

Returning Year After Year: The Motivation and Retention of Coaches at
Madawaska Volleyball Camp

By

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ABSTRACT

As the popularity of attending summer camps continues to rise, it is important that Camp Directors understand what motivates employees to choose to work at camp each summer. In this study, I implemented a qualitative approach using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to examine the motivational factors that keep coaches at Madawaska Volleyball Camp (MVC) coming back each summer. Eight participants shared their unique experiences at Madwaska Volleyball Camp (MVC) through semi-structured interviews. Four themes emerged that solidified their motivations to return to work at camp each year: alignment, tradition, opportunities for reflection and personal growth, and the surrounding environment.

KEY WORDS: summer camp; counsellor; motivation; interpretive phenomenological analysis; job satisfaction

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the Madawaska Volleyball Camp family, my family at home, and everyone that has supported me throughout this process.

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LIST OF TERMS/ABBREVIATIONS

Terms

Term	Definition
Counsellor	Madawaska volleyball coach and employee of MVC
Section Head	Coach responsible for a specific age and gender section of camp
Leadership Team	Madawaska Volleyball Camp's group of directors. Includes the following members: Camp Director: Ian Eibitt Assistant Camp Directors: Amy Wheler, Dustin Reid, Peter Millsap

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CIT	Coach in Training
CL	Coaches' Lounge
IPA	Interpretive phenomenological analysis
MVC	Madawaska Volleyball Camp

CHAPTER ONE

Each summer, children across Canada head to summer camp. Camp will become an experience they will remember for the rest of their lives – an opportunity to play, learn and grow outside the confines of a classroom or home.

As the experience of summer camps increases in popularity, so does the number of children being enrolled in summer camp programming. The *2016 Fall Enrollment- Camper Enrollment Summary* from the American Camping Association (ACA) reported that 55% of camps in America reported higher enrollment rates than in 2014, with 43% of camps seeing the highest enrollment rates in over ten years (Wilson, 2016).

As camp registrations increase, the need to recruit qualified employees, motivate commitment, and retain past employees becomes crucial. The ACA suggested retaining camp counselors each summer increases camp credibility, decreases staff training costs, and maintains an overall flow to daily camp life. Retaining previous camp employees has become difficult over the years, with only 54% of camps having more than half their staff return each year (Wilson, 2016). The ACA highlighted six recruitment challenges that impacted the camp counselor retention rates in 2015. Limited summer availability, lack of male applications, a lack of staff commitment, and salary were the most significant elements of the six reported statistically.

There is an absence of published research in the field of camp counselor motivation and retention rates not only in Canada, but globally. Limited information is available pertaining to camp counsellors' experiences in Canada and the research that is published is

not current. This study will increase the body of research in this field with findings directly relating to the experiences of Canadian camp counsellors.

Studying the experience of Madawaska Volleyball Camp (MVC) employees will increase the amount of research on the motivation and retention of summer camp employees. In 2016, MVC employed 168 staff, with 114 returning from the previous year and eleven returning after missing camp in 2015 (Eibitt, 2016). These statistics present a retention rate of 74% for MVC in the year 2016.

Madawaska Volleyball Camp provides a phenomenological situation as it is a unique camp. MVC only occurs once a year during the last week of August. The camp has been operating for over 44 years, with the last 41 taking place on the grounds of Camp Walden. Paul and Shelley Brownstein, the founders of MVC, began the camp as an elite volleyball experience for less than a hundred campers. The camp has now been sold to who have since sold the camp to Camp Walden owners Sol and Jennifer Birebaum and Sari and Howie Grossinger, who have evolved MVC along with the Leadership Team into an all-encompassing volleyball development program for campers with 468 registrations in 2016 (Eibitt, 2016). Due to the increasing popularity of camp and the lack of space and resources, MVC has created an 'All Sport' camp that occurs the week before volleyball camp. This allows campers whom are not sport-specific athletes to experience Madawaska without the intense volleyball training.

Over the six days of camp, campers enjoy three sessions of intense volleyball training alongside their cabin mates. Each cabin is assigned two coaches that are selected by the Leadership Team to provide a fit for the age, gender, and skill level of the cabin. The younger cabins are assigned a Coach in Training (CIT) who acts as the campers' mentor for

the length of the week. The CIT is housed in the cabin with the campers, providing support to them at all times. When the campers are not engaged in volleyball training, they are allowed to explore the grounds and partake in activities that are designed by the Program Team. From low ropes, to swimming, to campfires, there is no shortage of activities to participate in at camp.

The coaches endure the experiences of camp as well. Most coaches are placed in a cabin together, allowing them time to bond and share experiences during their rest times. The Coaches' Lounge (CL) is the preferred 'hang-out' location for most coaches, and is where their extracurricular activities take place each night after camper programming ends. The CL's walls are covered in picture collages, one to represent each year at MVC. They act as a memory bank, where coaches can look at how traditions have remained the same or evolved throughout the camp's growth. Often other coaches' will find another group of coaches sharing a laugh over finding a picture of one of them as a camper dressed for skit night, a tradition that has now evolved into Madawaska's talent show evening.

The CL also provides the coaches the opportunities to interact with each other and learn about the sport of volleyball. This is where lesson plans are cultivated, usually in a group setting, with ideas flowing as nicely as the beer they enjoy after a long day. The CL is always warm, not just in temperature. It is the common place where coaches come to get to know each other, share their experiences and build new relationships.

The preparation for next year's programming begins while still at camp. Coaches are constantly collecting information and ideas to put in their repertoire for next year. Over the year, coaches will get together with other MVC coaches to discuss ideas for next year;

from themes for the coaches' game costumes, to whom in their cabin will be bringing the music. The mentality of coaches while at camp consistently teeters between 'being responsible for the kids' experience' and wanting a 'camp experience for themselves.'

Not all coaches return each year, as it is a large commitment for just one week each summer. To qualify for employment at camp, coaches must commit to attending the whole week, be specialized in the sport of volleyball, and accept lower financial compensation than in their standard summer employment positions

Researcher Positionality

This year will mark my eighth year as a coach at Madawaska Volleyball Camp. I first attended camp at the age of 12 on recommendation from Mr. Keith Wasyluk, my club volleyball coach at the time. I had just been cut from my first tryout experience, and he suggested I attend MVC, explaining to my parents and me that it would be an intense week of camp where I would improve my volleyball skills and make new friends in the volleyball community. His suggestion was life changing for me. My previous experience attending an overnight camp had been extremely negative and I was nervous to attend another. It wasn't until I was settled into my cabin, the youngest girls' cabin at camp, that I felt hopeful. The week was memorable, specifically because of the bonds and friendships I made with my cabin mates and coaches. I loved every aspect of my first year at camp, and left excited to register for the next year. This experience began my volleyball career and solidified my commitment to MVC. I returned every year as a camper until I was asked to become a coach. This transition was due to the fact that I had made the Ontario provincial volleyball team, and the Leadership Team at MVC believed I would be better suited in a coaching position than attending as a camper that summer. I was both excited and scared for the

opportunity. I was assigned to the ‘top beach girls cabin’, meaning that some athletes I coached were older than me and had been playing the sport for longer. Overall, the experience was amazing and I was so thankful for the chance to become part of the coaching staff.

I continued to coach throughout high school and my university studies, while I was playing volleyball for the University of Toronto Varsity Blues. In my second year of university, I had decided to stop playing volleyball, and distanced myself from the sport altogether. This meant MVC as well. I decided not to return to camp for three summers. Throughout that time, my priorities had shifted towards my education and finding my identity outside the world of volleyball, yet something seemed to be missing. I decided to attend Madawaska’s 40th Anniversary party, which took place at Camp Robin Hood a couple months prior to camp that year. As soon as I was reunited with past and present MVC coaches and staff I knew I needed to go back.

I returned to coach on the beach with an amazing group of coaches. Although the coaches I had grown up with had all moved on, I made new connections that felt just as close as the ones I had previously made. Throughout my years coaching at MVC, I have not only developed as a coach but as a person. Two years ago, I received a call from Dustin Reid, a member of the MVC Leadership Team, with a proposition. It was known that one of the Section Heads at camp would soon not be returning and they were trying to find a replacement for her. They offered me the position, and that year I was mentored by Sian Leyshon-Doughty. She groomed me to take over her role that summer by sharing her coaching expertise with me, which she had gathered over her years at MVC. With her leadership, support, and encouragement, I felt comfortable and ready for the position. Last

year, I was the Section Head of the youngest girls section at camp, the same section I began in as a camper in my first year at MVC. With twelve cabins of fourteen athletes in each and three coaches per cabin, it was no easy managerial task. I continue to learn every day about the sport, the community and myself to become a better Section Head and member of MVC.

Throughout my studies at the University of Windsor, as I completed my Master of Education course work, the phenomenon of employee retention became an interest of mine. Reflecting on my past employment opportunities and my current choice to become a teacher, I began to question why I chose to stay or leave each position. When reflecting on my coaching experience at Madawaska, the longest place of employment for me, I found it difficult to provide a direct explanation. This challenge became the foundation of the research question I explore in this thesis.

Research question

This study examined the reasons behind Madawaska Volleyball coaches' motivations to return to camp each year, addressing the following broader research question: "*Why do camp counselors return to camp year after year?*". At MVC, it is not uncommon for new coaches hoping for the opportunity to work at camp to be placed on a wait list. A study completed by McCole, Jacobs, Lindley and McAvoy (2012) found that attracting and retaining seasonal employees is difficult due to a multitude of factors. The rising educational costs was a presented factor, as summer camp employees are often students (p. 85).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

A History of Summer Camps

In 1881, in a small cabin on an island on Squam Lake in New Hampshire, New England, Camp Chocorua was born. This summer camp, aimed to recruit boys in the Boston area is documented to be one of the first summer camps in the United States of America (Maynard, 1999). Mr. Ernest Balch, a student at Dartmouth College decided to construct the camp experience out of frustration formed by witnessing "the miserable condition of boys belonging to well-to-do families in the summer hotels" (Smith, 2006, p. 76). Balch made campers learn to build shelter, cook and engage in activities that would "develop self-reliance instead of dependence" (Smith, 2006, p. 76).

From 1881 to present day, the summer camp has evolved tremendously. Research suggests that the evolution of summer camp followed the evolution of American history closely, mirroring the positive and negative state of the country. Smith (2006) studied the progression of summer camps from Camp Chocorua to the camps prior to 2006, and how the American lifestyle transforms the idealism of camp.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, middle class Americans were expressing "grave doubts about urbanism and industrial capitalism even as these new social and economic realities swept them to ever greater levels of material prosperity" (Smith, 2006, p. 73). This produced a romanticized view of the summer camp experience as an opportunity to connect to the "character-building forces of nature" which "would revitalize bodies and spirits sagging under the weight of urban life and its conveniences-and inconveniences" (Smith, 2006, p. 73).

World War I brought a new light to the importance of camp. The war had inspired camps to emulate that of military basic training. Camp Directors incorporated “regimented, militaristic camp experiences” (Smith, 2006, p. 77) in daily programming. During this time in history, summer camps were seen as “an influential place in the panoply of child and youth serving institutions” (Smith, 2006, p. 77) outside standard learning environments.

The 1930s changed the view of summer camp into an opportunity to “stimulate democratic group dynamics” (Smith, 2006, p. 79). Camps became laboratories for researchers to not only study group dynamics, but also the effects of being in nature, as it offered “the ‘essential realities’ of woods and water as opposed to ‘the artificial realities and conventionalities’ of ‘routine living, especially in our cities’” (Smith, 2006, p. 79). Researchers believed experiences at camp required further research as “‘the naturalness and simplicity of life in the woods’ stood in contrast to ‘the complexity and artificiality of civilized city life’” (Smith, 2006, p. 79).

During the Second World War, camps reverted back to the regimented programming of the military. The fear of the ‘atomic bomb’ to Americans became relevant both literally and figuratively. The threat of communism and conformity increased the importance of summer camps, as they were believed to keep children away from the ‘harsh reality of life’ (Smith, 2006). The positive impact of attending summer camp on children was becoming evident to researchers and parents. Both parties began to note that attending summer camp allowed kids to be “removed from their everyday environment and placed in a different world” (Smith, 2006, p. 73). The belief surrounding summer camp experiences began to emulate that “camp was a better world, a place where socialization of children

could happen without them being subjected to a parents' or teachers' will" (Smith, 2006, p. 73).

The benefits of summer camp on child development continue to be researched today. Traditional summer camps are still in existence, yet many camps have evolved to provide different programming. The choices of summer camp programming today are extensive. From robotics to debate, there is now a camp that can fit the needs of every child. Adult summer camps have even come into fruition, showing the need for adults to escape and feel like kids again.

Working at Camp

The benefits of attending summer camp are not just prevalent in the research pertaining to campers; employees of summer camps can have similar experiences. Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011) found working at camp increased counsellors' opportunities for personal development and expanded their abilities to find employment after camp was completed. By forming partnerships outside the camp community, counsellors felt like they had something to contribute to society (Garst et al., 2011).

The role of the 'camp counsellor' is complex; it is that of a supervisor, a friend and a disciplinarian. The take-away experience campers receive at camp is greatly influenced by the environment the counsellor provides, which can add additional stress and pressure to the role. Bailey, Kang and Kuiper (2012) studied the persona, environment, and social predictors of staff burnout rates at camp. Their research found that the stressors that come with working at camp, including "long hours of work, lack of sleep, and unpredictable group dynamics", (p. 161) increased burn out rate of camp counsellors. These stress-inducing factors were caused by a lack of role clarity and counsellors not understanding

their job's expectations. Other factors highlighted included a lack of personal time and social support at camp. Burnout is not a positive outcome for Camp Directors. Losing returning staff due to burnout means more employees need to be recruited, hired, and trained each summer.

Theoretical Framework

There is an immense body of research pertaining to job satisfaction among employees, with the research directly related to summer camp counsellors focused on two main theories of motivation. The first, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs presents the idea that if one's needs are not fulfilled at a certain level of being, he/she cannot move to the next (Maslow, 1943). The second theory, Herzberg's Hygiene/Motivator Theory, was more frequently referenced by researchers studying camp counsellor retention rates referenced in this thesis. A third theory, Maher and Braskamp's 'Theory of Personal Investment' is introduced by Lyons (2000) and suggests that personal investment is a motivational factor in job satisfaction.

Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs'. In 1943, Maslow presented research on human motivation, and introduced the world to his ever-popular framework that outlined the hierarchy of needs of each individual. The theory's five elements are often depicted using a pyramid, with the base of the pyramid representing the first need as the most important, therefor the largest part of the shape.

The theory begins with 'physiological needs' being the most important as "a person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else" (Maslow, 1943, p. 373). The need for 'safety' is presented second, as its importance is not as life-threatening as the physiological needs, unless one's

safety is placed in jeopardy. The third need 'love' is related to feelings of belonging and affection. Maslow (1943) highlighted society has a predominant "hunger for affectionate relations with people in general" and when one does not feel satisfied with the level of affection he/she are receiving, one will "strive with great intensity to achieve" it (Maslow, 1943, p. 381). 'Esteem,' the fourth need gives people a sense of fulfillment. Maslow (1943) presented the notion that "all people in our society (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, (usually) high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for the esteem of others" (p. 381), and fulfilling this need leads people to believe they belong in this world. The final need is 'self-actualization', which is explained by Gawel (1997) as the need "to fulfill one's potentialities" (Table 1). Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Gawel (1997) suggested that employers need to provide opportunities to satisfy higher needs on Maslow's pyramid as employees advanced through their jobs.

In 1954, Maslow continued his research on needs by studying motivation and personality. Throughout his research on this topic, he found that a general pattern of needs-recognition emerged and reflected how people satisfied their needs through their work context (Maslow, Frager & Cox, 1970). As Becker (1983) stated "an important part of a counselor's decision to return to camp is to what degree his needs have been met by his camp experience" (p. 17). The degree to which these needs are fulfilled will determine if a counsellor will choose to return or not.

Herzberg's 'Hygiene/Motivator Theory'. To make the decision to return to camp year after year takes motivation yet motivation itself is a complex idea. DeGraaf and Edginton (1992) suggested that "the complexity of work motivation can be seen in the

interactions of the forces within an individual, the job, and the work environment that account for the level, direction, and persistence of effort expended at work” (p. 38). Many theories regarding work motivation have emerged over the years, and can be placed in three categories: content theories, process theories, and reinforcement theories (DeGraaf & Edginton, 1992).

Herzberg’s (1959) Hygiene/Motivator theory was cited throughout the work of multiple researchers that focused on studying the motivation of camp counsellors to return to camp, including Becker (1983), Cresci (2010) and McCole et al. (2012). Throughout Becker’s (1983) research on job satisfaction among camp counsellors, he presented Herzberg’s (1959) job satisfaction categories: hygiene factors and motivators. The factors that led to satisfaction were named ‘motivator’ factors and included achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and personal growth (Becker, 1983). Factors that caused dissatisfaction were named ‘hygiene’ factors. These included: job security, salary, working conditions, status, company policies and administration, quality of technical supervision, quality of interpersonal relations among supervisors, quality of interpersonal relations among peers, quality of interpersonal relations among subordinates, and fringe benefits (Becker, 1983). Cresci (2010) made the distinction between the two factors by means of ‘intrinsic’ and ‘extrinsic’ while studying motivations for camp staff to work at summer camps.

Although the Herzberg (1959) theory was popular in job satisfaction research, it did face scrutiny when applied directly to camp counsellor’s job satisfaction. First, the theory was not conceived while researching camp counsellor job satisfaction, but rather job

satisfaction in “normal job settings” (Becker, 1983, p. 26). As well, the theory itself is widely criticized on four accounts presented by McCole et Al. (2012):

1. Subjects in Herzberg’s study (1959) were asked to recall earlier feelings and experiences
2. Interviewees in Herzberg’s study (1959) were male professionals in technical fields (such as engineering and accounting)
3. Other studies have failed to replicate Herzberg’s results
4. Work design programs based on Herzberg’s model usually fail to stimulate workforce satisfaction.

Due to these four criticisms, Becker (1983) used the *Attitudinal Dimension* questionnaire to conduct his research. The questionnaire included aspects of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg’s Hygiene/Motivation theory, and provided a more profound understanding of potential motivators for camp counsellors through different classifications.

‘Theory of Personal Investment’. Lyons (2000) presented the theory of Personal Investment from Maehr and Braskamp (1986) in his research, which suggested the level of personal investment one has towards a particular activity is primarily based on what that activity means to him/her. Lyons (2000) suggested that by studying the meaning behind the choices one makes, one will have a greater understanding of his/her personal motivations. He proposed that an individual’s motivation is based on desired outcomes, which are “manifested in terms of personal incentives” and provide “the direction for a person's action” (Lyons, 2000, p. 23).

Camp Counselling

The January 1979 issue of *Camping Magazine* stated that “one way to ease camp recruitment is to retain as many competent staff from one summer to another” (Becker, 1983, p. 14), yet camp directors find retaining seasonal employees year after year a difficult task. Counsellors that return year after year are more likely to already display the skills and experience required to be successful in their position at camp, allowing them to provide an exceptional camp experience year after year (McCole Et Al., 2012, p. 87). High retention rates are also cost effective for camps. Having to recruit, hire, and train fewer new employees allows camp funding to be allocated to different sectors of camp (McCole Et Al., 2012, p. 85-86). As well, McCole et al. (2012) suggested that returning staff are rich resources for camp directors, and can be motivated to mentor new coaches and recruit new staff to join the roster. Furthermore, McCole et al. (2012) proposed that retaining the same employees year after year allows managers to explore higher-level training and development for returning staff as they are already versed in the basics of the role.

Organizations that are perceived to have higher employee turn over rates may have a difficult time “convincing potential customers, volunteers, benefactors, and parents that their programs are worthy of their trust and investment” (McCole Et Al., 2012, p. 87). The findings of McCole et al. (2012) validate the need for camp directors to understand counsellor motivators in order to increase employee retention rates.

Becker (1983) stated that a key aspect in employee retention at any job is the amount of satisfaction one receives from his or her job. Job satisfaction “is dependent upon the nature of a person's values and needs as well as upon the nature of the job” (Becker, 1983, p. 16), and the decision to return to camp relies heavily on the extent a counsellor’s personal needs have been met during employment (Becker, 1983).

Becker's (1983) study in on job satisfaction among camp counsellors became the point of reference for many research projects that followed. The four motivating factors highlighted in Lyons (2000) research pertaining to personal investment as a predictor of performance at camp allow the reseach collected to be categorized. The four caterogies presented are: 1) a desire to work with children, 2) having an opportunity to gain work experience working outdoors, 3) opportunities for social interaction, and 4) social expectation or normative influences. Themes complementing these four factors are commonly found in other bodies of work pertaining to camp counsellor motivations, and reflected many of the motivators found in Herzberg's theory (Becker, 1983; DeGraaf & Edginton, 1992; Hoff, Ellis & Crossley, 1988).

Working with children. Becker (1983) found the major factor in job satisfaction for camp counsellors was the opportunity to work directly with childen, and suggested that this may be the reason many counsellors choose to work in the education and human service field outside of their positions at camp. Bialeschki, Henderson, and Dahowski (1998) revealed that staff recognized the sense of responsibility felt not only for the lives of their campers, but also for their own personal development. The opportunity to take part in the development of campers was revealed by the participants, as they "often talked about the importance of the interaction with the campers and having an opportunity to observe and influence the positive development of a child" (Bialescki et al., 1998, para. 8).

Camper/counsellor interaction was found to happen on a personal level as well. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) revealed that counsellors found motivation in the "ability to share in making lasting memories" (p. 15) and to be an important part of campers' lives throughout their personal development.

Responsibility, a factor classified as a ‘motivator’ in Herzberg’s (1959) theory can be applied when addressing working with youth. While being responsible for the well-being of their campers, counsellors perceived themselves as holding a high position of responsibility and leadership, and an obligation to foster meaningful relationships with campers (Bialescki et al, 1998). LaFave and Loughran (2001) suggested that counsellors who felt they held a leadership role at camp experienced a deeper connection to camp itself. These counsellors understood their position within camp was complex and required “diligence and know-how” (LaFave & Loughran, 2001, para 5) as it pertained to counseling youth. By understanding the complexity of their role at camp, counsellors were found to influence camper behaviour positively, which resulted in a “happier, safer, and more effective camp” (LaFave & Loughran, 2001, para 5).

Gaining work experience outdoors. Although the camp experience can be seen as an unconventional form of employment due to its role diversity and length of time, Lyons (2000) suggested it provides a setting to acquire multiple skills through unique opportunities. Lyons (2000) suggested the skill set acquired at camp is extremely transferable to other career paths in education, outdoor recreation and careers that include interaction with children and parents. Becker (1983) found that the most important reason for specialty camp counsellors to return to camp was for the skills they acquired that could be transferred to their future career path. Garst et al. (2011) expanded on Becker’s (1983) findings, relating that the experience counsellors gained at camp were skills that would positively “affect their personal relationships, careers, and civic engagement outside camp”(p. 82). Counsellors believed that “camp experiences contributed to twenty-first-century workforce skills such as planning, decision making, communication, and

teamwork” (Garst et al., 2011, p.82). Along with the support from their peers at camp, counsellors also felt safe enough to “explore new opportunities and try out new roles that they could apply in other settings” (Garst et al., 2011, p. 82).

DeGraaf and Edginton (1992) found that counsellors’ motivations for working in a summer camp included “exercising personal skill and developing skills for future employment” (p. 51). Bialeschki et al. (1998) expanded on this notion and introduced leadership into the equation. They suggested that the opportunity to acquire these skills while working in a fun environment led to a constructive experience and increased one’s positive outlook on leadership.

Lyons (2000) revealed that camp counsellors perceived the opportunity to work outside as a contribution to overall satisfaction at camp, mainly by fostering a deeper concern for nature and the environment, and increasing outdoor education opportunities (p. 24). DeGraaf and Edginton (1992) were the only other researchers found to reference “being outdoors” (p. 51) within their study to motivate counsellors to seek camp positions. The lack of research pertaining to the benefits of working outdoors will be addressed in the research limitations of this chapter.

Opportunity for social interaction. McCole et al. (2012) identified the increased opportunity for social interaction at summer camps as a strong motivator for staff, stating that “interpersonal relationships and connectedness with others” (p. 98) are two leading motivational factors for choosing employment at summer camps. Bialeschki et al. (1998) found participants stressed the “importance of friendships formed at camp” (para. 7) as an important factor in camp counsellor job satisfaction. Another common factor that emerged from the research was the significance of teamwork. The staff interviewed spoke highly

about the benefit of learning and working in a team setting, which increased trust and respect within the staff, which in turn, increased team cohesion (Bialeschki et al., 1998).

DeGraff and Edginton (1992) presented another potential motivator: the ‘fun-factor’. The opportunity for “having fun and a chance to meet or work with other people” (p. 47) were showcased as strong motivators for counsellors to continue working at camp each year.

Social expectations and normative influences. Lyons (2000) suggested that the decision to become a camp counsellor and attend camp year after year is not an innate decision, but rather one must be motivated to do so. All decisions in life are influenced “by the concerns, attitudes, and opinions of others, particularly significant others such as family, friends, and college advisors” (Lyons, 2000, p. 25). These influences, along with the “desire for tradition and the opportunity to experience cultural diversity”(p. 25) are examples of resilient motivational categories. If these experiences are motivating enough for the individual, they will be acted upon.

Bialeschki et al. (1998) described camp staff as “idealistic and altruistic” (para. 1) and indicated camp counselling as a form of employment is chosen with the expectation to gain positive personal benefits.

Further Research to be Explored

Three additional factors emerged from the reviewed research that were not included in the four original motivating factors outlined above. Personal growth, a sense of community, and the influence of camp on counsellors’ lives outside the camp setting were themes that were drawn.

Personal growth. Waskul (1998) studied the construction of roles and identities at camp, and described camp as a ‘wilderness community’. He identified the “the emergence of a situated social structure, temporary roles, and situational identities whose perceived (if not actual) distance from the reality of everyday life allows for the realization of personal insights on the nature of participants everyday social relations” (p. 26) formed at camp. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) expanded on this notion by stating that counsellors felt a sense of freedom when in the camp staff role, and felt able to be themselves; free to do what they chose without restrictions. Participants in their research stated that camp gave them “the opportunity to create the kind of place they want to be interested in” (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003, p. 14).

Prior to DeGraaf and Glover (2003), Bialeschki et al. (1998) discovered ‘personal growth’ as another positive outcome occurring from camp employment (para. 14). Personal character, self-esteem, confidence and spiritual growth were all factors classified under personal growth and mentioned by study participants as aspects of their identity (Bialeschki et al., 1998). Duerden (2014) found that working at summer camp could be “attributed to positive changes in identity, development of a sense of belonging and an enhanced ability to effectively solve problems” (para 5) showing the potential for personal gain in the position.

Sense of community . Dustin (1994) stated that camp gave its attendees the “opportunity to taste the possibility of the human family, to sense their connectedness to other living things, to have a glimpse of what can be, to come home eager and enthusiastic, ready to take on the world” (p. 34). This sense of community was a theme found in many other pieces of research reviewed. Lyons (2003) found that a feeling of community

prompted feelings of belonging. His research found that the sense of community begins with the camp director during training sessions, where camp staff can collectively develop the camp's intentions (Lyons, 2003). Camp was seen as different from the outside world by participants, and inclusion boundaries were formed within camp staff. These boundaries distinguished staff between who were included in the camp community, defined as 'family', and who were not included (Lyons, 2003). Lyon's (2003) suggested that "camp songs, dining hall routines, established flagpole ceremonies and a range of other daily practices" (p. 57) became normative practices for both campers and staff, and these traditions "reinforced the boundaries of belonging" (p. 57). McCole et al. (2012) solidified the importance of Lyons' (2003) findings by declaring that elements of a camp's community were stronger contributing factors to job satisfaction than the responsibility of the job itself.

Klein and D'Aunno (1986) studied the psychology of community in the workplace by conducting an in-depth review of the literature available at the time. Their research defined community as "the sense that one belongs in and is meaningfully a part of a larger collectivity" (p. 365) and encompassed the notion of "organization commitment" and the "sense of community" (p. 366). Klein and D'Aunno (1986) defined organizational commitment as the "the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization," (p. 366) and can be described in three groups: 1) "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values," (p. 366) 2) a "willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization," (p. 366) and 3) "a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (Klein, D'Aunno, 1986, p. 366). Klein and D'Aunno (1986) found that although organization commitment and a sense of

community in the workplace are intertwined, they are not identical and need to be reviewed separately.

Klein and D'Aunno (1986) introduced the means of creating a sense of community in the workplace by using examples such as: having a social network of friends, creating functional subgroups within the organization, feeling a sense of belonging to the organization as a whole, and the feeling of being part of a larger work community based directly on his or her profession itself.

Klein and D'Aunno (1986) also found that employment that strongly promoted coworker interaction produced a much greater a sense of community at work, allowing coworkers to develop friendships and improved communication among groups. MacMillan and Chavis (1986) defined this sense of community among coworkers as 'membership'; a "feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness"(p. 9). The second element, 'influence,' concentrated on a "sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members" (MacMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 11). The third element, 'integration and fulfillment of needs,' showcased the reinforcements that bind a group together (MacMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 12). The fourth and final element presented by MacMillan and Chavis (1986) is a 'shared emotional connection,' and is defined as "the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences" (p. 9).

Influence on life outside of camp. Becker (1983) found that camp counsellors found their experience at camp "an excellent opportunity for personal growth and learning new skills" (p. 92), especially if they worked in an educational role outside of camp.

DeGraaf and Glover (2003) also discovered that camp had a large impact on counsellors' lives outside of the camp setting.

DeGraaf and Glover (2003) research participants stated that the experience of developing long-term relationships at camp would impact how they approach certain relationships in the future, using their camp friendships as a model for relationships outside its confines. Other positive benefits camp had on the participants' personal lives were recognized in the study's results, which included "increased self-confidence, increased appreciation of nature, spiritual growth, as well as the development of specific life skills" (DeGraaf, Glover, 2003, p. 8).

Gaps and Limitations in the Research

The main research limitations encountered thus far have been the lack of information and research conducted on Canadian summer camp employees. Both the Canadian Camping Association and the Ontario Camping Association were contacted regarding the collection of research for this thesis. Both organizations were unable to provide current statistical data, therefore data from The American Camping Association was referenced to lend statistical power. Although the United States and Canada are geographically close, the assumption that the data reported on summer camps in the United States reflects the Canadian camping experience authentically cannot be made. Readers must approach the data provided by the ACA with this understanding.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explore why coaches at Madawaska Volleyball Camp return to camp year after year, and to understand what motivated them to do so. An experiential qualitative research approach was undertaken using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis as a Methodology

The beginnings of phenomenology as a philosophy began in the 1900s with the release of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (Ashworth & Chung, 2007, p. 45). In this body of work, Husserl referred to phenomenology as a means to understand "the relationship between conscious acts and the objects to which they are directed" with the term 'object' "referring to anything, real or imaginary, or even illusory, that can be related to acts of consciousness" (Ashworth & Chung, 2006, p. 45).

The central focus of IPA is to understand "people's lived experiences, and the meanings they attach to their experiences" (Tindall, 2009, p. 3). In a similar fashion, Smith (2004) explained IPA as a framework that allows one to "explore in detail participants' personal lived experience and how participants make sense of that personal experience" (p. 40). This form of analysis is characterized as phenomenological because of its "concern with individuals' perceptions of objects or events" (Smith, 2004, p. 40) but also acknowledges the role of the researcher to make sense of the participants' experiences. The IPA framework was chosen for this study because it allows "unanticipated topics or themes to emerge during analysis," (Smith, 2004, p. 43) not allowing hypotheses derived from the

review of literature to be verified or negated, but allows the researcher “construct broader research questions which lead to the collection of expansive data” (Smith, 2004, p. 43).

Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) studied IPA and how to understand it as an additional methodology for researchers to choose from. Larkin et al. (2006) understood that the interpretation the researcher provided within the analysis is not the same as experiencing the event first-handed, but is used to “produce a coherent, third-person, and psychologically informed description, which tries to get as ‘close’ to the participant’s view as is possible” (p. 105). Considering this thesis is focused on why coaches choose to return year after year to MVC, it is important that there be flexibility within the framework to both expand and explore the boundaries of the research question. Room to interpret the participants’ experiences based on the researcher’s personal knowledge of MVC is required. IPA gives the researcher this opportunity, by allowing him/her to “deal with the data in a more speculative fashion: to think about ‘what it means’ for the participants to have made these claims, and to have expressed these feelings and concerns in this particular situation” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 105). Larkin et al. (2006) shared an example of the emotion ‘love’ to assure the researcher understood where to focus his or her analysis. They stated that the researcher should not be “primarily concerned with the nature of love per se, but with this particular person, and with their experiences and understandings of love” (Larkin et al., 2008, p. 108).

In summary, Larkin et al. (2006) presented IPA as a way to interpret participants’ “concerns and cares” (p. 117) about the world based on the experiences they chose to share. It is the role of the researcher to “contextualizes these claims within their cultural and physical environments, and then attempts to make sense of the mutually constitutive

relationship between ‘person’ and ‘world’ from within a psychological framework” (Larkin et al, 2008, p. 117). Larkin et al. (2006) suggested the role of the researcher as providing “a renewed insight into the ‘phenomenon at hand’, informed by the participant’s own relatedness to, and engagement with, that phenomenon”(p. 117).

Research Question

As stated in the introduction to the research methodology, this study will explore the motivational factors of camp coaches at Madawaska Volleyball Camp, and how these motivational factors influence them to return each year. The overarching question “What keeps you coming back?” is presented in the interviews as a simplified version of the research question.

Research Framework

Table 1
Summary of Research Framework for this Study

Category	Description
Philosophy	Phenomenological
Ontology	Social constructionism
Epistemology	Interpretive (hermeneutics)
Methodology	Qualitative
Approach	Inductive
Research Design	Experiential
Method	Semi-structured in-depth interviews

Participant Selection

Recruitment. Participants were recruited by an email distributed by MVC administration to all current and past camp employees. The email can be found in Appendix A for reference. The email gave all coaches, both active and inactive, the opportunity to participate. By not placing a limitation to coaches that were current/active employees at MVC, it gave inactive coaches the opportunity to potentially share their experience about why they chose not to return to camp.

Participant Details. Eight Madawaska Volleyball Camp coaches that have attended camp for more than two years participated in this study. The participants are described in Table 2 below. They are presented in alphabetical order by pseudonym. The information displayed are the personal details required to explore the research question, and include years coached at camp, the experience category related to the years coached, if the years they coached were consecutive and if they were a previous camper at MVC. Personal details such as age, gender, employment, and socio-economical status were not collected to assure confidentiality of the participants, as those details could potentially have led to their identification.

Table 2
Interviewed Participant Details

Participant	Years Coaching at MVC	Category Label	Years Coached Consecutively	Previous Camper Experience at MVC
Amanda	33	Lifer	Yes	No
Grant	3	Rookie	Yes	Yes
Jacob	8	Junior	Yes	Yes
Jamie	9	Junior	Yes	No
Josh	6	Junior	Yes	No
Mark	30	Lifer	Yes	No
Nick	8	Junior	No	No
Shannon	2	Rookie	Yes	Yes

Coaches are placed in culturally formed categories based on the years they have coached at MVC. The categories, along with the years they represent, can be found in Table 3. These categories are terms that have been constructed by the staff culture at camp over time, and are used to describe a coaches' level of experience at MVC. It is important to note that these categories do not represent the age of the coaches within them, as many coaches begin and end their MVC experience at different stages of life. As each category label represents a set amount of years of experience, each label represents a different set of characteristics pertaining to the coach that falls within it. The 'rookies' are the newest coaches to the MVC coaching staff, but perhaps are not new to the camp itself. This category generally houses the youngest coaches who will act as CITs for the week. They are labeled as 'rookies' to suggest they have a lot to learn from the more experienced coaches. Within the culture of camp, this category are known to be less responsible, and ones who test the rules of camp the most. These assumptions are socially constructed at camp, and the 'rookies' are in a way expected to fulfill these unruly expectations.

As a coach's years at camp increases, the Leadership Team's expectations of him/her increases as well. The labels 'junior' and 'senior' mimic the labeling found in American high school systems, suggesting that these coaches have been at camp for a couple years, understand its programming yet have not been at camp long enough to have mastered it. They have moved up from their 'rookie' status, and are now expected to take on more responsibility. Within this category it is common to see coaches of different ages and experience levels, as well as holding different roles at camp. Some may be given the opportunity to be a head coach at camp, and even move into higher leadership roles such as a Section Head. The cultural expectation of this category is they are expected to mentor the

‘rookies’ while looking at the more senior coaches for insight. Within a family context, these two categories would be labeled as the middle child. Greater expectations are placed on them, yet they are still priviled to lean from the coaches above them.

‘Veterans’ of MVC tend to hold higher positions of authority and have usually been working in the same camp section for a length of time. They are not as commonly found as the other three sections with less experience, as their length of commitment to attending camp is rare. Along with the ‘veterans,’ the ‘lifers’ are extremely rare. These coaches have been coaching at MVC for at least half of the camp’s existence and have personally witnessed its evolution. ‘Lifers’ are recognized at camp in many different capacities. The Leadership Team is quick to introduce them at staff training, as some of them fit within this category themselves. There is a culture in itself surrounding the label ‘lifer,’ which is constructed at camp not only by the recognition of the coaches in the category itself, but the emmense amount of dedication it takes to camp to reach this level.

Although the recruitment email was sent out to both previous and current coaches, only coaches in the three following coaching experience category responded: 1) Rookie, 2) Junior, and 3) Lifer. Two of the participants were classified as ‘Rookie’s, four participants were classified as ‘Junior’s and two participants were ‘Lifer’s. One participant is an inactive coach at MVC.

Table 3
Coaching Experience Categories: Years Coached at Madawaska Volleyball Camp

Years Coaching at Camp	Category
0-5	Rookie
6-10	Junior
11-15	Senior
16-20	Veteran
21+	Lifer

Research Design

The study is comprised of eight semi-structured in-depth interviews, which supported the IPA framework by allowing me to act in “real time” and be in “a position to follow up interesting and important issues that arose during the interview (Smith, 2004, p. 50). The chosen number of interviews conducted also complemented IPA’s methodology, as IPA studies “typically involves a highly intensive and detailed analysis of the accounts produced by a comparatively small number of participants” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 103)

Wiling and Stainton-Rogers (2008) stated that the interview process in IPA analysis is used to “have the participant describe in a faithful and detailed manner an experience of a situation that exemplifies the phenomenon that the investigator is interested in” (p. 71) and allows the researcher to understand the whole experience from their story. The interviews were conducted in an easy going and friendly tone, as the participants and I were familiar with each other due to my positionality at MVC. The management of this relationship will be discussed in the ethical considerations of this chapter.

Throughout the interviews, it was common for the participants to engage me to share an experience with them, so they too learned from the interview experience. The interview questions were not presented in a particular order but rather at a time I saw fit, allowing the participant to expand in as much detail as he or she liked. Interjections only occurred when clarification was needed or the participants needed more information from me.

All interviews were conducted after Madawaska Volleyball Camp’s completion in August 2016. The semi-structured interviews varied in length from 22 to 70 minutes, dependent on the amount of detail the participants contributed. The interviews were

conducted at a convenient time for both the participant and myself by phone. Participants were able to choose where they felt comfortable taking the call, preferably in places with less distractions or somewhere they could be alone. Grant's interview was conducted in a car while travelling with another MVC coach. In this instance, I made sure he was comfortable conducting the interview with this person present. Shannon's interview was not conducted on the phone but via email as she was out of the country at the time of data collection. The need for clarification or expansion was done through email correspondence.

Data Collection and Analysis

Using IPA as a method for analyzing the data collected allowed me to interpret its meaning and create understanding. The *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (Willing & Stainton-Rogers, 2008) presented the methodological steps researchers should follow to interpret their data using IPA. The steps are outlined in Figure 1 below.

Step 1—Reading for a sense of the whole.

Step 2—Dividing into meaning units.

Step 3—Transforming the data.

Step 4—Synthesizing the transformed meaning units

Figure 1. Process of Analysis in IPA. Adapted from “*The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology*.” by Willig, C., & Stainton-Rogers, W. (2008). Los Angeles ; London: SAGE.

Chapter 11 is dedicated to Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, and outlined the process of analysis for conducting IPA as a research method using four steps. Each step, presented in Figure 1 above, is elaborated to ensure the researcher understands its importance (Willing & Staiton Rogers, 2008).

The first step of analysis – reading for a sense of the whole – encouraged researchers to re-read the complete interview multiple times to gain understanding of the “whole picture” (Wiling & Stainton-Rogers, 2008, p. 71). Willing and Stainton-Rogers (2008) suggested researchers should not to begin analyzing or organizing the experiences presented by the participants during this step.

The second step – dividing into meaning units – is when the researcher begins to categorize experiences that provide similar meaning. ‘Meaning units’ described the collection of data that aids in the clarification of the experience’s meaning based on the perceived transitions they produce for the researcher (Wiling & Stainton-Rogers, 2008). The authors highlighted the difference between ‘good versus bad’ meaning units by establishing if the meaning units are “too short one risks fragmenting the description” and “if they are too long the risk is that important aspects are glossed over and missed” (Wiling & Stainton-Rogers p. 72). This interpretation suggested that researchers must be careful not to search for ‘meaning units’ too forcefully, but rather find them naturally throughout the interviews.

The transformation of data only begins in the third step. During this time, researchers begin to transform the “concrete expressions in each meaning unit into the psychological meaning of those expressions” (Wiling & Stainton-Rogers, 2008, p. 72). This is when researchers will ask themselves “what does this mean?” and describe their interpretation of the interview both explicitly and implicitly.

The fourth step – synthesizing the transformed meaning units – is when the researcher presents the meaning units highlighted in Step 2 with evidence from each participant’s interview. During this analysis, the researcher will present the transformed

meanings to highlight “what is truly essential about them” and create “invariant connected meanings belonging to the experience” (Wiling et al., 2008, p. 72).

The process of IPA was closely followed in the data analysis portion of this thesis. After the interviews were transcribed, the interviews were re-read several times to assure I was familiar with the whole experience being presented by each participant. The interviews were then coded and analyzed to identify emerging themes that related to the research question, along with sub categories. Patterns were identified across the interviews. Some of the initial coding of themes and my preliminary notes throughout an interview can be found in Appendix B. Once these themes emerged, a narrative was constructed that intertwined the themes and experiences of each coach who was interviewed. Large interview excerpts were used to embody the participant’s true experiences rather than attempting to paraphrase them and lose their personal quality. After coding the final interview, the IPA cycle had been completed multiple times and solidified themes were ready now ready for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Windsor’s Research Ethics Board has reviewed this research proposal prior to commencing data collection to assure the study complied with its ethical standards. The research proposal was then reviewed and accepted by Madawaska Volleyball Camp. Once approval was granted from both parties, participants were contacted and informed of the nature of the study. The participants were informed that they would remain confidential, yet the data collected from their interviews would still be used in direct quotations throughout this thesis.

My positionality as the researcher, as well as being an active employee at Madawaska Volleyball Camp, was clearly disclosed to all participants and discussed in the

introduction of this thesis. As I hold a higher position of responsibility at camp than some of the participants, the potential for coercion was addressed. Participants were educated that their position in the study was voluntary and were assured they could withdraw from the study at any time.

All those being interviewed were asked to create a pseudonym to be used throughout the study. The reason for this confidentiality is that one could not predict whether the outcomes of each participant's interviews would be positive or negative. As the researcher, I must provide a safe and trusting environment for those participating in the study. Although the participants were not classified as part of a vulnerable population, their responses had the potential to impact their employment, reputation and means of financial compensation from working at camp. Therefore, the Camp Director and administration were not informed of who participated in the study.

All interview data are held in a secure location and all audio-recorded interviews were given individual codes to assure the confidentiality of participants. All participants were required to complete a consent form highlighting their involvement in the study, and their consent to be audio recorded.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings/ Data Analysis

Overall Findings

The experience of summer camp is unique to each individual – whether one attended as a camper or a counsellor. Madawaska Volleyball Camp, a volleyball camp that caters to athletes over a week-long, program packed-camp, has been functioning for forty-four years. Last year, the camp experienced over 70% of its staff return from the previous year, and eleven staff returned after taking a sabbatical from camp (Eibitt, 2016). This thesis will highlight the value of studying motivational factors for camp counsellors to return to summer camp employment each year, with the purpose of examining the reasons behind Madawaska Volleyball coaches' motivations to return specifically to MVC. Addressing the following broader research question "*Why do camp counselors return to camp year after year?*" allowed the participants to express their motivations in personal terms. IPA, the chosen methodology for this study, allowed rich experiences to be shared through participants' semi-structured interviews, analyzed, and interpreted to showcase these experiences in context.

Four prominent themes emerged from the data collected in each of the participant's interviews. Notions of alignment, tradition, opportunities for personal reflection and growth, and the surrounding environment were all mentioned in the coaches' experiences at MVC, and impacted their motivations to return to camp each year. The concepts of alignment and tradition brought sub-thematic experiences to the forefront, allowing the overarching theme to gain structure and grounding. The other two themes were emphasized strongly enough through the coaches' reported experiences to stand alone.

Drawing connections between the motivators found in the research of this study and the motivations embedded in the literature was both simple and challenging. Some connections jumped off the pages, while others required more reflection on my part. Due to my experience as a previous camper and current coach at MVC, I have a vast understanding of camp and its workings. With this experience, I was able to relate the interpreted data found in this study to motivations found in previous literature. Although the participants did not use the term ‘motivation’ in a direct sense, they provided experiences and emotions that were interpreted as vehicles of motivation to return to MVC each summer.

In 1983, Becker studied the job satisfaction rates of camp counsellors returning to work at camp, and solidified the importance of counsellors to the summer camp experience:

...the camp staff, not the intangible objectives, are the motivating factors for the entire camp. Through them comes the desire and drive to participate; through them comes the continuing enthusiasm for more and new experiences; through them comes the desire to try, to learn, to persevere, and to try again (p. 2).

All eight participants provided sufficient experiences to recognize the importance of each theme presented, yet two themes in particular presented the strongest motivations for returning to camp each – alignment and tradition. Each theme provided enough evidence to create sub-categories, which reflected their importance to each participant while discussing MVC.

Theme One: Alignment

Alignment within an organization is acquired through “recruitment strategies, characteristics of applicants, and socialization processes” (Beehr, Glazer, Fischer, Linton,

& Hansen, 2009, p. 2), which must compliment the organization's values, and depends heavily on the extent employees are aligned with those values. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) encourage "camp professionals to customize this philosophy and mission to their specific camp," (p. 17) allowing counsellors to 'buy into' the camp's known philosophy and align themselves with the values presented.

Klein and D'Aunno (1986) presented the concept of 'organizational commitment' that consisted of three elements that could predict the strength of an individual's alignment with the organization in question. The first factor presented by Klien and D'Aunno (1986) was the "belief in the organization's goals and values, and the acceptance of them," (p. 366) which is reflected in this thesis's alignment sub-category of 'sharing common values.' The second element is one's "willing to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization," (p.366) which can be exemplified by experiences depicted when MVC coaches place campers' experiences before their own. The third and final element of 'organizational commitment' is modeled in the 'commitment to camp section' of this thesis, and is defined by Klien and D'Aunno (1986) as the "strong desire to maintain membership in the organization" (p. 366).

After analyzing the eight participant's interviews, it was evident their core coaching values and commitment levels towards MVC were all positively aligned with the findings of Klein and D'Aunno (1986). While some participants' statements expressed their love for MVC, other participants' emotional attachment to camp took more time to be shared with me. Overall, the theme of alignment was present in each participant's interview, which showed its strength to motivate coaches to return each year. Amanda, a participant that has coached at camp for 33 years, described alignment as the feeling that "we're all in it

together.” The common MVC value, which is presented by the Leadership Team at training and within the coaches manual, is to exude a ‘camper-centric’ environment at camp. The term ‘camper-centric’ expresses the value of the camper’s experience above everything else, with that experience intending to be positive.

Sharing a common value

Out of the eight coaches interviewed, I found Grant seemed to place a higher significance on being an integral part of a camper-centric mentality at camp, as he continually stressed the responsibility he felt for putting the campers’ experiences before his own. Lyons (2000) depicted ‘working with children’ as one the five motivational factors for counsellors, which supports Grant’s motivation to continue coaching at camp. Grant’s ‘camper-centric’ coaching style highlighted Klein and D’Aunno’s (1986) findings, showing his belief in the MVC’ value, and the acceptance of it throughout camp. Grant is a previous MVC camper and CIT, and has now coached at camp for three years. He expressed an understanding and commitment to the importance of MVC’s value and the long term significance of creating memorable relationships with his campers:

The kids are the first, the number one answer. I've created actually a great relationship with them, my campers, and it's awesome to instill the same camp experience in those kids and see those kids coming back the following year, and that's what it's all about. (Grant)

Grant believed his previous camper experience is what has brought him a sense of familiarity to his coaching at camp. Being a previous camper myself, I find myself relying on my camper experience while coaching at camp; from understanding the tiredness the campers feel on day three, to the excitement campers express for the dance programming.

Grant highlighted that the Leadership Team reinforced the camp's values last year, to ensure a united front for campers:

It's something that we, like as the staff we really, we really dug into that like over the last few years, like refocusing "It's all for the kids, it's all for the kids" and that's all really what it comes down to in the end. (Grant)

This reinforcement seemed to re-ignite the flame in many coaches at MVC. Last year's coaching staff was the most united I have been a part of so far in my years at MVC, which Grant is attesting to. Last year, we as coaches were continually reminded of MVC's value and were expected to emulate it at all points of our day.

Josh. Josh was not a camper previously to becoming a coach at MVC, yet he acquired a conception of camp after many discussions with people in the volleyball community. Josh was under the impression that MVC placed a great emphasis on the campers' experiences. This positive impression led him to apply for a coaching position at camp after being referred by multiple coaches and players close to him. Once he accepted the position, he was able to put his preconceived ideas about the camp to the test:

I was correct in a sense that the entire camp is entirely geared towards the campers.

It's a camper-centric environment that's created for everyone but specifically the campers, umm, and so that was evident from when you drive through the gates.

(Josh)

Now that I had an understanding of why Josh started coaching at camp, we explored the reason Josh decided to return as a coach each year. The preconceived 'camper-centric' value of camp that he had developed, which had now been experienced first hand, continued to consume his interview:

So it being camp-centric or it, sorry athlete-centric is so kind of guided from the top down, you know from Ian and Carrie make it very evident that we're here for the kids and we're aware of that, the head staff is the exact same, our section heads do the exact same thing. So from the top down I think everyone buys in to this community driven camp that is never forgotten about. (Josh)

This 'top-down' leadership style complimented Grant's explanation of how the value system is both taught and reinforced at camp. He appreciated the guidance of the camp coaches who taught him how to manage his personal well-being at camp, while he continued to enhance the campers' experience:

I would say the hardest was trying to figure out when were the times to be up and when were the times to be down. And so when to put yourself out there, you know personally and have some social time and umm, and when to retract and ensure that you know, you're there for the campers and, and, everything is about them so umm, so to make sure that you have your time for both. (Josh)

Overall, his acquisition of MVC's value was not innate, but rather guided by experience, and Josh has completed six consecutive years at camp showing Klein and D'Aunno's (1986) second element of organizational commitment, a 'willing to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization,'(p. 366) as he stresses his body and his mind throughout camp.

Nick. Although Nick seemed to share the same value of MVC during the interview, at the beginning of his coaching career at camp he experienced a lack of social support from the other coaches. Even with a negative experience, Nick praised the camp's value with enthusiasm. As we explored the 'right' reasons to continue coaching at camp, Nick

outlined his idea of what a coach's role is at MVC, and what must be accomplished throughout the week in order to fulfill the camper's needs:

The kids, the kids should have, have the best week of their lives. The coaches, the coaches should strive to achieve the best week of 12 to 14 kids lives and as well as many other people's they can touch in the process But that's your goal as a coach.
(Nick)

Nick presented this role with authority in his voice. I could feel the passion and belief he had in this statement through the phone. While reflecting on the fact that Nick's first year as a coach was a negative experience for him, I find it inspiring that he continued to care so much about the MVC experience of his campers. With feelings of exclusion and lack of support from the coaching staff itself, Nick compensated for the absence of coach connections by building strong relationships with his campers. This personal solution, in turn, fed back into the camp's value system of placing the campers' experience before your own:

The kids were absolutely incredible and, even though I didn't really get the songs or like the, the, I'd never even been camping, so I wasn't really and outdoorsey camping person. So, that was....yeah, it was...ah...yeah I, I, I often, I, I, thought back specifically to what, what brought me back and, I don't know if I really thought about it, but yeah it was the kids more than anything, it was these awesome, terrified, before their growth spurt, 12 year old kids. (Nick)

Nick justified his camper-centric mentality by highlighting the financial commitment parents put into camp. He suggested that with the exchange of funds came an expectation that coaches are strictly there to enhance the camper experience:

...from the nature of, of the financial commitment that family makes to have child go to Madawaska entails that, the only people in the camp that truly have the right to be, in really any capacity selfish, is the campers. Because, because we can, we can preach a million different values but ultimately it is, it is their, it is, it is their right upon acceptance and upon the transfer of a large amount of money that they go and have their type of camp experience. It's theirs, it's their camp. (Nick)

Jacob. Nick was not the only coach that expressed personal struggle as the catalyst for adopting MVC's 'camper-centric' value. Jacob, a previous camper at MVC, had endured both positive and negative experiences at camp, and decided to transform himself into the type of coach he needed back then:

I've always given my kids the opportunity to after session like I'll hang out with my kids before I'll hang out with a coach, even if like, like there's no exception, Umm, at this, this point where I'm at, that's the experience I want to be giving kids, and if I need to like go and sleep, I'll go and sleep, like I'll take care of myself. But as soon as I have energy, I want to share it with the people that I think matter most, and I think it's those campers. (Jacob)

Jacob was the most reflective participant in my experience, as he would create connections between coaching at MVC and the 'outside' world he inhabited, and how they either mirrored or differed from each other. He even described himself as a 'people watcher' that isn't as social as he wished to be. The intertwining of his observations at camp, along with his personal experiences outside its confines, reinforced Jacob's connections with his campers. His unique personality traits have led him to provide reflective examples to describe what he's learned at camp:

Any time at camp I've seen things shift away from the kids and shift towards the person, I don't see positive things happening at camp And I think that's because, the only positive instances that people do things for themselves are like "oh yeah, this free period I'm gonna have a nap". (Jacob)

With an inquisitive mind, Jacob has found ways to tie research he's studied outside of camp into his personal coaching philosophy, and incorporate it to increase the campers' experience positively. He channeled his findings into his camper interactions, hoping to fulfill their needs during the week:

...Care is paramount because you're looking for the best intent for them athletically, in a performance aspect, but you also don't want the kid to like develop like a mental disorder, like an aversion to coaching or an aversion to sport, so I think, I think people who lack empathy in coaching, not necessarily can't coach, but need to be aware that their actions are, necessitate empathy in the context of sport, and that saying "this is the way I coach" isn't always, isn't good enough to say because there are so many coaches, we'll find a coach that can step into their place. (Jacob)

This statement showed reflection, understanding, and 'care' even while he referenced coaches not supporting the value of camp. Throughout Jacob's interview it was evident that he was a compassionate and reflective person – both of himself and the situations faced at camp that were beyond his control. Drawing from his past, he emulated the coaching style he believed the camper's not only needed, but deserved. He did not want to repeat the past and have his campers experience camp the way he had in his second year at MVC.

Jamie. Jamie attributed his alignment with MVC's value to the 'like-minded' coaches that surrounded him at camp. As the other coaches interviewed highlighted the

camp's value, Jamie concluded that the commonality between coaches and the relationships built on the mutual love for volleyball are what makes MVC unique:

Its great because its got both, um, real established and, and, ah true deep relationships and then its also got some others evolving all the time so its kind ah exciting for the, ah, um, coaching standpoint to be able to, to, ah, rekindle and, um, grow new relationships with other coaches who are just about as crazy about the the game and everything that goes into it as you are, so you really do feel you know that these are people that that get it too or are like-minded. (Jamie)

Jamie continued to explore the idea of 'commonality' and expressed it as a significant difference between his current place of employment and MVC:

At camp everybody seems to always be on the same page. Even if there is slight disagreements on how things ah, roll out, it always with a common goal and work sometimes isn't like that you know, sometimes there are people who are trying to ah, um, ah, do what is best for them or you know. (Jamie)

Jamie expressed selfishness in the workplace, where at camp, coaches are encouraged to help each other as much as possible. Sharing lesson plans or creating them as a group can be observed each night in the CL. Considering the camp is only a week in length and coaches are not informed of the age or ability they will be coaching prior to arriving at camp, sharing among coaches is the only way session planning can be completed.

Coaches are also not told who they will be paired to coach with for the week until orientation. This brings a form of excitement into training, and allows coaches to bond quickly once paired off. Sharing can also be seen in the form of story telling, where

coaches offer advice pertaining to situations that arise at camp from their personal experiences. This allows new coaches to learn how to resolve situations quickly and efficiently.

Mark. Mark was the second coach to comment on the monetary value at MVC as Nick had previously done above. The pay may be small but the position does not lack responsibility. Mark went into greater detail regarding the personal responsibility a coach must take on at MVC when accepting the position, and placed the exchange bluntly:

Kids are paying money and your job is to help them learn volleyball. You're not up there just to have a good time but one of the coaches that was saying that the university players up there were saying "well if you take away the booze, you know, the university guys won't come" and I went "okay great". Yeah thanks I'm sorry, I'm not your babysitter for a week. (Mark)

Every other evening in the CL, a coaches' social is held to promote camp connections and acts as a stress reliever. Evenings in the CL are not always 'fun and games', in fact many evenings coaches decide to turn in early to make sure they are rested for the next day. The CL acts as a 'safe haven' for coaches to escape and wind down after a full day of programming, and some evenings, the scheduled programming allows coaches to have an alcoholic beverage. Drinks are served by program staff whom are SmartServe certified and are available by option and not in excess. These guidelines have become more strict and enforced as the years go by. Drinking has become a privilege, not a priority. In earlier years, the aspect of drinking may have been labeled as a motivation to attend camp for some coaches. Here, Mark refers to the 'partying' priority as an easy way to dissect which coaches display MVC's value and which do not. Regarding the evolution of the

coaches' social activities, Mark suggested that "yes we get older but we also understand, I think the people that have stuck around for so long, understand why we're really there".

Amanda. Amanda did not express the camper-centric value system as a motivation to continue coaching at camp at first, but rather focused on the common love for volleyball at MVC. As we explored this commonality as one of her motivators, Amanda began to understand that sport was the bridge that allowed her to form deeper "special connections" with other coaches at camp. It also provided her with an instant feeling of camaraderie with her campers. Once this was revealed, she connected the love for the sport played at MVC to the camper-centric mentality she exuded at camp. She then stated after a long reflective pause and a deep breathe that her favourite part about the week was "... I think being able to...the actual coaching of the kids." (Amanda)

Shannon. Although Shannon's interview was not conducted on the phone but through email, the emotion attached to her commitment to MVC could be felt in the words she chose to share with me. When I asked what she loved about MVC, her answer was non-descriptive yet did reference to the campers: "There are many aspects of camp that I love, from the court time with the campers to their cabin time". While reflecting on her reasons to return as a coach each year, she again referred to the campers in an indirect way, placing emphasis on her experience rather than theirs: "I understand the desire to return as a coach because it's not about you." Shannon believed by returning to camp each year, she could encourage other female athletes to return as well. When I asked her "What do you think keeps you coming back to camp each year?", she stated she wanted to be the reason campers chose to come back, and to be the "the reason they feel that they can grow and discover more about themselves" (Shannon). The personal feelings Shannon reported

in her interview showcased the research of Bialeschki et al. (1998), who uncovered camp counsellors recognized a ‘sense of responsibility’ for the campers they oversee, and for their development.

Despite lacking a direct camper-centric reference, I still got a sense that Shannon understood the MVC value system. When we continued to explore her favourite parts about camp, Shannon explained that she loved working with the female campers because she found “there is a way in making them feel as though the world can be their oyster and not be afraid to pursue that”. As Shannon explained in the latter part of her interview, she found camp a place where she was supported enough to question her identity; who she really was as a person. These ideas will be explored later in this chapter, but it is important to note that by feeling able to help motivate female campers to explore the world, perhaps she is trying to fill the void she lacked as a camper herself.

It was evident that the participants agreed that the employees of MVC exuded common values that are exercised in their care and intent with the campers. These values are reinforced from the top-down, beginning with the Leadership Team, and are personally carried through camp by the coaches. Grant solidified this notion stating “staff are there to ‘make kids’ weeks’ and make sure they’re ‘having the best week of their lives,’” and credited senior staff to assuring coaches are working with the same goals in mind.

Commitment to Camp

Throughout each interview, participants revealed their concept of commitment to camp in a unique approach, highlighting their personal connection to camp, aligning with Klien and D’Aunno’s (1986) third component of ‘organizational commitment,’ having a “strong desire to maintain membership in the organization”(p. 366). Some believed their

commitment was shown through their perceived loyalty to camp - the years they've coached, expressing the goal of becoming a 'lifer'. Others articulated a sense of obligation to maintain MVC's value, both at camp and outside in the community.

Nick. As Nick was the only participant that had not completed his coaching years at MVC consecutively, the level of commitment Nick perceived to have for camp was explored in depth. Although Nick took two sabbatical years from camp to pursue other volleyball opportunities, he decided to return to camp after each one. He believed that his motivation to return to camp was an unselfish one, the kids. Nick recognized he could be coaching at other camps or training for volleyball instead of attending MVC, but it was the thought that someone else would be responsible for his cabin that motivated him to return:

...it was genuinely the idea of, of, of thinking 'well, like if I'm, if I'm not the first face that this little crew of 12 year old camper boys at their first year of camp gets to see, then somebody else will and I, I, I feel pretty confident that they like having me around.' (Nick)

As Nick perceived this emotional attachment to the campers as showing loyalty to camp, it can also be interpreted as an egocentric statement by expressing the feeling of 'need'.

Lyons (2000) proposed that an individual's motivations are based on "personal incentives" and found that "how people will invest themselves in particular activities or courses of action depends on what the activities or courses of action mean to them" (p. 23). Nick and I explore the meaning of commitment for a large portion of his interview, and he seemed to explain commitment based on a scale of priority:

It's easy to go for a couple years for some of the right reason and for a lot of the wrong reasons. I think it's harder to go for a number of years for, for some of the

right reasons and some of the wrong reasons. I think it's borderline impossible to make an annual commitment to a full week entirely separated from the world and away from work, and as we get older as our commitments change, I think it's extremely difficult to commit what is a lifetime for a lot of Madawaska employees to just, to being there. To being, to being consistent. (Nick)

As his statements can be taken as a harsh reality for some coaches, I understand Nick's bluntness. Both Nick and I know there is a wait list for coaches wanting to work at MVC, and believe if a coach's priority is not MVC, then another coach who will make it their priority should be offered the position. Nick explained how making the decision not to return to camp is a way to understand where one's priorities lie at that time. He suggested he's understanding of the 'priority shift' that occurs throughout one's lifetime, as he himself chose not to return to camp on two occasions. Nick reflected on the occasions he did not return, and stated that at that time, other volleyball opportunities were a larger priority in his life. When asked if he would make the same choice to not return again, he commented he'd still choose to miss camp:

I think, I, it was, it was in a period where it was more, it, the experience I had in volleyball there have afforded me opportunities to be a better coach now and to, and to, interact better with the sport at this age. (Nick)

Although not a direct question posed by me, the financial commitment made to attend camp was also reflected in Nick's response. At MVC, the coaches make less than minimum wage, and one's wages only increase based on years of employment and position at camp. In many cases, employees make less money working at camp than their full-time jobs, and when factoring in travel time, they lose more money than they make. This is a tradition at

camp, and is very rarely talked about among employees. Nick expressed support regarding the pay rates:

I think that, that, that the fact that the coaches make from a strictly monetary standpoint, the fact that starting salary as a coach is so small, I think it's great. I love, I love the ideas that it's meritocracy, that the longer you stay the more you make and the more the more you move up and gain and achieve, and take on more responsibilities, I think that, that's, that's unfortunately the only, the only way to...to keep, that, to keep that balance. (Nick)

Coaches at MVC do not have to be technically qualified coaches to be considered for the position, although they are strongly encouraged to obtain their certifications through Volleyball Canada. The coaching staff of camp is therefore made up of previous campers, teachers, club coaches, and university/college coaches, which adds to the diversity of camp. If pay was based on experience, the Leadership Team would have to create a grid that takes into account either camp experience or volleyball experience, or both. This could affect the 'feel of camp' as no one really knows what anyone else earns at camp.

Jaime. The discussion of pay rates in both Nick and Jamie's interviews were the only instance extrinsic motivational factors were referenced throughout all eight interviews. Both participants mentioned coaches' pay, yet did not classify it as a means of motivation to return to coach at MVC. In contrast, they described the lack of financial compensation for coaches as a form of commitment, as Jamie explained coaching at camp is "not about the money."

Salary, labeled as a 'hygiene factor' in Herzberg's Hygiene/Motivator Theory (Cresci, 2010), was found to be an important factor in reducing job dissatisfaction, yet

could not eliminate it completely (DeGraaf & Edginton, 1992). Jamie believed the lack of financial compensation solidified the camper-centric view of camp. When discussing the value of MVC, Jamie reaffirmed that money was not a motivating factor to coach at camp: “it's not about the money that's you know that is not at all what people ah what people go for”.

Jamie, who has coached at MVC for nine years consecutively, approached the idea of commitment in a humorous way. He believed that being a returning coach at MVC makes him unique in the ‘outside community’ where other coaches and friends still questioned why he still attends camp; with some saying “I can't believe you are still an Madawaska guy”. Being a long-standing coach at MVC has given him a sort of ‘prominence’ in the volleyball community, and reported that other volleyball camps have tried to recruit him to come coach over the years. While coaching this year in his hometown, he was approached by another camp director to coach with them this year instead of MVC. Jamie said he found the proposition amusing, especially when the person asking is trying to discuss MVC when they’re not a ‘Madawaska person’.

Jamie explained that being recruited to work for another camp is not the only instance he’s faced when ‘outsiders’ do not understand his commitment to MVC. The first years that Jamie began coaching at MVC, he was required to book the week off work using his vacation time. His boss and co-workers found it difficult to understand why he would use his vacation time to attend camp. He remembered a specific time where MVC’s timing conflicted with his work schedule and he had to plead with his boss to let him take the time off. He found after explaining how attending camp would benefit the company, his boss granted his request:

...actually makes me a better person, a better manager by working with people all the time, you know you're, there's more time that you're spent put in situations where you have to learn to communicate, while you have to, you know, develop your people skills, your people managing skills a week at Madawaska than we get a week at almost any other job or situation so really it's actually, you know, making me a, a better manger by, by going to the thing so. (Jamie)

Amanda. Amanda, an MVC 'lifer' with 33 years of camp experience to her name, reflected on how a shift in the community can challenge his/her commitment to camp as she had seen personally. Through Amanda's years at camp, she has experienced many coaches come and go. When asked if there was an instance she contemplated not coming back to camp, she quickly replied with 'no'. I was afraid that was the only response I would get, without an explanation, but after a long pause Amanda returned to the conversation with one memory:

The only time I can think of is, there was, you know there's always shifts in people, and there was the one, the one year I knew that there was quite a few people that I kind of hung out with that weren't going to be there. Like they were hanging it up, like "okay that's it" and then I was thinking "huh" (laughs). (Amanda)

'Outgoing' is not an adjective Amanda said she would use in describing herself, so the shift in coaches led her to wonder if she too should 'hang it up' and not return. After much self-reflection, she realized her commitment to camp went beyond the current group of coaches and she packed her bags and told herself "Okay, let's go make new friends" (Amanda).

McMillan and Chavis (1986) declared “communities need to test new members to determine if they can and will be loyal to the community” (p. 318). By deciding to continue working at camp despite the shift in staff, Amanda revealed her commitment to camp and became what McMillan and Chavis (1996) termed as an “effective member”, showcasing her willingness to make “available time, energy and the financial commitment necessary” to its community (p. 318) despite her changing circumstances.

Grant. Grant’s commitment to camp quickly surfaced in his first year as an MVC camper. During that week at camp, he came to the realization that MVC was going to become an important place to him. Grant also foresaw the transition from camper to coach as being a natural progression in his commitment to camp:

So, the moment I knew was like after the first year and I realized that I want to keep coming back for as long as I possibly can and so it was like whether or not I was a camper or whether or not I was a coach it was, it was just the step I wanted to take but it's not like it was an adjustment period where it was like oh camper now I have to be a coach, darn I was I was a camper, I was always excited for the next step and the progression of being Madawaska employee. (Grant)

Grant completed his third year as a coach in 2016 and voiced eagerness to take on more responsibility in a higher leadership position in the future at MVC.

Jacob. Jacob reflected his commitment to MVC in the form of personal growth. Personal growth was identified in the review of literature as a theme that was lacking in the current research on camp counsellor retention. Throughout his interview, Jacob reflected on what his eight years of experience at camp meant to him, and suggested that it showed commitment to the growth of the camp experience:

Umm, for me...it represents kind of a commitment to the, to the growth of well, I wouldn't say so much myself but to the camp and to the camp experience and the people that come through to you know, make sure that there's a, a positive experience had for people who wouldn't experience that. (Jacob)

DeGraaf and Glover (2003) suggested that counsellors found camp gave them the opportunity to create their own spaces – a place they would personally want to go.

Reviewing Jacob's experiences at MVC exposed he was looking to shape camp into the place he wished it was when he was a camper, together through his coaching philosophy and his social interactions. Jacob is considerate of others and is conscious of other peoples' perspectives regarding MVC. Showing a commitment to growth emulated his selfless, giving nature.

Josh. Josh saw his commitment to camp as a personal feat. Coaching at MVC for six years has earned him the 'Junior' coaching experience status and his first MVC patch. Patches are given out to coaches as they reach 'years' coached' milestones at camp. Coaches receive a patch only after they've coached for five, 10, 30 and 50 years. This tradition was newly implemented in the last five years and allows coaches to wear their commitment to MVC proudly on their sleeves. This also makes their commitment visible to everyone at camp, in hopes to motivate others to continue attending. Josh proudly stated that his coaching commitment to camp is "the only thing that I've stuck through with for six years, ah well this is the only job that umm that I've ever stuck through with for six years". When he reflected on his longest term of employment being at a volleyball camp, he expressed the experience as "pretty incredible" (Josh). As Josh's level of commitment

brings him a feeling of accomplishment, I began to realize that his ‘junior’ status gave him pride outside of camp life.

Mark. Another way participants expressed their commitment to camp was through a sense of responsibility to its welfare. While a part of the Leadership Team, Mark felt responsible for keeping the integrity of camp intact through the staff he hired to work camp. He felt it was his responsibility to ‘weed out’ staff that were at camp for the wrong reasons – meaning they did not exude a ‘camper-centric’ mindset. He described the task of choosing coaches being the chance to solidify a united staff that were coaching at camp for the right reasons:

I think regardless of the people that decided not to come back, the people that we didn't feel belonged there were not welcomed back, to put it that way. So, in our own sort of, I guess kind of weeding out process, we kept the standard of staff pretty high. (Mark)

Mark showed understanding that holding the responsibility of hiring coaches for camp gave him direct responsibility for the success of MVC; to provide the campers with the most positive experience possible through the coaches he brought on board.

His commitment to camp can also be seen in the outside community, as parents would approach him asking if their children should attend camp. Mark did not say ‘yes’ to every parent, as MVC is not desperate for attendees – camp tends to hit the maximum capacity of 500 athletes months prior to August. Mark went about his conversations with parents methodically:

What I used to do with parents that would ask, the first question would be is “whether the kid had even been away from home before” and if the answer was

"no" then the next question would be "how mature are they" and "what's their love level of volleyball?" If those were "I don't know, we're trying to find out" I never sent them there. (Mark)

Mark did not want to deter children from experiencing MVC, but he was aware of the hardships the campers could potentially face. In retrospect, he was trying to set campers up to succeed at camp, not to fail. Chenery (1994) presented camp as a unique place that produced positive educational experiences to its attendees. Mark had personal experience with how intense the week was up at MVC, and did not want those children to be deterred from volleyball or another positive camp experience in the future. His realization was not only beneficial to the children that did not attend, but positively impacted the experience for campers who did attend MVC. Through personal reflection and the sense of responsibility for the well-being of youth, Mark showcased his commitment to creating a positive experience for campers.

Shannon. Despite reporting a negative experience in her first year coaching at camp, Shannon has now coached for two years at MVC and was a CIT for three years previous to that. She did not express the intentions to becoming a 'lifer' as many of the other participants did, but expressed "there is nowhere in the world" she could see herself being that week. Shannon concluded her interview describing the emotional turmoil she felt when leaving camp:

There is a relief in going home, but a sadness at the same time. I'm always so happy at camp and I think that stimulation and just overall high is not feasible to maintain. Maybe that comes from me being 50/50 introvert and extrovert that constant stimulation and contact with people is really exhausting". (Shannon)

The confusion she expressed made it hard to interpret if she experienced camp in a positive way, as the other participants had expressed so freely. It was not until she concluded her thought process on leaving that it was evident her love for camp still remained intact: “there has to be some method to the madness but I always leave with a stupid smile on my face” (Shannon). Shannon’s reflection shows the emotional hardship of camp that many coaches face throughout the week, and while some coaches flourish through these stressors, others find the process challenging.

Conclusion of Alignment

Alignment within an organization is acquired through “recruitment strategies, characteristics of applicants, and socialization processes” (Beehr et al., 2009, p. 2) which must compliment the organization’s values, and depends heavily on the extent employees are aligned with those values. Alignment is also found to lead to “greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, contextual performance, organizational effectiveness, and lower turnover rates” (Beehr et al., 2009, p.2), which are all characteristics exemplified by the participants’ statements about MVC in this study. By sharing a common value system, MVC has produced committed coaches that choose to willingly return to coach year after year.

Although negative experiences were mentioned throughout some of the participants’ interviews, no coaches mentioned that the value of MVC was misaligned with the value of summer camp. There is a common understanding the camp experience at MVC is for the athletes, not the coaches.

Theme Two: Tradition

As Mark reconnected with his late memories of camp, he reflected on the traditions that brought him great joy in the past are still happening at MVC today. Garst et al. (2011) revealed that “traditions and rituals foster group cohesion and community building, and they connect youth and staff to camps as special places” (p. 78). Many participants spoke about camp traditions and how they created a unique and memorable experience for them. Being a ‘lifer,’ Mark has seen traditions both flourish and fade. Garst et al. (2011) explained the life cycle of traditions as the recognition of “both the passage of time and change over time,” and their ability to “convey the impact of the past on the present and the future” (p. 79). DeGraaf and Glover (2003) found that documenting traditions in the form of ‘stories’ was not only beneficial to camp staff, but the organization itself as the stories could be recounted to share the camp experience with non-camp attendees.

The Hootenanny, a sing-along activity, still occurs each Wednesday evening at camp. Every camper, coach, program staff, and individual on the camp’s property gather into OMNI, an old creaky building that seems to shake with the wind as much as some of the first year campers. Coaches line the benches in the building, all wearing red t-shirts with most not knowing why; just knowing it is ‘a tradition.’ Ted Cole, the former owner of Camp Walden, was the star of the Hootenanny when MVC first began. He would strum his banjo on stage and sing both classical camp songs and some of his originals. ‘*Garbage*’, a song highlighting the effects of pollution on our planet much before its time, is a Ted Cole classic. After Ted’s passing, Sol Birrenbauml, who is part owner of Camp Walden today, sings alongside musical guests. It is the same set of songs Ted performed, in the same

building, with the same feeling. Mark recalled his first interaction with the tradition, and what it has become today:

I'm sorry, I'm a city boy, I had no idea what a Hootenanny was! To see that thing going for over 35 years is outstanding. And those same songs from back in the day too Oh my God, it's like....stuff like that's kind of cool, to take these kids out of downtown Toronto and have them sing a four part harmony on "Row, row, row your boat" or something. (Mark)

Although the camp itself underwent a large transition from an elite volleyball camp that catered to less than a hundred campers and thirty staff, the Hootenanny is one of the many traditions at camp that remain intact today.

Tradition at MVC is presented in three different subgroups throughout this study: the sense of community, leadership in different capacities, and camp programming. Each of these three categories were exemplified throughout the eight coaches' interviews, and provided evidence that tradition was a motivational factor for them to return to camp each summer. Grant illuminated how these traditions create a 'team' atmosphere and a fun place to work:

We come to volleyball camp once a year and the message stays the same, and the traditions stay the same so that's something that, it's just something crazy team, like the staff here's just such a unit and that's what differs from like, from other work places that I've been a part of. (Grant)

Sense of Community

The term 'community' is often used in two different contexts. Commonly the word is used to describe a territory or physical location; yet in this study it will be referred to in

its relational context. McMillan and Chavis (1986) presented this context as mean to interpret the “quality of character of human relationship” (p. 8). Klein and D’Aunno (1986) underlined six determinants of a workplace’s sense of community that evolved from individual characteristics to extra-organizational characteristics. Three of the six determinants will be explored in this section. Although. Thematically, the additional three determinants pertain to the sense of community, they will be discussed within the other core findings as they provide important relations in those sections.

Mark. Coaches come from all across North America come to attend MVC, which means some coaches will not have the opportunity to interact with the coaches they’ve created friendships’ with until the following year’s camp. The time between camps does not seem to place a damper on those relationships, as you feel like you just saw each other yesterday and that nothing has changed. Mark tried to describe the sense of family at MVC:

...family is one of those things where you haven't seen someone for five years and you walk into the room and you start giving them a hug and you start talking right away. It wasn't, it's not an awkward, I don't know... an awkward meeting. (Mark)

Coaches that had not previously been campers reported learning of MVC through word-of-mouth in the volleyball community. Whether they were personally recruited to coach at camp or were encouraged to apply by someone already on the coaching staff at camp, the fact that coaches were applying to work at MVC by learning about the camp through ‘word of mouth’ showed the strength of the MVC in the outside community.

Mark, who grew up outside of Ontario, quickly realized he would be returning for years to come:

There was pictures all over the place so I sort of got a... just pretty quickly of the camp, and even, like even, even know from the first two days you either 'in' camp or you're not you know so, you find out pretty quickly if it's something you want to do or want to belong there, or it's a welcoming atmosphere, you know all those kind of...ah, emotional things that go on. (Mark)

The feelings Mark describes here are some of my favourite to witness new coaches at MVC responding to for the first time. I've witness several coaches during their 'ah-ha' moment of understanding what MVC's experience is all about, and I can attest to it being an emotional feeling as I help wipe away their tears.

Grant. Grant's sense of community directly related to 'leader' and 'subgroup' characteristics which Klein and D'Aunno (1986) described as when supervisors "aid in defining the group and in building a sense of group purpose and identity, they may influence employees' loyalty and respect for their work group or organization" (p. 370). The work the group outputs also "influences members' perception and appreciation...and sense of involvement in it" (Klein & D'Aunno, 1986, p. 370). Grant referenced gaining inspiration from his previous CIT's and coaches, and believed they had a large influence on "why he loved camp so much." This suggested his supervisors helped him cultivate his affection for camp and felt a sense of pride for his continued involvement with MVC. Grant recalled how impactful his CITs and previous coaches were on his decision to coach at camp:

Like, CITs that I've had in the past like when I was a camper were always an inspiration to me and were always like a huge impact on why I loved camp so much, like obviously it's a big deal there. (Grant)

Prior to becoming a coach, Grant was part of the CIT program for three years. Throughout those years he had the opportunity to shape into the type of coach he wanted to be, and find ways to provide campers with the same positive experience he had previously.

Shannon and Nick. Shannon, a previous camper for multiple years, and Nick who had only attended camp as a coach, had both experienced exclusion from the community during their first MVC coaching experience. Both coaches described the camp community as ‘cliquey’, and suggested there are small groups of friends that formed and excluded others:

I don’t know how one would do this and if it’s even possible but there is a harsh reality in that amongst the coaches it’s cliquey. Yes, it’s nice when you’re on the inside of one of the circles but I know it feels to be on the outside. (Shannon)

Nick’s experience emulated that of Shannon’s, and referenced the same feelings of exclusion:

Pretty much as soon as we arrived, I realized how, ah, I realized how cliquey Madawaska was, and everybody kind of scattered off to their friends and found their groups. And I still remember the first night, umm...they said "yep, we're going to the CL for this games thing" and I was like "I don't know what the CL is, which building is that?" and, ah, and I took a nap and nobody woke me up and then I, and then I was like "no I think it 's that one" and so I was going late. (Nick)

Klein and D’Aunno (1986) discovered the “individual need for affiliation” and the “sense of belonging” as important contributors to a sense of community, stating that “the more homogeneous a group of employees, the more likely they are both to perceive that a ‘community’ of employees exists and to value this community” (p. 368). While reliving the

negative camp experience in her interview, Shannon underlined where she felt unsupported and misunderstood, and how it wasn't a single occurrence:

My first year as a coach I went four days without speaking inside my cabin, and I'm not a particularly shy person. I think there needs to be an understanding that new coaches, especially young coaches, are exactly that, young. It's intimidating trying to join a conversation because even though it might be completely welcomed, we aren't trained that way. If it had only been me I don't think it would be so much an issue, but I had two other friends this year talk to me. (Shannon)

Even though Shannon did not feel part of the coaches' group, she was not alone in her experience, and created a sense of community with the other coaches that were being excluded.

Nick and Shannon's experiences also presented the element of 'membership', a term used by McMillan and Chavis (1986), as they explored the elements of community. It was found members were aware that, in addition to the feeling of belonging, membership to a group came with boundaries (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Boundaries, which distinguished what group members' belonged and which ones they did not, were found necessary to "provide members with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9).

In the case of Nick and Shannon, they both found themselves on the outskirts of the group boundary yet found comfort in the intimate relationships they were able to cultivate with their campers because of it. Nick expressed he still doesn't feel 'in' the MVC family, although he's now coached for eight years and is considered a 'Junior'. He attributed this feeling to having not been a camper previous to coaching, and having the opportunity to

create relationships with campers who would potentially transition into a coaching role alongside him. He has now taken on the personal responsibility of assuring that all first year coaches feel welcome and included at camp:

I enjoy more working with coaches who it's their first year there, and guiding them through like "hey look... like maybe this part's new for you right now but, here, like if you feel like you ever need...you need guidance through it, or you feel like things are super cliquy and you don't know who to be friends with, come hang out with me". Like I don't, I don't do games night anymore, and I don't do casino night, I don't play any games because it's a lot more fun to...chat with people, like, I get to, I get, I get to sit and really 'talk'. (Nick)

Nick believed that by sacrificing the chance to participate, he was allowing coaches that felt excluded the opportunity to interact with a returning coach. Games Night occurs on Tuesday night, which gives coaches three days to find a team to play with. This tight timeline can be intimidating for new coaches, as they may not have forged strong enough friendships to feel comfortable to create a team. As well, Games Night is competitive. I find this is where coaches' either learn to love or hate their teammates, and emotional grudges are known to be harbored, which can last the rest of the week. New coaches may not feel like they have what it takes to contribute to a team, especially since they may be unaware of what games are played in the programming. Having a staff member like Nick sit it out gives coaches the idea that it is okay not to participate for one reason or another.

The fact that both Nick and Shannon found the motivation to return despite their negative experiences in the community showed they valued something greater at camp than the need to belong.

Jamie. Jamie continuously related his camp experiences with his experiences in ‘real life’, where he works full time in a managerial role. The ‘sense of community’ in the workplace is not as transparent to Jamie as it was for the other participants, as he found the differences in the MVC community and his workplace to be extremes:

...I guess sometimes it could be the one thing in Madawaska that could be a bit of a negative is that you, you see that happen and you realize how powerful the positive relationships are with the common goal and how much can happen by being that way and sometimes you go back to the real world and say “wow, why, why do people you know have to, have to do that to each other”, “why do people have to try and drag others down when you know there is so much that can be accomplished” if and everybody can sort of feel good about themselves or look good... (Jamie)

Jamie suggested here that camp allows coaches to ‘look good’; not in reference to physical appearance but in an emotional sense. MVC allows its employees the freedom to be themselves and act as they would like to, within the confines of the camp rules. It is not uncommon to see coaches wearing unique outfits, encouraging each other to try new things and test the boundaries of their comfort zones.

Coaches are also given ‘free run’ of their own cabins. Guided by their Section Heads, coaches are encouraged to put their unique twist on how they’d like to run the volleyball sessions for the week. Each coach creates his/her own rituals and traditions for his/her own cabin, creating an exclusive and memorable experience for that cabin alone. These personal touches can be seen as challenges and opportunities, depending on the comfort level the coach has in his/her own ability as well as the amount of support they feel from the surrounding community. The coaches at MVC are supported by staff no matter the

outcome, as long as he/she can justify their reasoning. This creates a fun and loving environment for everyone to get out of their comfort zone and learn from each other, which in turn increases the bond in the camp community.

Jacob. Jacob approached the sense of community, both in and out of the confines of camp in more critical fashion than the other participants. Prior to his first year coaching, Jacob had an idealized perception of what coaching at camp would be like for him. He was aware of the strong connections being made between coaches at camp, as he had witnessed his sister interacting with her ‘camp friends’ in the ‘real world’: “I was, I was allured by just the quality of friendships she was making and the energy she put into it” (Jacob). After his first year of coaching, he was faced with the harsh reality that these deep connections acquired at camp do not always continue in the outside community:

When I first left camp, I found it very weird that like people didn't want to connect in the same way than when they're at camp. We're like all super awesome versions of ourselves and then we leave camp and then like you don't want to hang out?

(Jacob)

I believe this personal experience led him to think more reflectively about his camp experience. Throughout his interview, I found him continuously challenging the supportiveness and inclusivity of the community at camp. Jacob seemed to be skeptical of the community at MVC, perhaps due to the negative interactions he witnessed taking place at camp last year. Sharing a story about another coach being unsupported by his/her coaching partner, Jacob began to question if the lack of support that coach felt was due to the community being unresponsive or the coach not knowing where to reach out for resources:

...I've seen people not uh, set up to be supported is something that is discouraging and doesn't necessarily reflect anything about camp, sometimes it just reflects things about the people currently in there and the skills that they have to support each other. Like, why, why would you ask for it when you know it's not there, so in my brain you know there's, there's instances where people don't know what they can ask for? (Jacob)

Although the lack of support from the MVC community was not directed towards him, he empathized with the coach, and expressed his support, in turn: “Oh yeah, and even if it, even if it was someone that was just like, I just need someone, I would be like I could have for sure fulfilled that role” (Jacob).

Jacob expressed a second instance where he felt disappointed by the lack of community at MVC, yet this experience took place outside of camp. Lyons (2003) found that camp counsellors perceived the camp environment as “different from the outside world” (p. 56). Jacob found the positive feeling of community fostered at camp was not translated to the ‘real world’ as the connections he made at camp did not seem as crucial to keep intact outside MVC. Opposing Jacob’s feelings, Josh and Jamie reported experiencing a positive sense of community when back in the swing of ‘real life.’ Both participants found they looked forward to opportunities to interact with the MVC community outside the week of camp. It may be interpreted that Jamie and Josh’s senses of “organizational characteristics” (Klein & D’Aunno, 1986, p. 371) are more strongly tied to MVC’s community than Jacob’s.

Josh. While Jacob expressed a lack of connectedness outside of camp, Josh explained how his sense of camp community has permeated into his personal world during

the other 51 weeks of the year. He described how the opportunity to interact with MVC campers and coaches at other volleyball events showcased the strength of the community MVC builds each year:

...as a coach myself, in the club volleyball community, we always look forward to provincials because I'll see so many of my previous athletes that I was able to coach at camp, umm and there's been this community that's been built around these campers being at camp at this time. (Josh)

Although Josh's positive experience contradicts that of Jacob's negative one, it is important to understand that both their experiences are as valid as the others in regards to the sense of community.

Amanda. Amanda was the least vocal regarding the sense of community at camp and its motivation for her to return, providing me with shorter and more vague answers than the other participants. Even though she never stated the community as a direct motivator, she did mention the connections created at camp as an important part of MVC. She even suggested that she has created stronger connections with people at camp than she had ever made at work, which she is now retired from. When asked if she found it difficult to return for so many consecutive years, she replied with "It's been easy: it's both the love of volleyball and the love of the people who are there." I found the lack of information Amanda was willing to expand on interesting, as many of the other participants were eager to share their perspectives on camp. This difference was not negative, but rather showcased the diversity of the participants' personalities, and how the community at MVC caters to an array of different people's needs. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) suggested that this uniqueness needs to not only be embraced by camp directors, but used to "create an

environment in which staff can be self motivating” (p. 18) so all counsellors have a beneficial camp experience.

Leadership in Different Capacities

Although found in the category of tradition, Beehr et al. (2009) found leadership “influential in developing alignment” (p. 5), as they suggested “a major component of leaders’ job responsibilities is to ensure that their units are operating in accordance with the organization’s goals” (p. 5). The reasoning for leadership to fall into the category of tradition is that the roles and responsibilities of MVC coaches have remained the same throughout time. Perhaps the staff handbook is more detailed in its staff expectations, or the training sessions are held for longer periods of time, but the core responsibilities of coaching at camp have remained constant throughout MVC’s history. Beehr et al. (2009) found that the better employees understood their role, the better those employees were able to complete their roles successfully and remained consistent with the overall goals of the organization. Coaching campers is just a part of one’s role at MVC. Coaches tend to take on roles outside the job description of ‘coach,’ from CL disc jockey to an emotional rock for coaches reaching their wit’s end at camp. These additional roles are filled naturally and have been implemented at camp for years; its tradition.

The more feelings of interpersonal support, respect, and sense of investment employees received from their management teams, the greater the motivation to work collectively towards the organization’s goals (Beehr et al., 2009). In Josh’s experience two members of the leadership team generated these feelings for him, increasing his devotion to camp and its growth:

As a coach, Ian and you know maybe Pete Millsap, have been my two, kind of the guys that have made me feel different as a coach umm, and...I mean, you know how kind of umm, you know, well spoken and out there they are. But for them to take their, take their time aside from their kind of, you know, Hollywood lives almost and be able to teach and conspire and be there for every individual coach and athlete is, is something that you don't really forget. (Josh)

Respondents in DeGraaf and Glover's (2003) survey suggested that relationships built at camp are used as models for employee's future relationships, giving senior staff "unique opportunities to mentor and impact the lives of the staff" (p. 18) whether they are aware of it or not.

Nick. The roles and responsibilities of each staff member at MVC are outlined in the staff manual emailed to each coach prior to their arrival at camp each year. All employees endure multiple mandatory training sessions where these roles and responsibilities are reintroduced and dissected, allowing the Leadership Team to re-emphasize their importance. In addition to this training, there are supplementary responsibilities coaches undertake in a personal capacity:

It's our responsibility as older coaches to, to, to impart that wisdom, to pass that on. I think, I think we have to facilitate it because otherwise you, you you can't expect, you can't expect a 17 year old CIT who's never been at camp before to, to step in and be, and be something that they aren't qualified to be. Now that doesn't mean they don't have a place there, they're very valuable and extremely important place there but it just means you have to guide them. (Nick)

The sense of responsibility Nick explained here is not found in the staff handbook. His role as an ‘older coach’ is one that has been socially constructed at camp through tradition. Nick was simulating what he observed previous ‘older coaches’ doing, and felt that because he was now considered in that category that he must take on the same role. Nick understood that the longer he coached at camp, the more wisdom he would accumulate to pass down to newer coaches. This is a long-standing custom at camp, yet one that has never been formally written down.

Nick has observed other coaches that have moved into different roles and reflected how he felt these transitions benefitted and positively changed the programming at MVC. When asked if he would like to take on a different leadership position at camp, he demonstrated trust in the Leadership Team’s capability to produce change if and when needed:

So, if they felt like, if they felt like me being a Section Head was what, was, was, was, what was best for the personnel that we have, and then yep I would accept it but for now I mean...I don't know...(Nick)

Often, coaches are placed in new coaching roles each summer. This could mean that coaches are moved from coaching on the ‘indoor’ side to the ‘beach side’ or even switched to a different age division. These switches are done methodologically, and the Leadership Team makes them in hopes of providing campers the best experience possible at MVC. These changes can come as a surprise to coaches, as I remember one coach being moved from the beach into my section two years ago, realizing she had not packed running shoes. It isn’t often that you hear coaches questioning the decisions made by the Leadership Team,

and as Nick suggested, it is understood they are doing it to provide “what’s best” for the campers’ experiences.

Amanda. Although Amanda did not mention leadership very often, she did suggest she was aware of the additional roles coaches’ took on based on seniority, in the same way Nick had previously explained. She consistently took on a mentor role at camp for coaches that were new to MVC, as she had accumulated different experiences over her 33 years at camp. She described her additional qualifications as “you know, you have to explain things to them and you know, and why, why things are the way they are and how they work and all that stuff” and suggested that coaches that had been previous campers at MVC had it easier: “anybody who's coming from being an athlete first is definitely has a step up on anybody else”. Here, Amanda is referencing MVC campers as ‘athletes’ which is common at camp as the campers’ are volleyball players for the week.

Josh. While exploring the opportunities for role advancement at MVC, and if he would be interested if an opportunity was presented to him, Josh expressed trust in the Leadership Team as Nick had. He credited the movement of staff throughout camp as being an ‘organic’ and ‘natural’ process at camp. The process is not based on experience level or coaching ability but rather how much that coach is “there for the kids and that, that just...love the camp unconditionally”. With time, Josh believed that his dedication to camp will be noticed and grant him the opportunity to take on more responsibility.

Jacob. In addition to Nick and Josh’s statements regarding trust in the Leadership Team, Jacob applauded the team for preserving camp traditions and declared trusting them to make changes where needed. He recognized the team for the recent changes they instilled at camp in 2016, which revealed the camp’s openness to evolve:

I do really enjoy how they keep trying to make changes at camp, I don't agree with all the changes but I agree with the 'making changes' because it shows a sense of courage about wanting to continue to grow and I would rather see that than see camp stay the same for too long, because people get comfortable, and then things kind of start to dissolve in some sense. (Jacob)

Jacob's view of the Leadership Team reiterated DeGraaf and Glover's (2003) suggestion that camp directors need to take into consideration the diverse needs of the campers and counsellors, as both groups are influenced by the changes made within camp.

Grant. DeGraaf and Edginton (1992) found that providing employees with means of recognition and the opportunity for advancement further promoted job satisfaction.

Grant received that recognition from the Leadership Team his first year coaching, as he was asked to be an integral part of a new tradition MVC was implementing. The 'Lighting of the M' began at MVC the year of its 40th anniversary as a ceremonial way to signify the beginning of the camp week. All campers and coaches gather on a hill in front of the Beach Show Courts as the first scheduled non-volleyball activity of the week. The Leadership Team presents the rules of camp, introduces key employees of MVC and programming staff cover the bases of swim and safety. A volleyball demonstration by selected coaches is incorporated to excite the kids of what is to come. A torch being lit and carried to a metal 'M' in the middle of the court closes off the programming. The torch carrier is chosen by the Leadership Team by the impact he/she has had on camp at some point during their time there. The 'M' burns, as an amazing fireworks show begins behind it.

The first year of this tradition, Grant was asked to carry the torch alongside a fellow coach and a guest of MVC. He recalled this memory as one of his most impactful:

...there were many other experiences leading up to that, but being the start of like a pretty, pretty ah, prominent and big tradition at camp and just having the chills, like every time I go back and see like the M it's just like a flashback, like I remember everyone that's lit the M since then and it's just, it's so exciting. (Grant)

Along with Grant's positive experiences as a camper and CIT, the supplementary recognition shown by the Leadership Team increased his motivation to return to camp each year, if only to witness this tradition unfold again.

As a camper, Grant began to mimick the behavior of his previous coaches at camp, and described how they influenced him to become a coach at MVC. He recalled the memory of an impactful CIT he had as a camper:

I was really driven to like being a coach and kept that separation between camper/coach and you know, like cause he's in the cabin with us like, he was a mature role in our cabin and he just like demanded the respect with the kids from our cabin and that was definitely, he was definitely someone that stood out to me as why I wanted to coach. (Grant)

By Grant presenting this memory in such a positive way, the importance of the recruitment, training and evaluation of MVC coaches is prevalent to the experiences at camp. Without this training, the Leadership Team would not be able to assure this positive impact on campers. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) presented a motivational correlation between counsellor's previous camp experience and the importance of building a "tradition of campers becoming counselors" (p. 6).

This positive experience can also be related to the CIT program offered at MVC, as it trains and motivates campers to become future camp coaches. Throughout CIT training,

the program's participants are technically campers themselves, yet are treated with 'coach' status. They are given opportunities to run volleyball sessions, give campers feedback and emulate the same values of the head coach and assistants assigned. Beerh et al. (2009) would classify the CIT's as a 'subunit' of the coaching staff at camp, and believed that an organization's subunits must all be aligned to create an ideal experience. Three of the participants were CIT's prior to becoming coaches at MVC, including Grant, and all of them recounted memories during this stage of their coaching careers in their interviews.

Mark. As a previous member of MVC's Leadership Team, Mark would have been aware of the importance of the systematic training given to camp staff. By creating consistency at camp - through distinct roles and responsibilities, leadership levels and a repetitive schedule, Mark believed camp became a 'comfortable' place for coaches to return to:

Well, I think one of the big drawing cards for everyone to come back was the consistency, certainly in the beginning of...you knew what you were getting and you knew who was doing what. (Mark)

It was evident that camp was beginning to grow throughout the years, and the Leadership Team had to embrace the changes without losing the integrity of camp:

As camp grew, we tried to make sure that we maintained that sort of standard and, and, and expectations certainly of the people at the, at the I guess now leadership part, so that there wasn't a whole lot of surprises and there was a pretty consistent umm, experience I think especially for the coaches and kids. That was the big thing, is that it was a comfortable place to come back to. (Mark)

Mark's idea of change was shown through the evolution of camp, and the consistency the Leadership Team continued to provide throughout the years. He suggested that despite the growth of camp "you knew what you were getting and you knew who was doing what," showing that coaches were aware of their roles and responsibilities each summer.

Jamie. Jamie's views on leadership at MVC focused on the changes that were happening at camp because of the Leadership Team. One particular change Jamie discussed was the increased amount of feedback occurring at camp, spearheaded by the Leadership Team:

...you didn't really feel like you could give a lot of suggestion, or feel like it was something you could do. Now, I, it just seems like we have so many avenues to prevent, or provide you ah feedback...(Jaime)

Jamie expressed his need for feedback, which aligned with MacMillan and Chavis' (1986) third element 'reinforcement,' which stressed that members' must feel their needs will be met by the group they belong to. Bailey et al. (2012) established "mentorship and regular feedback may contribute to job satisfaction, empowering staff to feel like a valued member of the organization" (p. 161). As Jamie showed he felt safe enough to voice his needs, he also showed he felt valued within the community at MVC and was heard by the Leadership Team.

Shannon. Contradicting the support Jamie felt towards the Leadership Team creating change for the better, Shannon revealed a lack of support for new coaches within the training module of MVC, providing room for improvement. She believed that the Leadership Team needed to recognize how the community could be unwelcoming to new

coaches, suggesting they provide first year coaches with coping mechanisms for exclusion and integrate ways to increase inclusion for all of camp. Shannon's first year coaching at MVC was not a positive experience. Feeling excluded from the MVC family and feeling too intimidated to voice her emotions, Shannon reflected on how the Leadership Team needs to recognize that new coaches, specifically younger ones, may face different challenges than other coaches. If this reflection had occurred prior to Shannon's experience, perhaps it could have been prevented.

Camp Programming

As Madawaska Volleyball Camp enters its 45th year of existence, Grant's description of a 'well oiled machine' is fitting. The camp has evolved from an elite volleyball camp to an inclusive, developmental volleyball experience. This change is evident in the structured programming offered today. Many of the original traditions from camp remain intact, from 'Madawaska Time' where clocks are set back an hour to assure a longer day of sunlight, to the coaches' social evenings like Casino Night. The programming can be described as 'intense'; with three volleyball sessions a day, evening programming, and meals all wrapped in. Josh recalled his feelings during his first coaching experience:

It's...Is, is overwhelming at first, umm, but to those that have been there, I'd say it's overwhelming your first two years and then when you hit that third, fourth and onward umm, those years, then you can truly understand umm, how amazing it is to have that much packed into each day. (Josh)

Josh suggested he learned the coping mechanisms he used at camp by trial and error throughout the years. As much as he could take notes on what the other coaches were doing around him, he found he had to figure what was effective for him to last the week.

All eight participants of this study provided an example of MVC programming that enhanced their experiences at camp, and increased their motivations to return each year. These experiences reflected how the activities scheduled at camp provided additional opportunities to interact with both campers and coaches.

Mark. Being that Mark is a ‘lifer’ at MVC, he has witnessed change throughout the years at camp. He specifically reflected on the change of MVC from an ‘elite volleyball camp’ to what it is today, and why the change was accepted:

It used to be an elite volleyball camp, that was, that was Paul's dream, but with all the university programs now, and with HPC (High Performance Clinic), and with provincial team programs in the summer, all the best kids are gone from this kind of camp. But it's still, still a really good volleyball and good camp experience for a lot of kids that might never get that somewhere else. (Mark)

Throughout his interview, he referenced the changing size of camp frequently. When he first began coaching at MVC, there were less than 100 campers. In 2016, MVC housed 493 campers on its grounds (Eibitt, 2016). The growth of camp baffled Mark:

I mean whoever knew you'd have to like have bus monitors and bag tags and all that kind of stuff, just to...it's grown but it's, it's being managed well and I think the standard is still there. (Mark)

With the consistent changes to camp programming in order to accommodate more campers, Mark continued to show trust and support in the Leadership Team even though he does not hold a role at MVC anymore. He expressed joy in knowing that some of the programming that was important to MVC’s previous owners, was still on the schedule today:

All those kind of things, like those, the ability to streamline the program itself into different factions, and then you have the CIT program to make sure that we captured all the good kind of kids we had in grade 11 and 12 and 13 whatever, that we sort of excited them to come back later on, I think it's been huge and to maintain some of the stuff that's, it's sort of Paul and Shelley were doing on their own for the first years. (Mark)

Mark reflected that the Brownstein's created an environment both coaches and campers wanted to come back to. He was happy to see the tradition of retention continuing, even though the camp has changed management. The current management team is not treading in unfamiliar territory, as it consists of coaches that grew up at MVC and understand its worth.

Amanda. Amanda, the second participant that has coached at camp long enough to merit the 'lifer' status, reflected on the changes throughout camp as Mark did. She focused on the addition of non-volleyball activities to MVC's programming today, sharing "there wasn't low ropes, there wasn't anything like so it was really volleyball concentrated, and I mean at the time you know, that's just the way it was and you did it". Reflecting on the 'concentrated' scheduling of camp in her earlier years, she realized "oh wow that was a little tough on some of the kids" and laughed. With the addition to the activities led by the programming staff, such as camp fires, dances and the low-ropes portion of the week, Amanda considered coaching at camp versus 'back then' as "great – and it's easy", and shared that she finds it more fun now than before.

Nick. Once coaches have surpassed the learning curve in the first years of coaching, they begin to appreciate the opportunities the programming fosters. Togetherness, the first

activity that occurs camp-wide first thing in the morning consists of all campers and coaches entering a tennis court to ‘wake up’ for the day. Specific coaches lead activities for 20 minutes before breakfast is served. The activities vary from dancing to aerobics and yoga, depending on how chipper and prepared the leaders are. At mealtime, coaches sit with their cabins on long wooden benches that have been known to cause many shin bruises over the years. Sitting together maximizes the opportunity for camper-to-coach interaction. Nick expressed mealtime as the time he has the chance to get to know each individual camper:

Meal times we sit at the table with them. So, we're at the table with them and we, we connect and we talk, and we talk, and we, and we're, we're encouraged to, we're, we're encouraged to meet all the kids and learn about them, learn their personalities and it's like, it's an accelerated best friend plan, it's like from week, from day one to day seven, you're gonna learn, you're gonna learn about this athlete, and if there's an athlete that by day seven that you haven't gotten a chance to really sit down and chat with and catch up with a ton, then that's on you as a coach and you've, and, and you've missed somewhere because...because you should be. (Nick)

Mealtime is not only necessary to assure nourishment for the campers, it also provides emotional nourishment for both the camper and the coach. Nick used this time to ‘check in’ with each camper to make sure he/she were having a positive experience. Inadvertently, Nick used this interaction to reflect on how his actions were affecting the camper’s experience, and if he was aligned with his coaching philosophy and the camp’s value.

Nick suggested the programming at camp is the medium that cultivates learning for both the campers and the coaches. The amount of volleyball that is scheduled

each day creates endless opportunities for interpersonal interactions. Each interaction creates a potential learning opportunity for the parties involved:

Every, every time I get a chance to work with, to work with a kid I, I, I learn more about volleyball and more about coaching and I can feel myself growing in that area, I, I think it's, it's, it's one of, one of the areas in my life that I think I can positively impact more people just by being myself and, I mean like its, it's really hard to find that, I mean I would, I would go as far as to say that most people don't get chances to positively impact that many other people the way that as a coach you do. (Nick)

These feelings towards camp simulate the fifth need of Maslow's (1943) Theory, 'self-actualization' as Nick suggested that he not only feels the need to attend camp selfishly, but is needed by the campers as well. His confidence in his coaching ability was prevalent to me throughout his interview, and with that sense of efficacy, he is able to move to the final stage of the theory.

Grant. While exploring Grant's favourite parts about MVC, he referenced one of the traditional activities of MVC: Tournament Day. Originally scheduled for the last day of camp, Tournament Day is now scheduled on the second last day to assure time to complete the activity, and to accommodate the emotional response it tends to provoke:

My favourite part about camp would probably be umm the tournament day when everything comes together and it's the, the goodbyes start to happen and like that night, they get sucked in at that point that transforms them, and the emotions start flowing a lot more and that's when you see kids come out of their shell like that may have been homesick earlier on in the week, they come out and now they're saying

"Oh my god, I miss this place already like I can't, I can't leave, I can't leave" And the fact that they let that out, it's infectious...(Grant)

Participants mentioned both traditional MVC activities, along with more recent ones being implemented at camp. While Grant praised the tradition of Tournament Day for provoking emotional recognition that the week was coming to an end, Jamie showcased how the integration of 'Lunch and Learns' by the Leadership Team has increased the opportunity for professional development at camp.

Jaime. Becker (1983) found that the environment at camp provided counsellors with "an excellent opportunity for personal growth and learning new skills" (p. 92). The 'Lunch and Learns' are quick twenty-minute presentations made by MVC guest coaches, who consist of elite coaches and athletes. Each coach speaks about a particular part of the game of volleyball. From skill, drills, and mental training, Jamie found he was able to incorporate the take-aways from each lesson immediately into the next session:

You have a lunch and learns that that you get more experts there...during your own free time and you take 20 minutes to learn more about how they how they do things and what you can borrow and and adapt and then you know throughout the day you're getting guest coaches in and and things like that...you'd get to um see in action and again learn more...adapt things, take things on or you know just be affirmed that 'that's exactly what I do. (Jamie)

Aside from professional development, Jamie also felt camp allowed him to develop personally. MVC provided him with a plethora of person-to-person interactions, which increased his communication skills. As well, overseeing multiple coaches and campers

throughout the week developed skills he knew would be transferrable to work outside of camp, and would “make him a better manager” in the long run.

Josh. When asked how he felt about the routine at camp, Josh expressed being a ‘huge fan’ of the MVC time change and the long days. He referred to MVC’s programming as providing campers with a unique camp experience, one that could not be replicated elsewhere. The tradition of ‘Madawaska Time’ and following the same schedule each year separates MVC from conventional overnight camps.

He suggested he was not as affected by the schedule as he completes shift work in his everyday job at home. He found the struggle was rather in “the amount of just things that you have to accomplish each day”. Despite the added programming, he approved of “everything that they put into each day and I guess the routine”. While talking about his first year coaching and the struggles he faced, understanding when he was required to be ‘on’ and ‘off’ was something he had to teach himself to recognize, which allowed him to work the schedule in favour of his personal health, while maintaining a camper-centric environment.

Jacob and Shannon. Participants’ Jacob and Shannon did not reference specific MVC programming, but rather expressed opinions on the week MVC was scheduled each year. Jacob found that having MVC fall on the last week of August each summer was “super convenient before school for me, historically speaking”, and set him up successfully to return to school:

...it's almost like a behavioural pattern, my body's like alright I go to camp the last two weeks in August and then school starts the week after and like, there's a whole

like almost ritual associated with it and umm, that kind of time of the year now.

(Jacob)

As Jacob expressed positivity towards the week of the year MVC takes place, Shannon highlighted the negative aspect of having camp at the end of each summer. She found herself weighing the pros and cons of attending camp each year, specifically because she found it “hard to take a week off during a 3-month internship or stopping work a week early before returning to school.”

While discussing the recent changes made at MVC, Jacob expressed both feelings of sadness and anger towards a specific change made by the Leadership team a couple years ago. Traditionally, the camp awards ceremony occurred the last night of camp after skit night, or what’s now a talent show. In the darkness of OMNI, the camp would go quiet to hear a member of the Leadership Team announce awards such as the Gord Hawkins Award or the Paul Brownstein Award. It was always a magical moment that night, and as the lights were turned back on in the building the crying faces of both coaches and campers would be revealed. OMNI would remain packed until campers were practically pushed out the doors, no one wanted to leave the building as no one wanted to leave camp the next day. Now, these larger camp awards are received the morning of the last day after breakfast down at the lake. The experience is different than at night, yet just as emotionally provoking. Jacob reflected on the change and how it decreased the feeling of empathy at camp:

...all these kids and campers and like moping and like, it's all like two minutes after the last award it's like "alright get the fuck out" Like, like “okay you can cry for two

minutes and then you have to go,” and that's kind of like, you know, way to put a damper on it. (Jacob)

Duerden (2014) suggested that camp management teams need to understand camp is an developmental environment for both campers and counsellors. In the future, it is important that the Leadership Team continue to recognize Coaches are affected by programming changes as as the campers at MVC, and that coaches' feelings are taken into consideration for each change.

Conclusion of Tradition

The experience of camp for all coaches interviewed repeatedly brought forward the feeling of ‘community’ to explain their reasoning for returning to camp so willingly year after year. Community in this context was used to explain the coach-to-coach relationship, coach-to-camper relationship, as well as coach-to-leadership team connection. Often at MVC, the term ‘community’ is interchanged with ‘family’ when talking about the people at camp that places an even greater emphasis on the strong connections created there. Dustin (1994) presented the notion that camp gave its members a sense of security and belonging. By counsellors returning to work at camp each year, they begin to feel a part of the history and tradition, and a part of “something big” (Dustin, 1994). As traditions remain a large part of MVC’s charm today, one can begin to understand the pull of coaches to return to it each summer in hopes of experiencing those traditions once more.

Theme Three: Opportunities for Personal Reflection and Growth

As Bailey et al. (2012) found while studying implications of camp counsellor burnout, counsellors were aware that “camp is a highly social environment where one’s

free time can be as exciting and frenzied as their time on the clock” (p. 168). The chances of finding yourself alone at MVC are minimal, and if you do, your first inclination is you’re late for something! This dense programming creates a place where personal reflections tend to occur while either in or around a group, not on your own time. Bailey et al. (2012) also found staff reporting high levels of group cohesion within the community at camp were “more likely to draw upon these local resources to cope with stress” (p. 168). Group cohesion can be seen in multiple areas across the camp groups; from the coaches planning together in the CL huddled around a table, to the coaches providing comical relief for those in need.

Josh. Many reflections made were that of selfishness, a trait that does not support MVC’s value. As participants’ processed the reflection during the interview, a learning experience was created and internalized. During the interviews, coaches’ perceptions, values, and levels of self-confidence came into context. Josh recalled another coach commenting on his volleyball performance during his college years, which increased Josh’s self-confidence. This boost made him believe deeply in his coaching abilities. He recalled the moment he interacted with Paul Duerden, a former Canadian national team member and Guest coach at MVC:

It was a different moment in a sense that it was kind of just me being selfish and accepting umm, and accepting the fact that you know, that people can actually you know, enjoy and remember things that you do that, that maybe you don't think are that important in your life and ah, it's kind of, helped me know and understand that I can do things that much better than maybe I believe. (Josh)

This was not the first time Josh mentioned being ‘selfish’ at camp. Another reflection showed how he recognized there were times coaches could be selfish but fulfilling that desire would ultimately clash with the value of MVC:

...you want to go back for selfish reasons in a sense that it is, it is so beneficial for you, and your time that you can have away from anything and everything and it be time with friends, it also be time to learn and it also be time to just, just expand as a coach, it's it's....there's so many selfish reasons that you can take and then there's so many reasons that you can say, that you know you're there to help kids and you're there to, to have fun with your friends and umm, you know...and to grow the sport of volleyball in Ontario. (Josh)

Josh expressed his feelings toward leaving MVC as both positive and negative, and referenced the wait time one endures before next year:

It's upsetting to know, you know, that week you have to wait another 51 to get back but it's also a sense of sheer joy and, and happiness because you gave everything that you could to a group of athletes for a week straight. (Josh)

I have personally experienced the same feelings Josh described here, as I too feel it is almost unbearable to have to wait another year to experience MVC again. For me, this wait creates a feeling of anticipation and excitement.

Nick. Nick's perceived competence as a volleyball player was not directly impacted by an interaction that occurred with another coach at MVC as Josh's was, as previously mentioned. In contrast, Nick's experience coaching the campers was what brought on the reflection of his volleyball career. Through this reflection, Nick commended his coaches

for making his experience a priority despite his difficulty, and indicated this as a motivator for him to coach presently:

I mean, I had, I had the privilege of having so many truly incredible coaches that, that took me at a very, very late age umm and...believed in me, and, and worked with me and encouraged me to...encouraged me to not, not just get better as a player, but better as a coach as well and I think pretty much every, every coach I've had at all levels, even when, even umm even on days when I'm my most inquisitive, and I'm sure at times that probably felt like I was challenging their, challenging their authority, or challenging their, their processes, I had often coaches that were always willing to talk about the game. Umm...umm, yeah so I mean I, I feel like I owe it a bit to give back on that front but, I mean, but beyond that like...it's cool. (Nick)

Nick has received the Gord Hawkins Award at camp, a yearly tradition where one coach is recognized for his coaching spirit and camper impact. Although grateful for receiving this recognition, Nick suggested he is more worthy of the award today due to his personal development:

I'd like to think I'm a much better person now and I'm more caring and giving person now so I mean like at the time it was, it was special but I mean I think since then I've had way better, way more incredible moments with kids and seeing them become things...(Nick)

This level of personal reflection showed Nick's humble nature, both in his coaching abilities and his social interactions. It also featured his dedication to growth throughout his coaching career at MVC.

Nick's interview also incorporated the feeling of vulnerability, specifically when he mentioned the unique opportunities coaches had to interact with their campers, like at bedtime or during meals. He attributed the programming of MVC to allow both campers and coaches to feel safe in a state of vulnerability based on the trust built quickly between them at camp:

...its like look, everyone's got their pajamas on and got their tooth brushes out, and it's like they're...these are just kids again, they're just kids and, and, and, and the technical part of the game doesn't matter in there, it's just "Hey, I'm here, I'm here for you guys that's all, what do you guys want to talk about, what do you guys want to do? You guys want to chat about this, you want to hear about stories, you guys going to tell us stories, I want to learn about you. Tell me about, like, what do you like? Do you have any hobbies?" (Nick)

Nick's statement about spending time in the cabin before bed allowed his care and support for his campers to shine through. As mentioned before, a coach's responsibility at MVC goes beyond teaching the game of volleyball, but the degree of emotional attachment coaches gain towards their cabins are as unique as the campers within them.

Jamie. Jamie expressed the opportunity for personal improvement as he reflected on his years at MVC. He believed coaches are being challenged constantly throughout the week, and are given ample opportunities to "become better at something that they already love". Jamie implied that coaches don't 'shy' away from the opportunities for personal development, but rather "realize that we all can always get a little bit better and can all help each other one way or the other."

This reflection also encompassed a feeling of community and friendship, something that lacks in his ‘real world’ where physical contact is not encouraged:

...hugs are not allowed everyday or allowed every time you say good bye to somebody and certainly high fives, you know, you, you give out several hundred a day so anytime somebody puts their hand up at camp, you give them a high five or I always have a couple days or re-climatizing to my work world. (Jamie)

Jamie suggested that ‘high fives’ and ‘hugs’ are used as a form of positive recognition at camp, primarily to express support for one another. He reflected that outside of camp, there is a lack of recognition:

...you don’t have as much like ah opportunity to recognize each other as we... and whether at camp that is saying ‘hey that was awesome’ or just giving them a smile or a look or like that kind of thing you're getting a form of positive recognition. (Jamie)

When exploring the reason he comes back to MVC year after year, Jamie expressed his feelings towards camp in a spiritual way. He suggested that camp itself has a ‘spirit’ and an ‘aura’ that is incomparable to anywhere else and that he could not imagine ending each summer any other way. He explained that every year he has coached, he has experienced a ‘wow’ moment that was unforgettable, and the anticipation that that will occur each time he attends camp is what keeps him motivated to return. These ‘wow’ moments are special to each coaches’ experience, and I have had the pleasure of experiencing many myself. Although there are too many to recount, many of my moments pertain to the development of a deep connection felt with another coach or camper, where something ‘clicks’ and you feel forever tied to one another.

Shannon. While studying the benefits of camp employment, Duerden (2014) stated camp provided counsellors with an opportunity to experience positive changes in their identity. Shannon's camp experiences have led her to explore her identity while at MVC, as she believed she's a different person at camp than in the real world. At MVC, Shannon reported feeling "accepted and loved" for who she was. She believed that who she portrays being at camp is not the same person she is deep down, and camp provided her with the opportunity to explore the reason for this difference. She showcased a heightened awareness that in her experience, MVC created "an environment that allows you to explore this idea of identity." Internalizing this reflection provided Shannon with the chance to explore herself in a supportive environment. Even when feeling challenged, she felt "allowed to just hug the person next to you."

As Garst et al. (2011) revealed, counsellors at camp "developed personal standards for their own behavior and learned to feel confident in showing their true personality and identity at camp (p. 82). She reflected on how she implemented change to her every day life based on her experiences at camp:

...expressing gratitude, telling people I love how much they mean to me, doing well unto others for nothing more than to make someone else's life easier. These are things I started doing at camp and have implemented into my life. I have become a more mindful person because of it. (Shannon)

Her final self-reflection came in the form of personal criticism, as she believed she had made some 'mistakes' last year at camp. She was confident enough in her ability to understand that there was a 'learning curve' at MVC, and making 'mistakes' is inevitable.

She concluded her criticism by positively reassuring herself it was okay: "I can't say that I won't make mistakes in the future but I want the opportunity to learn from them."

Shannon also shared the emotional experience she endured when leaving camp, and expressed it with a feeling of under-appreciation, as she found that "camp happens so quickly" and her understanding of its impact is not completely realized until camp is over. She specifically remembered this emotional experience during her first year as a camper:

It's been six years but I still remember my first year and the closing of camp and how I cried because I knew I wouldn't feel that way again for a long time. It was a feeling of accepted and loved for who I was. (Shannon)

Amanda. Amanda's personal reflection highlighted the opportunities MVC has given her to learn more about herself and how coaching at camp has increased her confidence to coach on the court:

...my knowledge of the game you know you always think oh "Yeah, you know I coach, but then I'm not the greatest coach in the world" but then I watch other coaches or hear other people talking and going "No, that's not right" (laughs) or whatever, and maybe I know more than I think I know (laughs) So it's umm, probably given me confidence in my ability to coach. (Amanda)

Amanda's reflection relates directly to Maslow's (1943) fourth need 'esteem', as her coaching experience continues to give her a sense of fulfillment and positively affected her self-evaluation.

Grant. Grant expressed an increase in confidence each year he coached at camp as Amanda had. During his years as a CIT and coach, Grant gained experience coaching in multiple age groups in the youngest boys' section. He credited this diversity for giving him

the opportunity to learn from different groups and see how campers respond to different coaching styles.

Grant also found it challenging to express how coaching at MVC made him feel emotionally, but described the camp as “pure bliss” and “a place to set aside all the other shit going on in the world and just like coach volleyball and hang out with friends”. He provided a memory where he witnessed another coach begin to understand what camp was ‘all about’ during his first week at MVC:

We always say like 'Madawaska gets in your veins' and the people don't understand it until they experience it, so Matt Schnarr, my coach for example, he didn't know what to expect and then he came and now it's in his blood and he just, you see him and you just, they get the same reaction in adults that are like 30-plus that have the same reaction, it doesn't make a difference It's camp, and we all feel it the same way. (Grant)

This memory can also be depicted as one of Grant’s ‘wow’ moments, which were discussed earlier in this chapter. It is these moments that are etched in the memory of MVC’s coaches that showcase the love for camp.

Mark. Mark did not provide any reflective experiences regarding opportunities for personal growth at MVC, instead he provided a different perspective in regards to reflection and personal growth at camp. He did not report experiencing ‘takeaway’ moments of growth as many participants did, but rather reflected on what he could bring into MVC from his outside world. This reflection can be related to the ‘job characteristics’ of Klein and D’Aunno’s (1986) ‘sense of community,’ in that Mark had specific skills he could bring to the community to shape it, rather than take from it. When Mark was recruited

to become a part of the MVC staff he was the Technical Director of the Ontario Volleyball Association, and was already an advanced volleyball coach. He believed coaching at camp became an “ego thing” to him, as he was aware that he had things he could contribute to camp to “help bring it forward.” However, Mark did mention the feeling of ‘safety’ and feeling ‘comfortable’ when driving up to camp, showing an emotional connection to MVC:

You feel really safe, really comfortable and whether you're looking forward to it or not, you make the drive, you turn on the road and go through the gate you're going ‘yep’ the smell is there, the memories come back right away. (Mark)

Mark, who left camp for good in 2014, remembered how he personally felt as camp began to wind down throughout the week, specifically in his later years as a coach:

I mean like exhausted certainly mentally...a little bit sad, but I mean that's...I think that as long as I felt that I did a good job I'd feel sad but, and that's why those last nights were always pretty emotional for us that we're starting to get older because we felt like we'd put in a lot to camp, and to see the benefit for the kids and coaches you were like "okay cool". (Mark)

Mark’s reflection allowed me to understand how coaches at camp experience its emotional aspects differently. In my observation, the less experienced the coach, the greater the emotional experience at the end of the week. Mark eluded that this observation was not the case, and that the experienced staff continued to be emotional come the end of camp.

Jacob. One of the experiences Jacob explained during his interview was that of disappointment, an emotion uncommonly found in the other participant’s experiences. One of Jacob’s favourite parts of camp is that coaches can “be the best version of themselves at camp,” yet expressed disappointment that this ‘version’ does not always continue to be

presented in the outside world. When asked why he believed coaches did not continue to present their ‘best selves’ outside of MVC, he believed that perhaps there’s a lack of support in the outside world to encourage them to continue being who they truly are. This reflection does not present a disappointment in MVC itself, but rather the feeling of disappointment that coaches’ identities differ so greatly outside of it.

Jacob’s reflection on personal growth opportunities at camp was short and sweet. He continued to express his ‘camper-centric’ view of camp, showing that no matter the cabin he was assigned or the week he’d experienced, he hoped to learn from his campers as much as they’d learn from him while at MVC.

Conclusion of Opportunities for Personal Reflection and Growth

Madawaska Volleyball Camp is a place of wonder. The physical space that MVC occupies is not the only element being explored while at camp. The eight coaches interviewed suggested that camp gave them the opportunity to explore themselves in different capacities through self-reflection. Through the emotional experiences lived at camp to the surrounding unique environment, the coaches reported becoming self-reflective and increasing their capacity to see opportunities for personal growth.

Theme Four: The Surrounding Environment

With over 750 acres of space, two private lakes and plenty of amenities, the MVC campground offers campers and coaches’ room to play, interact and explore. Mark explained the beauty nature provides MVC:

I mean, even in the rain this place is kind of special. You know, whether it’s getting up on Tuesday morning and it’s all foggy and you can’t see anybody, and you get up

Wednesday morning and there's a bright sun in your eyes you're going 'holy crap'.

(Mark)

The weather at MVC is just as unpredictable as anywhere else, but it is not often you get to witness it change as quickly as it does when coaches and campers are outside for such a large part of the day. The first session may be cold and windy in the morning, and when they return to the court after lunch it is so hot both campers and coaches sweat through his/her t-shirt. That unpredictability brings a sense of wonder to MVC. DeGraaf and Glover (2003) revealed that counsellors found motivation in the "ability to share in making lasting memories" (p. 15), which Mark demonstrated with the memory of the first time the Northern Lights made an appearance up at camp. The coaches got every camper out of bed to witness them, knowing there was a possibility the campers had never experienced them before. One of Mark's favourite memories is overhearing the 'awe' for the environment from both campers and coaches':

...whether they're 12 years old or 30 years old, when they're walking down the pathway at night and going "holy shit, look at all the stars" and there are a lot out there. (Mark)

Josh. Chenery (1994) styled the outdoor setting of camp as "its own curative, mellowing, comforting effects; it encourages curiosity and freedom as well as an appreciation of beauty"(para. 29). Throughout his study, he uncovered two major values learned at camp: 1) living in harmony with the wilderness and 2) protecting the environment (para. 23). While none of the participants mentioned 'protecting the environment' in their interviews, the idea of 'living in harmony' with nature was extremely prevalent in Josh's interview.

Josh presented the environmental surroundings at MVC as another challenge coaches faced each week. Creating contingency plans for weather is a task the Leadership Team has faced almost every year at camp. In 2016, a large rainstorm had passed over camp during one morning session, inhibiting play due to lightning. Once the rain ceased, the grass courts were too slippery for the ‘indoor’ volleyball campers to use, so they were going to miss a second session due to the rain. The Leadership Team, along with some creative coaches, decided to ship all 468 campers to the beach courts as the sand was wet but still sturdy. This was the first time in the camp’s history that both sections of camp – ‘beach’ and ‘indoor’ - would have a full session together, which promoted a greater sense of community throughout camp.

Josh commented on how the environment, including the changing weather, created another dynamic to MVC you had to embrace. With the busy schedule campers endure each day, Josh found that the campers did not seem to appreciate their surroundings as much as the coaches did:

...as a coach, I mean when I show up there every day there's this feeling of just...you know, relaxation and enjoyment when you can be in a place that big and it feels like you're going to your cottage. (Josh)

Josh didn’t depict MVC’s environment as the sole motivator for him to return, but described it as “icing on the cake,” showing his appreciation for the camp’s surroundings.

Grant. As a previous camper, CIT, and now a coach, Grant is well aware of the routine at MVC. He described camp as “tough” and “tiring” but attributed its surroundings for taking his mind off the robust scheduling:

...you don't think about it because you're surrounded by such great people and an amazing environment, like an amazing grounds like where it is, and it's just beautiful to be up north and, and escape the city and even like taking in the stars. I think that's another highlight, just taking in the environment around you and appreciate it. (Grant)

As a coach at camp, it almost seems that you do not have the time to appreciate the surroundings you are engaged with. It is only when the campers take a quick water break or when you are the first coach on the dock at the waterfront, that you can take a moment to appreciate the camp's true beauty. Grant depicted this feeling of appreciation, suggesting the surroundings at MVC are a special part of the experience for him.

Amanda and Jacob. Both Amanda and Jacob credited 'being outside' as a positive aspect of coaching at MVC. Amanda found comfort in knowing that across the grounds of camp, everyone is participating in the same activity at once – playing volleyball. Grant expressed being in the outdoors while “doing something you already love” adds to his continued commitment to attending camp each year.

Jamie. Jamie had the opportunity to experience the impact of MVC's environment through his wife's eyes. Jamie's wife does not attend camp with him, and had yet to see MVC until one year she decided to drive up to camp with him. She had heard about camp for years now, but had never expressed the urge to attend the week with him. As his wife explored the grounds for the first time, she decided she could see herself coming up for the week at some point, as long as she was given “a job to do”. Often senior staff bring their spouses with them to camp, and it is not uncommon to witness spouses going for a run around the property while campers and coaches walk to sessions, or see spouses playing

tennis against one another during lunch. They are merely enjoying the environment as the campers and coaches are.

Nick and Shannon. Both Nick and Shannon did not mention the surrounding environment of MVC directly. Nick did mention not being an ‘outdoorsey camping person’ when reflecting on his first year as a coach and how much he enjoyed the kids despite not being familiar with all the traditions at MVC and its surroundings. Shannon did use the term ‘environment’ during her interview, but related it to the personal environment she found herself in at camp, not the campgrounds itself.

Conclusion of Surrounding Environment

While analyzing the eight participants in this study, seven participants referenced the surrounding environment at camp as a means of motivation for them to attend MVC. Shannon was the only participant that did not refer to the campgrounds as influencing her attend MVC, but rather used the term ‘environment’ as a way to describe the personal environment she found herself to be in, rather than the physical one.

The beauty of the property is reflected in the programming of the camp itself. Indoor volleyball is usually played in the confines of a gymnasium, but at MVC, the sport is played outdoors on grass. Campers come home with scrapes and bruises, attesting to losing their volleyball in the brush one too many times. The hike up to the beach courts is nothing short of a trek. Whether campers are racing down the path in a group, or cutting through the woods, there is bound to be a slip or fall in the mud –or even worse, a rolled ankle.

As the experiences of camp provide campers with constant feedback and new opportunities to learn about themselves, the environment presents an additional element to

their week. DeGraaf and Edginton (1992) found that “working with children, being outdoors, and being with other counselors” (p. 51) were prominent motivational factors to seek and continue summer camp employment, binding the experience counsellors acquire from camp to the same experience of a camper.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This qualitative study explored the motivations and retention of coaches at MVC. The findings of this study have enriched the data pertaining to Canadian counsellor experiences in summer camp settings, and have increased the understanding of why counsellors choose to return to summer camp employment each year. Through the experiences shared by the eight MVC coaches interviewed, four prominent themes emerged that motivated them to continue coaching at camp: 1) alignment, 2) tradition, 3) opportunities for personal growth and 4) the surrounding environment. Alignment and tradition both provided subcategories to further refine the motivational factors they encompassed. As the rate of summer camp enrollment continues to increase (Wilson, 2016), it is important that research is conducted to understand how to retain counsellors year over year to create a sense of community, and continue traditions at summer camp for generations to come.

Limitations of this Study

While the current study provided an abundant amount of data relating to the motivations of camp counsellors to return to camp each summer, it is certainly not without limitations. The uniqueness of MVC can be seen as a limitation, as it only occurs for one week per year and is a specialized sports camp. The research findings may not directly reflect the motivations of other camp counsellors in other camp settings.

The second limitation of the study is that the research was conducted by interviewing only eight participants. Using a small sample size does not allow for external validity or generalizability of results. To assure the data interpreted were of value to this

under-researched topic, IPA was chosen as the methodology as it allowed smaller participant populations to be researched. As well, it must be noted that the participants were chosen based on who replied to the recruitment email. This factor did not allow for all the experience categories to be represented in the study.

The third limitation of this study is the most disheartening to me. The lack of data provided by the Canadian Camping Association forced me to reference American statistics and research throughout the study.

The final limitation of the study pertains to my relationship with the participants. I have had personal interactions with each participant at one point in time at MVC, whether as a peer or his/her manager. Although each participant and I have a positive and trustworthy friendship, they may not have felt comfortable enough to express negativity towards MVC. Although I tried to relate the confidentiality of the study, and my impartialness to the results frequently, there is opportunity that the participants did not disclose everything in their interviews.

Implications for Practice

After understanding the limitations of the study, there are still potential suggestions that can be derived from this study and implemented to increase retention for summer camp employees.

In this study, each participant identified a personal connection to the common value of MVC. This intense alignment of value across the camp community allowed staff to work towards a common goal, and understand what is to be accomplished over the week. Creating a relatable vision for camp allows staff to align their personal values and

commitment to camp, increasing their motivation to return based on nothing else but the shared common value.

Continuing camp traditions and creating new ones appeared to have an impact on participants' motivations to return to MVC. By creating irreplaceable traditions within, camp employees will understand that they have to return again to stimulate the same feeling those traditions bring them, as they can only experience them there. This sense of 'need' will assure a greater sense of community and safety to branch out, encouraging staff to strive for greater responsibility and higher roles at camp.

Encouraging reflection and personal growth in the camp environment will not only increase counsellors' sense of support from the community, but will increase the professional development of the staff. As coaches begin to share with other coaches, the need for scheduled staff training diminishes, saving cost and time for the camp.

Last, but definitely not least, MVC provides a natural and outdoor environment for staff to engage, which was reported to increase coaches' motivations to return to camp, and decreased the coaches' feelings of stress throughout the week.

Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to understand the motivations of camp counsellors to return to coach at MVC each summer. Although MVC can be classified as a unique camp experience, the findings within this thesis can still provide insight into the motivational factors camp counsellors examine when choosing to return to camp year after year.

First, I suggest the country finds a way to increase the Canadian camping research being conducted. The majority of references used to group the theories both accepted and

rejected in this thesis came from American resources. The lack of Canadian based camp studies made it difficult to gain enough insight into the camp counsellor experience.

Moving forward, I believe conducting a more in-depth interviews either during camp or directly at its conclusion would enrich the findings pertaining to the motivations of coaches at MVC as well as conducted the same interviews at other camps. This frame of time would allow coaches to share experiences that were either currently happening or were just completed, rather than having to recall memories for the research. As well, identifying participants prior to camp and having the opportunity to observe them at camp would have allowed me to interpret the participant's actions and reactions in present time.

Personal Reflection and Application

Conducting this study was an opportunity of a lifetime for me. I was able to converse with fellow and past employees of a camp that I am so passionate about, and not only listen to their stories, but interpret them to share them in this thesis. Engaging with each participant increased my understanding of them both personally, and professionally as a coach. Each participant brought a unique perspective to each question, and it was interesting to view camp from their eyes. The themes found within the collected data are factors that I will now be able to bring into my daily teaching and coaching practice, which will hopefully inspire and motivate my students and athletes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Hello Camp Coaches!

My name is Jennifer Straver, a Master of Education student working under the supervision of Dr. Geri Salinitri at the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor and I am looking for participants for my research study. You may know me as a current Section Head at Madawaska Volleyball Camp, a former camper and varsity volleyball athlete.

The title of my research project is 'Returning Year after Year: The Motivation and Retention of Coaches at Madawaska Volleyball Camp' and the purpose of this study is to explore what motivates MVC coaches to continue coaching at camp each year.

I am looking for participants who have coached at camp for at least two years, and would like to share their experience with me. If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

Give one in-depth interview regarding your motivations to continue working at Madawaska Volleyball Camp. The interview will last from 60 to 90 minutes and will be completed in person, over the phone or with Skype at a time convenient for you and the investigator. The interview will be audio recorded only.

Once I have your permission I will contact you regarding participation. I'm hoping to find an array of coaches with different amounts of coaching experience at camp!

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. You will be asked to choose a pseudo name to be used throughout the project, as your identity may be recognizable in the presentation of results I would like to assure you that the study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at the University of Windsor. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

If you are interested in participating, please review the attached Letter of Information and Consent Form, and contact me at (removed). I will then send a confirmation email indicating your participation, and to set up a time that is convenient for you.

See you at camp,

Jennifer Straver

Appendix B: Data Analysis Example

Excerpt of Nick's Interview

Line	Speaker	Theme	Line
178	Researcher		So what do you think made you come back into 2010 then?
179			(long silent pause following by a sigh)
180	Nick		Very good question (laughs)
181	Nick	commitment, questioning	(laughs) Why am I even here now?
182	Nick	camper centric	Umm, no I umm, the kids were awesome.
183	Nick	camper centric	The kids were absolutely incredible and, even though I didn't really get the songs or like the, the, I'd never even been camping, so I wasn't really and outdoorsey camping person.
		programming	
		environment, outdoors	
184	Nick	enviroment, sport	Umm, and...and like, from a volleyball standpoint, like, I was like "Yeah I could do this for a week" but I could also, yeah yeah, I could play beach, I could go up to Queens early and train, I could do other things but yeah, it was genuinely the idea of, of, of thinking "well, li if I'm, if I'm not the first face that this little crew of 12 year old
		commitment, questioning	
		camper centric	
		self, responsibility	
185	Nick	commitment, campers	(laughs)
186	Nick	camper centric	So, that was....yeah, it was...ah...yeah, I, I, often, I, I, thought back specifically to what, what brought me back and, I don't know if I really thought about it, but yeah it was the kids more than anything
		commitment, campers	
187	Researcher		(laughs) So true.
188	Researcher		Umm, so looking back now, what, how do you feel when you walk into the CL?
189	Researcher		Like what's the difference from your first year to now?
190	Nick	camper centric	Well, I mean...I think, I think, I think the umm...the appreciation, I mean ultimately it still is the kids.
191	Nick	experience, growth of campers	It's, It's the difference is now I get to see kids that I had coached as stallions having like now growing up and being CIT's and even gettir into their coaching years.
192	Researcher		Yep
193	Nick	experience, growth of campers	Or, or kids that I've had the last couple of years as umm, as that I've taught boys cabins uhh, getting into those years
194	Nick	language	It's, it's, ahh it's the fact that those quote on quote Madawaska lifer who alwasys come back, I mean I do know them...I could...yeah, I mean...I mean it's, it's, it still would be the kids, I'd, I'll, I'll never qui
		commitment, campers	
195	Researcher		Mmhmm
196	Nick	emotions, replacement	And, I don't think, I don't think there's much that can truly replace that (emphasis) feeling but...I mean I think, I actually I, I, I enjoy mo working with coaches who it's their first year there, and guiding them through like "hey look, (mumbles) like maybe this part's new for you right now but, here, like if you feel like you ever need...you
		self, responsibility	
		leadership, role	
197	Nick	programming	Like I don't, I don't do games night anymore, and I don't do casino night, I don't play any games because it's a lot more fun to...chat wi people
198	Nick	community, sharing	Like, I get to, I get, I get to sit and really talk (emphasis)

Appendix C: Interview Questions and Possible Expansion Questions for Participants

How many years have you been coaching at MVC?

Expansions:

- Reflecting on that number, how does it make you feel?

How did you become a coach at MVC?

Expansions:

- Was there someone or something that encouraged you to come?
- What made you decide to say yes to camp?
- What were the pro's and con's for you at that time?

Were you ever a camper at MVC?

Expansions:

- How do you think that experience impacted your decision to become a coach?
- How did that experience impact you to return as a coach for years to come?

What do you think keeps you coming back to camp each year?

Expansions:

- What are the motivations to return?
- What are your favourite parts about camp?

Have you ever chosen not to return to camp?

Expansions:

- What would discourage you to come?
- What process did you have to go through to make the decision not to return?
- How did you feel when you were not at camp?
- How was it to return to camp after your absence?

Can you share a couple of your favourite memories about camp?

Expansions:

- Why do you think those memories are the ones that stick out to you?

Do you think your experiences at camp have impacted your life outside of it? Either positively or negatively?

Are there differences about camp from your other workplaces?

Expansion:

Positives or negatives?

Is there anything you would change about working at camp if you could?

What are your feelings after camp is completed each year?

VITA AUCTORIS

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