Preceptions of Outdoor Leaders Towards Their Experiences of Spirituality in Nature: A Q-methodology Inquiry

Abstract
Subjective views regarding outdoor spirituality among outdoor leaders were captured through this Q-methodology study, and the use of spiritual intelligence (SQ) provided the theoretical framework. Q-sorts consisting of 42 statements about outdoor spirituality were completed by 30 outdoor leaders, and were analyzed with PQ Method software. The result of this abductive analysis was a three-factor solution deeply interpreted as: Sense of Transcending, Sense of God/Higher Power and Fellowship, and Sense of Challenge. Sense of Transcending is the perception of how nature improved one’s sense of self while feeling connected to nature. Sense of God/Higher Power and Fellowship is the perspective of feeling closer to God and/or one’s travel companions while in the outdoors. Sense of Challenge is the perception of how nature breaks down social norms and self-constructed norms. Outdoor leaders and outdoor recreation organizations can incorporate terminology, awareness of multiple perceptions, and ways to include outdoor spirituality in outdoor recreation experiences. It may be beneficial for further research in participants’ perceptions, possible transference of beliefs from outdoor leaders to participants, influences for SQ development, and possible best practices for including outdoor spirituality in outdoor recreation experience.

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