

National Survey of Camp Outcomes for Youth Development

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Introduction:

National Camping Association of Japan (NCAJ) was founded in 1966. Since then, NCAJ has worked for the development and dissemination of camping in Japan.

It is universally recognized that camping is very effective for the youth development also in Japan. However, there wasn't any educational evaluation which is comprehensively examined on camping in Japan, except some trials by specific organizations. As a consequence, we hadn't had Camp Standard on educational benefit, such as, "What is a good camp?" or "What is the necessary condition to achieve an effect?"

ACA has been studying on benefit of camping and has camp accredit standard based on these studies. They are very informative also for us. However, some of these standards are rooted in American camping culture, and aren't suitable very much to Japanese camping culture. We thought that it's significant to establish Japanese camp standard for the development of Japanese camping culture.

Study design:

NCAJ project team designed the survey referring the ACA's study "Youth Development Outcomes of the Camp Experience".

This study measured growth in following 10 constructs that we conceptualized as fitting into 3 developmental domains. These domains are more familiar to the developmental studies in Japan than ones used in ACA's study.

1. Connections with one's inner self
Self-Esteem / Independence / Values & Decisions
2. Connections with others
Leadership / Friendship Skills / Social Comfort / Peer Relationship
3. Connections with nature
Environmental Awareness / Spirituality

For campers (between the ages of 8 - 18), we made survey forms with 30 items and did surveys 3 times (Pre-Camp Survey / Post-Camp Survey / Follow-Up Survey).

For parents of campers, we did a survey to ask satisfaction level and expectation for camp. (Post-Camp Survey)

Moreover, for camp directors, we did a survey with 83 items in following 5 domains, to bring out the elements which enhance effectiveness of camping. (Post-Camp Survey)

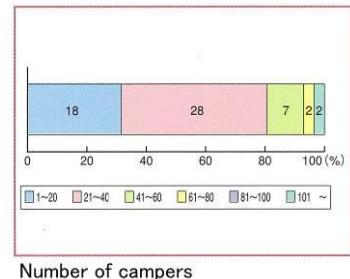
1. Aim & Program (23 items)
2. Facilities & Environment (6 items)
3. Staffing & Staff Training (30 items)
4. Campers & Group Organization (8 items)
5. Management (16 items)

We've got valid response from 57 camps, 1,604 campers, 769 parents, 34 camp directors. We analyzed the data and presented following recommendation.

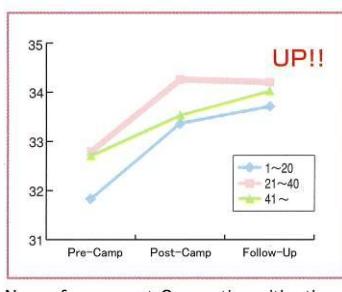
Recommendation for future:

1. Campers & Group Organization

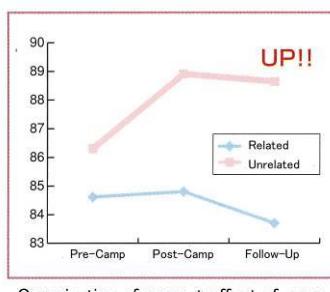
To achieve an effect for mutual communication between campers, most suited number of campers in total is 21 ~ 40, in which every camper recognizes each other. And it's better to organize groups of unrelated campers, mixed with different gender age group. In addition, to face with same group members during the camp, not changing the organization, leads to better effect.



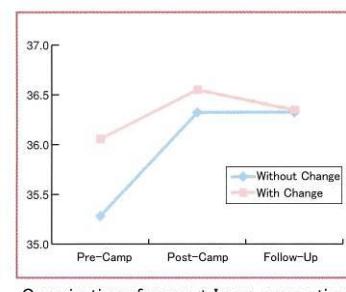
Number of campers



Num. of campers * Connection with others



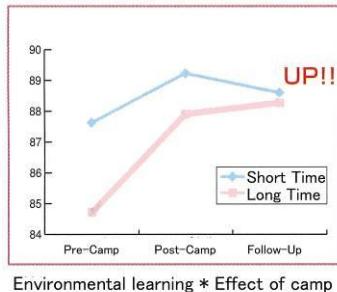
Organization of group * effect of camp



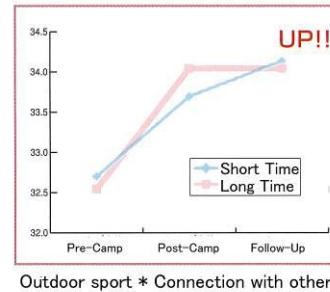
Organization of group * Inner connection

2. Program

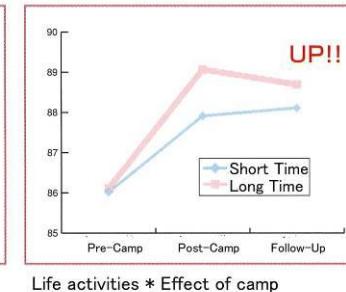
Activities which require cooperation, challenge and creativity such as environmental learning, outdoor sports, life activity and so on lead to better effect. And approximately 1 week long camp is the most suitable to enrich these activities.



Environmental learning * Effect of camp



Outdoor sport * Connection with others



Life activities * Effect of camp



Follow-Up

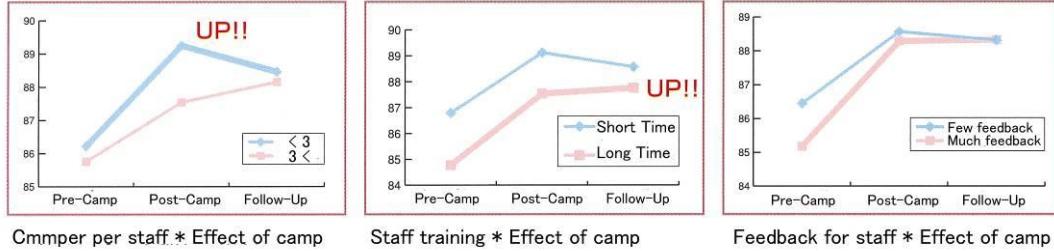
mental type * Connection with nature nature + values & decisions

3. Facilities & Environment

To have some suitable exposures to the nature through programs, such as sleeping in tent or field cooking, leads to better effect. It is required to use some difficult situation such as bad weather practically and safely, without relying on well-resourced facilities too much.

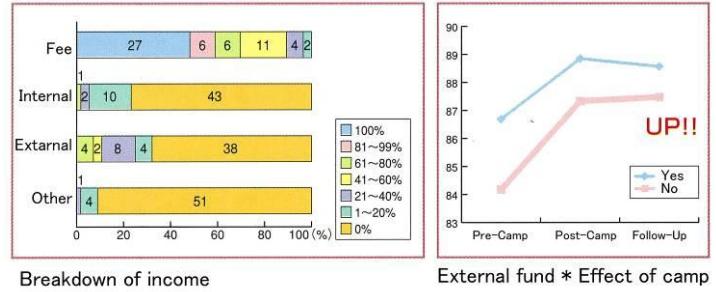
4. Staffing & Staff Training

It's important to consider carefully proportion of the number of staffs to that of campers, age balance of staffs. And staff training, sharing of the aim of camp and feedback during the camp makes better direction.



5. Management

The difference of management type doesn't make big difference on the effect of camping. However it's a basal condition to lead better camp that camp organizations ensure steady management.



Conclusion:

Through this study, it is emerged that the experience in camp improves campers' "Connections with one's inner self", "Connections with others" and "Connections with nature". And they are kept in their daily life.

In addition, even if obscurely, we found out some methods for better effect. We continue to study and try to establish Japanese own camp standard.