



Exploring the Impact of High Adventure Activities

Executive Summary

The research outlined in this executive summary and report describes how high adventure activities have impacted the **development of 13 character and leadership qualities** among Scouts. The research consisted of two primary research questions:

- **Do youth who participate in high adventure activities have more positive outcomes than youth who do not participate in high adventure activities?**
- **Is participation in high adventure activities associated with recruitment and retention efforts?**

A combination of a survey of Scouts, interviews with both Adult Leaders and Scouts, and observations of Scoutmaster Position Specific and Wood Badge trainings were used to explore the answers to these questions.

The most prominent finding is that Scouts who engaged in high adventure activities reported higher scores in more than half of the 13 character and leadership development areas. The figure below illustrates the seven areas where significant differences were identified among the high adventure Scouts.

- = We are confident differences exist between Scouts with High Adventure experiences and those without.
- = We are not confident differences exist between Scouts with High Adventure experiences and those without.

Areas of Development

High Adventure

| | |
|---|---|
| Communication | ■ |
| Ability to Make Ethical and Moral Decisions | □ |
| Practice Leadership Skills | ■ |
| Emotional Well-Being | □ |
| Connection | □ |
| Commitment to Doing One's Duty as a Citizen | ■ |
| Sense of Purpose | ■ |
| Sense of Purpose: Meaningfulness | □ |
| Sense of Purpose: Goal Orientation | ■ |
| Sense of Purpose: Beyond-the-Self | ■ |
| Joy/Fun | □ |
| Cultural Humility | □ |
| Leading at a Higher Level | ■ |

WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE STUDY?

Youth Survey consisted of 4,084 Scouts.

- 10% never attended a summer camp
- 72% attended a summer camp only
- 14% had a high adventure experience
- ~4% did not respond

Qualitative Interviews were conducted with Scouts and Adult Leaders.

- 110 Adult Leaders
- 109 Scouts

Observations of Wood Badge and Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training were conducted at several sites across the country.

OTHER VARIABLES ACCOUNTED FOR:

Although other variables such as *Time in Scouting and Troop Region* contributed to differences, high adventure experiences still emerged as impacting more positive development across many areas.

The survey findings were complemented by the themes that emerged from interviews and observations. These themes **were consistent with several survey findings in several development areas**, but also introduced several **additional development areas for future exploration**.

Reinforcing Character & Leadership

- Practice Leadership Skills
- Connection
- Sense of Purpose: Goal Orientation
- Enjoy/Fun

Emergent Themes

- Scout Retention
- Scout Recruitment
- Adult Training, Learning, & Leadership
- Confidence
- Positive Adult Experience
- New Experiences for Scouts