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Expectation and Satisfaction of Youths who Participate to Summer Camps in Turkey

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Abstract: Summer camps are an international voluntary youth movement. It provides positive changes in youth's behavior. The purpose of this study was to determine the perspectives and expectations of the youths who attended as campers in Turkish summer camps and to give broad information about physical conditions of the camps and their practice methods. Between the ages of 18-24, total of 416 youths have participated. The survey has 32 questions and acquired data was analyzed with a statistical program in level of $p<0.05$. In conclusion, camps had the opportunity to make long lasting friendships in a friendly environment.

Key words: Youth, Summer Camp, Camper, Expectation, Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Summer camps; designated age groups for children and young people, spend their free time outdoors, mentally and physically developed, positive changes in their behavior in the period reached camping activities such as scouting and orienteering language, religion, nationality without discrimination, but is an integral part of religious values, are an international voluntary youth movement. Camps enables youth spend their spare time out of education and working by active resting, learning new cultures and norms which leads them become healthy, happy, well-mannered, creative and productive society members (Coşkuner, 2009). Through the Youth Camps that are spread all over the country, thousands of young students make new friendships, memories and have the chance to live different cultures and traditions together (Ferah, 1996).

Youth are offered volunteer works during their services. Volunteer services, such as painting schools, planting and pruning trees, cleaning parks and working with elderly are some of the services youth are offered in these camps. Camps give new life experiences to youth while they also learn to respect different opinions and learn how to work collaboratively with their peers. In Turkey, Youth and Sports General Directorate (YSGD) have the authority to organize and run state owned camps (Coşkuner, 2009).

Most youths think camp as an enjoyable experience. In addition to the essential fun aspect of camp, researchers are discovering many positive developmental outcomes. The concept of youth, classification and location within the age bracket is determined in terms of different societies and periods, with different approaches were discussed. Even in the same or even different sectors of society are different approaches (Poyraz, Durman, Sönmez & Kılınç, 2002). Therefore, everyone can agree on a definition of youth to do and especially as a floor and ceiling of the age group, everyone can agree is an absolutely impossible to determine (Öztürk, 1983). Famous philosopher Plato's youth, "a spiritual drunkenness" when called, the young Aristotle, "stolid creatures," is described (Öztürk, 1990). According to Yörükoğlu, (1986), "Youth is physical and mental preparation period between childhood and adulthood for real life (Yörükoğlu, 1986).

When above definitions are examined, it can be concluded that Youth Period is a fast pace process and youth tend to feel independent and rebel. Youth is observed to have problems with their own family and their social environment. It is clearly seen that youth period is processed very rapidly. This process is directly related with the socio-cultural environment of the youth.

Youth generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in-between. Hence, different age groups are considered as youth by different organizations and countries. According to United Nations (UN) 15-24 age group is considered youth. While, World Tourism Organization (WTO) considers 15-19 age range and consider 20-24 as an upper age range (Talu, 1995).

Puberty period has different connotations for different societies. Puberty period in Turkey, for females, considered as 10-12 age range and, for males, 12-14. In development plans, Turkish State has provided different age groups so far. For example, in first 5 year development plan, 14-24, in third 12-22 and in fourth 12-24 age range are considered as youth. It is believed that international organizations' age definitions and geographical differences with its cultural reflections made it necessary to use different age ranges (Gökmen *et al*., 1985). According to another source in 2008, Turkey youth age range has changed to 13-24, volunteer youth age is 15-28 (YSGD, 2007).

Summer camps contribute a lot to its attendees in many ways. For instance, attendees who spend their summer with youth camp activities not only have great time at these camps but also make friends, learn how to

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rest while active, improve their community behavior, understand the importance of cultural and traditional differences and learn how to live in a democratic society. Summer camps also enable its attendees have new life experiences and give them chance to interact with their peers that help them become a whole person (Coşkuner, 2009).

Social activities and youth camps addressed to the youth have a long history. However, first Turkish youth camp was held in 1936. According to 1960 law, 3530, to help youth use their spare time more efficiently, youth camps are left for the responsibility of Physical Education Ministry which neglected the youth camp issue and spent most of its time on physical education. National Education Ministry (NEM) held first youth camp with world standards in 1965 Bursa city. İbrahim Menteş, physical education teacher (Çoban, Coşkuner, 2010) is the first person who has planned and executed youth camp project in Turkey. Eight students from different parts of Turkey had participated to the first camps. YSGD organize Youth Camps to help 17 and 18-24 age groups in Turkey. Purpose of these camps is to give the opportunity for the youth to get better involved with their culture, know their country better and have the chance to see different parts of the country. YSGD Youth Camps participants are selected among the students who are successful in their education and whose parents cannot afford a vacation for their kids. Students who show that they can get best out of camps and can reflect on their experience after camps are also given the chance to attend (YSGD, 2008).

Officially three institutions serve to youth camping in Turkey, YSGD, NEM and Red Crescent, and thousands of youth are served each year. According to 2007 census there are 18.809.26 youth between 10 and 24 in Turkey. However, only 8.209 youth have served in youth camps in 2008. These statistics indicate that only 5/10.000 of the youth population utilizes youth camps. In the same year, United Stated of America has attracted more than 10 million, while Russia 9.3 million and Finland which served more than 90% their youths (Coşkuner, 2009). The purpose of this study is to find out opinions, experiences and expectations of summer youth camp attendees in Turkey.

Methods:

Research population was attendees of Bolu Göynük summer camp aged between 18 to 24 years old. Randomly 426 attendees are selected and surveyed.

In our descriptive study, surveying method was used. Surveys were filled out by the attendees and the survey was composed of two parts. In the first part, questions regarding attendees personal information was asked while in the second part attendees answered a set of 32 questions regarding their experience at the camp (Coşkuner, 2009).

As data collection tool, Five-Point Likert Scale has been used. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents specify their level of agreement to a statement. From positive to negative Likert Scale Values: Strongly Agree 5.00-4.21, Agree 4.20-3.41, Neither Agree nor Disagree 3.40–2.61, Disagree 2.60-1.81 and Strongly Disagree 1.80-1.00.

Data is analyzed with statistical packet program and to indicate attendee's personal information frequency and percentage methods have been utilized. To find attendees opinions to the questions, variables are ignored and arithmetic average and standard deviation methods are used. To determine gender differences, independent groups are applied with t-test and their mean is assumed as less than 0.05.

Results:

72.1% of Participants were male, 27.9% consists of women, as well as 88.9 % of research participants' the first time, those who participated in youth camps, 11.1 % consists of the two or more participants (Table 1). While question number one, "I attended Youth Camp with a friend's/family member" suggestion, attracted most positive answers with 4.70, question number four, Most of the youth in my city is unaware of youth camps, received most negative answers with 4.12 (Table 2). Based on attendees' answers to the questions, it's concluded that question number 18 and 24 have been answered differently by the gender groups (Table 3). Answers shows campers provided, questions 1, 8 and 16 have statistically meaningful differences (Table 4).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Youth Campers.

Personal Information	N	%
Gender		
Male	300	72,1
Female	116	27,9
Have you ever been to Youth Camps?		
First time attendees	370	88.9
Attended 2 or more	46	11.1
Total	416	100

Table 2: General Opinions of the youth camp participants' about the youth camp.

No	Questions	$\bar{X}$	SS
1	I attended Youth Camp with a friend's/family member' suggestion	4,70	,543
2	I feel lucky that I am a camper and at the Youth Camp at the moment	4,39	,572
3	I believe that camper selection process is fraud	3,34	1,18
4	Most of the youth in my city is unaware of youth camps	4,12	,713
5	Before being a Youth Camp, I didn't know anything about it	4,05	,689
6	While was coming to camp, my journey bored	3,93	,811
7	I regret that I have never been to Youth Camps	4,11	,689
8	Before attending Youth Camps, I thought I would be bored	4,09	,695
9	I attended the camp to make new friends and holiday	4,24	,651
10	I think camping area is a suitable place for our camping	4,27	,701
11	I believe camp group is the foundation of camping	4,25	,629
12	Camp activities are adequate	4,20	,688
13	The toilets are cleaned daily in the camp	4,12	,650
14	I think that is large enough for tent	4,08	,809
15	I think, maximum 4 campers should sleep in one tent	4,22	,773
16	I believe that Youth Camps are educational as well.	3,09	1,54
17	Our leaders have the ability to educate us on camps	4,06	,755
18	Our group leader is very successful and leading us in an efficient way	4,12	,652
19	Our group leader is treating everybody same	4,11	,696
20	We have a busy camp program and we don't have any time for anything else	4,12	,816
21	I want night sleeping time little bit more lately	4,20	,778
22	I think we wake up too early	3,99	,963
23	I think, the camp program sea/pool organized time is limited	4,05	,832
24	I think, in camp program, sporting activities time is limited	4,14	,768
25	I think, scouting camp boosted my self-confidence	4,10	,797
26	I think, through this camp I will make new friends from different cities	4,37	,653
27	I had not been to the places that we visited in our camp trips	4,32	,665
28	I think, having a tourist guide in trips will be beneficial for us	4,37	,648
29	At the end of camp, I think I will miss my leader and friends	4,38	,618
30	I want to re-attend the Youth Camps next year	4,36	,621
31	I will encourage my friends to attend Youth Camps	4,36	,606
32	I think, more towns should have Youth Camps	4,37	,600

Table 3: According to the opinion of the t-test results of gender variables.

No	Gender Distribution				t and P values	
	Male n=300 %656665656565.052.9)		Female n=116 % 48,7			
	$\bar{X}$	SS	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	P
1	4,68	,557	4,15	,643	,128*	,442
2	4,30	,621	4,44	,567	-,770	,824
3	3,29	1,20	3,46	1,12	-,939	,349
4	4,14	,733	4,10	,667	,330	,741
5	4,07	,666	4,00	,749	,687	,493
6	3,94	,849	3,91	,707	,262	,794
7	4,13	,691	4,05	,686	,765	,445
8	4,10	,730	4,08	,600	-,856	,898
9	4,24	,664	4,22	,622	,223	,393
10	4,26	,729	4,31	,627	-,402	,688
11	4,38	,575	4,75	,506	1,493	,137
12	4,20	,707	4,20	,642	-,717	,474
13	4,16	,638	4,03	,674	1,317	,189
14	4,01	,819	4,10	,787	-,240	,811
15	4,19	,783	4,17	,625	-,834	,405
16	3,10	1,51	3,08	1,61	,060	952
17	4,07	,820	4,18	,544	-1,514	132
18	4,10	,663	4,29	,749	-,002*	,998
19	4,09	,688	4,15	,720	-,573	,567
20	4,06	,824	4,43	,651	-,672	,129
21	4,17	,766	4,27	,812	-,851	,396
22	4,34	,643	4,10	,892	1,053	,294
23	4,02	,839	4,15	,812	-1,051	,605
24	4,14	,797	4,15	,695	-,071*	,943
25	4,11	,807	4,08	,778	,219	,827
26	4,40	,645	4,29	,675	1,058	,291
27	3,94	,988	4,29	,725	,455	,650
28	4,36	,595	4,39	,673	-,231	,817
29	4,36	,606	4,25	,784	-1,525	,502
30	4,34	,623	4,39	,619	,518	,295
31	4,35	,603	4,39	,619	,460	,749
32	4,37	,640	4,39	,619	-,321	,646

Smaller than T: 1.76 groups are taken.

While question number 1, I attended Youth Camp with a friend's/family member' suggestion, attracted most positive answers with 4.70, number 4, Most of the youth in my city is unaware of youth camps, received most negative answers with 4.12.

Based on attendees' answers to the survey questions, it's concluded that question number 18 and 24 have been answered differently by the gender groups.

Table 4: Variance of visibility results based on camper participant number.

No	Number of Participants				t and P values	
	First Time Attendees n:370		2 or more attended n:46			
	$\bar{X}$	SS	$\bar{X}$	SS	t	P
1	4,20	,674	4,39	,891	3,00	,003*
2	4,41	,546	4,26	,751	1,22	,221
3	3,31	1,18	3,52	1,20	-,773	,440
4	4,10	,695	4,34	,831	-1,55	,121
5	4,06	,672	3,95	,824	,710	,479
6	3,96	,796	3,73	,915	1,24	,214
7	4,09	,712	4,26	,448	-1,10	269
8	4,12	,654	3,82	,936	1,98	,048*
9	4,22	,659	4,39	,583	-1,17	,240
10	4,29	,700	4,17	,716	,760	,448
11	4,23	,629	4,47	,593	-1,77	,077
12	4,74	,472	4,26	,810	-,399	,690
13	4,12	,654	4,13	,625	-,005	,996
14	4,08	,826	4,08	,668	-,033	,974
15	4,09	,801	4,21	,599	,025	,980
16	3,01	1,57	3,78	1,08	-2,28	,023*
17	4,06	,756	4,04	,767	,128	,899
18	4,12	,659	4,08	,596	,259	796
19	4,10	,687	4,17	,777	-,461	,645
20	4,22	,793	4,30	,926	-1,14	,252
21	4,17	,781	4,43	,727	-1,52	,129
22	4,36	,612	4,21	,902	-1,20	,232
23	4,03	,836	4,43	,506	-,976	,330
24	4,14	,769	4,17	,777	-,164	,870
25	4,10	,783	4,13	,919	-,157	,875
26	4,35	,661	4,47	,593	-,840	,614
27	4,32	,671	4,30	,634	-,505	,864
28	4,37	,664	4,43	,506	-,430	,667
29	4,36	,628	4,56	,506	-1,48	,138
30	4,35	,634	4,43	,506	-,606	,545
31	4,35	,618	4,43	,506	-,581	,562
32	3,96	,968	4,21	,795	,172	,402

According to the answers campers provided, questions 1, 8 and 16 have statistically meaningful differences.

Discussion:

The camps are an environment where have personal independence and management of time. The environment provides a personal, physical, and social from which to learn more about their own capabilities, the capabilities of others, and their physical potential. The study analyzed the perspectives and expectations of the youths who attended as campers in Turkish summer camps and to give broad information about physical conditions of the camps and their practice methods.

The purpose of typical summer camps is primarily to provide a pleasant recreationally-based experience with other youth (Thurber & Malinowski, 1999). Secondary goals can include the development of activity related skills, the encouragement of self-reliance, enhanced self-esteem, and opportunities for peer relationships (Kiernan & MacLachlan, 2002). In addition, a research support the use of summer camps as an environment for the conduct of research on the health and health behaviors of school age children (Rauckhorst & Aroian, 1998).

In our study, campers attended the camp with the suggestion of a friend, teacher or family member. Of course, to serve for a larger camper population, a better organized advertising campaign is needed. Parents believed their children changed positively from the beginning of a camp session to the end of camp on the 10 youth development constructs measured: leadership, positive values and decision making, positive identity, making friends, spirituality, environmental awareness, social comfort, independence, peer relationships, and adventure/exploration. These changes held relatively stable into the 6-month follow up. Scores on all outcome constructs were relatively high on the pre-camp survey, which suggested that parents already perceived their children to be functioning at fairly high levels before the camp experience (Henderson, Whitaker, Scanlin & Thurber, 2007).

On the other hand, campers who are attending second time, who knows the process such as how to apply and etc., will also increase the number of future participants (Table 2). Campers know well that summer camps are an international voluntary youth movement. It provides positive changes in their behavior mentally and physically. A lot of study describes some of the developmental outcomes that occur at camp based on developmental theories that underlie camp programs and the research that has been conducted. The primary developmental outcomes examined relate to the broad areas of self-constructs, social relationships, fun, outdoor experiences, skill building, and spirituality (Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007; Brannan, Arick, Fullerton & Harris, 2000; Sekine, 1994).

Campers believe that they take an education during camps. Camps provide a positive educational development. Youth development focuses on supporting or promoting positive developmental processes such as competence, mastery, positive identity, resilience, caring, connection, and belonging that help young people become successful adults. Camps are considered youth development programs when they intentionally incorporate experiences, opportunities, and supports to address and advance the positive development of children and youth (Henderson, Whitaker, Scanlin & Thurber, 2007).

Campers stated that they have a tourist guide during the field trips. Campers might have answered this question by thinking that visiting places with a guide will help them understand the history of that place better (Table 2). The recent national data collected by the American Camp Association to document developmental outcomes are highlighted to better understand how "camp gives kids a world of good" (Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007).

Campers think that they will make lots of friends from other towns. Young feels him/herself independent in selected friend group. He feels load a role in the group and need for group (Jersild, 1973). NEM camp called the analysis of another study has found the same result by Coban and Coskuner (2010), Campers who attend the camps organized by National Education Ministry, mostly are from Ankara, and it may also show their desire to meet new people (Coban & Coskuner 2010). It is possible to join the community of young people, take place among adults, and specific interests, skills and gaining experience through camps and social events. In this process, the young enter into social relationships, establishes friendships with their peers and become closer the opposite sex (Aktuna, 1987). Dworken (2001) found that opportunities to try new skills and to develop recreation skills were important, which confirmed the results regarding physical and thinking skills (Dworken 2001). Furthermore, Michalski *et al*., (2003) found that camper self-reports and parent reports were linked to one another as our study also confirmed through moderate correlations between the precamp questionnaires (Michalski, Mishna, Worthington & Cummings, 2003).

Number of campers in Turkey is well below than developed countries such as United Stated of America, France, Finland and United Kingdom. For example, organized camp experiences for children have been a part of American culture for almost 150 years. Millions of young people and adults have had positive developmental experiences in outdoor camp environments (Henderson, Bialeschki & James, 2007).

Results indicated that, in fact, a number of the camp's goals were not being met or were only partially being met. The camp's goal to increase campers' self-management skills, for example, was only partially met, because skills increased for the youngest group of campers but not the older campers. However, the youngest campers had more to gain and their positive change should be viewed as a success. Similarly, findings regarding the camp's goal to enhance campers' self-esteem were mixed, such that older campers' global self-worth decreased over time, whereas younger campers' global self-worth increased over time. Furthermore, the camp's goal of increasing time spent with one other person was successful for adolescents, but not at all for younger campers. In sum, Camp Discovery had been operating for more than 20 years on the premise that camp attendance was associated with improvements in factors such as self-management skills, self-esteem, and time spent with others, without the knowledge that such improvements were not occurring for all campers (Hunter, Rosnov, Koontz & Roberts, 2006).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, to increase number of camp participants, number of youth camps must be increased. Besides, promoting such camps to the parents will also help creating camp and camping culture. It's also important to plan for the future and determine the new destinations, and train enough camp leaders to serve for a larger population of the youth.

Most of the campers stated that better promotions of the camps are needed, physical condition of the camps should be improved and more camps should be available in the country. All youth camps should be organized as a free. Campers believe that if above conditions are improved or provided, more young people will take advantage of such camps.

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