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JOËL GAUCHER

FACTEURS D'ATTRACTION ET DE RÉTENTION
DES ANIMATEURS DE CAMP DE JOUR AU QUÉBEC

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TRANSLATION BY
FRANÇOISE ROMARD
SENIOR EDITOR – CANADIAN FORCES AEROSPACE WARFARE CENTRE
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Abstract

During the last few years, we have noticed a transformation in day camp environment in Quebec. This transformation is the result of many factors, such as youth social problems, the increase of parental demands, the heightening pressure on security standards and the lack of resources for counsellors' supervision. Following a research conducted by the Leisure and Community Living Laboratory Study (Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire sur l'état des camps de jour au Québec (2007)), the objective of the present essay was to identify the factors inciting students to start working as day camp counsellors (attraction factors) and also find out what are the factors inciting counsellors to remain in the counselling field for a prolonged period of time (retention factors). The present research is based on a theorist model taken from a study done in 2003 on attraction and retention factors of nurses in Quebec. The model holds seven dimensions: work schedule planning, work organization, responsibility and professional practice, financial conditions, recognition and valorisation, work environment and lastly management practice. As a method to collect the data, we used a survey distributed to 189 counsellors during the summer 2010. The research has enabled us to determine the factors inciting youths to become counsellors as well as the factors motivating them to remain in these positions for longer periods of time. The study provided useful information enabling us to dress a list of recommendations which will, in the near future, prompt a re-evaluation of the role of counsellors and their importance.

Introduction

This research which took place between 2010 and 2012 pursued two objectives: identify which factors incite students to start working as day camp counsellors, referred to as attraction factors; as well as recognize which factors would incite counsellors to remain in the counselling field, referred to as retention factors.

This essay outlines the process used and also presents the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained following the data collection from 189 day camp counsellors, male and female, from the Laurentian and Montégérie regions. Once the results of the research have been showed, some recommendations will be formulated.

This paper is divided in many chapters. The first chapter presents the research problems; chapter two puts into perspective the literature review; chapter three explains the reference framework, chapter four elaborates the method used for the data collection; chapter five presents the results, their analysis and interpretation for each research objective. Finally, the sixth chapter puts into perspective the different methods of analysis, a discussion section and some recommendations.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The objective of this chapter is to put into perspective the collected data as well as the results obtained, in order to provide an answer to the research question. To do so, some connections will be established with previous research and authors, as well as with the research objectives. These study objectives were to establish a list of attraction and retention factors for day camp counsellors in Quebec. Therefore, this research aims to answer the question: “What are the factors that motivate a student to start working as day camp counsellor and to persist in this position?” This section will try to propose an answer to this question.

In the first place, it appears noteworthy to compare, based on a purely statistical point of view, the results of the dimensions of the attraction factors versus the retention factors. This exercise will provide a way to compare and highlight the similarities and evolution of the dimensions.

In fact, it is interesting to note that the attraction and retention factors are divided into two distinctive groups. The dimensions of responsibility and professional practice; work schedule planning and financial conditions share the last three positions, for the attraction and the retention factors: Occupying respectively the 7th, 6th and 5th position for the attraction factors and the 6th, 5th and 7th positions for the retention factors.

The dimensions sharing the second group are work organization, recognition and valorisation, work environment and management practice. The positions of these dimensions vary slightly in regards to the attraction and retention factors, except for the management practice dimension, which goes from the 1st to the 4th position, while the

three others vary by only one position, being respectively in 4th, 3rd and 2nd position for the attraction factor and in 3rd, 2nd and 1st position for the retention factor. The following table clearly demonstrates these results.

Table 18

Comparison of positions of studied dimensions

Studied dimensions	Attraction	Average	Retention	Average
Responsibility and professional practice	7	2.25	6	2.84
Work schedule planning	6	2.35	5	2.88
Financial conditions	5	2.56	7	2.70
Work organization	4	2.65	3	2.97
Recognition and valorisation	3	2.82	2	2.99
Work environment	2	3.01	1	3.12
Management practice	1	3.12	4	2.90

In addition, if we compare some dimensions in more detail, we notice that some results shed a precise light on the evolution of dimensions between the initial hiring time of counsellors and the reasons for staying in this position.

For example, if we look at the dimension of work organization. While, within the attraction factor, the fact of being part of an experienced team of coordinators gathered only 66.1 per cent (*enough, a lot – assez, beaucoup* were the assessment choices in the survey), the percentage increases to 79.3 per cent (enough, a lot) within the retention factor for the quality of the supervision provided by the persons responsible.

Accordingly, after having experienced a summer or more of day camp, it seems that the counsellors understand the importance of efficient supervision. Chrétien (2010) mentioned this particularity in regards to the retention factors underlining the importance of: “Valorising team work, suggesting new challenges and emphasizing mentorship and sponsorship.” (p. 21). An interesting fact is that when we asked the counsellors if the requirements related to the position were an incentive for choosing to work in camps, they answered positively (*enough, a lot*) at 72.4 per cent. This percentage increases to 83.6 per cent (*enough, a lot*) when asked if the importance of responsibilities enticed them to come back. The weight of responsibilities is then transformed into motivation. Therefore the counsellors seem to be looking for new challenges in relation to their work once they have acquired experience.

The work schedule planning dimension also reveals some privileged information. When considering the amount of non-paid overtime hours, at a score of 80.4 per cent (*somewhat, not at all*), the counsellors considered that comments they had heard concerning non-paid extra work hours were not a deterrent to becoming counsellors. This reality considerably changes after a few years of experience, since the percentage greatly decreases to 62.4 per cent (*somewhat, not at all*). This particular situation is disturbing and is an element requiring improvement. The fact of working during the day and on week days also constitutes a progressive element. Between the moment when counsellors decide to work in that capacity and the moment when they have acquired experience in the field, the percentage rises from 75.1 per cent (*enough, a lot*) to 83.6 per cent (*enough, a lot*). The fact of having another weekend employment, often the same as during the

school year amounts for a lot. However, it is definitely the guaranteed amount of work hours that is subjected to the greatest variation between the attraction and the retention factors, since the percentage of importance rises from 59.2 per cent (*enough, a lot*) to 82 per cent (*enough, a lot*). Many employments in other fields do not offer the same stability in terms of number of work hours, whereas it is a noticeable advantage for day camps.

Although day camps offer advantages as far as work is concerned, some aspects remain problematic. When comparing two results pulled from the responsibility and professional practice dimension, it is interesting to observe that, during the attraction phase of future counsellors, to push their limits is an important element (82.5 per cent consider that this situation motivates them enough or a lot to become counsellors). By contrast, when asked if a coordinator position could motivate them to come back, therefore having more challenges and greater responsibilities, it is only at 59.8 per cent that counsellors acknowledge their desire to take such a position. This result can be explained in great part by the few coordinator positions available comparatively to the counsellors positions, but also possibly by the counsellors' desire to simply remain as such, opting for the privileged relationship they have with the children rather than advancing to a managerial position.

Although accessing managerial positions (coordinator or supervisor) seems a difficult task, by comparing some collected data at the retention factor level for the responsibility and professional practice dimension, we noticed that with the increase in age (between 15 and 20 years old and over), the average increases as well (from 2.72 to

3.04). Tremblay (2010) concurs with this ideology as he states that the fact of “developing autonomy in the work force and developing education and access to related abilities and to new knowledge” (p. 43) is favourable to employees’ retention in an enterprise. Another interesting fact is the low percentage of results to the questions relating to personnel training. For the six questions about training, the highest percentage recorded was 69.8 per cent which related to the impact of receiving training versus the desire to come back as a counsellor. Considering the current debate on the training of day camp counsellors in Quebec, it becomes important to reflect on the manner in which training is provided and the nature of the topics. In fact, Plante (2010), in his study on day camp counsellors training, stated this problem about the training of experienced counsellors:

The statements’ results on acquiring new abilities and the development of new knowledge, adaptation to experience and motivation trigger some questions about the content of the training for experienced counsellors (ones having three or more years of experience in counselling), since the perception of the latter concerning these statements are rather negative.” (p. 165)

In regard to the dimension of financial conditions, at the time of hiring, the notion of wage, at 78.9 per cent, is *somewhat* or *not at all* a motivating factor in choosing or not the work as counsellor. Debois, Pelletier and Morin (2009) also mentioned this fact, concerning the mitigated importance of salary for the retention, saying that: “Faithfulness reaches beyond monetary incentives. It corresponds to the fundamental practices aiming to inspire an employees’ collective or individual engagement with the organization” (p. 30). However, as time progresses, the notion of salary is becoming a factor again, although 63 per cent of respondents mentioned that it was a *somewhat* or *not at all* important element. Despite the decrease in percentage, it becomes important to mention,

that there are 63 per cent of counsellors for whom the salary is not a motivational factor. Another key element to put in perspective is the fact of recognizing education, abilities and years of experience acquired at another day camp. All these elements have progressed in percentage and in importance for the retention factors: (55 per cent, 56.6 per cent and 75.2 per cent *enough or a lot*) comparatively to (55.5 per cent, 66.6 per cent and 79.9 per cent *enough or a lot*). If we have a look at the results obtained in the comparative table according to the age of participants for the attraction factor, we notice that the older the counsellors are, the more the dimension of financial conditions increases in importance as well (increasing from 2.47 for the 15 to 17 age group to 2.85 for the 20 and over age group ($p=0.27$)). This trend is maintained for the retention factors, at the level of years of experience, while the average goes from 2.50 for the 1 to 2 years of experience to 2.71 ($p=0.52$), for the 3 years and over of experience. Many authors support the importance of salary as a drawing power and for retention by enterprises (Marsan 2008, Sage and Brisson 2001, Chrétien 2010). Surprisingly, the salary of day camp counsellors is far from being significant, being barely higher than the minimum wage. Thibault (2007) mentioned this in his study dated 2006: “It appears that the day camp counsellors’ wage is less and less competitive. However their responsibilities are increasing and they are facing sizeable challenges as demonstrated in the survey”. (p. 6)

Furthermore, as for the dimension of work environment, both questions had ostensibly the same percentages (attraction and retention), as much for the quality of the work environment (60.8 per cent attraction and 67.2 per cent retention) as for the

proximity of the camp location (84.1 per cent for the attraction factor and 83.1 per cent for the retention factor). Marsan (2008) alluded to this aspect in his research, stating that: “The distance to the residence, the reputation, the dynamic and the culture of the enterprise” (p. 54) are crucial elements enterprises should take into account in order to retain and sustain their personnel.

As for the dimension of recognition, it is important to mention that the question asked to counsellors pertinent to recognition, for which we observed the highest percentage is recognition demonstrated by managers. Hence the importance of specifying that we are talking about the directors of recreation or the owner of the enterprise for private camps, with 85.2 per cent (*enough or a lot*).

Caparison between the Leisure and Community Living Laboratory Study and other authors

Having analyzed and brought to light some results while relating them to different authors and different trends highlighted by research, it seemed important to compare certain results the study conducted by the Laboratoire en Loisir et Vie Communautaire (LLVC) revealed with some the present research brought forth. This comparison touches as much on the results pertinent to counsellors’ motivations and the possible link with the attraction and retention factors as to the contribution of some comments concerning issues presented in 2006 and the actual situation in day camps in 2012.

One of the problems at the heart of the research is the retention and recruiting of personnel. In 2006 the research revealed that 50 per cent of day camps were retaining only half of their counsellors from one year to the next and that 37 per cent had to hire almost all the potential candidates (more than 75 per cent). As mentioned in the LLVC study, although they were in demand, public day camps were facing a range of problems, as Thibault mentioned (2007): “An increase of children with behavioral problems, which implied greater responsibilities for the counsellors; the ratio counsellors/children often too high, counsellors too young and inexperienced, insufficient training and non competitive wages” (p. 4). The study also mentioned that the counsellors were for the most part enthusiastic persons, showing characteristics of motivation generally recognized as essential to a well functioning enterprise. As a matter of fact, in terms of motivation, the study revealed some way of promoting the return of counsellors in day camps. Here is the list: 1) the pleasure (3.32), 2) working with young people (3.31), 3) team spirit among counsellors (3.11), 4) experience for the future (2.85), 5) salary (2.45), 6) the fact to have a job for the whole year (1.77), 7) obtain a promotion (1.71) and 8) discounts or buying privileges in certain shops (1.06).

The results gathered in this study expose some common elements revealed in the study conducted by the LLVC (Thibault, 2006) while others remain different. In fact, the dimensions and the theoretical framework used in this research are not the same as the ones used in the 2006 study; however it remains interesting to compare some answers. The three elements being used to establish a comparison are team spirit between counsellors, salary and obtaining a promotion. The result associated to team spirit can be

linked to the element of work environment of the present research. The work environment element is part of the recognition dimension for the retention factors and that dimension obtained a 2.99 average and was the dimension finishing in second position, in comparison to 3.11 for the LLVC study, which finished in third position, both being in a similar position among the most important elements. The notion of pleasure could also be part of this comparison, since I believe that they are both very similar.

When looking at the salary, the LLVC study revealed an average of 2.45, while for the current research, salary was part of the dimension of financial conditions. This dimension had an average of 2.70, finishing first for the retention factors, while for the LLVC study, it finished in the middle. It is interesting to observe that for both studies, this particularity is not a priority for counsellors. It is therefore important to ponder the real power of attraction salary has in regard to employment in day camp. Attracting student candidates for summer jobs is becoming more and more competitive. Some employers do not hesitate to offer salaries much higher than the minimum wage, so to have a more important attraction power, a fact that decreases day camps fair hiring competition.

Finally, the last comparison concerns obtaining a promotion. In regards to the LLVC study, this element falls at the bottom of the ranking, in seventh position with an average of 1.71. For this research, this element can be compared with the dimension of responsibilities and professional practices, having 'obtain a counsellor's position' as a

component. This dimension obtained an average of 2.84, also falling at the bottom of the ranking, finishing in sixth position in term of importance for the retention factors.

Even though both studies have similarities, it becomes apparent to also look at the differences. The notion of recognition, not included in the LLVC study, appears as a innovative and promising element to consider as a new avenue towards the development of progressive recruiting and retention strategies. The notion of stability and competency is also a new element worth considering and bringing forward in recruiting procedures, in particular in the recruiting of young people with particular aptitudes, for example in sports, in art, in the management of children with related disorders or simply students wanting to acquire experience in their field of study.

Evidently, it is quite complex to establish comparisons and to put into perspective the results obtained for the attraction and retention factors of counsellors in the present research with the studies realized in day camps, because these results are embryonic. Apart from Thibault's study (2006), very few statistics or precise information on recruiting and retention exist concerning day camp counsellors.

Putting the results into practice

The results that were obtained in regards to attraction and retention factors have a direct impact, for day camps managers in Quebec, not only on the manner they will implement their recruiting campaign but also on how the managers will use the results in order to keep their counsellors for a long time. The day camps managers can put

programmes into place that will increase the number of interested prospects, and also maintain their staff for a longer period of time.

The attraction of new candidates as day camp counsellors can be facilitated through different measures. The first one being the manner in which the job offers are presented. When posted, it is necessary to focus on the daytime work schedule, during weekdays and to stress the guaranteed number of work hours, since the importance of those elements was demonstrated in this study. The lack of continuity for working hours offered in other positions will be to the advantage of day camps employers. If it is significant, the level of retention of counsellors should also be acknowledged as to demonstrate the stability of the team. The support contributed by the experienced returning counsellors in the integration process of the new comers should also be mentioned. The quality of supervision offered by the managers is an essential element contributing to decrease the stress intrinsic to the work load of counsellors starting their position.

In order to increase the chances of recruiting staff, managers would benefit from promoting learning opportunities in day camps. The choice of a summer employment for many, is often guided by the ability of the employer to offer learning opportunities in their field of study.

As well, involving former counsellors in different hiring strategies, such as job fairs, allows opportunities to better represent and explain the advantages of a summer

employment in day camp, particularly for those in the fields of education and/or recreation.

Attracting new candidates may also be increased by promoting an end of summer gala and special rewards presented to counsellors for their good work. Focus should be placed on working together as a team and not on the remuneration, since salary is not competitive most of the time.

Finally, to incite the interest of future counsellors, importance should be given to the quality of the work place (outdoors, quality of infrastructures, and diversity of specialized centres) and the strong points of the camp. Involvement of municipal management is crucial in order to better advertise the diverse elements of the employment and to ensure that all information is included in the recruitment campaigns.

Encouraging students to look for employment as day camp counsellors is one responsibility of day camp management, it is also important to look to promote the rehiring of past-counsellors. The cost of recruiting new candidates is certainly much higher than to simply retain counsellors already in place. In order to do this, as we would proceed in the initial recruiting stage, some modifications in personnel management methods could be implemented to significantly increase the level of retention of counsellors in the different day camps in Quebec.

Based on present job markets, since day camp employment lasts only a period of time of between seven to nine weeks during the summer, students most find other work during the school year. Therefore, it is important for employers to show some flexibility with regards to training hours as well as work hours to allow counsellors to maintain their other employment, if applicable.

Retention is also subject to the quality of the life experiences of the first year of employment at day camp. This is achieved by the pairing former counsellors with new comers during training and summer activities, which will allow for an easier integration and foster interpersonal exchanges setting the tone for the upcoming camp year. This atmosphere may also be enhanced notably by the availability of a hall for counsellors, an area where counsellors can conduct discussions about their day, discuss their problems and of course to socialize.

Retention of staff is directly related to the ability of the employer to recognize and validate the quality of work of the counsellors. As such, different hiring methods can be put in place notably the hiring of summer staff for part-time employment at the management level during the September to May period. A counsellor looks for three main types of validations: to be recognized for his worth as an individual, for his worth as part of a team and most importantly, appreciated by his supervisor and his employer. This method would ensure a multiple faceted appreciation of potential candidates.

In addition to the challenges related to the attraction and retention of staff, I also consider that it is important to consider different aspects of the management itself of counsellors, as such the pool of counsellors as a resource in all of Quebec. As is the case for workers of all different categories, counsellors have a tendency to change employment in order to diversify their work experience, but also move because of school or family reasons. From this reality, it becomes important to set up a national platform to hire day camp staff. Because students move to attend school, this initiative would enable them to continue in their field with greater ease. To compliment this initiative, it would also be worth creating a partnership between the camps that operate during different seasons (green class, snow class, outdoor centres, specialized day camp and municipal day camp) in order to keep counsellors working as long as possible and avoid drop outs.

Furthermore, as revealed in the analysis of the results to the open questions, counsellors established their study choice in relation to their experiences in day camps. It would therefore be advantageous to encourage the development of a partnership between BA students and college programmes in the field of recreation in order to encourage the recruitment (credits given to those who work in day camps) (education, special education, early childhood education, recreation, etc.).

It would also be interesting to consider, in a future research, the degree of importance of social changes with regards to day camps workers and the importance of this phenomenon of the retention of staff. What impacts could employment as a counsellor have on the development of personal and professional qualities of an

individual? It seems that the life experience as part of a counselling team can have a significant impact on a number of aspects, notably increased self-esteem, increased social skills such as communication, leadership, organization skills and resourcefulness.

Finally, in order to encourage the counsellors to remain in their position, they must be aware and know the support offered by the town executives and the recreation services, and this, before, during and after employment at day camp. This will allow a better understanding of camp for management which will allow them to make decisions adapted to the reality of camp.

Limitations of the study

This study is a consultation process realized by one person with certain time and resource constraints. Therefore it becomes advisable to put into perspective the strengths and limitations of the study, which will allow researchers who would wish to pursue the evaluation of the results obtained and make the necessary modifications.

One of the limits of this study resides in the use of a self-administered survey/questionnaire. Even though this method of collecting data has the advantage of reaching a large number of individuals, quickly and for little cost, as well as ensuring uniformity of the explanations relative to the process, certain drawbacks exist, notably the missing data and the inability to clarify certain responses. This particularity is evident in

relation to the responses for open questions, where it would have been interesting to obtain greater clarification.

Firstly, one of the principal limits of this study is the amount of question for each dimension. The inequality between the number of questions per dimension and the different elements included in each dimension are subject to modification for a future study. It becomes necessary to wonder if this situation may have had an impact on the results. If we take as an example the dimension of recognition and valorisation, one question was asked to identify the attraction factors, whereas six questions were asked about retention factors. It is also the case in the responsibility and professional practice dimension where two questions were asked vis-à-vis attraction factors, whereas eight questions were asked vis-à-vis retention factors. It would have been easier to make the comparison between the results of the attraction factors and the retention factors if the questions dealt with the same subjects.

As well, during the data analysis, we had to exclude certain questions. And the questions excluded were 8, 9, 13 and 15. The decision to exclude these questions came essentially from the fact that after analysis, during the interpretation of the statistic results, we came to the conclusion that these questions were not pertinent to the attraction and retention factors, but rather the perception of counsellors with regard to their experience and so less pertinent. We also excluded the question “For how many years have you worked in this day camp?”. This question had the same meaning as how many years of experience, but the results were different.

As well, while compiling the surveys, we noticed that for the towns of Chambly and Mirabel, five people under the minimum age of 16 filled out the survey (15 years). We decided all the same to keep these surveys in order to analyze the results. One important element in the limitations of the study resides in the fact that certain counsellors were employed by the company l' Air en Fête as opposed to the presumption of bias of certain answers.

This element leaves a shadow of doubt that it would have been possible that the results obtained would have been different if the surveys had been randomly distributed and that the sample group would have been selected over a greater area. A more extensive research could most certainly reveal additional data.

Finally, with regards to the comments received during the data collection, the survey was too long, too many questions, and the counsellors would have appreciated speaking about the importance of children and also the camp experience. It would also have been interesting to ask the following question: "Why are you working at day camp?" and also ask the question: "Do you like to work at day camp?"

This brief discussion had for objective the synthesis and analysis of the principal elements of the research. This consideration translates in the recommendations that are the subject of the following Chapter of this report.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and future perspectives

This chapter will expose the recommendations that have been taken from the results of this study, with regards to the dimensions presented: work schedule planning, work organization, responsibility and professional practice, financial conditions, recognition and valorisation, work environment and lastly management practice. These recommendations are intended as practical elements to be implemented in day camps.

Work schedule planning

Attraction

- Offer full time employment (35 to 40 hours/week), therefore create the twinning of positions (surveillance, counselling, chaperoning, specialists);
- Put the emphasis when advertising of positions on the positive aspects of a summer camp job (day hors, minimum hours guaranteed).

Retention

- Allow counsellors to work a certain number of hours other than day camp (employment during school year)
- Set up banks of hours for projects done by counsellors (special projects, games, thematic activities)

Work organization

Attraction

- Include a counsellor's detail job description responsibilities (creation of activities, group management, travelling, schedule);

- Clearly indicate the competencies of the supervisors in the job offers as well as their profile, in order to put into perspective the quality of support (teaching, special education, recreation, management, years of experience).

Retention

- Organize weekly meetings in order to ensure follow-ups with the counsellors.

Responsibility and professional practice

Attraction

- Put forward the insertion and mentorship programmes for the new counsellors during the hiring process.

Retention

- Organize continuing training workshops with counsellors to further develop their competencies;
- Ensure a decision making chain of command in case of conflicts between counsellors and supervisors. Ensure that counsellors are aware of this procedure.
- Improve the process of identifying continuous training needs in a more personal manner for more experienced counsellors by foreseeing the appropriate financing in order to ensure the acquisition of new knowledge while enabling the transfer of knowledge to counsellors;
- Invite former counsellors to participate in the setting up of certain camp components (thematic activities, organization of games). Work accordingly to individuals strengths.

Financial conditions

Attraction

- Advertise the current wage scale for accumulated years of experience.

Retention

- Establish a competitive wage scale according to years of experience;
- Promote the allocation of recruitment bonuses to counsellors who generate the recruitment of new counsellors;
- Make counsellors wages commensurate with their level of responsibilities.

Recognition and valorization

Attraction

- Talk about the recognition gala during hiring in order to foster a desire to be part of a team for the first encounter.

Retention

- Organize an end of camp activity (gala, supper at a restaurant, weekend at a cottage, fun activity) in order to reward all the counsellors;
- Recognize the work done by new counsellors by given prizes specifically for them;
- Develop a culture of recognition and put in place a programme of national valorization of counsellors where the contribution of individual counsellors and of teams of counsellors is showcased.

Work environment

Attraction

- Organize a visit of the grounds for future candidates where the camp will be held, as to increase the power of attraction of the environment.

Retention

- Emphasize the purchase of new quality materials in order to improve the counsellors efficiency;
- Decorating the day camp site will improve significantly the participation and implication of the counsellors and that of the children.

Management practice

Attraction

- During recruitment, put the emphasis on team work and the exceptional atmosphere of day camp;
- Use the network of former counsellors in order to take advantage of the advertising among their circle of friends and of their personal and scholastic circles;
- Put up flyers in a 20 kilometres radius from the camp, in stores and places where youths will be likely to gather.

Retention

- Delegate certain decision making to counsellors committees. To involve the counsellors team encourage their level of participation but also their desire to always give the best of themselves;

- Put in place a decision making committee with the counsellors in order to make certain decisions on the aspects of camp (camp shirt, activities to organize and social activities).
- Reduce to the maximum the restrictive measures with regards to staff, but encourage the development of abilities and the positive follow-up of mistakes.

Conclusion

The problems surrounding the recruitment and retention of staff are the important challenges in the summer day camp job opportunities. The reasons why young people decide to become counsellors and after to continue in the day camp environment were the important questions and will remain so. This study had for objectives to determine the factors of attraction and retention of counsellors of day camps in Quebec. In light of the results obtained, it was possible to determine and to classify the studied dimensions by order of priority and consequently to determine the factors that influence young people to become counsellors as well as the factors that determine their level of longevity in the field of day camps. This essay puts into perspective certain factors, as much as on an attraction level than on a retention level of day camp counsellors. On the attraction level, the recognition and valorisation of staff as well as the management practices are second and first in importance respectively during the initial recruitment. Furthermore, the work environment as well as the recognition and valorisation of staff appear to be important aspects for the retention of counsellors.

In addition, if this study brought forth answers to certain questions, it had an equal effect in raising other questions. Therefore, some avenues of reflection emanate from this research and could certainly be an interesting subject of further research.

Does there really exist, with regards to the hiring in day camps, a real generalized problem or is it a problem unique to rural areas? Do cities day camps have the same recruitment and retention problems as small towns or is it the procedure of recruitment that is deficient? Furthermore, an important aspect of this research resides in the

originality of the process, namely, having consulted counsellors directly instead of management. This focus group targeting allowed an uncovering of certain aspects not revealed before notably the importance of work atmosphere as much on an attraction level as a retention level. Day camps are not uniquely a place of pleasure but also and above all a place where people socialize, and develop long lasting friendships. It would be therefore pertinent to shed light on this aspect during a future research in this field. Equally, the importance of the involvement of all decision making levels of a town or an enterprise in the retention and the attraction of staff appears necessary.

This study would have also allowed to compile a list of recommendations and avenues of analysis in the event of a more extensive research, notably the importance of social changes for day camp workers and the importance of this phenomenon on the retention of staff. It would also be interesting to ask the question of the social and emotional benefits of individuals through their experience as counsellors. This study might be on one hand a departure point towards an awareness of the necessity to further document the phenomenon of day camps, because despite the distance come and the evolution of day camps throughout the years, very little literature exists. This study should also be regarded as a step toward the global valorisation of the work of counsellors.

Even though the research brings forth certain insights on the factors of attraction and retention of staff, having an impact on the hiring and the return of counsellors in Quebec certain questions are nonetheless without an answer and would need further

study. It seems interesting to ask the question if problems of recruitment and retention of counsellors really exist across the province or if it is mostly a problem of isolated regions away from urban centres. Does the problem of the number of candidates versus the number of positions available generalized?

I believe it is time to ask the question about the role of day camps, with regards to the simple fact that working as a counsellor would allow a young person to make a career choice in a certain field where children are the central element (teaching, recreation, psycho education, physical education, etc.).

Finally, an essential component of this study was to provide the opportunity to counsellors as well to take part in the present public place debate on problems of attraction and retention of staff. The opinion of management often dominates the comments made by the workers while the comments of latter should occupy a place of importance.