

Investigation of self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp by different variables

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to examine the self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp according to country, age and education variables. The study group of the study was composed of a total of 92 female students who participated in the international youth camp organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports from Turkey and from various countries. The data of the study were collected by Self-Awareness scale. Descriptive statistical techniques were used in the analysis of the data. Besides this, Mann Whitney-U and Kruskal Wallis-H tests were used for comparison of intergroup data. The results were interpreted at $p < 0.05$ significance level. As a result of the study, it has been observed that the overall self-awareness level of female students participating in the international youth camp is high and regarding the sub-dimensions, cognitive skills of female students, then their social intelligence and lastly their emotional intelligence better establish their self-awareness levels. It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in self-awareness levels of female students by the age variable in terms of demographic variables, but it varied significantly by the country and education variables.

Keywords: Ministry of Youth and Sports, international youth camp, female students, self-awareness

INTRODUCTION

No matter how much work and responsibilities the individuals undertake today, they will allocate a certain time period to leisure activities according to their personal desires if they use their time effectively and efficiently. Leisure time defined as the free time frame staying out of the time allocated by the individual to professional responsibilities, self and family and being above the obligations (Karaküçük, 2008) results in personal and social development if used positively and causes such problems as inefficiency and sadness if used negatively (Balci and İlhan, 2006).

Participation in leisure time activities has recently become a way of life and it is now seen as an obligation to introduce different programs and projects for the enhancement and expansion of the activities. For this reason, leisure time activities have benefited the individual physically, socially and psychologically through the presentation of individual's own style. At the same time, the activities in which the individual has performed passively or actively have included the efforts affecting the way of life within the field of activity by enabling them to take place within the community and to glorify living together (Kelly, 1990; Yerlisu et al. 2010).

Participation in leisure time activities may vary from one individual to another. It constantly changes according to the requirements, needs and demands of the individual. Individuals voluntarily participate in recreational programs that include leisure time activities. Because recreational programs are a discipline approach aiming to make a positive contribution to the quality of life and personal development in line with the needs and demands of individuals. Various leisure time activities are held by the Ministry of Youth and Sports [MYS] in Turkey. The youth camps – one of these activities – are prepared to enable individuals to spend their free time with various social, cultural and sports activities. Within the scope of “International Youth Camp” held in two different facilities of MYS in 2015, Samsun 19 Mayıs Youth Camp was held on 31st July – 7th August for female participants and Trabzon Düzköy Youth Camp was held on 9th – 16th August for male participants. Many people participated in these camps not only from Turkey but also from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Togo (Youth Camps, 2015).

As part of the international youth camp program where female students participate as leisure activities, participants have benefited from both academic and cultural activities along with camping activities and have been in thematic sessions. These themes are such topics as volunteering, contribution to society and common values and participants have found the opportunity to exchange ideas on these issues. During the international youth camp, female students coming from different provinces and countries have enjoyed and effectively spent their free time in addition to gaining personal and social values. It was considered important for the students to get personal contributions as much as the social values during the camp. Especially during this time, female participants were also expected to recognize their unknown aspects and to increase their awareness. One of these benefits is to increase self-awareness levels of female participants in the camp.

Self-awareness is the self-knowledge and evaluation phase where the individual applies self-focus according to internal and environmental factors. Self-awareness is defined in different ways in literature. Kernis (2003) defines self-awareness as the process in which one's own feelings, thoughts, and wishes are handled in a realistic way and they know the strengths and weaknesses of their character traits. According to Frisina (2014), self-awareness is defined as an honest understanding of individuals' self-recognition, their own values, desires, thought patterns, motivations, goals and

ambitions, emotional responses, strengths and weaknesses and influence on others. According to another definition, self-awareness means that the individual has a more objective and positive awareness of emotional states such as happiness and sadness (Anderson, et al., 1996; Chang, 1998). At the same time, self-awareness is a condition related to the self-knowledge and capacity of a person (Duval and Wicklund, 1972).

According to Manning (1986), the motives necessary for participation in outdoor recreational activities arise from the desire for success, loyalty, control, escape and self-awareness. Since the individual's self-awareness, self-discovery, success and self-realization elements constitute the center of the individual's value system (Cater 2006; Trauer 2006). It is thought that positive contributions have been made to the self-awareness, self-discovery, success motive, self-realization desires and self-awareness levels of female students through the activities in the program of international youth camp. Since the female students shape their positive-negative behaviors during the camp and express themselves to other individuals they don't know at all.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp by various demographic variables. For this purpose, answers have been sought for the questions below;

- 1) What is the self-awareness level of female students participating in international youth camp?
- 2) Do the self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp significantly differ by domestic and abroad countries, age and education?

METHOD

This study, which aims to examine the self-awareness levels of female students participating in the international youth camp according to various demographic variables, is characterized as a descriptive screening model. The study group of the research is composed of a total of 92 female students as 64 females from domestic participants in international youth camp organized by MYS and 28 female abroad participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Bahrain, China, Georgia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan and Togo. The distribution of female students by their country is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: The distribution of female students participating in international youth camp by country

Country	n	%	Country	n	%
1-Turkey	64	69.57	8-Indonesia	3	3.26
2-Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	3.26	9-Mongolia	1	1.09
3-Macedonia	3	3.26	10-Morocco	3	3.26
4-Afghanistan	1	1.09	11-Somalia	3	3.26
5-Bahrain	5	5.43	12-Sudan	1	1.09
6-China	2	2.17	13-Togo	1	1.09
7-Georgia	2	2.17	Total	92	100

Data of the research were obtained with "Self Awareness" scale developed by Condon (2011). The scale is composed of two parts. In the first part, there are 3 questions related to country, age and education, 58 questions related to "Self Awareness" and 16 questions stating the current "Mood" of the participants in the second part. Self-awareness levels are determined with the items of 1-21 in the scale directed to cognitive skills of participants, the items of 22-42 directed to social intelligence and the items of 43-58 directed to emotional intelligence.

The scale items are 7-point Likert scaled in the way “1:Describes me extremely poorly..... 7:Describes me extremely well” and the negative items are reversely graded.

The questions ascertaining to the current mood of the participants are 4-point Likert type and the positive items (1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 13, 14, 16) are “1:Definitely do not feel, 2:Do not feel, 3:Slightly feel and 4:Definitely feel” and the negative items (3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15) are reversely graded.

While the high grades obtained from cognitive skills, social and emotional intelligence sub-dimensions of self-awareness scale indicate that the participants have high level of self-awareness in these fields, the high grades obtained from the questions for mood point out that the participants are in a good mood (psychological well-being). Condon (2011) found the Cronbach’s α internal consistency coefficients of the scale as between .62 and .87. In the current study, Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated as .95 for Cognitive skills, .84 for Social Intelligence and .84 for Emotional Intelligence. According to these results, it can be stated that the scale is highly reliable (>.70) (Nunnally, 1978).

The demographic data obtained from the research were arranged and interpreted as frequency and percentage tables. With the purpose of determining the difference between the self-awareness levels of students by the independent variables coming from demographic data, normal distribution of sub-dimensions were analyzed and data were distributed normally according to Skewness and Kurtosis values; however, non-parametric tests such as Mann Whitney-U and Kruskal Wallis-H tests were preferred in analyses due to the fact that some group numbers were low ($n < 10$). The findings obtained were interpreted at $p < .05$ significance level.

RESULTS

The distribution of female students participating in international youth camp by country, age and education are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic distributions of female students participating in international youth camp

Country	N	%
Domestic	64	69.57
Abroad	28	30.43
Age		
15-20	47	51.09
21-25	41	44.57
26-30	4	4.35
Education		
College	5	5.43
Undergraduate	78	84.78
Postgraduate	9	9.78
Total	92	100.00

Concerning Table 2, 64 female students participated in international youth camp from Turkey (69.57%) and 28 female participants from different countries (30.43%). 47 of these participants are aged between 15-20 (51.09%), 41 of them are aged between 21-25 (44.57%) and 4 of them are aged between 26-30 (4.35%). Regarding the education status, 5 of the participants are college graduate (5.43%), 78 of them have a bachelor’s degree (84.78%) and 9 of them have a postgraduate degree (9.78%).

Table 3. Descriptive statistical results of self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp

Self-Awareness	N	Aver.	SS	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Cognitive Skills	92	5.39	0.94	1.57	7.00	-0.12	1.33
Social Intelligence	92	4.49	0.82	2.67	7.00	0.68	0.28

Emotional Intelligence	92	5.53	0.72	3.94	7.00	-0.14	-0.65
Mood	92	2.79	0.39	1.81	4.00	0.50	0.67

When Table 3 is analyzed, it is observed that skewness values of data obtained from the sub-dimensions of self-awareness scale are between +1 and -1; Kurtosis values change between -2 and +2 and data distribute normally. However, non-parametric tests were used in analysis of data due to the fact that the number of some groups was low according to the demographic variables (Table 4, 5, 6).

According to Table 3, the averages of self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp in sub-dimensions are as follows; 5.39 ± 0.94 in the sub-dimension of “cognitive skills”, 4.49 ± 0.82 in the sub-dimension of “social intelligence” and 5.53 ± 0.72 in the sub-dimension of “emotional intelligence” and the self-awareness levels of female students were found to be higher in emotional intelligence sub-dimension in comparison to other dimensions. In other words, emotional intelligence of female students first, then their cognitive skills and lastly their social intelligence determine their self-awareness levels better. According to these results, self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp are generally high. Concerning the general “mood” averages of the participants (2.79 ± 0.39), it has been observed that they feel themselves in a sort of bad mood.

Table 4. Mann Whitney-U test results on sub-dimension self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp from Turkey and other countries

Dimension	Country	N	M.R.	S.T.	U	p
Cognitive Skills	Domestic	64	43.52	2785.00	705.000	0.10
	Abroad	28	53.32	1493.00		
Total		92				
Social Intelligence	Domestic	64	42.62	2727.50	647.500	0.03*
	Abroad	28	55.38	1550.50		
Total		92				
Emotional Intelligence	Domestic	64	42.05	2691.50	611.500	0.01*
	Abroad	28	56.66	1586.50		
Total		92				

* $p < 0.05$

When Table 4 is analyzed, it is seen that the mean rank of the scores obtained in the sub-dimension of self-awareness scale from the female students participating in international youth camp from other countries is higher than the students participating in the camp from Turkey. However, self-awareness levels of the female students participating in international youth camp significantly differ only in the sub-dimensions of social intelligence ($U_{(92)}=647.500$; $p < 0.05$) and emotional intelligence ($U_{(92)}=611.500$; $p < 0.05$) in favor of the female students participating from other countries.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis-H test results on self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp by the age variable

Dimension	Age Group	N	M.R.	Chi-square	p
Cognitive Skills	15-20	47	45.07	0.620	0.73
	21-25	41	48.72		
	26-30	4	40.50		
Total		92			
Social Intelligence	15-20	47	45.40	0.168	0.91
	21-25	41	47.74		
	26-30	4	46.63		
Total		92			
Emotional Intelligence	15-20	47	43.31	1.376	0.50

21-25	41	49.79
26-30	4	50.25
Total	92	

Concerning Table 5, self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp don't differ significantly in all sub-dimensions by the age variable according to the Kruskal Wallis-H test result ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis-h test results on self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp by the education variable

Dimension	Education	N	M.R.	Sd	χ^2	p	Advanced Test (MWU)
Cognitive Skills	College	5	65.40	2	6.122	0.05	
	Undergraduate	78	43.60				
	Postgraduate	9	61.11				
Total		92					
Social Intelligence	College	5	68.50	2	4.906	0.08	
	Undergraduate	78	44.12				
	Postgraduate	9	54.89				
Total		92					
Emotional Intelligence	College	5	68.40	2	7.982	*0.01	1-2
	Undergraduate	78	43.20				2-3
	Postgraduate	9	62.94				
Total		92					

* $p < 0.05$

When we look at the Table 6, self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp by the education variable significantly differ in the sub-dimension of emotional intelligence ($KWH_{(2,92)}=7,982$; $p < 0.05$) while they significantly differ in other sub-dimensions ($p > 0.05$). According to result of Mann Whitney U test applied in order to determine from which group the difference arises in the sub-dimension of emotional intelligence (Table 7), it has been determined that the difference exists between college students and undergraduate students ($U_{(83)}=88.000$; $p < 0.05$) and between undergraduate students and postgraduate students ($U_{(87)}=200.500$; $p < 0.05$). Concerning the mean rank of groups, it has been observed that mean rank of college students and postgraduate students is higher than the undergraduate students.

Table 7. Mann Whitney-U test results on self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp in the sub-dimension of emotional intelligence by the education variable according to binary groups

Education	N	M.R.	S.T.	U	p
College	5	63.40	317.00	88.000	0.04*
Undergraduate	78	40.63	3169.00		
Total	83				
Undergraduate	78	42.07	3281.50	200.500	0.03*
Postgraduate	9	60.72	546.50		
Total	87				

* $p < 0.05$

CONCLUSION and SUGGESTION

In this study analyzing the self-awareness levels of female students participating from Turkey and other countries in international youth camp organized by MYS by the variables of country-based participation, age and education, it has been observed that self-awareness levels of female students are generally high, they have a positive mood and regarding the sub-dimensions, first emotional

intelligence of female students, then their cognitive skills and lastly their social intelligence determine their self-awareness levels better.

Looking at literature, it has been determined in some researches that (Rothlind et al., 2017; Locke, 2005) low level of self-awareness is in directly proportionate to cognitive skills and cognitive intelligences of individuals play an effective role in determining their self-awareness while it has been stated in some other researches that (Stogdill, 1963; Blake and Mouton, 1978) emotional and social intelligence of individuals are effective in establishing their self-awareness. It has been asserted in another study (Condon, 2011) that both cognitive skills and emotional intelligence are important characteristics for self-awareness levels of individuals.

According to Goleman (2000), self-consciousness is the ability of an individual to recognize and monitor any emotion when recognized and to use it in making decisions. Since self-awareness is the ability of self-reflection at a wide range of consciousness levels, it is thought that it causes self-awareness levels of female students to be higher in the sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence and cognitive skills.

In the study of Hançer and Tanrısevdi (2003), it has been ascertained that the feature of being able to understand the feelings and emotions of others – which is one of the most important factors of social intelligence – is among the most important characteristics required in a good and effective leader. In the study of Graves (1999) which evaluates the relation between emotional intelligence and cognitive skills with the purpose of foreseeing the performance, it has been determined that emotional intelligence and cognitive skills play the same important role in interpreting the differences regarding the skills of individuals to demonstrate their (a) effect and (b) interpersonal competences. It is also thought that the positive interaction of female students participating in international youth camp with each other positively affects their self-awareness levels in the dimension of emotional intelligence and cognitive skills.

Another finding of the study is that self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp don't differ significantly by the age variable while self-awareness levels significantly differ in some sub-dimensions by the variables of country-based participation and education. Self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp from other countries have been observed to be higher than the students participating in the camp from Turkey. While self-awareness levels of female students participating in the camp from Turkey and other countries significantly differ in the sub-dimensions of social and emotional intelligence, they don't differ significantly in the sub-dimension of cognitive skills. According to this result, it can be stated that the self-awareness levels of female students participating in the international youth camp from other countries are at a more positive level with social and emotional intelligence dimension.

It is stated in the previous researches (Akbolat and Işık, 2012; Moon and Hur, 2011) that the individuals with high level of emotional intelligence are more successful in their professional life and human relations, they become good leaders and they are more skillful in motivating themselves and others. In the study of Scheer et al. (2012), it has been stated that emotional intelligence is affected from the individual's success, daily social relations and their competitive characters. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence provides employees with the competition power and helps them be more successful in their jobs. It is assumed that although international camp environment doesn't create a sharp competition environment among the participants, the demonstration of

competitive characters of female students participating in the camp from other countries causes this result.

Self-awareness levels of female participant students significantly differ only in the sub-dimension of emotional intelligence by the education variable while they don't significantly differ in the sub-dimensions of cognitive skills and social intelligence statistically. It has been observed that self-awareness levels of college students and postgraduate students are higher than the undergraduate students for the sub-dimension of emotional intelligence. In the research of Gürbüz and Yüksel (2008) conducted on employees, they have stated that the higher the education level is, the higher the total emotional intelligence attitude scores become. The researches conducted and the practices indicate that emotional intelligence can be learnt (Goleman, 2000).

Intelligence and ability come first in the cognitive features. Intelligence and ability points out to the learning potential of the individual while success denotes the learnt potential (Walsh and Betz, 1995). Therefore, the reason for higher self-awareness levels of female students having college and undergraduate degree is thought to be the fact that their capacity to perceive, internalize and respond the information is newer and their emotional and social intelligences come before their cognitive skills. As a matter of fact, Lord et al. (1986) have uttered that intelligence is considerably related to leadership perceptions in order to use the cognitive skills.

As a result, self-awareness concerns individuals' self-knowledge, being aware of the fact that they are self. It is all related to knowing one's own values, beliefs, personal preferences and tendencies. In this regard, it can be stated that the individuals with high level of self-awareness can be more effective and successful in their interpersonal relations due to the fact that they are aware of both their own feelings and the feelings of others, they can empathize with others, they can control themselves and their social and cognitive abilities are high.

Youth Camps provide an environment providing the participants at national and international level with different experiences, new friendships and lasting memories that cannot be forgotten. The fact that especially female students coming from world countries benefit from such practices incorporating the slogan of 'learning by doing and living' within the camp programs emphasizes the importance of this research. In this study analyzing the self-awareness levels of female students participating in international youth camp – organized by MYS – from various countries, analyzing the self-awareness levels of the participants in the camps with male participants, keeping the study samples larger and conducting a new study with the individuals participating from Turkey in similar camps of other countries have been brought as suggestions of the research.

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