An Investigation of some Variables Problem Solving Skills of Youth Camps Leaders

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Abstract: A problem is an obstacle, impediment, difficulty or challenge, or any situation that invites <u>resolution</u>; the resolution of which is recognized as a solution or contribution toward a known <u>purpose</u> or goal. Problem solving consists of using generic or specific methods, in an orderly manner, for finding solutions to problems. This research aims to examine if there is a significant difference between "the problem solving abilities" of some Youth Camps Leaders depending on variables such as age, gender, and experience. The sample of this investigation consists of 70 females and 114 males; 184 youth camps leaders who have attended the Ministry of Youth's sports camps. The statistics for Sahin and others were used to collect data and adapted for Turkish using the "Problem Solving Inventory". The data obtained was analyzed using the t-test and Anova tests and interpreted in the tables. According to the study of youth camp leaders, the results were impacted by several variables such as age, level of education, and gender differences.

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Introduction

People need to find positive, rather than negative, ways to adapt to the environment. In order to overcome and resolve problems in everyday life people must learn effective coping and problem solving skills. Basically, a problem occurs when the individual faces a conflict or frustration in achieving a goal, or some mental or physical manifestation that causes concern, discomfort, or anxiety. (Aksoy, 2003). The way in which a person reacts to a problem he is faced with will determine his success in resolving it. Every person responds differently when faced with a problem and they will differ in how they approach its resolution (Kilic ve Koc 2003 &Genc, S.Z.Kalafat, T.2007). Some people will ignore the problem and some will be spontaneous in their efforts to resolve the problem. Some people will wait for others to resolve the problem by postponing making a decision until others have tried most known resolutions (Büyük karagöz ve Civi, 1999). Problem solving consists of using generic or specific methods, in an orderly manner, for finding solutions to problems. (Korkut, 2002). Learning effective problem solving skills as an individual and in groups will help us effectively adapt to the environment. Some problems don't have simple solutions. More complex problems require interdisciplinary knowledge, multi-faceted thinking, and creativity (Senemoğlu, 1997). There are various steps involved in effective problem solving: (Basaran, 1993).

- 1. Recognize and acknowledge the problem
- 2. Recognize and define available solutions
- 3. Decide on a course of action
- 4. Implement the solution
- 5. Evaluate the resolution

Developing problem solving skills must begin at a young age. Parents need to encourage their children to develop these vital skills (Forgatch, 1989; Tallman, 1970 & Genç, S.Z. Kalafat, T.2007). Information derived from the study sample of youth camps and leaders provides the following information:

The purpose of these camps is to provide youths with the opportunity to become more involved with their culture and have the chance to see different parts of their country. YSGD Youth Camps participants are selected from among the students who are successful in their education and whose parents cannot afford a vacation for their kids. Students who are anticipated to benefit the most from the camps and can reflect on their experience afterwards are also given a chance to attend (Savucu &Coskuner 2011).

Leadership: Leadership is approached from different perspectives and in retrospect is a phenomenon that can be defined in different ways and can be analyzed. (Şişman M. 2002).A leader acknowledges the desires of others and earns their respect, trust, obedience, and loyalty through his actions. Leadership has been described as "a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers, M.1997)

Youth Camp Leadership: A youth camp leader has successfully completed training courses in leadership, and has developed the ability to transfer his knowledge and skills to the young campers. He is a person that enjoys working with young people and also strives to help them attain successful futures (Coşkuner, Z.2009).

This study was conducted by the General Directorate of Youth and Sport of Turkey. Participants

have been chosen among youth camp leaders in the summer youth camps. The purpose was to determine the level of problem solving skills of the youth leaders.

The Methodology and Model

The research was populated by the attendees of the Ministry of Youth Sports Camps Leaders' year end evaluation meeting in Antalya. The sample of this investigation consists of 70 females and 114 males, in total 184 youth camp leaders who have attended The Ministry of Youth's sports camps. In our descriptive study the survey method was used. A two part survey was filled out by the attendees. In the first part, questions regarding attendees' personal information was asked, while in the second part the attendees answered a set of 35 questions regarding their approach to problem solving (Abaan, S & Altintoprak, A 2005). The survey developed by Heppner and Peterson (1982), Sahin, and others was used to collect data. It was adapted for Turkish use by the "Problem Solving Inventory". The Six-Point Likert scale has been used as a data collection tool. Each item is given a score between 1 and 6. The points range from 32 to 192. During Rating 9, 22 and 29 items are excluded from scoring ,2,3,4,11,13,14,15,17,21,25,26,30 and 34 rating is calculated as the inverse of substances. (Savaşır I, Şahin NH Şahin N, Şahin NH) The data must be interpreted in the following manner: the lower the total score of the participant is, the better his/her individual problem-solving skills would be. Consequently, the higher the score is, the more insufficient and ineffective the problem solving skills attributed to the participant would be.

Data is analyzed with a statistical packet program and in order to indicate attendees' personal information, frequency and percentage methods have been utilized. To find attendees responses to the questions, variables are ignored and arithmetic average and standard deviation methods are used. To determine gender differences, the t-test and Anova were applied to independent groups with the assumption that the mean is less than 0.05.

Findings

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Youth Camps Leaders

| Personal Information | N | % | | |
|----------------------|-----|------|--|--|
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 114 | 62,0 | | |
| Female | 70 | 38,0 | | |
| Age | | | | |
| 18-24 Age Group | 132 | 71,7 | | |
| 25-30 Age Group | 52 | 28,3 | | |
| Education Status | | | | |
| College Student | 130 | 71,5 | | |
| College Graduate | 54 | 28,5 | | |

| Before you became a Leader, have you ever been a Camper? | | | |
|--|---------------|-------|--|
| Yes | 35 | 19,1 | |
| No | 149 | 80,9 | |
| Leadership Ex | perience | | |
| 1-3 Years | 156 | 84,8 | |
| 4-7Years | 28 | 15,2 | |
| What age group did y | ou work with: | ? | |
| 13-15 Age Group | 64 | 34,8 | |
| 16-17 Age Group | 82 | 44,6 | |
| 18-22 Age Group | 38 | 20,7 | |
| Which gender group did you work with? | | | |
| Girl | 78 | 42,4 | |
| Boy | 106 | 57,6 | |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | |

Findings indicate that. 62.0 % of Participants were males, and 38% were females. Age groups of participants are as follows: 71.7 % were in the 18-24 age groups, and 28.3 % were in the 25-30 age groups. In terms of education status: 71.5 % were college students, and 28.5 % were college graduates. It was found that 80.9% of youth camp leaders have never been campers themselves. When we look at the leadership experience, 84.8 % had 1-3 years of experience, 15.2 % had 4.7 % years of experience. Findings also showed that 44.6 % worked with the 16-17 years age group and 57.6 % worked with the boys' youth camps (Table 1).

Table-2: T-test results of gender variables

| | | Х | Ss | Р |
|--------|-----|----------|----------|------|
| Male | 70 | 140,3077 | 12,25731 | *008 |
| Female | 114 | 134,7925 | 15,43448 | |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | | |

According to Table 2, the numbers show that for female leaders X = 140.3, which is higher than the result for male leaders, which is X=134.7. This showed a statistically significant difference of .P<.05.

Table 3: T-test results of age group variables

| | Ν | Х | Ss |
|-----------------|-----|----------|--------|
| 18-24 Age Group | 132 | 136,2273 | 14,316 |
| 25-30 Age Group | 52 | 139,4231 | 14,495 |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | |

According to Table 3, the numbers show that for 25-30 age groups, X139.4 which is higher than the result for 18-24 age groups , which is X=136.2. This showed a statistically no significant difference of .P<.05.

Table 4: T-test results of age groups worked variables

| | Ν | Х | Ss | |
|--------------------|-----|----------|----------|-------|
| 13-15 Age Group(1) | 64 | 137,6563 | 15,79755 | *026 |
| 16-17 Age Group(2) | 82 | 137,8537 | 12,47726 | 3-1,2 |
| 18-22 Age Group(3) | 38 | 134,6842 | 15,87809 | |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | | |

When age group worked variables are assessed, 18-22 age group leaders arithmetic mean (x=134, 6), 13-15 age group leaders arithmetic mean (x

= 137,6) and 16-17 age group (x = 136,3). 18-22 age group leaders are the lowest score statistically significant difference was detected (p<.05).

 Table 5: T-test results of education status variables

| | Ν | Х | Ss | Р |
|------------------|-----|--------|--------|------|
| College Student | 130 | 124.00 | 14.611 | |
| College Graduate | 54 | 112.08 | 11.476 | |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | | *018 |

According to Table 5, the results for college students shows that X=124 which is higher than for college graduates in which X=112.08. A significant difference of P<.05 was detected.

 Table-6: T-test results of before the been camper variables

| | Ν | Х | Ss | Р |
|-------|-----|--------|--------|------|
| Yes | 35 | 118.09 | 16.435 | |
| No | 149 | 129.05 | 14.967 | *010 |
| Total | 184 | 100,0 | | |

According to Table 6, before the been leaders arithmetic mean(x=118,0), not been the leaders arithmetic mean(x = 129,0) so significant difference was detected (p<.05).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the present study is to examine problem solving skills of Youth Camp leaders, who participated in this study, in various variables. Our study indicates that in terms of the gender variable there is a statistically significant difference detected. The arithmetic mean of the male group is lower than that of the female leaders (table 2). The problem-solving behavior is more prominent in the male leaders' behavior than in the female's. A possible interpretation of this result can be that when facing a problem male leaders exert a more decisive behavior, while women leaders are more careful in their decision making process. According to research on this subject gender is not a variable that influences decisive behavior. Taylan (1990), Basmacı (1998), Tümkava ve İflazoğlu (2000), Tanrıkulu (2002), Basmacı, S.1998, Tanrıkulu, T 2002., Tümkaya, S.2000, A., Taylan, S.1990,) Şahin at all. (1993), Barut and Yılmaz (2000), Ferah (2001), Katkat (2001), Ince and Şen (2006), Karabulut (2009), studies were done with different groups, problem-solving skills and between gender variable have found significant difference (Karabulut, EO.2009, Şahin, N., Şahin, NH1993, Ferah, D.2000, Barut, Y., Yılmaz, M.2000, Katkat, D.2001, İnce, G., Şen, C.2006. However, Polat's study (2010) of class teacher candidates found that problem-solving skills of female students are more positive than those expressed by the male students.(Polat, R.H.& Tümkaya, S.2010)

Regarding the age variables, no significant difference was detected among the leaders (Table 3).

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In this case, the age variable does not affect students' problem-solving skills, as different ages tend to exhibit the same approach when a problem is encountered. According to the literature on the topic, a relation between life experiences and problem solving skills has been identified. Namely, past experiences have a positive impact on problem-solving skills (Sonmaz, S.1998, Şahin, Z.1999, Thornton S.2002.,). The results of this study may be affected by the close age of the leaders and the camps' participants. Yurttaş (2001), Tanrı kulu (2002), Gonca and Ince (2006), Caglavan (2007), studies were done with different age groups and no significant difference was found between the different age groups in terms of their problem-solving skills. (Tanrıkulu, T.2002, Çam, S.1995, Çağlayan, HS.2007, Gonca, İ., Sen, C.2006, Yurttaş, A 2001). These results seem to support our work.

As far as the education status variable is concerned statistically significant difference was detected. College graduates leaders' arithmetic mean is lower than that of the College students leaders (Table 5). University graduates leaders are more effective because they have a broader perspective. Katkat (2001), Altun I (2003). and Tümkaya (2000)'s findings on the subject of students' problem-solving skills with class year as a variable, demonstrate that 4th grade students have better problem-solving skills than students in 1th grade. However Taylan (1990) and Tezel. A. (2009) found that there was no difference between the grades. (Katkat, D. 2001. Tümkaya, S. and Oflaz, Taylan, S. 1990. Polat, R.H.and Tümkaya, S.(2010) Tezel. A.Ve Ark. 2009, Altun I.2003).

In conclusion, individuals who voluntarily work at youth camps will not only encounter problems in their private life but also in their work at youth camps. Hence, it is essentially important to train and educate these individuals about how to act when a problem arises. Equipping individuals with problem solving skills will also minimize problems at youth camps.

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