

'Why I Became a Camp Leader?': Insider Views of Camp Leader Candidates

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to describe individuals' motivation of being camp leader in youth camps of Ministry of Youth and Sport (MYS). Thirteen camp leader candidates who had previously been admitted in the Ministry of Youth and Sports were interviewed using open-ended questions. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Analysis resulted in a synthesis of the various ways camp leader candidates were motivated: (a) Self-Actualization and being Beamy, (b) Creating More Leisure and Adventure, (c) Social Integration and, (d) Role Modeling. It is through being volunteer as a camp leader, as we stress, 'that anyone can realize their best selves and find deeper purpose and help others find theirs'. Motivation to be a camp leader is experienced from a perspective of both individualism and social constructivism that shows an interrelated view of freedom, autonomy and also organizational commitment.

Key words: Youth camps, leader, leisure context, adventure experience.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'leisure' evokes various thoughts, images and concepts (1). Normative expressions of the word have traditionally been expressed as freely evaluated time or activity, and some researchers have added the state of mind to the alternative definition of the term (2). Other leisure researchers have criticized this popular understanding (3–5) and from a critical perspective of leisure; they have associated with liberating action (Hemingway, 1999), participatory democracy (6), and community development (6). On the other hand, Mannell, Kleiber and Walker have suggested that leisure should be defined and functionalized objectively or subjectively in an alternative way (2). Objectively leisure is understood to be an activity or set of activities, a specific environment, such as camping, or a specific time period, and is typically measured

by time budgets or activity inventories. Subjectively leisure is understood to be the mental experience of the individual when dealing with leisure activities and the satisfaction or meanings that obtained from these participations (2).

In many contemporary lives, the importance of leisure is gradually increasing (7,8). Traditionally, work and leisure time have been understood as completely separate, inevitable and opposing areas (9–11). However, in the current job and employment literature, the boundary between work and leisure is much more permeable and interconnected (12–14). For example, leisure activities such as art, music and recreation (or sport recreation included in the new language) require hours of routine practice to develop skills, and productive aspects of the work can be comforting, binding and pleasure-oriented for employees (11). Based on this, the research aims to discover, synthesize and conceptualize the

reasons why volunteers who are entitled to attend training as candidate camp leaders in the Youth Camps of MYS become youth camp leaders.

Youth camps as a leisure adventure

Youth camps organized by the MYS today stand out as facilities established to enable young people to evaluate their leisure with various social, cultural and recreational activities. Activities in Youth Camps run under the leadership of MYS aim to contribute to the holistic development of individuals participating in camps (15). Young people's education and their time outside work areas in Turkey (leisure) to evaluate, provide relaxation, creative, productive, responsible, adopting the owner and Atatürk's principles and reforms of the citizenship and contribute to internalize that grow as individuals are among the objectives of the Youth Camp. For this purpose, in line with various camp activities for young people in various locations are carried out in the summer and winter months (16).

By performing activities such as horse riding, paintball, mountain biking, sea and pool activities, handicrafts, trips, folk dances of young people; body-mind-spirit development, talent development, awareness of nature and environment, common sharing habits, leadership, tolerance, and a planned and planned work and rest habits are provided with positive desired gains (16,17). A total of 36 Youth Camps, 18 of which are summer and 18 of which are winter camps, serve each year. In these camps, the average number of camps each year, the number of young people participating in the camp and the number of leaders taken to education increase. Looking at the statistical data; While an average of 360 camps were held in 2015, the average number of camps was 540 in 2017. While the number of young people attending youth camps was 30,250 in 2014, this number increased to 120,000 in 2017. When we look at the education statistics of the camp leaders, which are important for the realization of these activities and which are the basis of our study; The number of camp leaders trained increases regularly every year (18).

Self determination theory and being a camp leader in youth camps

Self-Determination Theory represents a broad framework for the study of human motivation and personality. This theory consists of six mini-theories, each developed to explain a number of motive-based phenomena and personality functioning arising from laboratory and field research (19-21).

Cognitive evaluation theory is concerned with the intrinsic motive based on the satisfaction of acting "for its own sake". This theory specifically addresses the effects of social contexts on internal motive, or how factors such as rewards, interpersonal controls, and ego participations affect internal motive and interest, and emphasizes the critical roles that competence and autonomy supports play in the development of intrinsic motive. Organismic integration theory treats the determinants and consequences of the extrinsic motive in various ways, and in particular emphasizes the supports of autonomy and relatedness, which are critical to internalization. In general, the extrinsic motive is an instrumental behavior that targets the extrinsic consequences of the behavior itself, and the more internalized the extrinsic motive, the more autonomous the person becomes when animating the behavior. Causality orientations theory explains individual differences in people's tendency to move toward the environment and regulate their behavior in a variety of ways. This theory defines and evaluates three types of causality orientations: the autonomy orientation in which people are not interested in what is occurring and value what is happening; the orientation of focus on rewards, gains, and control over approval; the impersonal or motivated orientation characterized by anxiety about competence. Basic psychological needs theory examines evolved psychological needs and their relationship to psychological health and well-being. It argues that psychological well-being and optimal functioning are based on autonomy, competence and relationship. Therefore, contexts that support these needs should invariably affect health. Goal contents theory arises from the differences between internal and external goals and their effect on motive and wellness. Goals meet basic needs satisfaction in a different way, and therefore relate

differently to well-being. External goals such as financial success, appearance, and popularity / fame are particularly contrasted with internal goals such as community, close relationships, and personal development. In addition to belonging to groups, relationship through relationships motivation theory is one of the three basic psychological needs related to the development and maintenance of close personal relationships, such as best friends and emotional partners, and suggests that healthy relationships are essential for harmony and well-being.

The research covers the study of the reasons underlying the behavior of individuals to become volunteer camp leaders in MYS's Youth Camps. 'What are the reasons for the voluntary behaviour of being a camp leader?' the fact that the overarching qualitative research question has not previously examined a similar problem situation with quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approaches indicates the originality of the issue. Thus, it is aimed to better understand the systemic mechanism of Youth Camps connected to the MYS in the wider context of leisure, adventure and Recreation.

In the focus of this research, the leader is the person who devotes herself/himself to her/his work with a great passion, has the ability to simplify high-level communication, human relations and complex issues, and by spreading positive energy around him persuades people to strive towards determined goals (22). On the other hand, the youth camp leader; physical education teachers with educational Formation, music teachers, teachers and instructors in the field of crafts, experienced people in the field of theatre, drama, folk dances and Performing Arts, and youth with the ability, knowledge and skills to work in the field of group by participating in the course and seminar opened by the MYS (16). Camp leaders at the same time; provide guidance and counseling to young campers with their knowledge and experience, exhibit role model behaviors, keep them away from bad habits, and provide them with education while entertaining them through social-cultural activities. However, the youth camp leader is key in cultivating a youth committed to her/his values (15).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Methodological approach

An interpretive qualitative method was considered appropriate in order to question the problem status of the research in depth, rich and transparent. Changes and trends that have diverged from the positivist approaches in research traditions have led to the relative acceptance of the necessity of qualitative research (23,24). Leisure researchers agree that qualitative approaches are constructive and innovative efforts to reveal meaning using alternative methods and a number of different research questions (25,26). The use of a qualitative series of research values supports different assumptions, as multiple meanings can explain human actions and ensure that the language used to define and interpret social behavior is often loaded with value (27,28).

Participants

In the inclusion of prospective participants in the research group, the research was introduced by holding meetings at the facility where candidates who wish to become camp leaders voluntarily in the Youth Camps of the MYS received training. Participants were selected based on previously determined criteria to ensure diversity and richness in the data (29). According to this, 56 out of 650 candidate camp leaders who wish to become youth camp leaders in different regions of Turkey and who have a bachelor's degree in educator formation were included in the research by declaring their voluntary participation. The use of different criteria helped create analysis by adapting to a wide range of and alternative views, rather than findings that reflected the main thinking without considering variation (Miles et al., 2014). As data saturation began to emerge, no further efforts were made to collect data from participants (30) and the research was terminated by including data collected from 13 people. In ensuring personal information confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant.

Data collection

Before beginning the research, an application was submitted to the Ethics Review Board of İnönü University, which concluded that there were no

ethical obstacles to the conduct of the research (2017/8-1). The board's application process for ethics review required the institution's consent letter, which had been previously obtained from the MYS. Participants were informed about the Declaration of Helsinki and the voluntary aspects of the study in both written and oral formats, as well as the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences or impact on their future life. Audio recording interviews conducted using open-ended questions created by the consensus of three field experts were considered the best method of allowing the vocalization of participant experiences (31,32). There is no relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. To create a relaxed atmosphere, the meeting began with small talk. Although It is not standard (in-sutu) (33) the interview began with a trigger question, 'What is your inspiration in wanting to be a leader in youth camps, can you tell me?' Then, to encourage the participant to focus more on specific topics or ideas, follow-up questions were asked, depending on their answers (30). For example, 'can you tell me more about this?' or 'how was that?' The recorder was turned off after the official interview was over. The participants were then asked how they felt, and it became clear that they were not psychologically affected by the issue. None of the participants expressed the need for 'disclosure' or further details.

Data analysis

A six-step method of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke was used to identify patterns in the data and to minimally organize, describe and report the data set in depth and richly (34):

Phase one (becoming familiar with the data): the data that was deciphered was read over and over again and the initial ideas were noted. Phase two (generating initial codes): throughout the entire data set, the interesting properties of the data were systematically encoded and gathered under each code to which the data were related. Phase three (theme search): all data and codes were collected under potential themes to which they were associated. Phase four (reviewing themes): themes with encoded data content (1. Level) and with the entire data set (2. Checking the alignment (level)

(35,36) and the preparation of a Thematic 'Map' of the analyses. Phase five (defining and naming themes): the analysis was continued to refine the details of each theme, and the whole of the story and themes told by the analysis were clearly defined and named. Phase six (report preparation): this section, which is the last opportunity for analysis, selected direct citations with concrete, striking and convincing examples. The encoded data particles were analyzed for the last time. The results of the analysis were re-associated with the research question and field writing, and the results were reported in an academic language.

In thematic analysis, the themes or patterns in the data can be determined in one of two main ways (34): inductive or 'bottom-up' (37) or theoretical or deductive (38,39). An inductive approach was adopted in the analyzes to demonstrate that the themes identified were strongly related to the data. Cohen's kappa coefficient (κ), which is used to measure inter-rater reliability for themes, was calculated as .84.

WHY I BECAME A CAMP LEADER?

The findings of this study explain the reasons why volunteers who are eligible to attend training as candidate camp leaders in the Youth Camps of MYS become youth camp leaders. The findings show a diverse synthesis of the desire to become a youth camp leader: (a) Self-Actualization and being Beamy, (b) Creating More Leisure and Adventure, (c) Social Integration and (d) Role Modeling.

Self-actualization and being beamy

In the individual-oriented interpretations of the participants, the tendency to discover the best self, find a better purpose from life and connect with the world around them is consistent with the desire to realize itself. This also emphasizes volunteering awareness, "I am already volunteering here. I take on responsibility so that I can help the young people who came." (Halil)

First of all, I'm a person who likes to learn as my personal property. Maybe if I said I was in love with learning. I wanted to realize myself by pursuing things I was curious about. That's why I'm here. (Yusuf).

The expectation is that I volunteer first, and the next expectation is that I will be able to develop myself better and be able to benefit young people more effectively in the future. (Deniz)

An environment where I can increase my knowledge and experience. By likening a person to myself, I mean by likening myself to myself, I want to add my knowledge and experience to it, to show it the right way, to be tasked with contributing to it. (Polat)

Participants who believe that self-realization can be achieved through personal development believe that their own development is linked to the development of young people. Based on this relationship, participants' willingness to provide their own personal development in the camps and then transfer their experiences to young people and to provide information and cultural photosynthesis is seen to be at the forefront of the discourse. This refers to Maslow (1943)'s theory of the hierarchy of needs.

Maslow refers to the need for self-realization as the realization of a person's potential, self-completion, search for personal development and the highest experiences, and describes this level as the desire to achieve everything possible, to be as much as possible (40). Empowerment of self-realization refers to the need for personal growth and discovery that is present throughout a person's life (41). According to Maslow, a person never stays static and always 'happens' by trying to find significant meaning for life (41). Where each individual is unique, the self-realization motive drives people in different directions (42). It should be known that self-realization is a process of being a continuous motion rather than being a perfect situation that is 'happily ever after' (43).

Creating more leisure and adventure

As a result of the transcripts of the audio recordings, it is understood that the participants

wanted to evaluate their leisure during their stay in the camps through social, cultural, artistic and adventure-based activities. During this evaluation process, candidates tend to share their positive feelings, such as personal development and well being, with the youth participating in the camps and inoculate. The tendency to create leisure is perceived as the basis of professional awareness.

My life changed with the youth camps. Because before I was limited to school, home and computers. Now I'm filling my leisure thanks to these camps. And I want to share that with children and young people. (Saban)

I want to spend my leisure with camping activities. I love canoeing, swimming, climbing... I've learned that these activities are also available in youth camps and I want to benefit from these activities while helping young people. (Cemil)

By framing the career concept from the point of view of the individual rather than the organization of work, it is now possible to accept the peculiar and diversity of today's working life. Conditional commitment to work due to leisure creation has received little interest in career field writing to date. The four skiers in the study of Adler and Adler provide evidence of the existence of a leisure-oriented career identity. The strongest evidence for this is the 29-year-old research participant 'T'. 'T's commitment to any business relationship depends on the presence of snow, with no immediate thought for changing the lifestyle dominated by ski adventure. This ski quest propels the "T" to ski and work in ski resorts around the world (10).

This acceptance of leisure-oriented career identity carries significant implications for Career Research. While the commitment to working in leisure goals is taking shape, the leisure-driven career identity works in contrast to established career theory. This theoretical opposition reveals a certain level of opposite opinion in the field Summer. Because established career theory does not

find and critiques free-time-oriented career identity 'serious' (44,45). However, business-business whether you are focused or unfocused, I will not participate in the adventure jun of your leisure in individuals (46) and long-term well-being (47,48) such as by creating positive emotions (49), it is possible to mention that pushed people to create more leisure. The results of the research show consistency with this situation.

Social integration

In interviews, it is seen that the desire to be a camp leader affects the candidates' willingness to be in social environments and to gain social status, to establish a social network and to fight the fear of being alone in the future for this purpose, "I am here for more of a social environment. I want to have many brothers. That's why I want to do these activities in the future so that I won't be alone." (Ziya). Candidates' willingness to ensure social interaction and social integration with young people participating in the camp are related to their desired behavior. In participant interpretations, the belief that higher social integration will contribute to a closer social distance, more consistent values and practices among candidate camp leaders themselves and other youth participating in the camp is at the forefront.

The indispensable part of our youth camps is that they are from different cultures. (Timur)

I want to take part in order to gain a social environment and to gain status. I want to be in this community when I give education to our youth in the best way. (Levent)

I want to take part in the youth camps to gain social environment and to improve my status for this purpose. (Osman)

Society exerts effective power over individuals, and people's norms, beliefs and values form a collective consciousness or a shared way of

understanding and behavior in the world. Collective consciousness connects individuals and creates social integration (50). Humans are social beings, and the interaction between them is essential to their mental health (51). The importance of interpersonal relationships between well-being between humans (52) and livelihoods has been extensively debated by various scholars (53–55). The need for membership, and especially the desire for intimate and close interpersonal relationships, often reflect part of the theory of need (56). Kaplan and Tausky emphasize the importance of satisfying interpersonal experiences and point out that satisfaction stems from the allegiances established in the workplace (57).

Role modeling

In the discourses of the participants pointing out the reasons for becoming camp leaders, it is evident that the youth who will participate in the camp will be able to be a role model. This willingness is associated with themes such as passion and inspiration, setting values, commitment to society, self-sacrifice and achieving success, and being able to overcome obstacles.

The reason I want to be a leader in youth camps is to be a role model in their eyes, or rather to be able to get to the background of them, to help our adolescent youth in their troubles. (Ismail)

First of all, I think I can be useful in educating young people who are more social, more active, more able to see the good and bad aspects of society. (Hamza)

Also, the idea of a candidate being a role model is about a desire to be unifying and integrative, 'let's think of a chain split in two, I want to be one of the rings that brings those two chains together. I mean, all of the leaders I've seen to this day have done so, and they've all left a mark on us. So I want to be a force that

unites the right and the left, the up and the down.” (Kaan)

Role models are often suggested as a way of motivating individuals to set and achieve ambitious goals, especially for members of stigmatized groups in achievement environments (58). Role models show individuals how to live with honesty, optimism, hope, determination and compassion (59,60). They play an important role in the positive development of an individual and enter the lives of individuals in various ways: educators, civic leaders, mothers, fathers, clergy, peers, and or ordinary people encountered in everyday life (61,62). In this study, it is seen that participants want to enter the life of young people as camp leaders and are thinking of becoming role models. While the research focuses on the positive impact of camp leaders as a role model on the lives of young people, role models can also have negative effects. For example, the negative and inappropriate behavior of acclaimed public figures or peers involving racism, sexual harassment, and dishonesty can sometimes be perceived as acceptable (63,64). In such a case, values should come to the fore and discourse should be made about why behaviour is unacceptable.

CONCLUSION THOUGHTS

We, here stress that MYS being a camp leader in Youth Camps is extensively related to self-realization and usefulness, creating more leisure and participating in adventure activities, building social relationships and role models. Paradoxically, the results also emphasize that the motivation of the participants to become camp leader is intertwined with ‘individualism’ and ‘social constructionism’. It is possible to observe freedom, autonomy as well as organizational commitment together, as there is self-management and participation in a group.

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