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Camp Counselors' Views on Volunteerism, Emotional Work, and the Transition to Adulthood

Kayla Jane McNamara
Bard College

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Camp Counselors' Views on Volunteerism, Emotional Work, and the Transition to Adulthood

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

By Kayla McNamara

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Dedication

I dedicate this project and hard work to my late grandparents, Betty and Ray McNamara. Since I was a child I have always felt the love, encouragement and pride that they surrounded me with. I am forever grateful for their guidance, advice and unwavering faith in me.

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Introduction

2005 was my first summer as a day camp counselor, and I was 16 years old. I had spent nine years participating in camp as a camper and was excited to become part of the staff. After years of participating in activities and going through daily camp life, I was eager to experience camp differently. I had grown to love my camp, my fellow campers, and the directors that had been my caretakers. After being hired, I went through the general training that the camp provided, such as sexual harassment, child abuse prevention, games, ropes course training, and conflict management. Going into the summer I thought I would be prepared for what came next.

After going through training, we all anxiously awaited the campers' arrival. Once the campers arrived, I was placed in a group of 20 four- and five-year-olds with three additional staff members. I was immediately both elated and terrified. Taking care of another person's child is a huge undertaking. You are responsible for the most important thing in the life of that parent. The pressure is on. Especially with four- and five- year olds, the counselor is the caretaker and takes care of all of the child's needs, like tying their shoes, helping them get dressed, and helping them navigate the world. The daily schedule was lengthy, and these kids even got nap time.

The kids arrived in the morning between 8 am-8:45 am. Either their parents dropped them off, or they took one of the three buses that transported kids to camp. After the kids arrived, they got split up into groups, and attendance was taken. There was a large gathering of all of the camp, and a song was sung, announcements were made, and the general plan for the day was discussed. In the morning, two activity periods were scheduled. The activities could be group games, arts and crafts, the playground, ropes course activities, or water activities. The campus was large, and a lot of walking was involved. For the younger campers, they scheduled the sequential activities to be on the same side of the campus. After the morning activities, the whole

group traversed to the Dining Hall for lunch. It was about a 20- minute walk for these youngsters with little legs. Lunch was served family style, and there was one bowl of food that was served between the campers. Lunch was a pretty chaotic time. These kids were too little to walk through the crowded dining hall themselves and needed someone to take them where they needed to go. This included the bathroom, making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, or to refill the food from the table. As a result, the counselors for this group rarely got to sit and eat during lunchtime. There was always a child that needed to go somewhere.

After lunch, it was time to rest and time to change into the kids' bathing suits. All of the walking and being in the hot sun was tiring for a lot of these campers, and they needed time to rest. Having everyone change was a challenging situation. The kids needed help to take off their clothes and put their bathing suits on. Eventually, after around 30-45 minutes, all of the kids were changed, and it was time to go to the lake.

The lake was a stressful place to be. All the kids loved swimming and playing in the sand, but for the counselors, it was difficult to keep track of the campers. The lake was sectioned into three sections: yellow, blue, and green. The yellow section was the shallow section for the nonswimmers, like this group of children. Whenever kids went into the water, they had a buddy, and they wore bracelets with numbers. When the lifeguards yelled, “buddy check!” everyone found their buddy and called out the numbers on their bracelets. One day, after yelling, “buddy check!” someone could not find their buddy. We went into what was called a lost bather drill (LBD). The kids were called out of the water and instructed to sit with their groups on the grass. After the kids were settled, if the group had an extra person, they were sent to the yellow section to “sweep” while the lifeguards dived into the deeper section. To “sweep,” the person joined hands with the person next to them, making a line across the section. Then, the counselors move

their legs in forward circles to feel anything in the water. To this day, one of the scariest moments I have had is when my foot hit something in the lake during the lost bather drill. It turned out to be a flipper, and the lost bather had gone to the boathouse without telling anyone. The outcome was positive, however, the fear did not wear off right away.

This type of work as a camp counselor has an emotional impact on counselors. The feeling of helplessness and fear when trying to find a missing camper is among one the scariest feelings that a person can have. Counselors are routinely asked to put their feelings aside, as in my example of lunchtime and not having the opportunity to eat. Young people in this position are pushed to mature much more quickly than their peers who are not in a position to take care of others. My research will seek to explore the emotional implications that being a camp counselor has, along with how their transition to adulthood is viewed reflectively.

College-age summer camp counselors who work with children with special needs are in a unique position. They have been allowed to work at a summer camp, a traditionally difficult job. For many, it will be the first time they are away from home for an extended period and will be relied on so heavily by children and other adults. These young people gain maturity quickly upon beginning their job. This group of camp counselors provides wonderful opportunities to conduct research. Because it is a unique research population, there is much to be gained from exploring emotional work, motivations, and influences on doing volunteer work, as well as inner reflection on the transition to adulthood. I researched young adults' views on transitioning to adulthood and how they take responsibility in this area. In my study, I researched perceptions on the transition to adulthood coupled with the phenomena of volunteering and performing emotional work.

My research was performed at Kids, Inc, a traditional summer camp in New York State. They specialize in offering a summer camp program for young people. The abilities and needs of

the young people offer a varied camper population. The site hires around 150 young people to work with the campers. The counselors come from around the world and offer many different ideas and opinions that will be explored throughout my research. Kids, Inc has a variety of activities that they offer at different spaces around camp. Probably the most popular and favored activities are the lake and pool. Kids, Inc has both, so campers can swim for two hours each day. The pool has a concrete area around it with a pavilion so kids that are not interested in swimming can hang out in the shade. The lake has a large inflatable climbing wall with a slide on the other side. It also has a diving board and a sand beach. The lake is a favorite for all the kids, even the nonswimmers, since there is a large shallow section.

A close favorite is the reading and technology center. Campers have the opportunity to play active video games, use tablets and do reading with counselors. Since the majority of the camp is “screen-free”, this is the one opportunity when campers are permitted to use devices. Next door is the Art Center, where campers are given options at stations each day to select what type of media they would like to use to make their creations. The period ends with a sharing circle where campers can share their art.

Like most camps, there is an expressive arts component that includes dance, music, drama, and theater. Campers are encouraged to explore their creative side with movement and music with their fellow campers led by experienced staff members. Some campers prefer the corral, where they can take care of animals, and the science center to do STEM activities or cooking. Every day at Kids, Inc is jam-packed with activities and fun. A typical day includes breakfast, bunk clean up, three morning activity periods, lunch served family style, a rest period, 3 afternoon activities periods, dinner, and evening activity ending with showers, snacks and bed.

Campers at Kids Inc are encouraged to express themselves, be creative and feel safe in the camp environment, all led, supervised, and enhanced by amazing camp counselors.

The Research Questions

My research questions are: “what motivates and influences young people to volunteer when the job has little pay and when so much emotional labor is required? My next research question is, “do camp counselors consider themselves adults?” And finally, “what life markers do camp counselors find necessary to make the transition to adulthood?”

Volunteerism is an important activity that over 56% of US citizens engage in (Miller, et al 2002: 248). Volunteerism is important because it provides a service to other people who may not be able to afford it or who would otherwise benefit greatly from it. Most volunteering takes place at nonprofit organizations whose goal is to serve other people. Without volunteers who generously donate their time, many organizations and nonprofits would be at a loss. Volunteers incur many benefits due to this activity. Some of these described by Miller are psychosocial benefits like reduced alienation, reduction in problem behaviors, higher self-esteem, improved self-concept, increased a sense of purpose, and attitudinal changes. These benefits make volunteering very attractive. In the case of this job, camp counselor, there is also a lot of emotional work that begs the question, why do people do it? My research seeks to answer this question.

The first concept explored in my research is emotional work. Sociologist Arlie Hochschild leads the way in her emotional work study. To state, “emotional labor is performed through face-to-face or voice-to-voice contact” (Rietti 2005). It can also be described as commenting that although Hochschild’s earlier work details customer service jobs, teaching,

counseling, etc., as emotional work, now other occupations like factory workers are also recognized as involving extensive emotional work. (Riitti 2009). Camp counseling falls into this description. Child care and teaching are both mentioned in this description, and counselors do both of these things. According to Riitti, more and more people are predominantly employed in these “people-skill” jobs.

Much research has been done on the attitudes regarding the transition to adulthood. There are potential markers discussed that include marriage and having children, as examples. I am curious to know what this particular group of young people views as important in achieving adulthood. Do the views expressed in the literature apply to this group of people? Can we generalize these beliefs held by the camp counselors to a larger population? In the eyes of the participants, I intend to discover if they consider themselves adults. If not, what quality of life markers are missing for them to make this conclusion about themselves?

This particular group of people interests me as I feel invested in camp counselors and their views of themselves and society. As I have experienced, working as a camp counselor is incredibly intense as the children have diverse and sometimes very challenging needs. Staff members are the “parents” to these children and attend to their every need 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in the case of a residential camp which is what my research focused on. The discipline and fortitude that it takes to embark on a journey such as this are admirable. This, coupled with the low wage that is paid, makes this an even more valuable group of people whose voice needs to be heard.

In my experience working at summer camp, I have many hypotheses as to why young people work at camp for little pay, including being able to receive college credit (some camps

offer this), building a resume, gaining experience, carrying on a legacy, and others. I intend to explain the validity of these hypotheses through the use of a questionnaire.

Camp counselors are a special group of young people who dedicate their time and energy to making a difference in the lives of children. My work was aimed at research for those young adults that work with children with special needs. Camps hire around 150 young people, depending upon the size of the camp, who are primarily college students, to work with this population of young people. The counselors across the country are generally between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, and counselors are hired from around the country and worldwide. The counselors are mostly from the United States. Counselors are selected based on various criteria, including an application, references, an interview, and a background check.

The Research Methods

I have conducted this research using a questionnaire. This methodology will use quantitative methods to study close-ended questions. All the questions have multiple choice answers allowing the data to be entered into a statistical software called SPSS after the study. By conducting this study quantitatively, there will be clear correlations and relationships between variables and the responses to the questions. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

During the third night of training, all of the counselors were in the Dining Hall together, going through a training exercise. I received permission from the camp director to present my survey to the group that will be present. I let people know what the survey is about. I explained that I am doing research regarding the transition to adulthood, their work, and their motivation to work at Kids, Inc. After explaining the study, I will ask volunteers to participate. Those who volunteered received a pop-it as an incentive. I expected to receive at least 50 volunteers to

participate, and I had 51 people take the survey. The staff took the survey in the Dining Hall, the space with one another following their training where I was present to answer any questions that came up. The survey was conducted on pen and paper.

The table in Appendix A presented demographic characteristic trends. In the table each person was given a pseudonym to attach to their responses. The demographic responses are age, gender, religion, country and career aspiration. In analyzing this table, it shows that the make-up of gender is 35.3% male, 62.7% female and 2% other. This shows that the majority of respondents were female.

In considering age, there is a closer split of 41.2% and 58.8% representing respondents that were 18-20 years old and 21-25 years old respectively. There seems to be a fairly even distribution of age throughout the population. Finally, in the category religion, the majority (62.5%) of people responded 'other' as their religion with 22.9% responding Christian and 14.6% responding spiritual.

From a sociological perspective, "a fundamental concern is understanding how emotions are regulated by culture and social structure and how emotional regulation affects individuals, groups, and organization" (Wharton, 2009: 148). In the case of my study, Kids, Inc is the culture with the broader implications of the culture of the surrounding climate. It will be interesting to see how the background of people affects their views of the transition to adulthood, emotional work, and volunteerism present themselves. Questions on the survey that will help illuminate these facts are age, gender, race, education, class, etc. At Kids, Inc, the emotions of a person can become dysregulated due to the type of work and the intensity that it entails. The research will show how this dysregulation can affect emotions.

Volunteers benefit so greatly from their volunteer experience. Miller, et al write that people who volunteer benefit greatly in their psychosocial areas and have increased self-esteem, a more positive attitude, a clearer concept of who they are, the ability to relate better with others, feeling helpful, the ability to understand their social responsibility, has a reduction in problem behaviors and a more focused sense of purpose (Miller et al 2002: 248). It is so important to consider these benefits when thinking about young people. Young people who start volunteering are set up to receive these benefits from a young age, improving their lives in the future. All of these positive benefits add to the maturity that young camp counselors have. This will be explored later in my paper.

Drawing on my research questions, this paper will be divided into three sections. The first section is a response to, “why do people work for little to no pay when so much emotional work is involved? This section focuses on the first part of the question, why do people volunteer and work for little pay. In this case, I am exploring this particular camp, Kids, Inc. and what their counselors think. This section will explore the reasons and motivations behind a person wanting to work at Kids, Inc. The most popular motivations are to make a difference, grow personally and boost resume.

Section two addresses the other part of the question, when so much emotional work is involved. This section explores how people think about their needs, maintaining a positive attitude and whether or not they enjoyed the experience. The answers to these questions are specific to Kids, Inc. and shed light on what these camp counselors think and feel.

The final section addresses my final research question, do these young people consider themselves and adults and what do they think constitutes an adult. This section determines that

percentage of young adult counselors consider themselves adults and what makes up the important characteristics of being an adult.

Section 1: Reasons for Work and Motivation

A study by Clary and Snyder and Smith et al, details reasons why people of all ages volunteer, not just young people. They broke down motivations to volunteer into the following six categories: values, understanding, enhancement, career, social and protective (Clary & Snyder, 1999: 157). Values can be seen as involving people who want to help others. Understanding is exercised when the volunteer is looking to learn more or to use skills that are often unused. Enhancement is psychological growth, and the description of a career includes the goal of gaining career-related skills. The social function involves the volunteer improving and strengthening relationships. The protective function is when a person volunteers to mask their feelings of guilt or to address personal issues. As a hypothesis, all of these functions can be applied to work as a camp counselor. For instance, a person may have the desire to make a difference in the lives of children and pursue opportunities that will afford them that chance (Smith et al, 2010: 69).

My research supports this literature, the values and enhancement factors most directly. Please see the table below, detailing the findings of my research question, “what motivated you to work at Kids, Inc.?”

Motivation for Working at Kids, Inc.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working with Children	9	17.6	19.1	19.1
	Working with Children with Special Needs	14	27.5	29.8	48.9
	Boost Resume	6	11.8	12.8	61.7
	Other	18	35.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	47	92.2	100.0	

According to the table above, wanting to make a difference, as well as ‘grow and develop personally’ were the most popular responses. The ‘other’ category includes the following choices: ‘prepare for a career’, ‘strengthen personal relationships’, ‘unsure’, and ‘other’.

Clary and Snyder’s factor of enhancement is best described using my research as work on skills and grow personally. This represents 10.2% and 36.7%, respectively. In reflecting on work on skills and growing personally, the staff is enhancing their lives. Work on skills can also be attributed to understanding, as discussed above, since understanding is needed to pursue skills.

According to Oesterle, there are a few ways that young adults get interested in volunteering. These include connections to various social institutions, including work, family, religion, and education. Among these, education is marked as particularly important. In high school, civics is taught, such as civic values, and the importance of being a good citizen. It was found in their study that every year a person is engaged in education, their tendency to volunteer increases by 5%. That corresponds with young people working at my research site. Most of the staff are in college, exposing them to high school education, which is shown to increase volunteerism.

Smith, et al’s paper, displayed a table that showed a relationship between occasional volunteers and non-volunteers. This relationship “occurs for three altruistic benefits: ‘opportunity to learn new things’, ‘self-satisfaction’, and ‘builds trust among people in society’, as well as the most instrumental benefit of ‘leadership skills’” (Smith et al 2010: 76). The results of this study differ slightly from my results. In this instance, Smith et al are reporting that the opportunity to learn new things, self-satisfaction, and build trust among people in society is most important. My research shows that the most important is making a difference and growing

personally. These are not represented in Smith et al's paper. Among more research, perhaps, these traits and attributes could be more fully explained and more of a bridge between results could be seen.

In a paper by Rehberg, there was a table that discussed the motives for young adults and international volunteering. In their study, "77% of the respondents were motivated by 'achieving something positive for others,' 75% were motivated by 'quest for something new', and 67% were on a quest for oneself'" (Rehberg, 2005: 209). This research matches the results of my study. Sixty-seven percent of people on a quest for themselves can be seen in the category, 'grow personally'. Both 'grow personally' and 'quest for oneself' involve a person being reflective and inward-looking when deciding to volunteer and thinking about what their motivations are and what they are hoping to gain from the experience. As a follow-up to this, Rehberg remarks that generally altruistic motivations involving helping others were also combined with the expectations they had involving being fulfilled personally (Rehberg, 2010: 115). These reports combined my two results of what motivates people to volunteer, 'making a difference and grow personally'. I can conclude that volunteerism motives can be both of these categories represented in my survey. The third category, work on skills, also falls into an advantage for the volunteer.

For the first motive, "achieving or changing something", Rehberg states that to see the reaction and effects of a person's actions is what this motive refers to (Rehberg, 2005: 115). This motive described by Rehberg is characteristic of my findings that involved making a difference. People who volunteer do so because the well-being of others is important to them. The desire to make a difference is so great that they give their time for little to no compensation. Camp counselors fall into this category. They give up countless hours, days, weeks, and months all to

make a difference in children's lives. This is reported as one of the most important motives for volunteering in my study as well as other studies (Wallace 2022).

As a follow-up to this, the next motive cited by Rehberg is "being geared to ethical values". This motive is also in line with the 'make a difference' response. Rehberg does an interview where the person said he felt it was his moral responsibility to volunteer. This is very similar to my response, wanting to make a difference. The next motive, which is described as a person feeling like they are useful doing something in return that is useful can be compared to my category of making a difference as well.

In making a difference, a person may feel fulfilled, as evidenced by my forthcoming table discussing how participants enjoyed doing the work. Doing something useful can be attributed to helping people, in this case, children. Another of Rehberg's interviewees stated, "the need for a useful or meaningful activity is closely connected with the desire to help, to give, or to do something good (Motive 1). A task is perceived to be useful if it has the potential to help somebody directly. Professional work in a large organization such as a bank is therefore not considered to be a useful or meaningful activity" (Rehberg, 2005: 116). There are a few items to consider in this statement. This meaningful activity in my case study is working with children and is linked to the desire to help others and do good. This task is considered useful because it changes the lives of children on an individual level. This quote provides a comparison between a bank and an organization. Kids, Inc is a nonprofit organization with a mission of helping young people be seen and be their true selves. This mission is much different than that of a bank whose purpose is to solely make money. A community-based nonprofits' goal is not to make money but to serve the people in their care. As referenced by this quote, meaningful activities, if the organization is one of sole profit and not of serving or helping others, volunteers generally do not

want to volunteer there because the link between wanting to make a difference and the mission of solely making money do not match. For a volunteer, the desire to help others overlooks the desire for money. Volunteers are special people who give their time to something important.

Another motive by Rehberg is “gaining experience, advancing oneself”. One of their interviewees said, “Expectations about personal development through international volunteering were sometimes quite high: respondents expected to become more mature and self-confident as well as getting more satisfaction from life. ‘I hope that from international volunteering I’ll gain new experiences, and maybe self-confidence and independence’” (Rehberg, 2005: 113). The piece of this that applies to my study is the self-confidence that people gain from growing personally.

The next motive, “discovering or transcending personal limits” also speaks to growing personally. According to Gaskin, there are many motivations that young people experience while thinking about volunteering. It is said that young adults are most interested in experience, enhancing skills, and gaining references and qualifications. These motivations meet the trend in my research for the make a difference response. Because the camp serves children with special needs, this is even more true. Motivations can also include external factors.

Some of the literature review that I conducted cited gaining experience for future careers, which falls in line with the boost resume category. Smith, et al write, "The most important reasons for volunteering were as follows: to help someone in their community; to learn new skills; to respond to their needs or skills; and, to help gain experience to benefit their future career" (Smith et al, 2010: 69). Rehberg also writes about people gaining personal benefit. When considering why people choose to volunteer, there is also a motivation behind their influence. While making a difference, working on skills, growth personally and other are key factors in why

someone wants to volunteer, it is also important to consider people’s motivation, why they wanted to work specifically at summer camp, and not some other volunteer experience. The table below details the motivations that these camp counselors had.

Motivation to Work at Kids, Inc.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Working with Children	9	17.6	19.1	19.1
	Working with Children with Special Needs	14	27.5	29.8	48.9
	Boost Resume	6	11.8	12.8	61.7
	Other	18	35.3	38.3	100.0
	Total	47	92.2	100.0	
Missing	System	4	7.8		
Total		51	100.0		

This table answers the questions, what motivated you to apply to work at camp? Please select the most important option. If this is not your first summer, please respond reflecting your reason to initially apply.” The three most popular reasons were to gain experience working with children, gain experience working with children with special needs, and boost a resume. The answers included in the ‘other’ category are gaining college credit, a friend working at camp, communication with Kids, Inc staff before the summer, recommendation of a professor or advisor, compensation, none of these, and other. The ‘other’ category makes up 38.3% of the responses. To break this down further, gaining college credit received 2 responses, a friend working at camp had 1 response, communication with Kids, Inc. received 2 responses, recommendation of a professor advisor had 2 responses, compensation had 1 response, none of these had 3 responses, and other had 7 responses. The 'other' category makes up a large percentage; however, without collapsing and combining these categories, the results would be

difficult to interpret. The categories were collapsed because individually, the responses that make up the 'other' category did not have enough responses to show significance in the chart. By collapsing them into this one category, the responses are more meaningful. When considering that the 'other' category received 18 responses, working with children with special needs was not far behind with 14 responses.

Working with children represents 19.1%. This is a frequency of 9 respondents. Working with children with special needs accounts for 29.8%. Fourteen counselors gave this answer. Boosting a resume had the fewest responses, with 6 people and 11.8%. Kids, Inc is a summer camp for children with special needs therefore, the response of 'working with children with special needs' is in line with this philosophy. When combining the answers, 'working with children' and 'working with children with special needs', the responses are 23. This surpasses the other responses, including 'other'. Since the job is solely working with children, the largest response was expected to be working with children. While some people did respond with the desire to have a boost to their resume, the work is so difficult that for most people, this is an added benefit, not the singular reason for working the job as a camp counselor for little pay. The second part to my initial research question, what makes people volunteer or work for little pay when so much emotional labor is involved, is explored in Section 2: Emotional Work. This section discussed people's feelings about emotional work and how it relates to their jobs.

Section 2: Emotional Work

Riatti talks about emotional work and handling the emotions of other people. Riatti writes, "management of *other's* emotions, for instance, in counseling or work with young children, often involves 'double shifts', since a main way in which people work on other's

emotions is through the careful and strategically deployed regulation of their own” (Rietti 2009: 57). It is reasonable to point to other people being the most challenging to work with when thinking about emotional work. Having to manage other people’s emotions is challenging and tiring. This quote also talks about how people manage others' emotions by regulating their own. Later in my paper, I discuss maintaining a positive attitude and the associated difficulties.

The emotional toll that a camp counselor undergoes while they are working at camp results in challenging situations. Camp counselors were surveyed on what they felt the most challenging part of their job was. The table below details the results.

Most Challenging Part About Working at Camp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hours	8	15.7	19.5	19.5
	Positive Attitude	3	5.9	7.3	26.8
	Other People	20	39.2	48.8	75.6
	Other	10	19.6	24.4	100.0
	Total	41	80.4	100.0	
Missing	System	10	19.6		
Total		51	100.0		

This table represents the question, “What did you find most challenging about this type of work? Please select the most challenging.” “This type” refers to emotional work. The three most popular answers were hours, maintaining a positive attitude, and other people. The answer ‘other people’ consisted of the choices of coworkers, supervisors, and difficult customers. The responses that make up the other category were pushing aside your needs for the organization and pushing down feelings of frustration to deal with customers or clients.

As 'other people' make up three answers, it is logical that it would be the largest category with 20 respondents and 39.2% of the population surveyed. The second largest category is other, with 19.6% of the respondents. Closely following is hours with 15.7% of the respondents and a frequency of 8.

Counselors' Experience with Burnout

The discussion of burnout is discussed at length by Arlie Hochschild and others. Arlie Hochschild's book, *The Managed Heart*, has been heralded as the launch point for research and theory in emotional labor. Wharton and Leidner have similar writings based on Hochschild's work. Wharton defines emotional labor as "the effort involved in displaying organizationally sanctioned emotions by those whose jobs require interaction with clients or customers and for whom these interactions are an important component of their work" (Wharton, 1999: 160). It can also be defined as, "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion" (Wharton, 1999: 160).

A definition of burnout is also provided in a paper by Wahl-Alexander. They claim that burnout is a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a feeling of reduced personal accomplishment. Depersonalization results in a negative attitude toward others and being overly critical of coworkers.

These emotions are thought of in the context of work. Emotional labor occurs in jobs where the employee is outward-facing toward customers and clients. This occurs in many professions, such as nursing, lawyers, retail, customer service, and child care. In these jobs and professions, employees undergo training, surveillance, and sometimes indoctrination for their positions.

When a person achieves burnout, the feeling that they are overwhelmed and emotionally drained, they sometimes have difficulty maintaining a positive attitude, as told by

Wahl-Alexander. Maintaining a positive attitude in difficult situations can be challenging. The next question camp counselors responded to was, do you feel that maintaining a positive attitude has resulted in burnout?

Maintaining a Positive Attitude Results in Burnout

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	34	66.7	66.7	66.7
	No	6	11.8	11.8	78.4
	Sometimes	11	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Emotional work is correlated to my findings in the question regarding burnout. A large 66.7% of respondents stated that yes, maintaining a positive attitude has resulted in exhaustion or burnout. The table shows a small percentage of people, 11.8% responding no and 21.6% of people responding sometimes. Yes is the overwhelming majority of respondents. This question is a reflection of people’s belief that when they consistently maintain or try to maintain a positive attitude, they become exhausted.

The companies discussed in Leidner’s article, *Combined Insurance and McDonald’s*, both conduct training and indoctrination for their employees. This training and indoctrination involve showing videos, teaching the company's history, appealing to camaraderie by being inclusive, and making sure new hires know the importance of customer service. When staff members arrive for training at summer camp, they have training sessions on many topics, including sexual harassment, child abuse prevention, and playing games. This practice speaks to “means of managing interactive service work” (Leidner, Robin, 1999: 86).

The Summer Camp Society is an online resource for camps around the world. It deems best practices and training that all camps should conduct. They recommend training staff on coworker confrontations, the inclusion of campers with special needs, how to handle homesickness, how to handle crises, and ways to make an impact (<https://www.thesummercampsociety.com/free-stuff>). Another value camp resource, the American Camp Association, offers trainings as well, including team building, group dynamics, camp culture, how to communicate, behavior management, how to supervise effectively, and again, how to be inclusive (<https://www.acanynj.org/training-consulting>). An important video put out by Amkier, an insurance agency specializing in camps, is about recognizing child abuse predators and what to do to prevent such activity. This is an especially important training as it keeps campers and staff safe (<https://www.amskier.com/eyes/>). All of these pieces of training put together are the general staff training that happens at camps, including Kids, Inc. It is imperative that staff members first keep campers safe and secondly help them have fun. All camp counselors across the country can count on some or all of these pieces of training during their staff training before camp starts. This is part of the indoctrination and training that Hochschild talks about. The camp staff members understand, for example, what child abuse is, how to prevent it, recognize it and respond to it. In this way, camp counselors across the country “speak the same language”. This is really important to keep kids safe and help staff relate to each other and know the protocols and procedures in the event something has gone wrong.

Another aspect of this practice is selection, the idea that organizations pick people who can project the type of image they want (Leidner, Robin, 1999: 86). The camps go to great lengths to select candidates who are well suited for the job of a camp counselor. They ask questions like, “what’s the hardest thing you’ve ever done?” “Why do you want to do this

work?” “How do you practice self-care?” “What do equity and diversity mean to you?” All of these questions (and more that are on camp staff applications) are geared to select individuals who are fit - emotionally and mentally - to take on this taxing job.

Concerning my research question, “what motivates these counselors to work for little to no pay when so much emotional labor is required,” it is worth noting the time commitment and salary of a general bunk counselor at a summer camp. In most cases, counselors commit to a nine-week employment period. Eight of these weeks work directly with children, and one week at the beginning of the summer serves as training. Counselors are generally compensated around \$2,000 for the summer

(<https://work.chron.com/much-would-paid-camp-counselor-summer-14067.html>) Counselors work about 12-13 hours daily, six days a week. The government has different wage requirements for summer camp programs, so this compensation does not violate labor laws. This begs the question, why do young people engage in this work when the pay is so low?

Counselors’ Views on A Positive Attitude

This question asks, are you tired of maintaining a positive attitude? The results of this question may be the result of a leading question. This question makes the assumption that counselors tire of a positive attitude and this question measures it. It is reasonable to say, based on the emotional work research, that counselors are tired of maintaining a positive attitude. The results are similar to the previous question in that most people answered yes.

Tired of Maintaining a Positive Attitude

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	36	70.6	70.6	70.6
	Other	5	9.8	9.8	80.4
	Sometimes	10	19.6	19.6	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

As evidenced by the table, 36 counselors responded that yes, they do find themselves tired of maintaining a positive attitude. This makes up 70.6% of the population. Only 5 remarked that their answer was other and 10 responded sometimes. The ‘other’ category includes the answers unsure, no, and other. The ‘yes’ response is overwhelmingly true. This corroborates research on emotional labor that states the same: people become tired of maintaining a positive attitude.

Employers strongly encourage those in jobs where the employees are doing emotional work to maintain a positive attitude. Steinberg and Figart write that a positive attitude is basic and that if they, the staff member, are not enjoying themselves, the people around them are not either. By having a good attitude, you can make a positive impact on the people around you, which gives you and the company an advantage (Steinberg and Figart 1999: 9).

At Kids Inc, camp counselors must maintain a positive attitude. This is true in a few avenues. As exemplified by the quote, if the staff member does not have a positive attitude, it affects their coworkers. Not acting positive or being friendly makes it more difficult to negotiate interactions with that coworker. Collaboration when working in a team with adults and children is imperative to the group's success. Children feed off of any energy that they are presented with. If people around them, in this case, camp counselors, are being negative or not upbeat, they will

recognize that and mirror the expressions they are being shown. For a child with special needs, a negative attitude can take a toll on them. It would not be easy to navigate positive behavior or challenges children face if the staff member did not maintain a positive attitude. This is part of what Hochschild meant when she referenced employees maintaining a positive attitude to manage the emotions of others (Wahl-Alexander 2017).

Wahl-Alexander talks about people engaging in a stage of burnout called depersonalization. This is characterized by a negative attitude internally and externally towards other coworkers and when people engage personally when interacting with others. This behavior results in a lower level of personal accomplishment regarding work and being critical of others' work. Emotional exhaustion, being over-extended and emotionally drained, are also parts of depersonalization. My study shows that 70.6% of people are tired of maintaining a positive attitude. However, it is not possible to extend that feeling to that of depersonalization. (Wahl-Alexander, et al 2017).

It is, of course, possible and expected that people would have a positive experience, otherwise, they would not keep volunteering. The below question is limited in its significance due to the setup. Please see the explanation below.

Attention to Personal Needs

As discussed in the introduction, counselors are charged with taking care of children as their largest responsibility. In order to do that, these young adults routinely have to put aside their needs in response to what the children need. The table below details these findings.

Ignoring Personal Needs to Take Care of Campers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	29.4	39.5	39.5
	Other	3	5.9	7.9	47.4
	Non Applicable	20	39.2	52.6	100.0
	Total	38	74.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	25.5		
Total		51	100.0		

This table answers the question, “If you have worked at camp before, did you have to ignore your personal emotional needs to take care of campers?” This variable is also skewed because 52.6%, more than half, commented ‘nonapplicable’, stating that they had not worked at camp before and, therefore, the question was not applicable. Apart from this, 39.5% of those who responded said that yes, they had to ignore their personal emotional needs, and only 7.9% said that they did not. This indicates that the type of work being performed at camp is emotional work. This emotional work impacts how people think about and consider what they need. The question below asks, do you wish you had more time to attend to your personal needs? The table below shows the results.

Wish to Have More Time to Attend to Personal Needs

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	42	82.4	82.4	82.4
	Other	9	17.6	17.6	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

This question is, “do you wish you had more time to attend to your personal needs?” In this case, the response ‘other’ includes no, maybe, unsure and nonapplicable. In this variable, it

is clear that the overwhelming majority of respondents responded yes, 82.4%, and only 17.6% responded. No one responded no or unsure. This question also lends itself to the notion of emotional work. When thinking of emotional work, we think about people pushing aside their wants and needs for the good of the company or organization.

Arlie Hochschild's book included research about emotional work and flight attendants. In her book, she details public and private spaces, the hiring practices of airlines, the expectations and indoctrination of flight attendants and how emotional work takes a toll, and the experiences that people have when performing emotional work. Among the many definitions for emotional work, hers sticks out: "This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others - in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place. This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality" (Hochschild 2012). This definition lends itself to many occupations and work. Not only flight attendants but also later explored in this paper, education, nurses, paralegals, etc., engage in emotional work. She also discusses alienation by saying that sometimes workers can be estranged from themselves based on the emotional work happening (Hochschild 2012). As seen in my study, camp counselors certainly engage in emotional work. Wahl-Alexander et al discuss a camp counselor's attitude and how it relates to emotional work.

A person's attitude can be influenced by how they feel about the work and the people around them. The question, did you have a positive experience working at camp, is limited in its significance since many people answered nonapplicable. Please see below.

Views on A Positive Experience

Overall Positive Experience Working at Camp

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	16	31.4	42.1	42.1
	Non Applicable	22	43.1	57.9	100.0
	Total	38	74.5	100.0	
Missing	System	13	25.5		
Total		51	100.0		

This question is limited by the number of people that commented ‘nonapplicable’ because they had not worked at camp before. It is also limited because there are 25 missing cases. It is important to note that in the nonapplicable category, no one answered no. This indicates that most people have a positive experience doing this emotional work. Fifty-seven point nine percent responded nonapplicable, which is not relevant when reviewing the data. I focused on the 42.1% that responded yes.

It is worth discussing that emotional labor is not always a negative force. While it can cause burnout and emotional dissonance, “emotional labor is not always (or even necessarily) associated with negative outcomes” (Wharton, 1999: 163). Wharton goes on to explain that emotional work is a necessary and typical part of everyday life and that it is taken for granted. Wharton comments that emotional work does not always produce a negative result (Wharton, 1999: 163). As mentioned, many jobs perform emotional labor, and those workers can be very happy. As shown later in my research, the people who perform this job enjoy the experience. The dichotomy provides an excellent opportunity for further reading and consideration of my research.

People’s emotional work propels them to think about themselves and how their work and volunteerism defines them. My next research questions deal with how people view themselves in

terms of adulthood. Section 3: Volunteerism and Transition to Adulthood explore whether these young adults consider themselves adults and why or why not they do so.

Section 3: Volunteerism and Transition to Adulthood

The attitudes have changed to reflect the life events that take place to transition to adulthood. “The life events that make the transition to adulthood are accompanied by a sense of commitment, purpose and identity” (Furstenberg et al., 2004: 34). In my research, I will examine markers that camp counselors feel are important in the transition to adulthood.

Along with attitudes, the economic climate has changed. Settersten Jr. and Ray remark when considering the 1950s, “In the postwar boom that followed, high-paying industrial jobs were plentiful, and a prosperous economy enabled workers with high school degrees (or less) and college degrees alike to find secure employment with decent wages and benefits” (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 21). This lends itself to the argument that the state of the economy later in the twenty-first century contributed to the delay of the transition to adulthood. Settersten Jr. and Ray report again because there were stable jobs, there were greater possibilities for people to get married young and have stability (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 21). Today, having one job or even two jobs may not be sufficient to live apart from a person’s family, which would delay their transition to adulthood.

The labor market has changed significantly since the 1950s. Jobs that require little education that pays well are less prevalent (Furstenberg et al., 2004). For this reason, young people have responded by attending residential colleges or joining the military more frequently. For joining the military, the percentage is not high, one in four young adults, but this has been one response to the changing job market (Furstenberg et al., 2004: 25). This delays the transition

to adulthood. Settersten Jr. and Ray write, “In 2005, even before the current recession and during the height of the Iraq war, roughly three in ten white men between ages sixteen and twenty-four with only a high school degree were not in school, in the military, or at work. For young black men, the proportion is staggering: more than half were not in school, in the military, or in work” (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 23). In the period following World War II, as mentioned, high-paying industrial jobs were plentiful. During the 1970s, the manufacturing sector had been what was keeping the middle class together, solidifying lives of security that then had fallen apart for the working class (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 29). This is a reasonable explanation for the delay in the marker for adulthood today the ability to support a family and work full time.

Another marker that was used in the mid-twentieth century was getting married. Between 1960-1980 the median age for someone’s first marriage rose from twenty to twenty-five years old, and today went up drastically to twenty-seven for men and twenty-six for women. Another statistic reads, “By age thirty-four, seven in ten have tied the knot” (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 31). It is parallel to say that the transition to adulthood is delayed by young people delaying marriage. Contrasting to this is the idea that part of a person being an adult has to do with having children. Young people with a lower level of education or less economic means, tend to have children before marriage. This weighs in at “40% of all first births occur before marriage” (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 31).

To combat these delays, there is a theory that institutions, particularly community colleges, the military, service-learning, and service-learning programs, need to step up and provide additional support (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 19). Community colleges are poised to reach many young people and provide them with skills that will be useful

in a job market. The military provides loan forgiveness, a skill set, tuition, health insurance, and pay. However, young people are not engaging in these programs (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 35). Service learning programs, in particular, are targeted to low-income communities and work to include at-risk youth.

These are important questions to consider as the ideas around the transition to adulthood keep changing from generation to generation. While there is research into how young people view the transition to adulthood, my literature review did not locate articles that look specifically at college-age students in volunteer positions. It is worthwhile to consider whether this positionality makes a difference in how these particular young people view adulthood. The sociological question at stake here is how society and its views impede and influence the upcoming generation and their conclusions about adulthood. My research will seek to make this distinction.

Camp Counselors Considering Themselves an Adult

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	35	68.6	70.0	70.0
	Other	15	29.4	30.0	100.0
	Total	50	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.0		
Total		51	100.0		

According to my study, 70% of the respondents responded that they consider themselves an adult. 30% answered other, which includes maybe, sometimes, unsure, and no. Five people were unsure if they considered themselves an adult, four people said maybe, three people said unsure, and two people responded no. There was only one missing case for this variable.

The type of work that is required of camp counselors requires maturity. Knight writes, “None of this is easy work - it is exhausting, and it is at times frustrating, but it is also worth it” (Knight 2019). Additionally, many staff members travel from other countries to work at Kids Inc. See the table below.

Country of Origin

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	United States	34	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Other	17	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

Sixty-six point seven percent of respondents are from the United States, and 33.3% are from other countries as follows: Mexico, Israel, Hungary, Jamaica, England, Poland, Brazil, and India. To travel such a far distance demonstrates the maturity that is involved in being an adult. It is reasonable to say that young people in this type of job exhibit enhanced maturity, which leads them to think of themselves as adults more so than other people their age. This could be an opportunity for further research to inquire what percentage of young adults that are not camp counselors consider themselves adults.

Camp counselors are also expected to teach life skills. Knight writes that camp counselors teach perseverance, cooperation, curiosity, how to support fellow campers, and how to be thoughtful (Knight 2019). This expectation comes with the understanding that counselors themselves must have the maturity and skills to pass along this wisdom to their campers. It is difficult to say if a typical teenager or young adult has the type of wherewithal to have these qualities and be able to extend them to others. The camper counselors in my research tended to

view themselves as adults and, by extension, consider themselves to have the maturity necessary to be an adult.

Rehberg writes, “challenging oneself and thereby getting to know one’s own limits is an important means to identity building, particularly for adolescents and young adults” (Rehberg 2005: 119). Differing from volunteering in later adulthood, the transition to adulthood is characterized by a time that “requires learning new roles and responsibilities and adjusting to new context and situation”. It is also noted that “the transition to adulthood is, therefore, a crucial time during which lifelong trajectories of civic participation are formed” (Oesterle et al., 2004: 1128). This is the link between volunteering and young adulthood. Young adults are expected to learn new things and adjust to the transition of becoming an adult. By volunteering, these young adults engage in activities in which lifelong participation trends are formed. This means they will volunteer more in the future the further into adulthood they get. This quote shows that the transition to adulthood is a crucial time and that young people benefit greatly from giving up their time. Different people have different ideas as to what it means to be an adult. Please see the table below for the responses. In the case of my research, the idea is that being financially independent or making independent decisions makes them an adult.

Important Factors in Being an Adult

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Being Financially Independent	11	21.6	27.5	27.5
	Making Independent Decisions	18	35.3	45.0	72.5
	Other	11	21.6	27.5	100.0
	Total	40	78.4	100.0	
Missing	System	11	21.6		
Total		51	100.0		

In the 1950s, adulthood was measured in the life events of getting married and having children. Men were considered adults when they got married and began to support a family, and women were considered adults when they got married and had children. Many social factors have changed since the 1950s. The attitudes around what makes someone an adult have changed over time. Contrasting with the ideology of the post-World War II era, Furstenberg cites his research saying that today, “Ninety-five percent of Americans surveyed consider education, employment, financial independence and the ability to support a family to be key steps on the path to adulthood” (Furstenberg et al., 2004: 36). Further discussed by Furstenberg, supporting a family is still a notable adult quality today (shown in the 94% surveyed). However, more emphasis has been placed on education and financial independence. Ninety-seven percent of respondents said that completing education and having financial independence are events that are important to be considered an adult (Furstenberg et al., 2004: 36). Setterson Jr. and Ray cite a similar thought, “Today, more than 95 percent of Americans consider the most important markers of adulthood to be completing school, establishing an independent household and being employed full time” (Richard A. Settersten Jr. & Barbara Ray, 2010: 21d).

Volunteers are very special people. According to Miller et al, volunteers can affirm their individuality and identify responsibilities. This is true for the camp counselors at Kids, Inc. It adds to the idea that counselors have a maturity not found in a typical young adult. Their ability and desire to volunteer enhance their ability to assert individuality and be able to take responsibility for their actions and their life.

Conclusions

My research garnered some interesting and valuable information. In section one, there was a discussion about the influences and motivations that young people had for working at camp. The expected results were that making a difference would gather the most responses. After conducting the research and interpreting the data, this was discovered to be unfounded. The motivations of making a difference and growing personally were identical at 36.7%. This is significant because much of the research cites helping others as motivation. For example, the six categories described by Clary and Snyder are discussed in section 1. Growing personally does not fit into this paradigm, so it is an interesting finding. Future research could include a larger group of camp counselors that explore these two variables and discover which has more responses. My question did not ask this question with just two answers in mind. Instead, there were other choices to select from. By narrowing down the questions to two answers, making a difference, and growing personally, the results will be clearer, particularly with a larger population.

The next section deals with emotional work. This question asks many questions about challenges, a positive attitude, burnout, personal needs, and positive experience. Research has been done regarding the difference between those identifying as male and female and their burnout rate. It is discussed in Wahl-Alexander's paper that depersonalization, a component of burnout, is felt differently between male and female counselors. He did his research with camp counselors at a camp in the northeast, similar to my research site. His research states that males feel more depersonalization effects than females do. He also states that males have a higher level of detachment, unimportance, and indifference than females do.

Another part of his study searches to discover the rates of personal accomplishment throughout the summer. The higher the level of personal accomplishment, the less the likelihood of burnout. In this study, females exhibited higher levels of personal achievement throughout the summer. This again leads to the conclusion that males have a higher level of burnout than females (Wahl-Alexander 2017). My table below does not support those findings.

Feelings of Burnout and Gender Cross Tabulation

		Gender			Total	
		Male	Female	Other		
Recorded Burnout	Yes	Count	8	25	1	34
		% within Gender	44.4%	78.1%	100.0%	66.7%
	No	Count	3	3	0	6
		% within Gender	16.7%	9.4%	0.0%	11.8%
	Sometimes	Count	7	4	0	11
		% within Gender	38.9%	12.5%	0.0%	21.6%
Total	Count	18	32	1	51	
	% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

This table is a cross-tabulation of gender and burnout. On the left are the responses to the question, “Do you feel that maintaining a positive attitude has resulted in exhaustion or burnout?” These answers are represented by yes, no, and sometimes. This question was discussed in Section 2. The genders, male, female, and other are listed on top. Eight males responded yes to the burnout question, and 25 females responded yes. Seventy-eight point one percent of females responded yes, and 44.4% of males responded yes. This is a difference of 33.7%. This is a large difference. In my study, females were more likely to claim that they had experienced burnout than men. This indicates a difference in the population of people that my research studied and that of Wahl-Alexander. This brings me to whether Wahl-Alexander’s or my

research can be generalized to the population. Wahl-Alexander states that his research has limitations in the population. His population comprises 96% Caucasian participants at a high-end sleep away camp. It is difficult to constitute what 'high end' means and I am unsure if my site meets this criterion. In response to his statistics regarding race, below is a table measuring race in my study.

Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	White	25	49.0	58.1	58.1
	Black	9	17.6	20.9	79.1
	Other	9	17.6	20.9	100.0
	Total	43	84.3	100.0	
Missing	System	8	15.7		
Total		51	100.0		

As this table shows, my population differs greatly from Wahl-Alexander's. Only 58.1% of my respondents are white, while 20.9% are black and 20.9% identified as other. Because our populations are so different, it is difficult to compare results. Further research could examine camps that have a larger variation in race, a different socioeconomic position, and camps that are in different parts of the country. My population also runs into issues with generalizability because it only has 51 respondents, and the research is done at one camp.

The biggest finding in section two is that people still have positive experiences regardless of individual experiences. Sixty-six percent of respondents stated that for them, maintaining a positive attitude leads to burnout, 70.6% of the population stated that they tired of maintaining a positive attitude, 39.5% of people said that they ignored their personal needs to attend to campers, and 82.4% responded that they wanted more time to attend to their personal needs. Finally, 41.1% of people said that they had a positive experience. This is remarkable: so much

emotional labor is required, there are many challenges and difficulties, and still, people have a positive experience and want to return to work at camp. The American Camp Association has an insight as to why: “Camp jobs offer invaluable skill-building, leadership, training and enrichment opportunities that can’t be found anywhere else! Regardless of your college major, camp experiences allow you to learn and develop skills that will enhance your job marketability” (<https://www.acacamps.org/resources/summer-camp-jobs-why-work-camp#:~:text=Camp%20jobs%20offer%20invaluable%20skill,far%20beyond%20a%20paycheck%2C%20too.>). In general, camp counselors claim to have gained valuable experience and immense enjoyment out of the experience. Knight reflects fondly on her job as a counselor saying that it is incredibly fulfilling and rewarding. She expressed the ability to hold many roles in the child’s life, such as mothers and sisters, bosses, and interns. She marks camp counseling as a noble profession (Knight 2019). The table below supports the idea that even when people are tired of maintaining a positive attitude, they still have a positive experience.

Maintaining a Positive Attitude and Having a Positive Experience Crosstabulation

Positive Attitude			Positive Experience		
			Yes	Non Applicable	Total
PosAt	Yes	Count	10	14	24
		% within Recoded Positive Experience	62.5%	63.6%	63.2%
	Sometimes	Count	2	3	5
		% within Recoded Positive Experience	12.5%	13.6%	13.2%
	Other	Count	4	5	9
		% within Recoded Positive Experience	25.0%	22.7%	23.7%
Total		Count	16	22	38
		% within Recoded Positive Experience	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When analyzing this table, I focus on the 'Yes' column. The nonapplicable column represents people who had not worked at camp before. The corresponding question to the variable is, "If you have worked at camp before, did you have an overall positive experience?" For this reason, the non-applicable column is not relevant. The relevant piece of information is that 62.5% of respondents said they had a positive experience regardless of tiring of maintaining a positive attitude while working at camp. This is shown in the 'Yes' on the left hand side and the 'Yes' coming from the top of the table. This is supportive of literature that talks about the positive experiences that people have working at camp and why they continue to do it.

The final section of my paper discusses how young adults view themselves in terms of adulthood. My findings suggest that most camp counselors consider themselves adults (66.7%). To quote this section and Furstenberg again, "The life events that make the transition to adulthood are accompanied by a sense of commitment, purpose, and identity" (Furstenberg et al., 2004:34). These types of people embody camp counselors. Camp counselors make a deep commitment to themselves, the organization that they work for, and the people that they work with. As stated in the introduction, taking responsibility for another person's child is a huge charge.

The commitment that comes with that is lofty. The commitment is filled with responsibility, intensity, hard work, and purpose. Furstenberg talks about purpose when thinking about the transition to adulthood. This is ever true for this group of young people. The purpose that can be considered in this case is making a difference, the large motivation for working at camp. The purpose fulfills the mission of most nonprofit organizations which is to serve the people that they work with well.

The meaning of purpose is a big reason why young adults volunteer, and in turn, it marks their transition to adulthood. Finally, the transition to adulthood is also measured by identity. In the case of my study, young adults were asked to ponder whether or not they considered themselves adults. This sense of identity that young people have is interesting. The two markers that this population has for being considered an adult are making financial decisions and being financially independent. From a cursory look, it does not appear that these young adults would be financially independent. They are between 18-25 years old and are generally college students. Most young people in this age group are not financially independent. An area for further research would be to ask this population, camp counselors, their socioeconomic status, and whether or not they are financially independent. It is more plausible that they would make independent decisions rather than be financially independent. My initial assumption was that these young people would not consider themselves adults because of their age. However, this does not appear true. Only 5 people responded that age was an important factor in being an adult, and only 3 responded being able to support a family. I think that generationally there is a difference between what young people consider markers of adulthood. This would be an excellent area for further study.

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Appendix A

Table of Participants

Participant	Participant Name	Age	Gender	Religion	Country	Career Aspiration
1	George	22	Male	Christian	Mexico	Modern Language
2	Jill	22	Female	Not religious	United States	Animal Therapy
3	Jimmy	18	Male		Hungary	
4	Gertrude	25	Female	Christian	Hungary	Sociologist
5	Robert	23	Male	Not religious	Hungary	Mechanical Engineering
6	Terry	21	Male	Christian	United States	Teacher
7	Payton	20	Female	Islam	United States	
8	Sean	21	Male	Not religious	Mexico	
9	Raymond	21	Male	Not religious	United States	Psychiatry
10	Patrick	21	Male	Buddhist	United States	

11	Betty	20	Female	Not religious	United States	Actor
12	Lee	20	Male	Other	Jamaica	Industrialist
13	Jane	18	Female	Not religious	United States	Medical Field
14	David	18	Male	Not religious	England	Criminology
15	Annette	19	Female	Not religious	United States	Psychiatrist
16	Hildie	21	Female	Other	United States	Doctor
17	Lynn	19	Female	Spiritual	United States	Teacher
18	Joyce	19	Female	Not religious	UK	Business Owner
19	Ashley	24	Female	Other	United States	Psychology
20	Jennifer	23	Female	Spiritual	United States	Speaker
21	Jessica	23	Female		United States	Teacher
22	Madison	22	Female	Not religious	United States	Social Worker
23	Jayne	19	Female	Christian	Poland	Helping People
24	Sally	24	Female	Spiritual	United States	HR

25	Michael	24	Male	Not religious	United States	
26	Frida	20	Female	Not religious	Brazil	
27	Mark	20	Male	Not religious	United States	
28	Georgia	21	Female	Christian	Hungary	Teacher
29	Katherine	20	Female	Other	United States	Teacher
30	Charlie	21	Female	Hindu	India	Real Estate
31	Diane	21	Female	Islam	England	Psychologist
32	Robyn	21	Female	Christian	United States	Psychology
33	Tricia	19	Non-Binary	Spiritual	United States	Park Ranger
34	Linda	19	Female	Spiritual	United States	Criminal Justice
35	Scott	24	Male	Christian	United States	Sports Psychologist
36	Janelle	21	Female	Not religious	United States	School Psychologist
37	Cecelia	19	Female	Not religious	United States	Elementary Education

38	Aaren	19	Female	Not religious	United States	FBI
39	Steve	22	Male	Spiritual	United States	Software Engineer
40	Danny	21	Male	Not religious	UK	Teacher
41	Adam	21	Male	Not religious	UK	
42	Ginny	20	Female	Christian	United States	Child Behavioral Specialist
43	Jordan	23	Female	Jewish	United States	Adult Disability Services
44	Giovanni	21	Male	Jewish	Israel	Politician
45	Justice	21	Female		United States	Clinical Psychologist
46	Kevin	18	Male	Christian	United States	
47	Genevieve	19	Female	Spiritual	United States	Children's Psychologist
48	Fiona	23	Female	Other	United States	Human Services
49	Tiffany	21	Female	Christian	United States	Day Care
50	Tori	22	Female	Christian	United States	Social Worker
51	Justin	23	Male	Spiritual	United States	Social Worker

Appendix B: Questionnaire

1. Age
 - a. Write in answer _____
2. Gender
 - a. Write in answer _____
3. Race, please write in your answer. _____
4. What religion do you identify as? Please select one answer.
 - a. Christian
 - b. Hindu
 - c. Islam
 - d. Buddhist
 - e. Spiritual
 - f. Not religious
 - g. Other
 - h. Unsure
5. Please indicate your city and state of residence, please write in your answer. _____
6. What is your high school GPA? Please write in your answer.
7. What would you consider to be your parent's class?
 - a. Lower Class
 - b. Working Class
 - c. Middle Class
 - d. Upper Class
 - e. Unsure
 - f. Other
8. What is your parents' highest level of education? Please indicate the highest level of education between both parents.
 - a. High School
 - b. Some College
 - c. Associates Degree
 - d. Bachelor's Degree
 - e. Graduate Degree
 - f. Phd
 - g. Other
 - h. Unsure
9. Are you enrolled in college?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

10. If you are in college, what is your college GPA? Please write in your answer.

11. If you are in college, are you enrolled in a four year, two year college or graduate program?

- a. 4 year
- b. 2 year
- c. Graduate Program
- d. Other
- e. n/a

12. If enrolled in college, what is your major or program of study?

- a. Humanities
- b. Social Sciences
- c. Fine Arts
- d. Science
- e. Performative
- f. Other
- g. n/a

13. What is your career aspiration? Please write in your answer.

14. What kind of job are you interested in doing in the future? Please write in your answer.

15. Do you consider yourself an adult?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe
- d. Sometimes
- e. Unsure

16. What factors do you consider important in being an adult? Pick the most important.

- a. Age
- b. Marriage
- c. Having children
- d. Living with someone besides family
- e. Being financially independent
- f. Being able to support a family
- g. Completing an educational program
- h. Finishing high school
- i. Making independent decisions
- j. Having a part time job
- k. Having a full time job
- l. Having a job with health and retirement benefits
- m. Other
- n. Unsure

17. What factors do you consider important in being an adult? Pick the second most important.
- Age
 - Marriage
 - Having children
 - Living with someone besides family
 - Being financially independent
 - Being able to support a family
 - Completing an educational program
 - Finishing high school
 - Making independent decisions
 - Having a part time job
 - Having a full time job
 - Having a job with health and retirement benefits
 - Other
 - Unsure
18. Have you had a job in the past where you've engaged in customer service or working directly with customers or clients?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
19. If yes, did you find this work challenging?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
20. What did you find most challenging about this type of work? Please select the most challenging.
- Hours
 - Having to maintain a positive attitude
 - Coworkers
 - Supervisors
 - Difficult customers
 - Pushing aside your needs for the organization
 - Having to push down feelings of frustration to deal with customers or clients
21. Please select the second most challenging aspect of engaging in customer service work.
- Hours
 - Having to maintain a positive attitude
 - Coworkers
 - Supervisors
 - Difficult customers
 - Pushing aside your needs for the organization
 - Having to push down feelings of frustration to deal with customers or clients

22. Did you enjoy this type of work?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
 - d. Haven't done previous work
23. Do you consistently maintain a positive attitude in your work environment?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. Other
24. Do you ever find yourself tired of maintaining a positive attitude?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Unsure
 - e. Other
25. Do you feel that maintaining a positive attitude has resulted in exhaustion or burnout?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Unsure
26. Do you find yourself pretending to be happy or positive to make customers/clients feel good about their interaction with you or the organization?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. Other
 - f. n/a

27. What motivated you to apply to work at camp? Please select the most important option. If this is not your first summer, please respond reflecting your reason to initially apply.
- College credit
 - Gaining experience working with children
 - Gaining experience working with children with special needs
 - Boosting resume
 - A friend is working at camp
 - A friend asked you to work at camp
 - Communication with Ramapo staff prior to the summer
 - Recommendation of a professor or advisor
 - Needing room and board over the summer
 - Compensation
 - None of these
 - Other
28. What motivated you to apply to work at camp? Please select the second most important option. If this is not your first summer, please respond reflecting your reason to initially apply.
- College credit
 - Gaining experience working with children
 - Gaining experience working with children with special needs
 - Boosting resume
 - A friend is working at camp
 - A friend asked you to work at camp
 - Communication with Ramapo staff prior to the summer
 - Recommendation of a professor or advisor
 - Needing room and board over the summer
 - Compensation
 - None of these
 - Other
29. Out of these factors, which influenced your decision to work at Ramapo the most? Please select the most important reason.
- Values (wanting to make a difference)
 - Work on skills
 - Grow and develop personally
 - Prepare for a career
 - Strengthen personal relationships
 - Escaping personal struggles
 - Unsure
 - Other

30. Out of these factors, which influenced your decision to work at Ramapo the most? Please select the second most important reason.
- Values (wanting to make a difference)
 - Work on skills
 - Grow and develop personally
 - Prepare for a career
 - Strengthen personal relationships
 - Escaping personal struggles
 - Unsure
 - Other
31. What are you most excited about regarding working at camp this summer? Please select one answer.
- Working with children with special needs
 - Developing relationships with other adults
 - The camp activities
 - Receiving college credit
 - Unsure
 - Other
32. Have you worked at this camp before?
- Yes
 - No
33. If yes, why did you return? Please select one answer.
- Satisfied with experience last year
 - To see friends
 - To receive a promotion
 - The love for the campers
 - Feeling like you've made a difference
 - Haven't worked at camp before
34. If you have worked at camp before, what did you find most challenging? Please select the most challenging.
- Hours
 - Schedule
 - Behavior of children
 - Support of supervisors
 - Support of administration
 - Relationships with co counselors
 - Activities
 - n/a

35. If you have worked at camp before, what did you find most challenging? Please select the second most challenging option.
- Hours
 - Schedule
 - Behavior of children
 - Support of supervisors
 - Support of administration
 - Relationships with co counselors
 - Activities
 - n/a
36. If you have worked at camp before, what did you find most rewarding? Please select the most rewarding.
- Relationships with children
 - Feeling as though you've made a difference
 - Relationships with co workers
 - Enhanced communication skills
 - Receiving college credit
 - Other
 - n/a
37. If you have worked at camp before, what did you find most rewarding? Please select the second most rewarding option.
- Relationships with children
 - Feeling as though you've made a difference
 - Relationships with co workers
 - Enhanced communication skills
 - Receiving college credit
 - Other
 - n/a
38. If you have worked at camp before, did you have an overall positive experience?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Maybe
 - Other
 - n/a
39. If you have worked at camp before, do you feel that your emotional needs are taken care of by leadership staff?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Other
 - n/a

40. If you have worked at camp before, did you have to ignore your personal emotional needs in order to take care of campers?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Unsure
 - d. Other
 - e. n/a
41. Do you change your behavior to meet the needs of campers?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. Other
 - f. n/a
42. Do you change your behavior in front of supervisors?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. Other
 - f. n/a
43. Do you wish that you had more time to attend to your personal needs?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. n/a
44. Has Camp Ramapo made clear their expectations for work with campers?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure

45. Which of these expectations are most difficult for you? Please select the most difficult expectation.
- The hours
 - Maintaining a positive attitude
 - Limited breaks
 - Limited time off
 - Dealing with aggression
 - Dealing with toileting challenges
 - Displaying empathy consistently through the day and evening
 - Being patient
 - Cooperating with co counselors and supervisors
46. Which of these expectations are most difficult for you? Please select the second most difficult expectation.
- The hours
 - Maintaining a positive attitude
 - Limited breaks
 - Limited time off
 - Dealing with aggression
 - Dealing with toileting challenges
 - Displaying empathy consistently through the day and evening
 - Being patient
 - Cooperating with co counselors and supervisors
47. What do you anticipate being the most difficult part of your job? Please select the most difficult.
- The hours
 - Working with children with special needs
 - Maintaining a positive attitude all the time
 - Being friendly consistently throughout the day and night
 - Pushing aside your own needs in favor of the organization's needs
48. What do you anticipate being the most difficult part of your job? Please select the second most difficult.
- The hours
 - Working with children with special needs
 - Maintaining a positive attitude all the time
 - Being friendly consistently throughout the day and night
 - Pushing aside your own needs in favor of the organization's needs

49. Do you seek to maintain a professional attitude to stay in line with the organization's expectations?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Maybe
 - d. Unsure
 - e. n/a