

SUMMER CAMP STAFF OUTCOMES

by

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ABSTRACT

SUMMER CAMP STAFF OUTCOMES

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This thesis describes summer camp outcomes experienced by camp staff. Summer camps are a \$15 billion dollar industry with more than 12,000 day and resident camps that welcome more than 11 million children and adult campers and more than 1,500,000 camp staff to work in various camp positions annually (American Camp Association, 2015). Summer camps provide a safe space, a supportive community, and a fun atmosphere for campers to learn and grow (Coleman, 2009). However, the full potential and power of the camp environment has yet to be recognized. Research and literature that focuses on summer camps, primarily looks at the value of camp for campers. Yet, summer camps provide staff members numerous growth opportunities as well. This study explored personal outcomes staff members experienced as a result of working at summer camp. This study found numerous significantly correlated personal growth categories among camp staff. Data collected indicates that young, new, counselors perceive the most growth from camp employment.

CHAPTER ONE

According to the American Camp Association, summer camps are a \$15 billion dollar industry with more than 12,000 day and resident camps that welcome more than 11 million children and adult campers and more than 1,500,000 camp staff to work in various camp positions annually (American Camp Association, 2015). Summer camp is an impactful and significant experience first formally introduced to North America in the 1800s by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) with the founding of Camp Dudley (Young Men's Christian Association, 2015). Shortly after, organized camping experienced a large boom in the early 1900s with the emergence of organizations like the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (Girl Scouts of the United States of America, 2015; Camp Fire, 2015). Van Slyck (2006) explains the history of camps as a leisure activity often used as a form of relaxation and rejuvenation, especially utilized as an escape from overcrowded city living. Today, summer camps provide an outdoor adventure and a chance to meet new people and try new activities.

Summer camp is not only an opportunity for physically active fun, but is also a chance for campers to gain life skills. In a 2005 national report conducted by the American Camp Association, parents stated they enrolled their children in summer camp experiences expecting them to leave camp having grown in key aspects of life: "Self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, adventure and exploration, leadership,

environmental awareness, friendship skills, values and decisions, social comfort, and spirituality” (American Camp Association, 2005). Indeed, camp is an experience that fosters personal growth in countless ways. Smith (2013), the former chief executive officer of the American Camp Association, promotes summer camp by expressing the critical thinking skills campers develop, success and achievement campers find through camp activities, and the leadership skills campers gain at camp. Summer camps provide a supportive, trusting and united community that allows campers to flourish. Most notably, camps offer a safe, often outdoor, environment for kids to explore, create, and perhaps most importantly, have fun in.

Although traditionally summer camp is known for serving and meeting the interests of campers, summer camp staff members gain insightful experiences, and the outcomes of camp employment are important aspects as well. Currently, much of the camp literature centers on the campers’ outcomes and benefits and neglects to address the benefits for the staff members. Campers and staff members exist in a reciprocal relationship in which one depends on the other for a summer camp experience. In this relationship, staff members serve as role models to campers, enforce rules, and promote and maintain safety. Summer camp staff members play a crucial role in building and reinforcing camp community, a valuable and memorable part of the camp experience (Lyons, 2003). Without staff members having positive experiences at summer camp, campers’ experiences would decline in quality.

Statement of the Problem

Research and literature focuses on summer camps' value for campers, yet, camps provide staff members numerous positive growth opportunities as well. Current research on staff members at summer camp is limited in amount, and narrow in focus. As stand-alone research, the current literature regarding camp staff has restricted focal points and therefore does not capture a complete picture of the potential array of outcomes of summer camp jobs. The full potential and power of the camp environment has yet to be recognized.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge of the benefits and outcomes of working at summer camp. The insight and knowledge gathered is useful for camp administrators in aspects such as camp marketing, staff recruitment and promoting potential benefits of camp to future staff members and to stakeholders. This study highlights the perceived benefits of working at summer camp by asking former staff members about their camp experiences and sense of personal growth. This study provides a look into the outcomes of working at summer camp that can be utilized as a resource for those in the camp industry.

Research Questions

The research questions formulated for this study inquire about personal growth and outcomes of working at summer camp;

1. What personal growth or life skills do seasonal staff members obtain from working at summer camp?
2. What is the significance of summer camp staff growth and experience outcomes?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is two-fold. First, this study contributes to the knowledge and research on the topic of summer camp staff. A collection of data from former camp staff members will help to make connections among camp staff outcomes and to help fill the gaps in current research. Second, this study may improve the professional practice of the summer camp industry by providing unified information on summer camp staff outcomes that can be used to the benefit of camps and camp administrators.

Definition of Terms

Summer Camp: “A camp providing recreational and athletic facilities for children during the summer vacation period” (Summer camp, 2016).

Counselor: “A person who is in charge of young people at a summer camp” (Counselor, 2016).

Specialist: “A person who has special knowledge and skill relating to a particular job, area of study, etc.” (Specialist, 2016).

Peer Relationships: A relationship between “[people] who belong to the same age group or social group” (Peer, 2016).

Diversity: “The state of having people who are different races or who have different cultures in a group or organization” (Diversity, 2016).

Leadership: “The power or ability to lead other people” (Leadership, 2016).

Mindfulness: “The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis” (Mindfulness, 2016).

Role Model: “Someone who another person admires and tries to be like” (Role model, 2016).

Interpersonal Skills: “The ability to communicate or interact well with other people” (Interpersonal skills, 2016).

Emotional Intelligence: “The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one’s emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically” (Emotional intelligence, 2016).

Delimitations

In order to create a study that best answers the research questions, some delimitations were put in place. Specifically, this study surveys seasonal camp staff because their time at camp is short term and perhaps more impactful and therefore personal growth may be more easily attributed to the summer camp experience.

Additionally, this study does not expand to multiple camps or camp types. Rather, the study, due to researcher access to camp staff, is conducted solely using female camp staff members from Camp River Ranch. Furthermore, this study utilizes anonymous online surveys to collect data which allows for confidential answers that may not be traced back to the respondent.

Summary

Overall, this study focuses on the perceived outcomes of working at summer camp and the significance of such outcomes. Current research is presented in the review of literature, the methodology, results, and a final discussion are further detailed in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

Summer camp experiences are powerful and impactful. People who went to camp as children often have fond memories of the friendships they made and the activities they participated in. From an industry perspective, camp provides an environment to explore nature, learn through experiences, build friendships, and gain life skills.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore current and pertinent research on the topic of summer camp staff. The intent is to create a collection of scholarly information that helps to bring a clear understanding of the benefits of working at a summer camp. This chapter explores experiential education, brain maturity, camp community, and current research related to summer camp staff. First, the concept of learning through doing, experiential education, is a fundamental aspect of camp that is innate in many of the program areas such as low ropes courses: “Camp is one setting for experiential education that holds the potential to foster positive relationships and competence-building opportunities that offer experiences for youth to initiate and engage in behaviors that aid in the transition to adulthood” (Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, & Bialeschki, 2011, p. 89). Studies that focus on the outcomes and benefits of summer camp participation provide data that camp has positive impacts on developing identities, social skills, cognitive skills, physical skills, as well as helping to create positive values (Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, & Bialeschki, 2011).

In addition to experiential education, a key aspect of camp that sets the stage for all the positive outcomes of attending camp is community. Community, especially in a positive camp setting, is a supportive, non-judgmental, and accepting culture that promotes trying new things, branching out, and testing one's comfort zone. Additionally, camp culture and community allows for people to explore their identity away from social and cultural pressures often experienced in day-to-day life (Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, & Norton, 2014).

Within the camp community are many peer-to-peer relationships that are important means to gaining and sharing feedback and input from others (Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, & Norton, 2014). Interactions at camp, as in many aspects of life, are ways in which humans connect with one another, learn social skills, and find themselves through others. Relationship building requires communication, open mindedness, and sincerity; aspects that provide positive growth opportunities for those involved. To highlight the benefits of community and play in the outdoors, some profound and powerful literature has been written. For example, Richard Louv (2005) wrote about a phenomenon he coined, "nature-deficit disorder," which discusses the idea that in today's technology filled world, children are not playing outside and children are not connecting with nature. Summer camps can be a key part of the solution to "nature-deficit disorder" because camps often provide the opportunity for outdoor play and incorporate aspects of environmental education. Moreover, academic minds like Wilson (2012) write about the importance of creativity and free play in a natural environment for a child's wellbeing. Wilson discusses the positive impact creative play can have on a

child and explores the long-term outcomes that outdoor free play can have on society, such as stewardship for the earth and environmental awareness. Summer camps traditionally focus on outdoor activity and allow opportunity for unstructured outdoor play, which blends nicely with Wilson's approach to a child's wellbeing.

Furthermore, brain maturity researchers like Aamodt and Wang (2012) explain how adolescent brains are not fully developed or connected, particularly in pre-pubescent youth. Brain chemistry is changing and developing until the age of 25; and during that time, children and their brains are impressionable. Summer camp, an environment ripe with growth opportunities, as previously outlined, aims to provide a safe learning environment for youth to mimic or imitate role models, and for youth to start to outline and develop their own identity. Ultimately, summer camps provide a safe space, a supportive community, and a fun atmosphere for campers to learn and grow (Coleman, 2009). Ultimately, the value of camp, whether it is recognized in one aspect such as creating positive personal values, or through a myriad of learning achievements, can be identified in the personal outcomes and growth of both campers and staff.

Staff Specific Research

Personal growth outcomes of summer camp staff members are a research topic in which a few notable researchers have explored. Most prominent is the study conducted by Bialeschki, Henderson, and Dahowski (1998) in which the authors investigated the positive aspects of working at a summer camp. The authors created focus groups of former staff members and asked them for their thoughts and perceptions in regard to

benefits of working at camp. The authors wanted to know the counselors' perspectives on their camp experiences and to hear the perceived outcomes expressed in the staff's own words. The study found both positive and negative outcomes that staff members discussed in the focus groups. Most notably, the study identified positive staff outcomes that included "relationships with other staff and campers, appreciation of diversity, interpersonal skills, group cohesion, leadership and responsibilities, role modeling and mentoring, technical skill development, personal growth, administrative skills, and teamwork" (p. 2). Additionally, the study noted some negative outcomes such as low wages, limited time alone, camper difficulties, and cliques. Ultimately the study found that the positive outweighed the negative in the experiences of these staff members. There is a juggle of many aspects happening in a camp work environment, and if properly supported by administrators, camp staff can learn to grow in a positive direction from their time at camp. Bialeschki, Henderson, and Dahowski note that the knowledge of such outcomes can enhance a new program's design, help to analyze current programs, and provide usable knowledge for marketing purposes. In recent years there have been a few articles that are beneficial and that reinforce the staff standpoint of summer camp. Most of these articles refer to Bialeschki, Henderson, and Dahowski (1998), and look to hone in on one specific outcome and focus on its prevalence. Notably, articles about mindfulness, emotional intelligence and workforce preparation contribute to the staff focused literature.

Mindfulness, the state of being fully immersed in the present and focusing on what is taking place in the moment, is a personal focus that is taught and encouraged at

camp naturally through the innate responsibilities of a camp counselor, as well as through always putting the campers' needs first (Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, & Bialeschki, 2011). In the article *Measuring Mindfulness in Summer Camp Staff*, Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, and Bialeschki (2011) sought to examine mindfulness measurements among camp staff. The authors found that their camp-Mindfulness Attention and Awareness Scale, which asked staff five questions about their attention and focus on campers and the present moment, was a valid tool that was usable in measuring mindfulness. The authors also found that by simply asking these questions, camp staff members were more conscientious and aware of their mindfulness. Additionally, the authors note that due to camps' experiential nature and educational setting, the camp environment is one that allows for growth and awareness of behavior among staff. Mindfulness, when used consistently, can yield outcomes such as greater self-regulation of emotions, an increase in perceived positivity, quality of life, personal well-being, and enhanced relationships skills; all skills, traits, and behaviors desired in a camp staff member who is a role model for the youth participants at camp (Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, & Bialeschki, 2011).

In addition to mindfulness, emotional intelligence is a psychological aspect linked to camp benefits. Emotional intelligence refers to "a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Jacobs, McAvoy, & Bobilya, 2004, p. 73). Jacobs, McAvoy, and Bobilya gathered data from four upper Midwest resident camps using an established BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory and a self-created Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. Both of these instruments were given

at the beginning and end of the summer of 2003. The authors found that staff reported they had the opportunity to build and gain new skills throughout their employment during the summer. The most significant findings of this study were in staff responses that mentioned growth in areas such as “stress tolerance, self-actualization, social responsibility, optimism, empathy, happiness, interpersonal relationships, and flexibility” (Jacobs, McAvoy, & Bobilya, 2004, p. 85). Emotional intelligence, and all of its components, is a fundamental and necessary skill set for staff members to have and build upon in order to have a successful summer. For example, summer camp staff members are often called upon to be “patient, flexible, optimistic, empathetic, assertive, independent, and socially responsible; the key aspects of emotional intelligence” (Jacobs, McAvoy, & Bobilya, 2004, p. 73). These researchers discuss the implications of the results of their emotional intelligence study, noting that working in a summer camp environment for 8-10 weeks is an experience that can lead to employees developing their emotional intelligence skills.

Not only can camps be a place for personal and psychological development, but camp can also strengthen and refine hard skills that prepare one for future jobs and careers. A recent study by Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, and Norton (2014) discovered that current workforce employers are apprehensive about the upcoming workforce personnel who are currently in high school and college. Specifically, the authors found that employers look for a new hire to be professional, possess a strong work ethic, have strong written and verbal skills, be able to work successfully on a team, think critically, and be able to solve problems. These skills were

determined to be more critical to employers than a knowledge or skill set of basic subjects such as reading and math. Additionally, high school graduates and college students noticed disparity in what they were taught in school and what employers were looking for and expecting from an employee (Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, & Norton, 2014). Duerden et al. note that although one may easily blame and criticize the education system in place for the disparity that students feel, researchers suggest looking for solutions outside of the education system that can help to prepare students. One solution proposed involves employment in residential camp settings as a way to encourage positive workforce development. Specifically, the authors suggest that “camp staff are often pushed out of their comfort zones and given the opportunity to explore new identities, which may lead to the development of new skills and perceptions” (p. 40). Camp, with all the responsibilities and expectations placed on staff members, provides the types of experiences and challenges that would benefit a young adult and help to prepare them for entering the workforce (Duerden et al.).

Summary

This current research is a step in the right direction. This study adds supportive research and data on the topic of staff outcomes, and identifies what outcomes staff members perceived growth in as a result of their camp work experience. Ultimately, this study contributes to the research and helps to build a well-rounded group of literature that can demonstrate the value of working at summer camp.

CHAPTER THREE

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology used in collecting data from summer camp staff members. George Mason University Institutional Review Board approval was given based on the following research structure. See Appendix A for George Mason University Institutional Review Board documentation.

Research Design and Instrumentation

This study is a convergent parallel mixed methods design which researched summer camp staff outcomes by collecting complementary qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. An electronic survey was utilized to collect information about previous staff members' camp experiences. Data was gathered through an anonymous, ten question survey, built through SurveyMonkey (Appendix C). The following are sample questions from the survey:

- “Why were you interested in working at a summer camp?”
- “What did you expect to gain from working at summer camp? Please explain and elaborate.”
- “In what ways, if any, have you been able to apply your camp experiences to life outside of camp?”
- “Please select to what degree you may have experienced personal growth in each of the following categories: Leadership, Responsibility, Role Modeling.”

Quantitative questions were used to collect information in Likert scale form to determine to what degree respondents felt they may have grown in personal areas. The Likert scale questions asked for measurements of perceived personal attributes that have been supported by previous research. These attributes include peer relationships, appreciation of diversity, teamwork, leadership, mindfulness, responsibility, role modeling, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence.

Qualitative questions were used to allow respondents to expand on their personal camp experiences and share information that may not have been captured in the quantitative questions. The qualitative questions are open-ended questions that inquire about the participant's expectations and perceived outcomes.

This design was used in order to best gather personal growth data from summer camp counselors and specialists. The survey approach best fits the research question because upon analysis, the mixed methods approach allows for connections and relationships to be made clear among and between the responses gathered.

Research Setting

The research setting was an anonymous electronic survey instrument, SurveyMonkey. However, the survey only sampled camp staff from Camp River Ranch therefore making SurveyMonkey a proxy setting for Camp River Ranch.

Camp River Ranch is a 436-acre, all-girls summer camp belonging to the Girl Scouts of Western Washington. The camp provides programming such as archery, climbing, challenge course, arts and crafts, gardening, nature, drama, pioneering,

swimming, boating, bicycling, and horseback riding for girls ages 5-18. The camp is located in Carnation, Washington, a small town east of Seattle. As the largest camp within the Girl Scouts of Western Washington, River Ranch hires approximately 50 counselors and program specialists each summer to facilitate the camp experience for approximately 400 day and resident campers each week.

Camp River Ranch recruits local, national, and international staff members each spring. After filling out an application online through the Girl Scouts of Western Washington, and completing an initial interview, an applicant may be offered a position that best suits their interests as well as the camp's needs. In the summer of 2015, 223 applicants applied to work at camp, 158 were interviewed, and 76 were hired. Of these staff members hired, 41 were counselors or program specialists. In the summer of 2015, all counselors and specialists that were hired were female.

The camp structure at Camp River Ranch allows counselors to be paired with a co-counselor each week, and to be the mentor to approximately 12 campers each week. In a weekly schedule, the counselors will lead the campers to each daily activity, plan and lead small games throughout the week, facilitate any conflict resolution, and be a hands-on mentor to the campers in their charge. The counselors at camp range in age from 18 years old to approximately 30 years old. Additionally, the camp structure at Camp River Ranch is set up so that there are program specialists who are responsible for a program area and its activities for the entirety of the summer. The specialists lead programming for campers of all ages, for hour-long sessions, throughout the entire week. Additionally, the specialists come together each week to provide camp-wide

programming and activities. The counselor and specialist roles may have a different approach to interaction with the campers, but each position allows for personal growth in the staff member. Staff members from both types of positions will be solicited to take the online survey and will have an opportunity to share their summer experience.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study is summer camp counselors and specialists who worked at Girl Scouts Camp River Ranch in the summer of 2015 ($N = 41$). Self-selection sampling was used to garner staff participation. The self-selection sampling strategy was facilitated through Camp River Ranch's email list serve of former employees. Counselors and specialists who worked at camp in the summer of 2015 will receive an email (Appendix B) asking for voluntary, anonymous participation in the camp staff survey (Appendix C). The self-selected approach allowed counselors and specialists to choose whether or not to participate in the study. Because of the voluntary nature of the strategy, participants may be more willing to provide detailed answers to the survey questions.

Overall, 16 camp staff participated in the survey. Of the 16, 10 were counselors and 6 were specialists. The participating staff ranged from 18 year of age to 23 years of age and had anywhere from 1 to 3 years of Camp River Ranch employment. Survey respondent profiles are below.

Table 1 Respondent Profiles

	Age	Years Working at Camp
Counselor 1	22	1
Counselor 2	20	1
Counselor 3	19	1
Counselor 4	18	1
Counselor 5	20	1
Counselor 6	21	2
Counselor 7	21	2
Counselor 8	21	2
Counselor 9	20	3
Counselor 10	20	3
Specialist 1	18	1
Specialist 2	21	1
Specialist 3	19	1
Specialist 4	23	2
Specialist 5	21	2
Specialist 6	21	3

Data Collection

Both quantitative and qualitative questions were asked to each participant via an online anonymous survey (Appendix C). An email was sent out twice, 3 days apart, to all counselors and specialists from the 2015 summer asking for their participation (Appendix B). The survey was live and open to responses for one week. The qualitative questions were open-ended text box questions and asked for the respondent's personal camp experiences to be shared in order to best understand the outcomes of working at summer camp. The qualitative questions were asked first, so the quantitative questions were not likely to persuade the respondents' answers (although a participant may return to the qualitative questions and change answers at any point in the survey). The quantitative

questions are formatted on a Likert scale with only one answer per category, so the participants can answer with ease. The survey responses collected via SurveyMonkey were reviewed and entered into SPSS and NVivo software for analysis. This method of data collection was the most convenient and cost effective for the size and scope of this study.

Data Analysis

Analysis and response coding of the qualitative data collected was conducted using NVivo software. The qualitative analysis portion focused on finding frequencies among the interview responses to determine trends and most noted personal benefits gained from working as a counselor or specialist at summer camp. NVivo helped to find unbiased connections and trends in the survey responses illuminating themes such as peer relationship, diversity, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, role modeling, technical skills, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, youth engagement and interaction, and confidence. Additionally, a series of Pearson Correlations were run to explore relationships among the categorical variables provided in the Likert scale questions to determine response correlations of two categories. For example, a Pearson Correlation was run between Peer Relationship responses and Diversity responses, to determine if there was a high correlation, or similarity, in responses among the two categories. A Pearson Correlation was conducted for each category compared to the entirety of the remaining categories. Additional Pearson Correlations were run to explore the relationship between age and outcomes gained (all categories) as well as between years working at camp and outcomes gained (all categories) to determine if there was a

correlation among responses that might indicate a trend. Age groups were divided at the culturally accepted age of adulthood, 21 years old, making two groups; 18-20 and 21 and older.

Researcher Note

The survey data was collected in the winter of 2015, from staff members who worked at Camp River Ranch during the summer of 2015. During the summer of 2015, the researcher, Janelle Marshall, was the Program Director at Camp River Ranch. In this position, Janelle directly supervised the specialists and personally knew all staff members who completed this survey. In order to negate any potential researcher bias and to avoid potential respondent hesitations, the surveys were completed anonymously. All staff who were asked to take the survey were told before the start of the data collection that Janelle Marshall was the researcher, names were not asked for in the survey, the data was in no way linked with participant names, and the information would not be shared outside of a research capacity.

CHAPTER FOUR

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the survey results and to provide an analysis of the collected data.

Survey Data Analysis

The following responses provided in the survey responses have been organized into thematic categories. The ten expected categories, based on the literature review, were peer relationships, appreciation of diversity, teamwork, leadership, mindfulness, responsibility, role modeling, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence. Of these expected categories, only mindfulness was not mentioned in the qualitative responses. Additional categories emerged during the qualitative analysis. Those categories were confidence and youth engagement and interaction. Of the twelve categories used to code qualitative responses, peer relationships and confidence were the most cited among survey responses. The quotes below are listed without the specific question it was in response to and stand alone to serve as highlights of camp staff outcomes.

Peer Relationships:

The responses to the qualitative questions provided insight into the expectations staff members had prior to the start of their employment for the summer of 2015. Many of the expectations and outcomes mentioned revolved around peer relationships. For example, a few participants noted the desire to make new and important relationships; “[I expected] to meet new people and make new friends.” Additionally staff members noted the community aspect of peer relationships: “Another thing I learned is that your friends and coworkers are there for you when you need them. People at camp are always willing to help the counselors having a tough week.”

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member’s recognition of growth in their peer relationships.

- “I have learned how to work effectively with a lot of different types of people.”
- “I have a lot more people skills now and am able to make friends more easily.”
- “I’m way better at dealing with children and talking to peers.”
- “[I expected] to make friends.”
- “Another thing I learned is that your friends and coworkers are there for you when you need them. People at camp are always willing to help the counselors having a tough week.”
- “I have a lot more people skills now and am able to make friends more easily.”
- “I also expected to gain friends, because I saw every year the type of relationships that counselors had with each other.”
- “[I expected] to gain a network of friends.”

- “[I expected] to develop skills communicating and working with others.”
- “I learned how to live and work with the same people for a long period of time.”
- “The connections I made are extremely valuable and encourage me to return to a camp environment.”
- “I love the family like bond [staff] all shared.”
- “[I expected] to meet new people and make new friends.”

Appreciation of Diversity:

Two themes emerged within the category of Appreciation of Diversity: traveling for cultural experience and learning to work with people from varying backgrounds. Sample responses regarding diversity were, “[I now have the] ability to work with a diverse group of girls,” “I have learned how to work effectively with a lot of different types of people,” “I was interested in working in a summer camp to gain a different cultural experience,” and “I wanted to travel and learn about new cultures.” These answers indicate that participants wanted to explore the world around them, and be introduced to new cultures and ways of life.

The average response to the Likert question asking participants to indicate personal growth of appreciation of diversity, on a scale from 0-5, was 4.19 ($SD = .911$), with the lowest being a mark of 2, and the highest being a mark of 5. Surprisingly, appreciation of diversity was not strongly correlated with peer relationships. Further research would be needed in order to explore the relationship between these two social aspects of camp life among staff.

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in diversity appreciation.

- "I have learned how to work effectively with a lot of different types of people."
- "I was interested in working in a summer camp to gain a different cultural experience."
- "I wanted to travel and learn about new cultures."
- "[I now have the] ability to work with a diverse group of girls."

Teamwork:

It is important to note that many of these categories are naturally linked. For example the teamwork highlighted quote, "another thing I learned is that your friends and coworkers are there for you when you need them. People at camp are always willing to help the counselors having a tough week," is a great example of two categories; teamwork and peer relationships. In the qualitative analysis conducted, teamwork was coded only once, and that quote was co-coded with peer relationships as well. It may be difficult, if not impossible, to entirely separate categories and have no overlap in understanding or application. The mean response for the Likert question asking participants to indicate personal growth of teamwork, on a scale from 0 to 5, was 4.56 ($SD = .727$), with the lowest a mark of 3, and the highest a mark of 5. Although the mention of teamwork in the qualitative section was low, the mean response indicates that

participants did perceive growth in teamwork. This growth, however, may not have been a highlight or standout moment of a staff member's summer.

The following quote from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in teamwork.

- "Another thing I learned is that your friends and coworkers are there for you when you need them. People at camp are always willing to help the counselors having a tough week."

Leadership:

The category with the lowest standard deviation among its Likert scale responses was leadership ($p = .521$), with a mean response of 4.56 ($SD = .512$). This response pattern indicates that all respondents perceived their growth in leadership to be a rating of at least 4 out of 5 meaning that all participants rated leadership growth similarly high, indicating leadership as a high growth category. The analyzed qualitative responses noted two mentions of leadership from survey participants; "[I can now] take on more leadership roles without any hesitation" and "My camp experience made me a better leader and problem solver." These responses support the idea that being a leader at camp and building one's leadership skills during the summer can translate to life outside of camp, allowing staff members to be able to apply those leadership skills in a variety of situations. Overall, leadership was a category that was indicated with high growth despite the fact that it was mentioned only twice in the qualitative portions of the survey,

suggesting that it may not be a stand out area of growth for survey participants when reflecting on their summer experience as a whole, but is a recognized area of growth when asked directly.

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in leadership.

- “[I can now] take on more leadership roles without any hesitation.”
- “My camp experience made me a better leader and problem solver.”

Mindfulness:

Mindfulness, as noted by Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, and Bialeschki (2011), is the state of being fully present and focusing on what is taking place in the moment.

Mindfulness is a personal focus that is taught and encouraged at camp naturally through the innate responsibilities of a camp counselor, as well as through the duty of always putting the campers' needs first. On average, mindfulness was scored with a 4.19 ($SD = .981$) on a scale of 0 to 5 in the Likert scale section of the survey. Despite the high ranking, mindfulness was not mentioned in the opening qualitative questions posed in the online survey, suggesting that when asked to reflect upon their summer experience, staff did not indicate mindfulness as a significant aspect. This indicates that mindfulness, although a desirable quality to have in a camp staff member, and found by Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, and Bialeschki to allow for growth and awareness of behavior among staff, was not a highly relevant or recognizable outcome to the participants of this study.

Responsibility:

The one response coded in the category of responsibility indicates a personal and internal responsibility to oneself and growth in aspects such as time management and ownership of actions. Responsibility was ranked anywhere between a 2 and 5 with a mean score of 4.31 ($SD = 1.078$) in the Likert scale section of the survey.

The following quote from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in responsibility.

- "I am so much more responsible for myself."

Role Modeling:

Naturally, in an environment in which one is leading and guiding children, there will be role models. Whether the camp staff members believe themselves to be a role model to the campers, or felt they grew as a role model, is the question at hand. One staff member noted, "[camp] has also given me the ability to step up and be more of a role model." This quote indicates that some staff members may feel camp is their main opportunity to guide children and to be in a role model position. Another participant noted, "I expected to make a difference in a camper's life," suggesting that camp is a known environment in which one can make an impact in a child's life. Furthermore, the mean response to the Likert scale question regarding growth of role modeling was 4.5 ($SD = .730$). This suggests that all respondents perceived relatively high growth of

responsibility as compared to growth categories such as technical skills ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.078$) and appreciation of diversity ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .911$).

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in role modeling.

- “[Camp] has also given me the ability to step up and be more of a role model.”
- “I expected to make a difference in a camper's life.”

Technical Skills:

The mean response to the Likert scale question regarding technical skill growth was the lowest of all the scaled questions, scoring 3.69 ($SD = 1.078$). Despite receiving the lowest mean score, technical skill growth and development was noted many times in the qualitative responses. A standout theme to these category responses was the mention of lifetime application and the ability to use the technical skills gained in an environment or situation outside of camp. One participant wrote, “summer camp has just taught me a lot of new and interesting skills that will continue to develop over time and I'll be able to continue using all my skills and experiences I had at summer camp in the real world.” A second participant shared, “[I can] show people and teach them certain skills that I've learnt myself at camp. It has also given me a lot more different experience which has enabled me to be able to work at places and get jobs where I never thought that I would be able to work before.” The applicability and the impact of tangible, hard skills learned at camp have been noticed by respondents. A third participant noted, “I also gained an

awesome set of skills including first aid which is useful anywhere.” The importance and usability of growth is perhaps most noted in the technical skills category.

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member’s recognition of growth in technical skills.

- “Summer camp has just taught me a lot of new and interesting skills that will continue to develop over time and I’ll be able to continue using all my skills and experiences I had at summer camp in the real world.”
- “[I can] show people and teach them certain skills that I’ve learned myself at camp. It has also given me a lot more different experiences which has enabled me to be able to work at places and get jobs where I never thought that I would be able to work before.”
- “I also gained an awesome set of skills including first aid which is useful anywhere.”
- “I expected to develop new and existing skills.”

Interpersonal Skills:

In regard to interpersonal skills, participants noted, “I have a lot more people skills now and am able to make friends more easily,” “camp has made me more confident in interactions with other people and public speaking,” “I’m way better at dealing with children and talking to peers,” “[camp helped] me improve my interpersonal skills in a multitude of ways” and “I learnt how to live and work with the same people for a long period of time.” These quotes highlight the idea that due to camps’ social setting and often close quarters with fellow staff members, growth in interpersonal skills may be obtained. Furthermore, the mean scaling of interpersonal growth on the Likert scale questioning was 4.44 ($SD = .814$) with a range from 2 to 5, indicating that although some

staff perceived relatively low growth in their interpersonal skills, enough staff indicated high growth to keep the average response high.

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in interpersonal skills.

- "Self confidence in how I present myself to authority figures and when I meet new people."
- "I also learned a lot about working together with my co counselor. Even if we may not get along as people, we have to be able to work together and give the kids a good week at camp."
- "I have a lot more people skills now and am able to make friends more easily."
- "Camp has made me more confident in interactions with other people and public speaking."
- "I'm way better at dealing with children and talking to peers."
- "[Camp helped] me improve my interpersonal skills in a multitude of ways."
- "I learned how to live and work with the same people for a long period of time."

Emotional Intelligence:

Garnering only two mentions in the qualitative responses from participants, the qualitative responses in regard to emotional intelligence allude to a growth in nurturing and thoughtfulness; "I also tend to care for people more; when someone is sick or upset I go into counselor mode and hold their hair back or talk to them about it," "Camp has made me become more thoughtful in myself." Finally, with the second lowest mean score 4.00 ($SD=1.033$), growth in emotional intelligence was scored anywhere between 2 and 5 for participants of this study, indicating a right skew, or a positive skewness,

demonstrating a collective low ranking. These response results suggests that staff members did not perceive the most growth in this category. This may be because of limited opportunity for development, lack of understanding of emotional intelligence and what growth in that area may look like, or a combination of factors. To be more precise, further research needs to be done regarding emotional intelligence growth among camp staff.

The following quotes from the survey results demonstrate staff member's recognition of growth in emotional intelligence.

- "I also tend to care for people more; when someone is sick or upset I go into counselor mode and hold their hair back or talk to them about it."
- "Camp has made me become more thoughtful in myself."

Confidence:

Throughout the qualitative analysis process, the theme of confidence emerged. This theme was not predicted as a priority, yet confidence was a large enough aspect of their camp that it emerged in the qualitative data. As the second largest theme, second only to peer relationships, confidence is noted as being a significant impact on the lives of staff members. When asked what camp staff expected to gain from working at summer camp, survey participants noted the following:

- "I expected to gain new skills and more confidence in myself with working with children. I've always wanted to work with children but just never had the confidence in myself to think that I was capable to look after other people's children. So I wanted the experience to work at a summer camp, so I could

experience and learn new things that I could use for in the future to help look after children. And I also just wanted to be able to feel comfortable with what I was doing and just build confidence in myself and camp was one of the best places for me and really did help me grow as a person.”

- “I expected to gain self-confidence, because I always saw counselors as the most self-confident people ever.”

Arriving at camp with the expectation of gaining self-confidence speaks to the known value of the environment of summer camp. Propelling this notion and sharing this value of camp with potential camp staff is key in obtaining staff members who truly want to better themselves and grow.

When asked “in what ways, if any, have you been able to apply your camp experiences to life outside of camp,” participants responded with the following:

- “I have gained huge growth in self-confidence. Self-confidence in how I present myself to authority figures and when I meet new people.”
- “I have become much more confident in my decisions, and have little regard for personal embarrassment anymore.”
- “The confidence camp has given me has improved my ability to contribute at University and therefore makes me a more active and engaging student.”
- “It taught me that if you do things wrong and make mistakes it's ok cause you can just keep trying and practicing and every time again that you do it you'll get better. So I guess camp just taught me to believe in myself and to never give up on what I want to achieve.”
- “Going to summer camp has made me grow as a person and has made me believe in myself and has given me more confidence to be able to do things I didn't think that I'd ever do. I used to be very shy, but camp also opened me up and just made me feel very comfortable.”
- “Camp has made me more confident in interactions with other people and public speaking.”
- “I'm more outgoing now and a lot more confident.”

- “Self confidence in how I present myself to authority figures and when I meet new people.”

As with all of the outcome categories, confidence is a large topic that is very closely related and intertwined with other noted outcomes. The overwhelming mention of confidence as an outcome suggests that further research regarding summer camp employment and growth in camp staff confidence should occur.

Youth Engagement and Interaction:

Although not necessarily considered an area of growth for all participants, rather noted as an interest or motivating factor in choosing to work at camp, youth engagement and interaction with children emerged as a standout category in the qualitative survey responses. Participants noted the following when asked about interest and expectations of working at summer camp:

- “I expected to gain skills like working with kids.”
- “I wanted to help teach young campers different types of activities. I was also interested just due to the fact that I love working with children and having an impact on their life.”
- “I love working with kids.”
- “I now have a nephew and niece, [I was interested in] learning other ways to talk to children. Learning about different behaviors, personalities of children.”
- “I expected to make a difference in a camper’s life.”

On an outcome related note, some staff members did describe growth in the skill or interest of youth engagement noting, “[I realized] I really do want to work with

children,” “[I now have the] ability to work with a diverse group of girls, ” and “I’m way better at dealing with children and talking to peers.” Once again, this emergent category is closely related with established categories like appreciation of diversity, peer relationships, and interpersonal skills. Further research could be done on the topic of youth engagement and the interest in working at summer camp among camp staff members.

Categorical Relationships

A series of Pearson Correlations were used to test the strength between two continuous variables. Pearson Correlations were run using one of the ten Likert scale attributes (i.e. peer relationships, appreciation of diversity, teamwork, leadership, mindfulness, responsibility, role modeling, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence) vs. the following:

- Age vs. Likert scale attributes
- Years working at camp vs. Likert scale attributes
- Likert scale attribute vs. A second Likert scale attribute

The following chart is the combination of the individual Pearson Correlations conducted in SPSS. The bold figures in the chart are statistically significant figures that are discussed in more detail.

[illegible]

		Peer Relationships	Diversity	Teamwork	Leadership	Mindfulness	Responsibility	Role Modeling	Technical Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Emotional Intelligence	Age	Years Working at Camp	Overall Benefit
Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.635**	.683**	.951**	.505*	0.445	1	.804**	0.434	.518*	.718**	-.163	-.580*	0.311
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.004	0	0.046	0.084		0	0.093	0.04	0.002	0.547	0.019	0.241
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Role Modeling	Pearson Correlation	.750**	.752**	.690**	.624**	0.326	.804**	1	0.466	.617*	.795**	-.236	-.633**	0.204
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.001	0.003	0.01	0.218	0		0.069	0.011	0	0.378	0.008	0.448
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Technical Skills	Pearson Correlation	.550*	.539*	0.324	.581*	0.059	0.434	0.466	1	0.394	0.419	-.157	-.512*	-.173
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.027	0.031	0.221	0.018	0.828	0.093	0.069		0.131	0.106	0.561	0.043	0.522
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Interpersonal Skills	Pearson Correlation	.617*	0.242	0.457	0.33	-0.277	.518*	.617*	0.394	1	0.476	0.193	-0.497	0.321
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.011	0.367	0.075	0.212	0.3	0.04	0.011	0.131		0.062	0.474	0.05	0.226
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	.619*	.567*	.621*	.756**	0.461	.718**	.795**	0.419	0.476	1	-.525	-.732**	0.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.011	0.022	0.01	0.001	0.073	0.002	0	0.106	0.062		0.037	0.001	0.594
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

		Peer Relationships	Diversity	Teamwork	Leadership	Mindfulness	Responsibility	Role Modeling	Technical Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Emotional Intelligence	Age	Years Working at Camp	Overall Benefit
Age	Pearson Correlation	-0.236	-0.051	-0.191	-0.463	-0.047	-0.163	-0.236	-0.157	-0.193	-.525*	1	0.346	0.138
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.378	0.852	0.48	0.071	0.862	0.547	0.378	0.561	0.474	0.037		0.19	0.611
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Years Working at Camp	Pearson Correlation	-.633**	-0.283	-0.368	-.687**	-0.434	-.580*	-.633**	-.512*	-0.497	-.732**	0.346	1	-0.235
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	0.289	0.16	0.003	0.093	0.019	0.008	0.043	0.05	0.001	0.19		0.381
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
Overall Benefit	Pearson Correlation	0	0.123	0.256	0.073	0.114	0.311	0.204	-0.173	0.321	0.144	0.138	-0.235	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1	0.651	0.338	0.789	0.674	0.241	0.448	0.522	0.226	0.594	0.611	0.381	
	N	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

First, statistically significant positive correlations were found between people indicating high peer relationship marks on the Likert scale and high marks on teamwork ($p = .023$), leadership ($p = .01$), responsibility ($p = .008$), role modeling ($p = .001$), technical skills ($p = .027$), interpersonal skills, ($p = .011$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .011$). This suggests that the importance and growth of peer relationships is closely linked with the importance and growth of teamwork ($p = .023$), leadership ($p = .01$), responsibility ($p = .008$), role modeling ($p = .001$), technical skills ($p = .027$), interpersonal skills, ($p = .011$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .011$) among Camp River Ranch staff in the summer of 2015. These results mean that peer relationships go hand in hand with other social aspects of camp noted, such as teamwork and interpersonal skills. An increase in peer relationships is related to an increase in various vital aspects of camp, and vice versa.

Additionally, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between people indicating high appreciation of diversity marks on the Likert scale and high marks on teamwork ($p = .008$), responsibility ($p = .004$), role modeling ($p = .001$), technical skills ($p = .031$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .022$). These Pearson Correlation results suggest that appreciation of diversity, or an acceptance of other's difference from oneself, is related to development of teamwork and emotional intelligence, among other aspects of camp staff development. Naturally, appreciation of diversity can be associated with social aspects of camp work life. Moreover, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between people indicating high growth in teamwork on the Likert scale and high growth in responsibility ($p = .00$), role modeling ($p = .001$), technical skills ($p = .031$) and emotional intelligence ($p = .022$). These results suggest that growth in teamwork

skills is closely linked with growth in skills that might require a team or assistance to learn, for instance, various technical skills associated with working at Camp River Ranch such as fire starting, outdoor cooking, overnight trip preparation, and use of knots and lashing.

Furthermore, indication of high growth in leadership was found to have a significant positive correlation with indication of high growth in mindfulness, ($p = .021$) the least significantly correlated category, role modeling ($p = .01$), technical skills ($p = .018$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .001$). The relationship between technical skill growth and leadership growth suggests that if a staff member perceives growth in a technical skill, then one is likely to step up and teach or lead that skill to peers and campers in their charge. The relationship is naturally found in a camp environment in which staff members are learning and practicing new skills in anticipation of being a counselor to eager campers also seeking to learn new technical skills. Additionally, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between people indicating high responsibility marks on the Likert scale and high marks on role modeling ($p = .00$), interpersonal skills ($p = .04$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .002$). This relationship indicates the importance and interwoven presence of responsibility among camp staff outcomes. With the close correlation, responsibility stands out among the data as an impactful aspect of camp that is consistently present and connected with key aspects of camp.

Additionally, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between people indicating high role modeling growth on the Likert scale and high growth in

interpersonal skills ($p = .011$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .00$). Naturally, by definition, role modeling and responsibility are linked. The fact that these two categories were significantly correlated is not a fluke. This relationship suggests that in order to be a role model, one needs to be responsible and vice versa. This relationship also indicates the importance of role modeling among camp staff outcomes.

Overall, every category had at least one significant correlation with another category, highlighting the interwoven importance of all categories in a camp setting. For the categories with several significant correlations, the implication is that those categories, and the opportunity for growth in those areas, are most abundant in a camp setting. For the categories with one or few significant correlations, the implication is that perhaps the category is more independent and can stand-alone from the other categories and still be an area of growth for staff members.

Group Analyses

Counselors and Specialists:

Of the total participants, 10 were counselors and 6 were specialists. When the two groups are compared to measure group mean responses to the Likert scale outcome questions, overall, the counselors note a small margin more of perceived growth in every category, except in the category of overall perceived benefit of working at camp. See Table 3. When this same data are used to conduct an Independent Samples T-test, no significant figures are present, suggesting that the difference between groups is not significant. Rather, the data suggests that more research, and a larger sample is needed in

order to support or deny this claim. If supported, the trend could suggest that the staff in the role of a counselor at Camp River Ranch obtain higher growth in outcomes at camp than specialists in the stated categories. The trend could also mean that the specialists hired at Camp River Ranch arrive with a higher level of skill in each category than do counselors, thus experiencing less growth to meet the “threshold.” Further research needs to be conducted in order to support or deny these theories.

The table below shows the statistical break down of the participants’ responses based on position held while working at Camp River Ranch in the summer of 2015.

Table 3 Group Statistics

	Position at Camp	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Peer Relationship	Specialist	6	4.33	.816	.333
	Counselor	10	4.60	.699	.221
Appreciation of Diversity	Specialist	6	3.83	1.329	.543
	Counselor	10	4.40	.516	.163
Teamwork	Specialist	6	4.33	1.033	.422
	Counselor	10	4.70	.483	.153
Leadership	Specialist	6	4.33	.516	.211
	Counselor	10	4.70	.483	.153
Mindfulness	Specialist	6	4.17	1.169	.477
	Counselor	10	4.20	.919	.291
Responsibility	Specialist	6	4.00	1.549	.632
	Counselor	10	4.50	.707	.224
Role Modeling	Specialist	6	4.17	.983	.401
	Counselor	10	4.70	.483	.153
Technical Skills	Specialist	6	3.17	.983	.401
	Counselor	10	4.00	1.054	.333
Interpersonal Skills	Specialist	6	4.17	1.169	.477
	Counselor	10	4.60	.516	.163
Emotional Intelligence	Specialist	6	3.67	1.366	.558
	Counselor	10	4.20	.789	.249
Overall Perceived Benefit of Working at Summer Camp	Specialist	6	4.83	.408	.167
	Counselor	10	4.70	.483	.153

Age Groups:

Additionally, participants were broken down into two age categories, under 21 years old, and 21 years old and older. This study broke down the participants into two age groups, 18 to 20 years old, and 21 years old to 23 years old (the oldest participant). When divided by these age groups, each group consisted of 8 participants. In every category of Likert scale questions, except for mindfulness and overall perceived benefit of working at summer camp, the younger age group consisting of 18, 19, and 20 year olds had a higher mean rating. See Table 4.1. When this same data are used to conduct an Independent Samples T-test, no significant figures are present except for in the category of emotional intelligence where the 21- 23 year olds ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .916$) indicated less growth than the 18-20 year olds ($M = 4.63$, $SD = .744$); $t(14) = -2.996$, $p = .010$.

Table 4 Average Responses to Likert Scale Questions by Age Group

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Peer Relationship	>= 21	8	4.25	.707	.250
	< 21	8	4.75	.707	.250
Appreciation of Diversity	>= 21	8	4.00	1.195	.423
	< 21	8	4.38	.518	.183
Teamwork	>= 21	8	4.38	.916	.324
	< 21	8	4.75	.463	.164
Leadership	>= 21	8	4.38	.518	.183
	< 21	8	4.75	.463	.164
Mindfulness	>= 21	8	4.25	1.165	.412
	< 21	8	4.13	.835	.295
Responsibility	>= 21	8	4.13	1.356	.479
	< 21	8	4.50	.756	.267
Role Modeling	>= 21	8	4.25	.886	.313
	< 21	8	4.75	.463	.164
Technical Skills	>= 21	8	3.50	1.069	.378
	< 21	8	3.88	1.126	.398
Interpersonal Skills	>= 21	8	4.25	1.035	.366
	< 21	8	4.63	.518	.183
Emotional Intelligence	>= 21	8	3.38	.916	.324
	< 21	8	4.63	.744	.263
Overall Perceived Benefit of Working at Summer Camp	>= 21	8	4.88	.354	.125
	< 21	8	4.63	.518	.183

Years Working at Summer Camp:

A Pearson Correlation was run to test the strength between years working at camp and each of the Likert scale categories. See Table 2.1. The test found that the less years one has worked at summer camp was significantly correlated with the growth of peer relationships ($p = .008$), leadership ($p = .003$), responsibility ($p = .019$), role modeling ($p = .008$), technical skills ($p = .043$), and most strongly with emotional intelligence ($p = .001$). These relationships indicate that the newer one is to working at camp, the more growth in peer relationships ($p = .008$), leadership ($p = .003$), responsibility ($p = .019$), role modeling ($p = .008$), technical skills ($p = .043$), and emotional intelligence ($p = .001$) one is to gain.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter discusses the significance of the findings highlighted in the previous chapter in regard to personal outcomes identified by seasonal summer camp staff members. Suggestions, limitations to this study, and recommendations for future research are also explored.

Discussion

The survey findings in this study suggest that camp staff grow in a multitude of ways. The category found to have the most significantly correlated aspects and the most mentions in the qualitative data section was peer relationships. Camp is an environment where counselors are working with one another on a daily basis, working with new co-staff members on a weekly basis, and socializing with fellow staff members continuously, creating a sense of community and belonging. As noted by Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, and Norton (2014), community at camp provides a way in which staff can learn to successfully communicate and to explore one's identity in a pressure-free environment. As a result of the continuous peer interaction and a sense of camp community, it is not a surprise that growth in peer relationships was noted as a large growth area. This desire for community is not new or specific to Camp River Ranch. In fact, Lyons (2003) discusses the importance of community and peer-relationships at camp, noting that community is a valuable and memorable part of the

camp experience. Peer-relationships are an important way to gain feedback and input about oneself from those around them. Such relationships are naturally found in a summer camp setting in which staff members work closely with each other and form a community (Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeschki, Schwarzlose, & Norton, 2014).

Additionally, camp staff noted in the qualitative data their perceived growth of personal confidence. Confidence was not a category that was specifically addressed in the quantitative questions. Therefore, the mention of confidence in the qualitative answers indicates that confidence was a standout category for camp staff members and should be included in future research that outlines potential themes prior to collection of data. In a camp setting, staff members are asked to try new activities, lead by example, and act out in silly, entertaining ways. Much of a staff member's experience can lead to a boost in confidence and ultimately an increase in self-esteem.

Overall, staff members noted growth in every category. However, it is impossible to directly relate this perceived growth solely to their camp experiences. By simple maturity, aging, and addition of life experiences, camp staff will naturally grow in many of these measured aspects. To attribute this growth solely to camp is narrow-minded. Furthermore, it is impossible to entirely separate many of these categories. For example growth in emotional intelligence, an understanding of one's own emotions and recognition of other's emotions, can naturally lead to growth in peer relationships. The natural linkage between and among categories however may be unique to the camp environment. Few job opportunities for staff between the ages of 18 and 23 provide such an array of positive outcomes. The survey findings, however, indicate that the younger

the staff member, the more likely they are to grow and perceive growth in themes that relate to overall maturation and adulthood. This is likely because younger staff members have not had as many, if any, impactful experiences, as have the older age group, making this summer of working at camp an experience that yields larger results.

Moreover, the categories that the older age group indicated higher growth in, mindfulness and overall perceived benefit of working at summer camp, are perhaps two of the more mentally advanced themes in that maturity and self awareness are needed to grasp these concepts, something older staff members are more likely to have.

Furthermore, the findings suggests that the younger, less mature, less experienced staff members perceive the most growth from working at summer camp; an outcome that one is likely to find in numerous first work experience setting such as a summer camp.

Further research, with a larger population and sample is needed to support or deny this finding. Conversely, no category was significantly correlated with the older respondents. That is not to say that older staff member do not experience personal growth. Rather, older staff members may come with a higher base of personal skill or knowledge in categories such as leadership, responsibility, role modeling etc. and therefore experience less growth, but not less skill usage or over all ability in said categories.

Practical Implications

In order to foster camp as an environment for staff to obtain personal growth in the studied categories, camp administrators can utilize this research and data by intentionally designing and facilitating staff training. Staff training is a period prior to the

start of camper's arrival in which staff members are brought together to learn about the specific camp's procedures, experience camp culture, create working relationships with fellow staff, and to become prepared for the many facets of their role as camp staff. Specifically, camp administrators can tailor the training to meet the expected outcomes of staff members and to set a solid foundation in which staff members can utilize to obtain positive growth in key attribute areas such as peer relationships, mindfulness, teamwork, and appreciation of diversity. An important aspect of staff training for camp administrators is knowing that being a leader and being a trainer at summer camp requires that a facilitator find a healthy balance between building skills such as confidence and competence in staff, while at the same time making staff aware of the significance of their roles among campers (Powell, Bixler, Switzer, & Hurtes, 2002). The emphasis and instilment of positive outcomes during staff training, the inclusion of these benefits in the camp philosophy, and support from the camp administration during the work experience are crucial in fostering positive camp culture that demonstrates the value of camp. Intentional effort from camp leaders as well as camp staff members is needed to build a community that fosters growth and positive outcomes. As Lyons (2003) states, "outcomes derived from organized camping are a product of a carefully orchestrated leadership process that takes place within camps" (p. 56). Knowing the likely personal outcomes helps administrators plan and program staff training to lend itself to said outcomes, thus, encouraging and propelling the likelihood of the personal outcomes to become reality for staff.

An additional significant aspect of this study is the applicability the findings have for camp administrators. For example, camp administrators can utilize the data from this study to help in their current recruitment and retention issues. In today's society, there are many challenges facing recruitment and retention of seasonal employees for leisure businesses like camp. To highlight a few leading challenges, McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, and McAvoy (2012) discussed the fact that the cost of attending higher education has increased and has forced students attending college to seek a high paying summer job. Additionally, the authors explained that college internship requirements have guided students to take jobs in their intended career field, rather than in recreation and leisure services such as camp. Camp administrators feel these financial and college requirement challenges when hiring for summer seasonal staff members primarily because the people who are most likely to be available for temporary summer work are college students. The search for a summer camp staff member means looking for people who have a desire to work with children, want the summer job experience, enjoy being and working outdoors, are willing to work on a team, and want a social job with much time spent in the work community and environment (Lyons, 2000). To find people with all of these interests, the time to devote to a temporary job in the summer, and that do not need a high paying job is a formidable challenge. Because of this multifaceted challenge, camp administrators continuously identify recruitment and retention of quality seasonal employees as a paramount issue (McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, & McAvoy, 2012).

The market for seasonal staff is consistently competitive and as a result, it is more and more important for summer camp administrators to be able to highlight and validate

the benefits and positive outcomes linked with working at summer camp (Jacobs, McAvoy, & Bobilya, 2005). Not only can outside of camp factors such as college influence recruitment and retention rates, but so too can internal camp issues. Bialeschki, Henderson, and Dahowski (1998) conducted a focus group with former staff members from various camp and found that staff members indicate that the negative aspects of working at camp include learning to work with diversity, small or low salaries, limited time for personal activities, annoyances with campers and fellow staff, cliques, and limited support from camp administrators. Robust knowledge of the benefits of working at camp will give camping professionals the tools to attract new staff members, dissuade the negative perceptions of working at a summer camp, be competitive with other summer job opportunities, and explain the value of working at summer camp as an investment in future goals of the staff members (Jacobs, McAvoy, & Bobilya, 2005).

From a business point of view, retaining quality staff members helps to reduce both time and costs needed to recruit, interview, and train new employees. Additionally, having a core set of quality returning staff can show the community and stakeholders such as staff, parents, and campers the commitment to the camp and the programs in place which in turn can create more buy in and business (McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, & McAvoy, 2012). Ultimately, knowledge of staff outcomes and an understanding of the goals and intentions of staff members can help to improve the camp experience as well as recruiting and retention efforts. If camp administrators better understand the positive outcomes that staff members wish to gain from working at camp, they would be able to speak to those outcomes and verbally demonstrate the value of camp to a potential staff

member. Being able to easily speak to the value of camp can bring in more qualified and committed staff to work at camp (Bialeschki, Henderson, & Dahowski, 1998).

Limitations and Future Research

This study was conducted using one summer camp's counselors and specialists. Information and responses coming from one source provides limited data and a limited scope that may not speak to results that may be found from asking a larger population and sample size. Additionally, this study utilized only female staff members from an all-girls summer camp. The impact of this female dominant environment was not studied or brought up in the online questionnaire, yet may have had an impact or influence on the participants' outcomes studied in this research.

Although the open-ended questions were paired with response text boxes that had no text limit, respondents did not tend to elaborate. A study that uses in-person interviewing would be a way to yield qualifying or expanded remarks. Furthermore, this study asked only 41 staff members to participate in the online questionnaire. Of the 41 asked, 16 participated, making the response rate of 39% a limitation in and of itself. Ultimately, the more people surveyed, the more variance one is likely to see in the responses. To truly capture and understand the outcomes of working at a summer camp, a larger number of camp staff would need to be involved in the study.

Based on the limitations mentioned, and from experience working through this research process, some suggestions for future research can be made. First, research done on the topic of summer camp staff outcomes and personal growth could expand its reach and survey a much larger population of camp staff. Asking staff from multiple types of

camps, including camps for boys and camps for co-ed campers, would help to obtain a truly representative sample. Additionally, future research may seek to ask camp staff questions about their current level of attribute (i.e. interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, leadership etc.) before and after their summer camp experience. In doing so, growth may be able to be more closely linked with summer camp employment. Finally, future research should look into the most noted topics in the qualitative responses; peer relationships and confidence and should explore the idea that young, new, counselors may perceive the most benefit from working at a summer camp.

Conclusion

Summer camp staff members can gain insightful experiences from their time working at camp. A summer of camp employment may lead to perceived personal growth in categories such as peer relationships, appreciation of diversity, teamwork, leadership, mindfulness, responsibility, role modeling, technical skills, and interpersonal skills. Additional areas of growth mentioned by staff in the qualitative findings portion of the survey were growth in positive youth interactions, and growth in personal confidence. These twelve noted growth categories of camp employment are important aspects of a staff member's emergence into both adulthood and into the workforce. The participants of this study noted growth in all ten of the tested categories. The data analysis shows that categories in which participants indicated high growth levels were significantly correlated to at least one other category in which participants noted similar growth. Finally, data collected indicates that young, new, counselors perceive the most growth from camp employment.

APPENDICES



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

Research Hall, 4400 University Drive, MS 6D5, Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703-993-5445; Fax: 703-993-9590

DATE: November 17, 2015

TO: Brenda Wiggins
FROM: George Mason University IRB

Project Title: [822742-2] Summer Camp Staff Outcomes

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: November 17, 2015

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The Office of Research Integrity & Assurance (ORIA) has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

Please remember that all research must be conducted as described in the submitted materials.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be submitted to the ORIA prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Katherine Brooks at (703) 993-4121 or kbrook14@gmu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within George Mason University IRB's records.

Appendix B: Camp Staff Recruitment Email

Recruitment Email:

Greetings 2015 Camp River Ranch Staff,

Currently working on my Master's thesis at George Mason University, I am studying the personal impacts that camp has on camp counselors and specialists. I would like to hear about *your* personal growth and experiences that resulted from working at camp this past summer. If you are willing to participate in the study, please use the link below to access the online survey.

The responses are anonymous and you may quit the survey at anytime. The short survey is to provide personal insight on the impact that camp has had on your personal growth. Again, any information shared will be kept anonymous and will help only in my research.

With appreciation,
Janelle Marshall
(IRBNet number: 822742-1)

(Chair Person of Research Committee, Brenda Wiggins, bwiggins@gmu.edu)

Appendix C: Summer Camp Staff Outcomes Survey

Summer Camp Staff Outcomes
<p>Hello Summer Staff 2015! Below is an anonymous survey that should not take you long, and will aid in my graduate research. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey about your camp experiences.</p> <p>By filling out the survey below, you agree and consent to letting your anonymous responses be a part of the study being conducted.</p> <p>1. Why were you interested in working at a summer camp?</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>2. What did you expect to gain from working at summer camp? Please explain and elaborate.</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>3. Please describe your most memorable experience working at the camp. What made that experience particularly memorable?</p> <input type="text"/>
<p>4. In what ways, if any, have you been able to apply your camp experiences to life outside of camp?</p> <input type="text"/>

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5. Please select to what degree you may have experienced personal growth in each of the following categories this past summer:

	Not at All	1	2	3	4	5
Peer Relationships (ability to make strong connections with your peers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciation of Diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teamwork Skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mindfulness (being present in the moment and being aware of the current situation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role Modeling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical Skill Development (development of hard skills such as fire building, canoeing, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interpersonal Skills (ability to communicate and interact with others)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional Intelligence (ability to recognize your own emotions, the emotions of others, and the ability to use that recognition in your thoughts and your actions)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. To what degree do you feel you benefited from working at camp?

	Not at All	1	2	3	4	5
I felt I benefited from camp...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Is there anything else related to summer camp outcomes you would like to share?

8. What is your current age?

Appendix C

9. How many years have you been working at summer camps?

10. Were you a counselor or a specialist in the summer of 2015?

☐ Counselor

☐ Specialist

Appendix C

Consent Language:

Hello Summer Staff 2015! Below is an anonymous survey that should not take you long, and will aid in my graduate research.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey about your camp experiences. By filling out the survey below, you agree and consent to letting your anonymous responses be a part of the study being conducted

Appendix D: Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative Completion Report

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)	
HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT	
Printed on 09/15/2014	
LEARNER	Janeelle Marshall (ID: 4391381)
DEPARTMENT	Sport and Recreation
PHONE	253-206-2724
EMAIL	jmarsh19@masonlive.gmu.edu
INSTITUTION	George Mason University
EXPIRATION DATE	09/14/2016
GROUP 1 SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH : This group is appropriate for Social & Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel.	
COURSE/STAGE:	Basic Course/1
PASSED ON:	09/15/2014
REFERENCE ID:	14040629
REQUIRED MODULES	DATE COMPLETED
Introduction	09/15/14
Cultural Competence in Research	09/15/14
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	09/15/14
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	09/15/14
The Regulations - SBE	09/15/14
Assessing Risk - SBE	09/15/14
Informed Consent - SBE	09/15/14
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	09/15/14
George Mason University	09/15/14
For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified Information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.	
Paul Braunschweiler Ph.D. Professor, University of Miami Director Office of Research Education CITI Program Course Coordinator	

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BIOGRAPHY

Janelle Marshall graduated from George R. Curtis Senior High School, University Place, Washington, in 2008. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Western Washington University in 2013. She was employed with the United States Air Force Reserve, the Girl Scouts of Western Washington, and the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. She received her Master of Science in Sport and Recreation Studies, with an emphasis in Recreation Administration, from George Mason University in 2016.