

Understanding Means-End Theory for Wilderness Inquiry Trips

What is Means-end theory and why is it useful?

Means-end theory looks beyond just the benefits participants receive from an integrated outdoor adventure program. We can see how the benefits and outcomes are related to the personal values of the participants using means-end theory. It is important to know not only what people received from participating in a WI trip (outcomes/benefits) but we need to also know why that was important to the individual (personal value). In knowing this, WI can make the appropriate program changes or what to continue doing in order to serve participants' personal desired end results.

What is an attribute?

Attributes are the physical components or characteristics that make up a Wilderness Inquiry trip. Attributes for a WI trip might include setting up a tent, canoeing or kayaking, being with the program staff, doing something new for the first time, interactions with people with a disability, or just being out in the wilderness.

What is a consequence?

Consequences can be thought of as the effects or outcomes that the participants received from an aspect (attribute) of the trip. A consequence may occur directly or indirectly to the participant and could be either desirable or undesirable for the participant. For a WI trip this might be becoming more aware of your abilities or strengths, learning outdoor skills, or teamwork amongst the group. Negative consequences are the costs or risks associated with participation. These might include conflict with other group members, feeling uncomfortable in the wilderness, or possibly getting injured.

What is a value?

A value is what a participant wants in life or sees as a better way of living or existence over another. They are highly abstract consequences that summarize desired end results. Values apply to all individuals. Some values that individuals might have are: a sense of accomplishment, happiness, security or self-confidence.

Results of HVM for All Participants

Attributes: The attributes that were strongest based on the hierarchical value maps (HVM) included:

Interactions – can be any type of social interaction with another member of the trip. Examples participants may have mentioned on the surveys would be:

- “I had fun with the others in the group at meals and campfires.”
- “I met a lot of interesting people.”

Wilderness experience – anything that took place in the wilderness or an outdoor setting.

- “It was great being outside in nature.”
- “I enjoyed seeing such remote country.”

Canoeing – this was the synonym for anything that had to do with paddling on a canoe trip.

- “It was nice to be out paddling.”
- “Canoeing on open water.”

Trip overall – this synonym was used for participants' responses that had to do with the trip in general.

- “The entire trip.”
- “The trip in general.”

Consequences: The predominant consequences that were linked to the above attributes included:

Relationships with others – can be any type of relationships that were developed on the trips.

- “I developed friendships with others that I hope will continue after this trip.”
- “I appreciate the chance to experience this with others I would normally not be with.”

Awareness – this synonym was given to respondents’ statements whenever they seemed to come to a better understanding of something or a realization of some aspect of themselves or just life in general.

- “I didn’t know my son was so quick to make new friends and be so outgoing.”
- “I spend too much time in the office.”

Nature appreciation – was used for participants’ responses that expressed an awareness or appreciation for the wilderness or nature in general, to include the responsibility of being a good steward.

- “This is a wonderful place and I want to take care of it.”
- “I love being out in the wilderness.”

Values: The following values were linked to the above mentioned consequences and were stronger in significance:

Transference – this is when participants can related an experience or new insight into their daily lives back home. Examples might include:

- “Communication skills will be helpful back at work.”
- “I can go kayaking on my own now.”

Self-awareness/improvement/fulfillment – these synonyms were used anytime a participant mentioned learning something new about who they were or felt like they had become a better individual.

- “I am a stronger person for it.”
- “I feel like I can better face my fears now.”

Personal goal – can be a statement about the desire to achieve new goals or something the participant wishes to accomplish.

- “I want to start working with people with disabilities in my community.”
- “I want to do more canoeing trips to the BWCA.”

Warm relationships with others – these are expressions of higher and more meaningful levels of relationships participants might have with others.

- “I will always remember the friends I made on this trip.”
- “My son and I are much closer now.”

Value (personal/spiritual) – a value statement made by participants based on their experience.

- “Quality of life and happiness are essential for a successful life.”
- “Being inclusive is very important to me.”

Strong links in overall participant HVM:

- Teamwork linked to relationship with others linked to awareness which linked to fun & enjoyment of life.
- New opportunities linked to personal goals
- New skills linked to transference which lead to value(personal/spiritual)

Results of HVM for Persons With a Disability vs. People Without a Disability

Similarities:

Strong Attributes

- Interactions
- Wilderness Experience

Strong Consequences

- Awareness
- Relationships with others
- Nature appreciation

Strong Values

- Self-awareness/Improvement/
Fulfillment
- Transference
- Warm relationships w/ others
- Personal goal

Strong Links

- No strong links were similar

Differences:

HVM for persons with a disability

- Links between interactions, awareness of abilities, achievement, to a sense of accomplishment
- Hiking/horse packing (A)
Knowledge & achievement (C)
A sense of accomplishment
- Not found

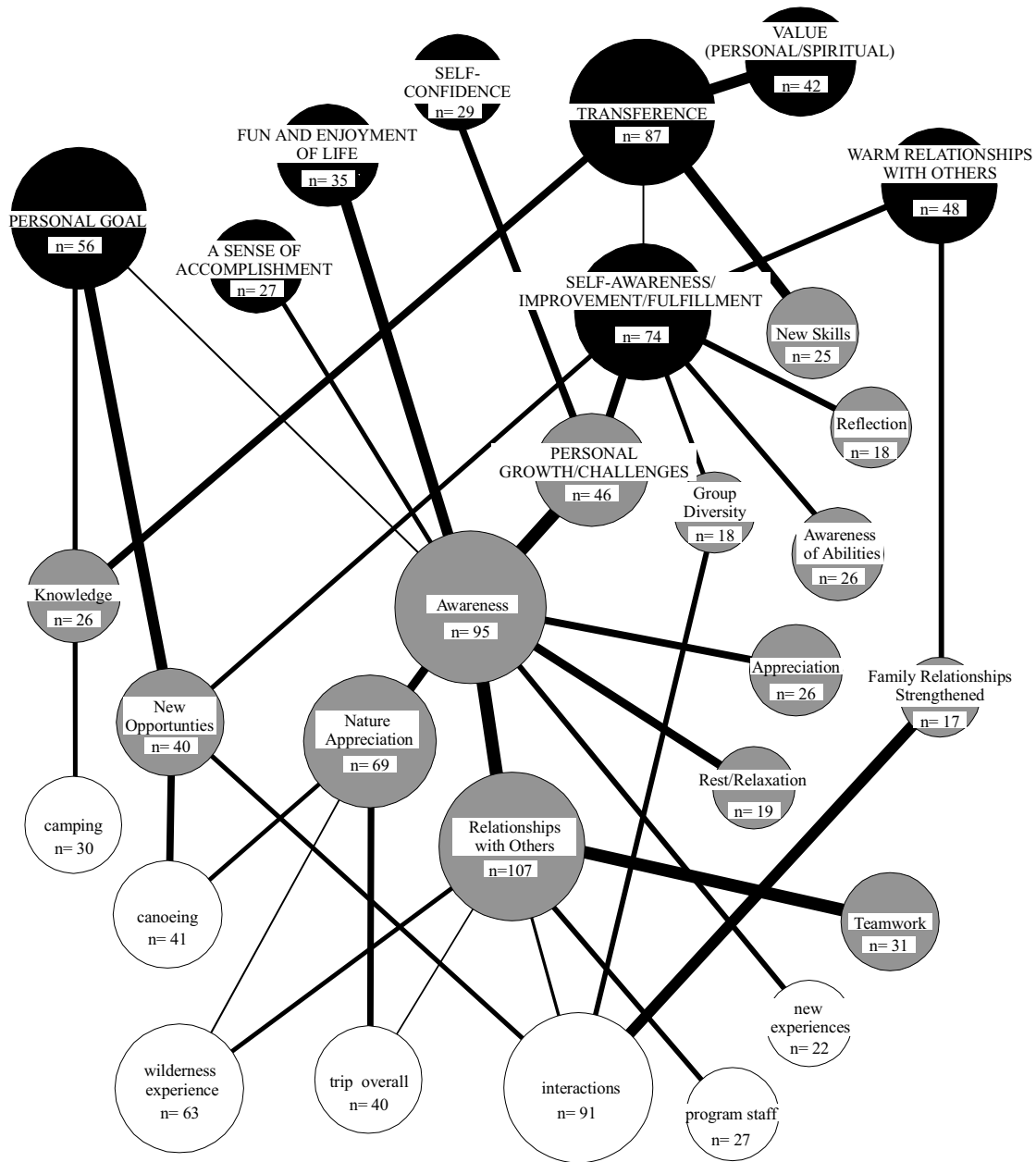
HVM for persons without a disability

- Links awareness of abilities to transference
- Not found
- New experiences (A)

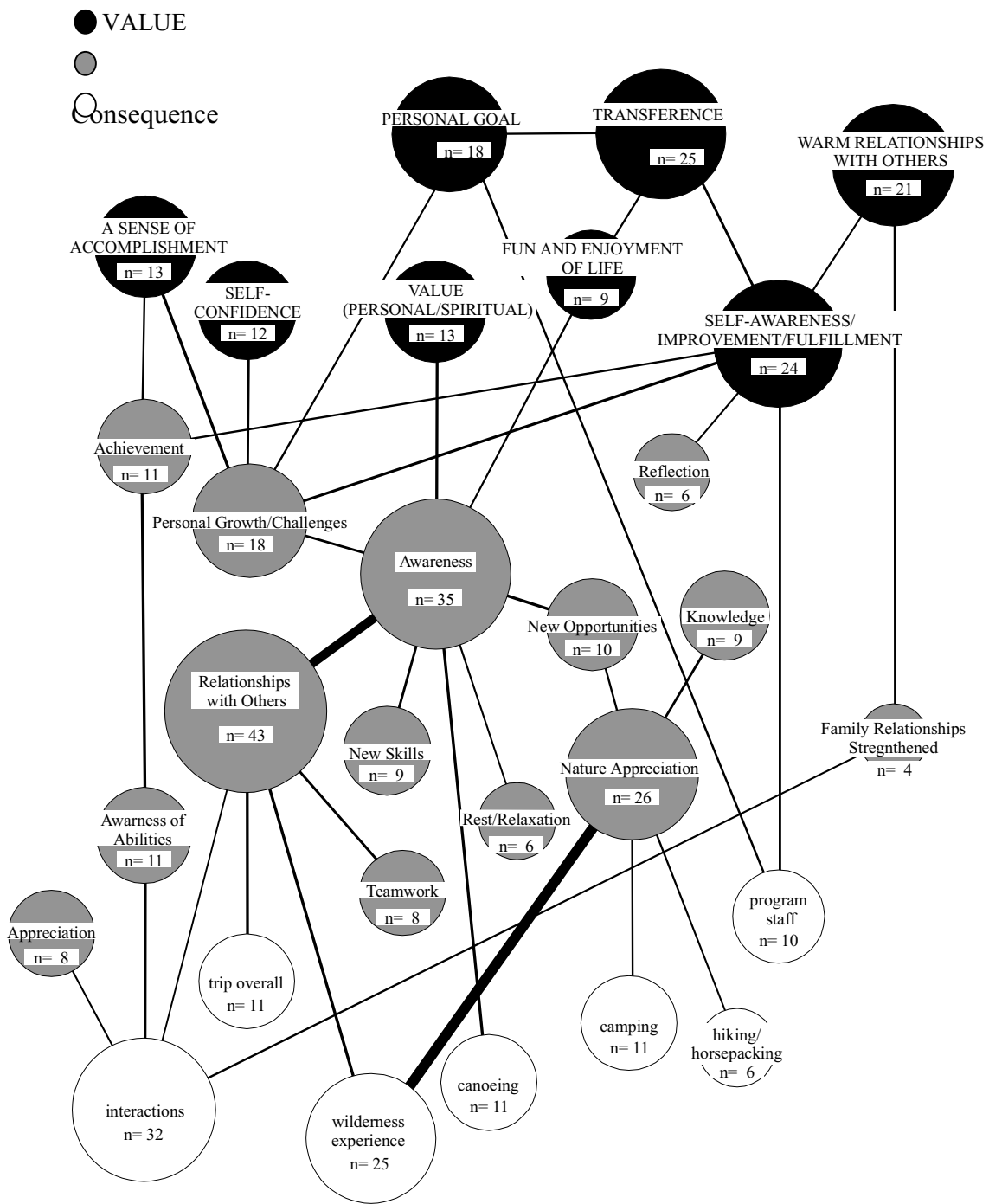
● VALUE



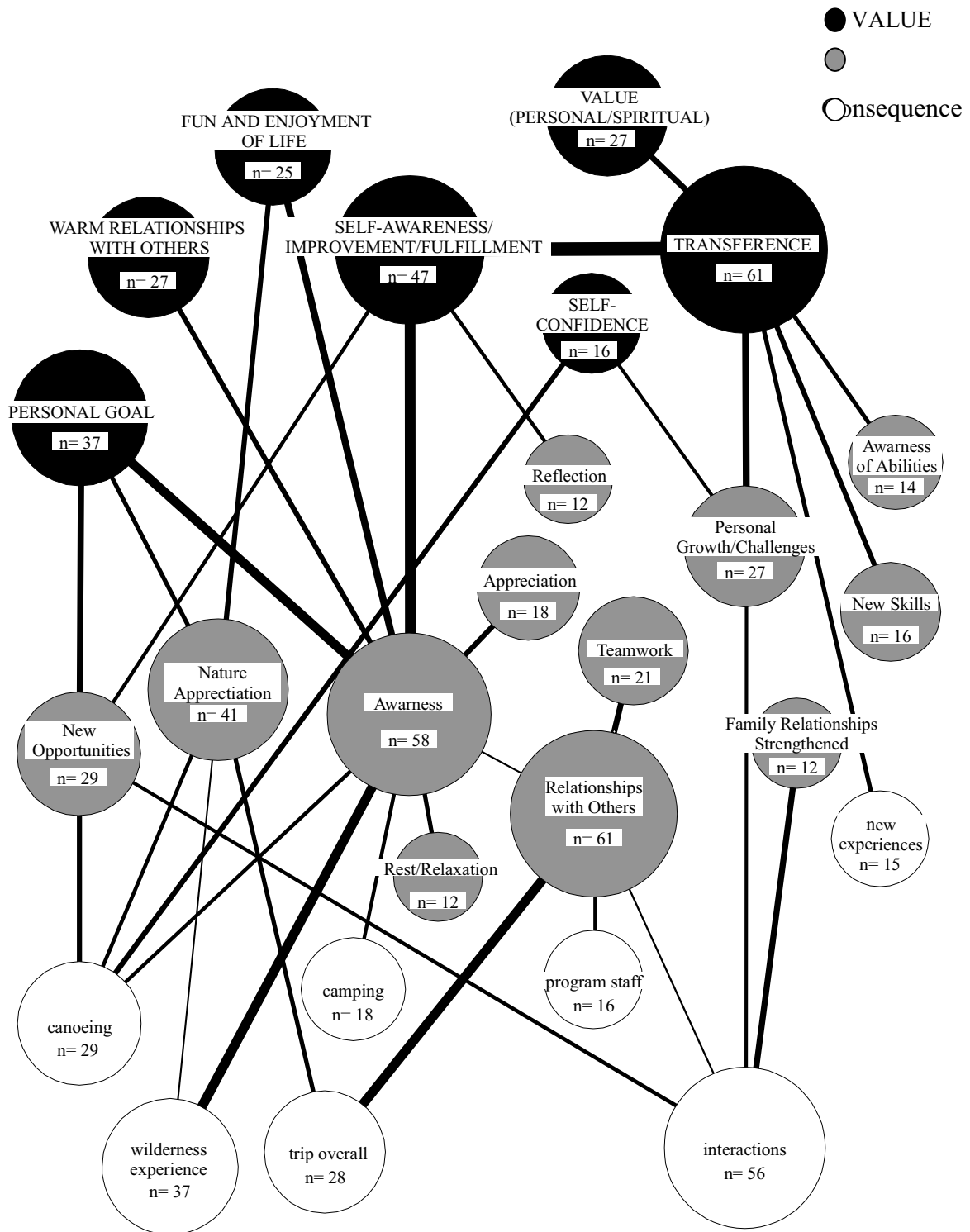
○ Consequence



Hierarchical Value Map: Wilderness Inquiry Participants Overall Data (n=198)



Hierarchical Value Map: Wilderness Inquiry Participants with Disabilities (n=64)



Hierarchical Value Map: Wilderness Inquiry Participants without Disabilities (n=126)

