' perspectives of their experiences in Ohio Military Kids (OMK) camp program for military youth.

Theoretical Foundations

Because the goal of programs for military youth is for them to be able to handle adversity and grow from their experience, resilience theory is useful. Resilience is affected by both internal and external factors (MacDermid Wadsworth, 2010; MacDermid, Samper, Schwarz, Nishida, & Nyaronga, 2008; Richardson, 2002). Fergus and Zimmerman (2005) categorized the positive factors that promote resilience as *assets* and *resources*. Assets such as competence, coping skills, and self-efficacy reside within the individual. Resources are external to the individual and include parental support, adult mentoring, or community organizations that promote positive youth development. Like positive youth development, resilience is focused on strengths rather than deficits, with an emphasis on developing resources and understanding healthy development in spite of risk exposure (Masten, 2014). Camps can be considered one such resource, and thus, hold promise as a context for supporting resilience.

Methods

Using a set of interview questions developed to address the goals of this study, we interviewed 11 youth (6 females and 5 males) with a mean age of 18.9 years. Participants described their experiences as a military child, followed by their experiences with participating in camp programs. The interviews ranged from 25 to 60 minutes; they were audio taped and

transcribed verbatim. Inductive analysis was used to derive themes (Thomas, 2006). An initial round of coding identified two themes: challenges with deployment and experiences with support (Bailey, Lang, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Ferrari, 2015). For the purposes of this study, the interview transcripts were re-examined to expand on the theme of supports, specifically from the perspective of camp participation as a resource that supports resilience.

Results

The participants in this study had long-term involvement with OMK camp programs, having participated as campers and camp counselors. Most had also participated in other opportunities such as weekend family camps and teen camps. Four related themes emerged from the data: initial involvement, establishing close relationships, creating a desire to give back, and further skill development and personal growth. They viewed their involvement in OMK camps as an important resource. As one participant said, “When you’re here [at camp], it’s a whole new world.” For many, going to camp was the first time that they got to know others with a parent in the military. Their involvement helped them to establish connections and friendships with other military youth. As one teen described, it helped her “by giving me friendships that I can rely on...I could tell [my friend] anything, and he’s just so understanding and it’s nice to have that kind of friendship, that kind of bond with people who have all gone through the same thing.” It was clear from such comments that the youth formed close, family-like relationships that served as a support system through the challenges of military life.

Their involvement created a desire to give back, manifested in their experiences as camp counselors. As one participant said, their camp experience was meaningful because “we were those kids once, and we had a counselor that made us want to be counselors, and that’s all we want to do, we want to be counselors that make them want to be counselors.” Another shared that her participation has “almost given me a purpose...I know I’ve made a difference in peoples’ lives.” This increased leadership role further contributed to their skill development and growth, as described by this participant: “Those leadership roles...helped me figure out who I wanted to be, so when I went to college I made sure I was that person.”

Implications

This study responded to the call for more research on military adolescents’ developmental experiences and outcomes (Millburn & Lightfoot, 2013). We found that participants benefit from long-term participation in multiple ways, but primarily through establishing relationships with those who share the experience of being in a military family. The results of this study were consistent with others who have examined opportunities afforded by deployment (e.g., Knoblock, Pusateri, Ebata, & McGlaughlin, 2015) and have found connections to be a major benefit of program participation (Clary & Ferrari, 2015). Our findings support the notion of individuals being able to thrive in the aftermath of adversity (Masten, 2014). Social supports, such as those provided by camps, can facilitate this positive adaptation (Millburn & Lightfoot, 2013).

Understanding the ways programs benefit participants will strengthen outreach to military youth audiences. Although camps are an external resource, they provide the space to develop internal assets that fostered resilience such as coping skills. Coupled with recommendations calling for programs to enhance the well-being of military families (Ames et al., 2011; The White House, 2011), these findings offer support for continued use of camps to address the needs of military youth. Camp directors should ensure their programs provide ample ways to develop connections. Such support programs should aim for sustained involvement to foster the development of resilience.

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PARENTAL ANXIETY CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES: PERSPECTIVES FROM CAMP PROGRAM PROVIDERS

Authors: Barry A. Garst and Ryan J. Gagnon, Clemson University. Contact: Barry A. Garst, 277 Lehotsky Hall, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634. bgarst@clemson.edu

Parents are gatekeepers of their children's experiences and often are vigilant about providing safe and developmental experiences. Although camp program providers take numerous steps to manage potential risks youth are exposed to during camp experiences, parents may still have anxiety about the camp experience in spite of these efforts.

While some camps collect parent satisfaction data (American Camp Association, 2011), and parental perceptions of youth outcomes have been studied (Baughman, Garst, & Fuhrman, 2009; Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007), little attention has been paid to parental anxiety associated with camp except for a few studies of homesickness (e.g., Kingery, Peneston, Rice, & Wormuth, 2012). Our study aimed to fill this gap by exploring how parental anxiety may influence camp operations and programming through the lens of camp program providers. More specifically, this study examined causes of parental anxiety from the perspective of camp program providers, operational and programmatic consequences associated with camp program providers' management of parental anxiety, and practices camp providers used to reduce parental anxiety.

Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by theories associated with parent involvement (Caspe, Traub, & Little, 2002), overparenting (Segrin, Wosidlo, Givertz, & Montgomery, 2013), and the social construction of risk (Backett-Milburn & Harden, 2004). Parental involvement is foundational to positive youth development (PYD) settings and outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001), and research has supported the importance of parental involvement in youth programs (Ferreri, Futris, Smathers, Cochran, Arnett, & Digby, 2006). Parent involvement can be normative or non-normative.

One type of non-normative parenting is overparenting. Segrin et al. (2013) defined overparents as those who "appear hyper-involved in their children's lives, risk averse, and [overly] preoccupied with their children's emotional well-being" (p. 570-571). Overparenting research has been confined to clinical (Locke et al., 2012) or higher education settings (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) with little evidence of the influence overparenting may have on youth during the middle and high-school age years.

Moreover, research on modern parenting suggests that a *risk society* has emerged (Scott, Jackson, & Backett-Milburn, 1998), in which parents are constantly engaging in assessing and managing potential risks in their children's life. Thus, it is important to understand how parents socially construct this risk (Backett-Milburn & Harden, 2004), how their perceptions of risk may contribute to the development of anxious thoughts and feelings, and how parental anxiety may influence the experiences parents allow for their children. Consequently, some research suggested that healthy child development may be inhibited when parents limit their child's experiences to minimize real or perceive risks (Hood-Williams, 1990). However, little is known about how this process may unfold for youth and parents related to parental perceptions of camp experiences.

Methods and Procedures

Data for this study were acquired during the spring of 2015 through an ACA research collaboration. Directors representing 1,792 ACA accredited camps were sent an email invitation to complete the web-based Camp Emerging Issues Survey resulting in 248 responses and a 14% response rate. Select questions from the survey were analyzed related to the influence of parental anxiety on camp programs and operations such as "To what extent is parent anxiety a management concern at your camp?" and "If you have made any operational or programmatic changes at your

camp due to the concern or anxiety expressed by parents, then please explain the type of changes made.”

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze responses to the Likert style questions. Content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to code the qualitative responses to the open-ended questions. After initial codes were identified, patterns and associations across the initial codes were ascertained. The researchers constructed 11 preliminary themes across the two questions using an inductive approach moving from the data to broader generalizations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Results

This study highlighted the need to understand more deeply how parental anxiety may influence the provision of camp experiences. Over 40% of respondents identified parental anxiety as a moderate to significant concern at their camps and a third of respondents (33%) indicated that they would describe parents’ level of anxiety during pre-camp and during-camp conversations as reflecting moderate to significant anxiety. These findings compliment other results from the 2015 ACA Emerging Issues Survey (American Camp Association, 2015), which found that 64% of respondents identified parent communication as the most important issue they faced over the past two years. These parent-related issues may be comparatively more important than program quality monitoring (57%), staff training and professional development (56%), and programming (54%).

Preliminary constructed themes (summarized in Table 1) associated with director perceptions of parental anxiety suggested that parent anxiety has multiple causes. Some may be within a camp director sphere of influence such as strengthening communication and building trust. Others, such as the expression of “helicopter parenting” behaviors, may require further study. Preliminary constructed themes associated with operational or programmatic changes suggest that camp directors are using a range of strategies to reduce parent anxiety, broadly summarized as communication, staffing, access, and education.

Table 1. Preliminary themes associated with director perceptions of parental anxiety and related operational and programmatic changes	
<i>If you have observed or experienced parents with moderate to significant levels of anxiety, then please describe what you believe was the cause of parents' anxiety.</i>	<i>If you have made any operational or programmatic changes at your camp due to the concern or anxiety expressed by parents, then please explain the type of changes made.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #1- Anxiety is influenced by parental separation and related loss of communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #1- Enhanced parent communication strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #2- Parents without camp experience are more anxious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #2- Increased parent access to the camp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #3- Parental anxiety is associated with a lack of trust in camp administration and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #3- Strengthened staffing patterns, staff training, and preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #4- Parents who show controlling, “helicopter parenting” behaviors are more anxious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #4- Increased social media web strategies to give parents virtual admission into camp life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #5- Parents fear that their child will experience physical, emotional, or social hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #5- Enhanced parent outreach, programs, and pre-camp training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #6- Parents concerned child is not properly prepared for camp (gear, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme #6- Reinforced camp policies and procedures

Implications

These findings can be applied to camp administration in a number of ways. First, program providers can compare their experiences with parents to those shared by respondents in this study to identify areas of similarity and difference. Second, camp program providers can consider strategies their peers are using to address parental anxiety as strategies for potential adoption. The study findings supported researchers' recommendations to better understand the influence of overparenting on the provision of youth programs (Garst & Gagnon, 2015). A logical next step is to collect data from parents about their involvement in camp programs and the extent to which they experience anxiety when sending their children to camp to better understand the possible relationship between parental involvement and parental anxiety.

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LIFE SKILLS, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AND ANTECEDENTS OF CHANGE IN CAMP ALUMNI

Authors: Barry A. Garst and Ryan J. Gagnon, Clemson University. Contact: Barry A. Garst, 277 Lehotsky Hall, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634. bgarst@clemson.edu

Although considerable attention has been paid to the developmental outcomes of camp experiences (e.g., Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007; Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011), less interest has been paid to factors that contribute to outcomes. Labelled *mechanisms* (Mainieri & Anderson, 2014), *conditions* (Garst, Franz, Baughman, Smith, & Peters, 2009), *elements* (Hough & Browne, 2009) or *antecedents of change* (Garst, 2010), factors such as session length, program structure, staff support, and program intentionality are believed to influence program outcomes. An understanding how these outcomes might be influenced, produced, or otherwise enhanced may allow program providers to bring a greater level of deliberation to their efforts, thus producing the camp experiences most likely to impact youth in positive ways.

The purposes of this study were: (a) to validate three subscales measuring life skill development, elements of positive youth development (PYD), and antecedents of change; and (b) to examine potential relationships between elements of positive youth development, antecedents of change, and a common camp outcome, self-determinate behavior.

Theoretical Framework

Theories and frameworks that guided this study included the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1998), the Community Action Framework for Positive Youth Development (Gambone & Connell, 2004), and Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). Although life skills examined within the context of youth development programs such as camps often lack a clear definition, Duerden and Witt (2011) suggested that life skills generally reflect the World Health Organization's (WHO, 1997) definition, which described life skills as "abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable individuals [youth] to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (p. 1). These abilities encourage young people to expand their knowledge and to move towards mastery of these demands and challenges. The Community Action Framework for Positive Youth Development (Gambone & Connell, 2004) was notable for identifying *supports and opportunities* necessary for PYD to occur within a youth program setting and guiding previous research exploring camp as a setting for PYD (American Camp Association, 2006). Finally, SDT is a motivational approach to behavior change used in a number of previous studies of the developmental outcomes of camp experiences (Hill, Gagnon, Ramsing, Goff, Kennedy, & Hooker, 2015; Schmaltz, Kerstetter, & Kleiber, 2011).

Methods and Procedures

Participants were recruited through a collaboration with the American Camp Association, who provided a randomized list of 350 U.S. accredited day and resident camps. A sample of directors from these camps shared an online Qualtrics® survey with their alumni resulting in 427 responses. The survey contained short-answer and Likert questions relating to participant demographics, skill development associated with camp participation, perceptions of camp as a setting for PYD, and components of the camp experience contributing to developmental outcomes. Questions were developed based on a review of the relevant literature and theory using a retrospective post-test format (Marshall, Higginbotham, Harris, & Lee, 2007).

Results

The three subscales were derived from a total question list of 43 4-point Likert scale questions. Since these scales were developed from both prior research, but had not been

psychometrically validated, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the questions was conducted. The results of this analyses indicated that 11 of the 43 questions were a poor fit either due to loading onto multiple factors or low loadings onto a single factor. The results of the EFA indicated the presence of three subscales: (a) self-determined behavior, (b) elements of PYD, and (c) antecedents of change (AOC). After scale validity was determined a reliability analysis was conducted using both Cronbach's Alphas (α) and Joreskog's Rho (ρ). Self-Determined Behavior (SDB) indicated good reliability as evidenced by both the Joreskog's Rho and Cronbach's Alphas ($\rho = .905$, $\alpha = .862$), as did the PYD subscale ($\rho = .904$, $\alpha = .854$), and the AOC subscale ($\rho = .821$, $\alpha = .804$). Subscales were subsequently converted into composite scores using the MEAN function in SPSS 22.

To understand the relationship between PYD, AOC, additional descriptive variables and SDB, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted using a theory based blocked format. In brief the combination of PYD, AOC, Session Length, and Target Audience predicted 37.5% of the variance in SDB score. Furthermore, staff status, years spent at camp, and camp style (i.e., resident or day camp) were not significant predictors in this sample. In the final model the unique effect sizes of PYD ($sr^2 = .115$), AOC ($sr^2 = .071$), Session Length ($sr^2 = .098$), and Target Audience ($sr^2 = .018$) indicated that these variables uniquely explained 11.5%, 7.1%, 9.8%, and 1.8% of variance in the SDB composite score. Additional modeling work with the inclusion of prior staff status, total years spent at camp, and camp style (resident or day camp) as variables indicated these were not significant predictors of SDB in this sample.

Implications

Several studies of the developmental outcomes of camp have indicated that growth in self-determinate behavior is a positive consequence of the camp experience (Hill et al., 2015; Roark, Ellis, Wells, & Gillard, 2010). This study provided complimentary evidence of the appropriateness of SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2000) as a theoretical frame for understanding skill development through camp experiences.

The study findings suggested that for many camps the presence of antecedents of change like: "being treated fairly," "staff attention and interaction," "sense of community," "small groups," and "leadership opportunities," and the elements of PYD such as the opportunity to learn and practice skills, supportive adult relationships, and emotional belonging significantly /contributed to the long-term development of SDB. Further , the analyses indicated that camp session length positively contributed to the achievement of SDB; moreover, the camp target audience focusing on either boys or girls also significantly contributed to SDB, but at a level that would be considered statistically meaningless accounting for only 1.8% of the total variance in SDB score. Conversely, prior status at a camp, number of years spent at camp, and residential or day camp status, did not predict SDB score. This finding runs counter to prevailing wisdom that working as a camp counselor or spending multiple summers at camp will necessarily contribute to positive growth and development.

To our knowledge this study of camp alumni is the largest to date. However, due to the exploratory nature of the study, further replication is highly recommended. The testing of the now validated scales and corresponding model using more empirically robust methods such as confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling may further contribute to the story of the long-term benefits of camp. Further exploration is also warranted in outcomes beyond self-determinate behavior such as career and life satisfaction. This more holistic approach could highlight additional benefits of the camp experience and thus provide camp providers and researchers with more evidence to articulate the benefits of the camp experience.

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DOES A 45-MINUTE STAFF TRAINING SESSION ON CAMPER FRIENDSHIP SKILLS MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO CAMPER OUTCOMES?

Authors: Ann Gillard, Ph.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and Mark F. Roark, Ph.D., Quality Measures, LLC. anngillard@gmail.com

This study investigated if campers' self-reported friendship skills changed from a summer when staff received no training about camper friendship skills to the next summer when staff attended a 45-minute training on this topic. Findings from this study could be used to make decisions about the amount and quality of camp staff training on camper friendship skills. The setting for this study was a seven-day residential recreational camp serving children with serious illnesses (e.g., cancer, sickle cell, HIV/AIDS, metabolic disease, and other serious illnesses) and their siblings.

Friendship skills is a youth development outcome defined by the American Camp Association as making friends and maintaining relationships (2011, p. 4). The experience of serious illness can greatly affect friendships with other youth. Developing and maintaining friendships is complicated by hospitalizations, differences in appearance, and decisions about disclosing or sharing information about the illness (Taylor, Gibson, & Franck, 2008). Friendships made at camp can help participants of camps for children with cancer identify with each other, have a positive impact on children's friendships (Martiniuk, Silva, Amylon, & Barr, 2014), and form meaningful relationships and feel less isolated (Beckwitt, 2014).

Published research using ACA's friendship skills scale is small but increasing. In an afterschool program, intentionally designed experiences were effective in increasing participants' friendship skills (Roark, Gillard, Evans, Wells, & Blauer, 2012). In a study of a camp for youth with cancer, Martiniuk et al. (2014) found that a high proportion of the older campers felt that their friendship skills increased significantly during their time at camp. Less is known about how staff training might influence campers' friendship skills.

Theoretical Framework

Developmental Systems Theory (DST) was used in this study to consider the processes between campers and their context in camp. According to DST, the nature of the systems in which campers are embedded likely has bearing on their development. Youth development involves changing *relations* between the developing youth and their shifting contexts, and acknowledges that youth exist in a larger social context (Lerner & Castellino, 2002). A key element of DST is *fit*: activities and experiences that are developmentally appropriate, interesting, and engaging, and that provide support via interactions with caring others and opportunities for building skills. In DST, youth thrive when there is alignment between their strengths and ecological resources in their context (Lerner et al., 2014). For example, changing the adults in the camp system by influencing their knowledge and attitudes through training could affect campers within the system. Other research has shown youth-level effects of staff-level intentional outcomes training (e.g., Galloway, Bourdeau, Arnold, & Nott, 2013; Roark, Gillard, Evans, Wells, & Blauer, 2012). For this study, we intervened in the camp system by adding a staff training session and examined if that intervention had any effect on the developmental outcome of camper friendship skills.

Methods

The first author designed and delivered a 45-minute training about friendship skills to approximately 80 summer staff during orientation in June 2015. Elements of the training included:

- a. introduction about why friendship skills are important to youth living with serious illness
- b. paired discussion about what people look for in a friend
- c. large group discussion about specific steps staff could take on camper arrival day to help them make friends
- d. paired discussion about what staff could do during camp to promote friendship between campers, followed by a large group discussion of favorite ideas
- e. a role playing scenario showing three different types of friendship building- or thwarting interactions (aggressive, passive, and productive)
- f. interactive building block activity of the 14 items from the friendship skills scale

No other staff training on friendship skills was conducted, although there were related training sessions about managing camper behavior, welcoming campers, and conflict management.

Parent or caregiver consent was obtained for campers to participate in evaluation activities in 2014 and 2015. Campers, aged 10-15 years, completed the friendship skills survey on their last full day at camp including 399 campers in 2014 and 467 campers in 2015.

In 2014, friendship skills were measured from -1 (decreased), 0 (did not increase or decrease), 1 (increased some) and 2 (increased a lot). In 2015, a third “increase” option was offered so that the increase part of the scale was 1 (increased a little), 2 (increased some) and 3 (increased a lot). The reason for the initial 4-point scale in 2014 was for camper ease in filling out the survey, but we recognized the potential for ceiling or floor effects. Thus, the third response category was added to comply with the original ACA response categories. The data were standardized prior to analyses.

Camper data for both years were analyzed using descriptive and reliability statistics. Differences between years with and without training were tested using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) procedures with the following hypothesis, $H_0: \mu_{\text{train}} = \mu_{\text{no train}}$. The covariate was age. Adjusted means, standard deviations, and strength of relationship statistics were calculated. Homogeneity of variance assumptions was tested.

Results

The test between friendship skills training and no training ($N = 866$) was significantly different ($F_{1, 866} = 139.66, p < .001$). This result is important because it provided evidence that intentional training affected camper outcomes. Descriptive statistics indicated the adjusted friendship mean for the friendship skills training ($M = .43, SD = .99$) was higher than training without a friendship focus ($M = -.55, SD = .69$). Levene’s test rejected the hypothesis that group variances were equal for friendship skills ($F = 42.54, p < .001$).

Table 1

ANCOVA for the Effect of Training vs. No Training on Friendship Skills

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2
Corrected Model	209.39	2	104.70	139.66	<.001	.245
Age	.90	1	.90	2.38	.274	.001
Training vs. No Training	208.08	1	208.08	4.33	<.001	.243

$R^2 = .245$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .243$)

Camp Applications

This study showed that intentional training for staff about camper friendship skills made a difference to this youth development outcome. This study adds to the growing literature on training interventions and youth outcomes. A key finding was that a relatively short training of 45 minutes still had an effect on camper outcomes. Future research will examine if longer and more frequent and complex friendship skills trainings will further enhance camper friendship skills. Understanding the effectiveness of training interventions of different lengths can inform how camps allocate training time and resources for different topics.

If camps aim to promote friendship skills or other positive youth development outcomes, they should train staff specifically in these areas. Using wording from the ACA Friendship Skills scale to focus on specific skills and encouraging staff to consider scenarios relevant to their camp seem to be good practices for staff training. As camps envision a world in which they are an essential part of youth development, intentionally training staff to promote positive youth outcomes is one key step toward this vision.

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OUTCOMES OF CAMP TRAVEL AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS: ASSESSING INDEPENDENCE, EXPLORATION, FAMILY CITIZENSHIP AND TEAMWORK USING THE YOUTH OUTCOMES BATTERY

Authors: Colie Haahr and Nate Trauntvein, University of New Hampshire. Contact: Colie Haahr, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH. neh2012@wildcats.unh.edu

“I feel that it was a life changing experience.” This quote from the parent of a youth travel program participant spoke to the transformative power of travel experiences. From one quote, however, knowing the ways in which a participant’s life was changed, or why changed occurred is not clear. My study examined outcomes of a youth travel program experience. Specifically this study examined independence, exploration, family citizenship, and teamwork outcomes for youth on international and domestic travel programs.

Approximately 130 adolescent participants completed the Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) assessments in the summer of 2015 following international and domestic leadership travel programs. The four YOB scales used were: family citizenship behaviors, independence, interest in exploration, and teamwork. A program evaluation approach was used to assess the participant outcomes, and statistical analyses were used to further explore relationships between participant outcomes and independent variables including age, gender, and number of years at camp.

Theoretical Foundations

Similar to the outdoor adventure program process outlined by Walsh and Golins (1976), international youth travel programs share aspects of youth exchange and study abroad programs. Youth travel programs match Walsh and Golins’s outline of a youth adventure program because participants are placed in an unfamiliar environment and given prescribed problems to solve, which could produce feelings of “mastery” and changes in participants’ self-esteem and self-awareness (1976, p. 16). Sibthorp’s 2003 study of a ship based outdoor education program was a close match to the type of program involved in my study. Sibthorp suggested that trips can produce transferable life skills. Youth development researchers have also found that ideal environments exist for positive development, and those environments specifically involve safety, structure, supportive relationships, feelings of belongingness, positive values and social norms, opportunities for efficacy, and skill building (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lawford, Ramey, Rose-Krasnor, & Proctor, 2012). The travel program environment involves many of these elements, as well as the added component of youth input into programs and leadership opportunities. Lawford et al. found that youth input and activity quality were predictors of youth development after an exchange program. Therefore, the youth travel programs in this study were examined to see if they could also produce positive youth development outcomes.

Methods

Quantitative methods were used to assess participants from a YMCA Travel and Service Programs in the northeast part of the US. The American Camp Association’s (ACA) Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) was used as the measurement tool. The YOB involved a retrospective self-assessment using a Likert-like scale to gauge the direction of change as well as the degree to which the changes related to the program. The YOB tool asked participants to reflect back on changes in attitudes or behaviors since the start of their trip. Demographic information collected included gender, age, dosage of leadership activities, and years in camp programs.

Because input into programs has been found to be a predictor of positive youth development outcomes, leadership dosage was compared with the four outcomes using

correlations (Lawford et al., 2012). The data were further compared to normed data from the ACA (2012).

Subjects and Setting. Subjects for this study include adolescents who participated in travel and service programs during the summer of 2015. Participants ranged in age from 14-17 years. The programs functioned as an off-camp first year CIT program. The programs were 30-35 days in length and involved travel to one of 10 international destinations and two domestic destinations.

Results

The demographic results revealed a fairly homogenous group ($n = 144$) with mostly white participants (87%) who were 15 years old (81%), and had spent four or more years in camp programs (79%). The sample was 57% female.

Table 1 shows the results of the YOB analyses. The ANOVA statistics indicated that female participants rated themselves slightly higher than male participants for the degree of change in each category, but there were no significant differences for degree of change questions based on gender in any of the domains.

Table 1 Youth Outcomes Battery Descriptive and Reliability Results

Variable	n	Mean	Std Dev/	α
Family Citizenship Behavior (FCB)	143			
FCB Statements Overall	143	5.52	.57152	.826
FCB Degree of Change Overall	143	4.49	.62221	.828
Reliability for Items-Degree of Change Overall	143			
Independence (IND)	144			
IND Statements Overall	144	5.62	.46622	.814
IND Degree of Change Overall	144	4.68	.60144	.847
Reliability for Items – Degree of Change Overall	144			
Interest in Exploration (IE)	144			
IE Statements Overall	144	5.7	.39878	.805
IE Degree of Change Overall	144	4.90	.66270	.863
Reliability for Items- Degree of Change Overall	144			
Teamwork (T)	144			
T Statements Overall	144	5.66	.45659	.844
T Degree of Change Overall	144	4.93	.58368	.845
Reliability for Items- Degree of Change Overall	144			

*For “statements” respondents were asked to rate their current status based on the statements 1 –false, 2 – Somewhat False, 3 – A Little False, 4 – A Little True, 5- Somewhat True, 6- True. For the “degree of change” questions, respondents were asked: “Is the above statement more or less true today than before camp?” 1- A Lot Less ,2- Somewhat Less, 3- A Little Less,4- A Little More, 5- Somewhat More, 6- A Lot More

Years of camp attendance had a significant positive relationship with the degree of change scale for Teamwork ($p = .017$, $r = .201$). Years of camp attendance also had a significant positive relationship with exploration in ANOVA tests for the degree of change scale. A significant, strong, and positive relationship was discovered between Family Citizenship Behavior and all of the other domains for degree of change scales. The family citizenship scale asked participants about planned behavior, whereas the other three scales asked participants to rate their current status.

Implications

By assessing the outcomes of independence, family citizenship, exploration, and teamwork, youth travel program research provided new information to the field of camp research, and helped to assess whether the travel and leadership program in this study delivered the outcomes suggested in marketing the programs. The participants rated themselves well above the normed data for this age group, which suggests that this specialized program similar to an on camp CIT program, may lead to greater youth development outcomes than a traditional camp program. The specific leadership curriculum involved in the program may have been one of the reasons for the higher scores as well as the years of camp attendance of the sample.

With the majority of participants having been in camp programs for four or more years, a relationship was discovered between years of attendance and positive team work and exploration outcomes. The teamwork scale of the YOB was relevant to leadership, and suggested that teamwork was related to leadership outcomes. These outcomes could inform youth program developers and practitioners, parents, and youth program leaders, as well as professional camp organizations such as ACA. The findings from this study may help fill gaps in the literature in terms of camp and youth travel research.

This study also created benchmarking and program improvement opportunities for the program involved in the study. Because this age is important for identity exploration (Erikson, 1968) and adolescent development, and the summer camp environment provides developmental growth opportunities (Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007), a study of participants aged 14-17 years adds to the body of camp outcomes research as well as can help camp leaders in designing leadership programs.

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PROGRAM OUTCOMES AT ADVENTURE-BASED CAMPS FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Authors: Alice Hall, Jerri Kropp, John Peden, Georgia Southern University, and Dan Mathews, Camp Twin Lakes. Contact: Alice Hall, Georgia Southern University, PO Box 8034, Statesboro, GA 30460. alicehall@georgiasouthern.edu

In 2005 the American Camp Association (ACA) published the first large scale national research project assessing the youth development outcomes of children who attend day and resident camps in the summer. Children between the ages of 8 and 14 years from 80 ACA accredited day and resident camps participated in the study. Results indicated that the camp experience was a positive influence on youth development in four domains: positive identity, physical and thinking skills, social skills, and positive values and spirituality. In addition, evidence showed that growth at camp was maintained over a six month time period. Specifically, respondents indicated that camp helped them make new friends and helped them get to know other campers who were different from them. ACA acknowledged that camps included in the study did not include children with developmental disabilities, and suggested that future research investigate experiences and outcomes within this population (ACA, 2005).

Camps for children with chronic illnesses have been established to enhance self-esteem, assist with normalizing attitudes to illness, and promote skills in self-care of the disease (Walker & Pearman, 2009). These camps offered traditional activities, but allowed all children the opportunity to participate regardless of their illness. Needs of children with chronic illnesses included socialization, independence, and self-concept. In another study, Devine and Dawson (2010) administered the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale on the first and final days of a camp for children with craniofacial differences, and again six weeks after camp. Results showed that campers experienced an increase in self-esteem and social acceptance. Children who have physical differences may experience discrimination, body image issues, and difficulty with peer relationships. Therefore, therapeutic camps are a place for children to be in a comfortable environment with other children facing the same life challenges.

This purpose of this study was to determine whether youth development outcomes at three residential camps that serve children with serious illnesses, disabilities, and life challenges varied based on gender, years at camp, overall satisfaction with the camp experience, and populations served. The study expanded on previous research by using the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework to evaluate outcomes at camps for children with a range of disabilities.

Theoretical Foundations

Previous research has demonstrated that campers with chronic medical conditions and serious illnesses benefit from camp experiences. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is a theoretical framework that emphasizes internal and external assets designed to promote resiliency and healthy development in youth. It differs from traditional treatment approaches that focus on changing maladaptive behaviors by emphasizing the development of personal resources, supportive relationships, leadership ability, and community engagement (Lopez, Yoder, Brisson, Lechuga-Pena & Jenson, 2015). Although the PYD framework has been used successfully to support at-risk youth, it has not been applied to programs for children with chronic illnesses or disabilities (Maslow & Chung, 2013). This study applied the PYD framework to residential camps designed to promote a range of internal and external assets for children with serious illnesses, disabilities, and life challenges.

Methods

The study took place at a camp in Georgia that worked in collaboration with over 60 community partners to provide life-changing experiences for children with serious illnesses, disabilities, and significant life challenges. Programs and activities were designed to address specific goals for the campers, and were planned by the host organization with input from camp partners. From the way that meals were served to clean-up time in the cabins, daily activities were planned with the intention to create opportunities for growth that can be generalized into campers' home lives. The host organization offered 39 different theme camps, at three locations, that targeted different populations in the summer of 2014. All theme camps were five days long, with one exception.

Camp staff administered five of the ACA Youth Outcomes Battery measures on the last day of each camp, following the protocol outlined by ACA. The *Young Camper Learning Scale* was designed to measure selected camp outcomes (i.e., Competence, Family Citizenship, Responsibility, Interest in Exploration, Teamwork and Friendship Skills) for campers 6-10 years old. The *Older Youth Outcomes Battery* was designed to measure outcomes for campers 11 to 17 years old. The Friendship Skills, Responsibility, Independence, and Affinity for Nature scales were administered to older campers. The 39 theme camps were divided conceptually into five categories based on the population served: Social, Cognitive/Intellectual/TBI, Cancer, Other Illness, and Physical. Independent variables included gender, years at camp, camp rating and population.

On the Young Camper Learning Scale, 14 single item measures were used to compute a mean index score (ACA, 2005). For the older campers, mean indices were calculated on the Friendship Skills, Responsibility, Independence, and Affinity for Nature scales. Data analysis included t-tests, Pearson's correlations, and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA).

Results

Data collection from all three sites yielded $N = 881$ surveys from young campers and $N = 1981$ from older campers. On the Young Camper Survey, the mean camp rating score was 9.42 (on a 10 point scale), and the index score was 3.49 (on a 4 point scale). No significant differences were found based on gender. Age and years at camp were statistically significant but the correlation co-efficient was minimal. No differences were evident based on population served.

On the Older Campers Survey, the overall camp rating was 9.19 (on a 10 point scale), and the mean scores on each of the four outcomes ranged from 3.88 – 4.0 (on a 5 point scale). For the older campers, Responsibility, Affinity for Nature, and Friendship all varied significantly based on Gender. Females scored higher on Responsibility and Friendship, while males scored higher on Affinity for Nature. Age was significantly but weakly correlated with Affinity for Nature (negative) and Friendship (positive). Years at Camp was significantly but weakly correlated with Responsibility, Friendship, and Independence; all relationships were positive. In addition, a MANOVA indicated significant differences based on population. Post-hoc tests revealed that the differences were limited to the Independence variable, with the social and cognitive/TBI populations scoring significantly lower than campers with cancer.

Implications

This study provided strong evidence that camps provide beneficial outcomes for younger and older participants with serious illnesses, disabilities, and significant life challenges, irrespective of the populations served. Outcomes selected for inclusion in the study reflected

assets that promote positive youth development among populations with a demonstrated need. Results can be used to guide staff training by focusing on what is successful and what might need additional attention in terms of programming. It is also important to share the evidence with funders, stakeholders, and the camp Board of Directors. Findings add to the body of evidence that youth with chronic medical conditions, disabilities, and serious illnesses benefit from camp experiences, particularly those designed to promote positive developmental outcomes.

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**4-H CAMPS MEETING PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS:
EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF CAMPS IN BUILDING LIFE SKILLS**

Author: Joe Long, EdD, North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Contact: Joe Long, Cooperative Extension Service, PO Box 37, Halifax, NC 27839.

joe_long@ncsu.edu

Organized camping is defined as “a sustained experience, which provides a creative, recreational, and educational opportunity in group living in the outdoors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper’s mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth” (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 285). North Carolina has a strong tradition of providing camping opportunities for youth through Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program. Currently three summer camps operated within the state 4-H program focus on building life skills such as leadership, communication, self-esteem, and other skills necessary for positive youth development. 4-H recognizes the value of the camping experience in developing youth who make positive contributions to society. Therefore, determining the expectations of parents from the 4-H summer camping program is useful for camp planners when designing camp programs for meeting the youth development expectations of parents.

Camping is one of the primary delivery modes for 4-H and is recognized as a way to promote youth development and build life skills. However, whether parents and guardians of 4-H youth perceive the value of camping has not been examined. Duerden and Witt (2011) noted a need for more standardized measures of youth development programs. Studies of life skills in particular are lacking. Filling this knowledge gap is the focus of this research study.

Conceptual/Theoretical Frame

The model widely used in many 4-H programs and for the North Carolina State 4-H Camps is the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model developed by Hendricks (1996). The TLS Model divides life skills into the four categories of the 4-H program including Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, and then divides them again into eight subcategories. Each subcategory defines specific life skills that help build a particular competency. Oklahoma State Extension (n. d.) defined a skill as a learned ability to do something well, and a life skill as the way one applies learned skills to real life situations. According to Hendricks, life skills are skills that help an individual be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. According to Pittman (1991), positive youth development programs focus on five basic competency areas: a) health and physical competence, b) personal and social competence, c) cognitive and creative competence, d) vocational competence, and e) citizenship competence. Building on Pittman’s work, Hendricks formed the four categories of the TLS Model and subsequent eight subcategories as follows:

1. Head: Cognitive and Creative Competency becomes Thinking and Managing.
2. Heart: Personal and Social Competency becomes Relating and Caring.
3. Hands: Vocational and Citizenship Competency becomes Giving and Working.
4. Health: Health and Physical Competency becomes Living and Being.

The TLS Model provides an important guide to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating 4-H youth development programs (Garton, Miltenberger, & Pruett, 2007).

Thirty-five life skills are specified in the TLS model (Hendricks, 1996). Of these life skills, North Carolina 4-H camping directors and program leaders acknowledged the emphasis of 16 life skills in North Carolina camping program. These life skills are: critical thinking, decision making, resiliency, goal setting, communication, cooperation, concern for others, sharing, leadership, contribution to group effort, teamwork, self-motivation, self-esteem, character,) healthy lifestyle choices, and personal safety. This study is based on the TLS model and how each of these 16 life skills are linked to the four major categories (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) specified in the TLS model.

Methods

This descriptive survey research study was conducted with the target population of parents/guardians of youth that attended North Carolina State 4-H camps during the summer of 2013. Some of the campers may have attended more than one camp during this summer, however, duplications have been avoided by distributing only one parent survey for each child attending regardless of how many times the child attended. The study population included a total of 675 parents of the children camping in the summer of 2013.

The instrument for this study was designed based on the available literature (e.g., American Camp Association, 2013; Baughman, Garst, & Fuhrman, 2009; Hendricks, 1996). The TLS Model includes 35 life skills (Hendricks, 1996). The North Carolina State leadership of the 4-H camping program and the North Carolina State 4-H Camp Directors agreed 16 life skills were the focus of the North Carolina Camping program. Those 16 life skills were used to determine the overall effectiveness of the 4-H Camping program using the TLS Model. The 16 life skills emphasized in the North Carolina 4-H camping program were used to construct the life skills development instrument. Two constructs were used to measure each of 16 life skills. These 32 constructs were listed as behaviors reflecting the respective life skills of campers and parents or guardians were asked to observe those behaviors of their children before and after completing the camping program. Their responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1=never to 5=always. Retrospective pre-test and post-test design was used for this study.

Results

Results provided evidence that the 4-H summer camping program improved children's life skills. The summer camping program significantly impacted all four categories (i.e., Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) relative to life skills specified in the TLS model (Hendricks, 1996). The most impacted area was the head area followed by hands, health, and heart. The most notable life skill development took place in areas such as goal setting, resiliency, self-motivation, contribution to group effort, and self-esteem area. Secondary improvements took place in life skills such as decision making, critical thinking, communication, healthy lifestyle choices, teamwork, and leadership areas. In addition, other important improvements took place in life skills such as concern for others, sharing, personal safety, character, and cooperation. Similar to the findings of Hedrick, Homan, and Dick (2009), youth at 4-H camps gained multiple benefits from 4-H camp experiences specifically in areas of leadership, character development, self-esteem, decision-making skills, independent living skills, and citizenship.

Findings clearly confirmed that the major reason that parents and guardians sent their children to the 4-H summer camping program was for life skill development. The other most cited reasons for sending their children to 4-H summer camps was their desire for children to try

new things, meet new people, be outdoors, have fun, and enjoy recreation, respectively. A smaller percentage of parents and guardians sent their children to socialize with friends, learn about the environment and new subjects, and attend field trips. Less than 1% of the parents and guardians send their children to camps as a means of babysitting.

It can be concluded from these responses that parents/guardians sent their children to summer camp because they perceived that it developed children's life skills that may not be taught as subject matter in school. Social skills, learning about the outdoors, meeting new people, and trying new things were all important competencies necessary for positive youth development.

Implications

The summer 4-H camping program was an effective educational program for building children's life skills such as goal setting, resiliency, self-motivation, contribution to group effort, self-esteem, decision making, critical thinking, communication, healthy life style choices, teamwork, and leadership. These life skills are essential for children to be successful in contemporary society. Summer youth camp planners should be aware of the development expectations of parents and guardians in designing educational programs and events in efforts to meet their expectations. Planners should focus on designing educational activities and events that build campers' life skills, encourage them to try new things, facilitate the development of friendships, promote outdoor activities, make the camp enjoyable, and engage youth in recreational programs. Camp directors and planners should pay attention to design educational activities that will contribute to improving targeted life skills.

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SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN YOUTH AT WILDERNESS SUMMER CAMPS: ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AS MEDIATING FACTORS

Authors: Julian F. P. Macnaughton, Earl P. Walker, Steven E. Mock, & Troy D. Glover,
University of Waterloo. Contact: Julian Macnaughton, Recreation and Leisure Studies,
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1. jmacnaughton@uwaterloo.ca

Summer camp is often framed as a pivotal youth experience with the potential to impart lasting positive outcomes (Gesler, 1992). As observed in our study, increased social capital, environmental awareness, personal development, and attitudes towards physical activity are benefits of youth summer camp participation, and thus call for the attention of both academic researchers and youth recreational service providers.

One benefit of summer camp participation is the development and maintenance of social capital. Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler and Henderson (2007) highlighted the ability of summer camp to foster substantive relationships and generate increased levels of social capital. Social capital can be conceptualized as the “consequences of investment in, and cultivation of social relationships allowing the individual access to resources that would otherwise be unavailable to him or her (Glover, Shinew, & Parry, 2005, p. 87). A comprehensive, international review of youth social capital literature by Ferguson (2006) provided considerable evidence of the positive impact that high social capital has on the wellbeing and personal development of youth

In conducting this study, we sought to answer the following question: Is social capital associated with positive attitudes toward physical activity in youth wilderness camp settings, and if so, what variables might explain this association? Specifically, we examined environmental awareness and personal development as mechanisms mediating this relationship.

Theoretical Foundations

Social capital has been connected to a number of positive health outcomes including increased participation and attitudes toward physical activity (McNeill, Kreuter, & Subramanian 2006). The ecological model of health behaviors suggests that attitudes toward physical activity and participation are influenced by multiple factors (Rodriguez, 2012). Two such factors are environmental awareness and personal development. Environmental awareness can be conceptualized as environmental stewardship, ecological practices, and appreciation for nature. Evidence suggests that time spent in nature can improve attitudes toward and increase physical activity (Schaefer et al., 2014). Personal development can be conceptualized as competence, character, and confidence. Considerable research has also highlighted the link between personal development and physical activity (Hemphill, 2014).

Methods

Data Source: Data were drawn from Phase2 of the Canadian Summer Camp Research Project (CSCR2; Glover, Chapeskie, Mock, Mannell, & Feldberg, 2011). The purpose of the CSCR2 was to examine the potential developmental benefits associated with camp participation. Five themes emerged during Phase 1 of the CSCR2 study: a) social integration and citizenship, b) environmental awareness, c) self-confidence and personal development, d) emotional intelligence, and e) attitudes towards physical activity. Camp counselors at the data collection sites used observations in conjunction with a specifically designed survey instrument

to document campers' behaviors, values, and attitudes in relation to each of these themes. Data were collected at both the beginning and end of the camp sessions (Time 1 first 48 hours and Time 2 last 48 hours). Sixteen provincially accredited camps from across Canada were included. Participants were obtained through convenience sampling methods. A total of 1 288 individual campers took part in the research.

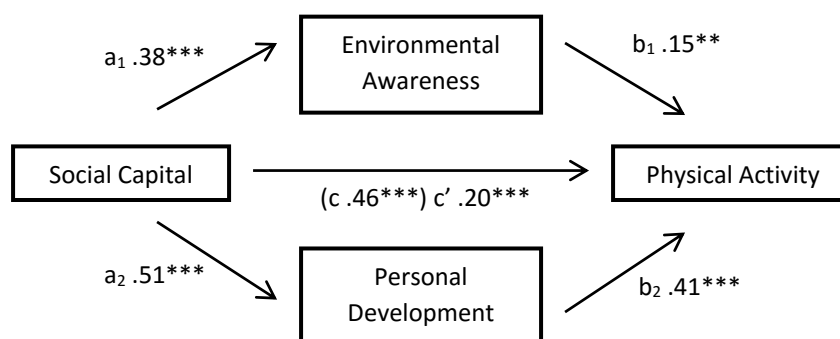
Measures: Age was coded on a scale in which the actual age of the participant represented the score they were assigned (e.g.: 4 years old = 4, and so on). Gender was denoted by female = 1 male = 0, returning camper was coded as yes = 1, no = 0. Items for all other measures were rated on a continuous scale from 1 = very strongly disagree to 7 = very strongly agree, and recoded when necessary so that greater values indicated greater endorsement.

Analysis: A filter was applied to isolate only those individuals who participated in wilderness summer camp settings, which resulted in a sample size of $n = 551$. Two linear regression models were conducted to examine the association of social capital with attitudes towards physical activity. Control variables and social capital were included in the first model of each set of analysis to examine their contribution to attitudes towards physical activity. In the second model, environmental awareness and personal development were added, which allowed for a comparison of multiple mediators. The process of bootstrapping, as outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2008), was used to test these multiple mediators.

Results

A conceptual model was constructed (Figure 1) to represent relationships and highlight the findings. The average age of participants in this study was 11.54 years ($SD = 2.43$), of which 42.8% were male and 57.2% female. About 66% of the sample was identified as returning campers. Scores for the control, dependent, and independent variables, as well as the two moderators, are represented by their respective mean scores. The scores for all variables increase from Time 1 to Time 2 as represented by their respective means.

Figure 1. Association between social capital and perceptions of physical activity mediated by environmental awareness and personal development



Note: The value in parentheses is the unstandardized regression coefficient for the association between social capital and attitudes towards physical activity before the addition of environmental awareness and personal development to the model. $n = 551$; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The total effect (c) of social capital on attitudes towards physical activity was significant ($B = 0.46$; $p < .001$) and compared to the total effect, the direct effect (c') of social capital on attitudes towards physical activity was noticeably reduced, yet still remained statistically significant ($B = 0.20$; $p < .001$) with the addition of environmental awareness and personal

development to the model. This finding suggested that environmental awareness and personal development explained a portion of the association between social capital and attitudes toward physical activity. The indirect effects ($a_1 b_1$ and $a_2 b_2$) for both mediators were statistically significant (environmental awareness, *point estimate* = 0.06, *SE* = 0.02, *upper confidence interval* = 0.12, *lower confidence interval* = 0.01; personal development, *point estimate* = 0.21, *SE* = 0.04, *upper confidence interval* = 0.32, *lower confidence interval* = 0.12).

Discussion

The results of this study suggested that in wilderness camp settings, increased social capital is directly associated with increased positive attitudes towards physical activity. Moreover, we found that environmental awareness and personal development were mediating factors in this relationship. Our findings are specific to wilderness camp settings, suggesting that wilderness camps provide a unique environment in which environmental awareness and personal development play a significant role in the association between social capital and personal development. Further investigation about the specific elements of wilderness camps that facilitate this association may be warranted.

Consistent with the growing body of empirical research on summer camp benefits, our study also demonstrated significant positive outcomes for youth participants. Through an improved understanding of the mechanisms influencing attitudes toward physical activity, future camp leaders will be better positioned to make informed programmatic decisions. While some environmental awareness and physical activities may have been designed as independent units, this study suggested the two variables were associated, and complementary program design would be valuable particularly for camps that have struggled to increase physical activity. Similarly, our study indicated increased opportunities for personal development could also be complementary to improving attitudes toward physical activity. While somewhat intuitive, a clear starting point for programmers should be facilitating social capital development early in camp—various teambuilding and trust oriented activities will ensure no camper is left behind.

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USING COUNSELOR IMPLEMENTATION JOURNALS TO EXPLORE THE PROCESSES AT WORK IN TWO GIRL SCOUT CAMPS

Author: Tracy Mainieri, Illinois State University. Contact: Tracy Mainieri, 158 McCormick Hall, Campus Box 5120, Normal, IL 61790. tmainie@ilstu.edu

Implementation evaluation aims to understand how well a program operates when delivered to participants (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004). Implementation evaluation literature indicates that collecting data from the facilitators of experiences is a useful method of effective implementation evaluation (Morgan, 2012; Tucker & Rheingold, 2010). In the camp arena, using such evaluation methods to understand how a camp program is implemented, from the perspective of counselors who deliver the program, can offer valuable insight to camp administrators. My evaluation study involved collaborating with two camps (one day camp and one residential camp) in a Girl Scout council (GSC) in the Midwest. At the time of this study, this council wanted to enhance its approach to evaluation for its camp offerings and was especially interested in understanding how implementation evaluation could be used to enhance what they did. The Girl Scouts of the USA takes a research- and outcomes-based approach to their programs under the leadership of the Girl Scout Research Institute and has identified three main program processes important to the development of the outcomes in their programs: Girl Led, Cooperative Learning, and Learning by Doing (Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 2014). The Girl Scouts of the USA encourage facilitators to incorporate these three processes into their implementation of Girl Scout programs including summer camps. Understanding the presence or absence of each of these three processes from a counselor perspective could provide camp administrators in the GSC actionable feedback about how their camp programs are delivered.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation study was to use counselor implementation journals to understand to what extent the three Girl Scout processes are implemented in the GSC camps and the factors that impacted the use of the three Girl Scout processes, from the counselor perspective.

Methods

A total of 14 counselors (9 from the residential camp and 3 from the day camp) participated in this study. Each participant completed a “Counselor Implementation Journal” during the final five weeks of in the summer of 2014. In this journal, each counselor completed one identical journal sheet at the end of each camp day. The journal sheets were modeled after the structured journal used by Morgan (2012). Specific to this presentation, each journal sheet asked 13 items about how frequently the Girl Scout processes were employed. The journal sheets were analyzed to produce means for each item to understand the frequency with which each of the 13 Girl Scout processes items occurred.

Additionally, the participating counselors took part in a focus group at the end of 2014 summer. One focus group occurring at each camp. For this presentation, focus group questions were used to understand the factors that impacted counselors' ability to implement the Girl Scout processes. The researchers analyzed focus group data following Hycner's (1985) guidelines for the analysis of qualitative data.

Findings

Counselors completed a total of 268 journal sheets out of a possible 382 journal sheets during the 5-week period (70.16% possible journal sheets completed). Regarding this completion rate, a previous presentation reported that though counselors found the journal sheets to be a simple and useful process, they sometimes did forget to complete them or were too tired to complete them at the end of exhausting days (Mainieri & Hill, 2015).

Table 1 lists each of the 13 Girl Scout process items, along with its accompanying mean score. When the means from the 13 items were grouped based on each Girl Scout process, the findings indicated that counselors reported all three processes happening between Some and Most of the time (Cooperative Learning = 1.69; Girl Led = 1.51; Learning by Doing = 1.20).

Table 1: Process Items from the Journal Sheet <i>Listed in descending order of means</i>	Mean Score*
Campers were able to do things themselves	2.07
Campers learned by working with other girls	1.83
Campers listened to what other campers were saying	1.77
Campers made decisions	1.68
Campers had a say in what they did	1.65
Campers had a say in how they did they things they did	1.50
Campers took the lead on activities	1.47
Campers worked in groups to solve problems	1.46
When we finished an activity or task, the campers and I talked about what campers learned	1.14
There was too much talking, and too little doing (Reverse item)	0.81
The campers and I discussed how campers could take what they learned and use it in other places, like at home, with friends, or at school	0.73
Campers learned by doing things in the real world	0.66
Campers taught younger girls new things	0.69
*Note. The counselors rated each item on a 4-point Likert-type scale: Never (0), Some of the time (1), Most of the time (2), Always (3)	

In the focus groups, counselors identified four main factors that impacted their use of the Girl Scout processes throughout the summer. First, counselors shared that they did not feel in control of programming for the majority of each day, which impacted their ability to control the processes. Second, they reported that the age of their campers influenced how appropriate some of the processes were. Third, counselors stated that camper attitude and behavior on a daily basis impacted the feasibility of some of the items. Finally, regarding the two items about relating camp learning to the real world, many of the counselors reported that camp was either intentionally separate from the real world or had no application to the real world. They struggled to make connections for campers.

Implications

Based on the findings, some recommendations were made to the GSC camp administrators for the following summer:

- Focus on empowering counselors to consider how camp and the learning at camp might relate to campers' real world
- Evaluate existing programming for incorporation of Girl Scout processes
- Provide counselors working with younger campers with ideas on how to incorporate Girl Led elements
- Consider increasing opportunities for older and younger campers to collaborate

The data from the counselor implementation journals provided actionable feedback for camp administrators about *how* their programs were delivered to campers, from the counselor perspective. Although the current study focused on the use of a counselor implementation journal specific to processes in Girl Scout camps, the researcher hopes the findings of this study could support other camps interested in collecting similar evaluation data on their own processes and programs. Expanded findings and implications will be discussed in the presentation.

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“LIVING 10 MONTHS FOR 2:” THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF SUMMER RESIDENTIAL CAMP ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF IN PRETEEN AND TEEN GIRLS

Author: Alexandra Mautner, Byram Hills High School. Contact: Alexandra Mautner, 3 Banks Farm Road, Bedford, NY 10506. mautnera16@byramhills.net

The passion campers have for their camp experience cause them to often say they spend the 10 months off-season waiting for the treasured 2 months of camp. Camp may be regarded as a frontier of freedom where campers are able to develop skills to face the challenges of life in a meaningful way (Perret-Clermont, 2004). In addition, the emotionally secure environment and opportunities presented by camp are successful in facilitating transformative learning (Dahl, 2009; Perret-Clermont, 2004). Research suggests that campers experience both intrapersonal growth (i.e., independence and personal achievement) and interpersonal growth (i.e., support systems and social skills) (Bialeschki, Krehbiel, Henderson & Ewing, 2003), which are important to facilitate transformative learning. Further, characteristics such as in-group living, low staff to camper ratio, supportive relationships, group goals, and traditions aid in transformative learning (Henderson, Thurber, Scanlin, & Bialeschki, 2007).

Residential camp provides a unique research opportunity because of the extended time campers attend camp. Single sex residential camp provides a live-in twenty-four hour a day gender-specific environment described as a bubble that is separate from mainstream society (Johnson, Goldman, Garey, Britner & Weaver, 2011). Therefore, camp can provide a clear and naturally segregated group to study collective self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-advocacy, body image, self-social ranking, and self-esteem.

Although research exists suggesting that camp and the camp environment lead to positive youth development, a dearth of literature has identified the impact that the gender structure of camp has on children’s development. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of the gender composition of a camp on the *self* and on social development in preteen and teen girls. The objectives were to a) evaluate the difference in collective self-esteem of preteen and teen girls in a camp environment with *camp friends* based on the gender composition of the camp, b) evaluate the difference in collective self-esteem of preteen and teen girls at home with *home friends* based on the gender composition of the camp, and c) to evaluate overall self-advocacy, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self- social ranking, and body image based on the gender composition of the camp.

Methods

A three-part survey was given to 132 preteen and teen girls ($n=132$) between the ages 11 and 17 years who had attended traditional, residential camp for at least three summers. Three years of camp experience was necessary to ensure that the girls attended camp during a critical time in their development. Part 1 of the survey required the girls to respond to the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992) based on their role in their camp friend group. Part 2 of the survey asked the girls to respond to the Collective Self-Esteem Scale based on their role in their home friend group. Part 3 of the survey asked the girls to respond to the Girls’ Self-Efficacy Scale (LeCroy, 2001). The surveys were completed online via Google Forms. Prior to receiving the survey link, participants and their parent were required to sign a consent and assent form. Participants were allowed to opt out of the survey at any point without consequences.

Data were analyzed using SPSS. The data were tested for normality. Data from each part of the survey were grouped by the type of camp the participants attended and analyzed with a Kruskal Wallis test followed by Mann Whitney post-hoc.

Results

All p values represent adjusted significance. There was a significant difference between the gender composition of the camp girls attended and their responses for Part 1 ($p = .018$) and Part 2 ($p = .000$). In Part 1 based on camp friends, the significant difference was between girls who attended co-ed camp and girls who attended brother-sister camp ($p = .014$). Girls who attended brother-sister camp scored significantly higher than girls who attended co-ed camp, but not significantly higher than girls who attended single sex camp.

In Part 2 based on home friends, a significant difference was found between scale totals for girls who attend co-ed as opposed to brother-sister camp ($p = .000$). Girls who attended brother-sister camp again scored significantly higher than girls who attended co-ed, but not significantly higher than girls who attended single sex camps. There was no significant difference in the camps' gender composition and the difference in the girls' scores for Part 1 and Part 2 ($p = 0.167$), but girls who attended co-ed camp showed the largest difference in their responses between Part 1 and Part 2.

There was a significant difference in the gender composition of the camp girls attended and their overall self-advocacy ($p = .025$). The difference was between co-ed and brother-sister camps ($p = .020$). Girls who attended brother-sister camp scored a mean 26 out of 28 on the self-advocacy scale, whereas girls who attended co-ed and single sex camps scored 25.

A significant difference was uncovered in the gender composition of the camp girls attended and self-efficacy ($p = .019$). The difference was between girls who attend co-ed camp and girls who attend brother-sister camp ($p = .017$). Based on the rounded scores, girls who attended brother-sister and single sex camps had significantly more positive responses to the self-efficacy questions than girls who attended co-ed camp. There was no significant difference in the responses between girls who attend co-ed and single sex camps ($p = .337$) or girls who attended single sex and brother-sister camps ($p = 1.000$).

Girls who attended co-ed camp had a significantly lower self-esteem than girls who attended a brother-sister camp ($p = .026$). However, there was no significant difference in the responses between girls who attended co-ed camp and single sex camp ($p = .102$) or between girls who attended brother-sister and single sex camps ($p = 1.00$). Girls who attended single sex camp have the highest self-esteem. No significant difference was found between the mean scores for girls who attended co-ed and brother-sister camps ($p = .003$).

Girls' self-social ranking was highest among girls who attended brother-sister camp. The data suggested that these girls were most comfortable with themselves socially. There was no significant difference between the mean scores for girls who attended co-ed and single sex camps ($p = .189$) or between the mean scores for girls who attended brother-sister and single sex camps ($p = 1.00$).

Further, there was no significant difference in girls' body image ($p = .736$) based on the gender composition of their camp. Out of the 32 possible points girls could score in body image, regardless of the camp the girls attended, the mean score was 26.

Implications

The data suggest that most of the significant differences in the girls' responses were between co-ed and brother-sister camps with girls participating in brother-sister camps having higher mean scores. Therefore, attending a camp on one of the extremes, completely co-ed or single sex, may not be the most beneficial to development under the circumstances outlined in

this study. Based on this study a single sex environment appeared optimal for growth but with opportunities for co-ed interaction. When girls see boys briefly at limited times (e.g., perhaps only as an evening activity), they are able to practice skills learned during the day in the safe haven that their camp provides.

The greatest implication of this study suggests that the brother-sister camp was significantly better than a co-ed camp for preteen and teen girls' development of self-advocacy, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-social ranking. Therefore, camp directors should consider providing single sex camps and co-ed camps with more co-ed and single sex opportunities within the camp program. Additionally, because there was no significant difference between the girls' responses in any categories that attended brother-sister or single sex camp, single sex daytime environments may favor the development of preteen and teen girls' self and social skills as well as their athletic and artistic skills.

Although this study suggests that a combination of single sex and co-ed opportunities for campers are most effective in facilitating positive development, all three camp types can potentially be altered without degrading the essential differences of a camping experience. In other words, co-ed camp in the future should continue being different from single sex and brother-sister camps because campers attend each camp for specific reasons. Therefore, co-ed camps and single sex camps should continue operating in their traditional manners while directors may choose to slightly alter their programming to improve the campers' self-advocacy, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-social ranking without eliminating the fundamental nature of the camp experience.

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CAMPER PERCEPTIONS OF COUNSELOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING BEHAVIORS AND ACTIONS

Author: Megan Owens, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Contact: Megan Owens, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1206 Fourth Street, Huff Hall 104, Champaign, IL 61820. mhowens2@illinois.edu

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the “process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, 2013, p.1). While school-based SEL research has existed since the 1990s, this skill set has recently gained attention with out of school time program research due to the current focus on helping youth develop 21st Century Skills. Initially, theorists sought to link SEL skills and academic performance as a means for preventing maladaptive behaviors among youth (Humphrey, 2013). However, youth learn and acquire skills in settings beyond the school system such as the skills obtained through a summer camp experience (Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007). The limited knowledge regarding the influence of a summer residential camp experience on camper social-emotional learning suggests more information is needed to understand how this setting and the staff involved with the program may facilitate SEL acquisition. The purpose of this study was to explore how campers might be impacted by their counselor’s SEL behaviors and actions during counselor-camper interactions.

Conceptual Frameworks

This study employed the conceptual frameworks of social learning theory (Bandura, 1978) and positive youth development to understand how SEL may occur from counselor-camper interactions. Counselors are expected to role model and teach campers positive behaviors with the hope campers will recognize, practice, and acquire these skills. Social learning theory is an appropriate lens for exploring what campers recognize and how they perceive their counselor’s SEL behaviors and actions. Positive youth development centers on creating an environment where healthy adult-youth relationships and skill enhancement are possible (Eccles, 1999; Larson, 2000). The camp setting provides an environment where youth have multiple adults with whom positive, supportive relationships can be fostered (Henderson et al., 2007), and camp counselors have been identified as potentially important adults in the absence of campers’ immediate family and friends (Bowers et al., 2014; Henderson et al., 2007). This presentation will discuss the campers’ perceptions of their counselor’s behaviors and actions related to the five SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore how SEL may transpire between counselors and campers. Multiple sources of data were collected to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon: counselor-camper interactions. The study was conducted during the 2015 summer at a co-ed residential camp in Central Illinois that provided traditional outdoor education, sports, arts and crafts, and waterfront activities. Twelve ($n = 12$) female campers aged 10 to 12 years, from the cabins of the four counselors participating in the study, were interviewed

across the four weeklong camp sessions. Prior studies have indicated differences among boys and girls regarding their ability to experience perspective taking, emotional concern, and personal distress (Barr & Higgins-D' Alessandro, 2007). Therefore, only females were identified as the target population for this study. Parental consent was obtained for camper participation, and a random selection of three to four campers from the cabin of the counselor observed that session were chosen. The campers were engaged in a semi-structured interview on the last session day that included open-ended questions and projective vignettes related to the five SEL competencies. Interviews lasted approximately 25 minutes and were transcribed verbatim. Data analysis followed the phenomenological approach of listening to interviews multiple times for verbal and nonverbal cues, thorough reading and rereading of transcripts, and identification of meaning units and clusters to reveal the central themes, which were compared across interviews to understand the impact on SEL (Giorgi, 1997; Hycner, 1985).

Results

The campers engaged in this study were perceptive regarding their counselor's SEL behaviors. Overall, campers believed their counselors were focused on establishing an equitable and positive environment for their cabin group. Most campers easily described how their counselor might react to projective scenarios for responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness, but had difficulty with the self-management and self-awareness scenarios.

Responsible Decision-Making: The counselors appeared to consider the campers' needs and interests throughout camp although the descriptions revealed a continuum of practice. Campers described one counselor as primarily focused on their own interests whereas another counselor adjusted their behavior and reactions to the campers' desires. For instance, this counselor did not provide input while her campers selected the cabin group program. When a program was selected without full consensus, the counselor provided additional activities for the uninterested girls as well as divided her time between the various campers.

Relationship Skills: All campers believed their counselor wanted to establish positive relationships with them. Some campers indicated the counselors formed diverse relationships based upon the campers' demeanor, needs, and interests. Other campers connected their counselor's inability to address some negative behavior to ineffective relationships with certain campers in the cabin.

Social Awareness: All campers believed their counselor treated everyone in their cabin equally. Some campers felt their counselor was inclusive of all individuals, within and outside the cabin group whereas another counselor was solely focused on inclusivity within the cabin. These campers indicated their counselor was empathetic to their needs. While this outcome was described as a positive outcome for these campers, the process of being empathetic resulted in the exclusion of a girl, from outside this cabin group.

Self-Management: Campers recognized potential management strategies employed by their counselors in stressful or frustrating situations such as quarreling or misbehaving campers. The campers suggested their counselor took naps or simply chose to be happy rather than sad as the primary strategies for addressing stress.

Self-Awareness: This competency was the most challenging SEL element to elucidate, as it focused on the identification of counselors' ability to recognize personal behavioral influence. Campers' responses primarily revealed management strategies versus awareness or recognition.

A minor theme emerged, as some campers expected certain behaviors from their counselors. These campers believed the behaviors derived from the “knowledgeable and experienced” counselor position; or they expected the counselor to behave like a “responsible adult” While a few campers indicated this belief, their expectations were strongly connected to counselors’ reactions or ability to maintain composure in various situations. The origin of these perspectives is unknown, as some campers may have been exposed to anti-bullying programs in school or involved in situations where appropriate emotional reactions were discussed.

Implications

The focus on acquiring 21st Century Skills indicates skills such as social-emotional learning are imperative for youth to obtain throughout their development. Although significant SEL research has occurred within schools, information is sparse from other youth development settings. Summer residential camps may play a pivotal role with providing opportunities to acquire or enhance SEL skills. The information garnered from this study demonstrates that youth are aware of their counselor’s behaviors and actions and will formulate their own meaning to these interactional behaviors. Administrators may seek to enhance staff training by incorporating more opportunities to learn proper conflict resolution techniques, effective and inclusive decision-making strategies, as well as helping counselors learn coping strategies when handling with difficult situations. Youth are perceptive and will create meaning from situations. Staff responsibility is to create an environment that fosters positive meanings and lessons.

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PROMOTING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AT RESIDENTIAL SUMMER SPORT CAMP

Authors: Victoria Povilaitis & Dr. Katherine A. Tamminen, University of Toronto. Contact: Victoria Povilaitis, University of Toronto, 100 Devonshire Place, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2C9. victoria.povilaitis@mail.utoronto.ca

Positive youth development (PYD) is a relatively new concept introduced into the field of child and youth development in the 1990s. This broad framework has been conceptualized in many different ways. However it is often described as a strength-based approach to youth development (Benson et al., 2006), in comparison to the deficit approaches common in previous years. Each summer over 10 million children and adolescents attend summer camp (Henderson et al., 2007a). Generally, the summer camp industry subscribes to shared values including fun, personal growth, and skill development (Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011), and researchers have shown that summer camps are a context in which youth development occurs (American Camp Association, 2005; Henderson et al., 2007a; Henderson, Scheuler, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007b; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). Although summer camps satisfy many of the conditions required to be considered a positive youth development program (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002), current research explicitly employing theoretical frameworks of PYD in summer camp settings is limited. Summer sport camps are a viable location to examine the contextual factors such as the setting, leaders, and programming that contribute to PYD opportunities for children and adolescents. Overall, our case study addressed the research question: how do the leaders, environment, and programming contribute to PYD experiences for children at a residential summer sport camp?

Theoretical Framework

One of the most widely recognized approaches to PYD are the 5C's developed by Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000). Within a PYD setting, youth develop competence, confidence, character, caring (or compassion), and connection. As a result of the acquisition of these five qualities, the developing individual is said to display a 6th C – contribution (Lerner et al., 2000). Although there is no exact definition of what constitutes a PYD setting, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) in conjunction with the American National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (NRCIM, 2002) created a list of eight characteristics that should be present in a youth development program. The eight characteristics are: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community efforts. These two frameworks were situated within an adapted version of Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time model (Bronfenbrenner, 1999) to present the results of our case study.

Methods

This research employed an instrumental case study methodology (Stake, 1995) which was conducted from a constructivist paradigmatic position with a relativist ontological perspective and a subjectivist/transactional epistemological perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Krane & Baird, 2005). The summer sport camp chosen as the case for our research was selected

because it provided information and examples of positive youth development at a residential summer sport camp.

Interview participants included counselors, coaches, senior campers, counselors-in-training (CITs), and leadership staff, totalling 57 participants and 67 interviews and focus groups. As a case study, observations were recorded as field notes, and initial and ongoing training documents were collected for analysis as well.

An inductive and deductive analysis (Patton, 2002), and first cycle and second cycle coding (Miles, Huberman, Saldaña, 2014) of the data was completed using the 5Cs (Lerner et al., 2000) and the 8 settings features (NRCIM, 2002) as guiding theoretical frameworks.

Results

Many participants felt that children experienced growth in all 5Cs as described by Lerner and colleagues (2000). The most commonly discussed characteristic, however, was confidence. The eight settings features (NRCIM, 2002) were evident in the process by which leaders provided campers with growth opportunities, such as structuring programming and social interactions based on campers' needs and developmental levels as well as supporting campers outside their comfort zones. These processes and intended outcomes differed among counselors and coaches. For example, counselors often encouraged campers to move outside their social comfort zones and make new friends, while coaches focused more on the development of life skills through sport and enabling campers to face their physical fears (e.g., fear of heights).

The overall camp context was facilitated by the leadership team through the development of an inclusive and accepting camp atmosphere and by providing leaders with appropriate support so they were able to be successful in their roles. For example, both coaches and counselors had weekly training meetings where coaches were encouraged to create new games to challenge campers and help them build new skills. Counselors shared stories of challenging camper situations and practiced different behaviour management techniques.

Finally, divergent opinions emerged from camp staff, CITs, and campers regarding the optimal length of time for children to be immersed in a camp setting to experience positive outcomes. Participants generally felt that the longer children attended camp, the more opportunities they would have to experience positive growth and development.

Discussion and Camp Implications

Findings from this study present a few practical implications for both sport programs and summer camps. Regarding individual camps, the eight settings features may be used to advise leaders on how to encourage and support children to move outside their comfort zones to experience growth while at camp. Including this information in the initial staff training period and reinforcing it throughout the summer during ongoing training would be beneficial.

An explicit discussion of the settings features during camp orientation and how these features could be implemented may serve to create more opportunities for development for campers and among staff members. If leaders are aware of what the settings features are, and are given examples of how to implement these features, counselors may be more likely to intentionally use the features in their interactions with campers and coaches may apply the features in their programming and sport instruction and facilitation. Ultimately, this awareness may lead to more positive growth and development experiences for children at summer camps.

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SUMMER CAMP COUNSELORS' SELF PERCEIVED COMPETENCY PRIOR TO, AND FOLLOWING STAFF TRAINING

Authors: Zachary Wahl-Alexander, Northern Illinois University; Steven M. Howell, Trails End Camp; Kathleen Donahue, Northern Illinois University. Contact: Zachary Wahl-Alexander, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. zwahlalexander@niu.edu

For a summer camp to be successful, the leadership team needs to successfully inaugurate its entire staff into their specific camps beliefs and objectives. This induction period begins during staff orientation where counselors are trained on specific policies, practices, and how to be successful at their job. While research shows that the effectiveness of a training program hinges on the staff's ability to interpret that information (Cronin, 2006), to date there has been a lack of research specifically examining the effectiveness of summer camps training orientations. To optimize camp trainings, research needs to be conducted evaluating how new and returning staff members perceive their ability level prior to, and following camp orientations. Identifying these perceived competencies might allow directors to focus training on areas their counselors feel the weakest. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate summer camp counselors' perceived competency before and after an 8-day training at a high-end residential summer camp.

Theoretical Framework

The framework used in this study was based upon Kirkpatrick's (1959; 1976; 1996) four level model of training evaluation. This model is a classic framework for assessing training effectiveness in a variety of organizational contexts. Although there have been more recent methods and models of training assessment (e.g., Day, Arthur, & Gettman, 2001), Kirkpatrick's, model of training evaluation and criteria remains the most accepted choice among researchers (Salas & Canon-Bowers, 2001; Van Buren & Erskine, 2002). Our study made use of the utility judgment reaction criteria to evaluate how new and returning staff perceived their ability level prior to, and after training.

Methods

The participants in this study were 101 counselors ranging from 17 to 27 years of age (mean age = 19.97). Fifty six percent of the counselors were male and 44% of the counselors were female. The study was conducted at a high-end residential summer camp in the Northeast part of the United States, serving campers between the ages of 7-15 years. The camp required all staff to participate in an intensive mandatory 8-day orientation where counselors learned how to: (a) handle conflict, (b) build healthy relationships with campers and fellow staff, (c) learn expected expectations, and (d) understand typical camp rules and routines.

The survey instrument used to collect data was based on the 16-question instrument used by Baldwin, Duerden, and Witt (2010) to determine the impact of the *workweek training*. The instrument used in our study contained 21 items with 3 items each loaded on 7 different factors. The questionnaire focused on typical day routines, conflict management, creating a safe camp environment, counselor expectations, developing camper skills, and behavior management. Counselors were asked to assess their perceived competency prior to the 8-day orientation, and immediately following orientation. Additionally questions were posed including camp experience, university major, and what age group they were working with. Items were rated on a ten-point Likert-type scale (1 = disagree a lot, 10 = agree a lot). Using paired-samples t-tests,

mean group differences were calculated to compare the assessment scores prior to and after completing the 8-day orientation.

Results

A total of 101 camp counselors completed the 21-item survey from one residential summer camp. Of the 101 counselors who participated in this study, 30 (29.7%) had previous experience working as a summer camp counselor, and 71 (70.3%), had no previous experience as a counselor. Table 1 includes the results of the pre- and post-orientation scores listed by both factor and item, as well as the overall changes in scores (pre- vs. post-orientation). Additionally, results from the paired-samples t-tests are also offered in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Workweek Training Scores

Factors and Items	Pre	Post	Δ
<i>Typical Day Routine*</i>	7.64	9.06	1.42
I understand the rules and routines of a typical day at camp.	6.96	8.91	1.95
I have a good understanding of how to perform my role as a counselor.	7.87	9.14	1.27
I understand the camp standards, as addressed in the TEC manual.	8.09	9.13	1.04
<i>Conflict Management*</i>	7.86	8.77	0.92
I have confidence in my ability to handle conflict between campers.	7.53	8.70	1.17
I feel skilled in my ability to handle conflict in a positive manner.	7.85	8.83	0.98
I am comfortable in my ability to handle a conflict between myself and another camper.	8.18	8.78	0.60
<i>Counselor Expectations*</i>	7.73	9.10	1.37
I understand what is expected of me as a camp counselor.	8.17	9.22	1.05
I feel skilled in my job as a counselor.	7.39	8.83	1.44
I understand how to perform the responsibilities of a camp counselor.	7.63	9.25	1.62
<i>Safe Camp Environment*</i>	8.28	9.15	0.88
I have the skills necessary to provide a safe camp environment in my bunk.	7.60	9.08	1.48
I understand the importance of my being a role model for the campers I work with.	8.89	9.33	0.44
I know the difference between properly and improperly speaking to my campers.	8.33	9.05	0.72
<i>Relationships*</i>	7.88	9.00	1.12
I understand how to build trusting relationships with campers.	7.79	8.92	1.13
I have the knowledge on how to build healthy relationships with campers.	7.99	8.95	0.96
I feel comfortable building relationships with my co-counselors and supervisors.	7.87	9.13	1.26
<i>Develop Camper Skills*</i>	7.52	8.73	1.21
I understand how to help campers build self-confidence.	7.50	8.70	1.20
I understand how to help campers develop relationships with other campers.	7.17	8.71	1.54
I understand how to build campers self-esteem.	7.90	8.78	0.88
<i>Behavior Management*</i>	8.13	8.99	0.86
I understand the importance of having high expectations for camper's behavior.	8.36	9.25	0.89
I understand the difference between proper and improper camper behaviors.	8.17	9.06	0.89
I feel comfortable handling behavior issues with my campers.	7.90	8.65	0.75

* $p < .001$; $n = 101$

For the 7-factor, 21-item questionnaire used in the study, the reliability coefficient was above the suggested cutoff value of $\alpha = .70$, as suggested by Lance, Butts, and Michels, 2006, which indicated internal consistency with the items for the survey. As shown in Table 1, all factors and items showed significant increases in perceived competency upon completing the 8-day orientation training ($p < .001$). In particular, the three factors that saw the highest increase after the orientation training were typical day routine, counselor expectations, and developing camper skills, while two factors that saw the lowest increase were behavior management and creating a safe camp environment. Noting that counselors, on average, perceived their confidence levels for all factors and items to be above 8.6 (out of 10) upon completion of the 8-day orientation training is important, with many of the factors and items above 9.0 out of 10.

Implications

In our study, prior to training, the counselors expressed low confidence in their ability level and knowledge of a typical camp day. Furthermore, before training, these counselors expressed low perceived competency in their ability to develop camper relationships, handle conflict between campers, and felt limited in their ability to provide a safe camp environment inside their bunks. However, following training week, counselors reported significant increases in their perceived competencies in each of the above items.

These results have two major implications for future training in the camping industry. First, since these counselors expressed a lack of confidence prior to orientation, incorporating pre-orientation homework focused on these aims seems appropriate. Requiring counselors to complete training modules before arriving at camp might lead to increases in comfort level before their immersion into training. Second, a strong emphasis during orientation should be placed on teaching counselors specific tangible skills to target these perceived inadequacies.

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THE EFFECT OF GOAL-SETTING WITH PEDOMETERS AT SUMMER CAMP ON YOUTH'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ENJOYMENT

Authors: Cait Wilson, Jim Sibthorp, Elliott Fraughton, & Timothy Brusseau, University of Utah.
Contact: Cait Wilson, 1901 E. South Campus Drive Annex C, Rm 1085, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112. cait.wilson@utah.edu

Youth are less physically active during the summer months and more likely to suffer from problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle including being overweight or obese, and the chronic health conditions associated with excess weight. School based interventions focused on improvements in children's fitness have uncovered declines after the three-month summer break, which erased any gains made during the school-year (Carrel, Clark, Peterson, Eickhoff, & Allen, 2007; Gutin, Yin, Johnson, & Barbeau, 2008). During the summer (i.e., June to August) children gain a larger amount of body weight (Von Hippel, Powell, Downey, & Rowland, 2007). The reason youth are less active during non-school days when compared to school days (e.g., Brusseau, Kulinna, Tudor-Locke, & Ferry, 2013; Brusseau, Kulinna, Tudor-Locke, van der Mars, & Darst, 2011) has been linked to sedentary leisure and recreation choices during non-school hours.

Summer day camps represent one of the largest settings, outside the academic school year, where children can be physically active. Summer camps serve over 11 million people each year, and remain a critical medium to reach youth during non-school hours (American Camp Association, 2015). Yet, little is known about this setting and how active children are while attending (Beets, Weaver, Beighle, Webster, & Pate, 2013). One recent study using pedometers illustrated the promise of summer camps as a setting for summer physical activity (Hickerson & Henderson, 2014). Pedometers are useful in monitoring step counts to gauge physical activity levels. Goal setting programs using pedometers have also been linked to increased physical activity in a variety of settings ranging from businesses to schools (Kang, Marshall, Barreira, & Lee, 2009). This approach is low cost and applicable to summer camps wishing to encourage physical activity of campers. However, camps unlikely will embrace physical activity programming at the expense of camper enjoyment.

Therefore, the purpose of our study was to investigate how campers setting step count goals and including these goals in camp programming related to both physical activity and enjoyment of physical activity while at camp. Specifically, we implemented three levels of goal setting (i.e., individual, small group, and camp wide) and compared average daily step counts and enjoyment levels to a baseline week, which included no additional programming.

Theoretical Framework

Locke's (1968) goal-setting theory suggests that individuals are motivated by clear goals and appropriate feedback. Five principles of the goal-setting theory suggest goals must have: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and complexity. Working toward a goal provides a major source of motivation to actually reach the goal which improves performance. Our study made use of goal-setting theory by considering summer camp as a unique setting for campers to set step count goals to improve physical activity levels. Youth wore pedometers as a means to provide feedback and monitor their progress towards attaining these goals.

Method

The sample consisted of 140 campers aged 5-11 years enrolled at a University sanctioned summer camp who participated in at least two of the four weeks for the study intervention.

Participants were outfitted with Yamax CW600 Step Digi-Walker pedometers for each camp day. During week 1 of the study, baseline data were collected for both step counts and levels of enjoyment related to physical activity. Week 2 included individual (i.e., camper level) step count goals. Week 3 included small group (i.e., counselor group) step count goals. Week 4 included setting an all-camp step count goal. To facilitate goal setting, campers were generally working toward goals that were 5 or 10% more or less than the averages established during the baseline week.

To measure children's enjoyment of physical activity per camp day, a Funometer scale was used. The Funometer scale is a 10-point Likert scale with 0 being no fun at all and 10 being the most fun. Children filled out the Funometer at the end of every camp day.

From these data, average daily step counts and average daily enjoyment of physical activity scores were calculated for each child for each week. All comparisons were made via planned comparisons to the baseline week. In an effort to control for individual difference in physical activity level and focus on the effect of our goal setting intervention, three paired *t*-tests were used to compare weeks 2 to 4 with the baseline week for each of the dependent variables.

Results

All results are reported only for the seven hours of camp programming where the participants wore the pedometers. Sample sizes for each comparison vary, as campers did not consistently participate in each of the four consecutive weeks of camp. During week 1, campers took an average of 7067 steps, or just over 1000 steps/hour at camp. Enjoyment scores for week 1 were $M = 8.5$ on a 10 point scale. Week 2 the number of steps significantly increased ($p = .003$) to 7834 steps/day and enjoyment did not change ($M = 8.6, p > .05$). Steps during week 3 did not significantly increase from week 1 ($M = 7224$ steps, $p > .05$); enjoyment significantly rose to 9.2 ($p < .001$). Step count was the highest during week 4 ($M = 8687, p < .001$) and enjoyment remained significantly ($M = 9.03, p = .003$) higher than during week 1.

Implications

Using a simple and cost effective intervention with pedometers at summer camps does appear to be an effective approach to increasing physical activity while not decreasing enjoyment. Such an approach may help to address the fitness declines over the summer months (Carrel et al., 2007; Gutin et al., 2008). However, goal setting is not universally effective at increasing either physical activity or enjoyment of physical activity. How an intervention is used and incorporated into overall camp programming is likely essential. A camp wide goal may be the most effective at both boosting physical activity and enjoyment.

Similar to other settings, we also found that individual goal setting could increase physical activity levels, yet this intervention did not seem more enjoyable. Similarly, the small group goals may have involved small group programming and social interaction that increased enjoyment, yet step counts did not increase during this week. Ultimately, camps seeking to increase physical activity at their camps should consider how the programming can be designed to facilitate physical activity while also allowing for other outcomes to be realized and in a manner that youth enjoy. If youth don't enjoy being physically active it is unlikely that any effects from a weeklong summer camp will lead to long term behavioral changes.

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