

OUTDOOR CAMP EFFECTS ON ATHLETES: ORIENTEERING EXAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

Background. In this research, we aimed to investigate the effects of outdoor camps on orienteering athletes.

Methods. The study group consisted of 74 athletes (44 males and 30 females, aged 11.94 ± 1.32 years) who participated in Bolu outdoor camp on the 3rd–13th of August, 2015. Interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used as data collection tool and content analysis method was used for data analysis.

Results. Demographic factors were interpreted after the analysis of the obtained data and three main research questions were discussed under the topics of the views of athletes about the concept of Orienteering which is an outdoor sport, themes and codes regarding the purpose of Orienteering by the students who participated in the outdoor camp, and themes and codes about the outcomes of Orienteering for the students who participated in outdoor camps.

Conclusion. It is suggested that a policy must be developed within the Ministry of Youth and Sport and Sport Federations in order to disseminate more deliberate and more comprehensive outdoor education among young people and measures should be taken to provide extensive participation.

Keywords: sport, outdoor education, camp, orienteering.

INTRODUCTION

Today, rapidly growing urbanization has begun to restrict opportunities for individuals to engage in sports in the natural environment. This natural environment is being replaced by artificial recreation and sports complexes. Though these artificial complexes give opportunities to individuals to do sports within the city life, people willingly go the natural environment to do sports. This request to escape from the routine life has many salient reasons such as getting away from the noise and pollution of the city, exploring new places and searching for new thrills and risks. These pursuits have begun to reveal the importance of outdoor camps and education for the people.

Different numerous definitions have been made in terms of focusing on the place, process and goals of the concept of nature education which is sometimes called outdoor education. While outdoor education is generally defined

as activities carried out in open areas and for various purposes (Neill, 2008), it is expressed as a challenge, according to Nicol (2002). According to Çelebi (2002), there is a wide range of educational processes, such as planning, conservation and use of natural resources, tending to nature, city comfort and life away from technology. However, it is suggested that a consensus cannot be reached on conceptualization, interpretation and application of outdoor education, which can vary depending on factors such as culture, philosophy and local conditions (Brookes, 2006; Freakley, 1990; Lugg, 1999; Neill, 2008). Moreover, it has been pointed out that nature education plays an important role in teaching participants the necessary knowledge and skills and maintaining healthier and more active lifestyle (Cantrell, 2015). In other words, it is emphasized that outdoor education will develop different feelings with the help of freedom instinct

besides offering different teaching programs to people (Demirhan, 1998).

Participants will be able to interact with outdoor environment through training to be held outdoors. Activities in natural environment such as nature walking, orienteering, camping, fishing, canoeing, skiing, horse riding, golf, water skiing, motor sports, air sports are called outdoor recreation (Cordes & Ibrahim, 1999). It is possible to reduce or control the risks that may be encountered in nature by the help of the education given for any activity to be done within open space recreation.

It is very important for the athletes to gain experience in natural environment because of wildlife areas where outdoor sports are done, insufficient control mechanisms and various environmental conditions (terrain, atmospheric conditions, etc.). In the process of gaining experience, development of fighting and decision-making mechanisms with outdoor is ensured with the training to be given by knowledge owners. In this way, participants' challenges with outdoor will be facilitated against possible risks (Chelladurai, 1993).

In essence, it is mentioned that there are four implications which underlie participation of individuals in outdoor camps and their education. These relationships include interpersonal relationships (communication, business association and problem solving, etc.), relationship that one establishes with himself/herself (self-concept, self-confidence, self-efficacy, etc.), relationships with ecosystems (attachment to other creatures), and it is explained as ekistics relations explaining how environment affects human life (Priest & Gass, 1997). Outdoor camps are seen as an experience for individuals to remember for the rest of their lives. Both interpersonal relations and friendships develop in camp life. These developments almost continue their existence throughout lives of individuals (Chenery, 1991).

As a result of the connection established with natural environment, situations where individuals are expected to experience in learning process provide some benefits through activities held in nature. The outdoor activities, in which individuals actively or passively participate, have positive effects on social life as well as supporting their integration with society and their interactions with nature, including the activities affecting their life styles (Ardahan & Lapa Yerlisu, 2011). As a result of interaction with nature, individuals and social

benefits come to the forefront. The connection established with nature provides a high motivation for individuals while creating environments in which skills such as decision making, team communication and coexistence, problem solving, idea generation and mutual trust can be used effectively (Dinç, 2006; Dymont & Potter, 2015). It is also suggested that outdoor camps allow individuals with various characteristics (age, sex, environment, etc.) to come together and interact and help to create original ideas, and ensures awareness of nature and environment (Ekici & Çolakoğlu, 2005; Dymont & Potter, 2015; Tekin, Ekici & Çolakoğlu, 2005). In other words, outdoor camps and education allow individuals to be self-aware, to recognize their talents, to establish social relations, to define outdoor, and to be satisfied with the activity that they will freely choose (McIlraith, 2000). In outdoor camps, individuals' efforts to live in natural environment and their education can be considered as an important factor to get sensitive to environment.

Outdoor camps have some important consequences for the participants. Particularly in camp environments, such features as sharing, solidarity, providing preference option and teamwork are directly related to self-esteem. In addition, individuals' self-awareness, team spirit and decision-making abilities develop in camp environments. While these situations are expressed as psychological consequences of outdoor camps, elements such as group experience and interaction bring about social consequences at the same time (Marsh, 1999). The Outdoor camps and education can cause differences in the level of socialization of the participants through various trainings given. It can be considered that participants and experienced leaders from different regions and opportunities to play with them and to live together are the most important socialization and motivation process of the camps (Ekici & Çolakoğlu, 2005; Munusturlar, Munusturlar Akyıldız, & Özçakır, 2016). Moreover, variable recreational activities improve satisfaction levels of individuals who are involved in leisure, social, cultural and sport activities in the sport education camps (Polat, 2016). Durall (1997) suggests that education in outdoor camps is a successful way of social development, especially for children. It is stated that skills such as communication, leadership, organization and decision-making that are gained in outdoor camps can also be effective in our interactions with people

in our daily lives (Dworken, 1999). However, it has been stated that nature education has come to the forefront of team spirit, leadership, talent development, self-confidence, problem solving, coexistence and taking responsibility (Dworken, 2001; Groves, 1981). In addition, problem-solving could be encountered as a dimension in many forms of leisure education (Munusturlar & Bayrak, 2016). According to Colyn, DeGraaf and Certan (2008), camp training is considered to be an important element in socialization of individuals and provides some gains such as friendship, honesty and communication.

Literature examination shows that similar research has been carried out discussing social, physical and psychological benefits provided by the outdoor sports to individual. Factors such as development of individual decision making, self-development, responsibility, risk management, leadership, self-confidence, team spirit, discovery, interacting with others, and self-realization can be cited as common benefits provided by outdoor sports (Burnett, 1994; Dymont & Potter, 2015; Hilton, 1992; Levi, 1994; McKenzie, 2000; McRoberts, 1994; Wagner & Rowland, 1992; Yerlisu Lapa, Ardahan, & Yıldız, 2010). Moreover, orienteering sport improves self-esteem (Wood, Gladwell & Barton, 2014), health, self-esteem and decision making (Baş & Cengiz, 2016) for participants.

In this research, we aimed to examine the effects of outdoor camps on athletes. For this purpose, the following questions were raised:

Q1. What are the opinions about orienteering sport of athletes who participated in the outdoor camp?

Q2. Why do they do orienteering which is an outdoor sport?

Q3. What do they think outdoor camp contributes to them?

METHOD

Research Model. This study is a descriptive research and phenomenology has been preferred as a qualitative research design since it is thought to be best in determining participants' thoughts, experiences, demands and suggestions about the topic. Phenomenology focuses on what we are aware of but we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding. In this research design, the data source focuses on individuals or groups

that live and reflect this phenomenon (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Study Group. A total of 74 athletes, 44 boys and 30 girls, aged between 9–15 (11.94 ± 1.32) years and participating in the orienteering development camp in Bolu on 3–13 August 2015 (Table 1), took part in the research. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 3 questions prepared in line with expert opinion. Primarily, Turkish Orienteering was informed and asked for permission about the process and scope of the research.

Table 1. Gender distribution of the research group

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	44	59.5
	Female	30	40.5
	Total	74	100

A purposeful sampling method was applied to select the appropriate sample. In the research, convenience sampling strategy was preferred. This method was chosen as it gives speed and practicality to the research and is easy to reach and examine a case for the researcher (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Data Collection Method. In this study interview technique was used as data collection method. The goal of interview method is to be able to carry out information exchange process between interviewer and interviewee (McKenna, 1994). According to Pehlivan (1999), interview is defined as a “purposeful interview”. Open-ended semi-structured questions were prepared in line with the opinions of a total of 3 expert academicians, 2 in the field of sports management and 1 in the field of measurement evaluation. Face to face individual interviews were held with 74 athletes participating in the nature camp held by Turkish Orienteering Federation on the 3rd - 13th of August, 2015, in Bolu (Turkey) (between 15–25 min.). The interview form consisted of two parts: the first part included participant information form and personal characteristics of participants and the second part was an interview form including open-ended semi-structured questions developed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews are often preferred by researchers because of their certain level of standard and flexibility as they are based on writing and filling tests and help to remove limitations in questionnaires and get in-depth information on a particular topic (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). All

participants were interviewed and information about the scope of the study was given to them, afterwards a voluntary consent form was filled in. Participants were asked for permission for voice recording and a commitment was made that records would be used by the researcher only for scientific purposes.

Data Analysis. A descriptive analysis method was first applied for the procession of data that was written by the researcher. The answers given by participants to the same questions were put together before the analysis. In the research process, coding of the data, extraction of the themes as well as arrangement of the sub-dimensions by arranging data according to the themes and codes were alternated. The purpose of this analysis was to convert raw data into a form that readers could understand and use if they wished. At this stage, the data summarized in the descriptive analysis was taken into a more detailed process and coded independently by three researchers in the field. Coding was conducted by two researchers working in the field of Sport Management Sciences using paper in a classical manner, and also by a researcher in the field of measurement and evaluation using qualitative data analysis programme (Nvivo 11 Pro for Windows). Consistency between the codes was confirmed by comparing the codes carried out in a mutually independent manner, and similar codes were put together to formulate problems and recommendations.

Content analysis is a method of scientific research used to make meaningful and necessary conclusions about texts and contexts (Krippendorff, 2004). Four stages are followed to make content analysis: coding of data, detection of themes, organization of codes and themes, and identification and interpretation of findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In content analysis, deduction or induction methods can be used. The purpose of study determines which one is suitable to be used. If insufficient knowledge is available about study case, induction method is recommended (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). The induction method was preferred as a research analysis method due to the lack of structured data array of results, especially in Turkey, although outdoor camps are organized regularly.

Validity and Reliability. Validity studies in qualitative research, which means that a researcher is conducting a study with a whole objectivity (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013), is concerned with fulfilling some obligations related to internal and

external validity. In this context, researchers pay attention to the following issues in terms of internal and external validity:

- The research findings were defined in a meaningful way, depending on the circumstances.
- The findings are consistent with the previously established theory.
- Findings were checked through both voice recorder and short notes and provided as a whole.
- The research was extensively defined to shed light on possible generalizations.
- The results of the study are consistent with the existing theories about the research question.
- The findings of the research were described as testable in other studies and in similar circumstances.

Since human behaviour has a non-stationary and variable structure, it is very difficult to repeat a research in social studies even in similar groups. In order to minimize this situation and to ensure internal and external reliability of the research, following elements were achieved by the researcher:

- Description and thematization were carried out by using direct quotation from obtained data (supported by voice recordings and researcher notes).
- The research questions were expressed clearly after relevant conceptual framework was prepared.
- The participants in the study were clearly defined as data sources.
- Processes and methods related to the results of the research were explained step by step.
- The raw data obtained in the research were filed in a way that other researchers can reach.
- In the research, the researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants and made necessary explanations to focus on relevant issues.
- In coding of the research data, more than one researcher coded and reliability was checked by Kappa statistic of this coding. In order to ensure the reliability of the research, Kappa reliability coefficient was calculated and reliability coefficient was determined to be .77.

Ethic Clarity. In this research process, importance and attention were paid to realization of main ethical principles. In this direction; *Conscious Consent*: “The *Volunteer Consent Form*” was filled

for volunteer participation at the beginning of the study. *Privacy, respect for private life and not harming*: Personal information of the participants was kept confidential and not deciphered. In order to record the interviews, participants were asked to provide “audio recording permission”. *Do not deceive, mislead, and being loyal to obtained data*: Data obtained from the participants were expressed clearly in the research and raw forms of the data were presented as available.

RESULTS

The opinions of the athletes who participated in the research on “Orienteering” were presented as graphics and tables by analysing and interpreting in subheadings according to the results of the research.

Table 2 shows that 93.5% of the participants were primary school students and 6.8% of them were high school graduate students. A large majority of participants (70 students) stated that they devoted 1–3 hours a day for sport. However, according to weekly spared time for sport the distribution of participants was 40.5% for 1–2 days a week; 39.2% for 3–4 days a week; 16.2% for 5–6 days and 4.1% for 1 week and over.

The views of athletes about the concept of Orienteering which is an outdoor sport. Under this heading, students’ opinions, frequency distributions and interpretations related to the concept of orienteering were given (Research question 1).

According to Figure 1, participants expressed their views about the concept of orienteering

Variables		Frequency	Ratio (%)
Educational Status	Elementary School	69	93.2
	High School	5	6.8
Is there another sport you do?	Yes	48	64.9
	No	26	35.1
How many hours of daily time do you spend in sports?	Less than 1 hour	17	23
	Between 1–2 hours	35	47.2
	Between 2–3 hours	18	24.4
	More than 3 hours	4	5.4
How many days a week do you do sport?	1–2 Day	30	40.5
	3–4 Day	29	39.2
	5–6 Day	12	16.2
	7 Day and more	3	4.1

Table 2. Some socio-demographic information about the participants

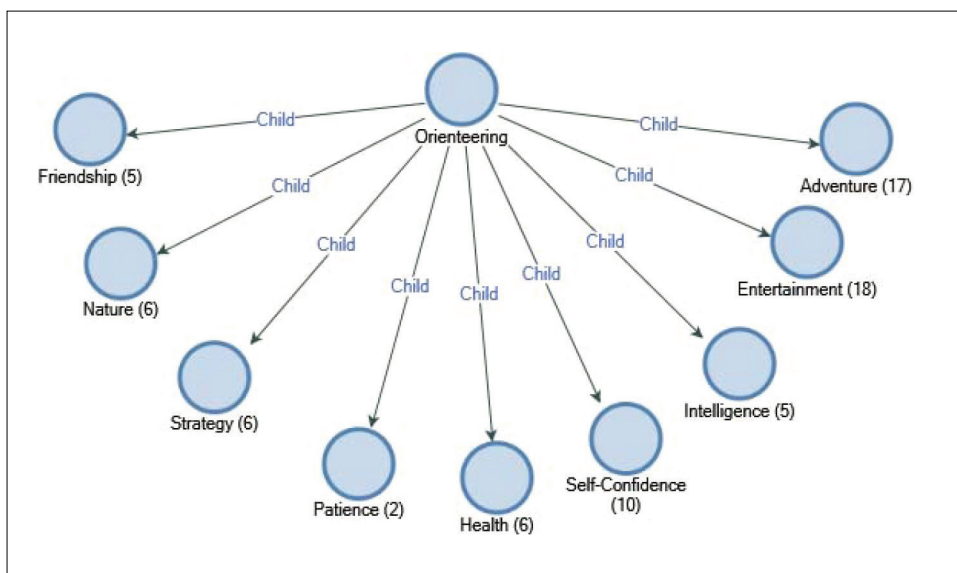


Figure 1. The views of research participants about “Orienteering”

through the terms of entertainment, adventure, self-confidence, nature, strategy, health, friendship, intelligence and patience. It is seen that orienteering concept, which is an outdoor sport, is perceived as entertainment ($n = 18$), adventure ($n = 17$) and self-confidence ($n = 10$) by the participants. It is an important indicator that these concepts are related to socialization, which is a part of individuals' lives. It can be argued that the views put forward from another point of view are generally focused on socialization, individuals' life quality, self-confidence, decision-making and mental development.

Findings related to goals of doing orienteering of students participated in outdoor camp. Under this heading of the research, the opinions of athletes about doing orienteering, frequency distributions and interpretations were given (Research question 2).

Participants' views about the question "Why do you do Orienteering which is an Outdoor sport?" came under the themes of mental development ($n = 12$), health (14), socialization (22), love of nature (2), career development (19) and leisure time activity (6). Participants indicated that orienteering had positive effects on their physical, mental and social development. In the light of participant's views, it has been stated that outdoor camps and

education have an important role in socialization of individuals in particular. Individuals who participate in outdoor camps can acquire a new friend environment in a new atmosphere and fulfil their needs. This environment can be seen as an important factor in socialization of individuals.

Some of the participant's views about these themes are:

K6: "I have started to do this sport because it's fun to get rid of stress and useful to decide by yourself."

K32: "I do this sport in order to be an elite athlete, to represent Turkey, to convey information I have learned to younger people and to be a role model for them."

K39: "Orienteering is an outdoor and mental sport. I do orienteering to live the pleasure of transformation of intelligence into nature challenge."

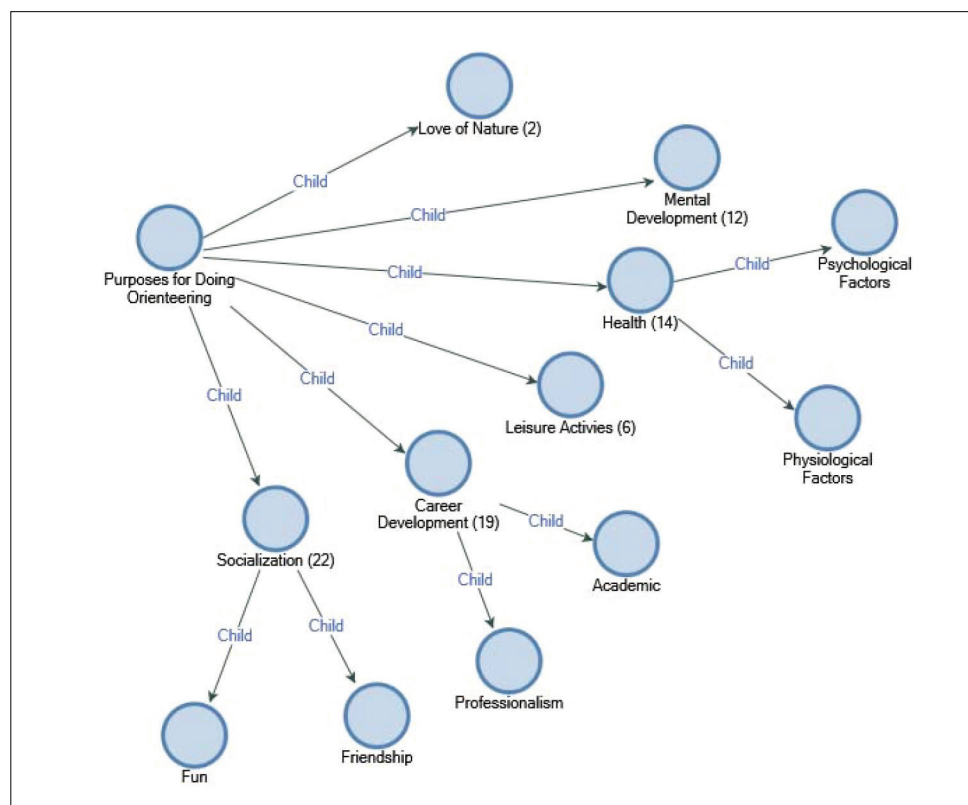
K46: "I have started to be a good athlete and have a better life in the future."

K62: "I think it has a great benefit in development of intelligence."

K69: "I have canalized orienteering in order to be a good athlete and to build my body."

As a result of the opinions obtained from the research, it can be asserted that outdoor camps may be effective in eliminating physical and physiological disorders of individuals. Allsop,

Figure 2. Themes, codes and statements about individuals' purposes for doing "Orienteering" according to research participants' opinions



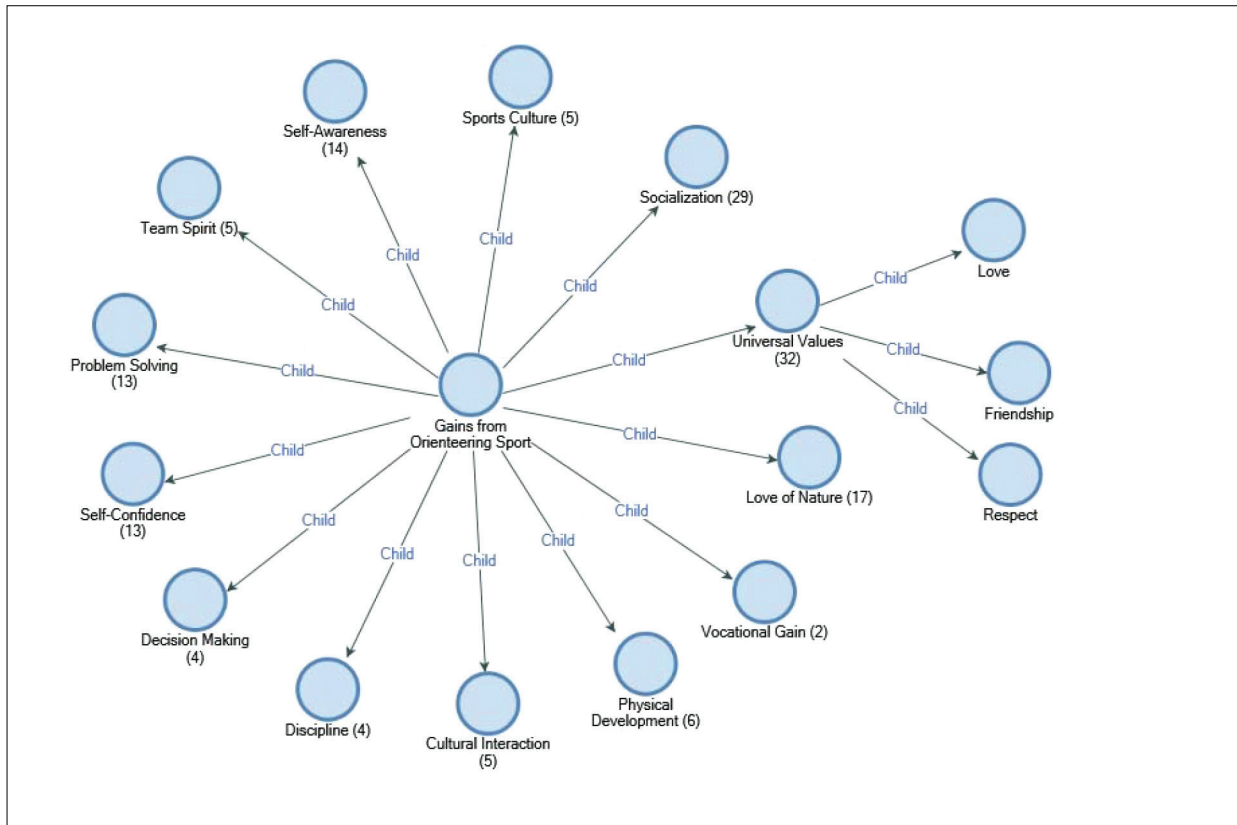


Figure 3. Themes, codes and statements about the gains of Orienteering sport according to the research participants' opinions

Negley & Sibthorp (2013) emphasized in their research that outdoor camps could improve some of the problems in young people by socializing.

In another study, it was emphasized that outdoor camps were influential in making new friendships and friendship experiences stemming from the strengthening of social values and domains, often depending on social interactions (Sibthorp, Bialescki, Morgan & Browne, 2013). One of the most important elements in formation of socialization and social interaction areas is that individuals must come and live together in natural environments (Neill, 2008; Wistoft, 2013). According to Ekici & Çolakoğlu (2005), acquiring sporting habits has an important role in feeling good and establishing friendships for individuals. In a study conducted by Preston (2014), it was stated that students perceived sportive activities in nature as adventure, high activity and challenge as well as learning. In another research, it was emphasized that activities in nature were important for health (Neill, 2008).

Findings related to the achievements of students participated in Outdoor Camp in Orienteering. In this part of the study, the themes, frequency distributions and comments on the

views of the athletes about their achievements of orienteering in the outdoor camp were included (Research question 3).

Figure 3 shows that participants' opinions about achievements of orienteering were brought together under the theme of universal values, self-confidence, sports culture, problem solving, discipline, decision making, professional gain, love of nature, socialization, self-awareness, team spirit, physical development and cultural interaction. It was pointed out that orienteering camps and education had an important function within the context of universal values (32), socialization (29), love of nature (17), self-awareness (14), self-confidence (13) and problem solving.

The participants' opinions about their achievements of orienteering are given below:

K2: "Sports done in nature instil love of nature."

K15: "Camping environment provides more friendship environment, and allows making friends."

K56: "Thanks to this camp, I have had many friends and a lot of fun with all of them. We have to interact with the people in here as we are isolated in outdoor camp."

Outdoor camps are seen as an important issue to educate and bring up healthy individuals. It is stated that sportive activities in nature are effective factors in the process of socialization and personal development of individuals (Preston, 2014; Wistoft, 2013). However, another study has shown that outdoor camps have important gains such as physical, recreational, educational, therapeutic and environmental effects (Neill, 2008). Especially, it is stated that outdoor camps held during summer are generally attended as recreational activities (Thurber & Malinowski, 1999) and these camps have significant effects on physical development, self-confidence, self-esteem and socialization processes (Goodwin & Staples, 2005; Kiernan & MacLachlan, 2002).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the obtained findings, conceptual opinions of participants about the concept of orienteering have been brought under nine themes as follows: entertainment ($n = 18$), adventure ($n = 17$), nature, strategy, health ($n = 6$), self-confidence ($n = 10$), friendship, ($n = 2$) (Research question 1). These conceptual ideas were presented in the study under the heading of “Opinions perceived by athletes on the concept of orienteering, which is an outdoor sport” (Table 2). It can be claimed that physical activities performed in natural environment create perception of entertainment and healthy life in an individual. The conceptual views perceived by individuals can be expressed as important elements that play roles in their individual development in general.

As a result of the analysis of the themes related to orienteering activities of the students participated in the outdoor camp, six main themes and six codes were determined. These main themes were stated as; socialization ($n = 22$), career development ($n = 19$), health development ($n = 14$), mental development ($n = 12$), leisure activities ($n = 6$) and love of nature (2).

When examining data about the gains of individuals besides their reasons for doing this activity, thirteen ($n = 3$) themes were found. These themes are; universal values ($n = 32$), socialization ($n = 29$), love of nature ($n = 17$), problem solving ($n = 13$), self-awareness ($n = 14$), self-confidence ($n = 13$), sports culture ($n = 7$), physical development ($n = 6$) team spirit ($n = 5$), decision making, discipline ($n = 4$), and professional career ($n = 2$). Socialization, self-esteem, love of nature and professional career are the main themes that were revealed as a result

of analysis of research questions. Kraus & Scanlin (2003) stated that in the age range between 13–19 year-old individuals, outdoor camps and education have important roles in social, psychological and physical development, consciousness participation to sport, decision making, and socialization as well as group activities. In addition, Palhares (2011) asserted that outdoor camps had significant gains in terms of socialization and social values (respect, equality).

According to the participants’ views, one of the themes related to the goals of individual for doing “Orienteering” is socialization ($n = 22$). Moreover, in the direction of participants’ views socialization ($n = 29$) is among the themes related to achievements of orienteering. It is known that outdoor camps provide personal pleasure, happiness, friend environment, socialization and team spirit (Temel, Namlı, Doğruer & Balcı, 2015). In addition, coming together in outdoor education offer the opportunity to interact and socialize in camp environments (Clancy & McClement, 2012; Fine & Glover, 2011). It is also stated that trying to maintain their individual existence away from the family (Kraus & Scanlin, 2003), satisfied and having interactions with other people (Palhares, 2011, 2015; Polat, 2016) are other goals of individuals. It can be considered that individuals are happier in environments where they feel free, satisfied and interacted as socializing opportunities with other individuals are easier. It can be claimed that the findings of the present study are similar to those mentioned in other studies.

According to the participants’ views, one of the themes related to the gains of individual for doing “Orienteering” is physical development ($n = 6$). Sheard & Golby (2006) stated that individuals who participate in outdoor activities such as rock climbing, canoeing, outdoor camping, and orienteering can have improvements in their physical condition and self-confidence. In another study, it was reported that qualities such as physical development and self-confidence were developed in individuals who actively participated in outdoor recreational activities (Fine, 2013; Fine & Glover, 2011; Wistoft, 2013). When the related literature is examined, it can be claimed that activities performed in natural environment have important roles in physical, physiological and social developments of individuals.

Camps (Guthrie, Cavins & Gabriel, 2012), one of the most popular outdoor programmes in the world, can be considered as a good educational tool when carried out in suitable environments

and conditions. It can be stated that supporting trainings held in natural environments in the framework of theoretical planning and practical applications considering existing conditions can be an important achievement. It can be regarded that outdoor camps have significant influences on the physical and social development of individuals especially in the age range between 13 and 19. Moreover, outdoor camps can be effective in

educating conscious individuals about sports and sports activities. As a result, in order to popularize planned and wide-ranging outdoor education among young people, measures should be taken to raise awareness of teachers, coaches, managers and their families, to create policies at the Sports Federations and the Ministry of Youth and Sports and to promote wider participation.

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