

EVALUATING THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR OF THE YOUTH CAMP LEADERS ACCORDING TO THE PARTICIPANTS PERCEPTIONS³

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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this research was to determine the perceptions of the young people of various age groups and educational levels who participated in the youth camps organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports about the youth leadership with the help of metaphors. The research is a qualitative study in the pattern of phenomenology which examines the "leader" perception of the participants with the help of metaphors. The data of the research was obtained from the participants who attended nature camps in Karabük and Bolu during the summer of 2014. During the data collection semi-structured interview forms containing expressions like "a youth leader is like..." and "because..." were used. Within the study the data of 253 participants were accessed and as the result of the analysis it was determined that the participants produced 73 different metaphors in 6 categories. The participants determined within the produced metaphors that the educators who were in leadership positions generally showed leading behaviour and exhibited positive behaviour models.

Key Words: Leadership, youth camps, metaphor

GENÇLİK KAMPI LİDERLERİNİN, LİDERLİK DAVRANIŞLARININ KATILIMCI ALGILARINA GÖRE DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı tarafından düzenlenen gençlik kamplarına katılan çeşitli yaş grubu ve eğitim düzeyinde yer alan gençlerin, gençlik liderliği hakkındaki algılarını metaforlar yardımı ile belirlemektir. Araştırma katılımcıların "lider" algısını metaforlar yardımıyla inceleyen olgu bilim deseninde nitel bir çalışmadır. Araştırma verileri 2014 yaz döneminde Karabük ve Bolu'da doğa kamplarına katılan katılımcılardan elde edilmiştir. Verilerin elde edilmesinde, gençlik kampı katılımcılarının metaforlar üretebilmesine olanak sağlayan "gençlik lideri..... gibidir" ve "çünkü...." ifadelerin yer aldığı yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında 253 katılımcıya ait verilere ulaşılmış ve gerçekleştirilen analizler sonucunda katılımcıların 6 kategoride açıklanan 73 farklı metafor ürettikleri belirlenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda, gençlik kamplarında görev alan liderlerin katılımcılar üzerinde olumlu davranış modelleri sergilediği, örnek bir kişilik oluşturduğu, onlara rehberlik ettiği ve sosyal statülerine destek olarak, onları olumlu davranışlara yönelttiği, aynı zamanda da katılımcılar tarafından eğitici ve örnek alınabilecek bir model olarak görüldüğü belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Liderlik, Gençlik Kampları

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INTRODUCTION

The youth age, where the individuals could find the opportunity to socialize with different social groups includes the most dynamic, most imaginative, most romantic, most fearless and perhaps the most productive periods of the people (Tuncay, 2000). In addition, the youth age is the age when the courage overcomes the timidity and the desire for adventure prevails the comfortable life and together with the curiosity towards an active life it is the time to deal with almost all sporting events and to make different experiences (Ekici and Çolakoğlu, 2005).

According to Arnett (1995) who stated that socialization express the acquiring and assimilation process of the belief and behaviour belonging to the social world based on the culture within the individual lives, the socialization process which starts with the family and continues with other factors is very important for the development of the young people. Therefore, the youth camps which can provide the youth people the ability to share and communicate with each other during the socialization process and at the same time can meet their needs for the sports are filling a huge gap in this regard. Socialization; because it is the period for the individual to orientate towards the aims, rules and the requested behaviours of the social groups to which he belongs (Northcraft and Neale, 1999), it can contribute positively to the socialization process if the youth population is within a social environment where they can show common shares and can express themselves.

The most appropriate period for the youth to communicate with their peers, to acquire the habit of making sports and to socialize is the holiday period when the schools are closed. The young people will want to be in an environment where they feel safe and excited, where they can make friends, proof themselves and reveal their abilities. In the formation of this

environment the role of the youth camps is quite big because the young people can gain the basic habits which will be applied throughout their lives with the youth camps (Ekici and Çolakoğlu, 2005).

The youth camp which brings the young people from all over the country together and allows them to establish strong bonds of friendship in a pleasant environment brings new life experiences by introducing the rich historical and cultural heritage of Anatolia (Zorba, 2007). In a study conducted by Marianne et al (2014) it was stated that an optimum development process occurred within the board participation in the camp environment and the young people acquired important leadership roles by having influence to their own decisions during this process. These youth camps carried out in the summer and winter period, are organized mostly by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and then by other public institutions, private sector and civil society organizations. These camps which are facilities established to allow the young people to evaluate their leisure time with social, cultural and sporting activities both fulfil all requests with a variety of activities and also provide an intensive participation (<http://genclikkamplari.gsb.gov.tr>).

In the youth camps beside the participants there are also persons who are responsible for the participants. These people called the camp leaders are chosen from persons who can be a model for the young people, are capable to direct them and at the same time have various skills and knowledge (<http://gsb.gov.tr/Duyuru/4482/kamp-liderligi-egitim-duyurusu>). These camp leaders accompany the participants of these camps who are in different age groups and they complete the camp period together with them. Therefore, they have to lead the group for which they are responsible. Leadership can be defined as the collection of features such as qualifications and talents which are

required to gather a certain group of people around specific aims and to mobilize them to achieve these aims (Erarslan, 2006; Güney, 2007).

Korkmaz (2005) pointed out in the definition of leadership that it was an important factor in achieving the organizational aims and explained that the group members combine the style of the leaders with their feelings about their abilities to achieve their organizational aims. Because there is a need for good management and managers in order to provide the healthy functioning of these institutions (Akçakaya, 2010). Therefore, the case of leadership emerges for the

social institutions as a very important concept within the organization (Buluç, 2009). Leadership is a process containing situations such as enthusiasm, faith, commitment and volunteering and during this process it is about an effect which converts obligation into request, faith, commitment and voluntary (Erçetin, 1998). Considering this and starting from the definitions of the leadership concept it was intended to examine through metaphors how the trainers in the position of camp leaders who are working in the youth camps organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, were perceived by the participants of these camps and it was tried to put forward the obtained results.

METHODOLOGY

The research is a qualitative study in the pattern of phenomenology which examines the “leader” perception of the participants with the help of metaphors. In the Turkish language the word metaphor is generally used to associate, make metaphor and allegory for an existing concept or to use it as a metaphor and with this structure it can be showed that metaphor has a feature to re-conceptualize, express and associate the phenomenon or object from different angles (Erarslan, 2011).

Metaphors, although they often seem like rhetoric which aims to decorate the discourse, have actually more importance. Because the use of metaphor within the discourse is a way of thinking and watching that helps us to understand the world (Çelikten, 2006).

In this study the research data was obtained from the participants who joined the youth camps in Karabük and Bolu during the summer of 2014. The demographic characteristic of the study group are given in Table 1.

Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

<i>Variables</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	Female	144	56,9
	Male	109	43,1
	TOTAL	253	100
<i>Educational level</i>	High school	249	98,4
	University	4	1,6
	TOTAL	253	100
<i>Grade Level</i>	High school 10	21	8,3
	High school 11	91	36
	High school 12	75	26,9
	High school Graduate	62	24,5
	University 1	3	1,2
	University 2	1	0,4
	TOTAL	253	100

According to the obtained findings, from 31 provinces a total of 253 people including 144 girls (57%) and 109 boys (43%) participated in the study. 98,4% of the participants attended high school and only 1.6 % of them were university students.

Data Collection Tool

A semi-structured interview form was applied in order to determine the participants' perceptions about the "youth camp" leaders. The first part of the interview form contained questions about the demographic features of the participants, while the second part contained open-ended questions in order to determine the participant's receptions with the help of metaphors. They were asked to complete the sentences in open ended question such as "The Youth Camp Leaders are like....." and "Because....." The interview forms were applied to the persons in the study groups face to face by the researchers and the clarity of the questions were ensured. The participants of the survey were reminded to write identity information such as their names, last names, the name of their schools beside the questions of the interview forms and it was stated that the given information would be only used by the researchers for scientific studies and the would not be used for any other purposes. This interview forms filled by the campers were accepted as the main data source of the research.

Data Analysis

The content analysis technique was used in the analysis of the data obtained by considering the opinions of the participants. This is the most common method in the analysis of the qualitative research. While conducting a qualitative research, the detailed report of the data and the detailed description about how the researchers reach the result is very

important in terms of the validity (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). Therefore, it was described in details how these conceptual categories used in the study were reached in the name of the study's validity. In the analysis of the participants' opinions the used statements were divided into groups according to the similarity. 18 interview forms which contained incompatible metaphors generated in the data analysis and metaphor sources were not assessed.

In order to ensure the validity of the study the participants' opinions related to the subject were coded (K1, K2, K3), the obtained data were expressed in percentage and frequency. The similar phases were grouped and themes were formed in accordance with the group. The participants' views which were appropriate to the themes were supported with direct quotations under the table of the categories. The significance and the integrity of the findings were continuously tested by the researchers. Additionally, the information related to the data collection was explained with the implementation of the research and the details of the analysis phase.

Expert opinion was used in order to measure the reliability of the survey and to determine whether the responses obtained from the opinions of the participants represent the theme where they were placed. A person who was an expert in this field was asked to place the metaphors created by the participants into the categories in a way that no answer would stay out. After this placement, the matching made by the expert and the matching made by the researchers were compared. As a result of this comparison, the reliability of the research was calculated by using the Miles and Huberman reliability formula (reliability = consensus/ (Consensus + Dissidence) by determining the number of agreements

and disagreements of the comparison process.

Considering that in cases when the compliance between the expert and the researchers is above 90% the reliability is ensured, the fact that the reliability study carried out specifically on this study

achieved a compromise of 93% was seen to be sufficient in terms of the study's reliability. In this way, the internal validity of the study was ensured. In order to ensure the external validity of the research the sample of the study was selected by allowing the generalizations.

FINDINGS

The data of the frequency and metaphors formed by the 253 participants was given in Table 2.

Table 2: Metaphors formed by the study group

S.N	Metaphor	f	S.N	Metaphor	f	S.N	Metaphor	f
1	lion	29	26	flower	2	51	phoenix	1
2	sister	22	27	worthless	2	52	cook	1
3	mother	17	28	trust	2	53	determined	1
4	teacher	15	29	queen	2	54	president	1
5	friend	11	30	frog	2	55	computer mouse	1
6	family	11	31	leader	2	56	plant	1
7	brother	11	32	love	2	57	gazelle	1
8	ant	10	33	top of the herd	2	58	trainer	1
9	angel	8	34	director	2	59	entertaining	1
10	taurus	7	35	guide	1	60	storm	1
11	commander	6	36	patient	1	61	gorilla	1
12	path finder	5	37	hard	1	62	smile	1
13	fellow	5	38	confidant	1	63	everything	1
14	manager	4	39	responsibility	1	64	ideal woman	1
15	sample person	4	40	chimpanzee	1	65	my idol	1
16	bird	4	41	darling	1	66	low	1
17	bad	4	42	team captain	1	67	brother/ sister	1
18	tortoise	4	43	careless	1	68	rock	1
19	compass	3	44	life coach	1	69	koala	1
20	wolf	3	45	joy of life	1	70	pole star	1
21	good	3	46	star	1	71	stork	1
22	life	3	47	blanket	1	72	happiness	1
23	horse	3	48	router	1	73	panther	1
24	man	2	49	tree	1			
25	bee	2	50	diary	1			

It was stated in the study that the participants produced 73 different metaphors. The metaphors with the

most frequency were the followings: "lion, sister, mother, and teacher".

Table 3: Categories, Frequency and Percentage Values of the metaphors created by the participants

Categories	Metaphors	f	%
Compassion Provider and Protector Leader	Sister (19), Mother (14), Lion (12), Brother (11), Family (10), Angel (7), Friend(6), Fellow (5), Tortoise (2), Good (2), Trust (2), Life (2), Path Finder, Smile, Love, Brother/Sister, Happiness, Queen, Flower, Patience Stone, Cutie, Plant, Blanket, Confident, Cook, Horse, Team Captain, Guide, Panther, Wolf, Bird	112	44,2
Leader due to the Exemplary Behaviour	Lion (11), Ant (7), Taurus (7), Bird (3), Friend(3), Sample Person (2), Bee (2), Horse (2), Frog (2), Wolf (2), Man (2), Everything, Angel, Love, Joy of Life, My idol, Ideal Woman, Flower, Leader, Phoenix, Tree, Queen, Gazelle, Koala, Gorilla	57	22,5
Leader with directing role	Path Finder (4), Compass (3), Lion (3), Friend (2), Mother (2), Sister (2), Top of the herd (2), Director (2), Manager (2), Good, Life coach, Trainer, Pole star, Ambitious, Router, Teacher, Star, Stork, Storm	32	12,6
Leader with Disciplinary behaviour	Commander (6), Lion (3), Teacher (2), Manager (2), Diary, Responsibility, Hard, Family, President, Ant, Leader, Law, Rock	22	8,7
Leader with tutorial role	Teacher (12), Sample Person (2), Life, Computer Mouse, Ant, Sister, Mother, Entertaining	20	7,9
Leader demonstrating irresponsible Behaviour	Bad (4), Tortoise (2), Worthless (2), Careless, Chimpanzee	10	3,9
TOTAL		253	100

In Table 3 the categories of the metaphors developed by participants for the concept of “camp leader” was shown. Accordingly, the percentage rate of the conceptual categories was shown in the table.

When evaluating the metaphor resources, it was determined that the participants developed perceptions in 6 different categories. With the category of “*Compassion Provider and Protector Leader*” (44.2%) the participants stated that the leaders acted merciful with the campers, did not left them alone, were protecting them and they expressed much affection. It was stated that within the category of “*Leader with exemplary Behaviour*” (22.5%) the participants were affected by the leaders and they contributed them to demonstrate positive

behaviour. In the category of “*Leader with directing role*” (12.6%) it was emphasized that the leader directed the participants, led them to the determined field and demonstrated guiding behaviour. In the category of “*Leader with disciplinary behaviour*” it was mentioned that the leaders had authoritarian and domineering behaviour, in the category of “*Leader with tutorial role*” (3.9%) it was emphasized that the educator role of the leader was more dominant. In the category of “*Leader demonstrating irresponsible behaviour*” (3.9%) it was mentioned that the leader was disinterested and always arrived late to the activities.

Some of the participant’s opinions in the categories are given below:

“The camp leader is like a mother, because in many things he spearheads himself and puts himself into the second row. “KK64” camp leader is like a teacher, because he controls our behaviour, teaches us how to act and allows us to be useful. “EK166” camp leader is like a commander, comes to wake us up early in the morning. “KK16” camp leader is a life coach, because the activities he made for us in the camp will give direction to our entire life. “KK18” camp leader is like a bird, because he

protects, feed and prepares the young birds until they learn to fly. “EK242” camp leader is like a panther, because he immediately comes and finds solution to any kind of our problems and troubles.”EK239” camp leader is like a turtle, because he is disinterested in the activities and he comes always late. “EK177”camp leader is hard” in order to make rules which the campers must adopt. “KK 131” camp leader is like a sample person, because she constantly tries to correct our behaviour.” EK168

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The metaphors obtained within the study were collected into six different categories including “Compassion provider and protector leader”, “Leader with exemplary behaviour”, “Leader with directing role”, “Leader with disciplinary behaviour”, “Leader with tutorial role”, “Leader demonstrating irresponsible behaviour”.

Most of the metaphors were created under the category of “Compassion provider and Protector Leader” (Table 3). One of the primarily tasks of the leaders working in youth camps is to solve all kinds of problems faced by the campers they are responsible for. When the campers who enter an unfamiliar environment face a problem the first shelter for them is the leader. The fact that the metaphors created in this sense, in the form of sister (19), mother (14), Lion (12), Brother (11), Family (10) etc and that they produced concepts which gave the feeling of trust, happiness, protection can be evaluated as an expected situation. These positive behaviours received from the leaders by the campers and the sense of protection may show that the leaders had transformational leadership characteristics too. According to Arslantaş and Pekdemir (2007) the transformational leaders show a fair and honest behaviour that protects the personal rights within the

organization. Due to these aspects, they allow to establish strong relationships between the people and to create emotional satisfaction within the organization. According to a similar study made by Ekici and Çolakoğlu (2005) it was determined that many positive results were reached such as the social life of the young people attending the camps which were organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sport changed in a positive direction, they got relaxed psychologically, they developed their knowledge and skills, their desires to volunteer and cooperate were woken up. At the same time the youth benefitted from the camp activities, they had the request to re-join the camp because their expectations were met and they were affected by the leaders positively.

It can be considered that the participants can gain the leadership behaviours through the camp leaders whose behaviours were taken as models; as it was stressed in the study of Özbek and Atar (2009) that the leadership behaviour could be taught. Exhibiting the high frequency values of the category of “Leader with exemplary behaviour” and matching it with metaphors similar to the positive behaviour patterns of the camp leaders led to the strengthening of this result. When the participants see the leaders as an exemplary model both the

leaders' internal attitudes towards the participants and the mutual trust relationship can be provided as well. Çelik et al in their study (2011) mentioned that the trust was very important within the organization, the trust in the leader would increase the trust towards the organization and this would bring beneficial consequences in terms of achieving the aims of the organization.

When the participants see the leaders as trainers by taking them as models and when they trust in them it will fit again into the description of the transformational leadership. Because for a transformational leader the trust of the followers is important and the charismatic aspects of the leader are also in the foreground (Erçetin, 1998).

The guiding and managing aspects of the leaders were observed especially with the metaphors created in the category of "Leader with directing role" and it was revealed that the leaders of the camp's participants were perceived at the same time as an ambitious manager, guide and an educative person. Again, when looking at the category of "Leader with tutorial role" where similar results were obtained, both entertaining and educating model was portrayed as well as the camp leaders' hard-working and instructive role was emphasized. When the camp leaders are successful in the role of managing and teaching it may indicate that they have the items of visionary leadership and protective - interactive (transactional) leadership. Because for the visionary leadership it is very important to show direction, to set fire emotionally, to create a driving force, to be in share and to

manage the risks from the best aspect (Çelik 1997; Erçetin 1998), while in the protective - interactive (transactional) leadership style it is important to be directed to the purposes of the group beside the followers' personal purposes and to display a leadership approach which is capable of directing (Bakan, 2008).

Another category is the group of "Leader with disciplinary behaviour" which is suitable for the protective-interactive (transactional) leadership style. In this leadership style the trust between the followers and the motivation based mutual communication are very important. The leader's promises, rewards and reinforces are motivated or the negative disciplinary behaviour is corrected (Durmuş, 2011). In the category of "Leader with disciplinary behaviour" the authoritarian attitude of the leaders were mentioned but negativity was not specified. As in the previous categories the participants emphasized both the guiding and managing role of the leaders and they also drew the attention to their disciplinary structures. The emphasis on the leader's negative behaviour was made only in the category of "Leader with irresponsible behaviour" but it was determined at a very low rate.

When evaluating the metaphors produced by the participants in general, then it can be stated that the leaders working in youth camps exhibited positive behaviour models on the participants, created an exemplary personality, guided them and led them to positive behaviours as a support in their social status and the same time it was seen by the participants as an educational and exemplary model.

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