

Pilot Research Results:

The effects of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award on learning

Summary

There has been a great deal of research conducted on the impact of the Award in terms of the qualities young people learn through participation in the program. The vast majority of research to date is based on qualitative (or anecdotal) evidence.

In 2015, a research team from Western Sydney University volunteered their time and know-how to develop and pilot research to provide an approach with quantifiable results. The aim was to provide statistical data to demonstrate which 'learnings' can be directly attributed to participation in the Award program.

The results of the pilot study show that improvements to a Participant's self-confidence, ability to cope with change (resilience), leadership, overall effectiveness and active involvement could be directly attributed to participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and could also be measured.

It also found that the Award impacted the learning of the qualities of time efficiency, self-efficacy, social effectiveness, co-operative teamwork, stress management, and, external locus of control can also be attributed to the current set up of the Award, but in a less compelling manner.

The full report can be found on the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award – Australia's website under Resources/Research.

Methodology

The research involved current NSW Award Participants completing a survey questionnaire as well as a sample of these Participants attending a focus group session.

The researchers used the ROPELOC instrument to gain quantitative survey results. The ROPELOC instrument measures key psychological and behavioural domains that constitute 'life effectiveness'. It is specifically designed to be sensitive to the effects of experience-based intervention programs, such as the Award.

The ROPELOC instrument contains 14 scales; including personal abilities and beliefs (Self-Confidence, Self-Efficacy, Stress Management, Open Thinking), social abilities (Social Effectiveness, Cooperative Teamwork, Leadership Ability), organisational skills (Time Management, Quality Seeking, Coping

with Change) an 'energy' scale called Active Involvement and a measure of overall effectiveness in all aspects of life.

These results were correlated with qualitative results from interviews and focus groups. A correlation is a statistic which ascertains whether two variables are associated with each other in a non-random fashion.

In this instance, whether possessing an attribute such as 'Leadership Ability' by a participant is associated with their attributions that participating in the Award helped them develop that ability. Variables can be positively or negatively correlated.

Statistical Results

Table 6 (on following page) shows the results of the correlation analysis. The means score for each scale of the ROPELOC was used. Correlations were carried out between: S1 (How 'true' individuals felt the comments were for them) an indication of possessing a Life Effectiveness skill and S2 (How much they had felt the Award had helped in developing this skill) an indication of the Award's contribution to the development of that skill. Table 6 also shows whether these correlations were significant, as well as a qualitative interpretation of the effect size of this correlation. For ease of interpretation, the effect sizes have been ranked in descending order from largest effects to smallest.

Table 6. Correlation between S1 and S2 for each of the ROPELOC Life Effectiveness scales.

ROPELOC Scale	r (S1 x S2)	Effect Size
Self-Confidence	.69**	Large
Cope with Change	.69**	Large
Leadership Ability	.65**	Large
Overall Effectiveness	.60**	Large
Active Involvement	.52**	Large
Time Efficiency	.49**	Medium
Self-Efficacy	.48**	Medium
Social Effectiveness	.48**	Medium
Cooperative Teamwork	.44**	Medium
Stress Management	.44**	Medium
External LOC	.43**	Medium
Internal LOC	.33*	Medium
Open Thinking	.24	Small
Quality Seeking	.18	Small

Note: S1 (How 'true' individuals felt the comments were for them) and S2 (How much they had felt DoEIA had helped in developing this skill). r = Pearson correlation. LOC: Locus of Control. n=51.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Effect size estimates and descriptors based on Cohen (1988).