SUMMER CAMP STAFF DEVELOPMENT:

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF WORK GROUP COHESION

by

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(Under the Direction of David Wright)

ABSTRACT

The involvement of quality workers has been found to be a critical factor in the success of youth programs (American Camp Association, 2006a). Although there has been little research on staff development with youth program leaders, literature on staff development highlights the importance of work group cohesion for successful outcomes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Pillai & Williams, 2004; Stogdill, 1972; Wech, Mossholder, & Steel, 1998). In this study, qualitative methods were used to explore the various elements of the concept of work group cohesion in a summer camp context. Camp workers filled out an online survey about their experiences at camp. Results suggest that work group cohesion is an important factor to consider for the development of staff training curriculum.

INDEX WORDS: Summer Camp; Social Group Work Principles, Camp Counselors, Group Cohesion, Out-of-School Time

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Organizations who work with youth, such as religious youth groups, sports programs, and parks and recreation services, report the involvement of quality workers as the most critical factor in the success of their programs (American Camp Association, 2006a). Success in implementing youth programs has been found to depend on the existence of established and organized support for staff, including youth workers (Robertson, 1997). Commonly, staff training focuses on instructions to implement specific programming and rarely includes information on working as part of a team (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003), even though youth workers most often work as part of a team rather than individually.

Summer camps are unique because their greatest strength is the supportive relationship between the staff and the campers (American Camp Association, 2006b). Summer camps typically benefit children by increasing self-esteem, social skills, independence, leadership, willingness to try new things, and spiritual growth (American Camp Association, 2006a). Although there has been little research on staff development with youth program leaders, literature on staff development and performance in general highlights the importance of work group cohesion for successful outcomes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995; Mullen & Copper, 1994; Pillai & Williams, 2004; Stogdill, 1972; Wech, Mossholder, & Steel, 1998). The work group cohesion of summer camp adult leaders may ultimately be more important than cohesion in other types of work groups because they are in work groups

constantly, and their tasks revolve around interacting with youth. Examining work group cohesion in an out-of-school time (OST) program setting is of value because researchers are trying to find pathways from professional development to positive youth development outcomes (Weiss, 2006).

In the present study qualitative research methods were used to explore the nature of youth program staff development during a week-long session of summer camp. This study will highlight important additions to the literature on staff cohesion by demonstrating a way to measure work groups with continuous goals, such as positive outcomes for youth, as opposed to those with categorical goals, such as the success of a mission or product. More specifically, this study will help to improve staff development for youth programs by bringing awareness to the decision makers for staff training curricula about the importance of work group cohesion. The purpose of this study is to explore the nature of youth program staff development by discovering themes that can be used to develop a quantitative measure.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Work Group Cohesion

     Background. Work group cohesion is a predominant variable of employee literature (Bartone et al., 2002; Carless & DePaola, 2000; Chansler, Swamidass, & Cammann, 2003; Griffith, 2002; Jung & Sosik, 2002; Paskevich et al., 1999; Shader et al., 2001) as well as small group research (Jowett & Chaundy, 2004: Paskevich et al., 1999). Research on work group cohesion has been cited as far back as 1950 (Festinger, 1950), but unfortunately researchers have not been able to agree on a definition or measurement (Mudrack, 1989). Unidimensional and multidimensional concepts of cohesion along with research findings and the definition in the current study are discussed below.

     Though there has been renewed interest in the group-cohesiveness construct in recent years, researchers have not been able to agree on a consistent or standard definition (Chansler, Swamidass, & Cammann, 2003; Cota, Evans, & Dion, 1995; Craig & Kelly, 1999; Pillai & Williams, 2004). "The resultant of all the forces acting on the members to remain in the group" (Festinger, 1950, p. 274) is the definition that the majority of researchers refer back to as the first definition, but some argue that this definition is too ambiguous and difficult to measure (Cota, Evans, & Dion, 1995; Craig & Kelly, 1999; Mudrack, 1989). Though there is much disagreement on the subject, researchers have found that commitment to the work being

performed is a central aspect of most definitions (Chansler, Swamidass, & Cammann, 2003;

Wech, Mossholder, & Steel., 1998).

Disagreement on a Definition. A clear definition is needed before the proper method of

measurement can be determined. Agreement on a common definition is more likely to be

achieved through multidimensional models than with unidimensional models because

researchers are more likely to be able to compromise on a combination of concepts (Cota, Evans,

& Dion, 1995). The multidimensional constructs of the definition used for this study include

social and task cohesion.

Both unidimensional (e.g. Brawley, Carron, & Widmeyer, 1988; Craig & Kelly, 1999;

Evans & Jarvis, 1980; Goodman, Ravlin, & Schminke, 1987; Gross, 1957; Stokes, 1983) and

multidimensional (e.g. Carron, 1982; Eisman, 1959; Griffith, 2002; Hagstrom & Selvin, 1965;

Yukelson, Weinberg, & Jackson, 1984) concepts of group cohesion have been supported by

many researchers. Among those who agree on using a unidimensional model, most do not agree

on the specific concept that should define group cohesion (Cota, Evans, & Dion, 1995; Mudrack,

1989). For example, among supporters of a unidimensional model, one researcher may use a

definition of group members interacting socially, while another researcher uses a definition of

group members meeting a common goal. These two definitions do not examine the same aspects

of cohesion, therefore research measures and findings could not be compared. On the other hand,

the supporters of a multidimensional model are far from unified around a definition or even a

number of dimensions to be used. For example, some researchers have used two dimensions of

attraction and motivation to stay with the group (Jung & Sosik, 2002; Zaccaro, Gualtieri, &

Minionis, 1995), whereas another researcher uses three dimensions in a definition including risk

taking, value of group, and group member attraction to other members (Stokes, 1983).

The multidimensional model of cohesion was developed in response to the critics of the unidimensional model who argued that it did not apply to all groups (Cota, Evans, & Dion, 1995). The multidimensional definition for work group cohesion used for the purpose of this study is "a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives" (Carron, 1982, p. 124). This definition was chosen because the majority of current researchers recognize task and social cohesion as the key elements used to define work group cohesion (e.g. Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985; Fraser & Spink, 2002; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Leeson & Fletcher, 2005; Murray, Joyner, & Burke, 2005; Paskevich et al., 1999; Treadwell et al., 2001; Van Vianen & De Dreu, 2001; Zaccaro, 1991; Zaccaro, Gualtieri & Minionis, 1995). In Carron's (1982) definition, "the tendency for a group to stick together" refers to social cohesion and "united in the pursuit of its goals and objectives" refers to task cohesion. Social cohesion is concerned with the interpersonal relationships present in a group. Task cohesion deals with specified objectives and is oriented toward outcomes. Research has shown that both social and task cohesion elevate the performance of group members, in turn, increase work group cohesion (Carron, Colman, & Wheeler, 2002; Murray et al., 2005).

Social Cohesion. For the purposes of this research, social cohesion was measured using four constructs: shared experiences with group members, familiarity with group members, staff leader support, and cooperation with peers. The following is an explanation of each of the constructs as related to the present study.

The two constructs of shared experiences and familiarity have been found to be related, since experiences as a group have the effect of making group members more familiar with one another. One study has found that shared stressful experiences and the previous familiarity with

other team members contributed to increased cohesion levels for Navy officer cadets (Bartone et al., 2002). This study suggests that providing opportunities to become familiar with group members through challenging tasks may increase group cohesion. Many summer camps, like military training programs, incorporate team building activities into their curriculum to challenge the group and make members work together.

Staff leader support involves showing support and consideration to members in a group that can lead to increased cooperation among group members. Research has found that members of a group whose supervisors show concern for them become more attached to each other (Korsgaard et al, 1995) that demonstrates the importance of this kind of top-down relationship in a group setting.

Cooperation with peers is the fourth construct used as a measurement for cohesion in this study. Yee Ng and Van Dyne (2005) found that cohesive work units are characterized by cooperation and a desire among the group's members to help each other. The researchers explain that cooperation can be described as getting along with group members while working together.

Examining social cohesion alone does not give a complete picture of staff cohesion. Members of a group may enjoy each other's company but not agree on any common objectives or, have the means to achieve them. These concerns are addressed through the concept of task cohesion.

Task Cohesion. Task cohesion has been defined in the past as members of a group joining together to reach common goals or objectives (Bettenhausen, 1991; Carless & DePaola, 2000; Cota, Evans, & Dion, 1995, 1995; Zaccaro, 1991) and as the level of motivation within the group to meet goals (Mason & Griffin, 2003). Like social cohesion, perceived task competence has been found to be positively related to performance and group cohesion (Wech, Mossholder,

& Steel, 1998). Shared goals and perceived task competence are the constructs used to define task cohesion in this study.

Levels of commitment and performance have been shown to be higher in groups with shared meaning, especially in groups where there is a need to work in closely coordinated groups (Pillai & Williams, 2004). The term shared goals is used to represent this concept in the current study. Some researchers suggest that more cohesive groups are more likely to have shared goals and the ability to achieve them (Beal, Cohen, & Burke, 2003; Davis, 1969).

Perceived task competence is the second construct used to measure task cohesion, and it contains two different aspects: perception of one's own competence and the perception of the competence of others. One's own competence refers to essential skills that contribute to one's ability to perform a specific task. These skills are termed quality aspects of competence (Burch et al., 2005). An individual's skills, attitudes, and expectations can all be related to how competent they feel in their ability to accomplish a task. Youth workers bring a set of beliefs, attitudes, and skills when they come into a camp session (Powell, 2001), and it is important to take this into account.

Perceived competence in others is an essential part of overall perceived competence. Rule compliance by group members may influence their perception of each other's competence, as in a study that found that understanding and following rules in accomplishing assigned tasks leads to improved group cohesion and group performance (Chansler, Swamidass, & Cammann, 2003). Following rules has been found to be positively related to cohesion (Prapavessis & Carron, 1997), and if this is true, then group member's perceptions of how well they think an individual in the group is doing their job should be related to how well they understand and adhere to rules.

Out of School Time

        Out-of-school time can be defined as taking place during the non-school hours when children and adolescents are awake (Weiss, 2003) and commonly includes after-school and summer activities. Quality programs strive to support academic achievement, health and well-being, families, and reduce delinquency (NIOST, 2005).

        OST time research is a rapidly emerging field of study. In the last six years, five issues of the Harvard Family Research Project's Evaluation Exchange have focused entirely on this field (Weiss 2000; Weiss, 2001; Weiss, 2003; Weiss, 2004). One indication that OST research is still in its infancy is the fact that more unpublished references than peer-reviewed publications appear in Evaluation Exchange, and the same is true of the American Camp Association web site.

        Friendship, performance, and outcomes have been examined pertaining to OST. Participation in OST programs has been associated with many aspects of adolescent friendships (Grossman, Resch, & Tierney, 2000; Simpkins, 2003). For example, Huebner and Mancini (2003) found friend endorsement of after-school activities to be predictive of out-of-school hours spent for adolescents. Gambone, Klem, and Connell (2002) have also compiled evidence to show that quality OST programs influence child and adolescent outcomes. Eccles and Barber (1999) found that adolescents' performance and low rate of involvement in risky behaviors was linked to prosocial behavior. Gore, Farrell, and Gordon (2001) examined the question of whether sports involvement moderates the depressive effects of family, peer, and school-based risk factors. Findings suggest it to be a positive instrumental activity for females. Marsh (1992) concluded that total extracurricular activity participation had a small but statistically significant and positive relationship with seventeen of twenty-two outcomes (e.g., social and academic self-concept,

educational aspirations, coursework selection, homework, absenteeism, academic achievement, and subsequent college attendance).

Positive youth development is a desirable goal for high quality youth development programs (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003). The term positive youth development can be explained through activities, developmental understanding, and relationships with one's co-workers. One component of the definition is an activity or action young people do in the process of learning, growing, and changing. Additionally, it can be described as the philosophical understanding of young people through the experiences of childhood and adolescence. Finally, positive youth development can be viewed as the youth development workers and programs that support youth by provide opportunities to accomplish goals of positive development (Kahne et al., 2001; Pittman & Cahill, 1991; Roth et al., 1998). These perspectives each offer a different component, that together form a definition of positive youth development (Hamilton, 1999; Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003). The idea of positive youth development has been widely accepted, although *how* to implement it has not been agreed upon thus far (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003).

Quality staff development in OST programs for adolescents needs to be thoughtfully constructed and guided by standards. Staff training that is perceived to have little benefit obstructs this common vision for youth workers. Training and education for youth workers has had little methodological consideration (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003). Researchers caution that if training is delivered without a context and does not have a framework of policies and resources, then it will not be effective or supportive (Horwath, 2001; Horwath & Morrison, 1999). Findings from a study of low-income neighborhood programs suggest that youth workers relied on personal experience instead of formal training in regard to daily activities and program

priorities (Halpern, Barker, & Mollard, 2002). Empirical findings link staff development to quality programs in early childcare and school-age care (e.g. Ghazvini & Mullis, 2002; Norris, 2001; Phillips et al., 2001; Weaver, 2002), but not to adolescent programming. One explanation may be the lack of standards for adolescent programs, especially compared to those that exist for children's programs (Huebner, Walker, & McFarland, 2003). Current research is attempting to bring the field closer to accepting standards. Among the findings from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, (2005) lower staff-to-youth ratios, good working conditions, lower staff turnover, and programs with professional development opportunities for staff are important and of interest to the current study.

There are several roadblocks to effective and useful OST research. For example, the focus of programming, length of stay for participants (hours in a day, or days in a year), and frequency of offering a particular program are all rarely held constant. The participant's motivation for attending the program is often an unknown and may also affect research findings. These roadblocks make it difficult to compare OST programs that in turn complicate the task of generalizing from one program to another (Simpkins, 2003).

Summer Camp Context

Summer camps typically are resident (overnight) or day camps. Camp sessions can last for a few days to a few weeks. Research on summer camps is limited in breadth, but it has a long history, beginning nearly a century ago. The first known researcher to take an academic look at camping education was Mitchell (1909), who submitted a graduation thesis on the subject at George Williams College. From 1909 to 1930, only ten theses or dissertations were published in the nascent field (Stone, 1986). Mason (1930) was the first researcher to summarize the overall

goals of summer camp and outdoor education that were generally accepted by the field as the universal goals of organized camping.

There were many trends in camp research through the second half of the twentieth century. From 1945 through the mid-1960s, publications involving a summer camp setting increased to an average of fifty-three a year. The 1950s and 1960s saw researchers focus on defining disciplines of organized camping, and most studies during those decades were descriptive (Stone, 1986). Then, in the 1970s, researchers turned their attention to developing instruments, though they were unable to come to a consensus on a set of standard measures. Quantity of publications decreased in the early 1980s, but then interests regenerated as the U.S. government increasingly emphasized funding based on program evaluation (Stone, 1986). Over fifty theses and dissertations have been published between the mid-1980s and the turn of the century (American Camp Association, 2007).

Research related to summer camp in the twenty-first century has much promise. Over twenty-five theses and dissertations have been written between 2000 and 2004 (American Camp Association, 2007). The most important development in current research has been the creation of the first large-scale national research project designed to measure outcomes of the camp experience. A representative national sample of more than 5,000 families participated in this study that included eight camps accredited by the American Camp Association. Data was collected from children, parents, camp counselors, and directors. Results indicated that a stay at summer camp typically benefited children in four areas: positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, and positive values and spirituality (American Camp Association, 2006a).

Explanation of Theory

This study explores the connections between perceived social group cohesion and perceived task group cohesion among adult leaders at a summer camp for adolescents. Figure 1 describes the researcher's proposed theoretical model supporting this study. Staff Development is proposed to influence work group cohesion. The cohesiveness of the group then influences performance. In turn performance affects program quality that then leads to positive youth development.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model
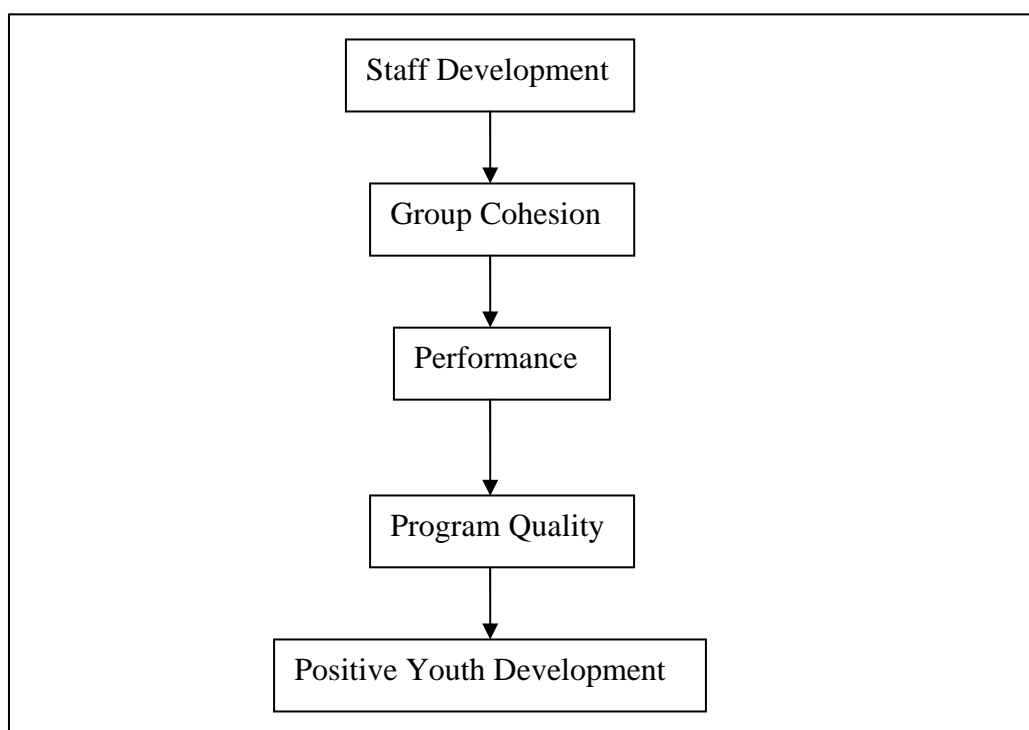
Explanation of Model

Figure 2 shows the constructs of group cohesion measured in this study. Work group cohesion encompasses both social and task cohesion. Social cohesion is measured by asking questions related to familiarity, staff leader support, cooperation, and shared experiences among

group members. Task cohesion is measured by asking questions related to shared goals and perceived task competence. The aim of the current study is to find themes in the construct areas to inform the out-of-school field about how group cohesion should be considered in future studies of youth staff development.

Figure 2

Operational Model
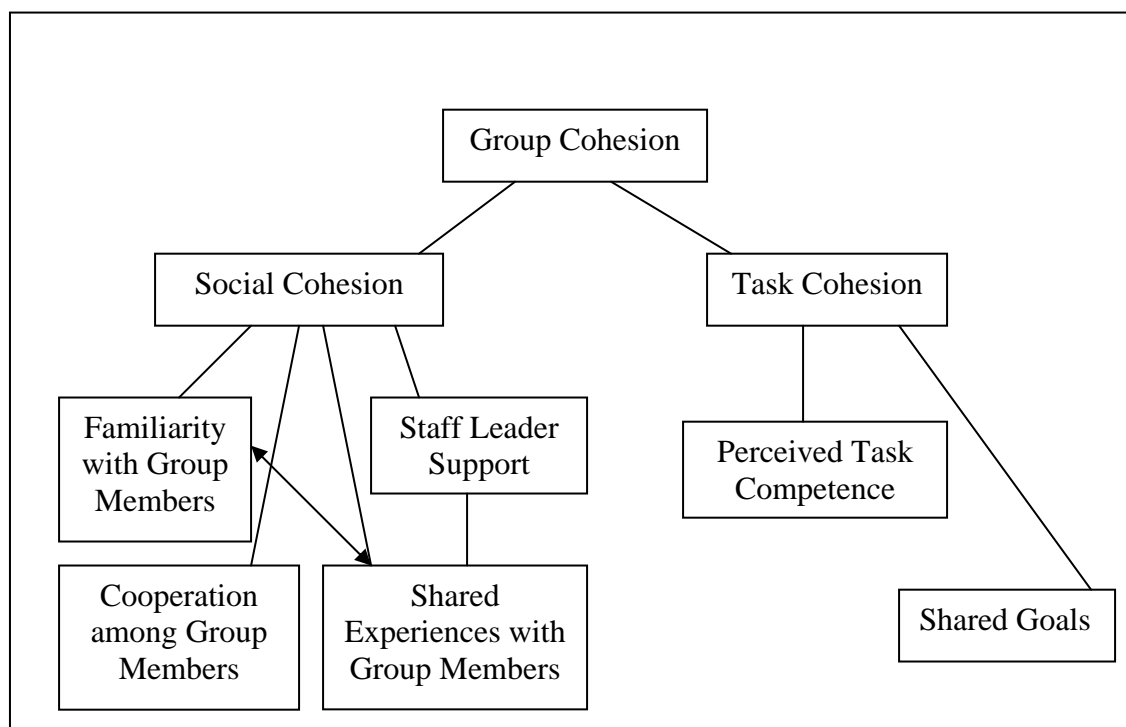
Summary

In summary, the definition of staff cohesion used in this study includes both task and social components. Social cohesion is defined through familiarity among group members, staff leader support, cooperation among members, and shared experiences. Task cohesion is defined through task competence and shared goals. Work group cohesion researchers have argued for several decades about whether cohesion should be defined with a unidimensional or multidimensional approach, as well as how it should be measured. There are disagreements in

the field over definitions and measurements, and there are significant difference between summer camp work groups compared to previously studied work groups. Due to these issues, a qualitative analysis was chosen as the best method for examining these constructs.

Examining social and task cohesion as it relates to performance works toward the goal of understanding the nature of group cohesion. In summer camp programs, adult leaders must work together to provide activities for adolescents to experience positive youth development. Research has found that the level of familiarity with group members, the amount of support from staff leaders, the cooperation among members of the group, and their shared experiences within the group are major components of social cohesion (Barton, et al, 2002; Korsgaard et al, 1995; Yee Ng & Van Dyne, 2005). Perceived task competence and shared goals are components of task cohesion that have been found to be a direct indicator of performance (Burch et al, 2005; Chansler, Swamidass, & Cammann, 2003). Social cohesion and task cohesion reflect different dimensions of group cohesion; together the information expands the available body of information relating to the construct. The next section will discuss the methods used to examine work group cohesion among summer camp adult leaders.

CHAPTER 3

Method

This study used qualitative research methods to explore staff development in a work group at a summer camp. The camp occurred for one week during the summer of 2006. Data were collected using an internet survey of open-ended questions on work group cohesion and staff issues four months after camp ended. A grounded theory approach was used to analyze the data.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher is the instrument for data analysis in a qualitative study. It is important to consider the researcher's background, history, and possible bias. The researcher of this study had eight years of experience working in a summer camp setting that shows her understanding of the role adult leaders have in a summer camp setting. The researcher had similar demongraphics to the majority of participants. The demographic similarity assisted the researcher in relating to and understanding the adult leaders in this study. Potential bias exists due to the researcher's position of volunteer coordinator during the camp session. A benefit to the close connection between the researcher and the participants demographics and culture was the ability of the researcher to understand the context of the responses. There was a conscious effort by the researcher not to assume or infer information based on the responses due to previous knowledge obtained through working at the camp session.

Participants and Procedures

        Participants for this study included eighteen adult leaders at a one-week residential summer camp held at a 4-H summer camp facility. Full time summer camp paid staff (heretofore referred to as counselors) work throughout summer with a different group of children attending each week. For the camp week examined in this study, Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls, adult volunteers supplemented camp paid staff. The children attending the camp were 11 to 14-years-old who were experiencing parental deployment overseas. Volunteers were housed in the cabins with the campers and assisted with camper management and participation in the camp session. Counselors were not housed in the cabins, but they managed the camp session.

        Several experiences were built into the adult leaders' training to encourage group cohesion. The volunteers and counselors were given an opportunity to eat dinner together at a restaurant the night before the camp session started, and to attend a training session prior to the arrival of the campers on the first day of camp. In addition, the counselor group and the volunteer group held staff meetings separately. The counselor coordinator attended the volunteer meeting as a liaison between the two groups of adult leaders.

        This study included full-time paid staff ($N = 8$), and volunteers ($N = 10$). Two counselors and nine volunteers responded to the survey. The response rate for the volunteers may have been a result of the researcher's role as volunteer coordinator during the camp session. As volunteer coordinator, the researcher recruited and supervised the volunteers before and during the camp session and developed a relationship with them that may have contributed to their greater response rate. As a result of the low response rate from counselors, the results are based solely on the data collected from the volunteers. In Chapter 5 there is a brief discussion of the results

from the counselors along with limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research including all staff.

Six volunteers responded to the demographics questions. Four of the volunteers attended for the duration of the week-long camp session, one attended the first half of the week, and one attended the second half of the week. Three of the respondents were 23 or older. Four classified themselves as white/Caucasian and two classified themselves as African-American. Four of the participants were female. Most of the volunteers were in college or were recent college graduates.

Participants were sent an email with information about the study and instructions on how to participate in the study. A link in the email directed the participants to the anonymous questionnaire provided through Survey Monkey, an online survey engine. The survey engine was user-friendly, easily importing the survey and providing a link for the potential participants to access the survey.

The survey was posted 4 months after the camp had ended. Administering the questionnaire a few months after camp enabled the researcher to see what feelings and concepts the subjects took away from the experience and remembered later. On the last day of camp adult leaders can be tired, over stimulated, or caught up in the moment. If this questionnaire had been given a year after the experience, details of the week may be very vague. Therefore, this time frame was considered ideal for the type of data collected. A two-week time frame was given for participants to complete the questionnaire. Reminder emails were sent to all participants one week later and then two days before the end of the two weeks. All participants were informed that filling out the questionnaire was completely voluntary and that all results were anonymous. A report of the results was sent to all participants at the completion of the study.

Survey Design

A qualitative study design was chosen because of a lack of consensus in the literature about how to measure group cohesion quantitatively (Mudrack, 1989). Qualitative questions were open-ended and addressed the degree that group members stick together (social cohesion) as a group of adults implementing a youth program and addressed their feelings of unity in reaching goals (task cohesion) based on Carron's (1982) definition. Questions related to each construct are presented in Appendix C.

Prior research highlighted concepts that participants found to be important to social and task cohesion. Social cohesion questions were asked in a general way to gain insight into staff support, familiarity with other staff, cooperation with peers, and shared experiences. Similarly, questions pertaining to task cohesion explored perceived task competence and shared goals. Information was also gathered to understand the participants' background and the context of their experiences. Finally, several questions asked about participants' previous camp experience and supervisory experience in a camp and other out-of-school time settings. See Appendix A for the full list of questions.

Data Analysis

Many strategies can be applied in qualitative data analysis and there is no uniform approach (Seal et al, 2004). Qualitative analysis has been broadly defined as a non-statistical approach to data collection and analysis (Golafshani, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This type of research is conducted in real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally" (Patton, 2002, p. 39).

The process of coding in this study was both substantive and theoretical. Using grounded theory, the first order coding is considered substantive or open coding. It is coding that

is closely related to the data (Seal et al, 2004). Responses were grouped together by question and coded using the main ideas represented in each response. This open coding was accomplished by examining the data line by line (Jacob, 1987) and using it to dictate which categories were evident (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Next, individual surveys were examined in order to not give more weight to responses that included multiple codes from a single respondent. No problems were found in giving more weight to one respondent over another. The researcher reviewed the coding to verify agreement with the participants' intent before moving to second order theoretical coding. In this second phase, the relationships between the substantitive codes were determined so as to categorize concepts (Seal et al, 2004). In selective coding the core categories were selected and systematically related to one another and refined (Seal et al, 2004). This was accomplished by examining the themes for each construct.

Reliability and Validity

In qualitative research, reliability is measured differently than in quantitative research. In the current study, a member check was conducted to add credibility (Clark, 2004; Mollen, 2006) and trustworthiness (Mollen, 2006; Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson, 2007). Each participant was provided with results and tables from Appendix D and asked if they thought the themes were plausible. Respondents to the member check (n=4,) agreed with the researcher's interpretation of participant responses. In addition, by administering the survey online, participant responses were anonymous.

Validity was addressed in three ways. First, construct validity was addressed by basing the survey questions on peer reviewed theory on staff development. A clear definition of work group cohesion that has been used by other researchers was used in this study. Second, the questionnaire was pilot tested by people with similar demographics who had previously worked

in a summer camp setting to insure question content clarity. Third, following Denzin (1978), the investigator used triangulation to establish validity. Two additional researchers review the primary data and codes to verify the established themes and to determine if additional themes were evident.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The following section describes the responses to the question that were designed based on constructs from prior research. Themes from responses are discussed pertaining to each construct to test the operational model proposed by the researcher. Appendix B includes Table 1 that reports the response rates for each construct and question. Based on response rates, perceived task competence had the most respondents with an average of seven people answering each question, and familiarity had the least respondents with an average of four people answering each question. Appendix C includes Table 2 that reports each construct and the questions that were used to explore each construct. Appendix D includes Tables 3-8 that show each construct, the direct quotations that support the construct, and concepts that where developed from each quotation. Since previous investigators have suggested that group cohesion can be best described through the components of social and task cohesion, those are used to structure the results below.

Social Cohesion

Social cohesion was examined through questions reflecting four constructs from the social cohesion literature: shared experiences, familiarity, adult leader support, and cooperation with peers. The question pertaining to shared work experiences asked how experiences influenced being included as part of the group and revealed two themes. Participants reported

that shared working time and personal openness contributed to their feeling of shared

experiences. This is exemplified in the following response:

    …. I think this first night helped us to all drop our guards and brought us closer together.

    Meals brought us together as a group too. We ate at the same table without the campers.

    While sometimes I wish we had sat among the campers and shared time with them over

    meals, sharing meals with the adults provided a chance for us to grow closer as a group…

The constructs of shared work experiences and familiarity have been grouped together in the

literature (Bartone et al, 2002).

Five questions relating to familiarity among adult leaders were included on the

questionnaire. These questions focused on before and after quantities of familiarity/friendship

with volunteers or counselors and how familiarity affected working together. There was no real

familiarity among the respondents prior to the camp session. By the end of the camp session, the

vast majority of the respondents felt they had made at least some friendships with other adults.

One response was, "[Getting to know adult leaders] allowed us to work as one." As prior

research has suggested, this response demonstrates the connection between familiarity and

shared experiences.

Staff leader support was examined through three questions that focused on describing

support from staff leaders, how that affected working with peers, and the level of clarity

provided to describe responsibilities. All of the participants felt that the instructions about

tasks/responsibilities were clear. Two themes were evident from responses: communication and

teamwork facilitated by the staff leader. Responses included, "We were able to exchange ideas

and events during the camp. As needed we were able to vent as needed. We seemed to work as a

team with one goal in mind...the children." This response echoes the definition of cooperation as set forth in the literature review.

Three questions addressed cooperation with peers that focused on each participant's perception of how well others did their job, the level of cooperation with peers, and how the level affected the camp session. The majority of respondents felt that most of the adult leaders did their job very well. Three themes were present in the responses: teamwork, goals, and desired skills/abilities in a co-worker. Regarding teamwork and goals, one participant's comment,

> All of the adults keyed on the kids and making sure that the camp was the best it could be. This in turn allowed the kids to open up and be kids again. Each day the adults got together and discussed the day and any thing that needed our attention. This allowed us to work as one.

The third theme that was evident was desired skills/experience level in a co-worker and was addressed by the following statement: "Those who work with youth in past have great understanding of how to work and handle youth. Those who have not have a more difficult time to understand them, how they think and act." More experienced co-workers create an environment that is conducive to effective teamwork.

In summary, seven themes were evident through the responses for social cohesion. Team work was present in half of the themes. Shared work time, openness, familiarity, communication, shared goals, and desired skills/experience level in a co-worker are the other constructs found that relate to social cohesion in this study. The social cohesion concept is specifically examined below as a construct of task cohesion. Many respondents agreed on the key concepts related to social cohesion. Prior to the camp session, most volunteers did not know many adult leaders and they did not establish friendships by the end of the camp session with counselors. They did

establish friendships with the majority of their peer volunteers. Another area of agreement by most of the volunteers was their perception of how well the other adult leaders performed their jobs. Finally, the majority of respondents thought familiarity with the other group members was related to how well they worked together as a group and most of their comments regarded how this relationship related to their bonding.

Task Cohesion

Task cohesion was examined through two constructs: shared goals and perceived task competence. Shared goals were examined through three questions focusing on their thoughts about the goals for the camp session, if they felt others shared these goals, and what motivated adult leaders to achieve goals. All of the respondents agreed that the goal of the session was providing campers with positive experiences. This is exemplified by the following statement,

> I think the overall goal for the camp session was to support the campers while they
>
> learned more about themselves, broke out of their shells, challenged themselves, and tried
>
> new things … The goal of the camp was for the campers to learn about themselves and
>
> the world and we were there to help them and guide them during their experiences.

All of the respondents agreed that the influence on the campers motivated them in striving to meet the goal. One respondent commented, "You had to be there to see the smiles that twinkle in the eyes, the grit at doing something new, something scary, something achieved. Knowing you helped a child, that's what kept [you] going." A consensus was found on the goal of the camp, that others had the same goals in mind, and their motivation to reach the goal was consistent. The potential to influence campers was the motivating factor to achieve the shared goal of providing campers with positive experiences.

Four questions were asked to examine perceived task competence focusing on describing feelings at the beginning of the camp session, personal strengths and weaknesses, the affect of training, and prior experience with similar tasks. The majority of respondents explicitly felt that the training was helpful. All respondents indicated that they had prior experience with similar tasks and responsibilities before this camp session. Themes that were evident from responses include having a cohesion conducive environment, adult leaders' state of mind, experiences, and training content.

The theme of a cohesion conducive environment was commented on by one respondent, "Loving the North Georgia Mountains as I do, I could not help but think what a [wonderful] setting to have for this special camp. The kids were laughing and enjoying life." An example of a respondent's state of mind is expressed by: "I was filled with excitement and nervousness as I anticipated meeting the youth. As I entered the camp site, memories from the year before began to fill my mind. Moments of joy, moments of sadness, moments of courage, could this summer's experience leave such a lasting impression …" One respondent explained their thoughts on how experience related to perceived task competence by stating,

> …I am good at relating to children/teenagers. This is probably due to the fact that I have two younger siblings and have a lot of experience working with children/teens. I have a sense of humor, that is important when working with children/teens. Kids can do some silly things that some people view as immature or inappropriate, but you have to be light-hearted and see the humor in certain situations in order to get anything accomplished and form real bonds with the children…

Training content was expressed by the following response,

The training helped me review what adolescents are like and how to deal with problems that might arise, like first aide, or campers being homesick, along with how to encourage the campers' participation in activities.

These aspects of perceived task competence help explain the overall concept of task cohesion.

In conclusion, seven themes were evident to explain task cohesion: providing experiences for campers, shared goals, influence on campers, cohesion conducive environment, state of mind, experiences, and the content of training. Youth workers' state of mind and experiences are related to the individual. Creating a cohesion conducive environment and training content are part of the structure of the camp. The shared goal for this specific camp was to provide campers with experiences. Motivation to reach the goal seems to have been driven by the youth workers' desire to influence the campers. The high level of agreement among participants regarding both social and task cohesion supports the operational model proposed by the researcher.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Implications

The purpose of the study was to explore the connection between social and task cohesion in an out-of-school time setting. Data analysis revealed many important connections between social and task cohesion as sought after in the operational model. Six constructs were used to inform the concept of group cohesion for adult leaders. There were certain limitations inherent in the scope of this study however; future studies could expand on the research done here in a number of ways.

Shared work experiences viewed in the context of this study revealed the importance of working time together and individual openness of adult leaders. Shared work time was a function of the camp environment, whereas openness is a personal factor. Meals, daily meetings, and small groups were all part of structured experiences during the target camp session. The finding of shared work time supports the importance of upper management's decision making influence on staff cohesion. The target camp session was intentionally arranged to have these and other activities to enhance work group cohesion. Personal openness in this study refers to how open an individual or a group is in sharing their true self and how accepting they are to other people and ideas. In a reciprocal relationship both parties are receptive to each other, whether it is between existing group members or a new member entering the group. The interconnectedness

between shared work experiences and familiarity has been noticed by researchers (Bartone et al.,

2002) and participants.

Familiarity with group members was found to increase by the end of the camp session.

There was a low response rate for the questions related to how many adult leaders they were

familiar with before the target session and how many friendships they had by the end of the

session. The term friendship was used in the second set of questions because it was assumed that

all adult leaders would have to be at least somewhat familiar with other adult leaders due to

times in the daily schedule when they all were working at the same location. Possibly, the low

response rate for the four questions related to familiarity/friendships was because they did not

quite know how to answer the questions. A contact list was not distributed to adult leaders;

therefore a reconnection after the session was not easily accessible. Over half of the participants

responded about their thoughts on how the level familiarity affected working together. Findings

suggest a direct effect between the level of familiarity and types of cohesion (i.e. social, task, or

group cohesion). In some ways the level of familiarity was determined by the quantity and

quality of shared work experiences by staff leaders.

Staff leader support, as it was viewed in the context of this study, revealed the

importance of communication facilitated by staff leaders and teamwork. This construct not only

had a high number of total responses, but also seemed to have detailed information in the

responses. Responses related to communication focused on structured interactions and personal

interaction. Responses concentrated on an environment conducive to open communication and

the level of receptiveness from the adult leader. Some responses pertaining to teamwork focused

on the affect teamwork had on different aspects of cohesion, whereas others focused on feelings

or how it affected their state of mind. The level of staff leader support seemed to be a factor in

how comfortable group members felt communicating with their superiors and with each other. This directly related to cooperation with peers.

Peer cooperation, as viewed in the context of this study, revealed the importance of teamwork, goals, and desired skills/abilities in a co-worker. The respondents seemed to look at cooperation as helping each other by utilizing everyone's strengths to counteract weaknesses in the group. Cooperation was also perceived by respondents as working together to reach a goal. The theme of desired skills and experience level can inform staff development by honing in on the specific skills that the workers feel are most important in themselves and others. This type of information is useful for curriculum development for staff training.

Shared goals, as viewed in the context of this study, revealed the importance of having shared goals and motivation to attain goals. Many participants felt that personally and as a group the goal of the camp session was to provide positive experiences for the campers. This concept fits with the idea of positive youth development that was discussed in the out-of-school time section of the literature review. Huebner, Walker, and McFarland's (2003) suggested main components of positive youth development are similar to what the participants' comments on as being important (e.g. activities, training to acquire an understanding of development, and relationships with co-workers). Future research should explore how having shared goals or lack of shared goals may be connected with how to best implement positive youth development programs. Findings suggest respondents individually arrived at similar goals that could be encompassed by the idea of providing positive experiences for campers. They also felt that others shared this goal, and they were motivated to achieve the goal by their perceived influence on the campers.

Perceived task competence, as viewed in the context of this study, revealed the importance of adult leaders' state of mind, having a cohesion conducive environment, and training content. Perceived task competence encompassed skills and abilities perceived for self and others. This construct can be elaborated on by comparing perceived task competency with actual tasks proven to be important in OST settings or contexts. The themes for this construct seem to be related to individual and group attitudes towards their job, how well the physical and emotional environment was set up for success, and the quality of training provided in that environment. Findings are in agreement with previous research that found staff leader support and peer cooperation to lead to increased perceived task competence (Griffith, 2002).

The findings from this study inform camp and out-of-school staff development by supporting a need to enhance current training curriculum. Especially with a resident camp structure, work groups work and play together eating and sleeping under the same roof or stars in some cases. In any other work setting people go home to their personal lives at the end of a day. In a resident summer camp the day ends in a cabin full of campers or a tent full of peers. Staff development should include curriculum on building staff cohesion. This should be a priority because staff cohesion in this study was related to having a shared goal and the perceived attainment of the goal. Work group cohesion can be strengthened through shared experiences and personal skills such as communication and openness.

Youth workers come to a camp session with a level of skill and experience along with their state of mind. The camp facility and staff leaders contributed to the conduciveness of the environment and the content of training that can influence familiarity and shared time working together. Together the above contribute to the level of teamwork and shared goals among youth

workers. The researcher believes that this is one of the first of such studies carried out in the U.S. to explore work group cohesion in an OST field to inform staff development curriculum.

Staff cohesion is important to out-of-school time programs because staff cohesion is related to reaching program goals. Camp, in particular, contributes to the youth development process by offering experiences and elements that research has shown are critical to healthy adolescent development. One study found nearly 70% of campers experienced the highest level of support (i.e. developmentally optimal levels) at camp compared to an average of 40% of youth in some community-based organizations and between 15%-20% in some secondary schools (American Camp Association, 2006c). Therefore, work group cohesion can be more influential in a camp context then in contexts previously studied.

Individuals in groups working with youth are unique compared to other types of work groups because they are passionate about interacting with children and adolescents. Responses frequently included emotions such as nervous and excited. In many statements the participant's were personally committed to working with children and it was evident that they viewed other adult leaders as feeling the same way.

Concepts found as a result of this study can be categorized as pertaining to an individual adult leader or the camp itself. Individuals enter the camp session with a level of experience, skill and state of mind. The camp program management is responsible for creating an environment for open communication, teamwork, and the conductivity for work group cohesion. The management also decides the quantity and quality of the adult leader training and program schedule (e.g. skills they teach, experiences they provide, and the types of shared work experiences that are planned). The interaction between the program and the individual is where the results of the study comes to life.

Limitations

       As with any study, there are limitations to the current study. Among those limitations, summer camp variability in general, the researcher's involvement with the target camp session, counselor responses, and using a specialized camp as the target session. The researcher used several approaches to minimize the negative effects of the limitations.

       Summer camps vary in models of staffing programs. Possible confounding variables including length of camp session, age of campers, camp affiliation, amount of paid and unpaid adult leaders, size of staff, amount of participants in program, turn-over of staff and participants, age of program, and ratio of new and returning adult leaders currently existing in the program. Future research could use multiple methods of collecting data, such as focus groups, personal interviews, and open-ended questionnaires, to increase the trustworthiness of the study (Golafshani, 2003).

       The researcher was a staff member of the program. Participants may have chosen to answer questions in a particular way due to their opinion of the researcher. This limitation is addressed by having the questions answered anonymously so that the participants would feel safe to answer truthfully. There are beneficial and detrimental aspects of having volunteer coordinator as the researcher of the current study. The researcher was aware of possible biases and possible assumptions that may stem from personal experience attending the target camp session. However, understanding the inner workings of the target camp made it possible to understand nuances of the participants' experiences and to understand specific terms used in responses. For example, one of the participants discussed turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones as concepts adult leaders where attempting to help the campers understand. From attending the

target camp session, the researcher knew the concept was the curriculum of one of the programs during the camp session.

The response rates for volunteers and counselors were very different. A reason for the high response rate of the volunteers compared to the counselors may be that the particular camp session in the study was the only session the volunteers attended, whereas the counselors attended sessions all summer. Perhaps the counselors' response rate was lower because they had never communicated with the researcher before by email or because they did not have a direct personal connection with the researcher, as the volunteers did.

The counselor responses were not included in the data analysis for this study. A decision was made that the perspective of the counselors and volunteers might be of a very different nature, and without an adequate number of staff respondents it would not be wise to examine the groups together. This impression was informed by a careful reading of staff transcripts from the two counselors who responded to the survey. Although one of the counselors only responded to the first 10 questions, both stated that adult leaders did their job well, that training was helpful, and that their strengths improved through the camp sessions. Counselor respondents also felt supported by staff leaders. This support affected their working relationship among peers because it increased familiarity, increased leadership skills, and they worked together to encourage campers to participant in the activities. The respondent who completed the entire questionnaire reported that adult leaders worked well together as a group and instructions were clear while flexible. This respondent agreed with the volunteers on the specific goal of the target camp session and about the goal of the camp session and motivation to achieve the goal.

The results of this study may be applicable to summer camp setting were there are counselors who work at the camp for all summer sessions in a season, and where the volunteers

change every week without previous ties to the campers. The researcher hopes to inform the field

of OST about work group cohesion for summer camps with volunteer and paid workers, but this

information may not generalize to all OST program workers. Findings can be used as a stepping

stone for other researchers in the field.

Future Studies

Future studies must explore within and between group cohesion with volunteer workers

who participate in a camp for a session and paid workers who participate in a camp for a season.

This was an intention of the current study, but lack of adequate responses from counselors

necessitated analyzing only the perspectives of the session volunteers. Those workers who are

together for a season would have the opportunity to have a higher level of work group cohesion

because they have more shared experiences and time to get to know each other. Hopefully those

who work together for a summer season would also receive more staff training than those

working for only one session. Further researchers should use triangulation of the youth workers,

supervisors, and campers to achieve a more comprehensive view of work group cohesion. Future

studies should also look at a model connecting a conducive environment with good training

content that will provide positive experiences to influence the adult leader's state of mind.

Out-of-school time staff leaders can learn from this information and use it as they plan

staff training sessions. Participants explained many components that they felt were influential to

work group cohesion. Staff leaders plan the structure of the program and can influence work

group cohesion. Spending time with the group of adult leaders without campers present,

spending time with small groups of adult leaders when campers were present, having open

communication between peers and superiors, and providing workers with clear tasks and

understanding of goals are ways to increase work group cohesion. Staff leaders must also

understand and address prior experience levels, skill sets, and the state of mind of youth workers as training is planned. Future studies can extend information gathered in this study to enhance staff training in the future. Standardized or certified staff training would benefit individuals and the field.

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APPENDIX A

Camp Wahsega Adult Leader Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions about your experience while at Operation 4-H: Joint

Forces at the Falls. The phrase "adult leaders" is used to describe both **volunteers** and

counselors.

1. Think about driving through the square of downtown Dahlonega to Camp Wahsega
   Road. Remember driving through the thick forest on the gravel road that opened up to the
   camp. Please describe your feeling about the camp session on the first day you were at
   Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls.

2. Please select which type of adult leader you were for Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the
   Falls.
   a. Counselor
   b. Volunteer

3. Tell me about your previous camp experiences (please check all that apply):
   a. I have not attended any summer camps as a camper
   b. I have attended Camp Wahsega as a camper
   c. I have attended other 4-H camp(s) as a camper
   d. I have attended non4-H camp(s) as a camper

4. Tell me about your previous experience having a supervisory role at summer camps (please check all that apply):

    a. This was my first time working at any summer camp in a supervisory role

    b. I have worked at Camp Wahsega one previous time in a supervisory role

    c. I have worked at Camp Wahsega two or more times in a supervisory role

    d. I have worked at a different summer camp once in a supervisory role

    e. I have worked at a different summer camps two or more times in a supervisory role

5. Tell me about your **other** supervisory experiences (please check all that apply):

    a. I have worked at an after school program

    b. b. I have worked with a church youth group

    c. I have worked with a recreation program

    d. Other, please explain _____

6. Describe your strengths and weaknesses as an adult leader prior to, during, and after Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls.

7. In what ways did the training you received contribute to your ability to do your job?

8. How well do you think the other adult leaders did their jobs? Please explain your answer.

9. Describe the support you received during the camp session from **staff leaders** (counselor coordinator, volunteer coordinator, camp coordinator . . .)?

10. How do you think this degree of support affected the working relationship among adult leaders?

11. Looking back at experiences with other adult leaders (with and without campers present), please describe specific experiences that made you feel more or less a part of the group of adult leaders.

12. What factors affected the level of cooperation among adult leaders?

13. Give examples of how this level of cooperation between adult leaders influenced the camp session?

14. How clear were the instructions from **adult leaders** about your tasks/responsibilities during the camp session? Please explain.

15. Had you experienced tasks or responsibilities similar to the ones given to you at the camp session before coming to Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls?

16. What do you think the overall goals of the camp session were, and how did you arrive at this assessment?

17. Do you think there was agreement among adult leaders on what the goals for the camp session were? Please explain why or why not?

18. In your opinion, what do you think motivated the adult leaders to fulfill their goals for the camp session?

19. How many of the **counselors** did you know **before** the camp session started?

20. How many of the **volunteers** did you know **before** the camp session started?

21. How did getting to know adult leaders before or during the camp session affect your ability to work together as a group?

22. How many friendships with **counselors** did you have **after** the camp session ended?

23. How many friendships with **volunteers** you have **after** the camp session ended?

24. Camp Attendance:

a. I was at the whole camp session

b. I was only at camp for the first part of the session

c. I was only at camp for the second part of the season

25. Are you?

a. Male

b. Female

26. Age:

a. 18-22 years old

b. 23 and older

27. Race/Ethnicity (please check all that apply)

a. White/Caucasian

b. African American

c. Asian

d. Native American

e. Hispanic

f. Other _____

APPENDIX B

Question Response Rates

Table 1

Question Response Rates

Construct	Question	Response Rate	Average
Shared Experiences	1	5	5.00
Familiarity	1	3	
	2	3	
	3	5	4.20
	4	5	
	5	5	
Staff Leader Support	1	7	
	2	6	6.33
	3	6	
Cooperation with Peers	1	7	
	2	5	5.66
	3	5	
Shared Goals	1	6	
	2	6	6.00
	3	6	
Perceived Task Competence	1	6	
	2	8	7.00
	3	8	
	4	6	

APPENDIX C
Questions Listed by Construct

Table 2
Questions Listed by Construct

Construct	Questions Used to Measure Each Construct
Shared Experiences	• Looking back at experiences with other adult leaders (with and without campers present), please describe specific experiences that made you feel more or less a part of the group of adult leaders.
Familiarity	• How many of the **counselors** did you know **before** the camp session started? • How many of the **volunteers** did you know **before** the camp session started? • How did getting to know adult leaders before or during the camp session affect your ability to work together as a group? • How many friendships with **counselors** did you have **after** the camp session ended? • How many friendships with **volunteers** you have **after** the camp session ended?
Staff Leader Support	• Describe the support you received during the camp session from **staff leaders** (counselor coordinator, volunteer coordinator, camp coordinator . . .)? • How do you think this degree of support affected the working relationship among adult leaders? • How clear were the instructions from **adult leaders** about your tasks/responsibilities during the camp session? Please explain.

Cooperation with Peers	• How well do you think the other adult leaders did their jobs? Please explain your answer. • What factors affected the level of cooperation among adult leaders? • Give examples of how this level of cooperation between adult leaders influenced the camp session?
Shared Goals	• What do you think the overall goals of the camp session were, and how did you arrive at this assessment? • Do you think there was agreement among adult leaders on what the goals for the camp session were? Please explain why or why not? • In your opinion, what do you think motivated the adult leaders to fulfill their goals for the camp session?
Perceived Task Competence	• Think about driving through the square of downtown Dahlonega to Camp Wahsega Road. Remember driving through the thick forest on the gravel road that opened up to the camp. Please describe your feeling about the camp session on the first day you were at Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls. • Describe your strengths and weaknesses as an adult leader prior to, during, and after Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls. • In what ways did the training you received contribute to your ability to do your job? • Had you experienced tasks or responsibilities similar to the ones given to you at the camp session before coming to Operation 4-H: Joint Forces at the Falls?

APPENDIX D

Constructs and Quotations

Table 3

Shared Experiences Themes

Shared Experiences Themes	Number of Responses Out of 5	Evidence	Concept
Shared Working Time	3	"One of the best experiences where I felt like I was a part of the group of adult leaders occurred during our meals when we would eat together and bond over our experiences." "Sometimes I felt as an outsider from the actual counselors of camp however that was more because they had been working together from a long amount of time." "…Meals brought us together too. We ate at the same tables without the campers. While, sometimes I wish we had sat among the campers and shared time with them over meals, sharing meals with the adults provided a chance for us to grow closer as a group. The adult leaders were divided among the units and we spent most of our day in these units which made us less of a group and more of individual teams. But the meals and meetings, as well as the rec activities, gave us a chance to catch up with everyone."	Closeness through experiences Shared experiences Being a part/not a part of a group Shared experience Time/amount Experiences to interact Shared experiences Sub-units
Openness	3	"I arrived late on Monday afternoon, so my time was with the campers present. However, I was welcomed into the group of adults. We where able to interact as if I had always been there."	Group inclusion Interaction

| Openness | "It starts with your willingness to put aside all insecurities and anxieties to truly make this an experience that you and others around you could grow in." | Open up to grow |
| | "…I think the first night helped us to all drop our guards and brought us closer together…" | Open up to bond Social cohesion |

Table 4

<u>Familiarity with Group Members Themes</u>

Familiarity Themes	Number of Responses Out of 5	Evidence	Concept
Getting to know co-workers affect ability to work together	5	"somewhat, did not play a huge role in bonding"	Stick together Get along Social cohesion
		"…bonds were formed between those leaders who worked together in the cabins or in the units much faster than with the group as a whole. If we had all known each other before hand we could have relied on everyone rather than on our co-unit leaders/cabin leaders."	Familiarity Time Amount of support
		"It [Getting to know adult leaders] allowed us to work a one."	Work together task cohesion
		"The more I got to know the adult leaders the more I felt I could open up causing me to feel more involved w/ the camp session."	Open up Participate/interact
		"It [Getting to know adult leaders] helped me work better as I got to know more of the adult leaders"	Task competence Comfort zone

Table 5

Staff Leaders Support Themes

Staff Leader Support Themes	Number of Responses Out of 15	Evidence	Concept
Communication	8	"We were able to exchange ideas and events during the camp. As needed we were able to vent as needed…"	Exchange Vent Communicate
		"Well from what I remember any thoughts or concerns I had were warmly and thoughtfully addressed…"	Communication Respect
		"Each day at camp there was a staff meeting in which we talked about the agenda for the day as well as any issues or concerns. Everyone was encouraged to contribute if they had something they wanted to talk about. In these meetings the counselor, volunteer, and camp coordinators all came together and offered their support and advice to the leaders and counselors. Aside from these meetings, I did not have very much contact with the counselor or camp coordinator. The connections made with the counselor and camp coordinator were not very deep, we did not talk very much outside of those meetings. If I did need help or wanted to talk about something, I went to the volunteer coordinator…"	
		"We were able to compare our experiences with various campers and [activities] so we could help prepare other adult leaders on what to expect and how various techniques on dealing w/ any situation that would be both beneficial for the campers, [adult] leaders, and counselors"	Experiences Peer interaction Exchange information Communicate

Communication	"...The daily meetings definitely helped the working relationship among the adult leaders. It was a chance for us to come together and express any concerns or comment on anything that had been on our minds in regards to the campers, the classes, the cabins, or other activities. It was also a chance for us to talk in an environment without campers for a few minutes, which made the discussion all the more valuable. Also, the support from the volunteer coordinator augumented our relationship. I think there was a certain degree of controversy between the counselors and the adult leaders. Some of their methods were striking to a few of the adult leaders as well as some of their attitudes towards the adult leaders. Talking to the volunteer coordinator about these issues as well as talking amongst ourselves about these issues brought us closer together. We were able to come to an understanding about what it was that perplexed us about the camp methods and were able to work together to do what needed to be done, to work with the counselors, etc."	Communication Togetherness Curriculum Perspective
	"The instructions we [received] were clear all of the time and even said repeatedly at our adult leader meetings and at the place of an activity so no one was left behind in understanding what tasks and activities we had to do"	Communication Repetition On the same page Task
	"[Instructions from adult leader were] [p]retty clear and understandable ...when I was confused I asked and was not made to feel bad"	Communication Value Respect Dignity

Communication		"We had conversations about our experiences during the camp, discussing how we dealt with certain situations, what happened during certain activities that we should be aware of/look out for/just not be surprised by, etc. In regards to the general instructions given to us from the coordinators, the instructions were very clear. Our responsibilities were laid out for us and clearly explained. There were plenty of opportunities to ask questions if we did have any about what our tasks/responsibilities were. ..."	Communication Curriculum
Teamwork	6	"…We seemed to work as a team with one goal in mind…the children."	Team Shared goals
		'It is always great working with our 4-H staff. I really felt like I was at camp. I felt comfortable with everyone. We gave each other respect, we valued each others opinions, we all understood the big picture."	Social cohesion Shared goals
		"…I mean despite my experience I never felt like an inferior but instead I felt as though I was a part of a team and group effort."	Team-experience Value/respect
		"We seemed to work as 'one'"	Unity Work together Task cohesion
		"It helped us all work together and be on the same page"	Work together Shared goals
		"I think the adult leaders had a good working relationship-we all got along fairly well, and we worked together well, we were able to take turns sharing certain positions and responsibilities…."	Social and task cohesion

Table 6

Cooperation with Peers Themes

Cooperating with Peers Themes	Number of Responses Out of 17	Evidence	Concepts
Teamwork	8	"I think due to the training and their exposure to the campers they grew as adult leaders and as people, because at first a few of the adult leaders were nervous about being around kids for such a long time, but with the help of the adult leaders who had been to Camp Wahsega the previous year all of the leaders did a great job"	Help each other Experience Teamwork
		'[Adult leaders did their job] [v]ery well, no bad attitudes, everyone cooperated…"	Positive attitude Teamwork
		"They [adult leaders] did a great job. I definitely learned a lot from them, and We often fed off each others energy. For example, knowing each others comforts made it easy to know when to step back and not intervene while another adult leader was sharing their wisdom. We learned how to be a balanced unit."	Boundaries Comfort Work together
		"…Each day the adults got together and discussed the day and any thing that needed our attention. This allowed us to work as one."	Teamwork Communication
		"… and how the great and unique capabilities each adult leader could bring to the camp." [what affected cooperation with peers]	Balanced group

Teamwork		"I think most of the adult leaders did a great job. Each adult leader had their own strengths and weaknesses; some were more exemplary/well-rounded than others. Some leaders were better at one-on-one time with the campers, some related better to campers over activities, some helped out by having extra responsibilities such as leading PT, etc. As a whole, I think we made a well-rounded group of leaders and worked fairly well together to get everything accomplished…."	Worked together Task cohesion
		"The adult leaders signed up for different activities. We basically divided all the activities among ourselves. I think this [increased] the level of cooperation among the adult leaders because we were all sharing the responsibilities and the odd-jobs…"	Shared tasks Work Together
		"With this level of cooperation the adult leaders were able to keep a better authoritative figure over the campers, because if the campers were getting too rambunctious for one leader another adult leader would [immediately] try to help the situation with reinforcement of authority."	Work together Intuitive
Shared Goals	7	"Awesome job!! Each and everyone of the adults seemed to truly care form the children and were there for them when needed" [Other adult leaders]	Shared goal Support
		[Adult leaders] … [k]new that the children were priority #1."	Shared goal
		"Our enthusiasm on being able to help the campers…" [what affected cooperation with peers]	Shared goals
		"…and most of us being there for the kids…" [what affected cooperation with peers]	Shared Goals

Shared Goals		"All of the adults keyed on the kids and making sure that the camp was the best it could be…"	Shared Goals
		"The goal of the camp was to reach out to the OMK children. That was what we focused on and we were able to achieve our [goals]. The kids seemed to have a great time." [what affected cooperation with peers]	Shared goal Achieved goal
		"I think this helped camp run successfully and smoothly." [how cooperation influenced on camp session]	Work together Achieve goals
Desired Skills/Experience Level in a Co-worker	6	"Most [adult leaders] were very great with the children. There were 2 that concerned me just because they seemed to lose their frustration quickly and seemed frustrated about being there and needing to actually supervise."	Patience, Role compliance
		"Those who work with youth in past have great understanding of how to work and handle youth. Those who have not have a more difficult time to understand them, how they think and act"	Experience
		"Communication…" [what affected cooperation with peers]	Communication
		"Communication, encouragement, respect, creativity, [openness], etc" [what affected cooperation with peers]	Communication Encourage Respect Creative Open
		"All of the adult leaders were very easy going and [agreeable]…."	Flexible Agreeable

Desired Skills/Experience Level in a Co-worker		"…There was one extreme case in which I [believe] a certain leader should not have been given that role at this camp. She had a lot of needs-need for structure, for instruction, for complete compliancy from the campers.... When things did not go as planned she would get nervous and become unfunctional. Sometimes I think her reactions to change, such as when she [received] a camper that wasn't on her original list, made the campers uncomfortable. She had physical problems which would interfere with her abilities to perform certain roles at camp, which was okay and very acceptable, however, she would become emotional and vulnerable before just saying 'no, [I] can't do this.' However, she did make connections with a few of the campers and also was able to reinforce the curriculum -stepping stones and stumbling blocks-in her cabin each night. She led discussions and had her cabin talk about their experiences for the day as well as the stepping stones/stumbling blocks they encountered that day. I also believe that this was her first time actually working with children, and everyone has to start somewhere"	Importance of doing a job well Interact with campers, Flexibility Do not give up Reinforce curriculum Debrief campers on day Communication Experience Emotion

Table 7

Shared Goals Themes

Shared Goal Themes	Number of Responses Out of 6	Evidence	Concepts
Goal (Q #1) Providing Positive Experiences for Campers	6	"I served as an OMK Ambassador for GA 4-H this past year. I knew that we were trying to provide the kids with a program that allowed them to met with other kids just like them … And a week of fun and activities that allowed them to learn and grow and be kids again."	Goal, Camper meet peers with similar life stressors Campers Learn Campers Grow
		"To help the campers bond with other campers who had parents in the military along with [bringing] life lessons..." [goal of camp]	Goal, Campers bond with peers – similar life stressors
		"To teach these adolescents that communicating about their feelings is a great characteristic to have …" [goal of camp]	Goal Teach campers communication and feelings
		"to provide an enjoyable [atmosphere] while showing military kids that they are not alone" [goal of camp]	Goal Provide atmosphere Campers – know not alone
		"To empower and encourage these youth by listening and being empathetic to their needs and feelings." [goal of camp]	Goal Inspire campers Support campers needs and feelings

Providing Positive Experiences for Campers		"I think the overall goal for the camp session was to support the campers while they learned more about themselves, broke out of their shells, challenged themselves, and tried new things … The goal of the camp was for the campers to learn about themselves and the world and we were there to help them and guide them during their experiences."	Goal Support campers Campers learn – self and others Campers try new things Campers challenge self
Shared Goals (Q #2) Most leaders had similar goals in mind for the camp session	5	"Yes, we were geared on helping the kids. IF that meant one on one we did that. If it meant group time, that was what we did..." [shared goals]	Shared goal Help campers Flexible
		"Yes the adult leaders all knew what the goals of the camp were since the first day of camp due to our packet that we received during our initial [group] meeting." [shared goals]	Shared goal- material given by staff leaders
		"Yes, we all knew what the camp was for and how we were striving to reach that goal."	Shared goal Task awareness
		"I think everyone was clear why we were their and if we did not know upon arrival we definitely did by the last day."	Shared goal Goal clarity
		Yes, I think there was agreement among the adult leaders on what the goals for the camp session were. …I think all of the adult leaders realized the importance of this goal [turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones] and their dynamic role in helping the campers achieve this goal…. I do believe that they knew their role at camp was crucial to accomplishing the goal of the camp	Shared goals Campers identify pros/cons Camper perspective Leader role to accomplish goal influence campers' lives

Motivation to Achieve Goal(s) (Q #3) Influence on campers	6	"You had to be there to see the smiles, that twinkle in the eyes, the grit at doing something new, something scary, something achieved. Knowing you helped a child, that's what kept [you] going." [motivations to achieve goal]	Influence on campers of achieving goals Emotion
		"Our ambition to make the best experience for the leaders and campers." [motivations to achieve goal]	Influence on campers of achieving goals
		"Their dedication to the campers and love for kids." [motivations to achieve goal]	Achieve goals Influence on campers
		"The enjoyment of the children."[motivations to achieve goal]	Influence on campers of achieving goals
		"The kids wanting to make a difference in their lives."[motivations to achieve goal]	Influence on campers of achieving goals
		"…I think the primary motivation was to influence the campers and make an impact on their lives and futures…" [motivations to achieve goal]	Influence on campers of achieving goals

Table 8

Perceived Task Competence Themes

Perceived Task Competence Themes	Number of Responses Out of	Evidence	Concepts
Conducive Environment	4/14	"Loving the North Georgia Mountains as I do, I could not help but think what a [wonderful] settling to have for this special camp. The kids were laughing and enjoying life."	Setting Campers
		" … I love this area and I love kids."	Setting Campers
		"I thought it was wonderfully scenic and open…"	Setting
		"The facility looked nice and I was just ready for the campers to get there…"	Setting
		"… I have a new found appreciation for those that dedicate their lives to working with children."	Appreciation for youth workers
State of Mind	12/14	I was very nervous since I arrived late after everyone else was set up. However, I was also very excited…"	Emotions
		"…[I] was somewhat nervous as what to expect with the children	Emotions
		"I was really excited and a little nervous about camp the first day. Once we arrived I felt relieved because it was all finally happening…"	Emotions

State of Mind	"I was filled with excitement and nervousness as I anticipated meeting the youth. As I entered the camp site, memories from the year before began to fill my mind. Moments of joy, moments of sadness, moments of courage, could this summer's experience leave such a lasting impression …"	Emotions
	"I had an eagerness to help these children, a willingness to listen, compassion for their experiences and tolerance. I found my tolerance could and did run a bit low from some of the behavior…"	Emotions
	"I'm friendly and energetic … I first had to learn something that I previously wasn't very good at: being authoritative and still being a non threatening figure. I'm also someone who is initially shy around new people so to be around a large group of new faces was a great learning [experience] on how to be more confident and feel that my ideas and strengths can be valued and help the progression of the camp."	Emotion Ability
	"I listen very well and become very attached to my 'kids'…"	Ability
	"[Strengths]: Fun loving Athletic Respectful Weaknesses: Too strict at times …"	Ability
	"Being a good listener and encourager are some strengths [trying] to be an effective communicator weaknesses."	Ability
	"My ability to work with youth ages as well as be a leader with fellow adult leaders, adults, and youth."	Ability
	"…Sometimes the kids do not look to me as a leader since I am not much older than they are and since I look just as young. That would be my main weakness."	Perception of Campers

State of Mind		"I am versatile when it comes to change; I don't let it slow me down. When things don't go as planned or when a new component is added to the situation, I can accept it and keep on going. This is an important quality to have in a camp environment because, while the camp is structured and organized, there are a lot of factors involved which can change and do change. People need to be up for anything…"	Ability Flexible
		"When I arrived at the first camp [session] I felt excited, due to the fun activities the campers had in store for them and the energy of the counselors. Their energetic attitude would soon become contagious to all of the volunteers and campers."	Expectations
		"I was nervous because I hadn't been in a camp atmosphere for a few years. But that was also why this camp was so exciting for me, I was ready to get back into the camp life-have fun with the campers, learn about myself, help others learn about themselves while they step out of their comfort zones and try new things. I was a little worried about how the curriculum would play out once the campers got there, but I knew that it would all work out."	Expectations
Experience	4/22	"My prior experience in working as a team and team building and being able to step down to a youth's level and closely relate with them are my strengths."	Emotions Expectations
		"…I am not used to being around children for periods of time over a few hours…"	Experience
		"Lacked some camp experience…"	Experience
		"I was able to put myself in their shoes and understand where they were coming from Prior experience" [training-ability to do job]	Past Experience
		Past experience[training-ability to do job]	Past Experience

Experience		"…In terms of weaknesses, before coming to Operation 4-H I didn't know what to expect from the kids. The camp was for children of military families. I don't know anyone who is a 'military kid' and had never even considered what military families have to deal with everyday before coming to this camp. I learned a lot during the week about military families and the things children of military families have to go through. This experience opened my eyes and made me more accepting and supporting of those who are on the more patriotic, conservative, military-esque part of the spectrum."	Emotions Expectations Special information
		"…I am good at relating to children/teenagers. This is probably due to the fact that I have two younger siblings and have a lot of experience working with children/teens. I have a sense of humor, which is important when working with children/teens. Kids can do some silly things that some people view as immature or inappropriate, but you have to be light-hearted and see the humor in certain situations in order to get anything accomplished and form real bonds with the children…"	Past Experience
Content of Training	5/8	"The training helped me review what adolescents are like and how to deal with problems that might arise, like first aide, or campers being homesick, along with how to encourage the campers' participation in activities."	Content Influence Training
		"Kristy explained everything great and helped me settle right in." [training-ability to do job]	Content Delivery Training Comfort
		"Tone, patience, reasonable expectations" [training-ability to do job]	Content Delivery Training
		"…The curriculum training was very helpful too. Not only did we discuss the themes, what we wanted to accomplish, and how we wanted to accomplish it, but we also did some of the exercises ourselves…"	Content Delivery Training

Content of Training	"Training is always helpful. I always learn new ways to improve my [effectiveness] as an educator. I have been blessed because I have been given such great advice. You have to be a good listener before you can lead.... Do everything to your best ability.... actions speak louder than words...stand firm in what you believe... look for the best in everyone... always put God first." [training-ability to do job]	Content Influence Training
	"The training helped a lot. The 4-H adult leader training (the video) did not necessarily teach me anything new, but it helped me to feel confident about my abilities as an adult leader. It reminded me of how to act and what to do in different situations. Most of the information we covered was very familiar; the instructions seemed instinctual, which made me believe that I am capable of being a good leader…."	Content Influence Training