

**INVESTIGATING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN BOY SCOUT CAMP  
AND SELF-ESTEEM**

by

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A Master's Research Project submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirement for the degree  
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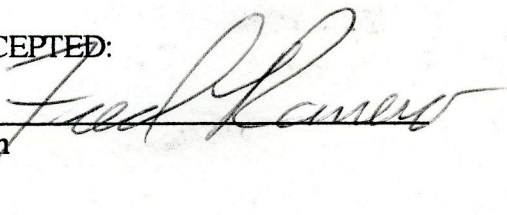


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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between boy scout camp experience and self-esteem. Utilizing the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, seventy boys were pre and post tested during a residential boy scout camp experience. The camp consisted of a one week stay at Camp Geronimo located in Northern Arizona. Boys ranged from ages ten to seventeen. The sample displayed a diversity of races and religious cultures. A two-tailed matched pair T-Test analysis was used as the statistical tool to calculate data. Results indicated a positive correlation between the camp experience and self-esteem. Self-esteem scores were higher after the camp experience, suggesting improved self-esteem. Within specific sub-groups, significant trends appeared. Caucasian boys age 14-15 years old from LDS (Mormon) groups and boys from smaller troops returned the highest correlations. These subgroups may have benefited most from the experience, although improvement was seen in the overall sample. Recommendations include screening boys with dramatically lower self-esteem scores, and also those with higher defensiveness scores. Other recommendations involve further investigation of differences between troops of different sizes, as well as innate differences of LDS religious culture and minority groups as they relate to self-esteem scores.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE PROBLEM

### Introduction

The Boy Scouts of America has been a popular organization among boys and men since it was founded in 1907. Baden Powell was the father of scouting and believed his scouting ideas would help boys become better men. Although sometimes criticized for its near religious value system, many believe that the experiences scouting provides do indeed help young men become responsible adults.

Scouting is multi-faceted in its approach. It begins for the boys by memorizing and committing to live the scout Oath and scout Law (Handbook, p. 5-8).

### OATH

On my honor I will do my best  
to do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight (p. 5).

### LAW

A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent (pp.7-8).

The scouts are regularly interviewed by their scoutmaster about living these ideals.

Another aspect to scouting are rank advancements earned when boys complete merit badges (skill acquisition). Community service projects are yet another aspect to the program.

scouts are also required to hold leadership positions within the group and develop leadership skills. Camping, hiking and other outdoor adventures are often the setting for these activities.



This study intends only to investigate the camp experience, specifically to examine the correlation between camp experience and the self-esteem of the boys who participate. The data from this research may provide a scientific approach to the value of the experience. With scouting's established history and anecdotal success in working with boys, its effectiveness needs to be determined from a scientific standpoint. Boys return from camp filled with stories of personal success and achievement. The very first scout summer camp was held in 1907. Lord Baden-Powell brought twenty two scouts off the coast of England to Brownsea Island. They set up tents and devoted seven days to scouting activities. In the evening they told stories by the campfire, sang songs, and performed skits. "When it was over, the scouts agreed that their summer camp had been a complete success" (Handbook, p. 569). However, scientific study has not inquired into the boy scout camp experience.

Camp is composed of experiences such as nature hikes, compass courses, archery and rifle ranges, ropes and challenge courses, swimming pools, lakes and streams, craft projects, practice of knives, saws, and axes, and many different conservation projects. There are day camps, monthly overnight camps, camporees which last two or three days, summer camps which are generally a week long adventure, and other high-adventure camps involving strenuous or unique opportunities (e.g., rafting, scuba diving). It would be difficult to determine which specific camps or which specific aspects to camps are most enjoyable by the scouts. Perhaps the variety of activities it what draws their interest or the opportunity to try new things which brings them back with a feeling of accomplishment. Whatever the reasons, this study intends to investigate only the correlation between camp and self-esteem.

## Development of the Problem

Many wilderness programs have been developed over the years to assist individuals with a range of difficulties or problems. Examples of similar programs include camps for children with AIDS (Langdon & Kelk, 1994), juvenile delinquents (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992), anti-social children (Feldman, Wodarski & Flax, 1975), and children with physical handicaps (Sessoms, 1979). There are striking parallels of these camps with scout camps, for example, the importance given to a natural setting. Many of these programs turn to nature as the backdrop for treatment. Another commonality is the focus on group exercises or social experiences. Scouts do many of their activities within the troop or patrol. Lastly, the development of skills is often seen as important for treatment. The scouts similarly earn rank advancements and merit badge achievements throughout their scouting career.

While such programs have documented success with the children they have serviced, the impact of boy scout camp has gone unmeasured. As wilderness and nature programs continue to market themselves, it seems increasingly pertinent to study the program which trailblazed the basic concept of camp: The Boy Scouts of America.

## Need for the Study

There are various camp programs currently utilized, and many under development, as alternative methods of treatment for numerous problems. This demand is fueled by anecdotal evidence and scanty scientific support. A variety of outcomes have been measured including prosocial behavior (Feldman, Wodarski, & Flax, 1975), adolescent delinquency recidivism (Clagett, 1992), educational performance and respect for authority (Bourque, 1996), masculine identification (Hantover, 1978), depression and self-esteem (Fichman, Koestner & Zuroff, 1997) and (Davis, Kurtland & Cohen, 1995). This study will improve the understanding of camp experience as it correlates solely with self-esteem.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between boy scout camp experience and self-esteem of adolescent boys.

## Research Question

Is there a correlation between boy scout camp and improved self-esteem?

## Definition of Terms

**Troop:** Individual units within which the boys are organized. Troops can range in size from three to over fifty boys. When not at camp, the boys meet as troops to earn achievements and participate in weekly activities. While at camp, the boys maintain troop organization. The chain of command and leadership roles of the troop play an important part in keeping the scouts on task. While at Geronimo, the boys will sleep, eat and participate in many activities together as a troop.

**Camp:** A one-week stay at the Grand Canyon Council's Camp Geronimo. Even within the Boy Scouts of American, camps vary in structure and design. However, at Camp Geronimo the boys sleep in tents together with others in their troop. There is running water for showering and cleaning. Latrine facilities are also available within close proximity to the troop's campground site. The scouts are expected to clean the facilities and leave the site area clean. All residents dine at the mess hall at the center of camp. Food is cooked and prepared for the participants by a cook. Camp Geronimo provides focused activities and merit badge instruction for events such as sports, first aid, conservation, safety, nature and environmental science, Indian lore, and more. Geronimo is also equipped for special events such as hiking, compass orienteering, lake activities (e.g., boating, swimming, etc.), horsemanship activities, a rappelling wall, and a shooting range

(e.g., rifle, black-powder, archery). The week long experience also includes several camp-wide firesides with skits, songs, and special awards.

**Scout:** Any young man age ten to seventeen, who is registered as a boy scout.

**Scoutmaster:** A registered adult leader who oversees the functioning of the troop.

He organizes and maintains the troop in good working order. He communicates with parents, boys and volunteer leaders alike.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to this study. Camp setting discusses the environments or backdrops of various camp programs. Camp programming discusses the focus, rationale or structure of the various programs. Finally, camp benefits discusses possible outcomes which programs have hoped to measure or influence.

#### Camp Setting

The Boy Scout Handbook (1990) gives young men a brief overview of the camp experience and explains that “Most councils have a special camp where scouts can enjoy a full week or more of scouting. Some council camps lie in deep forests or at the base of high, windy peaks. Others are tucked back in the woods along rivers and lakes. A few are located in the desert or along a seashore” (p. 571). Natural settings are emphasized. This seems to be a part of the recipe of any successful wilderness program.

Davies & Cohen (1995) have developed a nature program entitled Project NatureConnect. Based upon the concept that a “...nature centered way of thinking supports responsible behavior” (p.1). They continue by explaining that “The difference between people and the rest of nature is that humanity has learned to create and live by new brain stories about relating, whereas nature creates and lives through direct sensory attraction relationships” (Davies & Cohen, 1995, p. 6). In other words, man has separated himself from nature by living in his own head instead of through sensory perception and experience. Consequently, returning to the natural setting “effectively unites a student’s

wellness, spirit and education with the natural environment...” (Davies & Cohen, 1995, p.1), bringing with it psychological benefits. In Project NatureConnect, students gather in a wilderness area (e.g., park) and participate in activities which help them to connect with their environment. The activities are formulated to impact the senses rather than eliciting thought processes. “The students who entered Project Reconnect were...cut off from the natural world and the many sensory attractions that could nurture and balance them” (Davies & Cohen, 1995, p. 1).

### Camp Programming

The camp setting seems to have been successfully applied in a variety of programs with a range of focus and varying degrees of success. One program selected five antisocial children and randomly placed them within four groups of residential campers (Feldman, Wodarski, & Flax, 1975). For comparative purposes, they left four other groups untouched. The camp was composed of boys and girls age 9 to 16 years and mostly of Jewish faith. “For a 20-day period the members of each group lived together, took their meals together, and frequently participated in activities as a distinct unit” (Feldman, Wodarski, & Flax, 1975, p. 11). Results indicate that for each of the three weeks at camp, the antisocial children maintained a consistent rate of antisocial behavior. Likewise, the prosocial behaviors of these children remained constant.

The mere inclusion of antisocial children in prosocial groups resulted in no noteworthy developmental or long-term effects, either positive or negative, for the former category of children. However, self-ratings completed by the antisocial children raise the possibility that the camp environment and prosocial peer groups exerted an immediate and consistent prosocial influence on them... (Feldman, Wodarski, & Flax, 1975, p. 17).

In another study, emotionally disturbed boys were placed in a camp program named Camp Crossroads (Miceli, 1997). The boys ranged in age from 11 to 14 and were from both inner city and rural areas. The boys were transported from Somerset Hills School,

which is a residential placement center for emotionally disturbed youth. They attended camp activities Monday through Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Activities included:

...waterfront events, sports and field, arts and crafts, action socialization and pioneering. The camp allows its attendants to gain new skills that they may not have otherwise been given the change to acquire. The campers gain leadership abilities, confidence in themselves, socialization skills and summertime fun (Miceli, 1997, p. 34).

Interestingly, the researchers noticed that during camp activities and through times of personal crisis, inner city boys opened up and revealed personal stories to staff. This purging was viewed as beneficial for their growth and treatment. The suburban children "...became withdrawn and simply looked towards the staff for comfort" (Miceli, 1997, p. 35). The researchers concluded that camp staff can make great contributions to professional counselors because they will be the most available when children open up or look for comfort.

Other studies have specifically programmed the camp experience to benefit juvenile delinquents. Claggett (1992) cites two follow-up studies, conducted by the Texas Department of Human Resources, finding that "85% of ex-campers who had 'graduated' from the [camp] do not recidivate during the initial six months period following their release" (p. 15). This program had been specifically designed from a reality-therapy philosophy.

The National Institute of Justice took another approach to programming and created a boot camp atmosphere for male juvenile delinquents. The youth experienced a 90-day residential experience that included intensive military drills, discipline and physical conditioning. "The sites also offered more traditional rehabilitative activities, including remedial education, life skills education and counseling, and substance abuse education" (Claggett, 1992, p. 5). In addition, military-style uniforms were worn by the participants. The daily routine was exhausting, starting at 5:30 am or 6:00 am and ending with lights out

at 9:00 pm or 10:00 pm. At the conclusion of camp, there was an increase in educational performance, fitness and behavior. Youth also seemed more respectful of authority and better able to work as a team (Bourque, 1996).

Another study took young offenders in Australia and programmed a camp in conjunction with the police department (Houghton & Shier, 1996). Ten teenage boys were selected for the study ranging in age from 13 to 17 years old. The camp experience comprised one weekend with numerous activities. The officers and youth were required to work together and perform as a team. Programming included formal lectures to prepare for the activities, day and night-time bush navigation, survival training, and informal talking sessions around the campfire. This study suggested that the camp helped to improve relationships between the young offenders and the police. The youth themselves reported feeling that the police understood them better than before. The police officers on the camp “do not talk down to them and that they have a genuine interest in their well being” (Houghton & Shier, 1996, p. 198).

Another example of the variety of camp programming would be one designed for adult abusers. Oppenheimer & Johnson (1981) identified adults who have been abusive physically with other family members. Fifty families were selected and sent to weekend camps for psychoeducation and communication building. Some activities were planned for individual members as well as together as a family.

During evenings at the camp, parents and children spent time together. That proved a good chance for parents to show each other how to handle common discipline situations. Late at night, parents stayed up to talk more about the topics that had come up in the counseling sessions (Oppenheimer & Johnson, 1981, p. 15).

Recreational camp pursuits were also included as a part of the programming. Although no steps were taken to measure a decline in abusive behavior, they did conclude that the campers established friendships lasting outside the camp experience, which may help eliminate future abuse. “In about one-third of the fifty families, children had been removed



from their homes and placed in foster settings. The combination of camp weekends and regular counseling caused almost all these families to be reunited within a year, as opposed to the customary two years” (Oppenheimer & Johnson, 1981, p. 15). The Boy Scout Handbook (1990) refers to friendship building when discussing camp. “A camp staff of experienced older scouts and adults will give you a helping hand whenever you need it. You can form new friendships with scouts from other troops...” (p. 571). Social support networking may have been an important component of the abuser camp, and continues to be for the boy scout camps.

Other examples of camp programming include a setting for children with AIDS (Langdon & Kelk, 1994). Like most camps reviewed for this study, this camp was structured in a nature setting. Activities were geared toward acceptance and understanding of the children’s disease. Discussion groups were formed to provide information on the disease. Other activities included craft activities, swimming and beach games, canoeing and yachting, field trips, ropes course, theater sports, and campfire singing. Following the camp experience, researchers concluded that children and families developed friendships with others who had similar experiences. Similar to other programs, this networking and social support building may have considerable benefits. “The families have benefited from being part of a very warm, caring network of people. For example, the families keep in touch by phone and are interested in the well-being of all their new-found friends. The volunteers have formalized an after-care group by establishing a newsletter to be sent to all camp participants” (Langdon & Kelk, 1994, p.48). The researchers also stated their belief that these camps may lead to long term psychological gains.

Similarly, a camp program was established in a nature setting for children with physical handicaps (Sessoms, 1979). The children ranged in age from 8 to 14 years old. Camp activities embraced the concepts of outdoor living with arts and crafts, aquatics, cabin centered activities, nature studies, and horseback riding. Three years worth of camp

participants were analyzed. Researchers report that after the children attended camp, the children were more active and more involved in more activities at a higher level of participation. They felt this to be significant because many handicapped children do not actively pursue opportunities outside of camp. "The changes observed in self-concept and independent functioning seemed to be more lasting than the changes in motor performance" (Sessoms, 1979, p. 41).

### Camp Benefits

Based on the literature reviewed, camp programs are abundant, and although diverse in focus, they all seem to look for individual benefits. As previously mentioned, some studies have found benefits related to a decrease in juvenile delinquency (Clagett, 1992), and an increase in respect for authority (Bourque, 1996; Houghton & Shier, 1996). Other studies have found benefits related to the social support networking that occurs during the camp experience (Oppenheimer & Johnson, 1981; Langdon & Kelk, 1994).

One clear benefit of the boy scout camp program is skill acquisition. "Summer camp is a terrific place to work on many scouting skills" (Handbook, 1990, p. 571). Boys ranging in age from eleven to seventeen can attend camp and develop new interests and talents. Opportunities are abundant to learn arts, crafts, leatherwork, sports, aquatics, teamwork, leadership, and hundreds of other merit badge achievements. Personal growth can also be a benefit as it relates to vigorous physical activity which might include hiking, swimming, ropes courses, challenge courses, and other sports events. It might be said that the camp experience itself is a physical challenge which brings a feeling of accomplishment.

Hantover (1978) believed that one benefit is the maintenance of masculinity. He says men and boys readily ally themselves with scouts and associated activities, because society increasingly denies masculine expression. When the program was first adopted

within the United States in 1910, it soon became the largest male youth organization in American history. "The Boy Scouts' rapid national acceptance reflected turn-of-the-century concern over the perpetuation and validation of American masculinity" (Hantover, 1978, p. 184). Hantover believed that scouting affirms the masculine and helps alleviate social-role anxiety. "Scouting's program and structure would counter the forces of feminization and maintain traditional manhood" (Hantover, 1978, p. 189). The camping and wilderness facet of scouting was indeed viewed by some as a way of maintaining masculine attributes.

The Wilderness is gone, the Buckskin Man is gone, the painted Indian has hit the trail over the Great Divide, the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history, and we must depend upon the Boy Scout Movement to produce the MEN of the future" (Beard cited in Hantover, 1978, p. 189).

Other programs view benefits in terms of self-esteem. Fichman, Koestner & Zuroff (1997) studied children in terms of psychological distress. "Distress was assessed in terms of depression and low self-esteem" (Fichman, Koestner & Zuroff, 1997, p. 220). Ninety seven children were chosen to attend a summer sleep-away camp. Children ranged in age from 8 to 16 years old. At the conclusion of camp, depression and self-esteem was found to be negatively correlated to each other. In other words, when depression scores at camp were low the self-esteem scores were high. Also true, if depression scores at camp were high the self-esteem scores were low. As previously noted, the study by Davies & Cohen (1995) also demonstrated that treatment in a natural setting improved self-esteem and lowered depression.

Because higher or raised self-esteem can be seen as a possible benefit to effective programming, some camps have focused on the potential ways of influencing this variable. However, self-esteem is a difficult variable to gauge. Program success has had differing results. Klinger & McNelly (1976) randomly chose boys who were attending camp to fulfill leadership roles. They chose 221 boy scouts ranging in age from 10 to 17 years old. They discovered that when these roles were given to boys who were already leaders in their

troop, the leaders performed with increased enthusiasm. However, when boys were chosen who were not already leaders, they responded with decreased enthusiasm. In some cases the boys withdrew from relating to others and experienced feelings of ineffectiveness as leaders. Although the opportunity to be a leader could have hypothetically improved self-esteem, it sometimes had the reverse effect. In fact, these effects were sometimes unrelated to the actual success of the team they were leading.

Similarly, Thurber & Weisz (1997) conducted a study of 315 boys and 717 girls who attended a sports camp. Their average age was 12.6 years old. Thurber & Weisz (1997) hypothesized that children with less perception of control would experience higher amounts of homesickness or depression. The camp lasted two weeks to four weeks, depending upon the session. At the conclusion of the camp experience, "low perceived control was associated with more severe homesickness and lower overall ratings of satisfaction" (p. 515). Furthermore, "Children who perceive low control give up and do not actively cope to alleviate homesickness, and children who are homesick are less capable of mobilizing their resources to actively cope" (Thurber & Weisz, 1997, p. 515).

On the other hand, several programs have documented increases in self-esteem. Kelk (1994) reviewing the use of outdoor and camping programs as methods of change, reported that youth who participated in outdoor interventions have increased perception of self-worth and self-esteem, and improved their school performance. "It has also been shown that people from non-clinical populations can experience an increase in self-esteem as a result of camping experience" (Kelk, 1994, p. 39). As a possible reason for this increase, Kelk (1994) states "People attending camps are thrown into prolonged, intimate and stressful contact with each other, in which they are required to develop trust in each others' physical as well as emotional and intellectual skills" (p. 40).

Also with positive results, Nessel (1978) studied a wilderness camp where children attend a two week session away from home. The camp was geared toward emotionally

disturbed children. Many of the activities were similar to most other camps including arts, crafts, sports, magic shows, or scavenger hunts. However, there were also specially designed activities to meet the needs of the population. Staff were trained to help teach the participants social skills. "They believe that part of the reason these youngsters are so socially isolated is that they have difficulty learning social skills" (Nessel, 1978, p. 12). Therefore, staff helped teach basic skills and reward for growth and progress. For example, a child might be rewarded at a ceremony on the last day of camp as the best singer or most improved swimmer. "They believe that if children learn normal play skills, they will feel better about themselves and be better able to join their social group at home" (Nessel, 1978, p. 12). At the conclusion of the session, Nessel (1978) reported an overall 70% improvement in behavior from before the camp started. "Because the camp emphasizes developing skills and improving self-esteem ... the youngster who can benefit most appears clinically anxious or depressed, has a low self-concept, and has few social skills or successful areas of functioning" (Nessel, 1978, p. 13).

### Summary

Several factors are applied in the creation of camp programs: the camp setting, camp programming, and camp benefits. The camp setting generally revolves exclusively around natural or wilderness environments. The populations which are served by the various camps are diverse. Programs have been developed for antisocial children, emotionally disturbed boys, juvenile delinquents, adult abusers, and for children with AIDS or physical handicaps. Benefits of such programming are as varied as the populations they are calculated to serve. Some programs focus on skill acquisition and social skills. Others have targeted leadership ability. Still others have measured depression, anxiety and coping skills. Some of these studies have reported successful results while others have not.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between boy scout camp experience and the self-esteem of adolescent boys. Although the camp experience is made up of many components, the intent was to record only the general correlation. Future research may address specific variables which affect the correlation.

#### Research Design

This study was of descriptive design. One advantage of descriptive research is that accurate data can be obtained and "The researcher does not manipulate variables or control the environment in which the study takes place" (Merriam & Simpson, 1995, p. 61). This study used a pre and post testing procedure, utilizing an established self-esteem index (i.e., Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory). The pre and post tests were scored and relationships between variables were analyzed.

#### Population & Sample

Over 3,900 boys attended Camp Geronimo within one week sessions during the summer 1999 (Scouting Arizona, 1999, p.2). Three sessions were selected from which to invite participation. Each session averaged around 400 boys. Letters were sent to the scoutmasters of every troop registered within the respective session. Participation was voluntary. Parents received a letter of explanation from the scoutmasters regarding the

study and given the opportunity to withhold their son from participation. The week before camp, personal telephone calls were made to answer questions and make personal invitations.

The sample totaled seventy boys representing a range of ages, from ten to seventeen years old. A variety of ethnic groups were represented, including Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Native American. Religious groups were represented by Catholics, Protestants, LDS (Mormons), and other.

### Assumptions & Limitations

It was assumed that different cultural traits may lend themselves to the camp experience in different ways. Similarly, a scout's religious affiliation or age may influence his experience, as well as the number of times he may have previously been to camp.

Limitations included an inability to determine the camp influence. The participants may have improved self-esteem scores because the camp experience itself raised their self-esteem. On the other hand, it could be that the camp experience helped the boys themselves to improve their own self-esteem. This study was unable to make such a distinction.

One limitation of the study would be the relatively small sample of scouts. A larger sampling of boys could have been obtained if several volunteers had been recruited to assist with the testing procedures. During one testing session of over thirty boys, it was challenging to maintain silence and focus so the boys could concentrate. The scouts became noisy or easily distracted by their friends. Volunteers could help keep a larger group focused.

Another limitation was returning to camp the following week to complete the post testing procedures. Sometimes several boys had gone home for sundry reasons (e.g., homesickness). Other times the scoutmasters had forgotten about the post-testing.

The small sampling limited the scope of the study. Camp Geronimo is situated in the mountains of Arizona and generally serves only troops within driving distance. This pool of scouts was probably a representation only of the Arizona region, and not necessarily of the nation at large.

### Procedure

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory used for this study was approved by the Boy Scouts of America Grand Canyon Council. Before attending camp, each boy's parents received notification of informed consent regarding the testing of their child. The information explained participation in the study was voluntary. Parents were given the option of having their child excluded from the study.

The first pre-test was administered in the mess hall to the first group of boys. This location was deemed unacceptable, due to intense distraction. Consequently, the location of the first post-test and all remaining pre and post tests were administered at the Catholic Chapel. The Chapel is situated in a grove of trees and free of distractions.

During administration, campers were given an inventory with a cover sheet. The cover sheet asked the boys to provide information about their age, the number of times they've attended camp, their religion, their race, and the number of boys within their respective troop. This information was believed worthy of individual analysis as it related to the self-esteem scores.

The scouts were also asked to place their birthday and troop number on the front of the cover sheet. This number was used to pair the tests to the same person. At each testing, it was verbally explained that the researcher was prohibited by the Grand Canyon Council to retrieve information regarding any individual boy. Furthermore, test information would only be viewed by the researcher and not by individuals the scouts themselves would know.



After one week the second inventory was administered on the last day of camp prior to checking out. The scouts were given a reward (chocolate bar) for participation. Pre and post tests were matched by birthday-troop numbers then scored. Scouts and scoutmasters were informed that they would receive information about the results of the study when the scoring and evaluation was completed.

### Instrumentation

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was chosen as the measure of self-esteem for this study. "The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventories are a published instrument that is among the best known and most widely used measures of evaluative self-concept" (Anastasi, 1988, p. 637). It has become a well known, established form of measuring self-esteem. "Developed through a long-term research program, this instrument assesses attitude toward oneself in general, as well as in social (peers), academic (school), and home (parental) contexts" (Anastasi, 1988, p. 637-638). The school form was used because it was developed for children and adolescents. A copy of the Inventory is included as Appendix A.

The form contains fifty-eight statements which are worded for children age ten to fifteen. As an example, the first statement on the form reads "things usually don't bother me" (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 2). Before testing begins, the researcher reads the following:

On the next pages, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Like Me." If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Unlike Me."  
There are no right or wrong answers (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 1).

When scoring the items the form is written so that negative items are scored if they have been answered "unlike me." Similarly, the positive items are scored if they have been answered "like me" (Coopersmith, 1989, p. 8). Subscales can be scored separately with a total possible raw score of General (26), Social (8), Home (8), and School (8). "For the

School Form, multiply the total raw score by two. This results in a maximum possible Total Self Score of 100” (Coopersmith, 1989, p. 9).

The Lie score was developed to measure a child’s level of defensiveness. The total score is achieved by summing the marks on all eight items. This scale is scored separately with a possible raw score of Lie (8). “A high Lie Scale score suggests defensiveness in a student’s responses” (Coopersmith, 1989, p. 9).

### Method of Analysis

Results from the inventories were analyzed utilizing a two-tailed T-Test. “The matched-pair T-Test always involves a test of a set of observed differences” (Levine, 1991, p. 208). This study observed the same boys over a one week camp experience. These boys completed the Coopersmith before camp and after camp. These matched tests were then analyzed for differences in scores. A statistically significant difference would mean that the scores after camp would be generally higher or lower than before camp.

In regards to the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, “reliability, stability, and construct validity of the instrument are well-supported by research” (Anastasi, 1988, p. 638). The Coopersmith Inventories manual of administration (1989) states that “[Kokenes (1974, 1978)] confirmed the construct validity of the subscales proposed by Coopersmith as measuring sources of self-esteem” (p. 14), and that “the coefficients indicate adequate internal consistency” (p. 13) for reliability calculations. In other words, the Coopersmith has been found to be relatively consistent in its measurement and accurate in measuring indicators of self-esteem.

Further data was drawn by analyzing specific demographic groups. Scouts were scored by age, race, religion, number of times at camp, and by their troop size. The individual sub-groups were also analyzed using the matched pair T-Test.

Results of the analysis are stated in terms of probability. As noted by Levine (1991), probability refers to the likelihood that a change does not occur by chance (p. 119). In other words, it is a statistical measure to calculate the likelihood that the boys' self-esteem scores did not change by chance. Probability scores less than .05 are generally deemed significant.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Demographics

A variety of groups were represented by the sample as shown in Table 1:

Demographics. A total of seventy boys participated in the research study. Of these boys, eighteen were aged ten to eleven, thirty-seven were aged twelve to thirteen, and sixteen were aged fourteen to seventeen years old. Thirty six boys indicated they had never been to camp, nine had been once, eight had been twice, and thirteen had been three or more times. Fifty nine boys indicated they were Caucasian, four were Hispanic, two were Native American, two were African American, one was Asian American, and two were "other." The boys were asked to indicate the religion which their parents were teaching them. Seventeen indicated they were Catholic, twenty were Protestant, four were "other," and twenty eight were LDS (Mormon). Finally with troop size, twenty scouts came from a troop of one to ten boys, twelve scouts came from a troop of eleven to twenty boys, and thirty eight came from a troop of thirty one to fifty boys.

**Table 1: Demographics**

n = 70	Number of boys	Percentage of Total Sample
<b>Age:</b>		
10-11 years old	19	27%
12-13 years old	35	50%
14-15 years old	14	20%
16-17 years old	2	3%
<b>Number of Times at Camp:</b>		
Never	37	53%
Once	10	14%
Twice	9	13%
Over three times	14	20%
<b>Race:</b>		
Caucasian	59	84%
Hispanic	4	6%
Native American	2	3%
African American	2	3%
Asian American	1	1%
Other	2	3%
<b>Religious Preference:</b>		
Catholic	18	26%
Protestant	20	29%
LDS (Mormon)	28	40%
Other	4	5%
<b>Size of Troop:</b>		
1-10 boys	20	29%
11-20 boys	12	17%
21-30 boys	0	0
31-50 boys	38	54%
>50 boys	0	0

## Findings & Results

As mentioned earlier, results of the analysis are stated in terms of probability. As noted by Levine (1991), probability refers to the likelihood that a change does not occur by chance (p. 119). In other words, it is a statistical measure to calculate the likelihood that the boys' self-esteem scores did not change by chance. Probability scores less than .05 are generally deemed significant. Hence, a correlation written as  $p < .05$  would indicate significance.

A positive correlation ( $p < .03$ ) was found between the camp experience and the scouts' self-esteem scores. Post testing of the self-esteem scores were significantly higher than pre testing scores. However, when scored by individual demographs, interesting trends emerged (see Table 2: Significance).

It is important to note that approximately 36% of the sample population scored higher than 3 on the Lie scale (defensiveness). Although the Inventory does not define what constitutes a "high" Lie (defensiveness) score, other researchers have considered scores above three as "high" (Trowbridge, 1972 as cited in Coopersmith, 1989, p. 19). When tabulating only scores less than 4, the correlation returns  $p < .12$  (nonsignificant). High scores may indicate a feeling of "defensiveness" or that the boy thought he understood the intention of the test and was attempting to respond positively. Further investigation needs to be done to determine possible influences on the boys' feelings of defensiveness during this study.

Certain demographic groups seemed to rise to varying levels of significance (see Table 2: Significance). Fourteen and fifteen year old boys had the highest correlation between the camp experience and change in self-esteem scores ( $p < .07$ ). Likewise, Caucasian boys ( $p < .03$ ), LDS boys ( $p < .03$ ) and those scouts within small troops of one to ten boys ( $p < .10$ ) returned significant levels of change.

One might imagine the most significant changes in self-esteem scores would be seen for younger boys who had never attended camp. However, the younger boys ages ten to eleven ( $p < .50$ ) and twelve to thirteen ( $p < .15$ ) did not reach levels of significance. Similarly, the number of times attended camp did not reach levels of significance at all, although boys who had never attended camp reached closest a level of significance ( $p < .13$ ).

Race and religious cultures showed differences between groups' self-esteem scores. Caucasian boys clearly reached a higher level of statistical significance ( $p < .03$ ), whereas all other groups did not ( $p < .87$ ). In regards to religion, LDS boys clearly reached a higher level of statistical significance ( $p < .03$ ) over Catholic boys ( $p < .95$ ), Protestant boys ( $p < .34$ ), or boys from "other" religions ( $p < .57$ ).

Finally, the size of the troops from which the boys came showed interesting results. Only small troops of ten boys or less seemed to come close to significant levels ( $p < .10$ ). Larger groups simply did not reach significant levels ( $p < .48$  and  $p < .24$ ).

**Table 2: Significance**

n = 70	Probability
<b>Age:</b>	
10-11 years old	.50
12-13 years old	.15
14-15 years old	.07
16-17 years old	1.00
<b>Number of Times at Camp:</b>	
Never	.13
Once	.30
Twice	.30
Over three times	.76
<b>Race:</b>	
Caucasian	.03
Hispanic	.87
Native American	.87
African American	.87
Asian American	.87
Other	.87
<b>Religious Preference:</b>	
Catholic	.95
Protestant	.34
LDS (Mormon)	.03
Other	.57
<b>Size of Troop:</b>	
1-10 boys	.10
11-20 boys	.48
21-30 boys	0.00
31-50 boys	.24
>50 boys	0.00



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY

#### Summary

Programs have been created in a variety of settings with a variety of focus. Some have targeted antisocial children, emotionally disturbed children, juvenile delinquents and handicapped children. Many have claimed positive results. The Boy Scouts of America could be considered the trailblazers for camp settings and programs. Therefore, the boy scout camp setting was used as the groundwork for this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between boy scout camp experience and self-esteem of adolescent boys.

The author used a pre and post test design. Seventy boys were tested utilizing the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, before and after a one week camp experience. A two-tailed T test was the statistical tool employed. A positive correlation ( $p < .03$ ) was found between the camp experience and scouts' self-esteem scores. Post test scores were significantly raised following the week residence at camp.

#### Conclusion

The data from this study suggests that participants improved their self-esteem after a one week camp experience at Geronimo. These results are supported by other such studies related to self-esteem which were previously cited. As mentioned before, Davies, Kurtland & Cohen (1995) reported a decrease in depression and rise in self-esteem for children participating in a "natural" setting. Also mentioned previously, Norman Kelk (1994) as

well as Linda Nessel (1978) reported improvements in behavior and self-esteem after attending camp.

The findings of this study further suggest that older boys (14-15 years) will be most benefited by Camp Geronimo and its programming. It also suggests that smaller troops of less than 10 boys were most benefited. The highest correlation between self-esteem and the camp experience was found with the LDS (Mormon) boys. Also boys in a large troop seemed to have the weakest correlation between self-esteem and the camp experience. However, a general assumption about large troops cannot be made. This study acquired only one large troop of more than fifty boys for participation.

### Recommendations

A number of areas need to be addressed in future research. First, while many scouts had elevated their Coopersmith self-esteem scores at the conclusion of camp, a few boys had dramatically lower scores. Perhaps individual perceptions or experiences related to camp should be screened in order to better determine the drastic decline of these few boys' scores. A screening effort might also help determine whether there might be an ethical consideration to reach out or do further assessment for boys who demonstrated drastic changes in scores.

Further research needs to determine possible causes of high Lie scores. Over 36% of the sample had Lie scores above 3. "A high score on the Lie Scale may indicate that the examinee responded defensively or thought he or she understood the 'intention' of the inventory and was attempting to respond positively to all items" (Coopersmith, 1989, p. 9). It is unclear as to why so many scouts would be scoring above three. Some studies have indicated "Less than .5 percent of the children had Lie Scale scores greater than 3" (Trowbridge, 1972 as cited in Coopersmith, 1989, p. 19).

Because smaller troops of less than ten boys seemed to have near significant correlation ( $p < .10$ ), and larger troops' scores were far from significant ( $p < .48$ ), further research could determine innate differences between troop sizes.

The point that LDS (Mormon) boys seemed most benefited from the camp experience warrants further investigation. It is unclear as to why one particular religious culture would influence the scores on the boys' tests.

The most obvious fact which needs addressing would be the correlation for minority groups. A larger population of minority groups would provide better information regarding their needs. Only fifteen percent of this study's population were composed of minority groups. Sheer numbers alone could impact statistical significance.

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# APPENDIX A

## COOPERSMITH INVENTORY, SCHOOL FORM

## COOPERSMITH INVENTORY, SCHOOL FORM

SCHOOL FORM

SEI

# Coopersmith Inventory

Stanley Coopersmith, Ph.D.  
University of California at Davis

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: M \_\_\_ F\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions**

On the next pages, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Like Me." If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column "Unlike Me." There are no right or wrong answers.



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# COOPERSMITH INVENTORY, SCHOOL FORM

- | Like<br>Me               | Unlike<br>Me             |   | Like<br>Me               | Unlike<br>Me             |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Things usually don't bother me.                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 30. I spend a lot of time daydreaming.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 31. I wish I were younger.                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 32. I always do the right thing.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 33. I'm proud of my school work.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. I'm a lot of fun to be with.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 34. Someone always has to tell me what to do.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. I get upset easily at home.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 35. I'm often sorry for the things I do.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 36. I'm never happy.                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I'm popular with kids my own age.                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 37. I'm doing the best work that I can.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. My parents usually consider my feelings.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 38. I can usually take care of myself.                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. I give in very easily.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 39. I'm pretty happy.                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. My parents expect too much of me.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 40. I would rather play with children younger than I am. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. It's pretty tough to be me.                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 41. I like everyone I know.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Things are all mixed up in my life.                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 42. I like to be called on in class.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. Kids usually follow my ideas.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 43. I understand myself.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. I have a low opinion of myself.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 44. No one pays much attention to me at home.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. There are many times when I'd like to leave home.           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45. I never get scolded.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. I often feel upset in school.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 46. I'm not doing as well in school as I'd like to.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. I'm not as nice looking as most people.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 47. I can make up my mind and stick to it.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 48. I really don't like being a <sup>boy</sup> girl.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. My parents understand me.                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 49. I don't like to be with other people.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. Most people are better liked than I am.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 50. I'm never shy.                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. I usually feel as if my parents are pushing me.             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 51. I often feel ashamed of myself.                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23. I often get discouraged at school.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 52. Kids pick on me very often.                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 24. I often wish I were someone else.                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 53. I always tell the truth.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 25. I can't be depended on.                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 54. My teachers make me feel I'm not good enough.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 26. I never worry about anything.                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 55. I don't care what happens to me.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 27. I'm pretty sure of myself.                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 56. I'm a failure.                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 28. I'm easy to like.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 57. I get upset easily when I'm scolded.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 29. My parents and I have a lot of fun together.                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 58. I always know what to say to people.                 |

Short

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