

Regular Paper

Assessing the Impact of Summer Camp Employment on the Development of Workplace Skills

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively assess the impact of working at a camp on summer camp staff while simultaneously seeking to understand what facilitates and inhibits growth in that context. This study examined differences in levels of leadership, teamwork and resilience before and after working at a summer camp as a staff member. It also assessed staff perceptions of staff culture, support, and care. Results indicated that summer camp staff members can and do grow in the areas measured over the course of a summer at camp and that some elements of the staff experience related to staff support, staff care, and staff culture may be important factors in contributing to that growth. This study enhances our understanding of the impact of working at a camp on staff by providing a pre-post assessment while beginning the conversation about best practices to facilitate growth.

KEYWORDS: Summer camp; summer staff; workforce development

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Summer camp has a long history of providing young people with experiences that foster the development of social skills, self-awareness, spirituality, leadership, connection to nature, and personal values, among others (Bialeschki et al., 2007; Garst et al., 2011; Sorenson, 2018; Thurber et al., 2007). Given shifting cultural trends which seem to indicate that young people today are less prepared for college and career (Casner-Lotto et al., 2006; Hart Research, 2015; Jackson, 2010; McNamara, 2009), more recent studies have focused specifically on developmental outcomes related to college and career preparation (Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018). Although these studies are most often associated with those that participate as campers, over the last two decades researchers have begun to consider the developmental impact of camp on those that participate as staff members as well (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Duerden et al., 2014; Garst et al., 2011; Garst et al., 2009; Garst & Johnson, 2005; Kendellen et al., 2016). These studies have identified outcomes of camp experiences, specifically, life skill development and workforce readiness, among staff. Understanding the developmental outcomes of camp for summer staff members allows camp professionals to strengthen recruitment efforts by communicating the transformative nature of these experiences while also equipping camp professionals to facilitate change in an effective manner.

Outcomes of Camp Experiences for Staff

Although research on camper outcomes has dominated camp-based research, as early as 1998 researchers were also studying the staff experience. In a study published in *Camping Magazine*, researchers utilized a mixed methods approach to identify outcomes of a staff experience in a sample of 52 former summer staff members. Results suggested that outcomes were both personal and professional, including aspects of leadership, mentorship, technical skills, teamwork, interpersonal skills, and personal growth (Bialeschki et al., 1998). These findings were supported by several later studies that also identified personal and professional outcomes of a summer staff experience (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Ferrari & McNeely, 2007; Garst & Johnson, 2005). DeGraaf and Glover (2003) specifically identified outcomes related to self-confidence, social interaction, and a variety of marketable job skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication. Garst and Johnson (2005) also identified outcomes related to confidence and communication, while further suggesting that personal responsibility is developed during a summer staff experience. Using a quantitative approach, Ferrari and McNeely (2007) reported teamwork, social skills, initiative, and identity as strong outcomes of a summer staff experience.

Although these studies provided convincing evidence that camp experiences have a significant impact on staff, the uniqueness of the camp context presents questions about the transferability of these skills in everyday life. However, in 2007, Digby and Ferrari suggested that staff are not only gaining these valuable skills, they are also transferring those skills into academic and workplace contexts. Leadership was identified as the most applicable and transferable skill, but time management, personal initiative, and flexibility were also reported as highly transferable (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). More recently, Duerden et al. (2014) provided evidence for the “direct implications of summer staff experiences on workforce development” (p. 39), correlating the skills gained at camp with many of the 21st century workplace readiness skills needed for success in the workplace.

Given the literature affirming the value of camp experiences for staff, several studies have sought to identify factors that facilitate growth in all of the outcomes mentioned. In 2016, a team of researchers at Ottawa University suggested that staff grow in leadership when they are “placed in positions of authority at camp [that] exposed them to learning situations that facilitated the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to become effective leaders” (Kendellen et al., 2016, p. 36). In other words, part of the power of the staff experience is the opportunity to be in a position of leadership. It is the experience of leading that helps foster the development of core

leadership skills. Similarly, Garst et al. (2009) and Ribbe (2010) have noted that the opportunity to practice core life skills in an isolated and temporary space is an important feature of the camp context that promotes development for staff. Other aspects of camp that have been identified as facilitators of development include traditions, relationships, group processes, and the actual physical space of camp (Garst et al., 2009). In addition to the real responsibility and life practice inherent in a summer staff employment experience, staff are pushed out of their comfort zone in ways that foster development and are able to receive helpful feedback (Duerden et al., 2014).

Taken together, the results of these studies suggest that summer staff receive many developmental benefits from their experiences, and that a variety of factors foster that development. It should be noted, however, that some aspects of camp experiences have been reported to be harmful to staff development. For example, Duerden et al. (2014) found the long work hours, poor support and management, and challenging personal relationships among staff may reduce the impact of the experience, as well as the ability of staff to fulfill the duties associated with their role. Additionally, Bailey et al. (2012) noted that staff exhibit high levels of burnout over the course of the summer, in part due to long hours and poor management/supervision. Dubin et al. (2019) corroborate this finding, noting that administrative and peer support help mitigate fatigue. Dubin et al. (2019) further suggested that the increase in fatigue over time is related to the demanding nature of working with children and that fatigue decreases the attentiveness of camp staff to both self-care and care of others, diminishing their ability to perform their role effectively. Thus, while camp does provide excellent growth and development opportunities, when managed poorly, it can also be detrimental for a summer staff employee.

Life Skills and Workforce Readiness

Over the last two decades, concern has risen regarding the readiness of college graduates for the workplace (Casner-Lotto et al., 2006; Hart Research, 2015; Jackson, 2010; McNamara, 2009). Specifically, employers are concerned about skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, social and emotional skills, collaboration, responsibility, resilience, oral skills, and problem solving (Hart Research, 2015; Jackson, 2010; King et al., 2016; McNamara, 2009; Mishlind, 2014). While many employers report that new college graduates have the ability to succeed in entry level positions, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) has suggested that they do not have the skills needed to move beyond entry level positions (Hart Research, 2018). Furthermore, while employers affirm that basic knowledge is important, they also indicate that the ability to apply skills is more important than basic knowledge when it comes to workplace readiness and success (Casner-Lotto et al., 2006).

In response to employer concerns, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified eight competencies for career readiness: critical thinking/problem solving, teamwork, professionalism/work ethic, career management, oral/written communication, leadership, digital technology and global fluency (2019). Educators and professionals in related fields that work with young adults and college students are now faced with the task of figuring out how to develop these skills to ensure they are prepared for the workforce. In 2009, McNamara elucidated this issue, suggesting that while the needs of young adults have changed, teaching and training tools have remained the same. We cannot continue to educate and train young people without first adapting the educational landscape to address changes in the learning process, specifically as it relates to technology (McNamara, 2009). Additionally, the AACU has suggested that employers are now endorsing broader learning experiences that provide students with both breadth and depth of knowledge and skills (Hart Research, 2015). While field internships are important, the AACU promotes applied learning projects that cover a broad range of knowledge and skills to provide the “best pathway to long term success” (Hart Research, 2015).

Summer camp represents one example of a learning experience that focuses on applying a broad range of knowledge and skills in a real-life context. However, filling staff roles has become increasingly challenging as students often feel pressured to choose field specific internships over broad developmental experiences like summer camp. While the value of summer staff experiences has been reported through extensive qualitative research and a few more recent quantitative studies, this study seeks to strengthen the body of research on summer staff outcomes through quantitative methodology using a variety of validated instruments to measure leadership, teamwork, and resilience in a large sample of summer staff.

This study addressed two research questions:

- 1) What is the impact of working at a summer camp on staff members' resilience, teamwork, and leadership skills?
- 2) What differences exist in extent of growth in each domain based on levels of staff culture, support, and care?

Methods

Sample

This study was conducted in partnership with the Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA). In the spring of 2019, all 850 member camps were invited to participate in the study, and 27 camps agreed to participate. Study participants represent these 27 different Christian camps from across the United States. Individual participation was voluntary, and participants were not compensated for their time. At the time that the survey was sent to these 27 camps, the total number of staff positions was 2,229. A total of 1,103 pretest surveys were collected, representing a 48.5% response rate from the total sample. After matching these surveys with the 828 posttest surveys that were collected, 302 posttest surveys did not have a matching pretest, leaving a final sample of 526 summer staff. The unmatched surveys may be a result of two factors: some staff took the posttest that did not take the pretest due to later arrival dates, and some staff incorrectly filled out the survey code. Although all the camps were members of the CCCA, it should not be assumed that all participants identify as Christian.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study consisted of both validated and unvalidated, custom designed metrics. Three scales were used to measure developmental constructs of resilience, teamwork, and leadership. Permission to use these scales was secured before beginning data collection.

Resilience was measured using the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). The scale was validated using principle components analysis (PCA), Cronbach's alpha, intra-class correlation (ICC), and partial correlation. The BRS is a 6-item, single-factor scale with an internal reliability of .80-.91 and a test re-test reliability of .62-.69 (Smith et al., 2008). The BRS includes three positively worded items (e.g., "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times"), and three negatively worded items (e.g., "I have a hard time making it through stressful events") (Smith et al., 2008).

The Teamwork Scale for Youth (TSY) is an 8-item, single-factor scale that measures teamwork behaviors. All statements are positively worded, such as, "I feel confident in my ability to work on a team." Created by a team of social work and research methods professionals, the scale was validated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and has an internal reliability of 0.79-0.88 (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2015).

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) measured leadership using a 30-item, five-factor scale validated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The five subfactors—modeling, inspiring, challenging, enabling, and encouraging—are added together for the total scale score. The LPI has an internal reliability of .70–.84 and includes all positively worded items such as “I foster cooperative rather than competitive relationships among people I work with” (Posner & Kouzes, 1988; Posner, 2016).

In addition to the above metrics, on the pretest, participants were asked questions about their demographic background and motivations for working at camp. On the posttest, participants were also asked about their perspectives on support, supervision and staff care. These questions were developed by the researchers based on 30 years of experience in the field and were used in smaller exploratory studies for three years prior to this study. During that time they were refined and adjusted based on feedback from camp professionals. Table 1 lists the additional questions asked and the associated Likert scales.

Table 1

Support, Supervision, Team Culture

<u>Question</u>	<u>Scale</u>
How frequently did you meet with your supervisor for coaching, support, feedback or encouragement?	Not at all, 1-2 times over summer, 3-4 times over summer, at least once a week, Every day
How frequently did you meet with peers/coworkers for small group discussion, study, support, or encouragement?	Not at all, 1-2 times over summer, 3-4 times over summer, at least once a week, Every day
How much support did you feel from your supervisor?	None at all (1) – A great deal (5)
How much support did you feel from your peers/coworkers?	None at all (1) – A great deal (5)
I felt connected to the mission of the camp this summer	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
I had a clear understanding of the standards of performance for my role	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
I felt known and valued by the camp I was working at	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
My input and ideas were valued	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
My staff team was healthy and functional	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
I got along with my coworkers	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)
Conflict with staff was resolved in a healthy manner	Strongly Disagree (1) – Strongly Agree (6)

Research Design

This study utilized a pre-post survey methodology wherein staff completed a survey before and after their summer camp staff experience. Some camps utilized paper surveys to collect the data, while others utilized the Qualtrics online survey platform. Camps chose a method that worked best for their situation given access to technology. At the beginning of each survey, respondents created a five-item identifier by providing the first letter of their last name, the third letter of their first name, the first letter of their mother's name, and the day on which they were born (the fifth of the month was to be entered as '05'). The pretest was taken within one week of arrival and before any formal training had begun. The posttest was taken within one week of their last day of work. Only staff that were working at camp for at least six weeks were included in the study. Given that growth and development take time, this timeframe was chosen to allow a

focus on staff that were in a camp staff role for a majority (at least half) of a typical summer camp season. Anyone whose start and end dates indicated less than six weeks of employment was dropped from the sample. Due to the varied start and end dates for different camps, pretest data were collected throughout May and June of 2019, and posttest data were collected throughout August and September of 2019. All data were entered into SPSS for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS statistics software, version 25. Surveys were matched based on the unique survey identifier explained prior, and any non-matched surveys were removed from the data set. Each of the scales were scored using the methods provided by the scale author, and each case received a composite pretest and posttest score for each measure. Surveys that were missing responses to one or more of the items for any scale were not included in measurement for that scale. Normality tests were run on all variables and results indicated that the teamwork, resilience, and leadership variables were normal. Culture, support, and care variables were non-normal. The difference between the post and pretest for each scale was calculated, as well as a rate of change. Descriptive statistics were then used to determine the percentage of the sample that reported an increase in resilience, teamwork, and leadership, as well as the mean rate of growth for each measure. To determine the significance of growth, paired samples *t*-tests were used to analyze differences between pre and posttest scores for each scale. Finally, to look for differences in growth in each developmental domain based on supervision, support and care, Mann Whitney U analyses were used to compare differences between those that grew and those that did not.

Results

The sample was predominantly white (89.4%) and female (63.9%). The median age was 20 years old. The majority (70.7%) had attended camp as a camper, and 46.9% were working at camp for the first time. The majority of the sample (65.6%) were currently enrolled in some sort of college education (e.g., private, public, technical, or community college).

The first research question measured the impact of summer camp employment on staff members' resilience, teamwork, and leadership. To address this question, the difference between the pre and posttest scores for each case on each measure was calculated. Table 2 shows the percentage of staff that grew in each area, the percent of staff that regressed, and the percent of staff who maintained their pre-summer levels throughout the summer.

Table 2

Percent of Staff that Grew in Teamwork, Resilience, and Leadership

Domain	N	% of staff that grew	% of staff that regressed	% of staff that remained the same
Teamwork	507	54.4%	31.4%	14.2%
Resilience	493	48.3%	36.9%	14.8%
Leadership	518	45.9%	43.5%	10.6%

After identifying the percentage of staff that grew, paired sample *t* tests were run to determine if growth was statistically significant amongst those that grew. As shown in Table 3, results of the paired sample *t* tests revealed that growth was significant in all of the areas measured ($p < .05$) and that effect sizes were strong ($d > 0.80$) (Cohen, 1988; Pallant, 2016).

Table 3*Paired Sample t Test for Pre and Posttest Scores on Teamwork, Resilience, and Leadership*

Variable	n	Pretest		Posttest		95% CI	Cohen's d	t	df
		M	SD	M	SD				
Teamwork ^a	286	32.70	4.24	35.99	3.80	[3.31- 3.87]	.82	25.03	285**
Resilience ^b	238	3.29	.57	3.80	.53	[0.47- 0.55]	.93	23.98	237**
Leadership ^c	238	113.99	14.23	124.89	12.54	[9.82- 11.95]	.81	20.19	237**

^a Teamwork is out of 40 possible points. ^b Resilience is out of 5 possible points. ^c Leadership is out of 150 possible points.
* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

The second research question explored whether or not differences existed in extent of growth in each domain based on levels of staff culture, support, and care. Before addressing this question, we had to decide whether or not to include cases in which a regression or maintaining of scores was observed in any of the domains measured. Scatterplots of the relationships between each of the growth variables and each of the culture, support, and care variables, were created and assessed. These scatterplots did not display strong visual correlations when regression, maintenance, and growth cases were all included. However, it was evident from the scatterplots of teamwork, leadership, and resilience that cases in the top 25% of growth also scored at the highest end of culture, support and care variables, while cases in the bottom 25% of growth (all of which were regression cases) scored at the lowest end of the culture, support and care variables. Based on this interpretation, the researchers assessed differences on culture, support, and care variables between those that scored in the upper and lower quartiles of teamwork, leadership, and resilience. Thus, the data were then split into quartiles, and differences between the upper and lower quartiles were measured. Due to the non-normal distribution of the culture, support, and care variables, all which were negatively skewed, analysis of these variables was completed using the Mann-Whitney U test.

For teamwork, there were significant differences between the upper and lower quartiles in all of the variables measured except for standards of performance (Table 4).

Table 4*Differences in Culture, Supervision, and Support between Lower and Upper Quartiles of Change in Teamwork*

	Mdn		U	n	p
	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile			
Peer/coworker support	4.0	5.0	10,355.5	331	.000**
Supervisor support	4.0	5.0	10,161.5	330	.000**
Frequency of meetings with supervisors	3.0	3.0	10,492.5	330	.000**
Frequency of meetings with peers	3.0	4.0	11,414.5	331	.006**
Clear standards of performance	5.0	5.0	12,376.0	331	.094
Input and ideas values	4.0	5.0	11,195.5	332	.002**
Connected to the mission of the camp	5.0	5.0	10,734.5	331	.000**
Feeling known and valued by the camp	4.0	5.0	10,567.5	331	.000**
Staff team is healthy and functional	4.0	5.0	9,875.0	331	.000**
Coworkers got along	4.0	5.0	9,057.0	332	.000**
Healthy conflict resolution	4.0	5.0	9,497.0	331	.000**

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

For resilience, there were no significant differences between the upper and lower quartiles in any of the variables measured (Table 5).

Table 5

Differences in Culture, Supervision, and Support between Lower and Upper Quartiles of Change in Resilience

	<i>Mdn</i>		<i>U</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile			
Peer/coworker support	4.0	5.0	7,415.5	248	.597
Supervisor support	4.0	4.0	7,545.5	248	.789
Frequency of meetings with supervisors	3.0	3.0	7,258.0	246	.557
Frequency of meetings with peers	4.0	4.0	6,994.0	247	.231
Clear standards of performance	5.0	5.0	8,407.0	247	.112
Input and ideas values	4.0	4.0	8,163.0	248	.360
Connected to the mission of the camp	5.0	5.0	8,004.5	247	.348
Feeling known and valued by the camp	5.0	5.0	7,581.0	248	.832
Staff team is healthy and functional	4.0	4.0	8,007.5	248	.542
Coworkers got along	5.0	5.0	7,706.5	248	.967
Healthy conflict resolution	4.0	4.0	7,510.5	247	.827

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

For leadership, there were significant differences between the upper and lower quartiles in peer/coworker support, frequency of meetings with supervisors, coworker relationships, and connection to the mission of camp (Table 6).

Table 6

Differences in Culture, Supervision and Support, between Lower and Upper Quartiles of Change in Leadership Skills

	<i>Mdn</i>		<i>U</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
	Lower Quartile	Upper Quartile			
Peer/coworker support	4.0	5.0	5,790.0	239	.006**
Supervisor support	4.0	5.0	6,573.5	238	.314
Frequency of meetings with supervisors	3.0	3.0	6,115.0	239	.044*
Frequency of meetings with peers	3.0	3.0	6,591.0	240	.236
Clear standards of performance	5.0	5.0	7,289.5	240	.837
Input and ideas values	4.0	4.0	6,937.5	240	.605
Connected to the mission of the camp	5.0	5.0	6,284.5	239	.043*
Feeling known and valued by the camp	5.0	5.0	7,013.5	240	.706
Staff team is healthy and functional	4.0	5.0	6,321.0	240	.082
Coworkers got along	4.0	5.0	5,856.0	240	.004**
Healthy conflict resolution	5.0	4.0	6,373.0	239	.127

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

Affirming the work of Duerden et al. (2014) and Digby and Ferrari (2007), the results from this study indicate first and foremost that summer camps may be an effective context for facilitating growth and development amongst college aged staff, specifically in areas related to workplace skills such as leadership, teamwork, and resilience. Furthermore, this study provides quantitative evidence of that growth, which to this point has been explored primarily through qualitative metrics.

This study has demonstrated that summer staff can and do grow while working at camp. However, the somewhat high percentage of regression cases (31.4 % for teamwork, 36.9% for resilience, 45.9% for leadership) demands attention. While regression could be a result of response shift bias (Howard & Dailey, 1979; Sibthorp et al., 2007) it is possible that the summer staff experience provided a “gut check” in which staff realized that they are not as skilled as they thought they were. It may be worth exploring the results of this study alongside research exploring how experience contributes to a higher level of self-awareness. Regression could also be connected to the staff culture, support, and care variables measured. Finally, regression could be a sign of burn-out or fatigue, constructs that previous researchers have identified as factors that decrease staff effectiveness (Bailey et al., 2012; Dubin et al., 2019; Duerden et al., 2014). While these studies did not demonstrate that burnout and fatigue cause a developmental regression, a decreased ability to perform one’s job could impact the benefit staff members receive from that job.

The lack of ubiquitous growth in the sample across the domains causes us to question whether there are differences in experience that are related to growth. This study adds quantitative data to the body of research exploring factors that facilitate growth in a summer camp context. Whereas prior research (Duerden et al., 2014; Garst et al., 2009; Kendellen et al., 2016) explored how the various roles and responsibilities of a summer camp staff member are conducive for growth, this study takes a look at how some of the specific aspects of a summer staff members support, culture and level of care may influence growth. To that end, the results suggest that certain staff environments may be more conducive for growth than others, specifically for growth in teamwork and leadership. Ultimately, exploration of these results in light of current literature suggests the need for more extensive research on the aspects of the staff experience that influence growth in each area.

Teamwork

Related to teamwork, in the book *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, Lencioni (2002) identifies five characteristics that are common amongst unhealthy teams: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. In the midst of any of these five dysfunctions, it is unlikely that an individual would enhance their teamwork skills. Although this study did not measure these dysfunctions directly, the variables reflect some of the five dysfunctions in a theoretical sense. The significant difference in teamwork growth based on peer and supervisor support as well as feedback reflects the presence of accountability. The significant difference in teamwork growth based on connection to mission reflects commitment. The significant difference in teamwork growth based on input and ideas being valued reflects a sense of trust. Using the language of Lencioni (2002), summer staff members that have accountability, are committed to their work, and are engaging with teams grounded in mutual trust have more propensity for growth.

The results on teamwork may also be explained in terms of safety and belonging amongst staff. In *The Culture Code*, Coyle (2018) suggests that belonging and its ties to safety are key to successful teams. Feeling known and valued, and feeling like ones input and ideas are valued, may reflect a sense of belonging and safety that contributes to growth in teamwork. The investment of the supervisor could also signify value and thus increased safety and belonging. Coyle (2018) suggests that belonging cues have three basic qualities: energy, individualization, and future orientation. Energy signals that team members will invest in the exchange that is occurring. Individualization signals that they will treat others as unique and valued. Future orientation signals that relationships within the team will continue. The meetings with supervisors and peers as well as the sense of feeling unique and valued may signal energy and individualization, leading to a sense of safety and belonging and possibly growth in teamwork.

Resilience

Whereas growth in teamwork was different based on levels of staff culture, support, and care, growth in resilience did not differ based on the culture, support, and care variables measured. Resilience grows and develops in the face of challenge and is often understood as the ability to bounce back (Warner & April, 2012). Although we know from this study that staff can grow in resilience at camp, more research is needed to explain exactly how camps facilitate that growth. A 2007 study on grit, a similar psychological construct, conducted by Duckworth et al. suggests that among other things, long-term commitment to a task over time is an important aspect of grit. If this is true, the long-term commitment of serving in a camp staff role, working with children day in and day out, would seem to demand a measure of resilience. Additional research has shown that preserving through challenge and adapting within the context of challenge helps develop resilience (Riley & Masten, 2005). This study did not measure levels of challenge that staff experienced and it is possible that the staff experience in general was not challenging enough. Returning again to research on grit, Duckworth (2016) has suggested that being part of resilient cultures/organizations, having resilient role models, and having support systems that balance challenge and care effectively are important for developing qualities related to grit. Each of these areas seem related to the culture, support, and care variables measured in this study and yet no differences were seen in growth in resilience across the varied levels of staff culture, support, and care variables. This could be because the aspects of culture, support, and care that we measured are not the same aspects that facilitate development of resilience. To more fully assess the role of camp staff experiences in facilitating resilience, future research should seek to measure levels and types of challenge.

Leadership

Similar to teamwork, significant differences were seen in those in the upper quartile for leadership and those in the lower quartile for leadership based on a few culture, support, and care variables. Results from this study seem to corroborate the findings of a Kendellen et al. (2016), who found that internal conflict among staff and lack of feedback and support are barriers to leadership development. In this study, those with less feedback and support were also those that regressed in leadership. From a theoretical perspective, leadership is suggested by some to be a social construction in which there is assertion of identity as a leader and granting of leadership by the interaction with others (Rost, 1993; Hughes et al., 2006; Yukl, 1989). As such, it is "inherently relational" (Komives et al., 1998, p. 68). This perspective helps explain why peer and coworker support and frequency of meetings with supervisors were connected to growth in leadership. As staff claim their role as a leader it may be validated by peers and supervisors, causing the leader to accept that leader identity more fully. This set of factors may also point toward a social construction model of leadership, which suggests that leadership formation involves an invitation into the role which is supported by older peers and supervisors, thus giving some level of confidence by the participant that they are capable of leadership (Komives, 1998). Through this lens, developing leadership skills amongst summer camp staff requires a high level of engagement and intentionally on behalf of the higher-level leaders. Professional camp leaders that are effective in facilitating leadership development for staff would be those that are intentional to invite staff into leadership roles, affirm them in that role, and help them make sense of their experiences in that role.

Finally, there was also a significant difference in those that grew in leadership and those that didn't based on connection to the mission of the organization and healthy conflict resolution. Related again to the social construction of leadership, Komives et al. (1998), argued that purpose, both individual and shared, is a core component of relational leadership (p. 71). Connection to mission, therefore, would be an important characteristic of an environment for leadership growth. With this in mind, professional camp leaders can help facilitate leadership development

in their staff by frequently communicating their mission to summer staff and actively inviting them to contribute to fulfilling that mission through their work as summer staff. Finally, camp professional camp leaders should explore ways to help staff manage conflict in healthy ways in order to help facilitate the development of leadership skills.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the survey code process to maintain anonymity presented challenges in connecting pre and posttest surveys that decreased the final sample size dramatically—many surveys were unmatched and had to be removed. While the total number included in the final analysis is still quite large, the decrease in sample size from the pre to the posttest presents a limitation. Secondly, while all CCCA camps were invited to participate in the study, the sample could be biased towards camps that are investing in the development of their staff, leaving out the perspectives and experiences of camps where the staff experience is largely neglected. The questions related to staff culture, support, and care have not been validated, and this presents a major limitation to the second research question. Finally, the metrics used to measure each domain are limited as self-report measures depend on respondents' ability to make an accurate self-assessment.

Conclusions

While colleges and employers seek to find ways to help students develop important life skills that are essential for the workforce, camp is emerging as a space where that development can happen. This study strengthens the body of research on the role that summer camp may play in developing skills like teamwork, leadership, and resilience (all of which are reported as important workforce skills) by quantitatively demonstrating that significant life skill development is happening amongst staff at summer camps in these areas. Moreover, this study demonstrates that growth in positive outcomes as a result of camp employment is possible, it is not guaranteed. Although about 50% of staff are growing in these areas, the other 50% are not growing, and this study provides an initial analysis of some characteristics of staff culture, support and care that may be related to staff growth. Further research should investigate the regression of skills that also occurred among some staff during the summer staff experience. As such, this study also contributes to the field by beginning a discussion on how camps can create environments that are conducive to growth. The findings related to the characteristics of growth producing environments are limited and significant further research is needed in this area. A major limitation in this regard is that the items related to staff culture, care, and support have not been validated and several items could be considered double barreled depending on one's interpretation of certain terms in context. The contribution of this aspect of the findings is therefore quite limited. While the theories discussed here help explain some of the findings in this study, a qualitative approach may prove helpful insight in this regard.

Further research should seek to explore the development of other workforce skills such as communication, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence to gain a better understand of the holistic impact of camp staff experiences. Additionally, research seeking to intertwine our understanding of how teamwork, resilience, and leadership develop with our knowledge of the nature of the summer camp staff experience would enhance the field of knowledge.

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