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Editor's Comments:

Readers of our Winter Issue will be pleased with the variety of feature articles, program articles and innovative evaluation techniques shared by our authors. As we begin our fourth year of publication we welcome you to submit your manuscripts to patricia.dawson@oregonstate.edu

Articles of specific interest include:

- **Feature Articles** are informational, explanatory, or critical analysis and interpretation of major trends or comprehensive reviews. Articles include clear implications for youth development practice and programming and may be grounded in original research or new research from the relevant disciplines.
- **Program Articles** discuss programs and outcomes or describe promising programs and pilot projects that have clear implications for youth development research, practice and programming. These programs and projects are grounded with a strong research-based or theoretical framework.
- **Research and Evaluation Strategies** describe innovative methodologies and strategies in the collection and analysis of quantitative or qualitative research and evaluation data.
- **Resource Reviews** present analyses of materials, such as books, curricula, videos, other audio/visual materials, data management software, and Web sites.

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Feature Articles

Out-of-School Time Activity Participation, School Engagement and Positive Youth Development: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

[Article 080303FA001]

Li, Yibing; Bebiroglu, Neda; Phelps, Erin; Lerner, Richard M.; Lerner, Jacqueline V.

The relations in early adolescence among out-of-school-time activities and indicators of youth development were assessed through the use of 8th grade data from the longitudinal, 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. Hierarchical multiple linear regressions indicated that "hanging out" with friends without set plans and excessive media use were associated with lower behavioral engagement with school, lower academic achievement, and higher rates of risk behaviors. Youth who ate dinner with their family reported higher levels of emotional engagement, lower depression and risk behaviors, and better grades. Engagement in civic activities was associated with higher levels of emotional engagement. Behavioral and emotional engagement were both associated with better grades and lower depression. Emotional school engagement was also associated with lower rates of risk behaviors. Implications of the findings for evaluating the role of out-of-school-time activities and behavioral and/or emotional school engagement in academic achievement and youth development are discussed.

A Descriptive View of the 4-H Club Experience Through the Lens of 4-H Youth

[Article 080303FA002]

Guion, Lisa A.; Rivera, Blanca E.

4-H like other youth development programs should be generally marked by the presence of three features of optimal youth programming:

1) youth participation and leadership,
2) positive adult-youth relationships, and
3) skill building activities (Lerner, 2004).

This paper reviews a study which examined the extent to which 4-H youth felt they had "opportunities" to engage in different learning experiences, and provide leadership to those experiences within their clubs. The study also examined the youth's perceptions about whether their experience in the 4-H Club helped them spend more time with their parents, have a positive relationship with another adult and do things independently.

An examination of whether there is a difference in life skill development in 4-H based on certain key demographic variables is also discussed.

The results of this study are shared as well as implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Applying Marketing Concepts to Non-Profit/Educational Organizations: The Youth Professional's Responsibilities in Program Marketing & Promotion

[Article 080303FA003]

Diem, Keith G.

The degree of participation in community-based youth development programs is typically affected by both the recruitment and retention of participants. A review of literature over more than forty years revealed the value of marketing and promotion to the viability of a company, product, or organization and how it may contribute to company sales or an organization's membership. This article is focused on the application of marketing concepts to a non-profit organization or educational program. Using a marketing approach to program development can result in improved program quality as well as increased enrollment. Utilizing marketing activities such as needs assessment will aide in ensuring the program remains current in meeting needs and interests of clientele, the community, and society. Promoting an accurate and relevant image is a key in making sure people realize the value of your program.

Promoting Supportive Relationships in Youth Programs: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective **[Article 080303FA004]**

Duerden, Mat D.; Gillard, Ann

Although research suggests that positive contact with non-parental adults is developmentally beneficial for youth; many adolescents do not have access to such relationships. It is important that adults structure existing relationships to optimize positive youth development. Relationships with adults, who support youth's needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, provide youth with scaffolding as they navigate their way through adolescence. Self-Determination Theory offers a straight-forward approach to understanding the elements of contexts that best promote the development of supportive relationships. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature concerning youth-adult relationships, including their associated prevalence and developmental benefits across multiple contexts. These findings are then integrated into a framework of best practices for developing and supporting positive youth relationships with adults within youth program settings. Several theory-based recommendations are offered for youth program administrators and staff who wish to improve youth-adult relationships in their programs.

Why Play Sports? How Organized Sports Participation Can Contribute to the Healthy Development of Adolescent Hispanic Girls **[Article 080303FA005]**

Horst, Megan A.

This study addressed the research question, "What is meaningful to Hispanic girls about their organized sports participation during the first year of high school?" Purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 1996) was used to select 15 9th-grade girls to participate in individual interviews about their organized sport participation. Transcripts were analyzed via inductive coding. Findings showed that organized sports offered Hispanic girls in this sample a venue for healthy youth development, including opportunities for the "5 C's" – competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). This article highlights the salience of connection, caring, and competence in adolescent Hispanic girls' organized sports experiences. Insights from girls' narratives may help coaches and other educators structure athletic programs to best meet the needs of Hispanic girls during adolescence (AAUW, 1991; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Erkut, Fields, Sing, & Marx, 1996; Gil & Vazquez, 1996; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Examining the Potential Unintended Effects of a Healthful Living Curriculum Upon Children's Weight-Related Beliefs, Body Satisfaction, and Body Build Stereotypes **[Article 080303FA006]**

Ogle, Jennifer Paff; Carroll, Jan; Butki, Brian; Baker, Susan; Damhorst, Mary Lynn

This exploratory work was guided by the question of whether health education messages about food and exercise might inadvertently influence children's beliefs about weight controllability, body satisfaction, weight self-assessments, desire to alter weight, and body build stereotypes. Participants were 80 children (38 boys, 42 girls) aged 7 to 13 years enrolled in a week-long "FunLIFE" summer camp offered at a large university. FunLIFE was created in response to the childhood obesity crisis and focuses upon Learning to Improve Fitness and Eating (thus, the acronym "LIFE"). Pre- and posttest questionnaires were administered at four camp sessions. Findings indicated that participation in FunLIFE camp did not influence children's weight controllability beliefs, level of body satisfaction, their self-assessments of their weight, or their desire to alter or maintain their weight. Exposure to the FunLIFE curriculum did, however, positively impact children's stereotypes about both overweight and thin children. Findings and implications are discussed.

Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development through 4-H **[Article 080303FA007]**

Sallee, Jeff; Cox, Charles

The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover the perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in equal partnerships. The life skills of: Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and organizing were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. Through this research there was evidence that many of the youth participants did perceive themselves as equal team members when participating in this youth-adult partnership. The research indicated the greatest perceived obstacle that kept youth from engaging was not much time after homework and other activities. It is recommended that all participants in newly formed youth-adult partnerships receive training on how to implement this type of program, and how to participate equally.

A Qualitative Examination of Youth Voice in the Decision-Making Process within the 4-H Youth Development Program: Promoting Promising Practices in Overcoming Barriers **[Article 080303FA008]**

Fox, Janet; Tarifa, Todd; Machtmes, Krisanna

This paper discusses a national study designed to identify and describe obstacles to youth voice in the decision-making process in the 4-H youth development program from the perception of three distinct populations - State 4-H Program Leaders, 4-H State Youth Development Specialists, and 4-H Youth Agents/Educators. When examining these professionals' views on the barriers affecting youth voice in the decision-making process, time and scheduling seem to consistently present the largest barrier to youth voice. Involvement in the decision-making process provides a wide range of hurdles including the opportunity structures, involvement procedures, representation and dynamics within the process. Adult power and control provides a significant hurdle to authentic engagement of youth voice in the decision-making progress. Respect barriers were described by concepts such as preconceived notions, trust and valuing input. Additional barriers were identified including organizational culture, lack of transportation, lack of knowledge/experience, lack of preparation, lack of training, fear, misguided leadership, unclear expectations, participation, staffing and lack of resources.

Attrition in Adolescent After-School Programs: Addressing the Concern via Interviews with Program Dropouts **[Article 080303FA009]**

Okele, Lynda

The purpose of this paper is to address the challenges of attrition in adolescent, voluntary after-school programs (ASPs). Studies show that the after-school hours are a time of elevated juvenile delinquency. Since 1998 there has been a surge in the number of ASPs throughout the United States. Despite this surge, attrition is a major concern and threat to ASPs. Moreover, youth who drop out are rarely asked about their reasons for not attending. Seventy middle school-aged individuals who were selected to participate in the Baltimore County Middle School After-School Collaboration Project (BCAP) but eventually dropped out are interviewed for this study. Six primary reasons for non-attendance including: a lack of program fidelity, participation in non-family-related after-school activities, participation in family-related after-school activities, program length, boredom, and a lack of quality academic help are identified. The findings indicate a need for programming that is faithful, flexible, and narrow in terms of activities offered.

Program Articles

"Catch 'Em Being Good:" An Extension Service and State School System Team Up to Promote Positive Outcomes for Youth **[Article 080303PA001]**

Wade, Kerri; Nichols, Allison

This feature article describes a collaboration between the West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Department of Education to implement the "Responsible Students through School Wide Positive Behavior Supports" program (RS-SWPBS) throughout the state. A case study of Grandview Elementary School in Kanawha County illustrates the benefits that the collaboration brought to local youth. West Virginia Department of Education established the program and brought local schools onboard, while educators from the West Virginia University Extension Service became coaches and led the effort to collect and analyze data. Results included the development of positive behaviors, a decrease in negative behaviors, and the creation of a positive school climate.

Cross-Cultural Understanding Through Youth Sports: Bridging the Tolerance Gap Through Youth Development **[Article 080303PA002]**

Ross, Craig M.; Jamieson, Lynn M.; Mitchell, Donald W.

The USPORT-Kyrgyzstan project was an ambitious initiative of public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, cross-cultural exchange, in-country grassroots projects, and international cooperation. The project consisted of three phrases which included youth recreational sport programming, youth leadership and development training, and youth tolerance training. Overall, it proved to be an extremely effective form of intervention that provided youth in this region of the Middle East with many positive and constructive youth sports and leadership development opportunities.

West Virginia's Response to the Rotten Truth about Oral Health **[Article 080303PA003]**

Clark, Brent; Bowen, Elaine; Higgins, Chad; Hutson, Zona; Waugh, Tracy; Sharps, Gina

West Virginia University Extension Service has taken steps to increase the awareness and practices of good oral health. Significant barriers exist for optimal dental health and preventive care for youth in West Virginia. The 4-H Health Initiative strengthens community 4-H clubs through joint commitment to improve the Health "H," club reliance on youth leadership, responsiveness to youth voices, and involvement of community health resources. These efforts

bring oral health education and services to school-age youth. Evaluation data suggest that the model may impact oral health behaviors.

Research and Evaluation Strategies

Informed Decision-Making in Exploratory Factor Analysis [Article 080303RS001]

Cater, Melissa; Machtmes, Krisanna

As the field of youth development grows, evaluation of program outcomes has become more embedded in the program process. It is incumbent on youth development professionals to understand more clearly the process of instrument development. One phase of the process involves taking a closer look at the data to determine if an instrument measures one overall construct or if items cluster together to reveal underlying constructs. Exploratory factor analysis is a technique used to determine the underlying constructs, or subgroups, of an instrument. While professionals may use a variety of decision-making steps, researchers have identified some commonly agreed upon considerations when conducting an exploratory factor analysis. This article seeks to make the decision-making steps of this process more transparent while also offering guidance to youth development professionals who may be seeking to use this procedure for the first time.

Computer Gaming and Student Achievement: Investigating Middle School Students' Behaviors [Article 080303RS002]

Ibanez, Vincent; Kelsey, Cheryl; Slate, John R.

In spite of very little research on the subject, a growing concern exists among professionals that excessive time spent by students on computer gaming may have an undesirable effect in scholastic achievement. In this study, middle grade students self-reported their time spent on computer gaming for a one week time period. These self-reports were related with their GPAs at the end of the semester. Analysis of 114 students' GPAs in English, Math, and Science indicated the presence of a statistically significant difference in English GPAs between students in the High Computer Gaming group from students in the Moderate and Low Computer Gaming groups. No differences were yielded for Math or Science GPAs. Implications are discussed.

Do Higher Levels of 4-H Leadership Affect Emotional Intelligence? [Article 080303RS003]

Leech, Kalico Karr; Boleman, Chris T.; Akers, Cindy; Boyd, Barry L.

The ex post facto, exploratory study sought to determine whether higher levels of 4-H leadership had an effect on level of emotional intelligence. Using the *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)*, the Texas 4-H Council (n = 32) answered questions related to five domains of emotional intelligence. The results for the five domains are as follows: "General Mood" = 104, "Intrapersonal" = 101, "Interpersonal" = 100, "Stress Management" = 100, "Adaptability" = 94 (Scale: *effective emotional functioning* = 100). The overall EQ-I score was in the average range indicating that individuals in the group are functioning and healthy. Extension professionals should be aware of the lower scores related to "Adaptability" and "Stress Management." Some things Extension professionals should consider teaching youth include: ensuring youth goals are attainable, keeping youth focused on the issue at hand, establishing concrete protocols with youth, and teaching youth compassion for one another.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families: A Collaborative Program to Address Childhood Overweight [Article 080303RS004]

Jager, Kathleen B.; Saxe, Amy M.; Smith, Amy K.; Carolan, Marsha T.; Weatherspoon, Lorraine

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families is a program of outreach and research that has been developed to address treatment and prevention of the childhood obesity epidemic through a family-

centered, multidisciplinary approach. The American Dietetic Association recommends community-based and environmental interventions as the most feasible methods to support healthful lifestyles for the greatest numbers of children and families (Ritchie, Crawford, Hoelscher, & Sothern, 2006). *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* was developed as an innovative, collaborative program to help children and families maintain healthy weight, through impacting the systemic medical and psychosocial aspects of overweight in children. The program involves in-home, family-based intervention followed by multi-family group education and community outreach.

Resource Review

"Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition"

[Article 080303RR001]

Homan, Greg; Hedrick, Jason

Team Building is an important issue for Youth Development professionals. We utilize team-focused work to achieve our objectives in educating youth. The team building skills we integrate into programming serve to prepare youth for the dynamic, highly interpersonal work environment of today. "Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition," by W. Dyer, W.G. Dyer, and J. Dyer (2007), provides a practical theoretical framework for those interested in team building application, training, and practice in everyday work.

Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership [Article 080303RR002]

Dawson, Patricia A.

A national study conducted by Girl Scouts of the USA and Fluent, a New York-based research firm explores the leadership aspirations of girls and boys. Over 4,000 youth were included in the study which examines perceptions, behaviors, experiences and attitudes regarding leadership. The executive summary includes numerous tables and charts highlighting the research findings and comparative responses of boys and girls. Readers will find the results from this study to be of great value when designing youth leadership programs.

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Out-of-School Time Activity Participation, School Engagement and Positive Youth Development: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

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Out-of-School Time Activity Participation, School Engagement and Positive Youth Development: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development

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Abstract: The relations in early adolescence among out-of-school-time activities and indicators of youth development were assessed through the use of 8th grade data from the longitudinal, 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development. Hierarchical multiple linear regressions indicated that "hanging out" with friends without set plans and excessive media use were associated with lower behavioral engagement with school, lower academic achievement, and higher rates of risk behaviors. Youth who ate dinner with their family reported higher levels of emotional engagement, lower depression and risk behaviors, and better grades. Engagement in civic activities was associated with higher levels of emotional engagement. Behavioral and emotional engagement were both associated with better grades and lower depression. Emotional school engagement was also associated with lower rates of risk behaviors. Implications of the findings for evaluating the role of out-of-school-time activities and behavioral and/or emotional school engagement in academic achievement and youth development are discussed.

Introduction

The old adage, "Idle hands are the devil's tools" reads, on the other side of the provincial coin, "Angels hover about the busy." Similarly, people believe that adolescents are more likely to get involved in risky activities when they are bored and have nothing to do (Eccles & Barber, 1999). This folk wisdom has been supported by studies of the connections between adolescents' out-of-school time (OST) activities and individual and social adjustment (e.g., Eccles, 2005; Mahoney, Harris, & Eccles, 2006).

Most of the studies on OST have focused on the impacts of structured activities, varying from sports and clubs, to youth development (YD) programs on adolescents' adjustment (Lerner, 2004, 2007). Findings demonstrate that participation in structured OST activities has positive consequences for youth development (e.g., Mahoney, et al., 2006). For example, many adolescents participate in civic activities, such as volunteering and peer mentoring. These activities not only teach youth basic skills needed for later development, but they also give them opportunities to connect to their community and to practice democracy through collective work (Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Youth participation in these activities is linked to their later political participation and is considered to be an indicative of their potential contributions to society (Lerner, 2004).

Structured OST activities may be particularly important for success in the school context. The key argument is that structured OST activities provide youth a safe environment, adult supervision, supportive peer relationships, and a variety of training opportunities (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006; Sherrod, 2007), which are all essential elements for school. Meaningful involvement in such OST activities presents informal "developmental contexts" for youth to learn and grow, and may serve to support school involvement and enhance the impact of school on positive development.

Given the potential importance of structured OST activities for school, one may propose that structured OST activities have the potential to foster school engagement. School engagement manifests itself in youth's behavioral involvement and emotional identification with school (Finn & Rock, 1997). Youth who are behaviorally engaged with school tend to have higher academic performance, display fewer discipline problems, and are more likely to complete high school (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Lack of emotional engagement with school, on the other hand, is one of the most important reasons for youth to drop out (Finn, 1991). Therefore, both behavioral and emotional school engagement are believed to be antidotes to underachievement, student boredom, and dropout (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Recent research indicates that participation in structured OST activities predicts school engagement and other indicators of positive youth development (PYD), such as self esteem and high educational aspiration (Eccles & Barber, 1999). In particular, youth development (YD) programs, an instance of structured OST activities that emphasizes sustained, positive adult-youth relations, life skill-building activities, and youth participation in and leadership of various community activities, are particularly related to instances of PYD, or one or more of the "Five Cs" of this development, i.e., Competence, Confidence, Character, Character, and Caring (e.g., Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Zarett et al., in press).

Given all the possible positive effects of structured OST activities, and more specifically, of YD programs (Mahoney, Parente, & Zigler, in press), educators, practitioners, and developmental scientists have been looking beyond the typical school day to create structured opportunities for

fostering skill learning and positive youth development (Jordan, & Nettles, 2000). However, the reality is that structured OST activities are not the only component of the OST experiences of American youth. Adolescents are involved in many unstructured activities, in and out of school, with others and alone. These alternative activities may consume at least as much time (Mahoney et al., 2006). For instance, youth may spend at least one-third of their daily time sleeping, some time participating in structured out-of-school time activities, about a quarter of time being in school (not counting travel time to and from school), and the rest of their time (less than 10 hours a day) devoted to a set of activities that include eating meals, doing homework, watching television, or hanging out with friends.

All of these latter unstructured activities may have developmental consequences. These consequences can sometimes be positive. For instance, family meals may provide opportunities for parents to model, coach, and monitor their youth and, as well, may offer opportunities for youngsters to review and reinforce their out-of-home experiences, and provide opportunities for child development and socialization (Larson, Branscomb, & Wiley, 2006). Youth who regularly eat dinners with their families are less likely to engage in risk behaviors, have low self esteem, manifest lower depression (Compan, Moreno, Ruiz, & Pascual, 2002; Eisenberg, Olson, Neumark-Sztainer, Story, & Bearinger, 2004; Theokes, & Lerner, 2006). On the other hand, unstructured activities can have negative developmental consequences. For instance, watching television has been found to be negatively linked to school engagement: Youth who spend less time watching television are less likely to feel bored by, and more likely to be engaged with, school (Dotterer, McHale, & Crouter, 2007).

Thus, we need to assess the impact of youth OST activities beyond those linked to structured programs such as sports, clubs, or YD programs (Zarrett, & Eccles, 2006). This broadened approach to understanding the impact of youth participation in structured and unstructured OST activities is important because young people do not grow up in programs but in families, schools, and neighborhoods, where they are involved in various unstructured activities. These various unstructured activities in which adolescents participate may influence the intensity and quality of their engagement in school. As such, researchers and practitioners need to put youth back into their family, school, and neighborhood, and understand the impact of how they make use of all of their time.

Accordingly, in the current study, we expanded the spectrum of youth OST activities by studying various activities such as television watching, surfing online, hanging out with friends, eating dinner with family, and volunteering. In addition, studies on school engagement have most often focused on its connections to academic outcomes, such as grades and test scores, which reflect a narrow view of youth educational experience (Wong, & Rowley, 2001). Thus, in the present study, we investigated the effects of school engagement beyond academic outcomes by including indexes of depression and risk behavior. Finally, in order to examine the effects of structured and unstructured OST activities on multiple indicators of youth development, we included measures of academic achievement, depression, and risk behaviors.

The present study examined how youth engagement in structured and unstructured out-of-school-time activities, and particularly civic activities, was associated with increased academic achievement and emotional and behavioral development, and assessed the roles of behavioral and emotional school engagement in affecting the relations between activity participation, academic performance, and emotional and behavioral indicators of youth development.

We expected that:

(1) Being engaged with structured and unstructured activities such as family meals, exercising, and civic activities would be positively associated with favorable youth development, whereas participation in unstructured entertainment activities such as hanging out with friends and media use (TV watching, playing video games) would be negatively associated with positive indicators of youth development; that

(2) youth, through participating in civic activities (i.e., helping, volunteering, and tutoring), would benefit themselves in terms of academic achievement and other indicators of development; and that

(3) school engagement could be promoted through out-of-school time activities and would be predictive of academic achievement and other aspects of positive youth development.

Method

The present study was conducted as a part of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (PYD), which is a multi-wave longitudinal investigation in the United States that started in 2002 by assessing 5th grade youth and their parents. This report presents data derived from a Student Questionnaire (SQ) administrated during the fourth wave of the 4-H Study, i.e., during eighth grade. Full details of the methodology of the 4-H study have been presented in prior reports (Jelicic, Bobek, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2007; Lerner, et al., 2005). Accordingly, we present here those features of methodology pertinent to the focus of this investigation.

Participants

The present paper is based on Grade 8 participants in the 4-H study who were sampled from 24 states across the nation. This sample is comprised of a cross-sectional group of 1,567 adolescents (62.0% female). The mean age of youth in this sample was 14.21 years (SD = 0.76 Years). Socioeconomic status (SES) is indexed as family income (M = $63,683, SD = $36,092) and mother's education (M = 14.21 years, SD = 0.76 years). In the current study we controlled for sex and mother's education in all analyses reported. The sample was largely European American (71.0%), but included 8.8% Latino/a American, 8.4% African American, 3.0% Asian American, 2.0% Native American, and 3.6% multi-ethnic/racial American youth.

Measures

There were many standard demographic questions about youth and their families (date of birth, sex, race/ethnicity, and so forth). In addition to the demographic measures, the present study used measures of the assessment of the behavioral and emotional school engagement, youth's participation in out-of-school time activities, grades, depression, and risk behaviors. All of the non-demographic measures employed in this paper come from the Student Questionnaire (SQ).

Participation in Out-of-School Time Activities. Youth participation in out-of-school time activities was assessed by questions pertaining to 19 activities (see Table 1). We categorized these out-of-school time activities into six types for the analyses: Youth Development (YD) programs, civic activities, exercise, hanging out with friends, family dinner, and passive media use (see Table 1). Items indicate whether the student participates in specific activities (e.g., watching television or volunteering) or programs offered by youth development organizations in the current year and whether he or she was involved in these activities or programs in the past. Frequency of participation in these activities is also measured (0= never to 5 = every day).

Table 1

Participation in out-of-school time activities in Grade 8

Type of Activity	**Individual Activities**
YD Programs	4-H Club and 4-H Afterschool Programs Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts YMCA and YWCA Big Brothers and Big Sisters Boys and Girls Club Local Youth Center
Civic Activity	Volunteering Your Time Mentoring/Peer/Advising Tutoring Helping at church Helping at school Helping a neighbor Being a leader in a group or organization
Exercise	Exercising or being physically active
Passive media use	Watching TV Playing video games On the internet
Family Dinners	Having dinner with the whole family
Hang out	Hang out with friends with no set plan

Youth Development (YD) programs included several programs such as 4-H club and afterschool programs, Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and local youth center activities. For the purpose of our analysis, if youth responded yes to any of these items, they were considered a YD program participant.

Civic engagement was measured by eight items using questions adapted from the Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors (PSL-AB), created by the Search Institute (Leffert, et al., 1998). Four items assessed how often youth helped a neighbor, at school and church; three items assessed the frequency of their service activity participation (e.g., "how often do you do mentoring/peer advising?") and one item assessed how often the youth had been a leader in the last year. Items were weighted equally and were summed up, with higher scores indicating higher levels of engagement.

Passive media use was measured by three items that asked how often a youth watched TV, played video games and was on the internet per week. Items were weighted equally and were summed up into a composite for passive media use.

Family dinner, "hanging out" with friends, and exercise were all measured by single items that asked the number of times a youth had dinner with his or her family, and the amount of time they spent hanging out with his or her friends without a set plan and doing exercise.

School Engagement: Behavioral and Emotional. Six school engagement items were included in the analysis. All items were from the PSL–AB, created by the Search Institute (Leffert et al., 1998). The items asked youth about behaviors that pertained to academic functioning and to their emotions about school. For example, youth were asked whether they attended school regularly, whether they went to school without homework completed, and whether they thought their teachers and schoolmates cared about them. The response formats of three items were from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The other three items were with 1 = usually to 3 = seldom. In order to create consistency in item scoring, the three items with 1 to 3 response format were recoded as 1 to 5. In addition, the item "I do not care about school" was reverse-coded; thus, higher scores indicated higher engagement levels for all items.

Academic Achievement. Academic achievement was indexed by a single item that questioned "What grades do you earn in school?" which had a forced choice response format that ranged from 1 = Mostly As to 8 = Mostly below Ds.

Risk Behavior. Risk behaviors that are pertinent to substance use and delinquency were assessed using questions adapted from the PSL-AB and from the Monitoring the Future questionnaire (Bachman, Johnson, & O'Malley, 2000). Five items assessed the frequency of substance use (e.g., alcohol) in the last year ($\alpha = 0.86$). Four items assessed the frequency of delinquent behaviors (e.g., "how many times have you hit or beat up someone?") during the last year ($\alpha = 0.73$). Items from these two scales were weighted equally and combined into a composite for risk behaviors.

Depression. Depression was measured by the 20-item Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977). Youth reported how often they felt a particular way during the past week. An example of questions is: "I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me." The forced choice response format ranges from 1 = rarely or none of the time to 4 = most or all of the time. Participants reported how often they felt a particular way during the past week. Items were recoded to range from 0 to 3 and summed for a total score, with higher scores indicating higher levels of depression. Potential scores range from 0 to 60.

Procedure

Youth were tested in groups within their schools (in about 80% of the cases) or after-school programs. Trained study staff or assistants, who began all testing sessions by reading the instructions to the participants, conducted data collection. Parent data were collected through teachers or program staff giving youth an envelope to take home to their parents/guardians. The envelope contained a letter that introduces the study, consent forms for the child and his/her parent, a parent questionnaire, and a stamped self-addressed envelope for returning the completed forms and parent questionnaire.

Results

Our analyses were conducted to advance understanding of the association between activity participation, behavioral and emotional school engagement, and indicators of youth development. These indicators are indexed by grades, depression, and risk behaviors. The second goal was to examine the role of school engagement in the relations between activity involvement and youth development. Listwise deletion of cases was used to account for missing data in the following analyses. Table 2 shows means and standard deviations for participation in out-of-school time activities, behavioral and emotional school engagement, and indicators of youth development at eighth grade.

Table 2

Means and standard deviations for activity participation, school engagement, and indicators of youth development in Grade 8

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Risk Behaviors (range 0-30)	1494	.00	30.00	1.99	3.60
Depression (range 0-60)	1497	.00	51.00	13.87	9.65
Grades	1482	.5	4.0	3.32	.76
Behavioral engagement	1504	1.00	5.00	3.18	.77
Emotional engagement	1563	1.00	5.00	3.64	.83
Youth Development program	1518	.00	1.00	0.60	0.49
Exercising	1525	0	5	1.91	1.09
Family Dinners	1503	1.00	7.00	5.20	1.66
Passive media use	1540	.00	15.00	4.49	2.51
Civic Activity	1559	.00	34.00	10.31	5.82
Hang out with friends	1480	0	5	2.44	1.60

Bivariate correlations between activity participation, school engagement and indicators of youth development

As shown in Table 3, participation in Youth Development (YD) program was not only significantly correlated with more time spent on exercising, and less time on passive media use, but was also correlated with higher levels of youth civic engagement and higher levels of behavioral and emotional engagement with school. In addition, YD program participation was

also associated with better grades and fewer risk behaviors. On the other hand, passive media use was negatively correlated with every indictor of positive development and was positively correlated with higher levels of depression and risk behaviors.

Table 3

Correlations among activity participation, school engagement, grades, depression, and risk behaviors for Grade 8

	YD	Exercising	Family Dinners	Media use	Civic activity	Hangout	Behavioral engagement	Emotional engagement	Grades	Risk Behaviors
Exercising	.082*									
Family Dinner	.015	.027								
Passive media use	-.112*	.040	-.127*							
Civic engagement	.302*	.230*	.059*	-.162*						
Hang out with friends	-.048	.135*	-.108*	.117*	.027					
Behavioral engagement	-.012	-.002	.131*	-.160*	.079*	-.174*				
Emotional engagement	.120*	.018	.183*	-.221*	.349*	-.065	.189*			
Grades	.115*	.031	.210*	-.210*	.288*	-.120*	.262*	.378*		
Risk behavior	-.061	.047	-.179*	.153*	-.135*	.214*	-.151*	-.356*	-.355*	
Depression	-.026	-.097*	-.176*	.152*	-.063	.033	-.209*	-.256*	-.257*	.204*

The Effects of Activity Participation on Behavioral and Emotional School Engagement

Ordinary least squares regressions were computed, with behavioral and emotional school engagement as the outcome variables. The models included demographic variables: sex and mother's education, and activity participation variables: YD program participation, exercising, family dinners, media use, hangout, and civic activity.

As shown in Table 4, for behavioral school engagement, mother's education emerged as statistically significant. Youth whose mother had received more years of education were more likely than youth whose mother with lower education to be behaviorally engaged with school. Youth who went out with friends with no set plans and who reported more frequent use of media had significantly lower levels of behavioral engagement with school, above and beyond the effects of demographic variables. YD program participation, civic activity, and having dinner with family were not significantly associated with one's level of behavioral engagement.

For emotional school engagement, mother's education also turned out to be significant predictors of emotional engagement. Youth whose mother had received more education were significantly more emotionally engaged with school. The results indicated that youth who ate dinner with their families and youth who were more civically engaged were more likely to be emotionally engaged with their school than youth who had dinners with families less frequently and youth who were less involved in civic activities. In addition, youth who spent more time

watching TV, playing video games or surfing online were significantly less emotionally engaged with school than their less frequent media usage peers (see Table 4).

Table 4

Parameter estimates, approximate p values and goodness-of-fit tests for regression models of the relations between activity participation and school engagement, controlling for the effects of sex and mother's education

Variable Names	Behavioral Engagement	Emotional Engagement
	B	B
Constant	2.71*	2.71*
Demographics		
Sex (1=female)	.09	.13
Mother Education	.04*	.03*
Activity Participation		
YD participation	-.07	-.06
Exercise	-.02	-.04
Family dinner	.03	.07*
Passive media use	-.03	-.04*
Hang out	-.06*	-.04*
Civic activity	.01	.04*
Model R^2	.06*	.17*
Df (Residual)	855	879

*Note. *p.01 or less*

The Effects of Activity Participation on Academic Achievement, Depression, and Risk Behaviors

The associations between activity participation and indicators of youth development were assessed by three ordinary least squares regression models, with grades, depression, and risk behavior as the respective outcome variables. Mother's education turned out to be a significant predictor of youth academic achievement (indexed by self-report grades) and depression, in a way that youth reported better grades and higher levels of depression when their mother received more years of education. Girls reported higher levels of depression and lower rates of risk behavior than boys.

Regression results are summarized in Table 5. Having dinner with family was a positive predictor of youth academic achievement, indicating that once demographic variables were accounted for, youth who ate dinner with family members more frequently reported better grades in school. They were also less depressed and were less likely to engage in risk behaviors than those who had family dinner less frequently. In addition, youth who spent more time using media or hanging out with friends with no set plans had lower levels of academic achievement and were more likely to manifest risk behaviors than those who reported less media use or spent less time with friends. Youth who were actively engaged in civic activities reported better grades at school.

Table 5

Parameter estimates, approximate p values and good-of-fit tests for regression models of the relations between activity participation, school engagement and academic achievement, depression, and risk behaviors, controlling for the effects of sex and mother's education

Variables	Risk behavior	Depression	Grades
	B**	B	B
Constant	7.85*	34.72*	.77*
Demographics			
Sex (1=female)	-0.55	4.30*	0.00
Mother's Education	-0.09	-0.37*	.06*
Activity Participation			
YD	.04	-.54	.01
Exercise	.19	-0.92*	.00
Family dinner	-0.29*	-0.93*	.06*
Media use	.14*	0.62*	-.02
Hang out	0.34*	0.02	-0.02
Civic Activity	0.00	0.13	0.02*
School Engagement			
Behavioral Engagement	-0.11	-1.56*	.20*
Emotional Engagement	-1.16*	-2.99*	.22*
Model R^2	0.19*	0.23*	.27*
df (Residual)	836	832	829

*Note: *p<.01 or less; **B = unstandardized beta coefficient*

The Association between School Engagement, Grades, Risk Behaviors, and Depression

As can be see in Table 5, the results indicate that youth who were behaviorally engaged with school tended to have better grades at school and reported lower levels of depression, when the effects of demographics were taken into account, above and beyond the effects of all out-of-school time activities. Youth who were emotionally engaged with school reported better grades, lower levels of depression and were less likely to be involved in risk behaviors than those who were emotionally disengaged from school activities.

Summary of the Findings

In sum, the present findings indicated that participation in constructive activities such as YD programs, civic activities, and having dinner with the family was positively associated with youth school engagement and grades. Frequent media use and "hanging out" with friends were associated with lower behavioral and emotional school engagement, higher risk behavior and depression, and lower grades. Moreover, youth who were more behaviorally and emotionally engaged in school reported significantly better grades and lower levels of depression. Emotional school engagement was also associated with lower rates of risk behavior.

Discussion

The primary aim of the present report was to examine if the choices youth make regarding their participation in structured and unstructured activities are connected in meaningful ways to their school engagement, academic achievement, and broader indicators of youth development.

Accordingly, this research augments the out-of-school time activity literature by expanding understanding of the potential impact of out-of-school activities (structured and unstructured) and school engagement in the promotion of healthy and positive youth development. These issues were considered using hierarchical regression models. The major findings and implications are reviewed below.

In general, the results indicated that participation in constructive activities, such as YD programs, civic activities, and having dinner with the family was negatively associated with youth participation in more "passive" activities, such as "hanging out" with friends and media use. For example, youth who participated in YD programs were more likely to exercise and to be engaged in civic activities, and less likely to spend time watching TV, playing video games, or using the internet. This negative linear relation between participations in constructive activities and "passive" unstructured activities implies that the more adolescents are provided meaningful activities and positive adult supervision when they are not in school, the less likely they are to be idle or to be involved in activities that distract them from opportunities for positive development.

Despite the recent surge of public and research interest in the effects of out-of-school activity participation on youth development, the question of how participation impacts school engagement has been overlooked, or assumed without testing. The present study is one of the first to bridge the out-of-school and the within-school worlds. The findings provide evidence that youth who involve themselves in positive, constructive activities (e.g., family dinner and civic activities) are more likely to be emotionally engaged with school than those who are less involved in these activities. In other words, this study suggests that how youth spend time out-of-school has an impact on how they spend time in school, which in turn might lead to different academic and psychological outcomes. Accordingly, the importance of family, community, and program efforts in creating positive experiences for youth beyond the regular school time needs to be highlighted. Creating an effective partnership between in- and out-of-school educators may enhance meaningful involvement and effortful investment in school (Lerner, 2007).

The hypothesis that youth participation in structured and unstructured out-of-school time activities is predictive of a variety of indicators of youth development was corroborated by findings that consistently suggested positive effects of having dinner with the family on academic achievement and on lower rates of depression and risk behaviors. Conversely, there were significant negative effects associated with time spent watching TV, playing games, surfing online, and hanging out with friends. The results also highlight the advantages of participation in civic activities for improving academic achievement and the effects of exercising for lowering the levels of depression among youth. In light of these results, it is important to note that structured activities such as after-school programs are embedded in social and familial ecologies for youth (Theokas, Lerner, Phelps, & Lerner, 2006). How youth benefit from their OST activity participation is likely to depend on the combination of activities, structured and unstructured, in which they are involved (Zarret et al., in press) and the contexts in which these activities happen. In other words, the effect of participation in a particular activity/program depends on other activities in which a youth is also involved, and the activities in which he or she fails to be involved. Adapting this broadened, systemic perspective is critical for youth development program designers and practitioners to fulfill their mission of being a key resource in promoting positive youth development (Theokas et al., 2006), as this mission is unlikely to be fulfilled without the collaboration offered by parents and the community.

Finally, despite the realization that schools are a central context of child development, how school engagement impacts the psychological and behavioral well-being of youth remains in need of greater elucidation. Instead, the effects of school engagement have perhaps unduly focused on academic outcomes. This study assessed whether there was empirical support for the premise that student engagement in school is not only essential to positive academic outcomes, but also is beneficial to healthy emotional and behavioral functioning among youth. This idea was corroborated by the results showing that school engagement was positively associated with academic achievement and negatively associated with depression and risk behavior. In light of these results, it is legitimate to argue that youth experiences in school can potentially promote developmental competencies that pertain to academic, emotional, and behavioral functioning.

It is important to bear in mind that a particular level of school engagement, behavioral or emotional, results from the interactions of the individual and the context, not from youth themselves. Out-of-school time activities, such as civic activities and family activities may afford opportunities for youth to practice positive interaction with parents, other adult role models, and peers. The present findings highlight the notion that collaboration between in-school educators and out-of-school time educators is needed to promote positive healthy youth development.

The present results must be tempered in light of several limitations of the present study. First, the analyses are cross-sectional, so we cannot determine the direction of effects between activity participation, school engagement, and indicators of youth development. It is likely that youth who are behaviorally and emotionally engaged in school have the self-regulatory capacities to organize their daily life, which give them more time to be involved in constructive out-of-school activities. Longitudinal analyses are needed to understand the causal ordering among activity participation, school engagement, and youth development (Zarrett, et al., in press). Second, our list of activities was not exhaustive, due to constraints on the length of the survey we administered. Moreover, in the present report, activities such as sports, after school programs, and religious activities were not included in the analysis. Third, the present analyses focused only on the frequency of involvement, and not on the quality of activity participation. Nothing was assessed about what was going on within activity contexts, which limits our ability to target the components within activities that are responsible for promoting positive youth development.

Despite the above limitations, the present findings do have implications for applications in designing and implementing structured out-of-school program and in guiding youth in spending their time. This study adds to the extant literature by indicating that the extent to which a youth is engaged in in-school activities and out-of-school time activities has significant impacts on academic, emotional, and behavioral development. Activities that require little adult supervision for large amounts of time, such as hanging out with friends and media use, may impact negatively engagement in school and constructive out-of-school time activities.

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A Descriptive View of the 4-H Club Experience Through the Lens of 4-H Youth

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Abstract: 4-H like other youth development programs should be generally marked by the presence of three features of optimal youth programming:

1. youth participation and leadership,
2. positive adult-youth relationships, and
3. skill building activities (Lerner, 2004).

This paper reviews a study which examined the extent to which 4-H youth felt they had "opportunities" to engage in different learning experiences, and provide leadership to those experiences within their clubs. The study also examined the youth's perceptions about whether their experience in the 4-H Club helped them spend more time with their parents, have a positive relationship with another adult and do things independently.

An examination of whether there is a difference in life skill development in 4-H based on certain key demographic variables is also discussed.

The results of this study are shared as well as implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Introduction

4-H Youth Development (4-H) is the national youth-serving organization of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). 4-H like other youth development programs should be generally marked by the presence of three features of optimal youth programming:

1. youth participation and leadership,
2. positive adult-youth relationships, and
3. skill building activities (Lerner, 2004).

In this paper, the results of a cross-sectional descriptive evaluation study of a 4-H Youth Development club program based on those three key features are shared.

Using experiential, research-based curricula, 4-H offers many opportunities for youth to be active participants in learning. "All 4-H curricula and projects, regardless of the differences in content area, provide youth with experiences that foster the development of skills and encourage them to become contributing, caring members of their communities" (Mincemoyer, & Perkins, 2001). 4-H also uses a variety of different delivery modes to reach youth (e.g. community club, camps, after school, school enrichment, etc.). While curricula, activities and delivery modes certainly will and must vary in content and structure, the bottom line is clear that youth need to have opportunities to participate in multiple types of activities that interest them (Theokas, Lerner, Phelps & Lerner, 2006). Therefore, this study examined the extent to which 4-H youth felt that they have "opportunities" to engage in different learning experiences, and provide leadership to those experiences within their clubs. The study also explored those learning experiences 4-H'ers felt they engaged in most frequently.

In keeping with the Lerner framework, in addition to positive relationships with their parents, youth need positive, supportive, mentoring relationships with other caring adults (Perkins, & Butterfield, 1999; Bogenschneider, & Olsen, 1998). The literature is clear that the most positive youth-adult relationship experiences are those with supportive adults willing to share power with youth and give youth opportunities to lead (Jekielek, Moore, Hair & Scarupa, 2002; Jones, 2006; Perkins, Borden & Villarruel, 2001). This study examined the youth's perceptions about whether their experience in the 4-H Club helped them spend more time with their parents, have a positive relationship with another adult and do things independently. In addition, this study explored whether 4-H youth felt they received positive feedback from the club leader and helped make decisions in their club.

Building critical life skills is an integral part of positive youth development. The development of life skills through experiential learning continues to be the cornerstone of 4-H youth programming. Numerous studies have shown that it is important to include learning experiences that build and/or enhance life skills into 4-H and other youth development programs (Peterson et al., 2000; Seevers, & Dormody, 2000). Further studies have shown that participation in 4-H does contribute to life skill development (Astroth, & Haynes, 2002; Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992).

Using a Life Skills Improvement Scale that had been tested and validated as reliable (Guion, & Rivera, 2006), this study examined whether 4-H youth felt they have increased nineteen key life skills that prevailed in the literature. In an examination of the current literature there were very few studies that looked descriptively to assess whether there is a difference in life skill development in 4-H based on certain key demographic variables. Also, to date, no studies were found that examined whether there is a relationship between the learning experiences and the life skills that 4-H youth develop.

In essence, this study provides a more descriptive examination of the 4-H club experience by assessing the extent to which 4-H youth perceived their club experience as containing the three key features for youth development:

1) youth participation and leadership,
2) positive adult-youth relationships, and
3) skill building activities.

In addition to evaluating whether these key features are present, this study also examined the relationship between certain club experiences and life skill development. While not specific to 4-H, other studies have documented significant differences in participation in after-school activities (i.e. types of activities, number of activities, etc.) based on key demographic variables (Bouffard, Wimer, Caronongan, Little, & Dearing, 2006). Therefore, this study provides insight as to whether perceived life skill development also varied for 4-H youth who differ based on gender, race and age.

Methods

Participants

Participants of the study were 126 youth members of 4-H Clubs in Florida, of which 36% (n=45) were male and 64% (n=79) female. The average age was 13.8 years, ranging from 7 to 18 years old. Participants have been members of 4-H an average of 4.7 years ranging from 2 months to 12 years. More than half (66%, n=83) of the youth in this study described themselves as Caucasian/White, 22% as African-American (n=28), 7% as Hispanic/Latino (n=9), and 5% described themselves as Other (n=6). Participants and their parents signed informed consent forms and no compensation was provided for participation in the study.

Instrument

Astroth and Haynes (2002) assert that 4-H clubs are intentionally designed to include the eight critical elements necessary for positive youth development:

- Positive relationships with caring adults;*
- Opportunities for self-determination;*
- An accepting and inclusive environment;*
- Opportunities to contribute through community service;*
- A safe environment for learning and growing;
- Opportunities to develop skills and mastery;*
- Engagement in learning*; and
- Opportunities to be an active participant in life- now and in the future."

The evaluation instrument consisted of three sections. The first section asked questions related to six of those critical elements (* indicates those elements included in the instrument). For example, study participants were asked how often they were given a *chance* to do service projects in their community, make decisions in their club, etc. They were also asked how often they had *actually* helped decide which projects to do in their club for example.

The second section of the evaluation instrument was the Life Skills Improvement Scale that includes the 19 indicators of life skills development. Each indicator used a five point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items included in the instrument were determined by conducting two strategic steps. First, the researcher surveyed the literature that conceptualized 4-H life skills. For example, life skills from the Targeting Life Skills model (Hendricks, 1998) were identified. Ultimately, life skills from the Texas 4-H evaluation instrument, which is based on the Hendrix model, were adapted for use in the Life Skills Improvement Scale. The Texas model was adapted because "the youth development skills

section is a set of statements that are relevant to all project experiences and to youth of all ages and backgrounds." (Howard et al., 2001, p. 2).

Second, nine Extension 4-H Agents from different districts in the state of Florida were asked to select the life skills that their 4-H program targets. They were also encouraged to add to or refine the list of life skills. Those items that had the greatest level of consensus were chosen for inclusion in the Life Skills Improvement Scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients for the Life Skills Improvement Scale was .88 above the typical conservative target of at least .80 (Guion, & Rivera, 2006). The scale was also found to be face valid and had a very high content validity index of 3.8 out of possible 4 (Guion, & Rivera, 2006). The last section of the evaluation instrument contained key demographic questions.

A copy of the evaluation instrument is provided as an Appendix.

Implementation

Using a cross-sectional survey design, the instrument was administered at the beginning of a regular 4-H club meeting. Each 4-H Agent participating in the study was provided with consent forms that were signed by the parents, as well as detailed instructions and a script in order to make administration of the instrument more consistent across sites. They were also provided postage paid envelopes to return the survey.

Findings and Implications for Practice and/or Further Research

Opportunity to Engage In Different Learning Experiences that Foster Youth Participation and Leadership

Participants "frequently" engaged in different learning experiences that are integral to youth development. Opportunities for having fun was the most frequent (M=4.41, SD=.72) followed by opportunities to "feel like part of a group" (M=4.39, SD=.85). Only "sometimes" they had the opportunity to "be a leader" (M=3.44, SD=1.35) or "speak before a group" (M=3.56, SD=1.28) (See Table 1).

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of opportunities given to club members

How often were you given the CHANCE TO...	M	SD	N
have fun	4.41	.72	126
make new friends	3.89	1.07	126
feel like part of a group	4.39	.85	125
make decisions	3.91	1.06	126
speak before a group	3.56	1.28	124
be a leader	3.44	1.35	124
do service projects	3.95	1.06	126
learn record-keeping	3.73	1.15	126
Use parliamentary procedure at club meetings	3.75	1.24	124

Scale: 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Sometimes 4) Frequently 5) Always

Giving youth the opportunity to develop leadership skills by providing him/her with opportunities to "be a leader" and "speak before a group" are important. These results suggest

that club leaders need to find out from the youth what leadership roles they would like to have, then coach and support them in carrying out those roles.

Learning Experiences Related to Positive Youth-Adult Relationships

Participants frequently "received positive feedback" (M=4.15, SD=1.01); spent time with their parents because of 4-H (4.03, SD=1.07), and "felt successful" (M=4.04, SD=.97). "Been a leader" (M=3.30, SD=1.38) and "spoken before a group" (M=3.35, SD=1.40) were the least frequent experiences they felt that they engaged in with their 4-H club. (See Table 2).

Table 2

Mean and standard deviations

How often have you ACTUALLY…..	M	SD	N
spoken before a community group	3.35	1.40	125
felt successful	4.04	.97	125
been a leader	3.30	1.38	120
help decide which project to do in your club	3.66	1.18	122
learned a new skill	3.67	1.23	121
received positive feedback from the club leader	4.15	1.01	121
felt that the club leader respected your input/ideas	4.01	.95	125
spent time with your parents because of 4-H	4.03	1.07	124

Scale: 1) Never 2) Rarely 3) Sometimes 4) Frequently 5) Always

Some results related to positive adult-youth relationships are encouraging. The club leaders are providing positive feedback and help youth feel successful, respected and heard. Youth are also spending more time with their parents because of 4-H. However, learning by doing also has been the fundamental principle of 4-H since its inception (Woloshuk, Brown, & Wagaman, 1999). Therefore, more strategies must be employed to provide all youth in the club with opportunities to actually assume more leadership roles, beyond just the club officers, and speaking before community groups. Club leaders should also make sure youth get the opportunity to help decide which projects the club will do (self-determination). These all contribute to positive youth development.

Experience in the 4-H Club

Almost all participants (93%) indicated that their experience in the club helped them to "get along well with others in a group." More than eighty percent of participants indicated that their experience in the club helped them to "do things independently," "expect good things from themselves," "have a positive relationship with an adult," and "accept other's views." (See Table 3).

Table 3

Experience in the 4-H club

My experience in the 4-H club helped me to	No		Yes		Not Sure	
	n	%	n	%	N	%
have a positive relationship with an adult	6	4.8	102	81.6	16	12.8
do things on my own (independently)	2	1.6	110	88.8	12	9.6
accept other's views	4	3.2	100	80.0	21	16.8
get along well with others in a group	4	3.2	116	92.8	5	4.0
expect good things from myself	1	.8	111	88.8	13	10.3

N=125

Improvement in Life Skills

Participants indicated an increase in the following skills as a result of 4-H club activities and projects: serving the community or volunteering (M=3.17, SD=.87), setting goals (M=3.14, SD=.78), making decisions (M=3.10, SD=.75), leading a healthier lifestyle (M=3.02, SD=.78), and feeding and caring for animal/pet (M=3.01, SD=.90). Mean scores for the other 14 life skill indicators ranged from 2.43 to 2.99. These mean scores are relatively low given the emphasis on life skill development within 4-H Youth Development. Further study is needed to fully examine these implications. (See Table 4).

Table 4

Means and standard deviation of ability developed by club members in several skills

As a result of 4-H, I improved my ability to…	M	SD	N
keep accurate records	2.85	.78	125
plan/organized	2.99	.79	126
set goals	3.14	.78	126
solve problems	2.91	.80	126
make decisions	3.10	.75	126
serve my community or volunteer	3.17	.87	125
lead a group	2.76	.91	126
get ready for a job	2.90	.85	122
plan my career	2.84	.86	122
speak publicly	2.93	.87	126
write more clearly	2.85	.80	125
resolve conflicts	2.81	.80	124
Sew	2.48	.91	124
Cook	2.63	.83	124
groom an animal/pet	2.87	.94	122
feed and care for animal/pet	3.01	.90	122
lead a healthier lifestyle	3.02	.78	125
use a computer or other technology	2.93	.88	122
learn photography or other media	2.71	.86	120

Scale: 1) Strongly Disagree 2) Disagree 3) Neutral 4) Agree 5) Strongly Disagree

Differences in the Skills Improved based on the Gender of 4-H Club Member

T-tests were conducted to examine the difference by gender. Results showed that the ability to write more clearly increased more in females (M=2.97, SD=.84) than in males (M=2.64, SD=.71) ($t(122) = 2.22$, $p<.05$). An explanatory study is needed to determine whether this difference was due to the types of projects that girls select compared to those that boys prefer. For example, do girls engage more with activities and projects requiring journaling and/or keeping records? If so, then naturally girls would be developing writing skills more. Gender differences were also found in the ability to sew, where females (M=2.64, SD=.93) scored higher than males (M=2.25, SD=.78) ($t(120) = 2.37$, $p<.05$). This difference may be the result of there simply being more females involved in club projects related to clothing/sewing. However, it is very encouraging that 17 of the 19 life skills developed did not differ significantly for boys and girls. 4-H has always maintained its gender neutrality. This result supports that claim. (See Table 5).

Table 5

Group differences for the skills improved by gender

	Males			Females				
As a result of 4-H, I improved my ability to… (Likert Scale)	M	SD	n	M	SD	N	t	DF
keep accurate records	2.68	.85	45	2.94	.74	78	1.68	121
plan/organize	2.87	.87	45	3.08	.75	79	1.41	122
set goals	3.04	.77	45	3.20	.79	79	1.08	122
solve problems	3.02	.72	45	2.84	.84	79	1.25	122
make decisions	3.13	.73	45	3.08	.76	79	.41	122
serve my community or volunteer	3.11	.81	44	3.19	.91	79	.46	121
lead a group	2.67	.90	45	2.81	.92	79	.84	122
get ready for a job	2.96	.77	45	2.87	.91	75	.55	118
plan my career	2.82	.78	45	2.85	.91	75	.19	118
speak publicly	2.82	.89	45	3.00	.86	79	1.09	122
write more clearly	2.64	.71	45	2.97	.84	78	2.22*	121
solve conflicts	2.84	.81	44	2.79	.81	78	.30	120
sew	2.25	.78	44	2.64	.93	78	2.37*	120
cook	2.60	.75	45	2.69	.85	77	.58	120
groom an animal/pet	2.76	.83	45	2.92	.99	75	.93	118
feed and care for animal/pet	2.89	.83	45	3.01	.95	75	1.04	118
lead a healthier lifestyle	3.02	.69	45	3.01	.83	78	.06	121
use a computer/other technology	2.98	.87	45	2.88	.90	75	.58	118
learn photography or other media	2.76	.86	45	2.70	.76	73	.35	116

* $p<.05$ two-tailed

Differences in Life Skills Improvement based on the Race/Ethnicity of the 4-H Club Member

Because only 7 participants identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino and 5 indicated "other," t-test analyses were conducted only with the group of African-American/Black and Caucasian/White 4-H youth. Results showed that African-American/Black participants scored

significantly higher than Caucasian/White in planning/organizing, setting goals, writing more clearly, solving problems, sewing, cooking, using a computer, and learning photography. (See Table 6).

Table 6

Group differences for the skills improved by group of race/ethnicity

	African-American			Caucasian/White				
As a result of 4-H, I improved my ability to... (Likert Scale)	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	T	DF
keep accurate records	2.96	.71	27	2.77	.82	82	1.10	107
plan/organize	3.28	.66	28	2.89	.82	82	2.32**	108
set goals	3.61	.50	28	3.00	.80	82	3.76*	108
solve problems	2.82	.98	28	2.94	.74	82	.66	108
make decisions	3.21	.74	28	3.01	.75	82	.86	108
serve my community or volunteer	3.39	.92	28	3.04	.87	81	1.84	107
lead a group	2.82	.90	28	2.78	.93	82	.20	108
get ready for a job	3.00	1.04	25	2.93	.82	81	.37	104
plan my career	2.88	.88	25	2.95	.85	81	.36	104
speak publicly	2.86	1.04	28	2.93	.86	82	.51	108
write more clearly	3.25	.70	28	2.72	.78	81	3.21*	107
solve conflicts	3.15	.91	27	2.70	.77	81	2.49**	106
Sew	3.22	.89	27	2.27	.74	81	5.48*	106
Cook	3.15	.77	27	2.52	.73	81	3.84*	106
groom an animal/pet	2.56	1.08	25	2.98	.89	81	1.93	104
feed and care for animal/pet	2.72	1.06	25	3.12	.86	81	1.94	104
lead a healthier lifestyle	3.21	.77	28	2.99	.77	81	1.34	107
use a computer or other technology	3.43	.74	28	2.78	.88	78	3.48*	104
learn photography or other media	3.21	.77	24	2.59	.82	80	3.28*	102

* p<.01 two-tailed. ** p<.05 two-tailed

These results suggest that the aforementioned skills were improved more in the group of African-Americans than in the group of Caucasian/White participants. Mean scores were higher for African-Americans for 14 of the 19 life skills, and significantly (statistically) higher for 8 of the 19. An explanatory study would be needed to determine "why" African-American 4-H youth feel they are improving more skills as a result of 4-H club involvement. For example, further study to examine different ethnic groups' in involvement in other youth programs and therefore could not contribute skill development solely to 4-H. Also, a study to assess any difference in pre-existing knowledge or mastery of skills and perceptions of skill improvement may reveal the reasons behind these results.

Difference in Life Skills Improvement based on the Age of the 4-H Club Member

To examine differences by age the group was divided into two groups, younger participants (from 7 to 13 years old) and older participants (from 14 to 19 years old). Results showed that older participants scored significantly higher than younger ones in leading a group, planning their career, and speaking publicly. (See Table 7) These results suggest that the aforementioned skills increased more in the group of older participants than in the younger group. The increase in the types of skills for the older 4-H youth seems logical given the

difference in ages and stages of development between the groups. For example, it is feasible that the older youth would be improving skills in planning their career more so than the younger youth. The key implication for this finding is that irrespective of age, 4-H youth in this study are developing key life skills namely setting goals, making decisions, serving their community/volunteering (i.e. skills where M for both age groups > 3.00).

Table 7

Group differences for the skills developed by group of age

	Younger			Older				
As a result of 4-H, I improved my ability to… (Likert Scale)	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	t	DF
keep accurate records	2.75	.78	55	2.93	.79	70	1.30	123
plan/organize	2.89	.88	56	3.07	.73	70	1.26	124
set goals	3.07	.85	56	3.20	.71	70	.92	124
solve problems	2.79	.82	56	3.01	.77	70	1.60	124
make decisions	3.05	.80	56	3.14	.71	70	.67	124
serve my community or volunteer	3.07	.93	56	3.25	.81	69	1.12	123
lead a group	2.43	.91	56	3.03	.82	70	3.89*	124
get ready for a job	2.75	.88	53	3.01	.81	69	1.69	120
plan my career	2.57	.84	53	3.04	.81	69	3.16*	120
speak publicly	2.71	.91	56	3.10	.80	70	2.53*	124
write more clearly	2.88	.85	56	2.83	.77	69	.34	123
solve conflicts	2.78	.88	55	2.84	.74	69	.41	122
sew	2.60	1.06	55	2.38	.75	69	1.37	122
cook	2.76	.92	55	2.52	.74	69	1.62	122
groom an animal/pet	2.81	.98	53	2.91	.90	69	.59	120
feed and care for animal/pet	3.07	.94	53	2.96	.88	69	.72	120
lead a healthier lifestyle	3.14	.72	56	2.93	.81	69	1.55	123
use a computer or other technology	3.06	.91	53	2.83	.86	69	1.44	120
learn photography or other media	2.63	.96	51	2.77	.79	69	.88	118

* p<.05 two-tailed

Relationships between the activities done by 4-H Club Members and the Life Skills Improvement

Correlation analyses were conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between the learning experiences 4-H youth engage in and the life skills they develop. Results are shown in Table 8. Only those correlations higher or equal to .30 will be mentioned here. Those participants that actually **spoke before a group** more frequently had an increase in their ability to speak publicly (r=.50, p<.01), lead a group (r=.49, p<.01), and make decisions (r=.35, p<.01). Those who **felt successful** more frequently had an increase in their ability to make decisions (r=.37, p<.01), solve problems (r=.36, p<.01), groom an animal/pet (r=.34, p<.01), keep accurate records (r=.32, p<.01), lead a group (r=.31, p<.01), serve the community (r=.31, p<.01), get ready for a job (r=.31, p<.01), and plan their career (r=.30, p<.01).

Participants that **were a leader** more frequently had an increase in their ability to lead a group (r=.70, p<01), serve the community or volunteer (r=.40, p<.01), make decisions (r=.34,

p<.05), and plan/organize (r=.33, p<.01). Those who **helped decide which projects to do** in the club had an increase in their ability to serve their community or volunteer (r=.37, p<.01), plan/organize (r=.36, p<.o1), lead a group (r=.36, p<.01), and plan their career (r=.33, p<.01).

Those who **learned a new skill** had an increase in their ability to write more clearly (r=.44, p<.05), learn photography (r=.44, p<.01), cook (r=.42, p<.01), sew (r=.40, p<.01), solve problems (r=.34, p<.01), plan/organize (r=.32, p<.01), and plan their career (r=.32, p<.01). Participants that **received positive feedback from the club leader** more frequently had an increase in their ability to serve the community or volunteer (r=.46, p<.01), make decisions (r=.38, p<.01), resolve conflicts (r=.36, p<.01), solve problems (r=.30, p<.01), and learn photography (r=.30, p<.01).

Participants who **spent time with their parents** more frequently because of 4-H, had an increase in their ability to plan/organize (r=.30, p<.01), write more clearly (r=.37, p<.01), keep accurate records (r=.36, p<.01), solve problems (r=.33, p<.01), set goals (r=.33, p<.01), and speak publicly (r=.30, p<.01). Finally, those who **used parliamentary procedures at the club meetings** had an increase in their ability to lead a group (r=.40, p<.01), plan/organize (r=.42, p<.01), serve the community or volunteer (r=.40, p<.01), resolve conflicts (r=.37, p<.01), learn photography (r=.36, p<.01), set goals (r=.35, p<.01), make decisions (r=.33, p<.01), and speak publicly (r=.30, p<.01).

Table 8

Relationship Between Activities and Skills

	Spoke	Success	Leader	Decided	Learned	Feedback	Parents	Meetings
keep accurate records	.22* (124)	.32** (124)	.26* (120)	.18 (121)	.21* (121)	.17 (120)	.36** (123)	.25** (123)
Plan/organize	.24** (125)	.29** (125)	.33** (120)	.36** (122)	.32** (121)	.29** (121)	.39** (124)	.42** (124)
set goals	.10 (125)	.29** (125)	.29** (120)	.22* (122)	.23* (121)	.27* (121)z	.33** (124)	.35** (124)
solve problems	.27** (125)	.21* (125)	.18 (120)	.16 (122)	.12 (121)	.30** (121)	.33** (124)	.21* (124)
make decision	.35** (125)	.37** (125)	.34** (120)	.20* (122)	.29** (121)	.38** (121)	.26** (124)	.33** (124)
serve my community	.21* (124)	.31** (124)	.40** (119)	.37** (121)	.18 (120)	.46** (120)	.26** (123)	.40** (123)
Lead a group	.49** (125)	.31** (125)	.70** (120)	.36** (122)	.12 (121)	.21* (121)	.13 (124)	.48** (124)
get ready for a job	.15 (121)	.31** (121)	.24** (117)	.22* (118)	.28* (118)	.26** (117)	.26** (120)	.28** (120)
Plan my career	.16 (121)	.30** (121)	.25** (117)	.33** (118)	.32** (118)	.23* (117)	.26** (120)	.23* (120)
speak publicly	.50** (125)	.25** (125)	.22* (120)	.22* (122)	.21* (121)	.24** (121)	.30** (124)	.30** (124)
write more clearly	-.03 (124)	.22* (124)	.16 (119)	.23* (121)	.44* (120)	.23* (120)	.37** (123)	.24** (123)
resolve conflicts	.24** (123)	.36** (123)	.31** (120)	.22* (120)	.34** (120)	.36** (119)	.23* (122)	.37** (122)
Sew	-.08 (123)	.08 (123)	.21* (118)	.23* (120)	.40** (119)	.19* (119)	.10 (122)	.20* (122)
Cook	-.14 (123)	-.01 (123)	-.00 (118)	.06 (120)	.42** (119)	-.08 (119)	.05 (122)	-.01 (122)
groom an animal/pet	-.04 (121)	.34** (121)	.05 (117)	.16 (118)	.12 (118)	.25** (117)	.24** (120)	.05 (120)
Feed & care for animal/pet	-.12 (121)	.29** (121)	-.02 (117)	.06 (118)	.21* (118)	.19* (117)	.26** (120)	.08 (120)
Lead a healthier lifestyle	-.04 (124)	.25** (124)	.15 (119)	.10 (121)	.27** (120)	.26** (120)	.17 (123)	.18 (123)
use a computer or other technology	-.11 (121)	.13 (121)	.16 (116)	.15 (118)	.27** (118)	.22* (117)	.18 (120)	.26** (120)
learn photography or other media	.04 (119)	.36** (119)	.15 (115)	.12 (116)	.44** (117)	.30** (116)	.24** (118)	.36** (118)

Note: Spoken = spoken before a group. Success = felt successful. Leader = been a leader. Decided = helped decide which projects to do in the club. Learned = learned new skills. Feedback = received positive feedback from the club leaders. Parents = spend time with parents because of 4-H. Meetings = used parliamentary procedures at a club meeting.
* p<.01. The number of respondents is in parenthesis.

Further Study

More descriptive studies that look at what specific learning experiences are being provided in 4-H clubs and how these experiences contribute to the critical elements of positive youth development are warranted. This study has demonstrated that we can not only look at outcomes and impacts of programming without spending enough time assessing and understanding the learning experiences and environments that are supposed to produce those outcomes/impacts.

This study focused only on the 4-H Club delivery system. Additional studies with youth who are involved with 4-H through other delivery modes such as 4-H After-school Programming, 4-H Camping Program, or 4-H School Enrichment would be very helpful in examining the different contexts in which 4-H Youth Development is taking place. This type of study is not limited to 4-H youth development. Other youth serving organizations could conduct a similar study.

Additionally, while the sample size was sufficient for statistical analysis, further studies should be conducted with larger sample sizes that have even greater age, gender, and race/ethnic diversity.

Finally, given the nature of descriptive studies, a foundation was laid for more specific research questions that must be answered through explanatory research that can answer the question "why." Descriptive studies like the one presented in this paper can provide the catalyst for further scholarship and refinement of knowledge in the field of 4-H Youth Development.

Conclusion

4-H youth development has a long, rich history of enhancing the lives of young people across this nation. Descriptive studies like the one presented in this paper provide a glimpse into the 4-H Club which is one of the hallmark 4-H programming delivery systems. These types of studies help us examine what 4-H youth perceive to be key elements of positive youth development that are being reinforced through their club experience. In this study, the key elements of positive youth development that were explored included:

1) youth participation and leadership,
2) positive adult-youth relationships, and
3) skill building activities.

By focusing even more purposefully on designing and implementing learning experiences that reflect positive youth development, 4-H will continue to be a powerful, proven program of excellence in the field of youth development.

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Applying Marketing Concepts to Non-Profit/Educational Organizations: The Youth Professional's Responsibilities in Program Marketing & Promotion

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Abstract: The degree of participation in community-based youth development programs is typically affected by both the recruitment and retention of participants. A review of literature over more than forty years revealed the value of marketing and promotion to the viability of a company, product, or organization and how it may contribute to company sales or an organization's membership. This article is focused on the application of marketing concepts to a non-profit organization or educational program. Using a marketing approach to program development can result in improved program quality as well as increased enrollment. Utilizing marketing activities such as needs assessment will aide in ensuring the program remains current in meeting needs and interests of clientele, the community, and society. Promoting an accurate and relevant image is a key in making sure people realize the value of your program.

Theoretical Background

The degree of participation in community-based youth development programs is typically affected by both the recruitment and retention of participants. A review of literature over more than forty years revealed the value of marketing and promotion to the viability of a company, product, or organization and how it may contribute to company sales or an organization's membership. This article is focused on the application of marketing concepts to a non-profit organization or educational program.

Marketing has too often been equated with selling, promotion, advertising, public relations, and publicity. Although these terms are related, they are not identical. The distinction between marketing and selling is especially important to note. The sales concept is "a management orientation that assumes that consumers will either not buy or not buy enough of the

organization's 'products' unless the organization makes a substantial effort to stimulate their interest in its 'products'." In contrast, the marketing concept is "a management orientation that holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists of the organization's determining the needs and wants of target markets and adapting itself to delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than its competitors" (Kotler, 1980).

Marketing aims to meet customer/clientele needs and keep them satisfied, and thus would encourage customer loyalty to a product, or in this case, participant/member retention. However, the application of variables involved in a market mix (product, price, promotion, and place) should also influence new participants in their decisions to join an organization. If the market mix is right for them, they should be willing to enroll (Pride & Ferrell, 1985).

"Promotion . . . is the communication function of marketing" (Engel, Warshaw, & Kinnear, 1983, p. 16). It "refers to communication undertaken to persuade others to accept ideas, concepts, or things." Pride and Ferrell (1985, p. 331) stated that "Several types of promotional methods can be used to communicate with individuals, groups, and organizations" and that "When an organization combines specific ingredients to promote a particular product, that combination constitutes a promotion mix for that product." They listed four major categories of promotion that can be included in an organization's promotion mix: advertising, personal selling, publicity, and sales promotion. Within each category are a multitude of specific individual promotional methods available, from traditional mass media to emerging technologies such as web-based marketing, blogs, etc.

The desired outcome of promotional activity is based on the hierarchy of effects hypothesis, where promotion works "to stimulate awareness, which leads to attitude change, which leads to behavioral change." Thus, it "is basically a model of consumer response to promotional activity . . . [where] the consumer passes through the stages of awareness, knowledge (cognitive), liking and preference (affective), intention-to-buy or conviction, and purchase (behavioral)" (Engel, Warshaw, & Kinnear, 1983, p. 164). This is supported by models developed by Engel and Blackwell (1982) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975).

One aim of promotion is to communicate a favorable image of an organization (Pride & Ferrell, 1985). Consequently, since Boyle and Brown (1964, p. 34) stated that "The image that people have of an organization will determine, to a great extent, their participation [in it]," then this would involve not only an initial decision to join an organization, but also a decision to remain in it, thus relating promotion to the aspect of retention as well as recruitment. Meenaghan (1995) stated "In an increasingly competitive marketplace, greater emphasis is being placed on brand image development as the basis for consumer discrimination. Advertising has a central role to play in developing brand image, whether at the corporate, retail or product level. It informs consumers of the functional capabilities of the brand while simultaneously imbuing the brand with symbolic values and meanings relevant to the consumer."

Even after years of research and practice to determine the most effective promotional methods, there appear to be no clear answers regarding this complex topic. Engel, Warshaw, and Kinnear (1983, p. 379) described a factorial experimental design employed by Ford Motor Company to compare sales in regions using various combinations of media in an advertising campaign. Ford reported that the data "revealed a definite relationship between advertising and sales but no significant advantage for any of the media tested." A variety of other studies (Johnston, 1982; Lawson, & Dail, 1966; Marsh, & Knox, 1966; Scherer, 1980; Wilson, 1963) have reported mixed results of the success of specific promotional methods and/or their

potential for reaching audiences, depending on the objectives, use, and location of use of such methods. A study related to 4-H youth programming (Williams, 2004, p. 81) "indicated that race/ethnicity is a factor for respondents when choosing [media]" and therefore, "marketing strategies should be prioritized and focused where information can be disseminated to specific clientele through avenues that are being used by them."

Salcedo (1974) reported that a variety of channels have been shown to be more useful than public service mass media alone. Therefore, mass media, especially heavy reliance on a single type do not appear to be the answer to all problems of image and recruitment, emphasizing the need for the use of a variety of promotion methods. Literature related to learning theory and instructional media has also supported the value of using a variety of communication channels.

In a study related to promotion of the 4-H Youth Development Program, Diem (1987) found "that the mere frequency of use of promotional methods will not be effective in attaining goals of promotion. The quality of promotion efforts is more likely to be a factor. Therefore, promotion must communicate an accurate, up-to-date, and appropriate image of the [program]." The study recommended that if [program leaders] "are trying to highlight innovative, modern programs to new audiences, then they must do just that. Focus on the features of the program that will interest the audience you are trying to reach. Furthermore, use media your audiences are accustomed to, and consider the education level of that group."

"Social marketing has taken ideas from commercial marketing and used them to address social and health problems. The marketing concept of consumer orientation and tolls such as the marketing mix have been successfully applied to health and social behaviors … Social marketers have targeted the citizen to bring about individual change, as well as policy makers and stakeholders to bring about institutional and social change" (Hastings, 2003, p. 6).

Indeed, although the term marketing has been heard frequently in recent years, it still does not seem to be clearly understood by many people in social service settings. While marketing has been a fundamental activity in the business environment, some aspects of the concept are applicable to non-business settings as well. Besides being a distinctly different management philosophy and orientation of an organization, marketing consists of activities performed by the management of the organization. One of the marketing activities performed by a program leader is the formulation of a marketing mix. A marketing mix consists of four decision variables, often known as the 4 P's: Product, Promotion, Price, and Place. Another marketing activity performed by a program leader is the development of a marketing strategy. A marketing strategy encompasses selecting and analyzing a target market (the group of people whom the [organization] wants to reach) and creating and maintaining an appropriate marketing mix (product, price, promotion, distribution) that will satisfy those people (Pride & Ferrell, 1985, p. 25).

George, Buchanan, and Bramblett (1976) claimed that a marketing management orientation supplements the work of adult educators such as Houle and Knowles, who were instrumental in using program planning models to develop programs for clients, and is easier to understand by youth development professionals. The authors proclaimed that the marketing approach "reorients the perspective of the [program leader so that] instead of focusing on a set of available institutional services, the [program leader] now begins the program development process based on felt and ascribed client needs" (p. 17). They described the following University of Georgia case as evidence of the potential results of applying marketing concepts to an educational organization:

> In applying these marketing techniques, the service activities of the university have increased. The average annual increase in the number of programs held on campus has been 20% for the last 3 years, while the number of off-campus programs and projects conducted in the same period has tripled. This expansion has occurred without additions to the resource base. In addition, the pre- and post-program evaluations have revealed that the quality of service now being received by the clientele groups has risen sharply (p. 16).

George, et al. concluded by stating that the "program will ultimately fail unless marketing information is collected and used to develop marketing plans that effectively serve the … unit's publics" (p. 19).

Needs assessment is a valuable marketing function. For example, a nationwide needs assessment was conducted (Diem, 2007) to ensure that plans to expand the Clemson University Youth Development Leadership (YDL) degree program would meet the needs of organizations related to the youth development profession. In the process of conducting it, a variety of findings proved beneficial for determining similarities and differences among youth development organizations as well as implications for the types of degrees that would be most valuable for professionals in contemporary youth development organizations.

Whitlock and Hamilton (2003) provided perspective on multiple approaches to the role of youth surveys in understanding youth needs and improving communities as contexts for youth development. National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (2002) conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics have served as an important tool for economists, sociologists, and other researchers. Other surveys (Diem, 1990; Diem, 1991; Diem, 1992b/c; Diem, 1994; Diem, & Rothenburger, 2001; Warner, Christenson, Dillman, & Salant, 1996) have looked at the needs, interests, and perceptions of youth, adult volunteers, and the public regarding educational events and programs.

In recent years, an important application of marketing concepts has been to demonstrate and communicate program impact to stakeholders. Impact … is the positive difference we make in people's lives as a result of programs we conduct. These programs may include teaching, published curriculum, volunteer training, or applied research and, may or may not involve the public directly while they are being delivered. Yet the results programs achieve must ultimately change people's attitudes or behavior, or benefit society in other ways (Diem, 1997). "Proving program impact is important to:

- justify the investment of time and effort, as well as the dedication of public and private funds.
- earn and build professional, organizational, and political credibility and support.
- satisfy the requirements of political bodies and funding agencies.
- yield tangible results that serve as a basis for scholarly publications, as well as awards and recognition.
- determine, to what degree, that participants achieve intended results" (Diem, 2003).

Putting Marketing Concepts into Practice

Developing a Marketing Mix with the Four Decision Variables (the 4 P's):

In creating a marketing strategy, a marketing mix is created for each group of people the organization aims to reach. Such a "target market" is "a group of persons for whom an organization creates and maintains a marketing mix that specifically fits the needs and preferences of that group. The organization must determine if it has the resources to produce a marketing mix that meets the needs of a particular target market and whether satisfying those needs is consistent with the organization's overall objective. It must also determine what competitors are already serving the given target market" (Pride & Ferrell, 1985).

Here are some key considerations for developing an appropriate marketing mix:

1. Product

   This can be a good, service, or idea. Determine what the organization has to offer compared to other agencies and organizations. What makes it unique, relevant, and perceived as valuable?

2. Price

   How much does the "product" cost? Consider both actual costs (such as fees charged) and opportunity costs (such as the time dedicated to participate in an inexpensive workday program may require paying for child care or time off from work).

3. Promotion

   In informing people about an organization and what it has to offer, the cost of and program marketer's expertise or familiarity with the promotional methods chosen must be balanced with the likelihood that the target audience uses that medium. For example, an article printed for free in the local weekly newspaper may not be read and a late-night radio public service announcement may not be heard by your intended audience.

4. Place (also referred to as Distribution)

   To satisfy customers, products must be available at the right time in a convenient and accessible location. It's really about access. A modern, spacious facility may not be useful if clientele cannot not get to it by public transportation, if there is limited parking or if the area is considered unsafe after dark. Web-based programs may limit access to only audiences with home computers and fast Internet connections.

Problems in Implementing the Marketing Concept

Despite the benefits of a marketing approach, there are problems and limitations, including:

1. Takes time, effort, money. Requires good information.
2. May result in conflict with tradition.
3. By satisfying one segment of society, an organization sometimes contributes to the dissatisfaction of other segments.
4. There is a limit to an organization's ability to satisfy clients' specific, exact needs.

5. Effective promotion attracts participants to your program but … marketing also requires you to have a plan for what to do with them once you've got them.

Kotler and Andreasen (2000, p. 266) summarized the challenge of applying marketing to a non-profit as follows:

> Indoctrinating a non-profit organization from top to bottom with the proper marketing philosophy is not an easy task. The experience of those who have successfully achieved this objective suggest such strategies as: recognizing the limited understanding of others about what marketing really is; allowing for other pressures on the organization that may temporarily mandate non-customer oriented approaches; picking visible, short term projects for the first marketing applications; and recognizing that the introduction of a new philosophy is as much a political exercise as a matter of logic and persuasion. Allies must be sought and enemies deflected. Above all, it is essential to secure top management's commitment to the new way of thinking. Without it a true marketing orientation will not be achieved and customer-centered thrusts in one area will inevitably run foul of organization-mindedness elsewhere.

Using a Marketing Approach to Improve and Expand Your Program

As stated, marketing is not just the "selling" of a product or service. It is a client-centered approach that attempts to match program offerings with the needs and interests of current and potential clients. Promotion, which is part of marketing, is one of the last steps in a marketing approach, not the first or only!

One of the first steps in using a marketing approach is to formulate a marketing strategy. To do this, it is necessary to determine the goals for your program. Here are some questions you may need to ask (Diem, 1989; 1992a):

- Who is your program trying to serve?
- What is happening in your community or society that will affect your program in the future?
- What should be offered?
- What resources are available to accomplish your goals?

Of course, the answers to some of these questions may already have been determined for you. Others you may have some influence in or authority to define or change.

Marketing can be used in many types of programs and organizations. The following uses a youth development program as an example and is especially applicable to any program that is an optional activity for kids, where enrollment depends on a choice youth, and people who influence them regarding whether to join or not. In consideration of this, here is a simple, three-step approach to employing marketing principles in your program (Diem, 1989):

1. Determine what the current participants in your program think about the program.
   - What do they like about it?
   - Why did they enroll and who convinced them to do so?
   - What don't they like about it and what suggestions do they have for improvement?

2. Find out what others think about the program.
   - What do they think the program offers?
   - Why didn't they enroll?
   - Who influenced their decision? (Try to talk to those people too.)
   - What would interest them to enroll?

   Various methods can be used to find needed information. A few are:
   - Written questionnaires
   - Personal or telephone interviews
   - Discussions at participant and staff/volunteer meetings, classes & workshops
   - Opinion questions on applications, enrollment forms
   - A comprehensive review of your program every 3-5 years

   Finding out what people think is very important. Remember, that people's perceptions of reality, not just the actual facts, influence people's attitudes, decisions, and actions!

3. Determine if there are discrepancies between what people think of your program and what it actually is or you think it should be.
   - Devise a plan of action to alleviate or minimize these discrepancies. This is your marketing strategy.
   - Your marketing strategy will probably differ from one aspect of your program to another. This means that one approach won't work for every situation.
   - Gear your promotion efforts toward the people you're attempting to attract. If you don't target your message to a specific audience, your message may not get through to anyone.

   An Advisory Group Can Help:
   - If you don't already have one, consider organizing a *working* advisory group for your program.
   - The group might be composed of community leaders, current and former participants, parents, and volunteers, and other staff.
   - To get representative views, a mixture of people who know the program well and those who don't may help generate objective opinions and a greater variety of ideas.
   - Your advisory group could be formed just to make initial recommendations for changes in your program or to help promote it. Ideally, it would meet on an ongoing basis.
   - Many people in youth development organizations think that advisory groups are merely a formality and a hassle. Consider that industry puts big money into similar groups; they call them "focus groups."

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Using the marketing approach to your program can result in improved program quality as well as increased enrollment.
- Keeping your program current in meeting needs and interests of your clientele, the community, and society is essential.
- Promoting an accurate and relevant image is the key in making sure people realize the value of your program.

The importance of this challenge is emphasized by the likelihood that satisfied "customers" will tell a few friends about the "product" but, unfortunately, those who are dissatisfied are likely to tell even more people of their bad experience; an unfortunate but common phenomenon of human nature. It is also further incentive to work hard at maintaining and promoting a valuable, interesting, and relevant program - the "product" in an educational organization or youth development program.

Lastly, realize that "social marketing is founded on trust. It is not driven by profit but, at least ostensibly, a desire to benefit the target audience. It therefore has a very different, and perhaps, morally higher, base than commercial marketing on which to build mutual respect with its customers" (Hastings, 2003, p. 9).

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Promoting Supportive Relationships in Youth Programs: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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Promoting Supportive Relationships in Youth Programs: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective

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Abstract: Although research suggests that positive contact with non-parental adults is developmentally beneficial for youth; many adolescents do not have access to such relationships. It is important that adults structure existing relationships to optimize positive youth development. Relationships with adults, who support youth's needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, provide youth with scaffolding as they navigate their way through adolescence. Self-Determination Theory offers a straight-forward approach to understanding the elements of contexts that best promote the development of supportive relationships. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature concerning youth-adult relationships, including their associated prevalence and developmental benefits across multiple contexts. These findings are then integrated into a framework of best practices for developing and supporting positive youth relationships with adults within youth program settings. Several theory-based recommendations are offered for youth program administrators and staff who wish to improve youth-adult relationships in their programs.

Introduction

Although theoretical approaches concerning adolescent development differ in terms of terminology, targets, and outcomes (Small & Memmo, 2004), consensus exists regarding the positive role of adult relationships in youth development. Research findings from the fields of prevention (Coie, et al., 1993), resilience (Benard, 1991; Werner, 1986, 1989), and positive youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000), highlight youths' need for positive adult role models. While the body of literature examining youths' access to and the developmental impact of supportive adult relationships is extensive in contexts, such as child-parent, student-teacher, and mentoring relationships, little research has

focused on youth-adult relationships in group settings associated with youth programs (Grossman & Bulle, 2006).

A connection between youth-adult relationships and program outcomes is theoretically supported by Self-Determination theory (SDT), which posits that feelings of relatedness to others, along with opportunities to experience competence and autonomy, are essential prerequisites of positive development (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). While some attention has been given to supporting autonomy and developing competence and self-determination in youth program settings (Grossman & Bulle, 2006), concerted and systematic efforts to promote positive relationships with adults are lacking. Too often it is assumed that positive relationships between participants and adults automatically occur in youth programs.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to review the supportive adult relationship literature across a variety of contexts (e.g., school, mentoring, etc.) and then organize these findings into a SDT framework of best practices for developing positive youth-adult relationships within program settings. Before reviewing the research we will outline the major tenets of SDT. We propose that SDT provides a useful conceptual framework for integrating and applying findings concerning supportive adult relationships that could be used to improve programming in youth settings.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) has been used to examine motivation regarding the development and functioning of personality in social contexts, and explores how people engage in behaviors with a full sense of volition, or self-determination. Social contexts may encourage or thwart the development of psychological growth and overall well-being. SDT suggests that people experience self-determination when they are internally motivated, rather than externally motivated or amotivated. The development of internally regulated behavior appears to have considerable bearing on development (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). Internally motivated activities prepare youth for adulthood through tasks that develop self-direction, self-expression, and motivated involvement (Larson & Kleiber, 1993). Contexts that promote the basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are those where internalized motivations will emerge.

Basic needs theory is one of four mini-theories that comprise SDT. This theory suggests that the needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence are fundamental, innate constructs for all people (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

- *Autonomy* refers to the need to feel volition or decisive in one's actions. When one has choice, one can use available information to regulate themselves in the achievement of goals.
- *Relatedness* is the "integration of the individual into a larger social whole," and refers to the need to be connected with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).
- *Competence* refers to people's needs to feel self-efficacious, to believe that they are the cause of their actions, and to receive positive feedback which enhances intrinsic motivation.

While competence is required for any type of motivation, and relatedness comes from internalizing the norms and values of the social group, autonomy is also needed for the motivation to be intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000b).

Self-determination is optimized when the basic needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are met. Social contexts that support these needs are characterized by informative (not controlling) feedback from trusted others. This feedback can be competence based ("She knows what she's talking about") or relationship-based ("I like him, so I will listen to what he says"). Elements of self-determination are influenced in varying ways by the other people in the social context.

While the basic needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are theorized to be universal, one approach to basic needs theory is to focus on relatedness as the common thread of all three needs. Feelings of relatedness are most important for internalization and integration of the values associated with an activity because the desire for connectedness with significant others is an essential component of people's willingness to endorse such values (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A sense of belonging is an essential component for youth to internalize positive beliefs about themselves and others. In the following section we will review literature that addresses contexts that support these developmental needs.

Literature Review

Contexts of Supportive Adult Relationships

The topic of supportive youth-adult relationships has been studied in a variety of contexts outside of the family, such as school, one-on-one mentoring, and out-of-school time youth programs including summer camp and sports. The literature regarding supportive relationships will be reviewed through an SDT perspective for the following contexts:

(a) educational settings;

(b) one-on-one mentoring; and

(c) youth programs.

Research findings were included in the following sections if they were: 1) empirically-based; 2) SDT-based; and/or 3) measured SDT related constructs.

Educational Settings

Recent research employing SDT in educational settings has examined relationships between teachers and students. Youth spend about one-third of time during weekdays at school, mostly in the presence of teachers. Teachers can serve as positive role models as they form relationships with students. Following the tenets of SDT, teachers are integral in constructing a classroom context that supports students' autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Researchers from diverse theoretical perspectives have documented that positive relationships between teachers and students are usually characterized by warmth and acceptance (e.g. Birch, & Ladd, 1998; Hughes, Cavell, & Willson, 2001) and by autonomy granting (e.g. Schweinle, Meyer, & Turner, 2006; Zimmer-Gembeck, & Locke, 2007). These relationships are further linked to positive developmental outcomes (e.g. Birch & Ladd, 1997; Gest, Welsh, & Domitrovich, 2005).

The classroom can be an ideal setting for studies using SDT, for it inherently affords varying degrees of opportunities for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. The traditional classroom climate, characterized by high levels of teacher control, has been criticized as providing students with little to no choice about what they learn, and how they learn it (e.g. David, Mihaly, Barbara, & Elisa Steele, 2003; Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004).

Conversely, more modern educational practices have suggested that youth learn more when teachers give them choices (e.g., Schweinle et al., 2006; Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004). For example, ninth- and tenth-grade students who felt that school teachers, parents, and school administrators acted in autonomy-supportive ways had higher levels of self-determined motivation to stay in school; their perceptions of these social agents' meeting their needs for competence, autonomy, or both influenced their motivation, (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997).

High school physical education classes have also been studied using a SDT framework. In one study, Standage, Duda, and Ntoumanis (2003) found that the manner in which students perceive situational cues from their PE teacher related to their intentions to engage in future physical activities. Students felt more autonomous, competent, and related when they perceived an autonomy-supportive environment low in controlling features, and to a lesser extent, perceived PE class as offering a mastery (e.g., cooperative, volitional) climate.

In a related study, Ntoumanis (2005) found that PE teachers' support of their 15-year-old students' needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy positively predicted self-determined motivation. This was further linked to positive affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes, and positive intentions to engage in optional PE activities the next year. Students who felt competent in freely-chosen PE were more likely than those for whom PE was required to find it interesting and want to continue participation. Students also felt related to others in the friendships made through their PE participation. These studies suggest that students' experiences and participation levels can be influenced by opportunities for self-determined motivation.

Soenens and Vansteenkiste (2005) examined the effects of the provision of autonomy on educational outcomes. They found that teachers' support of autonomy was significantly linked to adolescent students' grade point average, levels of vocational exploration and commitment, and self-determination in school- and job-seeking behaviors. Self-determined motivation to engage in academic activities was associated with higher perceived academic competence and higher grades. As mentioned earlier, when the need for autonomy is met, self-determination to engage in prosocial behaviors often emerges.

One-on-One Mentoring

Research findings show that youth in quality mentoring relationships exhibit higher levels of school attendance and academic performance, better attitudes towards school, lower levels of substance abuse and some deviant behaviors, and improved family relationships than those without mentors (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002). As noted, these outcomes only occur in certain types of mentoring relationships. It appears that youth realize the most benefits from mentoring when they can establish a supportive, long term relationship with a mentor who addresses their need to experience competence and autonomy.

Certain characteristics are associated with mentoring relationships that foster feelings of relatedness. For example, the frequency of contact between mentor and mentee and the duration of their relationship appear very important. Findings from a large study of Big Brother Big Sister participants, suggest that relationships that last at least 12 months produce the greatest positive benefits, whereas relationships that last less than three months negatively impact self-worth and academic efficacy (Grossman, & Rhodes, 2002). Similar findings show that more contact between mentors and mentees also lead to many of the same benefits

mentioned earlier (DuBois et al., 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002). The amount of training adults receive before and during mentoring also predicts overall youth-adult relationship quality (DuBois et al., 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002; Karcher, Nakkula, & Harris, 2005).

Although numerous studies examine the outcomes of mentoring programs, fewer studies consider the quality of mentoring relationships (DuBois et al., 2002; Karcher et al., 2005). From existing research, it appears that, as would be expected, mentor and mentee characteristics jointly influence relationships quality. In a study of older adolescent mentors, researchers found that mentors' perception of the mentor-mentee relationship was predicted by mentors' self-efficacy and mentees' propensity to seek support (Karcher et al., 2005). Additionally, individuals who indicated extrinsic motivations (e.g., building their resume) for mentoring also reported more negative perceptions of their mentor-mentee relationships.

These findings speak to the need for adequate mentor training in order to increase levels of self-efficacy, as well as to teach mentors methods of encouraging mentees to seek their help and support (Karcher et al., 2005). It is interesting to note that these factors are stronger predictors of relationship quality than mentee's risk status (Karcher et al., 2005). Findings also show that shared interests between mentor and mentee is the strongest predictor of quality relationships, even more so than gender or ethnic matching (Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, & Arbreton, 2000).

While providing training and making good mentor-mentee matches appear to be important components of quality relationships, mentee characteristics also deserve consideration. Findings suggest that the types of youth served influences program impact and effectiveness. For instance, individuals who come from risky environments appear to experience greater benefits from mentoring than youth from less risky backgrounds (DuBois et al., 2002). These findings do not hold true for youth with individual-level risk factors, although it may mean that mentors need additional training in order to effectively work with more behaviorally-challenged youth (DuBois et al., 2002). These results align with Karcher et al.'s (2005) findings discussed earlier which show that mentors' self-efficacy is a better predictor of relationship quality than mentee risk status. In other words, if mentors receive training that increases confidence in their ability to mentor, they can successfully work with more difficult youth.

Mentees perceive their mentoring relationship to be most positive when they have opportunities to engage in both social and academic activities with their mentors. This is especially the case when mentors allow them to play a role in making decisions regarding activities, thus meeting youths' need to experience autonomy and competence (Herrera et al., 2000). Findings from a study of youths' perceptions of mentoring relationships show that youth who perceive their mentor as offering moderate levels of structure and activity participation as well as conditional support experience more positive outcomes than youth whose mentors provide either low structure or unconditional support (Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004). Mentors were most effective when they provided support contingent upon high expectations, while still allowing for active participation and independence. These findings align with outcomes associated with different parenting styles (Baumrind, 1991; Langhout et al., 2004).

Mentoring programs, when structured effectively, have the ability to provide youth participants with a wide range of positive benefits. It appears that those relationships that best address youths' need to experience relatedness, competence and autonomy provide the greatest benefits. Certain considerations need to be taken at both the program and individual level in order to promote the development of positive mentoring relationships. Additionally, and

perhaps most importantly, the efficacy of mentoring for youth from risk-laden environments lends support for the use of these programs as prevention interventions (DuBois et al., 2002).

Youth Programs

The development of positive relationships between participants and staff is often a natural byproduct of many youth programs, but evidence regarding the importance of these relationships should motivate program administrators and youth workers to intentionally design programs to promote the development of supportive adult relationships. Research in this area is lacking (Grossman, & Bulle, 2006) as SDT has only been examined in a limited number of studies exploring these contexts. Findings regarding youth-adult relationships in similar contexts can also provide guidance for youth program staff until more specific research findings become available. Given this orientation, we will explore the research-to-date in the area of youth programs and then follow it with work completed in similar settings.

While the empirical examples in youth programs are limited, these studies do provide insight into the importance of youth-adult relationships within these contexts. For example, at a 4-H program for urban youth ages 5-19, survey results show that participants' perceptions of positive relationships with adults in the program were positively related to program attendance as well as supportive adult behaviors (Paisley, & Ferrari, 2005). Anderson-Butcher, Cash, Saltzburg, Midle, & Pace, (2004) examined how relationships between youth organization staff and participants in a Boys & Girls Club program impacted academic outcomes. Relatedness was found to positively affect youth's prosocial factors at school, such as enjoyment, trying one's best, and helping others. These relationships also protected against antisocial factors such as getting sent out of class, being suspended, and other disciplinary actions. Findings from a study of an after school program aimed at increasing positive motivation in science classes showed that participants in the program exhibited higher levels of engagement in school and science class, autonomous motivation, and desire for learning for its own sake (Grolnick, Farkas, Sohmer, Michaels, & Valsiner, 2007).

Camp Settings:

Self-determination has also been investigated in residential summer camp settings for adolescents with diabetes (Hill, & Sibthorp, 2006; Ramsing & Sibthorp, 2006). Perceived autonomy support positively predicted campers' feeling competent at managing their diabetes (Hill, & Sibthorp, 2006). Ramsing and Sibthorp (2006) found that noncompetitive activities and camper-centered approaches to instruction predicted increased perceptions of autonomy support by girls and boys at diabetes camp. However, competitive activities and leader-centered approaches to instruction led to decreased perceptions of autonomy support for girls. Art activities led to more perceptions of autonomy support than sports, games, and athletics did, and older campers perceived more autonomy than younger campers. These studies show that the levels of competition and autonomy, as well as interpersonal processes in the youth program climate created by adults, have effects on youth's perceptions of the provision of autonomy, relatedness, competence, and self-determination.

Youth Leadership:

Outcomes related to levels of youth leadership within programs have also been explored. Jones and Perkins (2006) found differences between demographic groups on perceptions of youth involvement in a collaborative after-school program for 13-18 year olds. Females and rural participants had more positive perceptions of youth involvement in the program when compared to males and urban participants. Additionally, youth participants and adults in youth-led collaborations were significantly more positive toward youth involvement than those

participants and adults in adult-led collaborations. In a similar study on leadership in youth programs, Larson, Walker, and Pearce (2005) examined qualitative differences between four high school programs that employed different approaches to youth involvement in program leadership. Youth-led approaches contributed to feelings of youth ownership of and investment in the program, which made them feel more competent and motivated within the program as well as other areas of their lives. For example, participants developed greater acceptance of diversity, and a greater commitment to their education. However, one of the risks of this approach was the possibility of getting off track from the goals. Adult-led approaches resulted in feelings of competence in technical skills, as well as in self-confidence, interpersonal skills, and a sense of responsibility. A risk of this approach was that adults could undermine youth's ownership. This study's suggestions coincide with other work in this area (Larson, 2006) that relationships between youth and adults should be intentionally balanced so as to keep work in the program on track while keeping youth actively invested.

Sports:

Sports represent another context where young people have opportunities to interact with adults, namely their coaches. Research has shown that coaches can developmentally impact the players on their teams. For example, findings from a study of the influence of coaches on competitive high school swimmers' motivations suggest that controlling coaches negatively impacted swimmers' motivations to participate in competitive swimming, whereas swimmers with non-controlling and autonomy supportive coaches exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation and persistence (Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Briere, 2001).

It also appears that coaches' ability to positively influence youth can be greatly enhanced through short-term training interventions. Findings from a study of social support training for coaches showed that players whose coaches participated in the two and a half hour training had more fun during the season and gave their coaches higher ratings than players whose coaches did not receive the same training (Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993). The same study also found that boys with low self-esteem who played for the trained coaches experienced significant self-esteem growth over the course the season in comparison to the control group. These findings are particularly exciting in terms of promoting the development of supportive adult relationships because they show that short-term training interventions can improve preexisting youth-adult relationships and positively impact important internal capacities such as self-esteem.

Youth program settings such as summer camps, after-school programs, and sports can be contexts where opportunities for autonomy, relatedness, and competence are provided by supportive adults. The structure of out-of-school time (OST) programs lends itself to the development of these important developmental processes, for in OST exists a greater freedom for youth to engage in relationships with non-parental and non-teacher adults in a nurturing, experiential climate. While youth may only spend a few hours per week with adults in OST settings, these interactions can be more intensive than student-teacher relationships due to lower youth-adult ratios and opportunities for engagement in a diverse array of activities.

Practical Implications

Although the majority of findings reviewed in this paper deal with contexts other than OST youth programs, it is our belief that this combined body of knowledge can inform youth organization policy and practice. Additionally, the tenets of SDT provide guidance for organizing these findings into an applicable framework for promoting relationships in youth programs.

Organized youth programs, when structured appropriately, can provide a fertile context for youth to form relationships with positive adults in group settings outside of home or school. Youth programs are often more flexible than school settings that are constrained by curricula, policy, and the pressures of standardized testing. Youth programs can supplement the influence of the home and school by introducing youth to new people, ideas, and diversity of experiences that can help build social skills, and positively influence development.

There exist several levels of influence within youth programs ranging from administrative policy to direct interactions between youth and adults. The following sections will outline an SDT framework of proposed best practices at the administrative and direct service levels for developing youth programs that promote supportive relationships between youth and adults.

Administrative Best Practices

Youth program administrators affect youth-adult relationships through program design and implementation. While the climate of a program is largely based on interactions between program staff and youth, administrative policy influences these relationships through hiring, programming, and policy. For example, school policy affects teacher-student relationships through adult-child ratios; length of contact between students and teachers; transitions and stability of contact; and school organization, climate, and culture (Pianta, 1999).

Administrators need to develop policy and programming to create an environment that will enable participants to meet their need for relatedness through the development of positive relationships with program adults. As discussed earlier, appropriate levels of duration and frequency are necessary to optimize benefits inherent to youth-adult relationships. Administrators should make it clear during hiring and training that staff are expected to work for at least a year and develop positive personnel policies and working environments to support staff.

Findings also show that youth-adult relationships are enriched through participation in social, structured, and unstructured activities (Grossman, & Bulle, 2006; Herrera et al., 2000). It is also important that youth play a role in the decision making and programming process; such a policy meets youths' need for autonomy and appears to strengthen their relationships with adults (Herrera et al., 2000). Administrators need to evaluate the breadth of their current program offerings and add additional components if the variety is lacking, as well as allow flexibility for the expression of youth voice (Ellis, & Caldwell, 2005) and decision making.

The training of staff is another area where administrators can have an impact on their organization's ability to meet youths' need for relatedness, autonomy, and competence. Through the establishment of a quality and targeted training program, administrators can develop staff equipped to develop relationships with youth in a way that will promote autonomy and competence. Although the research is limited regarding the training of youth workers, short-term training programs for youth sports coaches appear efficacious (Smoll et al., 1993).

In order to promote the development of long-term, stable relationships, staff training programs should occur before and during programs (DuBois et al., 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002; Karcher et al., 2005). Training should focus on teaching staff how to find ways to connect with youth to build positive youth-adult relationships. Two key predictors of such positive relationships are identifying similar interests for youth and staff, and creating environments in which youth feel comfortable seeking support from staff (Herrera et al., 2000; Karcher et al., 2005). Training should also focus more on building general youth worker/mentoring competencies rather than

preparing staff to deal with specific at-risk behaviors since general levels of mentoring self-efficacy have been shown to be better predictors of positive relationships than youths' at-risk status (Karcher, 2005). Such a training program could consist of pre-mentoring workshops supplemented by regular, scheduled contact with program supervisors once mentoring begins. Continued administrative oversight of mentoring relationship helps ensure program implementation (DuBois et al., 2002; Jekielek et al., 2002). Research shows such supervision also leads to increased contact between mentors and mentees (Herrera et al., 2000).

Staff should understand the balance they need to establish in terms of structure, support, and activity participation. Research shows that youth gain the greatest benefits when adults provide moderate levels of structured and unstructured activities. Staff should also offer support based upon agreed-upon expectations for appropriate behavior (Langhout et al., 2004). Program staff also need to understand the perspectives and experiences of youth, both as individuals and as members of unique contexts (i.e. family, community, ethnic, etc.; Larson et al., 2005).
Policy and staff training can create an environment and culture where supportive adult relationships thrive. Although further research is needed to validate these proposed best practices, findings from other contexts support their effectiveness. It is also worth noting that relationships between administrators and program youth leaders may affect relationships between youth leaders and youth. Accordingly, one way to prepare youth leaders to foster feelings of relatedness, autonomy, and competence among the youth is to provide these same conditions for youth workers. Administrators' efforts to enact policy, programming, and training procedures lay the foundation for the development of supportive relationships between youth and program staff. The following section presents ideas regarding how staff can most effectively interact with youth in order to promote competence and autonomy.

Interpersonal Best Practices

Direct interactions between youth and adults are the touchstone of youth's feelings of connectedness to youth programs (Pearce, & Larson, 2006). Pianta (1999) suggests that such relationships can be thought of as a system comprised of: representations, feedback mechanisms, tolerances, timing of interactions, and contingency of interactions. While there are several different approaches to establishing supportive relationships with youth, many similarities exist across approaches that suggest that the provision of opportunities for autonomy, competence, and relatedness lead to effective youth-adult relationships.

Autonomy-supportive teaching styles are those in which teachers provide a sense of volition by being sensitive to students' needs, and also affording choices to students (Soenens, & Vansteenkiste, 2005). Adults can support autonomy by providing information about options and actions; acknowledging feelings; incorporating student perspectives into activities; providing optimally challenging tasks; providing structure and guidance that demonstrate the reasons for certain behaviors; and minimizing a performance-based climate (Eisenman, 2007). Autonomy support can also occur in environments that include opportunities for youth to evaluate their own performances, have choices, learn how to find information, and understand rationales for behavior change that are relevant to them (Hill, & Sibthorp, 2006).

Autonomy-supportive contexts are those that provide youth with a sense of personal choice and involvement, and are provided by adults who actively engage youth in being the agents of their experiences. In coaching contexts, group structures that are autonomy-supportive and mastery-focused can promote self-determination to engage in physical activity (Standage, Duda, & Ntoumanis, 2003). When coaches provide adolescent athletes with a sense of choice, meaningful rationale for behaviors, and freedom from external pressure, athletes are more

likely to internalize the positive values (e.g., goal-directed behavior, persistence, etc.) inherent to competitive sports (Pelletier et al., 2001). Interactions with coaches lead to feelings of autonomy when the coach takes the athlete's perspective, provides choice, reflects the other's feelings, and encourages initiative.

A competence-supporting environment is one that provides youth with positive feedback on their skill development and creates feelings of self-efficacy. Such experiences can lead to self-determined motivation. Eisenman (2007) suggests that there are specific activities that adults can do to teach students to be self-determined by modeling problem solving, setting performance goals, monitoring completion of tasks, and evaluating products. Contexts that support youth's needs for competence are those that also have a high quality of relatedness with the adult who appropriately organizes the activity to maximize skill-building, and provides effective positive feedback.

While relatedness is a need that can be met within the provision of autonomy and competence, there are some steps that adults can take to meet the need of youth to feel related and connected to others. For example, in a review of studies on relationships between teachers and early adolescents with high-incidence disabilities, Murray (2002) suggested the following for improving relationships:

- Recognize that youth need to feel supported by adults;
- Provide students with opportunities to learn positive relationship skills with adults;
- Learn more about students' backgrounds, interests, and communities;
- Develop increased awareness of classroom interactions; and
- Model and expect appropriate behavior.

Effective interpersonal behaviors can include talking to a child in a positive tone, giving a child clear directions, listening to a child, and using a child's name when talking to him or her (Paisley, & Ferrari, 2005). Such approaches to building relationships should be tuned to be age-appropriate; for example, teens may find teachers' frequent use of their names to be patronizing, whereas seven year old children may not.

Individual youth characteristics should be considered as well. For example, in groups with students who have low-acceptance by peers or are aggressive, social skills training interventions can be used to focus on the affective quality of teacher-student interactions by increasing teacher support of students through proactive positive comments and gestures (Hughes et al., 2001). Also, Guzick, Dorman, Groff, Altermatt, and Forsyth (2004) suggest that for youth who are low on social liking and social empathy, an appropriate approach by adults would be to foster good relationships with students by focusing on praise and refraining from ridicule; in other words, being "cultivators rather than weeders," (p. 367). Youth's need for relatedness can be met in contexts that are characterized by caring, interested, and sensitive adult role models.

The interpersonal relationships between youth and adults can serve as opportunities to meet needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. The meeting of such needs is integral to youth development, and can carry over into other parts of youth's lives. While actual interaction time with adults in youth programs may be small when compared to interactions with adult family members and teachers at school, the experience of a diverse support system of caring adults strengthens youth by providing additional resources that promote their development.

Conclusion

The merit of youth programs lies in their ability to foster relationships between youth and supportive, caring adults. A SDT approach to relationship development organizes empirically-based information and practices that can inform practitioners as they create supportive relationships that meet youth's needs. The implications from this article represent not so much a new method of youth development, but a synthesized, youth-centered application of preexisting research and practice. While further research is needed to test this claim, it is believed that the application of this framework will result in increased participation in youth programs and psychological well-being.

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Why Play Sports?
How Organized Sports Participation Can Contribute to the Healthy Development of Adolescent Hispanic Girls

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Abstract: This study addressed the research question, "What is meaningful to Hispanic girls about their organized sports participation during the first year of high school?" Purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 1996) was used to select 15 9th-grade girls to participate in individual interviews about their organized sport participation. Transcripts were analyzed via inductive coding. Findings showed that organized sports offered Hispanic girls in this sample a venue for healthy youth development, including opportunities for the "5 C's" – competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000). This article highlights the salience of connection, caring, and competence in adolescent Hispanic girls' organized sports experiences. Insights from girls' narratives may help coaches and other educators structure athletic programs to best meet the needs of Hispanic girls during adolescence (AAUW, 1991; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Erkut, Fields, Sing, & Marx, 1996; Gil & Vazquez, 1996; Sadker & Sadker, 1994).

Introduction

Adolescence is a time of inevitable change. Adolescents witness the physical maturation of their bodies, experience feelings of sexual desire, develop abstract ways of thinking, forge new relationships and modify old ones, struggle to assert their independence yet maintain connections, and grapple with who they are within their socio-cultural context (Elliott & Feldman, 1990). In the context of these multiple sources of change, researchers, clinicians, and parents have traditionally viewed adolescence as a turbulent time (Elliott & Feldman, 1990).

A body of research shows that some girls report dramatically low or lower self-confidence during the early adolescent years (American Association of University Women (AAUW), 1991; Biro, Striegel-Moore, Franko, Padgett, & Bean, 2006; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Eccles, Barber, Jozefowicz, Malenchuk, & Vida, 1999; Erkut, Fields, Sing, & Marx, 1996; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Scales & Leffert, 1999), particularly Hispanic girls (AAUW, 1991; Rotheram-Borus, Dopkins, Sabate, & Lightfoot, 1996). Not all girls, however, demonstrate low self-confidence during adolescence (Hattie, 1992; Offer & Schonert-Reichl, 1992), particularly some ethnic minority adolescent girls (Eccles et al., 1999; Greene & Way, 2005).

What is different about the experiences of Hispanic girls who maintain healthy self-confidence during adolescence? Researchers in positive youth development argue that positive, or healthy, attributes can be promoted in a variety of youth contexts, not only limited to school and family life, but also in youth's extracurricular activities (for reviews see Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord 2005, and Scales & Leffert, 1999). This study offers evidence that organized sports – defined as any athletic program (inside or outside of school) with regular practices/instruction, a designated coach, and athletic competitions – is one such context.

Research has supported this notion of "organized" activities, though not limited to sports (Eccles & Gootmann, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Organized activities "are characterized by structure, adult-supervision, and an emphasis on skill-building. These activities are generally voluntary, have regular and scheduled meetings, maintain developmentally based expectations and rules for participants in the activity setting (and sometimes beyond it), involve several participants, offer supervision and guidance from adults, and are organized around developing particular skills and achieving goals" (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005, p. 4).

Theoretical Framework

Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) have defined healthy youth development according to the "five Cs," a model based on a consensus of researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers. The "five Cs" are:

- competence,
- connection,
- character,
- confidence, and
- caring (or compassion).

Each "C" is a collection of individual attributes that contribute to overall healthy development and ultimately, from the viewpoint of these researchers, a civil society.

Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2000) have provided more elaborate definitions of the "five Cs":

- **competence** in academic, social, and vocational areas;
- **confidence** or a positive self identity;
- **connection** or healthy relations to community, family and peers;
- **character** or positive values, integrity, moral commitment; and
- **caring** and compassion (p. 1).

This study uses the "5 Cs" model of health youth development as the theoretical framework for interpreting what is meaningful to adolescent Hispanic girls about their organized sports participation.

Target Population

Adolescent Hispanic girls are a compelling population to study for multiple reasons:

1. Hispanic girls in particular have demonstrated significant losses in self-esteem during adolescence (AAUW, 1991; Rotheram-Borus, Dopkins, Sabate, & Lightfoot, 1996).
2. Hispanic girls are underrepresented in the sports literature.
3. Hispanics now represent the largest ethnic minority group in the United States (United States Department of State, 2003), and Hispanic youth are projected to represent 24% of the elementary and secondary school population by 2020 (Pew Hispanic Center, 2005).

Method

Participants

At the end of students' 9th-grade year, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 9th-grade Hispanic girls (*M*=14.6 years, *SD*=0.43 years). Girls self-identified their ancestry: Mexican (9), Mexican/Honduran (2), Honduran (2), and unspecified (2). One third of the girls in the interview sample were first generation immigrants (i.e., girl was born outside the United States), and 40% were second generation (i.e., girl was born in the United States and at least one parent was born outside the United States). These definitions of generational status are modeled on those provided in the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican-Americans-II (ARMSA-II) (Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995).

All girls attended a public, urban high school in the southwestern United States, serving approximately 1650 students, predominately Hispanic (88%) and low-income (87%). All 9th grade students were invited to participate in the overall research project, which included both quantitative (i.e., survey) and qualitative (i.e., interview) components. This research project and related instruments were approved by the Institutional Review Board of Harvard University.

This article reports on findings garnered from the interview data. Purposeful sampling (Maxwell, 1996) was used to select an interview sample representative of a broad cross-section of organized sports participation. Using girls' responses from questionnaires administered to all 9th-grade girls at the beginning and end of the year (N=103), 12 out of 29 organized sports participants were selected for interviews to ensure a range of:

a. types of organized sports;
b. single-sport vs. multi-sport participants;
c. school-based sports participants and community-based sports participants; and
d. length of involvement in organized sports.

Organized sports included any high school teams, private/club teams (e.g., U.S. swim teams), and community/town teams (e.g., YMCA teams).

Twelve of the 15 girls in the interview sample completed at least one season of organized sports participation during 9th-grade. A variety of individual- and team-oriented sports were represented (n=12), with soccer (n=5) and volleyball (n=4) most common. Half of the girls

played on two or more organized sports teams. Eleven of the 12 girls played on high school teams; two of the 12 girls played on organized teams outside of school.

Three of the 15 girls in the interview sample indicated plans at the beginning of 9th-grade to play on an organized sports team during the school year but in the end quit or did not do so. Though these girls may not have completed the sport season, the interviews provide insight under what conditions these girls were willing and able to play.

Procedure

Data Collection

Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of girls' 9th-grade year. A semi-structured interview protocol incorporated questions employed in the author's previous research (Horst, 2002). The interview protocol presented girls with a series of questions about the nature and extent of their sports involvement, why they played sports, how sports involvement had influenced their 9th-grade year, and what they appreciated about their organized sports participation. Interviews lasted an average of 60 minutes; interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Thematic, inductive coding of interview transcripts served as the primary analytic technique. Inductive codes were developed using a five-step process developed by Boyatzis (1998):

1. Data reduction – Key segments of each transcript were highlighted.
2. Identify themes within each interview transcript – Preliminary "descriptive codes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were documented by the author as well as a team of researchers.
3. Compare themes across interviews – "Descriptive codes" were compared across interviews to identify broader themes, known simply as "codes."
4. Create and record codes – Using the Boyatzis (1998) coding model, each code included:
    - A label or name;
    - A definition of the theme;
    - A description of how to know when the theme occurs;
    - A description of qualifications or exclusions to the code; and
    - Examples, both positive and negative, to eliminate possible confusion when looking for the theme (p. 31).

Codes were not mutually exclusive; that is, one segment of a transcript could be coded twice if the criteria for both codes were met.

5. Determine code reliability – The author coded all interview transcripts. Trained, independent raters also applied the codebook to selected interview transcripts. Initial inter-rater reliability was supplemented by discussion in order to strengthen the clarity of the codebook and to achieve at least 90% coding agreement (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

Results

In this analysis 48 codes were developed (See Table 1 for a list of all codes). These codes represented what the sample of 9th-grade Hispanic girls discussed as meaningful about their organized sports participation.

Table 1

List of Inductive Codes

1. Skill instruction/desire to learn	25. Being playful
2. Practice, practice, practice	26. Win/lose attitude
3. Sport achievement	27. Disappointment
4. Losing	28. Positive coaching
5. Recognition	29. Negative coaching
6. Assessment	30. Punishment/trouble
7. Sport competence	31. Teamwork
8. High commitment	32. Responsibility/Leadership
9. Effort	33. Peer relational connections
10. Proving oneself	34. Relational tensions
11. Challenge	35. Frustration
12. Less challenge	36. Passion
13. Goal setting	37. Part of me
14. Competitive drive	38. Release
15. Something to do	39. Focus
16. Get involved	40. Control emotions
17. Balancing act	41. Anxiety
18. Stay out of trouble	42. Family sports
19. Skill transfer	43. Family gathering
20. Sport opportunity	44. Parent support (or adult extended family member)
21. Fit	45. Sibling support
22. Details	46. Parent/family resistance
23. Seriousness	47. The body
24. Not serious	48. Sports & academics

In Table 2, the codes are presented by their frequency of occurrence across interviews (High Plus = 30 or more instances; High = 20-29 instances; Medium = 10-19 instances; Low = 9 or fewer instances).

Table 2

Frequency of Code Occurrence across Interviews (listed alphabetically)

High Plus (30+)	High (20-29)	Medium (10-19)	Low (0-9)
Assessment	Details	Anxiety	Competitive drive
Challenge	Effort	Balancing act	Control emotions
Family sports	Positive coaching	Being playful	Family gatherings
High commitment	Practice, practice, practice	Disappointment	Focus
Parent support	Recognition	Fit	Get involved
Peer relational connections	Relational tensions	Frustration	Goal setting
Sibling support	Something to do	Losing	Less challenge
Skill instruction/ desire to learn		Negative coaching	Not serious
Sport achievement		Part of Me	Parent resistance
Sport competence		Passion	Proving oneself
Teamwork		Punishment/trouble	Release
		Sport opportunity	Responsibility/ Leadership
		The body	Seriousness
			Skill transfer
			Sports & Academics
			Stay out of trouble
			Win/lose attitude

After developing and applying the codebook, the Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) model of the "5 C's" of healthy youth development – competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring – was useful in clustering the codes. This analysis demonstrated that organized sports are a setting in which healthy developmental can be promoted.

In Table 3, 33 of the 48 codes from the current study are mapped onto the Lerner et al. (2000) "5 C's" framework of healthy development (Note that ten codes in Table 3 fell under more than one "C" category – Sport competence, Recognition, Proving oneself, Balancing act, Punishment/ trouble, Losing, Teamwork, Peer relational connections, Parent support, and Sibling support). The codes that did not align with this framework were not indicative of unhealthy development, but rather suggestive of additional important overarching characteristics of healthy development.

Table 3

Inductive Codes Classified by Lerner, Fisher & Weinberg (2000)
Model of Healthy Youth Development

Competence	Confidence	Connection	Character	Caring
Sport competence	Something to do	Teamwork	Win/lose attitude	Teamwork
Sport achievement	Sport competence	Peer relational connections	Teamwork	Peer relational connections
Recognition	Passion	Being playful	Losing	Parent support
Skill instruction/ Desire to learn	Part of me	Positive coaching	Responsibility/ leadership	Sibling support
Practice, practice, practice	Stay out of trouble	Family sports	High commitment	
Sports & Academics	Recognition	Family gatherings	Punishment/ trouble	
Proving oneself	Anxiety	Parent support	Seriousness	
Assessment	Fit	Sibling support	Not serious	
	The body	Get involved	Control emotions	
		Balancing act		

In Table 4, the contents of Tables 2 and 3 are combined to create a matrix of the frequency of code occurrence by "C" cluster. This table highlights that the over 50% of the codes in each of the "C" clusters of competence, connection, and caring were "High" or "High Plus" in frequency. In the following section frequently occurring codes within each of these three clusters are described. Quotes from interviews are included where appropriate and as space permits.

Table 4

Frequency of Code Occurrence by Attribute of Positive Youth Development

	Frequency of Occurrence				% Codes "High Plus" or "High"
	High Plus	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	
COMPETENCE					6/8 = 75%
Sport competence	X				
Sport achievement	X				
Recognition		X			
Assessment	X				
Skill instruction	X				
Practice, practice, practice		X			
Proving oneself				X	
Sports & Academics				X	
CONFIDENCE					3/9 = 33%
Something to do		X			
Sport competence	X				
Passion			X		
Part of me			X		
Stay out of trouble				X	
Recognition		X			
Anxiety			X		
Fit			X		
The body			X		
CONNECTION					6/10 = 60%
Teamwork	X				
Peer relational connections	X				
Being playful			X		
Positive coaching		X			
Family sports	X				
Family gatherings				X	
Parent support	X				
Sibling support	X				
Get involved				X	
Balancing act			X		
CHARACTER					2/9 = 22%
Win/lose attitude				X	
Teamwork	X				
High commitment	X				
Responsibility/leadership				X	
Control emotions				X	
Punishment/trouble			X		
Seriousness				X	
Not serious				X	
Losing			X		
CARING					4/4 = 100%
Teamwork	X				
Peer relational connections	X				
Parent support	X				
Sibling support	X				

Competence

Competence in organized sports was one of the most common threads across the interviews with adolescent Hispanic girls who participated in organized sports. Girls repeatedly mentioned that it was important for them to be competent in sports or to work towards attaining competence. Frequently occurring Competence codes included:

- ***Skill instruction/Desire to learn.*** For girls who were playing on an organized sports team for the first time or for girls who had played organized sports before but were now learning a new sport, the opportunity to receive skill instruction and to become proficient in the sport was of great importance.
- ***Sport competence.*** Some girls were not satisfied with simply knowing how to play; they wanted to achieve a level of proficiency or competency that indicated they were particularly "good" at the sport. For example, Daniela explained how she went from knowing how to play volleyball recreationally to being one of the more skilled players on the team:

I really like volleyball, but I never really knew how to play. We use to just play like, like when we had little family parties. Like we use to play, but I didn't really know how. You know so I wanted to get good at it too. And like my first year (in middle school), I was pretty good. Like, I knew like how to play before I had played in middle school, but it was way different because everything you do like bump, set, spike. And like I didn't know how to do that and I didn't really know what it meant either (laughs). So you know I had to learn that and I learned pretty quick, so I got good at it. And, um I ended up being, like being like one of the good ones, 'cause you know I had like a lot of serves.

- ***Sport achievement.*** Perhaps not surprisingly, some of girls' favorite memories from the season were examples of crowing sport achievements – placing in competitions, performing well, or the ultimate experience of sports competence – winning.
- ***Recognition.*** Some girls appreciated when they were recognized by others for their sports competence. Laura told about one of her shining moments on the volleyball team:

I was having a good day so I would serve a lot. And I would like serve almost the whole game to 15… Then the audience was like yelling and stuff. You know, like "Laura!" They're like, "Little one!" 'Cause I'm like little. And it was just fun, and then the coach would be like, "Yeah!" And everybody would be cheering and stuff. You know, it doesn't happen a lot, um, cheering at the games.

Recognition also came after the competition. Sports scores and individual achievements were noted on the morning announcements at school, leading to congratulatory remarks from peers throughout the day. Another form of recognition which was particularly meaningful to Ana, a newcomer to organized sports, was earning her varsity letter jacket, which she wore proudly to school.

- ***Assessment.*** Throughout interviews, girls frequently assessed their or their team's ability in comparison to that of their teammates or competition. Girls who excelled in their sport had a clear understanding of the extent of their skills and recognized the pivotal roles that they played on their respective teams.
- ***Practice, practice, practice.*** Girls, especially the veteran sports participants, understood the importance of practice in order to achieve sports competence. Veteran

sports participants often selected athletics as their elective class in order to have extra practice time and also stayed after school for off-season "open gym" practice. Additionally, some coaches found opportunities for their players to hone their skills at formal sports camps during the summer.

Connection

Healthy development includes forming positive relationships with family, peers, and community (Lerner et al., 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Hispanic girls in this sample repeatedly detailed how sports provided them opportunities to connect with friends and family. The following codes illustrate how organized sports can provide Hispanic girls a forum for Connection:

- ***Peer relational connections.*** Peer relationships on and off the field were repeatedly cited as a key feature of their sports participation. Organized sports appeared to facilitate these Hispanic girls' transition into the 9th-grade by providing them with a social network of same-grade and upper-grade friends. For Sandra, who had not attended the middle school that feeds into the high school, this was true:

At first it was kind of easy (making friends)… I got along with the volleyball team 'cause volleyball's kind of right when you enter school, like. And then Laura, she was real like easy-going, you know. And so we just, I don't know we just started always being together. And we do stuff on the weekends and stuff.

Mentoring-type relationships were sometimes formed between upper-grade varsity players and 9th-grade girls in the same sport. These varsity players provided instruction and guidance to the girls in addition to that of the head coach. Although Daniela was a veteran to organized sports, she nonetheless appreciated the attention of senior team members:

It's not like upper class (10th, 11th, or 12th grade) girls like, you know, think they're better or whatever. It's not like that. They're real supportive. Like they try to help you, like in whatever you need…. And I think that was one of the things that made me like get a little bit better 'cause a lot of the upper class girls like, they were like, "Oh no, you have to do it like this." You know, they wouldn't say it in a bad way. They would like, "Just try your best."

- ***Teamwork.*** On the playing field girls established and nurtured a special type of relational connection – Teamwork. Girls in this sample talked at length about the sports-related support and encouragement they received from their teammates on a daily basis. Teammate support was particularly important to girls who were new to sports and might need additional, external motivation to keep with a sport. Unfortunately, on a couple of the school sports teams, several girls quit early or mid-season leaving their teams scrambling to fill the void. Such events had a significant impact on the sports experience of the remaining players. As described by Sandra, remaining players were keenly aware of the importance of being a dependable teammate as well as a good friend:

Our first baseman left. …'cause our coach is real hard on us. But I don't think it's right for them to leave the team. 'Cause you know like, the girls on your team are your friends, you know…. And when she left it was like, "Okay, now we don't got no first baseman." You know? Our pitcher, the one pitcher we did have, she left too

because of him (the coach)…. You depend on that person to always be there. And then, they just leave. You know? I don't think it's right… Stick together.

- ***Positive coaching.*** Some coaches served as positive adult figures in these girls' lives. Girls particularly praised the coach of the 9th grade volleyball team who prioritized having fun, skill instruction, and positive reinforcement among a team comprised of many girls who had limited or no volleyball experience. This coach was also a 9th-grade teacher at the school and understood when girls needed to miss practice for tutoring.
- ***Family sports, Parent support, Sibling support.*** Girls' narratives about their sports involvement were almost always set in the context of family sports. Family sports participation often functioned as girls' entry point into sports as well as a source of connection for girls with their families, particularly male nuclear and extended family members. Within the context of these relationships, girls received conversation, instruction, training partners, and support. Daniela poignantly described how through sports she connected with her father who had moved to the United States five years prior to the rest of the family:

> *I guess I kind of grew distant from my dad 'cause I wasn't use to him. …Like, I started getting real close to him because like I started seeing that him and my mom were having problems, you know, so I was like, "I want to get to know my dad." …So I started getting along with him, you know, and talking about sports mainly. So I was like, "How do you do this? You know, how do you play this?"*

Caring

Connection and Caring are intimately related in organized sports participation in this sample of adolescent Hispanic girls. In fact, each of the Caring codes in this analysis also falls under the Connection cluster. Although care and compassion may not come to mind as attributes engendered by sports participation, Hispanic girls in this sample provided rich narratives that demonstrated how organized sports can function as a venue in which a girl can develop and display concern for others, as well as be the recipient of care. Frequently occurring Caring codes included:

- ***Teamwork, Peer relational connections***. Girls demonstrated concern for their teammates through verbal encouragement and support. Teammates cheered for each other during races and gave each other "props" for points well played. It can be easy to display care when things are going well, but it is quite another capacity to act compassionately in team settings when players can become frustrated with poor performances or teammate errors. Several girls candidly shared that they had learned how to better support teammates through their sports participation, as Daniela, a veteran to organized sports, explained:

You know, it's not like, "Why did you do that? You're not suppose to do that" (in a huffy tone). Like I have a better attitude towards things like that. Like, "Oh, it's okay. You'll get it next time." Stuff like that, you know. But like before I was like, "Why did you do that?!" And now it's like, "It's okay. You'll get it next time." You know, I have like I guess more patience since like you can't win every single game. Since you can't be perfect when you just start a sport. You know I guess sports taught me that – to like, to be patient, you know, and how to get along with other girls.

As girls forged friendships with teammates, their commitment to the sport became intertwined with their commitment to their friends. Girls deeply cared about the impact of their actions on teammates and the team's ability to function. For many girls quitting ultimately was not an option; their concern for the team's and teammates' well-being trumped any personal reasons for quitting.

- ***Parent support, Sibling support.*** Girls described their parents and siblings as supportive of their organized sports participation via a wide range of activities. Parents and siblings expressed care for girls' sports involvement by attending games, offering words of encouragement, practicing together, purchasing sports equipment, helping set up for competitions, and participating in the team booster club.

Discussion

Organized sports participation afforded adolescent Hispanic girls in this sample a wealth of opportunities to acquire and nurture positive developmental outcomes and skills. Using the Lerner, Fisher, and Weinberg (2000) "5 C's" model of healthy development as a theoretical framework for interpretation, this article provides preliminary evidence for how organized sports can serve as a positive factor in Hispanic girls' adolescent development. Girls' interviews and the corresponding inductive codebook highlight that organized sports provide these adolescent Hispanic girls with opportunities to develop **competence**, to feel self **confident**, to **connect** meaningfully with others, to practice positive **character** values, and to express **care** and compassion.

Salient Themes

Girls in this sample spoke most frequently and extensively about organized sports as a place for competence, connection, and caring, representing three of the "5 Cs" of healthy youth development (Lerner et al., 2000). The prevalence of these themes is not surprising given the sports and broader extracurricular participation literature to date. Such research has long and consistently shown that

(a) perceived competence or skill development, and

(b) friendship or affiliation are leading motivations or incentives in girls' (and boys') decisions to become and remain involved in sports (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Erkut, Fields, Sing, & Marx, 1996; Gill, Gross, & Huddleston, 1983; Gould, Feltz, & Weiss, 1985; San Antonio, 2004; Wankel & Kreisel, 1985).

Though not labeled as such, research has also demonstrated the importance of care in girls' (and boys') sports experiences. The following factors have shown to be positively related to girls' (and boys') participation in or enjoyment of organized sports:

- Parent support (e.g., low pressure) (Brustad, 1988; Leff & Hoyle, 1997, Leff & Hoyle, 1995);
- Coaching style (e.g., skill instruction, encouragement) (Smoll & Smith, 2002);
- Peer affiliation (e.g., Gould, Feltz, & Weiss, 1985; San Antonio, 2004); and
- Teamwork (e.g., Gill, Gross, & Huddleston, 1983).

What is not highlighted within this literature is the salient finding from this study that organized sports can serve as a source of connection and care among Hispanic families. Although organized sports participation could theoretically take time away from the family due to sports

practices and competitions, the girls in this study most often described organized (and recreational) sports as a way to spend time together with family through conversation, competition attendance, and extra training or instruction. Of particular note, girls' detailed how through sports they were able to maintain or forge connections with their fathers, brothers, and/or other male family members.

Implications

Understanding why adolescent Hispanic girls participate in organized sports holds important implications for educators, coaches, parents, and girls. As we broaden and deepen our understanding about what is meaningful to adolescent Hispanic girls about their sports participation, it may be possible to document further how sports can serve as a protective factor during adolescence and to design sports programs that best support girls' needs from a development perspective as well as a cultural perspective.

Given the defining role coaches can play in girls' sporting experiences, and by extension school experiences, keen attention needs to be given to the formal training of coaches. In direct practice, coaches must be able to draw on a range of motivational and instructional strategies in order to work with a variety of players who have different skill levels, experience, and goals.

Beyond sports mechanics, coaches should be required to take coursework in human development so as to be able to recognize the developmental tasks and challenges of their players. For example, given the importance of peer relations during adolescence, coaches should be sure to make time for team bonding both on and off the court.

As demonstrated in this study, organized sports can promote positive attributes and learning experiences, such as competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. All youth should have access to such opportunities. Yet only 29% of girls in the 9th-grade at the study site participated in organized sports inside or outside of school – a rate 40% less than Hispanic girls nationally (49%) (Grunbaum et al., 2004). This finding may reflect a shortage of club or community-based teams, a lack of interest, differences due to immigration status or ethnicity, or other barriers to access.

Given that sports can foster positive youth development, we should advocate for increasing the number, range, and use of organized sports opportunities in the community, such as through the local park department and youth organizations such as the YMCA. One example would be to create a soccer league that invites youth and adults to participate together so that entire families and communities can share in a sports experience. Another example would be to offer school- or community-based multi-age summer sports camps, perhaps in conjunction with academic enrichment or fine arts programs, to provide youth with structured summer activities and eliminate caretaking responsibilities as a barrier.

This study underscores that the sporting revolution for girls living in the United States has not been universal in reach. In an era of sports "powerhouses" and elite traveling teams, it has become increasingly vital for a player to be able to demonstrate excellence or talent in sports at an early age. Opportunities to participate on prestigious varsity and club teams are limited, often handled by "cutting" those less able.

In striking contrast, girls in this sample – Hispanic girls of recent immigrant status from a low-income community in the southwestern United States – could join an organized sports team during 9th-grade with no experience, a tremendous and rare opportunity. Among these girls,

there was a greater focus on skill development and opportunity to play than in my previous research with White, middle-to-upper class girls who concentrated heavily on sports achievement and goal attainment (Horst, 2002). Given the increasingly competitive youth sports market, it was quite refreshing to hear one talented, veteran, multi-sport Hispanic girl say that she played basketball simply "for the love of the game."

Limitations and Future Research

A qualitative study such as this offers distinct advantages in terms of in-depth, rich narratives from girls themselves, but also limits generalizeability. As researchers have pointed out, there are distinct historical and cultural differences among Hispanic subpopulations (e.g., Erkut & Tracy, 2002; Marín & Marín, 1991). The majority of girls in this sample were of Mexican ancestry; research with other Hispanic populations should be pursued.

Second, this study focused on participation in any organized sports. This inquiry neither targeted specific sports, nor was it representative of all sports. Additionally, girls in this sample primarily played high school sports. Few girls played on club or community-based teams. Based on my analysis of this sample, there also may be important differences between newcomers to organized sports and veteran players that need to be further investigated. Despite these limitations, this study offers rich information regarding what is meaningful to adolescent Hispanic girls about their organized sports participation beyond what is provided by the sports research to date as well as relates these findings to the positive youth development literature.

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Examining the Potential Unintended Effects of a Healthful Living Curriculum Upon Children's Weight-Related Beliefs, Body Satisfaction, and Body Build Stereotypes

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Abstract: This exploratory work was guided by the question of whether health education messages about food and exercise might inadvertently influence children's beliefs about weight controllability, body satisfaction, weight self-assessments, desire to alter weight, and body build stereotypes. Participants were 80 children (38 boys, 42 girls) aged 7 to 13 years enrolled in a week-long "FunLIFE" summer camp offered at a large university. FunLIFE was created in response to the childhood obesity crisis and focuses upon Learning to Improve Fitness and Eating (thus, the acronym "LIFE"). Pre- and posttest questionnaires were administered at four camp sessions. Findings indicated that participation in FunLIFE camp did not influence children's weight controllability beliefs, level of body satisfaction, their self-assessments of their weight, or their desire to alter or maintain their weight. Exposure to the FunLIFE curriculum did, however, positively impact children's stereotypes about both overweight and thin children. Findings and implications are discussed.

Introduction

Childhood Obesity and Educational Programming

In recent years, those who work with youth have become increasingly focused upon the development and delivery of curricula designed to promote healthful lifestyles among children (Dixey, Sahota, Atwal, & Turner, 2001; White, Martin, & Martin, 2007). These efforts have been made largely in response to increases in childhood overweight and obesity rates. Over the past three decades, the prevalence of obesity among American children has increased threefold

(Ogden, Flegal, Carroll, & Johnson, 2002). Current estimates suggest that 15% of American children between the ages of 6 and 19 years are overweight, placing them at risk for becoming overweight during adulthood and for developing a host of health problems as children, and subsequently, as adults (Fagot-Campagna, 2000; McGuire, Hannan, Neumark-Sztainer, Cossrow, & Story, 2002; Neumark-Sztainer, Story, Resnick, & Blum, 1996; Ogden et al., 2002; Styne 2001).

Although there is increasing acknowledgement that genetics contribute to body size and shape (Aphramor, 2005; Campos, Saguy, Ernsberger, Oliver, & Gaesser, 2006; Kater, 2006; Monaghan, 2005; Rich & Evans, 2005), there is an expansive body of literature supporting the hypothesis that individual behavior – including diet and level of physical activity – also plays an important role in predicting risk for overweight and obesity (Koplan, Liverman, & Kraak, 2005; Lindsay, Sussner, & Gortmaker, 2006). Similarly, there is evidence to suggest that nutrition and exercise behaviors developed in childhood establish a basis for patterns later in life, and thus, have implications for adult health (McGuire et al., 2002; Neumark-Sztainer et al., 1996). For these reasons, many of the educational programs created in response to the childhood overweight and obesity crisis have focused upon engendering healthful lifestyle patterns, including making healthful eating choices (e.g., limiting consumption of fats and sugars) and encouraging regular engagement in physical activity (e.g., Fitzgibbon, Stolley, Dyer, VanHorn, & KauferChristoffel, 2002; Neumark-Sztainer, Story, Hannan, & Rex, 2003).

The FunLIFE Program

One such program is the FunLIFE summer camp offered by the Department of Health and Exercise Science at a large land grant university in the western United States. Week-long FunLIFE camps target elementary school aged children and focus upon Learning to Improve Fitness and Eating (thus, the acronym "LIFE"). The FunLIFE camps are part of the university's Youth Sport Camps program and were created in 2004 in response to the childhood obesity epidemic and the concomitant reduction of time allocated to physical education programming in the local public schools. Camps run on a seven hour schedule, and programming is designed to teach age-appropriate healthy lifestyles, focusing specifically on nutrition (e.g., RDA recommendations, appropriate consumption of fruits and vegetables, importance of a low-fat diet, importance of limiting junk food consumption) and physical activity (e.g., aerobic activities, individual and team sports). Campers participate in physical and creative classroom activities examining nutrition, fitness, and healthy lifestyles. Some of these activities are based on national programs developed by Cooperative Extension, corporate entities, and recreation departments and others are created by the University camp staff specifically for FunLIFE.

Evaluations of the FunLIFE program suggest that the five-day camps are effective to some extent in improving knowledge about nutrition and physical activity. In a pre- and posttest comparison, campers improved their knowledge of fruits and vegetables but did not change snack selections as a result of participation in the camp. The researchers speculated that the lack of change in snack selection could be due to the fact that, at home, many children do not participate in making their own snack selections, but rather, eat what is provided by a caregiver. Physical activity knowledge scores also increased from pre-to posttest, but there were no group differences between FunLIFE campers and a control group in the amount of daily or weekly steps taken (Mattie, 2006; Mattie & Butki, 2007). Although these findings suggest that exposure to camp curriculum may not be sufficient for producing desired behavioral changes, they do indicate that there are some positive knowledge changes to be gained through participation in the FunLIFE program.

The present work builds upon that of Mattie and Butki (Mattie, 2006; Mattie & Butki, 2007) by continuing to explore the ways in which the FunLIFE curriculum may impact its young participants. However, this work is unique in that it examined the possibility of unintended consequences stemming from participation in FunLIFE camp. More specifically, this exploratory work was guided by the overarching question of whether health education messages about food and exercise – such as those presented as a part of the FunLIFE camp curriculum – might inadvertently influence children's beliefs about the extent to which weight is within one's personal control, their degree of body satisfaction, their assessment of their own weight, their desire to alter their own weight, and their stereotypes toward overweight and thin children.

Justification and Hypotheses

The Cultural Conflation of Healthfulness and Thinness

There is a growing body of scientific evidence suggesting that thinness, alone, should not be used as a barometer of physical well-being, but instead, should be considered in conjunction with factors such as fitness and genetic predisposition to disease (Aphramor, 2005; Campos et al., 2006; Kater, 2006; Rich & Evans, 2005). Nonetheless, in today's cultural milieu, the distinction between behaviors enacted for purposes of health and those undertaken for purposes of appearance has become obscured to the extent that healthfulness has become conflated with thinness (Shilling, 2003). The thin and toned body is now perceived as the most desirable, and thus, the most healthful, moral, and valued (Bordo, 2003; Shilling, 2003). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that for adults, the desire to modify appearance is a more significant factor in driving dieting behaviors than is concern with health (Hayes & Ross, 1987).

Research indicates even young children embrace these widespread cultural messages about thinness and healthfulness. Elementary school aged children, including past FunLIFE campers, have been found to

(a) confuse healthy eating and dieting,

(b) associate health with dietary restraint, and

(c) perceive thinness as requisite to wellness (Blissett, Lyons, & Norman, 1996; Hill & Silver, 1995; Ogle, Baker, Carroll, Butki & Damhorst, 2007).

Indeed, this is concerning because although certain self-care regimens (e.g., eating a lowfat diet, exercising regularly) undertaken to achieve a thin and toned body may promote health, adherence to radical diets may actually undermine rather than promote healthfulness (French, Perry, Leon, & Fulkerson, 1995; Story, Neumark-Sztainer, Sherwood, Stang, & Murray, 1998). Similarly, compulsive exercising can cause injury, fatigue, and excessive weight loss (De Coverly Veale, 1987; Wichmann & Martin, 1992).

Healthfulness and the Ideology of Self-Control

American children today also are socialized in a culture that emphasizes the role of personal volition in shaping the quality of one's healthfulness. This tradition has its roots in a Western culture ideology that reveres self-control (Shilling, 2003). When taken in conjunction with the cultural conflation of healthfulness with slenderness, this ideology contributes to the construction of overweight or obesity as a stigmatizing attribute and a sign of personal failure to appropriately control the body through diet and exercise (Rich & Evans, 2005; Quinn & Crocker, 1999). Further, in previous work, body attitudes have been shown to be negatively related to beliefs about body control (Ogle, Damhorst & Lee, 2005).

Body Build Stereotypes

There is evidence to suggest that adults and young children alike embrace negative cultural stereotypes about overweight individuals. Research indicates that the socialization to hold prejudices against overweight and obese persons begins early in life (Cramer & Steinwert, 1998). Elementary school aged children attribute negative personal characteristics to overweight people and express preferences not to associate with overweight peers (Cash, 1990; Felker, 1972; Tiggeman & Anesbury, 2000). Further, elementary school aged children have been found to view obesity as a matter of personal control – a perception that has been positively correlated with negative stereotypes about obese persons (Tiggerman & Anesbury, 2000). Research regarding stereotypes about thin children is somewhat less consistent, with some findings indicating that thin stereotypes include a combination of desirable social traits and negative physical capability traits (Brylinksy & Moore, 1994), and other work suggesting a more singularly positive (Stager & Burke, 1982) or negative (Lerner & Korn, 1972) thin child stereotype. Differences in method and the socio-cultural moment during which the data were collected have likely contributed, in part, to these discrepant findings.

Hypotheses

Dixey et al. (2001) have posed the question of whether children might connect health education messages regarding the need to reduce fat in the diet (as a means by which to prevent heart disease) with being too fat or with a need to reduce fat on their own bodies.

The present study was designed to provide some preliminary insights regarding this overarching question. In light of the literature reviewed herein, we proposed the general hypothesis that participation in a curriculum emphasizing one's personal role in constructing a healthful body – through maintenance of a "proper" diet and engagement in physical activity – could set a context that may change children's perceptions of the extent to which weight is controllable as well as their degree of satisfaction with their own bodies (Am I doing enough to control my own body?, Should I be doing more?), their perceptions about their own weight (including self-assessments and the desire to alter or maintain their weight), and their stereotypes about others' bodies. In previous work, beliefs about weight controllability have been found to be related to body attitudes and body build stereotypes (Ogle, et al., 2005; Tiggemann & Anesbury, 2000).

Specific hypotheses for this study were as follows:

H1: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will increase campers' perceptions of weight controllability.
H2: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will decrease campers' level of body satisfaction.
H3: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will change campers' self-assessments of their weight.
H4: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will change campers' stated desire to alter their weight.
H5: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will increase campers' negative stereotypes about overweight children.
H6: Participation in the FunLIFE camp will decrease campers' negativity of stereotypes about thin children.

Method

Sample and Data Collection

As noted, the sample for this study included male and female children who had voluntarily enrolled in a week-long "Fun-LIFE" summer camp session at the local university. Tuition assistance for the program was available, and participants represented diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Because the camp is administered by a university, human subjects' permission to include the children in relevant research studies is routinely obtained from the campers and their parents.

Data were collected at four different camp sessions offered during the summer. For each camp session, the questionnaires were administered by camp counselors and the researchers on the first and last day of camp. Pretest data were collected prior to the presentation of curricular content related to nutrition, exercise, fitness, and health. For both pre- and posttest data collection, camp counselors read the questionnaire instructions aloud to the children. After children completed the posttest questionnaire, height and weight data were collected by the camp counselors and the researchers. Then, camp counselors presented curriculum related to body image and the notion that healthy or "fit" bodies can come in any size. This also served as a debriefing exercise for the study.

Measures

Perceptions of Weight Controllability. The extent to which children believe that weight is under one's personal control was measured using items adapted from Tiggemann's and Anesbury's (2000) Controllability Beliefs scale. Given the focus of the present study upon changes in attitudes toward body weight, only the items focusing upon weight and obesity were used; items related to beliefs about height controllability were omitted. Nine weight-related items from the scale were included in the questionnaire and addressed perceptions about causes of and solutions to overweight and obesity (e.g., "Do children have control over their weight?", "Can fat children become thin if they really try?"). Participants indicated the extent to which they believed the question to be true ("Yes"), false ("No), or were unsure of the answer ("Don't know"). To calculate an aggregate controllability score for each participant, a score of 1 was awarded for each answer that indicated controllability, .05 was awarded for each "don't know" response, and 0 was awarded for each response that indicated a lack of controllability. As such, scores on this scale could range from 0 to 9, with higher scores reflecting greater perceptions of controllability over one's weight. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.64 for the pretest and 0.72 for the posttest.

Body Esteem Scale. Children's affective evaluations of their bodies were measured using the Body Esteem Scale (Mendelson & White, 1982). This self-report scale, which is viewed as reliable for children seven years and older, contains 24 descriptive statements (e.g., "I like what I look like in pictures," "I'm proud of my body," and "My weight makes me unhappy") with "yes/no" responses . The measure is scored by counting the responses indicating high body esteem. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.86 for the pretest and 0.89 for the posttest.

Body Dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction also was assessed using a pictorial rating scale developed by Collins (1991) for use with children aged six and older. This measure includes seven child figures ranging in size from very thin (figure #1) to obese (figure #7). Separate scales are used to depict male and female figures, which are assigned corresponding values ranging from "1" (figure #1) to "7" (figure #7). For the present study, the facial features of the Collins' figure drawings, which are Caucasian in appearance, were removed to ensure that the

scales were appropriate for use with diverse participants (Thompson, 1996; Wood, Becker, & Thompson, 1996). To assess body dissatisfaction, participants were asked to respond to the following questions by circling the appropriate same-gender child figure of their choice: "Which picture looks the most like you look?" and "Which picture shows the way you want to look?" The discrepancy between these ratings was interpreted as an indicator of body dissatisfaction.

Weight Self-Assessment. Participants responded to two questions borrowed from Collins' (1991) work and designed to tap children's assessment of their current weight and desire to alter weight:

1. Weight self assessment: I think I am…fat, skinny, in-between
2. Desire to alter weight: I would like to…lose weight, stay the same, gain weight

Body Size Stereotyping. Body size stereotypes were measured using an approach similar to that used by Tiggemann & Anesbury (2000); Tiggemann & Wilson-Barrett (1998). Here, participants were presented with selected sets of figures from the Collins' (1991) figure rating scale1 and were asked to make judgments about the figures. The following pairs of figures were selected:

(a) a set including male figure #4 (the mid-point or "average" sized figure) and male figure #6 (the second-largest figure2),

(b) a set including male figure #4 (the mid-point or "average" sized figure) and male figure #1 (the thinnest figure),

(c) a set including female figure #4 (the mid-point or "average" sized figure) and female figure #6 (the second-largest figure), and

(d) a set including female figure #4 (the mid-point or "average" sized figure) and female figure #1 (the thinnest figure).

The second largest figure was selected for comparison with the average-sized figure because the largest figure (#1) had been used in previous work (Tiggemann & Anesbury, 2000), and we were interested in examining whether the same stereotyping effects would hold for the slightly less overweight figure. Results of this analysis will be reported in a separate paper.

To avoid introducing any systematic bias related to the positioning of the figures, the average-weight figure was presented on the right side of the page for half of the participants and on the left side of the page for half of the participants. In all cases, the figure on the left side of the page was referred to as "Boy (Girl) A," and the figure on the right side was referred to as "Boy (Girl) B."

The same ten items were used to measure body size stereotypes for all four sets of figures, with participants asked to select between the two figures on each item. The first eight items focused upon personality judgments and asked participants to indicate which boy (girl) they thought was friendlier, happier, lazier, smarter, healthier, more attractive, more confident, and worked harder. The remaining two items focused upon issues of peer preference, and asked participants to indicate which boy (girl) they liked best and wanted to play with. In all cases, three response options were provided: "Boy (Girl) A," "Boy (Girl) B," and "Both the Same." All participants evaluated same gender figures first and opposite gender figures second.

A score of 1 was awarded for each response indicating negative stereotyping of the overweight or very thin (i.e., the non-average) figure. As such, total stereotype scores for each figure could range from 0 to 10, with each scale containing two subscales: a personality subscale

(scores ranging from 0 to 8) and a peer preferences subscale (scores ranging from 0 to 2). Cronbach's alphas for the pretest and posttest scales (respectively) were as follows: 0.77 and 0.85 for the overweight male figure scale, 0.77 and 0.86 for the overweight female figure scale, 0.79 and 0.81 for the very thin male figure scale, and 0.82 and 0.82 for the very thin female figure scale.

T-tests were conducted as a manipulation check to examine the possible influence of the positioning of the overweight/thin and average-sized figures on the page (i.e., right side versus left side) on participants' responses to the stereotyping items. Analyses revealed no significant differences in participants' responses based upon the figure positioning (all ps > 0.05). That is, there was no order effect at work.

Data Analysis

Paired sample t-tests were used to compare pre- and posttest scores and to test Hypotheses 1, 2, 5, and 6. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested using McNemar-Bowker Test, which is an extension of the Chi-square test that allows for the comparison of dependent, categorical data. In all cases, male and female analyses were run separately to allow potential gender differences to be revealed. The significance level for the tests was set at 0.05.

Results

Sample Characteristics

Participants were 80 children (38 boys, 42 girls) aged 7 to 13 years (M = 9.30 years, SD = 1.76) enrolled in the FunLIFE summer camp program. The FunLIFE program is offered within a vibrant and diverse university community. A formal attempt was made to collect participant ethnicity data via a parent questionnaire. This measure was taken in response to concerns about children's capacity to accurately report ethnicity. Very few parent questionnaires, however, were returned. As such, a specific breakdown of participant ethnicity cannot be reported.

Body Mass Index (BMI), an estimate of body fatness that is adjusted for height, was calculated by using the following formula (Center for Disease Control [CDC], 2007): BMI = (weight in pounds x 703)/(height in inches). The range for a normal BMI changes with a child's age and gender and must be interpreted using a BMI-for-age chart (CDC, 2007). If BMI-for-age is greater than or equal to the 95th percentile, the child is considered overweight. A score between the 85th and 94th percentiles places a child at risk for of overweight. Mean BMI scores for the present sample are presented by age and gender group in Table 1. Mean BMI scores for the younger children participating in this study (i.e., those in the 7 to 8 year old group and in the 9 to 10 year old group) approached or exceeded the 85th percentile for both gender groups, which represented some risk of overweight. There was, however, a great deal of variation in the BMI scores for the females in the 9 to 10 year old group (SD = 7.15). The mean BMIs for the 11 to 13 year old children in the sample were below the 85th percentile cut-offs and suggested that, on average, male and female participants in this age group maintained healthy weights.

Table 1
Body Mass Index Scores by Age and Gender:
Means and Standard Deviations

	Males		Females	
Age in years	n	M (SD)	n	M (SD)
7 to 8	19	17.59 (3.42)	16	17.83 (3.14)
9 to 10	11	19.48 (3.73)	13	19.33 (7.15)
11 to 13	8	19.90 (3.16)	13	19.56 (2.67)

Note: At 7, 9, and 12 years of age, the BMI-for-age scores at the 85% percentile (the threshold for being considered "at risk" for overweight) are approximately 17.4, 18.6, and 21 (males) and 18, 19, and 21.6 (females) (CDC, 2007).

Hypothesis Testing

As noted, the aim of this work was to explore the potential unintended influence of participation in a given nutrition and fitness education program upon children's perceptions of weight controllability, degree of body satisfaction, self-assessments of weight, stated desire to alter weight, and body build stereotypes. Results of paired sample t-tests are presented in Table 2. As the contents of Table 2 indicate, findings did not confirm Hypothesis 1. There were no significant differences between male campers' or female campers' pre- and posttest scores on the controllability beliefs measure ($t = -1.12$, $p > 0.05$ and $t = -1.16$, $p > 0.05$, respectively). That is, participation in the FunLIFE camp had no statistically measurable impact on male or female campers' perceptions of weight controllability. As the data in Table 2 indicate, even prior to the presentation of the camp curriculum, both male and female campers held moderately strong beliefs in human capacity to change weight ($M = 6.68$ and $M = 6.05$, respectively).

Table 2

Paired Sample T-tests Comparing Pre- and Posttest Scores on Perception of Weight Controllability, Body Esteem, Collins' Pictorial Rating Scale of Body Satisfaction, and Body Build Stereotypes

Measure	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	t
Males (n = 38)			
Perceptions of Weight Controllability	6.68 (1.48)	6.89 (1.32)	-1.12
Body Esteem Scale	16.66 (4.49)	17.03 (5.75)	-0.52
Collins' Pictorial Scale	-0.35 (0.86)	-0.30 (0.85)	-0.44
Stereotypes about overweight males – personality subscale	5.34 (1.96)	4.97 (2.33)	0.91
Stereotypes about overweight males – peer preferences subscale	1.42 (0.72)	1.36 (0.85)	0.36
Stereotypes about overweight females – personality subscale	5.39 (2.11)	4.68 (2.68)	2.06*
Stereotypes about overweight females – peer preferences subscale	1.58 (0.76)	1.24 (0.97)	2.83**
Stereotypes about very thin males – personality subscale	3.50 (2.19)	3.47 (0.90)	0.00
Stereotypes about very thin males – peer preferences subscale	1.18 (0.87)	1.18 (0.90)	0.00
Stereotypes about very thin females – personality subscale	3.68 (2.56)	3.11 (2.56)	1.42
Stereotypes about very thin females – peer preferences subscale	1.34 (0.88)	0.89 (0.98)	3.09**
Females (n = 42)			
Perceptions of Weight Controllability	6.05 (2.07)	6.27 (2.12)	-1.16
Body Esteem Scale	19.55 (4.96)	19.24 (5.06)	0.81
Collins' Pictorial Scale	-0.44 (0.86)	-0.37 (0.85)	-0.55
Stereotypes about overweight males – personality subscale	4.81 (2.21)	4.69 (2.42)	0.47
Stereotypes about overweight males – peer preferences subscale	1.31 (0.75)	1.14 (0.84)	1.14
Stereotypes about overweight females – personality subscale	4.88 (2.03)	4.57 (2.35)	0.96
Stereotypes about overweight females – peer preferences subscale	0.95 (0.82)	1.00 (0.86)	-0.42
Stereotypes about very thin males – personality subscale	3.90 (2.22)	3.45 (2.49)	1.67
Stereotypes about very thin males – peer preferences subscale	1.40 (0.77)	1.19 (0.89)	2.46**
Stereotypes about very thin females – personality subscale	3.57 (2.09)	3.43 (2.19)	0.59
Stereotypes about very thin females – peer preferences subscale	1.26 (0.86)	1.00 (0.91)	1.98*

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 2 also was rejected. There were no significant differences in males' or females' pre- and posttest scores on the body esteem scale ($t = -0.52$, $p > 0.05$ and $t = 0.81$, $p > 0.05$, respectively) or the Collins' pictorial rating scale ($t = -0.44$, $p > 0.05$ and $t = -0.55$, $p > 0.05$, respectively). Thus, according to these data, participation in this summer camp program did not impact children's level of body affect. On the whole, mean scores on the Body Esteem Scale, particularly for female participants, reflected rather positive body attitudes among the present sample (see Table 2). However, an interpretation of the pre- and posttest mean scores on the Collins' measure suggests that both male and female campers did desire to be somewhat slimmer than they perceived themselves to be (as indicated by the negative mean values) (see Table 2). This finding is consistent with previous work employing figure rating scales to examine body size dissatisfaction among children (Tiggemann & Pennington, 1990) and is perhaps not surprising, given the somewhat elevated BMI scores for the younger children in the sample.

To test Hypotheses 3 and 4, the McNemar Bowker test was used to compare participants' pre- and posttest scores on Collins' weight self-assessment and desire to alter weight items. Both hypotheses were rejected; participation in the FunLIFE camp did not significantly influence male or female participants' scores on either item (all ps > 0.05). The Chi-square values for the comparison of the males' and females' pre- and posttest weight assessment and desire to alter weight scores were 3.80, 4.00, 3.67, and 2.00, respectively. The distribution of pre- and posttest responses is presented in Table 3. A follow-up Chi-square test was conducted on the males' and females' pre- and posttest responses, with results suggesting that the distributions were not uniform (all ps < 0.01, see Table 3). For both the pre- and the posttest assessments, male and female participants most frequently selected "in-between" as the response to the weight self-assessment item. For the desire to change weight item, "stay the same" was the most commonly selected response among male and female campers on both the pre- and the posttest measure.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Responses on Weight Self-Assessment and Desire to change Weight pre- and Posttest Scores for Male and Female Participants

	Males ***n* = 38**				**Females** ***n* = 42**			
Weight Self Assessment	**X^2**	**Skinny**	**In-Between**	**Fat**	**X^2**	**Skinny**	**In-Between**	**Fat**
Pretest	7.81*	10	27	0	27.85**	9	28	2
Posttest	34.43**	6	29	2	46.29**	6	34	1
Desire to Change Weight	**X^2**	**Lose**	**Stay the Same**	**Gain**	**X^2**	**Lose**	**Stay the Same**	**Gain**
Pretest	19.68**	13	23	1	19.08**	11	25	3
Posttest	22.11**	10	25	2	23.17**	12	27	2

*p < 0.01; **p < 0.001

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested by comparing pre- and posttest scores on the personality and peer preferences subscales for both the overweight and very thin male and female child stereotype scales. Results of these paired sample t-tests indicated some change, but not always in the anticipated direction. As the data in Table 2 indicate, Hypothesis 5 was not supported; participation in the FunLIFE camp was not shown to increase children's negative stereotypes about overweight children. Findings did indicate, however, that male campers' scores reflected less bias toward the overweight female figure on the personality subscale items ($t = 2.06$, $p < 0.05$, $M = 5.39$ vs. $M = 4.68$) as well as the peer preference subscale items ($t = 2.83$, $p < 0.01$, $M = 1.58$ vs. $M = 1.24$). Hypothesis 6 received some support. Among male campers, findings revealed a decrease in negative stereotypes toward the very thin female figure on the peer preference subscale items ($t = 3.09$, $p < 0.01$, $M = 1.34$ vs. $M = 0.89$). Results indicated a significant decrease in female campers' pre- and posttest scores on the peer preference subscale items for stereotypes of very thin male figures ($t = 2.46$, $p < 0.01$, $M = 1.40$ vs. $M = 1.19$) as well as very thin female figures ($t = 1.98$, $p < 0.05$, $M = 1.26$ vs. $M = 1.00$). Thus, as expected, participation in the FunLIFE camp decreased campers' negativity of stereotypes about thin children.

Concluding Discussion

As noted, Dixey et al. (2001) raised the intriguing query of whether well-intentioned health curricula designed to encourage lowfat diets and thereby reduce risk for heart disease might inadvertently incur negative body image-related consequences for young participants. Findings from the present study suggest that, at least with respect to the FunLIFE curriculum, the answer to this question is "no." Findings indicated that participation in the FunLIFE summer camp did not influence children's level of body satisfaction, their self-assessments of their weight, or their stated desire to alter or to maintain their weight. Similarly, results indicated that participation in FunLIFE did not change campers' perceptions about the extent to which weight is under one's personal control. From a programming perspective, then, these findings are encouraging; the FunLIFE curriculum achieved its intended aims of improving nutrition and fitness knowledge (Mattie, 2006; Mattie & Butki, 2007) and did not incur unintended outcomes that could have potentially deleterious impacts (e.g., decreased body satisfaction, increased negative stereotypes toward persons whose bodies deviate from 'average" sizes).

Interestingly, results did indicate that exposure to the camp curriculum positively impacted children's stereotypes about both overweight and thin children. One might speculate that some aspect of the camp curriculum increased positivity toward people of diverse sizes. The decreased negativity toward overweight persons is certainly a hopeful finding, especially when interpreted in light of previous work suggesting that children who adopt stereotypes about overweight persons may tease overweight peers, which in turn, may produce body dissatisfaction and low self-esteem among the targets of this teasing (Stormer & Thompson, 1996; van den Berg, Wertheim, Thompson, & Paxton, 2002).

Future work might further explore what aspect of the camp curriculum contributed to this effect. Further, although the increased positivity toward very thin children may be considered encouraging from a social issues perspective, it also could be interpreted as somewhat disconcerting. This is particularly true given the excessively thin size of the stimulus figure used in the present study and the notion that although increases in childhood overweight and obesity are, indeed, alarming, they are paralleled by concerns about eating disorders and a growing

preoccupation with dieting and the achievement of thinness among children (Field, et al., 2001; McVey, Tweed, & Blackmore, 2004).

Given the relatively small sample and the use of a repeated measures approach, findings from this work should be interpreted somewhat cautiously. Additionally, it is important to recognize that by virtue of their enrollment in a healthy lifestyle camp, it is possible that participants in the present study were identified by their parents as in need of the information presented in this camp (e.g., perhaps they were perceived as having poor eating habits, as being sedentary, or as being at risk for overweight). Or, perhaps the participants were being raised by parents who were inclined to value healthfulness and who therefore encouraged their children's involvement in the camp. As such, the experiences of children in this sample may be unique in some way, and it will be important for future researchers to explore the beliefs of children using larger samples free of this potential bias. Further, in the future, it will be helpful to assess how content directly addressing body image concepts might shape some of the outcome variables explored in the present study, perhaps by expanding the debriefing content into a full educational unit and repeating the present analysis after it has been presented as part of the camp curriculum.

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Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development through 4-H

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Perceived Effectiveness of Youth-Adult Partnerships on Enhancing Life Skill Development through 4-H

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover the perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in equal partnerships. The life skills of: Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and organizing were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. Through this research there was evidence that many of the youth participants did perceive themselves as equal team members when participating in this youth-adult partnership. The research indicated the greatest perceived obstacle that kept youth from engaging was not much time after homework and other activities. It is recommended that all participants in newly formed youth-adult partnerships receive training on how to implement this type of program, and how to participate equally.

Introduction

Leadership development has been, and continues to be a major goal of the 4-H Youth Development program. As the world enters the 21st century, many youth programs, including 4-H, are focusing on the effectiveness of their leadership training (Seevers, 1995). A historical approach to teaching leadership to 4-H youth has been through life skill development. Life skills have been defined as the abilities that are useful for living everyday life. They include thinking, doing and feeling skills. The overall purpose of the life skills approach to leadership training was the development of skills necessary to perform leadership functions in real life (Miller, 1976).

The purpose of this study was to determine if youth and adult participants in the 4-H Environmental Impact program perceive youth-adult partnerships as an effective means to enhance the youths' development of life skills. The study further sought to discover if there were perceived obstacles that may keep youth and adults from participating in youth-adult partnerships.

Objectives for this Study

1. To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.
2. To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership with adults.
3. To discover if there are perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.
4. To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Design and Procedures

The research was an exploratory study to determine the perceptions of youth and adults involved in partnerships through Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact programs. Specifically the study sought to determine how youth perceived the development of life skills through their involvement in the youth-adult partnership.

The design selected for this research was a mixed method approach. A mixed method design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Creswell, 2005). The research study consisted of a quantitative pre-survey and post-survey regarding the perceptions of the participants. The study also involved a qualitative assessment. The adult participants were asked to complete an open-ended report of their experiences relating to the project. The ultimate outcome of this approach was to determine the perceptions of the adult participants regarding youth-adult partnerships developing life skills. By assessing both quantitative and qualitative outcomes we can develop a complex picture of the social phenomena (Creswell, 2005). The mixed method design was the most appropriate means to collect the necessary data to analyze the participants' perceptions of developing life skills through youth-adult partnerships.

The internal consistency method provides a unique estimate of reliability of the survey instrument for the given test administration. The most popular internal consistency reliability estimate was given by Cronbach's alpha. According to Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1972) most test makers and researchers are satisfied if they obtain a Cronbach's alpha indicator greater than .70. Subsequently, all questions on the survey which received a rating lower than .70, on this research, were not used in the findings of this study.

Cronbach's Alpha Score For Youth and Adult Survey Life Skill Questions	
Life Skill	Alpha Values
Youth Survey Questions	
Leadership	0.76
Accepting Differences	0.74
Contributions to Group Efforts	0.70
Planning and Organizing	0.82
Service Learning	0.73
Cooperation	0.95
Adult Survey Questions	
Leadership	0.82
Accepting Differences	0.73
Contributions to Group Efforts	0.71
Planning and Organizing	0.78
Service Learning	0.95
Cooperation	0.73

The survey results were compiled and analyzed to determine the change in the participants' perception of youth-adult partnerships after collaborating in a youth-adult partnership for one year. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the change in the participants' perceptions from the pre-survey to the post-survey. All results from individuals who completed a pre and post survey were compiled and evaluated as a population. These results were summarized for triangulation with the qualitative data.

All surveys were coded and participants' names were kept in strict confidence. Because this survey involved a youth audience, parental consent forms were required before the survey was administered. All forms and procedures were Internal Review Board approved; #AG0544.

Scope of the Study

The population for this study was the youth and adults who were involved in the youth-adult teams participating in the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact team during 2005-2006. The population consisted of teams of youth and adult partners from 16 Oklahoma counties. Study respondents from the 16 locations self-selected to participate. A census was used for the study, therefore sampling was not required.

Findings and Conclusions

Population of the Study

The study was designed to involve the population of youth and adults who were participating in the Oklahoma 4-H Youth Development Environmental Impact team. This population included educators, volunteers and youth from sixteen locations. From this group, 36 youth and 9 adults self-selected to participate in the study by taking the pre-survey. There were additional educators involved who chose not to participate in the pre-surveys. Due to IRB guidelines, educator participation in this research was not mandatory and had no reflection on their job performance. However, after the program, several of these educators did chose to participate in

the research by completing an Adult Participant Report. The number of participants in this study was small. However, if the total population of this project had chosen to participate and completed all the research instruments, pre and post, approximately 20 adults and 60 youth would have been involved. Twenty youth, who completed the pre-survey, did not complete the project or did not complete the post-survey. Following, is the number of participants whose data was analyzed in the findings; 16 youth completed the pre-post surveys, 8 adults completed the pre-post surveys, and 14 adults completed an Adult Participant Report.

There were 14 total adults who completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey, or the Adult Report. Fourteen adult participants completed the Adult Report while 8 completed both the pre-survey and post-survey. These adults were all involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 8 male and 6 female adult participants, the average age was 39.35, ranging from 25 to 53 years old. All of the participants were Caucasian. The adult participants had been involved in 4-H from 0 to 26 years with an average of 13.50 years. The majority of these adults (71.5%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

Demographics of Adult Participants at the end of the Pre-survey (N = 14)					
Survey Question	Frequency	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Percent
Gender					
Male Female	8 6				57.1 42.9
Age		41	25	53	100.00
Ethnicity					
Caucasian	14				100.0
Highest Level of Formal Education					
Graduate degree Four Year Degree Some College	10 3 1				71.4 21.4 7.2
Role					
Paid Staff Volunteer	13 1				92.9 7.1
Years Involved in 4-H		11-15	0	26	
Hours spent doing Community Service each Month					
More than 20 hours *11-20 hours* *2-10 hours*	3 1 10				21.4 7.1 71.5

There were 16 total youth who completed both the pre-survey and the post-survey. These youth were involved with their county 4-H environmental youth-adult partnership for the first year of the project. There were 11 boys and 5 girls, with the average age of 14.5, ranging from

12 to 18 years old. Fourteen of the participants were Caucasian, one Hispanic and one indicated "other". The youth participants had been involved in 4-H from 2 to 8 years with an average of 5.19 years. The majority of these youth (56.35%) spent from 2-10 hours each month doing community service.

Demographics of Youth Participants at Pre-survey (N = 16)					
Survey Question	Frequency	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Percent
Gender					
Male Female	11 5				68.75 31.25
Age		14.50	12	18	
Ethnicity					
Caucasian Hispanic Other	14 1 1				87.50 6.25 6.25
Years Involved in 4-H		5.19	2	8	
Hours spent doing Community Service each Month					
More than 20 hours *11-20 hours* *2-10 hours* *About 1 hour* *None*	1 3 9 2 1				6.25 18.80 56.25 12.50 6.25

As a part of the pre-survey the participants were asked if they had prior experience working in a youth-adult partnership. For the youth, 68.8% indicated they had "Some" previous experience working in a youth-adult partnership, while 62.5% of the adults indicated they had "A lot" of prior experience working in youth-adult partnerships.

Objective 1: To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing through participation in youth-adult partnerships.

From the participating teams involved in the project, the research indicated that the teams of youth and adults which gave the youth the opportunity to partner and help decide the direction of their program were more successful than the teams that tried to force the team into a specific project area. Norman (2001) stated a youth-adult partnership is one in which adults work in full partnership with young people on issues facing youth and/or on programs, and policies affecting youth.

The responses from question 1 on the qualitative Adult Participant Report indicated the closer the adult works with the youth partners in the design and implementation of the program, the more interest the youth will show in the project.

Life Skills

According to the triangulation of the findings in the data sources, the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and Organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. Individual life skills results follow:

Life Skills – Leadership

All 14 of the adult respondents indicated on the qualitative Adult Report that the life-skill of *Leadership* was developed through the youth-adult partnership. A respondent stated the youth developed the life skill of *Leadership* through, "communicating with the adults in a role of leadership, and they had to be responsible in their data collection."

Life skill and Number of Adult Respondents who identified the Life skill as developed through the Environmental Impact program Youth – Adult Partnership		
Life Skill	**Number of Times Identified**	**% of N (N=14)**
Leadership	14	100
Cooperation	13	93
Service Learning	12	86
Contributions to Group Efforts	10	71
Planning Organizing	9	64
Accepting Differences	6	43

The quantitative questions on the pre-survey and the post-survey resulted in a positive change in the means of the questions related to developing the life skill of *Leadership*. Both, the youth and adults reported over a 10% increase in the mean scores from the pre-survey to the post-survey on two of the questions related to the life skill of *Leadership*. The most notable differences were the questions which indicated youth were given the chance to share their feelings about things that mattered to them, and the youth's thoughts, ideas and suggestions were listened to by the other team members. Therefore, there was a positive relationship between youth participating in a true youth-adult partnership and youth enhancing the life skill of *Leadership*.

Life Skills – Cooperation

The qualitative analysis illustrated that 13 of the 14 adult respondents reported *Cooperation* as a life skill developed through the environmental program. The participants stated that the, "Youth and adults learned to work closely together to complete tasks" while another respondent stated, "The children had to cooperate with myself, with each other and with the adults while collecting data together and making decisions on which wells to test."

The quantitative survey questions related to the life skill of *Cooperation* indicated a small percentage drop in the level of cooperation in the pre-survey and post-survey means; however the change was less than 4%. The one exception to this drop in perception was the youth response to the question, "How often do adults ask you about your thoughts and opinions?" The change in the mean response to this question was a notable 15% increase in the perception of the youth in how the adults value the thoughts and opinions of the youth.

Therefore, there was a mixed relationship between the qualitative and the quantitative responses of the enhancement of the life skill of *Cooperation*. Even though the quantitative values indicated a negative change, the identifiers associated with the values remained as positive responses to the survey questions. The qualitative data did indicate an enhancement in the youths' development of the life skill of *Cooperation*.

Life Skills – Contributions to Group Efforts

The qualitative analysis of *Contributions of group efforts* illustrated that 10 respondents indicated on the Adult Report form that the youth partners developed this life skill. A respondent stated this was their lowest scorer of the life skills while another respondent stated the partners developed great working relationships with each other. On the quantitative surveys, all the adult respondents indicated a positive change. The survey question, "How often do youth have specific assignments on the team" received mixed responses from the youth and the adults. The youth indicated a negative percent change in the pre-survey and post-survey means while the adults reported a positive change. The question, "How often are youth able to attend the activities planned by the team" received the same mixed response. Both the youth and adults agreed that the other youth team members were positive and responsive to the needs and questions of the other youth. These results indicate that the youth were willing to contribute to group efforts and develop this skill as long as they were able to participate with the team.

The results of the life skill of *Contributions to group efforts* were questionable as to whether this life skill was enhanced through the participation in a youth-adult partnership.

Life Skills – Accepting Differences

Only five of the 14 respondents identified this life skill as one developed through the program. An adult respondent stated, "I don't think this was an issue that was dealt with in the program." This may indicate the youth could learn this skill under different circumstances. On the quantitative Adult Participant Reports there was very little change in the mean scores. The findings for the life skill of *Accepting Differences* were inconclusive due to the lack of the identification of this life skill on the Adult Reports and the absences of change in the mean scores on the quantitative survey responses.

Life Skills – Service Learning

This life skill was reported by 12 of the 14 adult respondents on the Adult Report as a skill developed through the project. A common theme emerged through the qualitative data that the youth learned the importance and value of working with clientele throughout the community.

The quantitative data questions corresponding to *Service Learning* reported almost a 9% increase in the youth response to "learn new skills," which correlate with over a 6% increase in the adult values. When asked if the youth "feel a sense of personal fulfillment in working to improve their community?" the adults reported over a 9% increase and the youth a 6% from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Therefore this data indicates an enhancement in the youths' development of the life skill of *Service Learning*.

Life Skills – Planning and Organizing

Nine of the 14 respondents identified this life skill on the qualitative Adult Report. The participants' responses emerged into a consistent theme that the youth learned to develop a plan and a timeline to accomplish their tasks.

On the pre-survey and the post-survey the respondents were asked to base their answers on 'how worried' they were these activities might interfere with: "their school schedule and activities," "their family time," and "their personal free time."

At the conclusion of this research youth indicated a 24.56% in their concern that the project would interfere with their school schedule and activities. The youth also indicated over a 16% increase in their concern with the environmental project interfering with their family life.

The adult respondents had lower values on the corresponding questions. The adults indicated a 12.85% increase in how worried the youth were the project would interfere with the youths' personal free time.

Therefore the results indicated the youth participants enhanced their life skill of *Planning and Organizing*. The results indicated the youth became more concerned about their schedules from the beginning to the end of the project. This finding might be interpreted the youth realized to what extent their time was limited. Through the qualitative Adult Reports the adults stated the youth increased their skills in *Planning and Organizing*.

Objective 2: To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults.

The responses by the youth to quantitative questions regarding their role on the team indicate that the youth felt an equal partnership with the adults. A notable change from an adult-led collaboration to a youth-adult partnership was evident by the over 30% increase in the response to the question regarding receiving coaching from other youth on the team. The youth expected to receive coaching from the adults, it would appear that coaching from each other may have been a new concept. The adult responses to these same questions fell in the "sometimes" or "often" categories. This was an indicator that the adults were open to the youth choosing and changing their role on the team, and the youth being given more responsibility, or coaching each other and serving in a leadership role.

The adult participants were asked to, "Describe the relationship between the youth and adult partner(s) and your team." The general responses indicated an equal partnership between the youth and adults. One respondent stated, "The youth and adults work to have an equal relationship. At first the youth wanted the adults to take the lead but once we started an equal relationship formed quickly." This response was the most representative of teams exhibiting the qualities of youth-adult partnerships.

The adult respondents also suggested through the qualitative data the adults provided guidance and teaching to the team by drawing on their past experiences. This corresponds with Jones and Perkins (2000) thought that without adult guidance youth led projects may decline into negative and undesirable behaviors. However, it must be noted that the data also indicated that 100% of the teams did not function in this manner. There were 14 different teams in this study; they all seemed to operate somewhat differently.

Objective 3: To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships.

Youth respondents identified two obstacles through the quantitative data that keep youth from fully participating in youth-adult partnerships: not much time after homework and other activities, and the meetings were not at a good time. These obstacles were selected by 50% of the youth participants. The two most identified obstacles (that may keep youth from participating in a youth-adult partnership) by the adult participants were: not much time after homework and other activities, and transportation to meetings. These two obstacles were selected by 87.5% of the adult respondents. Fifty percent of the adults reported that youth would rather be with their friends. Although it was notable that only 12.5% of the youth indicated they would rather be with their friends.

Perceived Reasons Youth Do Not Participate in Youth-Adult Partnerships	
Youth (N=16)	% Identified
What keeps you from participating 100% with the project team? (Check all that apply)	
• Not much time after homework and other activities	68.8
• Adults don't respect youth on the committee	0
• Rather be with friends	12.5
• Transportation to meetings	12.5
• Not so interesting	12.5
• Parents don't help youth get to the meeting	12.5
• Meeting not at a good time	50.0
Adults (N=8)	% Identified
What keeps youth from participating 100% with the project team? (Check all that apply)	
• Not much time after homework and other activities	87.5
• Adults don't respect youth on the committee	12.5
• Rather be with friends	50.0
• Transportation to meetings	87.5
• Not so interesting	37.5
• Parents don't help youth get to the meeting	62.5
• Meeting not at a good time	25.0
• *Other*	12.5

Two respondents identified time as a constraint that limited the project. Time was identified by the Innovation Center (2003) as a disadvantage of implementing youth-adult partnerships. It takes more time for a youth leader to partner with youth than it does to make a decision and implement that decision.

An additional identified discouragement to the youth-adult partnership was that the youth either lost interest, or did not show up at the meetings or work days. As one adult described, "When the project was presented, all team members were supportive of the efforts; however, time, and travel constraints limited the success of the project."

Many of these obstacles, such as time, transportation and interest, could be improved by including youth in the planning process, especially when scheduling meeting times and designing the project.

Objective 4: To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills.

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data related to this objective;

1. *no changes* should be made in the program,
2. the project needed to be *more interesting* for all the participants,
3. the project needed *more participation* in the decision making process, and
4. the teams should work *more as a youth adult partnership*.

In analyzing the four themes identified as methods to improve youth- adult partnerships, it would appear three of these themes involve a lack of youth involvement in the partnership. If youth were more engaged in the project design and the decision-making process, the teams might work as a *true youth-adult partnership.* More youth involvement in this project may have resolved the issues of: needed to be *more interesting,* needed *more participation, and the teams should work more as a youth adult partnership.* Increasing youth involvement could greatly improve the shortcomings in the environmental project, and the corresponding youth-adult partnership.

The youth-adult partnership does not exist when adults discount youth input (Camino, 2000). The following two statements from participants illustrate this point, "Making sure that all adults allowed youth to have an equal part of all decisions," and "Stressing the need for these partnerships to be used more so that the youth become more confident in speaking out and working in the youth-adult partnership." Further development of participants understanding and implementation of a true youth-adult partnership may be the most effective method for improving newly developed partnerships.

Recommendations

The findings of this research support the recommendations for each stated research objective.

Objective 1: To determine if youth and adult team members perceive that youth developed the life skills of *leadership, cooperation, contributions to group efforts, accepting differences, service learning, planning and organizing* through participation in youth-adult partnerships.

According to the triangulation of the findings in the data sources, the life skills of *Leadership, Cooperation, Service Learning, and Planning and Organizing* were enhanced through the youths' participation in the youth-adult partnership. The other measured life skills of *Contributions to Group Efforts and Accepting Differences* were not clearly enhanced through this program effort.

Therefore it is recommended that before beginning 4-H programming utilizing youth-adult partnerships as a youth development tool, specific life skills should be targeted for enhancement. Once these skills are targeted the participants in the program should receive programmatic training through youth-adult partnership workshops to help them develop these specific skills within the youth participants. The participants should understand that the skills

are developed through working in a youth-adult partnership, not just participating in a partnership.

Objective 2: To determine if youth perceive themselves as equal team members when serving in a partnership of youth and adults

Through this research there was evidence that many of the youth participants did perceive themselves as equal team members when participating in this youth-adult partnership. However, other youth may not have perceived themselves as equal partners and dropped out of the program or they may have just lost interest in the project or 4-H.

It is recommended that before initiating youth-adult partnership programming all the adults involved understand the concept of a youth-adult partnership and demonstrate a true appreciation for the youth partners and their opinions. Once the adults involved reach this understanding then the youth may feel appreciated and view themselves as equal team members.

Objective 3: To discover perceived obstacles that may keep youth from engaging in youth-adult partnerships

The research data generated by this study indicated the greatest perceived obstacle that kept youth from engaging was "not much time after homework and other activities." It could also be concluded that the "meeting not being at a good time" may be the cause of the transportation obstacle.

It is recommended that the youth-adult partnership team schedule meetings at a time that was convenient to all participants. In order to overcome these identified obstacles, the youth must be involved in setting the meeting schedule.

Objective 4: To discover methods for improving newly developed youth-adult partnerships in order to develop life skills

The data indicated the project needed to be more interesting, needed more participation, needed to work more as a youth-adult partnership, or didn't need a change. By incorporating more youth involvement in the project design and decision-making process, this project may have resolved these two issues.

It is recommended that all participants in newly formed youth-adult partnerships receive training on how to implement and participate equally in this type of programming.

Staff development and 4-H Leader training should be conducted to ensure greater participation by youth in planning, implementing, and evaluating program activities. Adults may need to be taught to share authority roles, and respect youth for the contributions they can make in the leadership process (Seevers & Dormody, 1995, p.12).

Training can help the youth and adult participants improve their participation, working relationships, and partnership in this type of effort.

Implications of the study

Because this research was conducted as an exploratory study to determine the perceptions of youth and adults involved in partnerships in a specific program at a specific place and time the findings are only applied to that population. However, the implications of this study could affect how the Oklahoma 4-H program uses the youth development tool of youth-adult partnerships in other programs in the future. Research has supported the notion that youth-adult partnerships do have the ability to enhance the life skill development in 4-H youth and as such should be considered by youth development professionals.

As 4-H programs implement this type of programming, training should be provided to all the partners (youth and adult) involved prior to the development of the youth-adult relationship. Youth should understand they have an equal voice in the program design and implementation. Adults should understand the special needs of youth, such as meeting schedules and transportation to events. Adults should also understand it is imperative they place a high value on the youths' opinion and participation in the project development. Both, the youth and adults should understand that there is a balance in a youth-adult partnership where the youth and the adults have an equal voice. This point of balanced leadership and commitment is the ideal context for the development of life skills within the youth partners. According to the research and the literature, youth-adult partnership can enhance youth development programs, but to be effective they must be conducted properly. Simply supporting the concept without understanding it and fully embracing it doesn't seem to be adequate.

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A Qualitative Examination of Youth Voice in the Decision-Making Process within the 4-H Youth Development Program: Promoting Promising Practices in Overcoming Barriers

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A Qualitative Examination of Youth Voice in the Decision-Making Process within the 4-H Youth Development Program: Promoting Promising Practices in Overcoming Barriers

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Abstract: This paper discusses a national study designed to identify and describe obstacles to youth voice in the decision-making process in the 4-H youth development program from the perception of three distinct populations - State 4-H Program Leaders, 4-H State Youth Development Specialists, and 4-H Youth Agents/Educators. When examining these professionals' views on the barriers affecting youth voice in the decision-making process, time and scheduling seem to consistently present the largest barrier to youth voice. Involvement in the decision-making process provides a wide range of hurdles including the opportunity structures, involvement procedures, representation and dynamics within the process. Adult power and control provides a significant hurdle to authentic engagement of youth voice in the decision-making progress. Respect barriers were described by concepts such as preconceived notions, trust and valuing input. Additional barriers were identified including organizational culture, lack of transportation, lack of knowledge/experience, lack of preparation, lack of training, fear, misguided leadership, unclear expectations, participation, staffing and lack of resources.

Introduction

Youth development is the process of positively developing a young person's capacities by promoting the psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual growth of youth to help them transition into adulthood. Within organizations, positive youth development takes place intentionally as a course of action that encourages and supports positive results for youth. Through the process of youth development, young people become focused on achievement and goals, work in the direction of those goals, and avoid behaviors that would prevent the attainment of those goals (Hirschi, 1969).

Relevant Literature

Youth development organizations such as 4-H prepare young people to meet the challenges of adolescence positively transitioning into adulthood through a well conceived, progressive sequence of activities and experiences that promote social, emotional, ethical, physical, and cognitive competencies. They address the broader developmental assets all youth need, such as: caring relationships, safe places and activities, both physical and mental health, life skills, and opportunities for community service and civic participation (National Youth Development Information Center, 2000).

Youth development programs engage youth in activities, programs and environments that will enable them to gain critical life skills while meeting their basic human needs. Research on youth development programs has identified the following key elements:

- a comprehensive strategy with clear mission and goals;
- committed, caring professional leadership; youth-centered activities in youth-accessible facilities;
- culturally competent and diverse programs;
- youth ownership and involvement, and
- a positive focus including all youth (National Youth Development Information Center, 2000).

Exceptional youth development programs empower youth to make informed decisions, engage in actions based on their informed decision, and feel that they have the ability to make choices that affect their lives (Pittman & Wright, 1991).

One of the key elements of youth development programs is youth ownership and involvement. Youth voice is the involvement of youth in policy, program creation, development, implementation, and evaluation. A youth development program should recognize positive youth participation practices of nurturing, valuing and respecting young people and their ability to meaningfully contribute to issues and decisions that affect their lives (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002). Youth development programs must aid young people in developing their sense of voice in order to prepare them to be successful in today's fast changing world (Larson, 2000). Inclusion of youth voice entails taking risks and working together with youth to accomplish the mission of the organization (Fletcher, 2002). However, youth development programs that build relationships and effectively engage youth in the decision-making process provide well planned and structured programs that promote positive youth development (Redd, Brooks, & McGarvey, 2002).

In the field of youth development, adults frequently organize and implement projects with little or no involvement by youth in the decision-making process (Kothari, 1996). For many youth serving organizations, inclusion of youth voice would require a change in the culture and a shift in the paradigm of adults controlling the programming within 4-H (Hillison, 1996). However, the shift is well worth it. Research has shown that conventional planning led by adults is failing our young people (Frank, 2006; Meucci & Redmon, 1997). Newsome and Scarela (2001) found that organizations planning their programs based on the desires and preferences of adults make youth feel disconnected, alienated, unsupported, and unacknowledged by adults.

With the many opportunities that youth development organizations provide youth today, it is vital that these organizations allow them to become a larger contributor to the decision-making process to aid in recruiting and retaining young people. The fact is that youth are affected by an organization; therefore, these organizations should give youth the right to voice their opinions and ideas on how the organization is run. Youth understand the needs and desires of their peers and the manner in which they can be reached (Kothari, 1996; Laidlaw Foundation, 2001).

In addition to benefiting the organization, inclusion of youth voice has many advantages for youth as they gain valuable skills. Some of these include social and leadership skills from being included in the decision-making process (Kothari, 1996; Laidlaw Foundation, 2001; Pittman & Wright, 1991). Allowing youth to have a voice in the decision-making process means that a youth-serving organization needs to take youth's ideas and opinions into consideration and respect what they have to say. Engaging and empowering youth teaches them to define and communicate their concerns and interests thus, helping them design, discuss and implement programs that meet their interest and concerns (Pittman & Wright, 1991). Youth benefit from the learning process of being involved and planning programs, and they develop a sense of ownership and consecutiveness with the organization (Kothari, 1996). By allowing youth to have a voice, youth organizations tap into the unique perspective and ability of youth and the creativity and energy they bring with them to the table. Overall, youth organizations are equipping youth with the tools they need to become more active members of their community (Frank, 2006; Laidlaw Foundation, 2001; Pittman, 2000).

Procedures for engagement, suggested settings, length of activities, age-appropriate activities and barriers to youth voice are all issues that will challenge youth development educators (Checkoway, Figueroa, & Richards-Schuster, 2003; Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Mason & Goll, 2000; Scales & Leffert, 1999; Young & Sazama, 1999; Zeldin, McDaniel, Topitzes, & Calvert, 2000). Youth organizations often reinvent the wheel because of the lack of studies that identify how youth-serving organizations can promote youth voice and break down barriers that prevent youth voice in the decision-making process. There is a strong need for studies that identify if we are truly including youth in the decision-making process (Frank, 2006; Knowles-Yánez, 2005).

Purpose and Objectives

Within the framework of this research, youth voice is the concept that will be examined to shed light on the barriers of the engagement of young people. The purpose of this study is to identify the barriers that limit youth participation and recommendations based on these barriers that encourage youth voice.

Methodology

Population and Sample. National in scope, the study consisted of three significant professional groups within the 4-H youth development program: (1) the State 4-H Program Leaders in all 50 states, (2) the State 4-H Youth Development Specialists in all 50 states, and (3) five 4-H Youth Agents/Educators in Cooperative Extension county/parish offices in each state. The first population, 4-H Program Leaders in all 50 states, and the second population, 4-H Youth Development Specialists in each state were identified through the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service website directory. All 50 State 4-H Offices were contacted to verify 4-H Youth Development Specialists. Identified by the State 4-H

Program Leaders, the third population, 4-H Youth Agents/Educators, were selected based on the diversity and demographics of their state to complete the survey. Prior to the survey, a letter was sent via e-mail to each state's 4-H Program Leader, 4-H Youth Development Specialists, and 4-H Youth Agents/Educators to notify them of the study.

Instrumentation. An extensive literature review determined that there was not an existing instrument which measured the 4-H program's views on youth voice in the decision-making process. After a thorough review of literature, instruments were developed. Dillman's (2000) electronic survey design and methodology was followed in the study. Approval for implementation of the study was obtained from the Louisiana State University Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Protection prior to the initiation of the survey (3332).

Presupposition questions were developed to obtain data on the participant's perception on barriers to youth voice in the decision-making process. These questions were:

- What is the biggest obstacle to youth voice in the decision-making process within 4-H;
- Why is it the biggest obstacle;
- List any additional concerns or comments you may have regarding the topic of youth voice in the decision-making process.

Data Collection. The researchers administered the instrument via Zoomerang© (electronic survey software), to each State's 4-H Program Leader, State 4-H Youth Development Specialists, and five 4-H Youth Agents/Educators in all 50 states at the county/parish level that were selected by the State 4-H Program Leaders to complete the survey.

All participants were sent a cover letter electronically requesting their participation and instructions for completing the survey along with a URL link to the survey. Dillman's (2000) electronic survey design and methodology was followed throughout data collection. A total of 706 participants were asked to complete the survey during the time period extending from May 17, 2006 through July 27, 2006. The response rate for each population was 64% for State 4-H Program Leaders, 46% for 4-H Youth Development Specialists, and 52% for 4-H Agents/Educators.

Data Analysis. The qualitative analysis involved examining the assembled relevant data to determine how participants answered the research questions. The data analyses were conducted within the framework of the youth program development. To provide a framework for analyzing the information gleamed, the team of analysts repeatedly asked the following questions:

1. What patterns and common themes emerge in responses dealing with barriers that prevent youth voice? How do these patterns (or lack thereof) help to illuminate the broader context of the situation(s)?
2. Are there any deviations from these patterns within the populations studied? If yes, are there any factors that might explain these atypical responses?
3. Do the patterns that emerge corroborate the findings of any other corresponding research studies that have been conducted? If not, what might explain these discrepancies?

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), there are three elements of qualitative data analysis: data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions. The mass of data was organized and

meaningfully reduced involving deductive and inductive analysis. While shaped by pre-established questions and a literature review, researchers were open to inducing new meanings from the data available and took note of the frequency with which different issues were raised as well as the intensity with which they are expressed. In doing so, the researchers were careful not to "flatten" the data.

Using data display, the researchers arranged the responses in an organized, condensed display of information using a chart for thinking about the more textually embedded data. This data display allowed the team of researchers to extrapolate from the data to discern systematic patterns and interrelationships.

The researchers drew summaries by reflecting upon the analyzed data and what the implications meant. Online survey data and a review of literature were used to cross-check the themes identified from the survey. When drawing conclusions, verification entailed revisiting the data consistently to cross-check the emergent conclusions.

Limitations. The study only focuses on youth voice in the decision-making process as it pertains to 4-H; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other youth organizations. This study was limited to include only State 4-H Program Leaders, State 4-H Specialists, and 4-H Agents/Educators who are part of the 4-H program.

Findings

Demographics. The majority of State 4-H Program Leaders (59%) and State 4-H Youth Development Specialists (57%) were male. The overwhelming majority of 4-H Agents/Educators who participated in the study indicated they were female (79%).

The majority of study population reported their race as "White" with State 4-H Program Leaders at 91%, 4-H Youth Development Specialists at 94% and 4-H Agents at 89%. Table 1 illustrates data regarding the sample's ethnicity.

Table 1
Ethnicity

Ethnicity	African American	Asian-Pacific Islander	Latino	Native American	White	Other
State 4-H Program Leader	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	90.6%	3.1%
4-H Youth Development Specialist	3.7%	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	93.6%	3.7%
4-H Agents/Educators	3.1%	3.1%	1.5%	1.5%	89.2%	1.5%

When it came to highest level of education, the majority of State 4-H Program Leaders (65.6%) earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree. The largest group of State 4-H Youth Development Specialist (57.2%) and 4-H Agents/Educators (60%) reported that they had earned a Masters Degree. Table 2 illustrates data regarding the sample's highest level of education.

Table 2

Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	Program Leaders	Youth Development Specialist	4-H Agent
BS/BA	0.0	9.6	36.9
MA/MS/Med	31.3	57.2	60.0
PhD/EdD	65.6	33.2	2.3
MD/DVM/JD/DD	3.1	0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Youth Voice Barriers. The major objective of the study was to gather information, utilizing open-ended questions, from State 4-H Program Leaders, 4-H Youth Specialist, and 4-H Agents/Educators on the obstacles that they perceived affected youth voice in the decision-making process within the 4-H youth development program. When asked the question "What is the biggest obstacle to youth voice in the decision-making process within 4-H?," all three populations responded that involvement, lack of experience/knowledge, organizational culture, power/control, respect/value of youth voice, time/scheduling, and transportation were barriers of youth voice in the decision-making process within the 4-H program. Table 3 illustrates the emerging themes for the question, "What is the biggest obstacle to youth voice in the decision-making process within 4-H?"

Table 3

Biggest Obstacle to Youth Voice in the Decision-making Process within 4-H

Theme	State 4-H Program Leaders[a]	4-H Youth Development Specialists[b]	4-H Agents/Educators[c]
Communication		X	X
Diversity			X
Expectations		X	X
Fear		X	X
Involvement	X	X	X
Lack of Experience/Knowledge	X	X	X
Leadership		X	X
Organizational Culture	X	X	X
Participation		X	X
Policy/Risk Management	X	X	
Power/Control	X	X	X
Resources		X	X
Respect/Trust	X	X	X

Staffing			X
Time/Schedule	X	X	X
Training		X	X
Transportation	X	X	X
Youth Development		X	

Note. An "X" indicates that the theme emerged within the identified population
[a]A total of 32 State 4-H Program Leaders that responded to this particular question.
[b]A total of 168 4-H Youth Development Specialists that responded to this particular question.
[c]A total of 114 4-H Agents/Educators that responded to this particular question.

Time and Scheduling:

Time and scheduling garnered the most statements from all the groups. Accessibility, availability, scheduling conflicts, competition with other organizations, over commitment, time management, and parents' schedules were all dynamics reported as factors impacting time as an obstacle to youth voice in the decision-making process. A number of comments were made about the difficulty finding a time that accommodates for both youth and adults' schedules can be difficult.

Accommodating the schedules of youth was a theme within time and scheduling that garnered a wealth of comments including:

> "Changing the culture to allow youth to participate by adjusting meeting times and schedules to accommodate them."
>
> "Schedules for both youth and adults work against each other."
>
> "Trying to accommodate schedules of youth and adults, with varying demands, both night and day in order to have meaningful engagement."

Youth being overscheduled was another reoccurring concept related to time as illustrated by the following statements:

> "There just aren't enough hours in their schedule for additional responsibilities."
>
> "Youth are already over committed and seem hesitant to get involved."
>
> "Youth are too involved in other activities and other organizations, and it is difficult for them to find time to plan and carry out projects."
>
> "Effort required making it happen."

Involvement:

Involvement was mentioned the second most frequent with 4-H Specialists mentioning it the second most number of times and 4-H Agents ranked it fifth with their frequency of comments. Involvement in the decision-making process ranged from the design of the opportunities to involvement procedures to the concept of representation to dynamics within the process.

The design of the involvement opportunities was a complex issue ranging from designing the involvement opportunities to providing a high quality involvement experience to time for and timing of the involvement. The following statements illustrated issues of involvement:

"Ability to convene opportunities for youth to be heard and involved in the program development and implementation."

"Providing youth with information that their voices are important. Then allowing the youth to speak out."

"Lack of an effective structure or process for decision making, particularly at the state level."

"We tend to involve them AFTER adults have come up with the issue/program, etc instead of asking them to help in brainstorming and coming up with the issue/program."

In providing involvement opportunities, the concept of representation came out in comments related to a balance between the number of youth and adults and using the same youth. The following comments illustrate these points:

"Thinking that one youth rep is enough presence to assure their voice is heard."

"The same youth are repeatedly called on to serve, thus excluding many capable youth."

"Identifying youth to be involved that will speak their mind and thoughts, not their parent's views."

"Adults understanding why youth representation is not only important but necessary for the continuation of the 4-H program."

An additional involvement issue was youth and adult relationship dynamics which was described through the following statements:

"Adults who lack a positive understanding of the contributions youth can make while still participants in the program."

"Many times youth do not realize the power and knowledge they bring to the entire process."

"Adults and youth perceiving equality at the same table."

"…Youth for the most part are told this is what will happen and then go along with the decisions and are given smaller roles in the activity."

Power and Control:

Power and control was the third most frequent theme identified. Power and control was the theme mentioned second most frequently by 4-H agents and third by 4-H Specialists. Power and control obstacles ranged from adult control issues to negative perspectives of youth capability to adult being over invested in the program to a lack of openness to the inability to share power. Some of the comments regarding power and control within the decision-making process were:

"Adult's fear of youth taking control and adults not getting their way."

"The lack of adults willing to let them have a voice. Then when they do have a voice, the adults allow the youth to believe they will do what they want when they actually have no intention of doing what the youth planned."

"Adult's ability to be quiet and let youth dominate."

"Adults allowing youth to build a responsible partnership in the decision making process."

"Involving adults that will allow youth to make decisions. Failure is part of the process. It's not what failed it's what can we learn from this and do differently so the next time we have different results."

Respect:

Overall, respect was the fourth most frequently identified theme. Respect or lack thereof, was the second most frequently mentioned theme for State 4-H Program Leaders, the third most frequently mentioned theme for 4-H Agents and the fourth most frequently identified theme for 4-H Youth Development Specialists. Respect was described by concepts such as preconceived notions, trust and valuing input. Preconceived notions were identified as barriers related to respect as illustrated through the following comments:

"Youth and adults having preconceived ideas about each others' capacity."

"Changing the mindset of some adults to value the ideas and skills youth can bring to the planning and implementation process."

"Our inadvertent patronization of youth."

"Getting adults to open up and to realize that the youth are responsible enough and capable of participating in the decision making processes."

Within the concept of respect was the importance of valuing each other as expressed in the following statements:

"The ability of each to accept and value what the other may bring to the table."

"Adults truly valuing young people as resources and not objects."

"The adults need to honor the youth in the youth-adult partnerships. To see the role of the youth's voice as equal."

"Adults' perception that youth voice is valuable to the 4-H process."

An area within respect, trust was described through the following statements:

"Trust and communication play a major role in youth voice."

"Once the group establishes trust and objectives both groups work better together as a unified team."

"Trust among the youth and adults to be equal players, time to develop this trust and create true partnerships...to bring youth truly into partnerships with us."

Quotes outlining valuing input included:

"Being asked to serve on committees and then the committee members not listening to what they have to say."

"The biggest obstacle is having an equal partnership between youth & adults when making decisions in 4-H."

"Youth and adults mutually respecting each others opinions and ideas."

"Adults who value and support opinions and input of youth."

"Having adults value their input and to seek their input."

Identified by all three groups, organizational culture was described through the statements regarding tradition and expectations as follows:

> "The culture of control by the 4-H faculty member at either the state or county level."
>
> "Changing the culture to allow youth to participate by adjusting meeting times and schedules to accommodate them."
>
> "Inoculating both a culture that expects youth involvement and lack of understanding and knowledge of Youth Development principles and pressures of getting programming done at the service level."
>
> "Culture believes that youth don't have the skills and abilities to live up to the expectations of adults."
>
> "A history of not including them on advisory councils, fair boards, committees, etc. - currently doing more of that, but youth and adults aren't used to it and often don't understand/appreciate roles of each."
>
> "Developing an atmosphere of openness between youth and adults."

Training:

Lack of training was identified by 4-H Youth Development Specialists and 4-H Agents as a barrier to youth voice in the decision-making process. While both groups identified the need to provide training for both youth and adults, 4-H Specialists' comments focused mostly on training adults as illustrated in the following statements:

> "Teaching adults how to accept, encourage, and facilitate opportunities for youth voice."
>
> "Providing sufficient training to adults so that they understand the value of youth voice in the decision making process."
>
> "Volunteer adults need to be trained as to how to encourage youth voice by more self-awareness and participatory group process, diversity and respectful communication skills training."

Another aspect of training was identified by 4-H Youth Development Specialists as they discussed the youth voice aligned with their age and ability as demonstrated by the following statements:

> "Lack of life experiences sometimes leaves them (youth) without enough information to make good choices or suggestions" and
>
> "neither adolescents nor younger children are developmentally ready or able to effectively take on actual adult decision-making roles and responsibilities for the overall 4-H program, and adults who attempt to engage youth as 'equal partners' in 4-H decision-making at all levels are often misguided in what they do."

Transportation:

Identified by all populations as a challenge, the barrier category of transportation involved the youths' ability to drive, the distance involved in transporting youth as well as the resources to drive or be driven. Statements regarding transportation included:

> "Transportation, distance to travel to gather for meetings."
>
> "Travel restrictions for face-to-face meetings of State 4-H officers."
>
> "Distance required to bring all parties together."

"They can't drive or do not have their own car, money is being saved for college and or a car, and they have little time as starting to work and school work and activities are very important."

Experience:

Noted by all three populations, lack of experience and knowledge dealt with comments regarding both adults and youth. The comments included:

"Youth interest and knowledge level with respect to decisions they might have to make."

"Their lack of life experiences sometimes leaves them without enough information to make good choices or suggestions."

"Experience on the part of both adults and youth."

"Lack of skills by the adults to encourage youth voice and involvement."

"The lack of opportunity to develop their communication skills in other areas of their lives."

Fear:

Both 4-H Youth Development Specialists and 4-H Agents/Educators identified fear as an obstacle to youth voice in decision-making roles. Interestingly, Specialists recognized adults' fear of letting people down, not being able to make a mistake and fear of allowing youth to take the lead. Conversely, 4-H Agents related fear to youth being made fun of by peers or adults and fear to speak up when adults are around.

Communication issues were addressed between youth and adults, such as communication skills and lack of effective communication tools. Expressed by both 4-H Youth Development Specialists and 4-H Agents/Educators, having clear expectations was outlined through perceptions of each other's expectations, communicating expectations, low expectations, and making a commitment.

A wide variety of other themes emerged including leadership, participation, policy/risk management, and resources. The concept of leadership was identified, which ranged from adult leadership that doesn't value youth voice, to lack of positive 4-H leadership roles for youth. Participation issues addressed active participation, lack of participation, prior negative youth voice experiences, turnover and a lack of success stories. Policy issues were connected to university policy or liability/risk management considerations. Resources involved fiscal and material resources needed to support youth voice such as transportation, time, and computers. Staffing obstacles, shared exclusively by 4-H Agents, related to staff shortages and having capable volunteers to expand staff efforts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions. When examining 4-H youth development professionals' perceptions on the obstacles that affect youth voice in the decision-making process, time and scheduling was consistently present as the largest barrier to youth voice. Time, as a barrier, was a complex concept. The first concept of time related to the time it took as part of a process involved in developing and utilizing youth voice within the decision-making process. The second concept related to issues of busy schedules, the timing of meetings, differing schedules of youth and adults, and conflicting events, activities and priorities. While involvement was mentioned as an aspect of time, it emerged as a separate youth voice barrier. Involvement in the decision-

making process provides a wide range of characteristics including the opportunity structures for engagement, involvement procedures, adequate representation of youth on boards, and dynamics within the process.

Adult power and control provides a significant barrier to authentic engagement of youth voice in the decision-making process. Power was focused on adult's superiority over youth, adults not having confidence in youths' decision making capabilities, and protecting youth from failing in front of their peers and adults.

Other consistent threads through which most control issues identified were respect and trust. Barriers outlined within the respect construct were described by preconceived notions, trust and valuing input. Interestingly, respect often involved including youth representation and not valuing or trusting that they could contribute to the decision-making process. Some of the context of this construct included believing youth don't have the life experiences necessary to be a successful contributor or that they lack the responsibility to follow-up on critical steps.

Organizational culture indicated that the organization did not value youth inclusion throughout multiple levels. While personal views regarding youth voice indicated that youth development professionals realized youth voice should be part of the decision-making process, it was clear that they felt that the organization limited youth voice through policies, history, tradition and conflicting values. Additional barriers included transportation challenges, lack of knowledge/experience, deficiencies in preparation and training, fear, misguided leadership, unclear expectations, participation levels, staffing issues, lack of resources, and developmental fundamentals.

Recommendations. Time and scheduling, money issues, and transportation will always present challenges to participation in today's society. To address these logistical issues, youth development professionals can utilize technology such as conference calls or web chats to support different meeting formats and strategies to engage youth voice. Meeting times can be dovetailed to maximize participation. In addition, instead of meeting as a whole group, once started, smaller groups or committees can meet together to address specific tasks or goals. It's important to make the most of meetings by helping participants come prepared to aid in running the meeting efficiently. The meetings can be "brought" to the youth at their location so transportation isn't an issue. Transportation support can be provided by carpooling and having meetings when parents and other adults can provide travel support.

When finances or resources are a concern, providing scholarships, obtaining grants or having a computer loan system to reduce the financial burden on participants can provide much needed support (Hoover & Weisenbrach, 1999; Newsome & Scalera, 2001; Parker, 1999).

Research has shown that one of the most critical components to the success of youth voice is the youth-adult partnership. Youth development professionals should view youth as equal partners when it comes to making decisions. It's the responsibility of the youth development professional to address adults who want to control the program and do not allow youth voice in the decision-making process. Professionals can provide training and preparation, model the behavior they wish others to adopt, and address control issues through consultation and guidance (Checkoway, et al., 2003).

Most of the obstacles to youth voice can be remedied through preparation and high quality, experiential training on youth voice. Relevant trainings help youth and adults get on the same

page in understanding why youth voice is important and appreciating what each group brings to the table. Preparation for youth voice through such avenues as orientation, position descriptions, team building activities and careful selection of both youth and adults teammates assures that youth and adults become partners and develop meaningful relationships that provide the respect and trust needed for youth voice to thrive.

To build positive relationships, it is critical that youth and adults engage in open, honest dialogues around the strengths and weaknesses each brings to the project. Respectful sharing can create an atmosphere that can result in trust, an essential element to positive youth and adult partnerships. Communicating high standards and clear expectations to all that are involved are critical to fostering a positive environment for youth voice (Carstarphen, 2001; Checkoway et al., 2003; Justinianno & Scherer, 2001; Mason & Goll, 2000; Young & Sazama, 1999; Zeldin et al., 2000).

While organizational culture can be a difficult area to enhance, it's a vital element in creating a culture of youth voice. The organization needs to be modeled from all levels starting at top to provide an avenue to promote and support youth voice on the front-line. As administration supports youth voice, linking the organizational vision to the role that youth voice plays in its implementation of the programming and support mechanisms is vital. Clear communication and expectations of inclusion of youth voice needs to be demonstrated on multi-levels within the organization. When it comes to promoting and supporting youth voice, experimentation and acceptance of failure must become part of the organizational culture. Professionals must understand that failure is a part of the natural youth development process. To create system's change, involvement of everyone is vital.

Youth development professionals have an obligation to prepare, teach, coach and support both youth and adults in the decision-making process. Youth development professionals have the responsibility to employ facilitation strategies that help promote equal voice. The recommendations from this study should be implemented to insure equal and adequate representation of youth and adults within youth organizations.

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Attrition in Adolescent After-School Programs: Addressing the Concern via Interviews with Program Dropouts

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Attrition in Adolescent After-School Programs: Addressing the Concern via Interviews with Program Dropouts

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to address the challenges of attrition in adolescent, voluntary after-school programs (ASPs). Studies show that the after-school hours are a time of elevated juvenile delinquency. Since 1998 there has been a surge in the number of ASPs throughout the United States. Despite this surge, attrition is a major concern and threat to ASPs. Moreover, youth who drop out are rarely asked about their reasons for not attending. Seventy middle school-aged individuals who were selected to participate in the Baltimore County Middle School After-School Collaboration Project (BCAP) but eventually dropped out are interviewed for this study. Six primary reasons for non-attendance including: a lack of program fidelity, participation in non-family-related after-school activities, participation in family-related after-school activities, program length, boredom, and a lack of quality academic help are identified. The findings indicate a need for programming that is faithful, flexible, and narrow in terms of activities offered.

Introduction

In fiscal year 1998, the federal government provided 40 million dollars to schools across the nation to create and run 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), which are school-based after-school programs. By fiscal year 2001, the funding for CCLCs had increased to $850 million (Hollister, 2003). State and local agencies followed suit. New York increased funding for its after-school programs from 500,000 to 10 million dollars; Kentucky spent $37 million on extended school services, and in 2003 Pennsylvania was considering a bill to spend $15 million on their after-school programming (Hollister, 2003).

The growth in ASPs stems from several important issues. In the 1980s, youth activists began to focus on programming that would target risky behavior of youth including increased sexual

activity, drug and alcohol abuse, school dropout, and weak educational performance. The results of such behaviors were perceived to be: growth in teen pregnancy and single parent families, deeper involvement in drug use and sale, growth in gang-related activity and crime, and a lack of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy (Hollister, 2003).

Pursuant to these concerns was the increasing concern over the timing of delinquent behavior. A Carnegie Foundation report (1992) found that a higher proportion of crimes committed by youth were committed between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. in the afternoon. Furthermore, Snyder, Sickmund, & Poe (1996) found that 22% of the violent crimes that occurred in South Carolina from 1991 to 1992 occurred between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays. Additionally, Sickmund, Snyder, & Poe, (1997) analyzed data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System from eight states between 1991 and 1993 and found that one in five violent crimes committed by juveniles occurred between the hours of 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Finally, Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Weisman (2001) found that the after-school hours were a time of elevated delinquency and that youth who were unsupervised after school were significantly more delinquent at all times than those who attended ASPs.

Indeed, pre-1960s, youth serving organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Boys and Girls Club of America, and the Boy and Girl Scouts were not originally focused on preventing risky behavior, youth crime, and/or teen pregnancy. However, during the 1960s and 70s, the increasing rate of poverty, especially in the inner city, heightened the awareness and concern about juvenile delinquency and risky youth behavior (Hollister, 2003). Towards the late 1980s and early 1990s, greater emphasis was placed on two areas:

1. Curtailing risky behavior and youth crime and
2. Achieving positive outcomes for youth through programming that would build upon the positive assets that youth already possessed (Hollister, 2003).

Towards the latter half of the 90s, positive youth development became the major focus of after-school programming (Hollister, 2003).

Literature Review

The literature on ASPs is varied and extensive. To date, the literature suggests that high quality ASPs provide a plethora of benefits to their participants including: (1) personal attention from caring adults, (2) academic support, (3) development of new friendships, (4) exploration of new interests, (5) a sense of belonging to a group, and (6) the ability to build a sense of self-esteem independent of academic talent (Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP), 2004). These benefits manifest themselves in several protective factors against delinquency and other risky youth behavior including:

1. Increased academic achievement (i.e. higher grades and grade point averages), including recovery from poor academic performance/standing and an interest in furthering one's education,
2. A stronger self-image,
3. Positive social development,
4. Reductions in risk-taking behavior,
5. Better school behavior, and
6. Fewer absences (HFRP, 2004).

However, the literature is mixed in regards to the definition of high quality programming. The Harvard Family Research Project (2003) provided an overview of 27 evaluations of after-school programs that used experimental and quasi-experimental research designs to make statements about program outcomes. Results from this study suggest that after-school program components and factors that yield greater benefits for youth are programs that match program content and scheduling to participant's needs (i.e. the need to make money or flexible scheduling), programs that keep teens involved with opportunities for leadership, and community service programs.

Lauver and Little (2005) report that paid employment yields greater benefits for teens, especially those in low-income communities, while Rhodes (2004) stresses that caring youth-staff relationships are extremely important. In terms of recruitment and retention strategies, Lauver and Little (2005) state that there are three critical elements to quality after-school programming. These include: "1) a sense of safety and community that is both physical and psychological, 2) committed program staff who develop supportive relationships with youth, and 3) challenging, age-appropriate, and fun program activities" (pg. 72).

Despite the potential benefits of ASPs, attrition is a major concern and threat to their prosperity. In a national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, 25% of the participants withdrew in the first two months of their ASP (HFRP, 2004). Additionally, in Weisman and Gottfredson's (2001) evaluation of eight different ASPs involved in the Maryland After-School Community Grant Program, "withdrawal interviews" showed that 33% of the students found the program boring, 19% of the students had relocated to a different area and could not attend the after-school program and 14% of the students had transportation problems that caused them to drop out of the program. Indeed, the literature commonly finds that it is difficult to retain teen participants because of a lack of interesting activities.

In a study of three Boys and Girls Clubs of America in New York and five in Boston, about 44% of the teens in the Boston clubs and 54% of the teens from the New York clubs cited uninteresting activities as the main barrier to participation (Herrera & Arbreton, 2003). Finally, the Harvard Family Research Project (2004) states that most ASPs experience attrition rates of 20-40% and most commonly lose participants early in the program year due to boredom and/or a lack of interesting program activities.

High attrition rates can be particularly problematic if there are systematic differences between the youth who drop out of ASPs and those who remain in ASPs. For example, youth who drop out of ASPs may come from low-income homes or single parent households. They may have learning disabilities that may negatively impact their ability to perform in an after-school program setting. These youth may be less likely to remain in ASPs than youth without these problems and may be in need of more individualized after-school care. These differences are especially salient for program implementers seeking to positively impact at-risk populations of youth. If more at-risk youth are dropping out of ASPs then the chances of reducing delinquent behavior is diminished. Indeed, the literature on the effects of selection bias tell us that those who remain in after-school programs are more likely to perform well in other areas of life regardless of participation in the ASP (HFRP, 2004). In other words, those who choose to participate in ASPs are not necessarily at-risk and are systematically different from those who choose not to participate in ASPs. Similarly, Weisman and Gottfredson's (2001) study shows

that students who choose not to participate in ASPs are exactly the type of at-risk students that some ASPs are targeting.

Some interesting qualitative studies have emerged from the New Directions for Youth Development series. In a study conducted by Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, and Stone (2005), the researchers examine the possible correlation between ethnicity and choosing to participate in ASPs. Borden and her colleagues (2005) conducted a qualitative study in which they asked a group of 77 urban youth who reported active participation in a structured program for youth and who identified themselves as Black/African American, Latino, Arab American, or Chaldean about why they chose to participate or not to participate in voluntary ASPs. The youth were also asked to speculate about the reasons for participation and non-participation of other youth in their neighborhoods and schools. Over half of the youth reported attending one of the nine ethnic-oriented, community-based ASPs that were identified for the study at least three times a week (Borden, et al., 2005).

The study showed that reasons for non-participation varied between ethnic groups, by age, and by gender. There were four main reasons for non-participation: youth "1) were too busy or lacked time, 2) had other interests, 3) held negative opinions of the youth center, or 4) were constrained from participation by parents or guardians" (Borden, et al., 2005, pg. 39). Some programs were perceived as boring or more suitable for younger students. In fact, for the students over age 15, the presence of younger children at the youth centers was described as a major deterrent to their enrollment and participation.

The popularity of the program was also a concern for some of the teenagers in the group. If the programs were not as popular or favorable to their peers, the youth were less likely to participate (Borden, et al., 2005).

The African American females in the group cited competing interests and negative opinions of the youth center in response to why they and their peers do not participate in some ASPs. The Latina girls repeatedly cited chores at home or babysitting as a major barrier to participation. Likewise, the Arab American females cited lack of time, often due to homework or babysitting, and lack of confidence as some of the major barriers to attendance in ASPs. The Arab American, Chaldean, and Latina girls also stated that they were not allowed to participate in sports like coed swimming and that some parents did not allow their daughters to go out at night for fear of involvement with males in the ASPs. The Arab American males in the group also cited parental disapproval, particularly in terms of work and study behaviors that served as a barrier to participation. As one participant expressed, "I joined the football team, but my dad made me quit because I had to work…my dad tells me that school is more important than work and work is more important than sports" (Borden, et al., 2005, pg. 40).

The Chaldean females in the group diverged a bit from the dialogue in that they believed that youth did not participate in ASPs because they were engaged in other risky but "fun" activities such as partying, smoking, or doing drugs (Borden, et al., 2005). Both the Chaldean females and the males in this group stated that their parents' concerns about safety were another barrier to participation in ASPs. The Chaldean males cited other extracurricular activities such as bike riding and sports as a major barrier to participation. The Latino males in the group mentioned that some youth did not participate because they were out getting high, doing drugs, or out with their girlfriends (Borden, et al., 2005). Other barriers to participation for the Latino males included: lack of information, money, shyness, and concerns over body image. Finally, the attendance barrier most commonly voiced by the African American males in the

group was the quality of the program staff. If the program staff did not relate well to young people, that was seen as a major barrier to participation in ASPs.

The Present Study

This paper discusses a study designed to identify the reasons for non-attendance in a sample of dropouts from the Baltimore County Middle School After-School Collaboration Project (BCAP). This study offers some interesting results that may help program implementers develop methods that help decrease attrition rates and increase attendance in after-school programs. First, a brief description of BCAP is warranted.

The Baltimore County Middle School After-School Collaboration Project

The Baltimore County Middle School After-School Collaboration Project is a joint project between the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland (UMD) and the Baltimore County Local Management Board (BCLMB). The BCLMB is the County agency in charge of facilitating collaboration across public and private child-serving agencies and presently funds, monitors, and evaluates a variety of after-school programs in the area (Gottfredson, 2004).

Sample and Selection

During the 2006-2007 school year, five Baltimore County Public Schools participated in BCAP. All of the schools were middle schools that served approximately 4,617 students from predominantly lower socioeconomic status and were predominantly African American. Upon parental consent, 447 students who expressed interest in participating and volunteered to participate in an after-school program across all five schools were randomly assigned to either receive the "enhanced" after-school program (the experimental group) or a "less intensive" after-school program (the control group). After randomization across all five school sites was completed, there were 223 students randomly assigned to the control group, and 224 students randomly assigned to the experimental group.

The Experimental and Control Group Programs

The "enhanced" after-school program had three main components: structured tutoring, life skills training, and attendance monitoring and reinforcement. The structured tutoring in math and reading was carried out by hired tutors and was intended to improve literacy and math skills. The life skills training curriculum was carried out by hired and trained program staff and was intended to "reduce substance use and increase social competency skills" (Gottfredson, 2004, pg. 2). Finally, the attendance monitoring and reinforcement component was also carried out by program staff and was intended to aid in program attendance via positive reinforcement (i.e. the students are given various material incentives for continually attending the program).

The ASP was held three days a week, three hours each day for a total of 30 weeks. The three program components mentioned above were the structured activities involved in the program. Less structured activities included a variety of sports, board games, dance, and active team games offered after the structured activities had been completed. The less intensive program required the control group students to attend the ASP on the last Thursday of every month. The last Thursday of every month was a day when no structured activities were carried out (i.e. the students played various games for three hours).

Attrition in ASPs

The aforementioned study ran from September, 2006 until May, 2007. This study examined the reasons for non-participation using a sample of the students who were randomly selected to participate in the "enhanced" ASP but eventually dropped out. Data was collected via phone interviews and surveys mailed out to the parent/legal guardian of the non-participant. Every effort was made to contact all of the dropouts who had withdrawn from the program as of January, 2007. Due to time constraints adolescents who dropped out after January, 2007 were not included in this study.

Present Study Method

Interviews

There were a total of 98 students withdrawn from the after-school program at the end of January, 2007. A student was withdrawn if he/she missed over 50% of the program days in a given month during the 2006-2007 school year. For example, during the month of January, the program ran for 14 days so the students were expected to attend the after-school program all 14 days. In theory, at the end of the month if a student had attended seven days or less, they were withdrawn from the program. Of the 98 students withdrawn from the program, 68 (69%) students agreed to participate in a phone interview. This included 34 (50%) girls and 34 (50%) boys.

Surveys

Postcard surveys were mailed to the remaining 30 (31%) dropouts who were difficult to contact by phone. A brief letter accompanied the survey and explained its purpose. Only two (7%) of the 30 surveys were returned as the majority of the data was collected via phone interviews. Two male students completed and returned the survey mailed to their home address and 28 (93%) of the 30 remaining students could not be reached by phone and did not return the survey in the mail.

Results

Several reasons for non-attendance were voiced by the adolescents and in some cases by both the adolescents and their parents. As such, several themes developed over the course of the interviews. It was possible to group the reasons for non-attendance into 20 distinct issues under two overarching categories. The first category is entitled "Program Complaints." Under this category were reasons for non-attendance that dealt with the internal workings of the program such as program fidelity, length, and structure. The second category dealt with more external reasons for non-attendance such as relocation, fatigue, and illness. Thirteen of the reasons for dropping out of the program are categorized as "Program Complaints," while seven other reasons for non-attendance are categorized as "External Concerns." Tables 1 and 2 show the most prevalent reasons for non-attendance.

Table 1

Reasons for Non-Attendance: Internal Issues, N=70

Program Complaints	Percentage of students who gave particular reason
Program Fidelity[a]	21.4%
Program was too long[b]	17.0%
Overall program was boring or was not liked[c]	16.0%
Needed more academic help	14.3%
All Stars component was not liked/boring	10.0%
Forgetfulness/Miscommunication[d]	8.6%
Homework/tutoring component was not liked/boring	7.0%
Too structured	7.0%
General concerns[e]	7.0%
Program staff was too harsh	5.7%
Too little structure	3.0%
Concerns about safety	1.4%
No individualized attention	1.4%

[a] Certain activities were advertised during the initial planning/recruitment phase such as photography-, music-, and dance-related activities. Not all advertised activities were carried out. Also, structured tutoring was supposed to be offered at all sites, but only some sites actually hired tutors.

[b] This was especially the case during the winter time when sundown was around 5 p.m. or so. Some of the students and parents did not like the length of time spent in the program because it was dark outside by the time the students returned home. Other students complained that they did not like staying at the after-school program for three hours because it prevented or deterred them from participating in other activities when they returned home.

[c] Some of the students said that the program was boring because they "never got to do anything." There was often some kind of behavioral issue that caused all of the students to spend a majority of the time being quiet and making up for the bad behavior of specific students.

[d] Miscommunication problems included: receiving no instructions or receiving faulty instructions about the program days. For example, one student stated that because the school did not announce the meeting of the after-school program over the loud speaker, he would constantly forget to attend.

[e] Included in this category are the students who said that they just did not feel like going and parents who had specific incidents that made them take their children out of the program.

Table 2

Reasons for Non-Attendance: External Issues, N=70

External Issues	Percentage of students who gave particular reason	
Other after-school activities[a]	Non-family-related	Family-related
	27.0%	17.0%
Hang out with friends outside of program	8.6%	
Moved	8.6%	
Behavioral problems	Expelled from school or program	Suspended from school or program
	5.7%	4.3%
Illness and/or fatigue[b]	4.3%	
Grades dropped	4.3%	
Friends as a distraction[c]	1.4%	

[a] Other after-school activities included in the family category are: chores, baby-sitting siblings, "family time" and in the non-family category are: sports teams that were part of school or organized by an outside organization such as a local league, other after-school clubs such as chess and science clubs, cheerleading, and religious activities to name a few. This category also includes having to attend a funeral of a family member or tending to sick family members.

[b] Included in this category is depression. One student in particular was suffering from depression and could not attend the after-school program.

[c] One student stated that his friends in the after-school program were a distraction because they would often try to involve him in mischievous behavior. Additionally, he was not able to focus on his homework because his friends wanted him to "mess around" with them instead.

Under external concerns, there were two main issues that yielded more specific reasons for non-attendance. This included participation in other after-school activities and behavioral problems. Some students were suspended from either the after-school program or their school for a period of time or were expelled from the program or their school if their behavior was too severe. Additionally, there were two types of other after-school activities that students participated in; those that were family-oriented such as babysitting siblings, doing chores around the house, or "family time," and those that were not family-oriented such as: participation in school-sponsored sports teams or clubs (i.e. the basketball team or the chess club), non-school sponsored clubs (i.e. dance club and boy scouts), and/or religious education classes.

Each statement made by the respondent was recorded and then coded. After all of the interviews were completed, there were 145 statements made regarding barriers to participation. This included 88 statements made regarding program complaints and 57 statements made regarding external concerns. The average number of internal reasons given was 1.3 per student and the average number of external reasons given was .8 per student. The average number of total reasons given for non-participation was two and the maximum number of

reasons given was six. Sixty-three percent of the students gave at least one internal reason for non-participation and 67% of the students gave at least one external reason for non-participation. Finally, 30% of the students gave both internal and external reasons for non-participation.

Withdrawal interviews indicated that there were six primary reasons that students dropped out of the after-school program as listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Top Six Reasons for Withdrawal, N=70

Reason given	Percentage of students who gave particular reason
1) Engagement in other non-family oriented after-school activities (i.e. dance club)	27%
2) Lack of program fidelity	21%
3) Engagement in family-related, after-school activities (i.e. babysitting siblings)	18%
4) Program was too long	17%
5) Boredom	16%
6) Need for more academic help	15%

In Weisman and Gottfredson's 2001 study, the main reason students gave for dropping out of the program was boredom. Boredom, however, was cited by only 16% of the dropouts in this study. Fifteen percent of the dropouts stated that they needed more academic help. Students in this category expressed concern over the lack of help in subject areas such as language arts, math, and reading – areas that they were struggling with in school. Moreover, a fraction of these students were actually taken out of the after-school program and placed in specialized tutoring programs in order to obtain the help they needed. Although "homework help" was a program component sometimes performed alongside tutoring, the majority of students in this group stated that homework help was either not given and/or was not sufficient for their particular assignments. A few of the students voiced their concerns over the inability of tutors and/or program staff to actually help them complete their homework because as one particular student stated, "they [the program staff] didn't know how to do it." This suggests that program staff members were not sufficiently trained to assist a student in completing their particular homework assignments. Altogether, more dropouts indicated that various aspects of the after-school programming (i.e. concerns listed under program complaints) caused them to drop out (as opposed to the external issues).

Summary

This study found more participant concern regarding the internal workings of the program (internal issues) than external issues. The top six reasons for non-attendance in the ASP were:

1. Engagement in non-family-related after-school activities,
2. Lack of program fidelity,
3. Engagement in family-related after-school activities,
4. Program length,

5. Boredom, and
6. Lack of quality academic help.

Although this study was modest, it speaks to the type of concerns that program dropouts may face in deciding not to participate in an after-school program.

The findings about program complaints suggest that this particular after-school program suffered from a lack of program fidelity, excitement, and quality academic help; in essence, issues that dealt with program design/structure and implementation. The lack of sufficiently trained program staff members may have been due to high staff turnover. The total turnover rate across all five schools was 55%, with one of the schools having a turnover rate as high as 75%. Theoretically, these issues should be addressed in the design phase of an after-school program; however, even careful research and planning may not be able to combat the unpredictable nature of adolescents, their decision-making skills, and their complex family structure. Additionally, careful planning may not be able to circumvent the tendency of program staff to seek alternative employment, especially if the students in after-school programs are particularly disruptive or display significant behavior problems.

Implications

Program implementers face a great challenge. They must balance the needs and wants of not only the adolescent, but the parent(s) as well. After-school programs and their activities have to be fun, exciting, academically-oriented, structured, but not too structured, safe, considerate of the adolescent's time, and sensitive to family issues/concerns. With all of these considerations it will be difficult to completely satisfy every need/want of the adolescent and their families. It is clear that quality after-school programming is beneficial to the adolescent and their families; however, it is less clear what the most effective strategy is for retention. Additionally, the problems that BCAP had with program fidelity, structure, and implementation may be unique to this research and as such, the results may not be generalizable to other students in other after-school programs.

Most of the non-family-related after-school activities that the adolescents in this study were engaged in were clubs of some sort; for instance dance club, chess club, and sports clubs. These activities were structured, adult-supervised, after-school activities. This suggests that although it is common for ASPs to offer a wide variety of activities, it may be more beneficial to offer a specific, narrow set of age- and gender-specific activities. Likewise, program fidelity is key in retention efforts; if a program claims to offer a particular activity, then it is important to the students to be able to participate in that activity. Perhaps this is a good reason to offer a specific number of activities instead of an extensive number of activities that may or may not materialize. The expectation of something that may not materialize may be more detrimental to the student's future participation in ASPs than the expectation of certain non-varied activities at the ASP.

Related to this issue of an adolescent's time, boredom, the fifth highest reason on the list, manifested itself in a couple different ways. Some of the dropouts we interviewed stated that behavioral problems resulted in "time outs," which affected the ability of all of the students in the ASP to partake in the unstructured sports and games activities. Other dropouts stated that they found the monotony of the activities performed at the ASP to be a problem because the activities themselves were uninteresting.

The non-family-related activities that some of the dropouts participated in were dance clubs or organized sports clubs where they would practice the same routine for one, two, or three hours each day. At least for the dropouts in this category, these other after-school activities took precedence over the ASP. These *structured* monotonous activities were simply more "fun" and "interesting" than the unstructured, monotonous activities offered at the ASP. Again, it may be beneficial for program implementers to offer a narrow set of gender- and age-specific activities with clearly stated purposes and goals. This may decrease the number of students in a particular ASP, but help increase retention and engagement rates at the ASP. Tied closely to this issue is the fourth highest reason for non-participation: program length. When students are bored and uninterested, program length becomes a problem. When students are engaged and excited to be present, program length is less of a problem.

Eighteen percent of the dropouts in this study cited family-related after-school activities as a barrier to participation. Some students routinely watched their siblings after school, performed basic household chores, and/or spent time with a parent in a different household after school. For program implementers, these family-related after-school activities may be harder obstacles to overcome. However, when program implementers have some knowledge about an adolescent's commitments outside of the program, it should help them design programs that work around an adolescent's schedule. For example, some ASPs use "drop in" programs and activities with flexible schedules as recruitment and retention strategies for older youth who may have more demands on their time.

Finally, from this research, there is no indication that students were unwilling to participate in the academically-oriented activities at the ASP. Even the students who claimed that the academically-oriented components of the ASP were "boring," cited a few other reasons such as involvement in "other after-school activities" as the main barrier to participation. However, this study did find that some dropouts felt that there was a lack of quality academic help. The results imply that it is imperative that tutors, program staff, and helpers be knowledgeable in the student's coursework, especially in the particularly difficult areas of math, reading, and language arts. It may be beneficial to do one of two things: either conduct an assessment of the student's math, reading, history, language arts (and other subjects) skills and find out where the majority of the students are struggling, or access their student records in order to determine the areas that need improvement. Perhaps this manner of addressing academic concerns will help program implementers in the hiring process and help give students the tools they need to improve their academic skills and further their academic success.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Future studies may want to take into consideration the challenges recognized in this study as they seek to develop after-school programming that suits the unpredictable needs of students and their families.

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"Catch 'Em Being Good:" An Extension Service and State School System Team Up to Promote Positive Outcomes for Youth

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"Catch 'Em Being Good:" An Extension Service and State School System Team Up to Promote Positive Outcomes for Youth

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Abstract: This feature article describes a collaboration between the West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Department of Education to implement the "Responsible Students through School Wide Positive Behavior Supports" program (RS-SWPBS) throughout the state. A case study of Grandview Elementary School in Kanawha County illustrates the benefits that the collaboration brought to local youth. West Virginia Department of Education established the program and brought local schools onboard, while educators from the West Virginia University Extension Service became coaches and led the effort to collect and analyze data. Results included the development of positive behaviors, a decrease in negative behaviors, and the creation of a positive school climate.

Introduction

Creating a positive learning environment for youth in today's schools is challenging for educators. Many find that they must accommodate students with significant learning and behavioral problems and work under conditions that are counterproductive to learning (Lewis & Sugai, 1999). Schools in West Virginia have been searching for ways to improve school climate, student behavior, and student achievement to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001). In 1993, the West Virginia Legislature passed state code requiring all schools to develop a preventative discipline program. Today, because of a partnership between the West Virginia University Extension Service (WVUES) and the West Virginia Board of Education (WVDE), a program called Responsible Students through School Wide Positive Behavior Supports (RS-SWPBS) has been established statewide. Its mission is to provide safe learning environments for children and youth focused on academic and behavioral achievement.

In 2001, the WVUES received a school violence prevention grant from the U.S. Department of Education. A team of WVU Extension educators determined that RS-SWPBS addressed the goals set forth in the grant application. In July 2001, WVUES and WVDE reached a collaborative agreement to help school districts adopt RS-SWPBS. WVDE provided training and WVUES coached school leadership teams as well as provided technical support in the form of research tools and databases. The authors of this article describe this collaborative effort by telling the story of Grandview Elementary in Charleston, West Virginia.

The School Wide Positive Behavior Support Model

Many schools respond to behavior problems by establishing "zero tolerance" policies, however, punishment without a school-wide system of positive support increases levels of aggression, vandalism, truancy and dropout (Covington, 2000; Merret & Thorpe, 1996; Mitchem, Young & West, 2000; Stewart & Evans, 1997; Sulzer-Azaroff & Mayer, 1991).). Substantial research indicates that if teachers want to influence learning and behavior and improve student achievement, they must reinforce and reward positive behavior (Hardman & Smith, 1999; Kaplan, Hemmes, Motz & Rodriquez, 1996; Mitchem, Young & West, 2000). Schools that implement SWPBS tend to see lower levels of student problem behavior and improved academic performance (Blum, McNeely & Rinehart, 2002). If school rules are fairly applied and the consequences for not obeying them are known, fewer youth will become victims of violence and mistreatment by other students (Mayer, 1995).

The SWPBS program is comprised of a broad range of large group and individualized strategies. SWPBS is not a specific practice or curriculum; it is an approach to prevention/early intervention, based upon the scientific principles of applied behavior analysis (Sugai & Homer, 2002). According to the SWPBS continuum, a triangular model demonstrates student behavior. The top point of the triangle constitutes high-risk students or 5% of the student population who require tertiary prevention, including specialized and individualized plans. The second layer of the triangle constitutes 15% of the school population: students requiring secondary prevention. Three-fourths (75-80%) of the student population comprises the bottom portion of the triangle, those who only require primary prevention, and the SWPBS process focuses on this group. Once the primary prevention is in place, the staff can address the individualized needs of the remaining students.

The SWPBS process includes the following ten steps:

1) Develop a leadership team.
2) Recruit supporters.
3) Assess problems.
4) Establish three to five behavioral expectations for the school.
5) Develop an acknowledgement system.
6) Teach the behavioral expectations and the acknowledgement system.
7) Establish a Teach-Re-Teach System and acknowledgement system.
8) Continue ongoing decision making based on data.
9) Develop a procedure to identify and assist students with chronic problem behavior.
10) Continue a public relations effort.

West Virginia University Extension Service's Involvement in RS-SWPBS

Role One: Coach

In 2001, the WVDE provided training on how to implement RS-SWPBS for the first group of 45 school-based leadership teams. Over 200 teachers, administrators, university professors, Extension agents and state department staff learned how to develop and implement West Virginia's model. WVUES provided coaches for most teams. One of those teams was from the Grandview Elementary School in Kanawha County. The team included the principal, the counselor, and three lead teachers. Grandview Elementary is an urban school. At Grandview Elementary, the student minority population averages 17%, well above the state's average of 4%. Almost two-thirds of the 270 pre-kindergarten to fifth-grade students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program (62%).

At the end of the initial training, Grandview Elementary team members lacked confidence in implementing the RS-SWPBS process. Because there was no standard curriculum several members commented, "Where is the manual?" and, "They didn't tell us how to do this!" As coach, the Extension Agent helped team members gain confidence in their ability to implement the program. She attended monthly staff /professional development meetings and presented the RS-SWPBS model to the entire school staff. She conducted a school assessment survey and collected baseline referral data. As she guided the staff in their understanding of the results of the assessment survey and baseline referral data, they understood for the first time the level of discipline problems in their school. This was a turning point in the school's history.

The school staff began drafting school-wide expectations. Since the school's mascot is an eagle, they built upon an eagle theme and selected the following expectations:

1) expect to do your best,
2) accept responsibility,
3) give and earn respect, and
4) listen and learn.

In January of 2002, Grandview Elementary, with the assistance of the Extension agent, conducted a kick-off event to introduce RS-SWPBS to the students, parents and community.

Role Two: Data Collector and Analyzer

The Extension agent worked with the school staff to compile baseline data including academics, attendance, promotion/ retention rates, disciplinary office referrals, primary behaviors, disciplinary actions by location, grade level, gender, and ethnicity. She collected data in 2001 and again in 2003 and compared the two data sets.

Other Resources Provided by Extension

WVUES professionals provided other resources to support the RS-SWPBS process. The Extension Evaluation Specialist developed the core team questionnaire and analyzed the results. Extension Service faculty made presentations at workshops and conferences and reported on the West Virginia RS-SWPBS effort through a technical report to the U.S. Department of Education and to U. S. Senator Robert C. Byrd. The Kanawha County Extension Agent was able

to leverage the resources of the county office to provide on-going programs including nutrition classes for students and workshops for families, a 4-H after-school program and Family "Fun Nights."

Results

The collaboration between West Virginia University Extension and the West Virginia Board of Education benefited both the students at Grandview Elementary as well as the state school system.

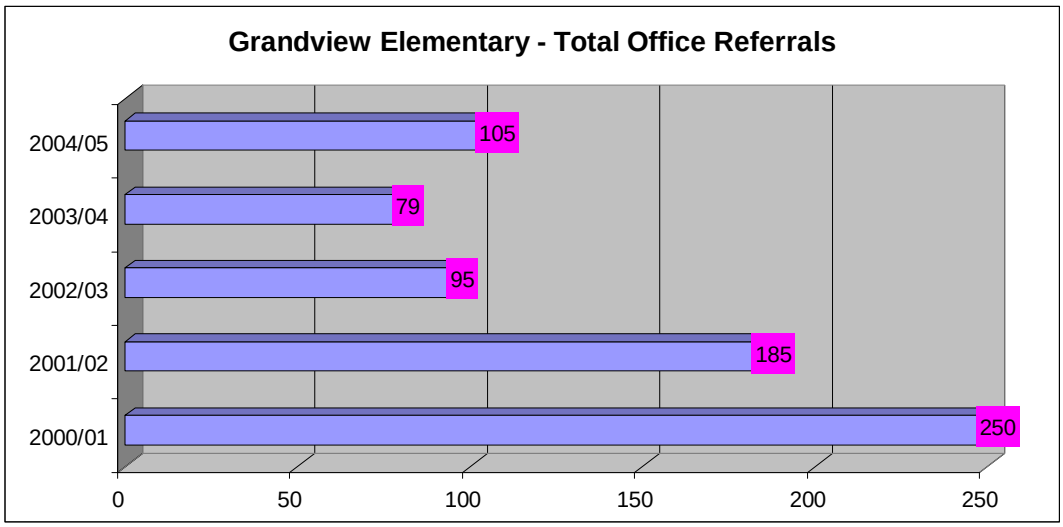
Benefits to the students at Grandview Elementary

1. Fewer students were referred to the principal's office for disciplinary reasons.

Baseline data, collected in the 2000/01 school year, showed that there were 250 discipline referrals to the office. Over the four years of implementation, disciplinary referrals steadily decreased to 105 referrals. This is an overall decrease of 58%. Based on 180 school days per year, the average number of referrals per day dropped from 1.38 to 0.583.

Table 1

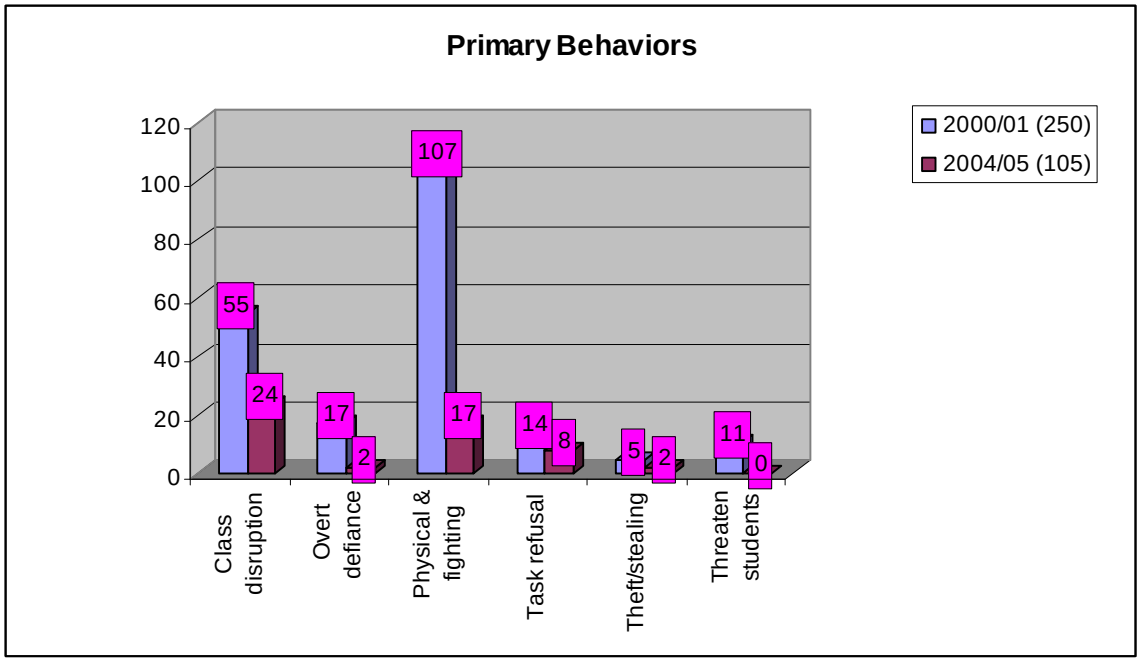
Total Office Referrals



2. The number of primary behavior incidents decreased dramatically.

In 2000/01, there were 107 reported incidents of fighting, but in 2004/05, there were only 17. This is an improvement of 82.2% (n=90).

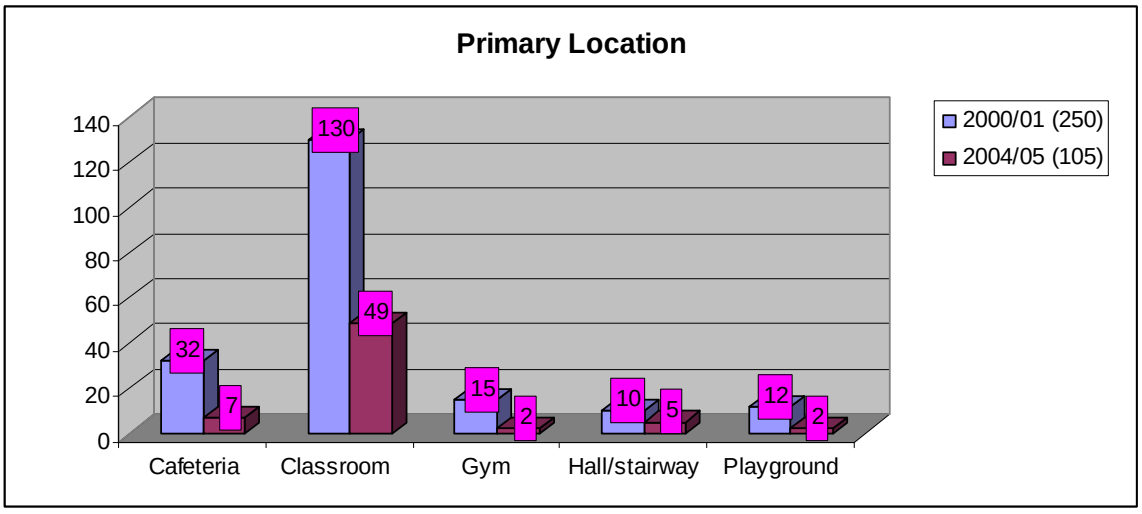
Table 2
Primary Behavior Incidents



3. Students enjoy safer and more learner-friendly classrooms.

Incidents in the classroom went from 130 in 2000/01 to 49 in 2004/05. This is a 62.4% decrease. Another category of dramatic improvement was the classroom disruptions. In 2000/01, there 55 reported disruptions. This number decreased by 56.4%.

Table 3
Primary Location of Behavior Incidents



4. Most primary behavior incidents are now handled at the classroom level; administrators handle only the serious cases.

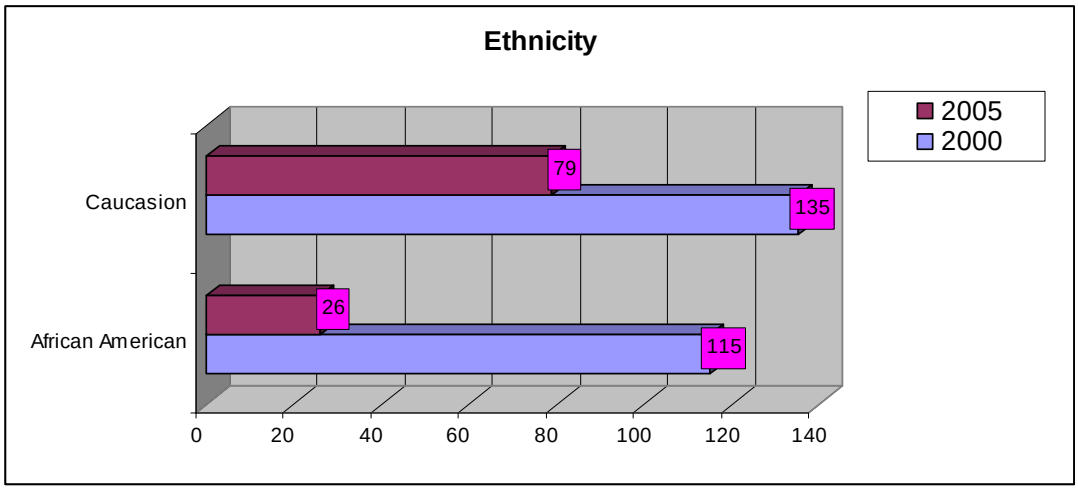
During the year of baseline data collection, teachers referred 87 children to the office without first trying to address the primary behavior problem. This number decreased to five in 2004/05 (94.3%). Now, if a teacher refers a child to the office, he or she has already taken appropriate action for primary behavior management and the next level of intervention can begin.

5. Minority students are no longer viewed as a "problem-behavior group." Ethnicity by incident more accurately reflects the school population.

In 2000, African American students were responsible for 46% (n=79) of the reported incidents even though African American children represented only 17% of the total school population. In 2005, that number was reduced to 24.7% (n=26).

Table 4

Disciplinary Action by Ethnicity

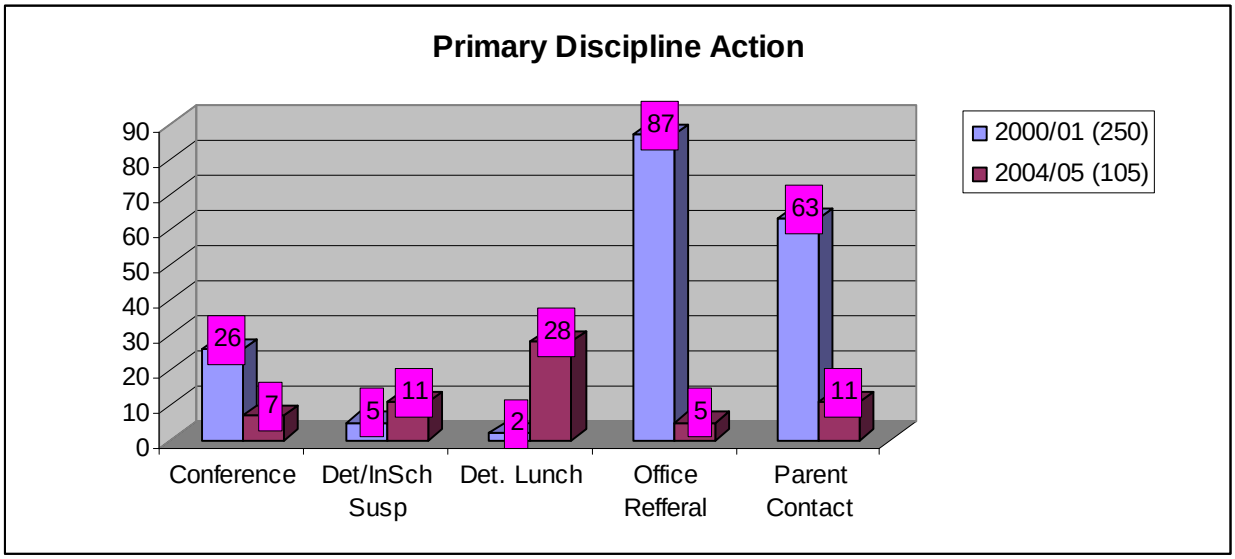


6. The number of children requiring tertiary intervention has decreased, and those that do, are receiving appropriate services.

At Grandview Elementary, students with more than five discipline referrals require tertiary prevention. In 2000/01, 11 students fit this criterion. This is 3.95% of the student population. In 2004/05, four students needed tertiary interventions. This is 1.73% of the student population, an improvement of 63.7%.

The number of referrals also decreased. In 2000, the three students with the most referrals received 22, 21, and 14 referrals, respectfully. In 2005, the three students with the most referrals received 11, 10 and 5 referrals, respectfully. This change is statistically significant.

Table 5
Primary Discipline Actions



Benefits to the state school system

1. The RS-SPBS training model, which included a coach for each school team, expanded statewide.

As it became apparent that the role of the local coach was important to the success of SWPBS, the WVDE formalized the requirement for a coach and created a coach's manual. Superintendents are now required to select the local coach before a school can enroll in an RS-SWPBS training seminar and put the commitment in writing. The local coach is required to attend a coaches' training session, the school-team training session, and all follow-up sessions. The local coach position has improved the integrity of the RS-SWPBS process in West Virginia.

2. The database created by the Extension agent coach was offered to all schools in WV.

WV RS-SWPBS teams were not comfortable using the internal data collection/reporting system, "West Virginia Educational Information System" (WVEIS) because if they reported all offenses, not just tertiary offenses, their school would be labeled as a dangerous school. (The WV Board of Education requires schools to report only high-level offenses such as drug use, weapon possession, and suspensions.) The RS-SWPBS database, underwent three revisions, and was finally offered as an alternative to the WVEIS system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The collaboration between West Virginia University Extension and the West Virginia Board of Education to implement RS-SWPBS throughout West Virginia resulted in positive outcomes for children and youth in West Virginia, including the development of positive behaviors, a decrease in negative behaviors, and the creation of a positive school climate. The authors recommend that readers, both in Extension and in community institutions and organizations seek out similar collaborative arrangements.

Recommendations for developing programs that result in positive outcomes for youth include:

1) Develop a program plan designed to meet specific youth outcomes using a logic model approach to program development. The University of Wisconsin Extension website offers many tips for using logic models for program development. Visit: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html.
2) Determine your organization's strengths and weaknesses with regard to meeting specified outcomes. Determine where collaboration is appropriate.
3) Get to know the resources of organizations in your state and community related to positive youth development. Every state has a land grant institution of higher education with Extension Service. To locate a listing of all Land Grant Institutions visit: http://www.higher-ed.org/resources/land_grant_colleges.htm.
4) Strengthen your plan by collaborating with other organizations, allowing each to bring their expertise to the program.
5) Develop indicators for success and collect baseline data.
6) Compare changes in baseline data over time.
7) Allow each organization to share in the analysis of the data.
8) Allow each organization to take credit for successes and share the results with their stakeholders.

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Cross-Cultural Understanding Through Youth Sports: Bridging the Tolerance Gap Through Youth Development

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Cross-Cultural Understanding Through Youth Sports: Bridging the Tolerance Gap Through Youth Development

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Abstract: The USPORT-Kyrgyzstan project was an ambitious initiative of public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, cross-cultural exchange, in-country grassroots projects, and international cooperation. The project consisted of three phrases which included youth recreational sport programming, youth leadership and development training, and youth tolerance training. Overall, it proved to be an extremely effective form of intervention that provided youth in this region of the Middle East with many positive and constructive youth sports and leadership development opportunities.

Introduction

In the aftermath of 9/11, many changes took place that increased security measures, examined groups of individuals and their purposes for travel, and improved the perceived safety of those who gathered for events, travel, and other means. The wake of 9/11 also brought increased interest on the part of the State Department of the United States to help stabilize societies and develop programs designed to become more aware of a sector of the world that is little understood - the Islamic nations of the Middle East (Dunne, 2004; Powers, 2006).

With this desire to understand came many forms of cross-cultural exchange, the extent to which has provided opportunities on university campuses to look at unique needs of Middle East nations. One such need was identified in the area of youth recreational sport development. In particular, how recreational sport can serve as a form of intervention to provide at-risk youth in these countries with positive and constructive environments and opportunities other than those

that plague these nations such as poverty, lack of education, alcohol, drug, terrorism and other abuse (Fraser-Thomas, Cote & Deakin, 2005; Rustad, n.d.). The United Nations further suggests that "by its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and bridging cultural or ethnic divides. Sport can cut across barriers that divide societies, making it a powerful tool to support conflict prevention and peace-building efforts. When applied effective, sport programmes promote social integration and foster tolerance, helping to reduce tension and generate dialogue" (UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, 2005). In addition, youth sport activities are frequently associated with positive experiences related to developing teamwork skills and forming community ties (Hansen, Larson & Dworkin, 2003).

Program Overview

The Indiana Center for Cultural Exchange (ICCE) was created by academic and administrative leaders at Indiana University, Purdue University, and the University of Notre Dame in order to bridge mutual understanding, appreciation, and cooperation between the United States and the Muslim world through youth sports development. The ICCE also included the Indiana-based Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and eventually expanded to include the University of Chicago, University of Minnesota, and noted national and international organizations.

The mission of the ICCE is to utilize its vast resources in ambitious initiatives of:

- public diplomacy,
- sports diplomacy,
- cultural exchange,
- in-country projects, and
- international cooperation.

The ICCE completed a very successful sports diplomacy project/program entitled: Unity through Sport (USPORT) or **USPORT-Kyrgyzstan.**

USPORT-Kyrgyzstan included Indiana University, Purdue University, the University of Notre Dame, Mercy Corps, and NIKE. The objective was to create youth recreational sports leagues throughout the Nookat region of the Kyrgyz Republic and included three major components in its "train the trainer" program. These components included:

(1) youth recreational sports management, coaching, and officiating training,
(2) youth leadership and development training, and
(3) youth tolerance training.

A three-person faculty project team from the ICCE universities visited Kyrgyzstan in early 2005. The team spent two days in the capital Bishkek and four days in Osh, the second largest city. Most of the time in Osh was spent visiting the Nookat region where the USPORT project was located. The Nookat region is located south and west of Osh, has about 220,000 inhabitants, and forms part of the Ferghana Valley that extends into both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Because of a number of destabilizing factors in these areas, including a multi-ethnic population, a recent history of violent conflicts, inter-village and cross border tensions, economic decline and unemployment, and environmental degradation, this region is constantly at risk for conflict. Also in this context, youth age 0-14, who now make up about 30% of the population, are especially vulnerable to the recruitment for, and provocation by, radical religious ideologies that support terrorism activities. In addition, youth are also succumbing to problems with alcohol,

tobacco, and other drugs due to extreme poverty, lack of education, and unemployment (Choudhury, Denham, Kumser & Romanelli, 2002).

The U.S. State Department's USPORT program for the Kyrgyz Republic sought to address the risk for conflict and radical influence by promoting constructive programs in the region. The goal of these programs was to assist in the prevention or reduction of stereotyping, violence, and hatred, particularly among youth, that is prevalent in the Nookat region of Osh Oblast.

Together, with a representative from its local partner in Kyrgyzstan, Mercy Corps International, the USPORT team visited a number of key institutions and influential individuals to solicit their support for the project and to make an assessment of the sports facilities in Nookat. The team also interviewed 42 applicants that included sport coaches, physical education teachers and NGO representatives from Nookat, and chose 10 candidates and 4 alternates to visit the three Indiana universities for training in the various dimensions of the USPORT program.

In designing the USPORT project, we asked ourselves a number of questions that fell into three categories:

1. How can we reach the largest number of youth? How can we bring into our project the most marginalized and disenfranchised youth who are most at risk of violence or being recruited into organizations and movements dedicated to violent change?
2. How can we develop as many youth as possible in positive ways and involve them in community projects? How can we identify and develop key youth who have the potential to be future leaders?
3. How can we teach youth to be tolerant of ethnic and cultural differences? How can we teach youth to value religious differences?

In regard to the first set of questions, we concluded that the best way of reaching a large number of youth is through a **youth recreational sports program**. Sports programs have proven to help youth establish peaceful and productive relations with their neighbors (Colliard & Henley, 2005; Holden & Wilde, 2004; Saskatchewan Culture, Youth and Recreation, 2003; United Nations, 2005). They have been shown to be highly successful for building bridges, fostering community involvement and creating friendships among youth (Perks, 2007). The team approach in sports leagues connects youth from different ethnic backgrounds. It helps at-risk youth gain a sense of belonging, experience the importance of teamwork and cooperation first hand, and value fellowship that crosses traditional boundaries (Autry & Anderson, 2007). Further, Mercy Corps has found that its own recreational sports programs in the Ferghana Valley were particularly valuable in reaching out to some of the more marginalized youth who would not attend more discussion-based or technical activities. We also saw sports programs as a way of connecting youth, especially those who are at most risk, to their local communities, making them less vulnerable to leaving home to join outside organizations.

In regard to our second set of questions, youth recreational sports programs are not just single events, but ongoing activities in the context of which **youth leadership and development training** can take place. Sports have always been a vehicle for leadership development that carries over off the playing field into the rest of one's life (Martin, 2004; Mull, Bayless & Jamieson, 2005). Youth development in general can enable young people to develop a sense of responsibility, more self-confidence, a sense of value in the eyes of others, social skills such as cooperation, assertion, and responsibility, and a greater value to positive and productive relationships with others (Cote, 2002; Eccles & Templeton, 2002; NAYS, 2002; Wright & Cote,

2003). Youth leadership training in particular gives young people the skills needed to analyze issues, suggest solutions, and resolve conflicts in peaceful ways that contribute to unity within and between communities. Leadership training helps youth identify and discuss local issues relating to young people as well as teaching them communication skills needed to present their views to the elders of the community. In addition, leadership training can assist youth in developing and participating in local civic activities in ways that help the youth feel valued and bonded to their community (NAYS, 2002; Wilson, 2000).

Lastly, we concluded that a **youth tolerance training** component was necessary for our project. This component has two aspects.

- First, we focused on training youth in ethnic tolerance, conflict mitigation, and peace-building. Greater tolerance, acceptance of others, mutual understanding, and respect are key to the development of cooperation between persons of different ethnic backgrounds. This kind of cooperation is fundamental to peaceful change in multi-ethnic regions.
- Second, we included training in religious tolerance, in valuing other religious traditions. While all the youth in the region of Osh are Muslims, they are sometimes influenced by radical views that demonize other religions, especially Christianity and Judaism. Training in religious tolerance make youth less likely to be convinced by the extremist religious ideology of those who would propose violence against persons of other faiths in the broader international arena (Reshef & Paltiel, 1989).

Given our resources and our conclusions concerning the design of a viable project proposal, we decided to offer multifaceted professional training that would lessen the potential for ethnic conflict in the Osh region. We created and developed youth recreational sport programs that included strong youth development, leadership, and tolerance components. This was presented to the 14 adult trainers who were selected to implement programs across the region.

We believe that this program will build grassroots friendship, teamwork, and cooperation; self-esteem, leadership, community action, and connectedness; as well as mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance. The development of these qualities and activities will serve to reduce the potential for conflict within and between communities in the Osh region, and making youth less receptive to extremist influences.

Project Description Detail

The USPORT project had three components to its train-the-trainer program at the three ICCE universities:

1. **Youth Recreational Sports Management and Coaching Training**
   The USPORT project included a two-week short course at Indiana University in recreational sports management, programming, coaching, and officiating with the following objectives:
   - train trainers to organize, plan, manage and program recreational sports programs,
   - train trainers in specific sports coaching in soccer, basketball and women's volleyball, as well as rules and officiating in these sports.

   To achieve these objectives, the USPORT short course was divided into two, five-day segments. During the first week, the participants were trained in the following:

- settings for recreational sports and the leisure sports model,
- planning, controlling, and managing of recreational sports programs,
- programming and supervision of sport tournaments and sports clubs,
- physical, psychological, and cultural impact of youth recreational sports programs.

During the second week, the participants were trained in the following:

- coaching basics, skill development, and rules and officiating in soccer, basketball and women's volleyball.

2. Youth Leadership and Development Training

The youth leadership and development training segment of USPORT took place at Purdue University. Its training program was designed to develop the particular knowledge, qualities, and skills youth need to become effective leaders within culturally diverse communities. To help create young leaders and role models who will work with their peers to instill positive values, the youth leadership/development component of USPORT included the following objectives:

- to teach the trainers an effective youth leadership development program to use with youths in Kyrgyzstan in order for youth to learn social life-skills and positive values that will enhance the well-being of themselves, their families, and their communities,
- to enable trainers to teach youths to be creative and resourceful in dealing with problems, to teach them communication skills, encourage them to have a vocal presence on social issues, and empower them to work with their peers in grassroots community projects,
- to help trainers build self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline, and social responsibility among youth,
- to train trainers to build youth-youth and youth-adult relationships across socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and geographic lines within and between communities.

3. Youth Tolerance Training

Tolerance training for USPORT was conducted at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc and Kellogg Institutes and at the Islamic Society of North America. The objectives were:

- to understand better the dynamics of ethnic conflict and the need and goals for tolerance training and peace-building in the midst of ethnic conflict,
- to give the trainers ways and suggestions of working with youth in order to develop ethnic tolerance and a desire for peace-building,
- to help address the radial religious ideology that demonizes other religions, especially Christianity and Judaism.

4. USPORT in the Kyrgyz Republic

Lastly, as part of the USPORT program, Mercy Corps partnered with ICCE and the 14 trainers in order to achieve the following USPORT objectives in the Kyrgyz Republic:

- improve levels of tolerance and understanding among youth in the Nookat area of the Osh region through active participation in youth recreational sports programs and joint problem-solving activities,

- enable these young people to participate in sports leagues, game days and related sports activities with their neighboring communities,
- coach these young people in soccer, basketball and women's volleyball,
- present to these young people the USPORT programs in tolerance and youth development and leadership,
- improve basic community social infrastructure through small, grassroots-driven projects that young people will design and implement based on their participation in the programs.

With the support of Mercy Corps and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Sport, the 14 Kyrgyz USPORT trainers trained other coaches, referees, and recreation supervisors in Kyrgyzstan. Together they created, organized, managed, coached, and officiated youth recreational sports leagues, game days and tournaments in the Nookat region for the remainder of 2005 and 2006. In that context, they presented programs, called "Time Out for Unity," to assist youth in developing tolerance, leadership, character, and engaging in community service.

The USPORT project brought in almost 2,000 youth, both boys and girls in separate leagues. Over 800 youth took part in the final tournament in late 2005 and early 2006. The local authorities and benefactors have taken over the leagues from Mercy Corps and have expanded them to include more villages in the region.

In their own words…

The following quotes, obtained through interviews from trainers in the program as well as youth participants after USPORT was implemented in Kyrgyzstan, demonstrate the impact that USPORT-Kyrgyzstan is having on league players, trainers, and supporters in Kyrgyzstan:

> *"During the games, a great number of fans enthusiastically support their teams. Players have started to see in their rivals not only opponents, but also friends. During the process of league play, children have already become closer and more friendly, and have even begun to greet and recognize each other in the streets. This is not insignificant."* (USPORT Train the Trainer basketball coach at the Abduvaitov School)

> *"Our trainer is very kind and he trains well. I requested him to let me play on this team because I'll do anything to play more soccer. And it's fun to mix with other children!"* (a student of Krupskaya School)

> *"One phenomenon worth noting is parent attendance at leagues games. Prior to USPORT league play, it was uncommon for Nookat parents to attend their children's sports events, primarily because parents had few opportunities to cheer for their children. Though fans are still few, the noticeable increase in parental involvement in the sports league is a positive start."* (USPORT Train the Trainer volleyball coach)

> *"Today I held a 'Time Out for Unity' exercise for the first time in front of a large crowd of people. Of course, I was nervous at the beginning, but once I started it became easier as the audience was active and worked with me well. I have prepared some materials for this training using US training handouts and the advice of our trainer,*

Janybai (USPORT Train the Trainer participant)." (Volunteer and student from Tajibai School)

"I held a number of 'Time Out for Unity' exercises during league basketball and football games. Initially, the issue of tolerance among children was difficult to get across as kids were so focused on winning. Regardless, it's so important to think beyond winning and losing and focus on the more important issue: to make friends with the other participants. These trainings help, and the relationships between the children are improving. They understand that these games were organized to build friendship and strengthen them further. As a result of the 'Time Out for Unity' exercises, players are now congratulating each other after the game and showing more sportsmanship while playing." (USPORT Train the Trainer coach at the Krupskaya school)

"As result of the USPORT organized referee trainings, youth between the ages of 14-17 – still just students at school – are now refereeing together with adults. Usually they are paired, with one referee being an adult and one being a young person. (USPORT Train the Trainer participant)

Conclusion

USPORT's impact was captured through the number of participants, trainings, and service projects that were carried out, as well as through reported changes in perceptions and attitudes about inter-ethnic friendships and tolerance of ethnic differences. With completion in 2006, USPORT-Kyrgyzstan had met or was close to meeting all of its expected benchmarks. Overall, the project:

1) trained 14 Kyrgyz USPORT trainers,
2) formed 98 sports teams directly benefiting 1,176 youth participants,
3) had 50% female participants, 65% ethnically Kyrgyz participants and 35% ethnically Uzbek participants,
4) directly benefited 2,842 adults, and
5) developed one grassroots service project in each of the seven hubs in Kyrgyzstan.

Kvalsund (2005) reminds us that sports, with its unique power can "bring people together and create communication where this has been removed and to strive for a positive change of people's attitudes." More than 40 years ago, DeGrazia, a leisure scholar, suggested that "recreation as a part has a vital mission in today's world. In an age of 'Hot and Cold' war, widespread international unrest, and terrifying weapons capable of blotting out whole cities at the flick of a button…recreation and sport must contribute effectively to the cause of peace" (1964).

Creating youth sport programs for at-risk youth involves using sport as a strategy or vehicle to strengthen youth learning and development. These programs incorporate specific rules for playing the sport, group interactions within the team and league and outside of the community, city or village, and provide a sense of unity among the participants who come with culturally different backgrounds. The United Nations regards sport as an effective tool and a strong unifying factor in the process of conflict transformation and peace building. "The balance between developing sport in its traditional form and using sport to achieve peaceful coexistence can only be managed by conscious and planned implementation, increased research, concept development and understanding and increased training of field implementers" (Kvalsund, n.d.).

We believe that the USPORT program had tremendous results for this region and could certainly be replicated in other parts of the world where youth are at risk. Truly, recreational sport can serve as a form of intervention and as a form of peace building that can provide at-risk youth a future for tomorrow.

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West Virginia's Response to the Rotten Truth about Oral Health

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West Virginia's Response to the Rotten Truth about Oral Health

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Abstract: West Virginia University Extension Service has taken steps to increase the awareness and practices of good oral health. Significant barriers exist for optimal dental health and preventive care for youth in West Virginia. The 4-H Health Initiative strengthens community 4-H clubs through joint commitment to improve the Health "H," club reliance on youth leadership, responsiveness to youth voices, and involvement of community health resources. These efforts bring oral health education and services to school-age youth. Evaluation data suggest that the model may impact oral health behaviors.

Introduction

Good oral health is essential to overall wellness. According to the United States Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health (2003), tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease. Children miss more than 51 million school hours each year due to dental-related illness. This report also states that dental decay and gum disease are communicable infectious diseases linked to low birth weight, cardiovascular conditions, cancer, diabetes, poor nutrition, speech impairments, and psychosocial problems. In 2006, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources concluded that eighty-four percent of West Virginia youth have cavities by high school graduation. Despite the rotten truth concerning dental disease, it is preventable when healthy habits begin early in life.

Barriers may prevent youth from receiving appropriate dental education, screening, and care. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office (2000), such barriers include a limited number of dental health practitioners, lack of transportation, cultural beliefs or misconceptions, low educational levels, and financial constraints.

Ensuring good oral health requires both community responsibility and personal actions. The West Virginia 4-H Health Initiative provides necessary elements to address this important issue. Through a new 4-H health officer program, West Virginia University Extension Service (WVUES) aims to improve awareness of oral health and reduce disparities among youths. An innovative partnership with WVUES, the West Virginia University School of Dentistry, and the West Virginia Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health/Oral Health Program engages youth and parents to actively learn and modify oral health attitudes and practices.

Program Design

Consistent with the national 4-H healthy lifestyles mission mandate, the West Virginia 4-H youth development program created a youth health officer position. Similar to other elected 4-H club officers, these youths are selected by their peers. They are trained and responsible for leading health activities during club meetings and other 4-H events. The pilot program focused on dental health content. It was pilot tested in four counties in 2006. Project goals were:

- To develop meaningful youth leadership roles within 4-H and their communities.
- To create focused, culturally appropriate and sequential messages and hands-on activities delivered at nine monthly club meetings.
- To build internal and external youth assets through planning and delivery of key oral health messages.
- To encourage communications between youth and parents regarding healthy dental habits.
- To increase organizational partnerships and resources.

Target Audience

The 4-H health officer program was designed for traditional, community-based 4-H clubs managed by adult volunteer leaders. Typically, club members range in age from 8 to 21. The majority of 4-H members are ages 10 to 14. Clubs meet monthly for business, education, and recreation. Meetings may be held in a variety of settings - homes, community centers, schools, and places of worship. Because of the nature of this learning environment, health education experiences were developed to be dramatic, short, interesting, and factual.

Program Delivery

A multidisciplinary team of Extension professionals and partners formulated the initial concept and guided the pilot program. The following steps were conducted:

- Formulated the initial plan using the experiential learning model, the Targeting Life Skills Model (2004), and the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework (2004).
- Defined the youth health officer as a primary peer conduit of health information.
- Created the health officer curriculum with a focus on dental health.
- Involved youth and adult volunteers in curriculum preview and critique.
- Recruited members as health officers for community-based 4-H clubs.
- Trained health officers with the aid of a community dental health professional.
- Examined parent perceptions via surveys.

- Distributed materials:
    - € West Virginia 4-H Club Health Activity Guide: Dental for officers
    - € West Virginia 4-H Club Health Planner: Dental for club youth
    - € Toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, and mouth guards for all youths
    - € Officer record forms to document meeting outcomes
    - € A dental resource kit for health officers containing DVDs, visuals, and manipulatives
- In 2005, curriculum pieces were piloted with 1,200 youths in four counties. The curriculum was revised and distributed statewide in the fall of 2006, reaching 18,000 youths.

The activity guide is an in-depth curriculum piece to assist youth health officers in leading activities focused on improving specific dental habits. The guide has a health officer job description, training guide, program introduction, dental facts, club activities for nine monthly topics, and resource list. Each club activity encourages youths to set goals to achieve a monthly challenge. For example, during April, youths try to "replace sugar-added drinks with water and low-fat milk." To reinforce the importance of personal daily dental behaviors, each 4-H youth received a health planner. This companion piece enabled youths to set goals and monitor progress on monthly challenges. To support positive family involvement, the planner was designed to encourage parent-child interaction through puzzles, trivia, and tips. 4-H Family Handouts on dental topics reinforce monthly challenges and urge parent-child discussion.

Methodology and Findings

Selected aspects of the pilot program were evaluated using a 4-H Parent Survey. These characteristics were determined appropriate by the expert panel consisting of youth development and dental professionals. The survey and protocol were approved by WVUES according to Institutional Review Board policies. The one-page, 13-item survey was created and distributed to parents of 4-H youth involved in the health initiative. A total of 245 completed surveys were analyzed (a 24% return rate). The youths were 62.1 percent female and 37.9 percent male. The youth mean age was 12.76 years.

Parents reported 32% of children used the 4-H Health Planner as a planner and 36% used it as a calendar. Results suggest the planner may be a valuable tool to prompt parent-child discussions and behaviors. A correlational procedure examined possible relationships between the planner usage and desired program outcomes. Table 1 displays relationships between the increase of planner usage and parent-child discussions.

Table 1

Correlations between Planner Usage and Parent-Child Discussions N=245

Selected Variable	*r*	Interpretation
Discussions of dental brushing increased	.53	substantial
Discussions of consuming healthier foods increased	.54	substantial
Discussions of tracking dental habits increased	.66	substantial
Selected Variable	*r*	Interpretation
Discussions of tobacco usage increased	.7	very high
Discussions of consuming healthier foods increased	.71	very high
Discussions of tracking dental habits increased	.65	substantial
Discussions of dental visits increased	.77	very high
Discussions about flossing increased	.75	very high
Selected Variable	*r*	Interpretation
Discussions of tobacco usage increased	.71	very high
Discussions of using a fluoride mouthwash increased	.63	substantial
Discussions of consuming healthier foods increased	.71	very high
Discussions of tracking dental habits increased	.64	substantial
Discussions of dental visits increased	.8	very high

Notes: $p<.001$

Interpretations of Davis's (1971) Descriptors: .01-.09 (negligible); .10-.29 (low); .30-.49 (moderate); .50-.69 (substantial); .70-.99 (very high). Correlations for non-significant correlations were determined to have negligible effect size.

Another crucial educational component of the program was to alter behaviors associated with potentially detrimental dental habits. Structured educational challenges within the curriculum exposed youth to healthier habits and promoted dental hygiene. According to parent survey results, the most prevalent behavior changes parents observed were drinking water more often, getting new toothbrushes, and eating more fruits and vegetables. See Table 2.

Table 2

Frequencies of Parent Observations of their Child's Dental Habits N=245

Changes Observed by Parent	Percent Less Often	Percent No Change	Percent More Often	Percent Not Sure
Brushing teeth	.5	67.0	29.6	2.9
Flossing teeth	1.0	67.1	27.5	4.3
Using mouthwash	1.0	62.9	32.7	3.4
Using fluoride rinse	2.5	72.0	18.5	7.0
Drinking water	.5	49.0	47.5	3.0
Drinking soda pop	26.8	61.6	8.1	3.5
Getting a new toothbrush	1.0	55.4	41.2	2.5
Eating sugary snacks	20.8	65.6	9.3	4.4
Eating fruits and vegetables	2.2	59.2	33.9	4.3
Wearing a mouth guard when playing sports	3.0	76.5	11.4	9.0

To date, findings of this study include:

1. The program had a positive impact on targeted oral health behaviors (e.g., brushing, flossing, fluoride rinse, mouthwash, mouth guard, and toothbrush replacement).
2. Complimentary health habits were positively affected (e.g., increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, water, and decreased consumption of soda and sugary snacks).
3. Planner usage helped youth form and establish improved oral health habits.
4. The program increased family discussion concerning dental-related habits.

Resources and Funding

This initiative could be replicated in any state or county program involving school-age youth. Currently, West Virginia 4-H community clubs and selected after-school programs and school classrooms are involved in the program. In addition, 4-H Family Handouts are used in adult health programs. Curriculum resources are adaptable for various situations. To ensure success, the following components are essential:

1. enthusiasm for promoting health by youth professionals and volunteers;
2. partnerships with health professionals and organizations;
3. a volunteer training system; and
4. funds to purchase or develop curriculum materials.

From the West Virginia 4-H program experience, it is clear that schools of dentistry, community dental professionals, state health departments, and private foundations are eager to contribute resources to worthy youth leadership and health projects. For example, partners contributed in-kind staff time for program development and outreach education, health incentives (toothbrushes, floss, mouth guards, posters), and monies to cover curriculum printing, volunteer training, and teaching tools.

Program Impact

Although the initiative is in a formative stage, there are many signs of success. The program brings health education directly to school-age youth through the strong, sustained community network of 4-H clubs, youth, parents, volunteers, faculty, and experts. With focused and culturally relevant health messages and hands-on activities, the curriculum engages 4-H members and families.

The addition of the youth 4-H Health Officer provides significant leadership opportunities. Trained officers learn and practice leadership and health while involving club members in activities such as roll call, experiments, games, and personal challenges. 4-H'ers using the planner try monthly health challenges and track health-promoting behaviors. In addition, monthly family handouts foster parent-child communication, prompting improved daily dental habits.

The emerging partnerships, commitments, and resources were essential in developing the successful 4-H Health Initiative. 4-H demonstrated its potential to make an impact on the oral health status of youth. In fact, in 2005 the national advocacy group Oral Health America awarded West Virginia "extra credit" status for increasing collaborations (2005). According to its report, "Partnerships in West Virginia are leading to creative solutions to access and utilization

problems in this rural state…This information will help the state improve self-care and to increase utilization of dental services," (Oral Health America, page 11).

Conclusions

This promising model is an effective way to involve youth leaders in providing peer health education. It appears to bring synergy to partner organizations whose shared mission is to address such critical problems as oral health and to improve youth and family well-being.

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Informed Decision-Making in Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Informed Decision-Making in Exploratory Factor Analysis

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Abstract: As the field of youth development grows, evaluation of program outcomes has become more embedded in the program process. It is incumbent on youth development professionals to understand more clearly the process of instrument development. One phase of the process involves taking a closer look at the data to determine if an instrument measures one overall construct or if items cluster together to reveal underlying constructs. Exploratory factor analysis is a technique used to determine the underlying constructs, or subgroups, of an instrument. While professionals may use a variety of decision-making steps, researchers have identified some commonly agreed upon considerations when conducting an exploratory factor analysis. This article seeks to make the decision-making steps of this process more transparent while also offering guidance to youth development professionals who may be seeking to use this procedure for the first time.

Introduction

In the field of youth development, evaluating programs based on participant perceptions is a common practice. When developing instruments to measure youth perceptions, it is not uncommon to ask questions about several different aspects of learning that are targeted in a program. Factor analysis is a statistical technique "whose common objective is to represent a set of variables in terms of a smaller number of hypothetical variables" (Kim & Mueller, 1978, p. 9). Youth development professionals can use this technique to determine the underlying constructs, or subgroups, that an instrument measures. This is important because it allows the professional to purposefully consider a specific construct (i.e., verbal communication skills), and how this skill is impacted by a treatment or specific demographic variables, instead of simply looking at the impact of the program on overall communication skills.

Choosing the Appropriate Analysis

There are two types of factor analysis: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for use with newly developed instruments where there is no prior knowledge about the existence of underlying patterns in the data, while confirmatory factor analysis is appropriate for testing hypotheses about the structuring of variables into significant factors (Kim, 1970).

Exploratory Factor Analysis. Exploratory factor analysis "seeks to uncover the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables" (Garson, 2006, paragraph 12). In other words, a survey instrument with a given number of questions is analyzed to see if the questions separate into smaller subgroups. An example of this is a 40-question survey developed to measure youths' perceptions of learning in a leadership program. Exploratory factor analysis would be used to analyze the instrument and determine what, if any, underlying commonalities the questions share. These themes might include a subset of questions which measure perceptions of communication skills, perceptions of problem-solving skills, or numerous other concepts.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis "seeks to determine if the number of factors and the loadings of measured (indicator) variables on them conform to what is expected on the basis of pre-established theory" (Garson, 2006, paragraph 13). This analysis is routinely used with existing instruments, where there is interest in verifying that previously identified latent constructs hold under different circumstances (e.g., a larger population or different ethnic groups). This type of analysis would be appropriate for use with an instrument such as the Free Time Motivation Scale (Baldwin & Caldwell, 2003), which was tested with a sample of 6th through 8th grade youth whom were 95% Euro-American. If the scale was used in a different population, perhaps one that was largely African-American or Hispanic, then confirmatory factor analysis would be used to ensure that the questions from the survey factored into the same constructs as with the predominantly Euro-American youth.

The choice between exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis is driven by the type of instrument that is being analyzed; whether it is a newly developed instrument or a previously developed instrument. Discussing the decision-making process for each of these processes is beyond the scope of this article, therefore the remainder of this article will focus on the specific choices facing users of a newly developed instrument where exploratory factor analysis would be the appropriate procedure to use.

Sample Size Considerations

One of the first considerations impacting the advisability of conducting an exploratory factor analysis is sample size. Is the sample large enough to assure good recovery of population factors? Recommendations are commonly expressed as a proportion of questionnaire respondents to instrument questions or items. Suggestions for this proportion range from a minimum of five respondents for each item, to as many as twenty respondents per item (Gorsuch, 1983; Habing, 2003; Nunnally, 1978). More recently, researchers have suggested that the issues of which variables to include, the communality of variables, and overdetermination of factors are of more importance than sample size (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999; Hogarty, Hines, Kromrey, Ferron, & Mumford, 2005).

MacCallum et al. (1999) suggest that when communalities are high (greater than .6), sample size has less impact on recovery of population factors, although this "rule" does not occur in a

vacuum. Determination of factors, and the factor solution, also plays a part in recovering population factors. Mundfrom, Shaw, Ke, Knofczinski, and McFann (2003) extend the discussion of factor determination by recommending a greater number of variables per factor in order to further elucidate the factor. This is supported by Hogarty et al. (2005), who noted that not only did overdetermination reduce the influence of sample size, but it also improved the factor analysis solution. Henson and Roberts (2006) sum it up best with their contention that "the best rule of thumb to follow is to get the largest possible sample for a factor analysis" (p. 402).

Extracting the Factors

At this step of the process, the main objective of EFA is to determine the minimum number of factors needed to produce the correlations among the observed variables (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Researchers often disagree on the type of extraction to use in EFA. Extraction models fall into two categories: components models [e.g., principal components analysis (PCA)] and common factor models (e.g., principal axis factoring and maximum likelihood factoring).

Some researchers suggest that components models and common factor models may be used interchangeably in EFA; however, when communalities are .40 or lower and there are three or fewer measured variables per factor, the results of PCA and those of common factor models may be different (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Additionally, the existence of random error in social science research is assumed. This assumption indicates the need for an extraction model that allows the user to take this error into account.

To better understand this, it is perhaps easier to think of a variable in terms of the following equations: variable = common variance + specific variance + error and unique variance = specific variance + error. The common variance portion of a variable indicates the amount of influence that a variable has among all of the factors. The unique variance part of a variable shows the amount of specific variance and error that is distinctive to that particular variable.

Use of a common factors method of extraction allows the researcher to estimate the pattern of relations between the common factor(s), with the unique variance partitioned from the common variance (Fabrigar et al., 1999). This method shows the amount of variance shared among factors as well as indicating the amount of variance that is unique to a factor. Components models (like PCA) combine the unique and common variance, resulting in a matrix which is not representative of latent variables, and simply seek a reduction in the number of variables in the solution (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003; Fabrigar et al., 1999). This method does not distinguish between common and unique variance of factors but instead combines it all together. Therefore, when analyzing a newly developed instrument, the best decision is one where a common factor model is utilized.

Determining Number of Factors

Once the factors are extracted, the number of factors to retain must be determined. Popular strategies include employing Kaiser's (1960) criteria that stipulates that eigenvalues associated with the extracted factors should equal or exceed unity (EV>1), utilizing Cattell's (1966) scree plot, and using the solution that accounts for the highest proportion of variance while still producing an interpretable solution (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003; Fabrigar et al., 1999). Henson and Roberts (2006) report that researchers commonly only use one strategy to determine the number of factors retained, with the EV>1 rule being the most commonly used approach. Used

independently, each method has its own share of pros and cons. The optimal approach is to employ multiple strategies to determine the number of factors to retain, with special attention given to reporting the decision-making strategies used.

Rotating to a Terminal Solution

Once the number of factors is determined, the final step in exploratory factor analysis is to simplify the interpretation of the factors. This is accomplished via rotation. While a graphical rotation illustrates the process more clearly, an analytical rotation is more interpretable. Choices for analytical rotation in statistical packages are classified as either orthogonal or oblique. Orthogonal rotations produce a solution in which factors are uncorrelated. The most commonly used orthogonal rotation is varimax. Oblique rotations produce correlated factor solutions.

The most commonly used procedures for oblique rotation include Promax and direct oblimin. The consensus is that oblique rotation is the preferred method of analytical rotation (Conway & Huffcutt, 2003; Fabrigar et al., 1999). Oblique rotation is warranted particularly in a situation where theoretical and empirical evidence exists to suggest an underlying correlation among the constructs. Using orthogonal rotation will force the factors into an uncorrelated solution. An oblique rotation is more likely to produce a simple factor structure, and will also show if the factors are uncorrelated. If this occurs, an orthogonal rotation can be utilized. Factors are then named based on the underlying theme that the variables within a factor share.

Reporting EFA Results

When reporting the results of an exploratory factor analysis, it is important to fully report the analytical decisions made during the EFA process. Include the target population and sample size. Report the method of extraction, as well as the strategies used to determine the number of factors to retain. When reporting the results of an oblique rotation, include both the pattern and structure matrices. This allows readers to evaluate decision-making, and rotate results to alternative criteria (Henson & Roberts, 2006). When giving the results of either oblique or orthogonal rotations, include communalities as a part of the pattern/structure matrix table. This allows the reader to determine the tightness of the solution and what, if any, effect sample size may have had on the stability of the loadings (MacCallum et al., 1999).

Conclusion

Exploratory factor analysis is a very powerful procedure that can be utilized when developing a new instrument. The following is a summary of the steps to follow:

1. Plan for good population recovery by collecting as large a sample as possible;
2. Choose an appropriate extraction method [i.e., common factor model (like principle axis factoring or maximum likelihood factoring)];
3. Use multiple methods for determining the number of factors to retain;
4. Choose a rotation method appropriate to the theoretical and empirical evidence of correlation among factors; and
5. Accurately report all steps of the decision-making process.

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Computer Gaming and Student Achievement: Investigating Middle School Students' Behaviors

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Computer Gaming and Student Achievement: Investigating Middle School Students' Behaviors

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Abstract: In spite of very little research on the subject, a growing concern exists among professionals that excessive time spent by students on computer gaming may have an undesirable effect in scholastic achievement. In this study, middle grade students self-reported their time spent on computer gaming for a one week time period. These self-reports were related with their GPAs at the end of the semester. Analysis of 114 students' GPAs in English, Math, and Science indicated the presence of a statistically significant difference in English GPAs between students in the High Computer Gaming group from students in the Moderate and Low Computer Gaming groups. No differences were yielded for Math or Science GPAs. Implications are discussed.

Introduction

Technology has become the newest tool in the education arsenal (Goss, 1996). Recently, researchers have shown that the average American classroom (K-12) has 4.0 students for every computer, with 98% of these classrooms having internet access (Information Please® Database, 2007). American households have embraced technology as well. Computer use in private homes has increased steadily since their introduction in 1984 when merely 8.5% of households owned computers. By 2002, that number had increased to over 60% of households (Trumbull, 2005). Internet use has been embraced and has enhanced computer use by both schools and private homes (Newburger, 2001, p.4). Districts have renovated outdated classrooms and restructuring the curriculum to include technology at significant cost.

The sudden influx of technology in the home and school has highlighted several areas of concern within the parenting and teaching community. Some researchers have focused on how technology can improve scholastics, how technology functions as a learning tool, and whether

or not technology has any benefit at all within the teaching environment. Other areas of research have included how technology affects learning and how the brain develops under intensive multimedia sensory input. An area of particular concern to schools due to the immense popularity of specific entertainment technology is the extent to which computer gaming influences students' academic achievement.

Anderson and Dill (2000), in a study of video game playing and student academic achievement, reported the presence of a statistically significant negative relationship between the two variables. In contrast, Mitchell and Savill-Smith (2004) provided evidence that computer gaming can improve academic achievement. In addition, other researchers have demonstrated a positive relationship between computer gaming and attainment of fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, visual attention, depth perception and computer competency (Reuters, 2007). Game sequences moving from a start to a finish require planning ahead and recognizing potential dilemmas along the path to completion. Circular games such as adventure games require multiple input sources, often from a variety of media. Cooperation with others to solve problems within the various environments requires ability to function within a society (Pillay, 2002).

Most students have been brought up spending substantially more than seven hours per week using the computer or another form of electronic media (Mitchell & Savill-Smith, 2004). Concerns are present when students spend excessive amounts of time in gaming technology. Negatives in gaming technology are both, physical and psychological. In video and computer games, players experience symptoms of stress including headaches, eyestrain, nausea, irritability, and exhaustion (Tazawa, Okada, Soukalo, & Takada, 1997). Extensive playing, where the student spends hours at the monitor, produces evidence of sleep deprivation such as rings under the eyes and muscle fatigue in the neck or back (Tazawa et al., 1997). Concerns have been expressed that electronic gaming affects the heart, causes carpal tunnel syndrome, and induces epileptic seizures. Excessive playing tends to aggravate these symptoms, where normal playing may be compared to light physical activity and have few negative effects (Emes, 1997).

Excessive gaming may also contribute to social isolation and other negative psychological effects (Roe & Muijs, 1998). Becoming proficient at a particular game artificially increases self-esteem causing the gamer to seek computer gaming interaction instead of human interaction. If a low feeling of self-esteem was already present, then the gaming success of the computer gamer generates a need to inflate their self-esteem through other addictive habits such as gambling. This process opens the door to depression and other psychological ills (Roe & Muijs, 1998).

As with all forms of entertainment, enough attraction may exist to the gaming media to cause a psychological dependency. On May 19, 2005, NBC News reported 13% of adolescent gamers become addicted (Kem, 2005). The electronic gaming addict exhibits patterns of behavior which signal to teachers that a problem exists, generally a neglect of scholastic responsibilities and an obsession with computer games.

Computer gaming provides middle school students with the opportunity to fantasize and explore different paths without ever leaving their bedrooms. Because they like to enjoy the moment, they often fail to think ahead (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Furthermore, computer gaming allows this age group to vicariously and safely experience the adventure and emotions inside them without the consequences of being seen as irresponsible.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of computer gaming with the academic performance of middle school students. In particular, these researchers were interested in having students self-report time they spent using electronic media and then examining the extent to which these hours were related to student academic achievement in three core academic areas: English, Math, and Science.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of computer gaming on sixth grade students' English Grade Point Averages?
2. What is the effect of computer gaming on sixth grade students' Math Grade Point Averages?
3. What is the effect of computer gaming on sixth grade students' Science Grade Point Averages?

Methods and Procedures

Participants

Out of a total pool of 181 sixth grade students enrolled in the Technology Applications class at a middle school in a Southwest state during the 2005-2006 school year, 114 students participated in this study. These students had consent forms returned with permission to participate and completed journals in which they logged their time playing games on electronic media. The school at which this study was conducted did not permit the collection of demographic data on these students. As such, no information is available regarding student gender or ethnicity.

Procedures

As part of this Technology Applications class, students were assigned the task of journaling and logging time for one week of technology use. In this journal, students were asked to record the times where they participated in any type of technological entertainment in television, radio, and electronic games (including computers, television console games, and handheld gaming devices). Within the journal was a section specifically designated for computer gaming which was the section of the journal that was used for this study. Grades for the core subject areas and final grade point averages were obtained at the end of the spring semester.

Results

Descriptive statistics were calculated for students' GPAs in English, Math, Science, and then overall, as well as for the hours students reported they spent that week in computer gaming activities. Students' GPAs across the three areas were very consistent. Computer gaming varied from a low of 0 hours to a maximum reported 80 hours. Table 1 depicts these values.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Subject Areas and Hours of Game Playing (N=114)

Area	M (0 to 100)	SD
English GPA	83.07	7.73
Math GPA	83.34	8.93
Science	83.66	6.51
Average	83.36	6.80
Hours of Computer Gaming	27.93	23.69

Following a frequency table of hours students spent computer gaming, three groups were created: a Low Computer Gaming group which was comprised of 34 students whose computer gaming hours ranged from 0 to 10 hours that week; a Moderate Computer Gaming group which was comprised of 35 students whose computer gaming hours ranged from 11 to 29 hours that week; and, finally a High Computer Gaming group, comprised of 45 students whose computer gaming hours ranged from 30 to 80 hours that week. Descriptive statistics were then calculated for their GPAs by group membership. For this study, students' GPAs were defined by their percentage success out of 100% that was possible for each course. That is, an average GPA of 80% in English meant that 80% of 100% points were received. Table 2 depicts these values.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Subject Areas by Group Membership

Area	Low	Moderate	High
English GPA	85.29 (6.81)	83.86 (7.48)	80.78 (8.11)
Math GPA	84.47 (9.13)	84.23 (7.85)	81.80 (9.52)
Science	83.85 (6.83)	84.31 (6.62)	83.00 (6.27)
Average GPA	84.54 (6.81)	84.13 (6.36)	81.86 (6.99)

To address whether these three groups of students differed in their GPAs, univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) procedures were calculated. An ANOVA, used to ascertain the extent to which a statistically significant difference was present among the three groups of computer gaming in their English GPAs, yielded a statistically significant finding, $F(2, 111) = 3.738$, $p = .027$, $d = .25$. Scheffe post hocs revealed that students in the High computer gaming group had statistically lower English GPAs than did students in either the Moderate or the Low computer gaming groups, about 4.5 points lower. The effect size for this finding was moderate (Cohen, 1988).

A similar analysis, an ANOVA, was conducted to determine the extent to which a statistically significant difference was present among the three groups of computer gaming in their Math GPAs. This analysis did not yield a statistically significant finding, $F(2, 111) = 1.117$, $p = .331$.

Students in the High computer gaming group had lower Math GPAs, albeit not statistically significantly lower, than did students in either the Moderate or the Low computer gaming groups, about 3 points lower. A similar analysis in which Science GPAs were investigated also failed to yield statistical significance, $F(2, 111) = 0.418$, $p = .659$. Science GPAs did not differ across the three groups of students.

Discussion

These authors investigated the extent to which computer gaming was related with students' GPAs in English, Math, and Science. Though not related with Math and Science GPAs, results were statistically significant with students' English GPAs. Students in the High Computer Gaming group performed statistically lower, about 4.5 points lower, in English than students in either the Moderate or the Low Computer Gaming groups. Thus, this study provides some evidence of a connection between time spent on technology usage and student academic achievement.

As such, these findings support the findings of Anderson and Dill (2000) of a negative relationship between hours spent gaming and student academic achievement, at least in the area of English. Though tentative in nature, researchers are recommended to investigate this issue using more rigorous methods. Gathering data on hours spent computer gaming throughout the semester might provide more in-depth information than was obtained in this one week of self-reported computer gaming hours. In addition, more information should be acquired concerning the types of computer gaming activities in which students are involved. To what extent could some computer gaming activities be considered educational in nature, versus entertainment, versus socializing? Until further research studies are conducted, readers are urged to view these findings as tenuous and only suggestive of a possible linkage between hours spent on computer gaming and student academic achievement.

The evidence of a connection between time spent on technology usage and student achievement among middle school student merits further research. Adolescents are at unique developmental stage and should be exposed to the widest range of intellectual, social, and physical experiences (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Computer gaming may decrease the opportunities for exploring and developing not only cognitive ability but also physical, social, and emotional skills.

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Do Higher Levels of 4-H Leadership Affect Emotional Intelligence?

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Abstract: The ex post facto, exploratory study sought to determine whether higher levels of 4-H leadership had an effect on level of emotional intelligence. Using the *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)*, the Texas 4-H Council (n = 32) answered questions related to five domains of emotional intelligence. The results for the five domains are as follows: "General Mood" = 104, "Intrapersonal" = 101, "Interpersonal" = 100, "Stress Management" = 100, "Adaptability" = 94 (Scale: *effective emotional functioning* = 100). The overall EQ-I score was in the average range indicating that individuals in the group are functioning and healthy. Extension professionals should be aware of the lower scores related to "Adaptability" and "Stress Management." Some things Extension professionals should consider teaching youth include: ensuring youth goals are attainable, keeping youth focused on the issue at hand, establishing concrete protocols with youth, and teaching youth compassion for one another.

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence "is a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one's own thinking and action" (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). While Intelligence Quotient (IQ) has long been used as a predictor of a student's success, research now shows that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a better predictor of "success" than the more traditional measures of cognitive intelligence. According to Pool (1997), IQ predicts only about 20 percent of career success while emotional intelligence predicts about 80 percent of a person's success in life.

When discussing emotional intelligence, it is important to remember that emotional intelligence is learned. It can be developed over time through understanding (emotional intelligence assessment tools) and thoughtful effort (training and development) to realize even greater benefits in personal performance and ultimately success in all aspects of life (Lajoie, 2002). According to Stein and Book (2001), a person's emotional intelligence quotient continues to rise with age.

Many youth programs, including 4-H, are focusing on the effectiveness of their leadership training. A general perception prevails that participation in a variety of activities or programs such as public speaking or holding office develops leadership life skills and self-understanding (Dormody & Seevers, 1994).

Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) stated that the level of 4-H participation was a significant predictor of leadership life skills development scores among 4-H youth in Texas. They observed higher leadership life skills development for 4-H members than non-members. Being a member of the Texas 4-H Council is the highest level of leadership attained at the state level in the Texas 4-H and Youth Development program; therefore, suggesting that members of the Texas 4-H Council should have higher life skills development.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether higher levels of 4-H leadership positively correlate with higher levels of emotional intelligence. The Texas 4-H Council was the group that was surveyed and tested to determine the following:

1. What is the emotional intelligence of Texas 4-H Council members?
2. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and years in 4-H?

Methods and Procedures

This study was exploratory in nature; therefore, a descriptive survey design was used to execute the study (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996). The study used an ex post facto approach and a correlational design. The purpose of the correlational research was to evaluate the relationships between multiple variables by using correlational statistics (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

The population of this study was the 2005-2006 Texas 4-H Council members. This was a census study, encompassing all 32 members of the State 4-H Council. Schutt (2006) indicated that "in some circumstances it may be more feasible to skirt the issue of generalizability by conducting a census – studying the entire population of interest – rather than drawing a sample" (p. 138).

He goes on to say social scientists don't usually attempt to collect data from all members of some large populations because it would be too expensive and time-consuming, and they could do almost as well with a sample. Due to the small size of the Texas 4-H Council, a census study was determined to be feasible and was used in this study, reaching all 32 of the members.

The instrumentation for the study was the *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)* (Bar-On, 1996). The *BarOn EQ-i*, provided a total emotional quotient (EQ) score and five EQ composite scale scores comprising 15 subscale scores (Bar-On, 2002). The five scales are "Intrapersonal EQ," "Interpersonal EQ," "Stress Management EQ," "Adaptability EQ," and "General Mood EQ" — each with its own set of subscales (Bar-On, 2002). The test was comprised of 133 items and employed a five-point response set, ranging from "not true of me" to "true of me." Approximately 30 to 40 minutes were needed to complete the exam; however, there were no imposed time limits. The scoring structure to this test was very similar to that of the intelligence quotient assessment (Bar-On, 2002). This test was developed by clinical psychologist Reuven Bar-On and was the first empirically constructed test of emotional intelligence that is commercially available (Bar-On, 2002).

The *BarOn EQ-i* instrument used to measure emotional intelligence was scored and interpreted by Multi-Health Systems, Inc. The *EQ-i* has previously been shown to demonstrate sufficient test-retest reliability with .85 after one month and .75 after 4 months (Bar-On, 1996). The *EQ-i* variables in the five major domains of "Intrapersonal EQ," "Interpersonal EQ," "Stress Management EQ," "Adaptability EQ," and "General Mood EQ" were measured with 133 questions using a scale of 1 = *Very seldom or Not true of me*, 2 = *Seldom true of me*, 3 = *Sometimes true of me*, 4 = *Often true of me*, and 5 = *Very often true of me or True of me*. The 133 questions dealt with

- self-regard,
- emotional self-awareness,
- assertiveness,
- independence,
- self-actualization,
- empathy,
- social responsibility,
- interpersonal relationships,
- stress tolerance,
- impulse control,
- reality testing,
- flexibility,
- problem solving,
- optimism, and
- happiness.

Six of the 32 Texas 4-H Council members were not able to attend the workshop; therefore, the instrument was mailed to them along with another parental consent form and a personalized letter of explanation. Before they were mailed, emails and telephone calls were made to each recipient to explain what they would be receiving in the mail (Dillman, 1978). All six of the instruments were returned. There was no difference in participants responding from the mailed survey versus participants responding via face to face administration.

SPSS 14.0 for Windows software was used for parts of the data analysis. The analysis of data was divided into two sections. The first section was the emotional intelligence section and the

second section examined demographics of respondents. Inferential correlational and/or comparative techniques were used. These techniques included analysis of variance, independent and paired t-tests, and Pearson's product moment correlations.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents. Participants in the study were the 32 members of the 2005-2006 Texas 4-H Council. All members of the Texas 4-H Council were between the ages of 16 and 19 with the mean age being 17.31. Their years of 4-H participation ranged from 4-12 years with the mean years in 4-H being 9.03. The majority of the Texas 4-H Council members were male (53.1%). The majority (81.3%) of the Texas 4-H Council members were white, two (6.3%) were black, one (3.1%) was American Indian or Alaskan Native, one (3.1%) was Asian, and one (3.1%) was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Following the format of questions asked on the Texas 4-H Enrollment Form, participants were asked in a separate question if they were of Hispanic ethnicity. Two youth (6.3%) responded that they were of Hispanic ethnicity, and one of these marked that he was also white, the other did not choose a race.

Research Question 1. Emotional Quotient Inventory (*EQ-i*) scores may be classified as high, moderate, or low. In general, high scores identify areas of strength. Scores in the average range on these scales indicate typical healthy functioning and are scores that are obtained by the majority of those in the population who have taken the *EQ-i*. Lower scores reflect areas for development (Bar-On, 2006).

The Total EQ score obtained by the Texas 4-H Council members was about average (97). Usually a score in this range is obtained by a group that functions very well in some or most areas of emotional intelligence. A score of 100 represents effective emotional functioning. Scores greater than 100 represent enhanced emotional functioning, and scores of less than 100 indicate areas that may need improvement. This information is based on the average scores obtained by the group members, therefore it is important to keep in mind that the group results presented may not, and usually will not, apply to every single individual within the group (Bar-On, 2006).

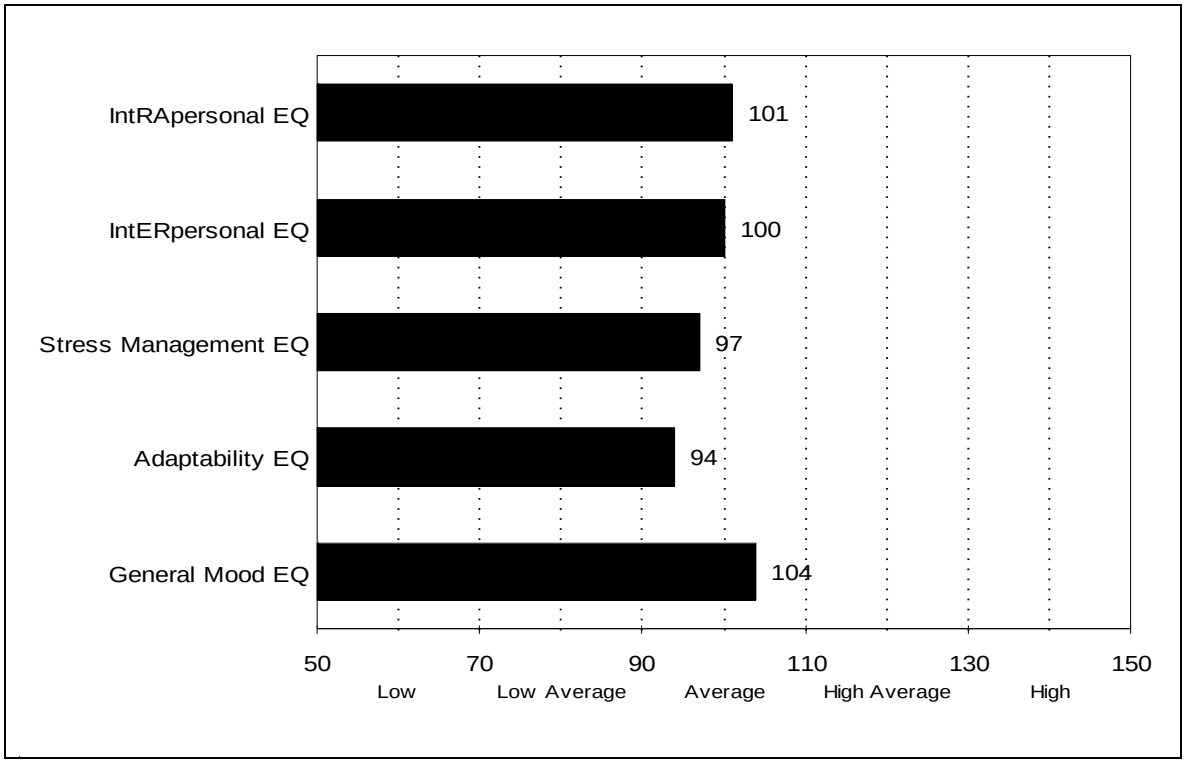
There are five composite scales used to determine EQ. The composite scales break Total EQ into the five domains of EQ for the Texas 4-H Council Members:

- Intrapersonal (101),
- Interpersonal (100),
- Stress Management (97),
- Adaptability (94), and
- General Mood (104).

Figure 1 provides a graphical display of the group's composite scores.

Figure 1

Emotional Quotient Scores on the five Composite Scales by Texas 4-H Council Members N=32



Within each of the five composite scales there are 15 subscales that provide scores and very focused information about specific skills within each of the domains of Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Stress Management, Adaptability, and General Mood (Bar-On, 2006).

Intrapersonal EQ. The Intrapersonal composite score includes Emotional Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Self Regard, Self-Actualization, and Independence. The group's Total Intrapersonal score (101) was about average overall, and scores on all of the subcomponents are also comparable to the norm (Bar-On, 2006).

- Self-Regard: The score on the self-regard scale (103) is slightly above average indicating a group with adequate self-respect and self-confidence. The Texas 4-H Council members probably have a reasonably good sense of who they are and have positive feelings about their life, lifestyle, and work most of the time (Bar-On, 2006).
- Emotional Self-Awareness: The score on this scale is about average (100). The emotional self understanding of the Texas 4-H Council members is moderate. Usually, emotional self-awareness assists interactions for this group, and attitudes are conveyed adequately. Nonetheless, improvement in this facet of emotional functioning may be of benefit (Bar-On, 2006).
- Assertiveness: Collectively, the Council members' scores are above average (104) on the Assertiveness scale. This group should have an advanced ability to defend their beliefs, deal appropriately with others, and handle adversity. These Council members are probably forthright and confident and can openly share thoughts, beliefs, and feelings in

a constructive manner. The group is likely perceived as non-threatening and provides freedom for exchanging ideas (Bar-On, 2006).

- Independence: The score on this scale is about average (97), indicating a balance between a desire to think and act independently and a willingness to make decisions in combination with other people (Bar-On, 2006).
- Self-Actualization: The score on this scale is reasonably high (103) and is indicative of a group of individuals who generally feel more content and self-fulfilled than the population norm. The score is indicative of a group whose members enjoy life most of the time and who usually stay involved in pursuits that are interesting and meaningful to them. Texas 4-H Council members are likely motivated and successful in what they do (Bar-On, 2006).

Interpersonal EQ. This component of the Total EQ-I scale taps interpersonal capacity and functioning. The subcomponents of the Total Interpersonal Scale include Empathy, Interpersonal Relationship, and Social Responsibility. The Total Interpersonal group score (100) was about average overall, but at least one of the subcomponents of interpersonal functioning was below average. Some social interactions are experienced as difficult, while others can be handled with the utmost ease and confidence. The subcomponent scores listed below will be helpful in understanding why some interpersonal situations are handled more easily than others (Bar-On, 2006).

- Empathy: The score on this scale (95) was slightly below average. While some of the time members of this group may have little difficulty understanding others and showing them consideration, there may be occasions when empathizing and giving proper regard to others is more difficult. As a result, some interactions will become strained due to thoughts and feelings being misunderstood (Bar-On, 2006).
- Social Responsibility: The results (99) indicated individuals who perceive themselves as being considerate and responsible most of the time. Sometimes self-aspirations are put ahead of the needs of others, but overall these individuals will be satisfactory contributors to the "community at large" (society, organization, team, etc.) (Bar-On, 2006).
- Interpersonal Relationship: The score (103) on this scale indicated a group with above average interpersonal skills overall. This is the scale that ties most directly to the ability to interact with others. Group members are able to form agreeable relationships and alliances. This ability supports effective communication and the mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, feelings, and information (Bar-On, 2006).

Stress Management EQ. The Stress Management component consists of the Stress Tolerance and Impulse Control Scales. The Total Stress Management EQ score (97) was below average, indicating that the scores obtained on both of the two subcomponents of Stress Management were low. This can indicate nervousness, anxiety, and difficulties handling stressful situations (Bar-On, 2006).

- Stress Tolerance: The score (98) on the Stress Tolerance scale is a bit below average. The group probably has a reasonably normal ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations. However, some circumstances may be difficult to handle for some individuals. Emotional outbursts and avoidance are probably common reactions to

stress, but task-oriented coping efforts focused on problem resolution would be more adaptive (Bar-On, 2006).

- Impulse Control: The Impulse Control score (95) was below average indicating that group members have occasional or frequent difficulties resisting or delaying impulses, drives, and temptations to act. There may be problems avoiding overreacting, making impetuous decisions, and losing control. Some actions/decisions are likely made without adequate thought concerning all of the important implications (Bar-On, 2006).

Adaptability EQ. The Adaptability composite area is composed of the Problem Solving, Reality Testing, and Flexibility subscales and examines success in coping with environmental demands based on the ability to effectively size up and deal with problematic situations. The responses and score (94) of these individuals suggest some pretty important limitations in terms of adaptability. Sometimes the limitations can be due to an impractical approach to life that might be addressed by setting realistic goals. In other cases, the limitations are due to poor approaches to problem solving or the inability to adapt to changing demands (Bar-On, 2006).

- Reality Testing: The Reality Testing score (92) is quite low indicating a group with a pronounced tendency to be unrealistic and unfocussed. Group members may pursue unrealistic goals instead of sticking to practical and attainable goals. These Texas 4-H Council members may tend to lose focus on the task at hand and/or let their minds wander and become distracted (Bar-On, 2006).
- Flexibility: The group's Flexibility score (97) was slightly below average. Overall, the Council members may be slow to change opinions about things and to respond to shifting demands/needs. Some or most of the group members may be most comfortable performing clearly defined, regular tasks or assignments (Bar-On, 2006).
- Problem Solving: The group score (96) on the Problem Solving scale is a bit below average. Scores in this range are indicative of a group of individuals who have some success with their approach to problem resolution, but overall feel that improvement is possible in this area. Often improvement will come from approaching problems more methodically and systematically and by considering all of the possibilities before deciding what to do (Bar-On, 2006).

General Mood EQ. The subcomponents of this composite scale consist of Happiness and Optimism Scales. These components of the Total *EQ-i* scale measure contentment and overall outlook. Both components of General Mood were high for the Texas 4-H Council members (Bar-On, 2006).

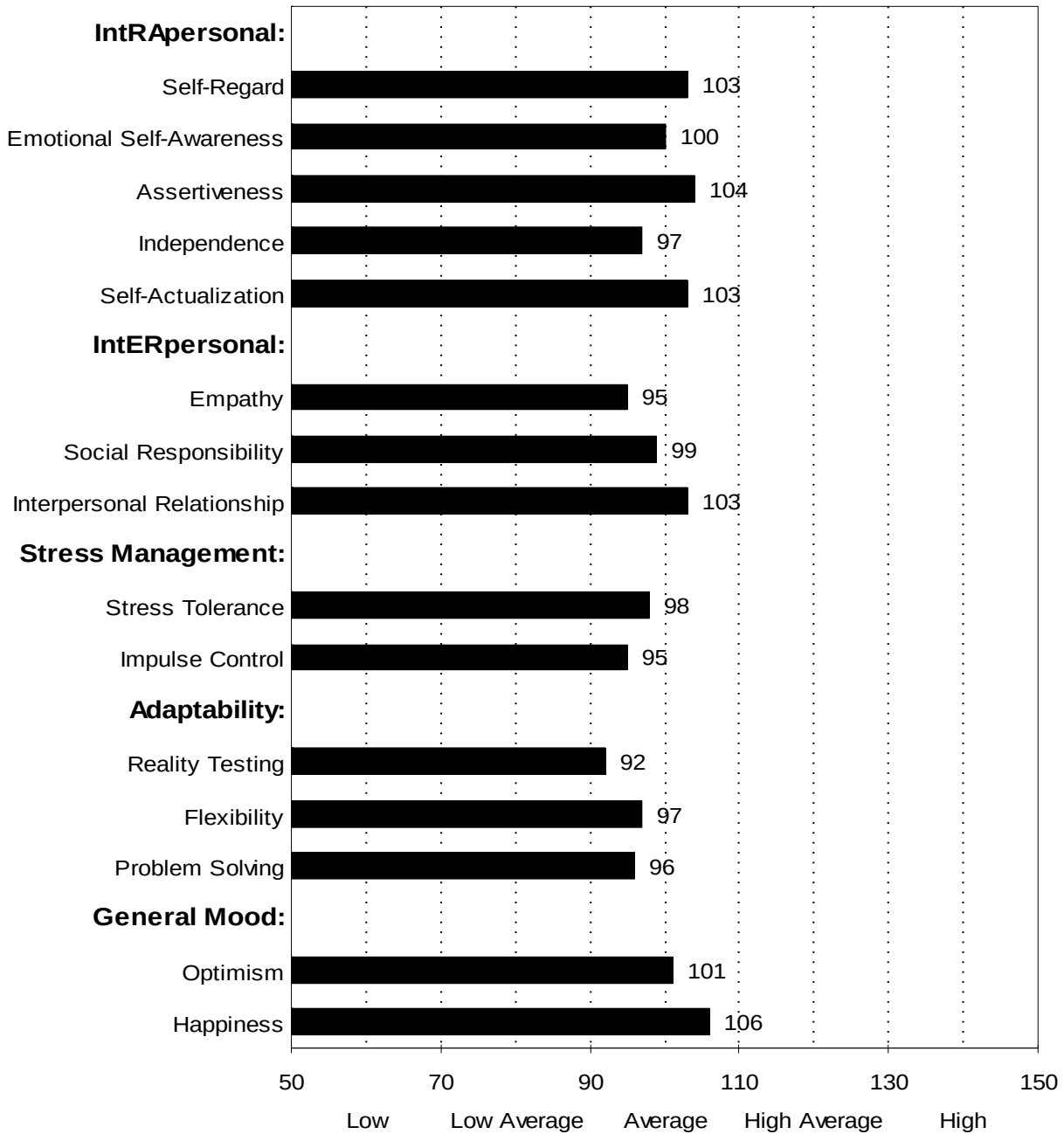
- Optimism: The score (101) on this scale is about average, indicating a level of optimism that is close to the population norm. There are probably times when members of this group feel a little pessimistic, but this is not necessarily unusual. Overall, optimism usually will be appropriate for the circumstances. Prospects for the future are assessed by keeping expectations balanced (Bar-On, 2006).
- Happiness: The score (106) on the Happiness scale is quite a bit above average and indicates Council members who feel satisfied with their lives and who get along well with others. This disposition can be infectious and can help energize and create an upbeat feeling in those around, fostering optimal functioning (Bar-On, 2006).

The overall *EQ-i* score was in the average range and indicates emotional functioning which is about typical for emotionally healthy individuals in the population. There were fairly large

differences in the scores for the 15 content scales indicating areas of relative strengths and areas for improvement. The highest subscales were Happiness (106), Assertiveness (104), Self-Actualization (103), Interpersonal Relationship (103), and Self-Regard (103). The lowest subscales were Reality Testing (92), Empathy (95), and Impulse Control (95). A graphical display of the Texas 4-H Council's averages for the 15 *EQ-i* subscales grouped by composite area is shown in Figure 2 (Bar-On, 2006).

Figure 2

Emotional Quotient Scores on the 15 Subscales by Texas 4-H Council Members (N=32)



Research Question 2. A Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was conducted to determine the relationship between years in 4-H and emotional intelligence (Table 1). There was nothing significant to report, but it is worth noting that Intrapersonal EQ (r = .23) and Stress Management (r = .20) both had low, positive relationships (Davis, 1971) with the years in the 4-H program, indicating that those who had been involved in the 4-H program longer had better scores in these areas.

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients Between Years in 4-H and Emotional Intelligence in 2005-2006 Texas 4-H Council Members (N=32)

Emotional Quotient Inventory	***Years in 4-H***	
	r	**p**
Total EQ	.04	.22
Intrapersonal EQ	.23	.22
Interpersonal EQ	.06	.77
Stress Management EQ	.20	.28
Adaptability EQ	.05	.80
General Mood EQ	.10	.58

Conclusions

The Total EQ score obtained by the Texas 4-H Council members was about average (97). Usually a score in this range is obtained by a group that functions very well in some or most areas of emotional intelligence. A score of 100 represents effective emotional functioning. Scores greater than 100 represent enhanced emotional functioning, and scores of less than 100 indicate areas that may need improvement (Bar-On, 2006).

There are five composite scales used to determine EQ. The composite scales break Total EQ into the five domains of EQ scores for the 2005-2006 Texas 4-H Council Members: Intrapersonal EQ (101), Interpersonal EQ (100), Stress Management EQ (97), Adaptability EQ (94), and General Mood EQ (104). Within each of the five composite scales there are 15 subscales that provide scores and very focused information about specific skills within each of the domains.

There were fairly large differences in the scores for the 15 content scales indicating areas of relative strengths and areas for improvement. The highest subscales were Happiness (106), Assertiveness (104), Self-Actualization (103), Interpersonal Relationship (103), and Self-Regard (103). The lowest subscales were Reality Testing (92), Empathy (95), and Impulse Control (95).

Recommendations

The two Emotional Quotient domains on which the Texas 4-H Council members scored lowest were Adaptability EQ (94) and Stress Management EQ (97). The content subscales for

Adaptability include "Reality Testing (92)," "Flexibility (97)," and "Problem Solving (96)." The content subscales within Stress Management EQ include "Stress Tolerance (98)" and "Impulse Control (95)." Of the 15, "Reality Testing" was the subscale that the Council members scored the lowest; "Impulse Control" and "Empathy" were the other two identified in the Bar-On *EQ-i* Group Report (2006) as the lowest scores. In order to address this, Texas 4-H teaching efforts and curriculum development should focus on "Reality Testing," "Impulse Control," "Empathy," "Problem Solving," "Stress Management," and "Stress Tolerance" — specifically for the youth, but they should also be addressed and included in professional development efforts of Extension faculty who work closely with the 4-H members.

Specific recommendations (Bar-On, 2006) for addressing "Reality Testing" are to make sure goals are concrete and attainable and to ensure that observations/opinions are verified with alternate sources of information. The 4-H program is known for teaching goal setting (Karr, 2000), but in light of the findings, should perhaps help youth to increase their focus on practical actions; while ideals are desirable, they are sometimes not feasible. Also noted was the fact that inability to stay focused on the situation at hand is sometimes related to attention deficits or concentration lapses (Bar-On, 2006). This could be directly related to research that indicates attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), a neurological disorder characterized by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, affects 3 to 7 percent of school-age children (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; Mayo Clinic, 2002; Surgeon General of the United States, 1999; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000, and National Resource Center on AD/HD, 2004). Increased novelty in activities/assignments to improve attention and removal of distractions from the immediate environment would assist in this area (Bar-On, 2006).

"Impulse Control" was another area Bar-On (2006) specifically addressed in relation to this group. Strategies for improvement in this area include establishing or enforcing protocols that require specific procedures/steps to help avoid rash actions. For important decisions, require the submission of formal listings of alternative actions, including an examination of the pros and cons of each action – allotting time and resources for verification of solutions. The importance of thinking before acting should be reinforced to 4-H members, as should listening/understanding before speaking. Other suggestions include setting priorities and avoiding diversions based on "whims" as well as using teams to balance/pair impulsive individuals with others who are more methodical (Bar-On, 2006).

When addressing "Empathy," another low scoring subscale for the Texas 4-H Council members, Bar-On (2006) suggests using job exchanges or job shadowing and make clear the duties/responsibilities of others with whom the youth are working, helping to promote an empathetic understanding between individuals. Also, opportunities for group members to interact and get to know each other on a personal level aids in facilitating empathy. Individually, 4-H members should learn to refine observational skills to notice facial expressions and body language as these cues are often just as important as what is being said. They should also learn to be "inquiring" in interactions, making sure that a message has been correctly interpreted and to understand the thoughts and feelings being conveyed. Finally, they should be able to "put oneself in the other person's shoes," ask questions of others, and find out about their activities, problems, and needs. The character education pillars of "caring" and "respect" should be used to help address empathy and compassion. Although research shows that youth involved in experiential education programs like 4-H report that they developed more empathy for others when compared to youth with no experiential education contact (Conrad & Hedin, 1981), more emphasis should be focused on empathy and compassion.

Noting that the EQ scores of the Texas 4-H Council members were in relation to the general population, it is important to remember that the population for this study was youth and that a person's emotional intelligence quotient, as well as behavior and impulse control, will continue to increase with age (Bar-On, 2002; Stein & Book, 2001). Research on the ages and stages youth development show that while even in early childhood youth begin to experience empathy for others, they are still selfish (Tomek & Williams, 1999). Such social and emotional characteristics continue to develop through all stages of youth development and into adulthood. While social and emotional maturity continues to increase, in teenagers such as those on the Texas 4-H Council, the hormones and mood swings of puberty, the desire for peer acceptance and approval, and the need for independence play a role in emotional intelligence. The social/emotional maturation process is explained by Selman (1980) who developed social role taking stages that are viewed as a link between Piaget's logical reasoning stages and Kohlberg's moral reasoning stages. Selman places emphasis on the role of *experience* and *learning*, where advances in social perspective taking depend on the individual's experiences with others.

When discussing these subscales, descriptions that apply include: "Happiness" – this is a group who feels satisfied with their lives and who get along well with others. This disposition can be infectious and can help energize and create an upbeat feeling in those around fostering optimal functioning (Bar-On, 2006); "Assertiveness" – this group has an advanced ability to defend their beliefs, deal appropriately with others and handle adversity. This group is forthright and confident, and can openly share thoughts, beliefs, and feelings in a constructive manner. The group milieu is likely perceived as non-threatening and provides freedom for exchanging ideas (Bar-On, 2006); "Self-Actualization" – these individuals feel more content and self-fulfilled than the population norm, indicative of a group whose members enjoy life most of the time and who usually stay involved in pursuits that are interesting and meaningful to them. These are people who are motivated and successful at what they do (Bar-On, 2006); "Interpersonal Relationships" – this area ties most directly to the ability to interact with others. This group is able to form agreeable relationships and alliances, support effective communication, and the mutually beneficial exchange of ideas, feelings and information (Bar-On, 2006).

When sharing 4-H accomplishments with donors, emotional intelligence results and programming efforts should be shared as research suggests that people with high levels of emotional intelligence "experience more career success, build stronger personal relationships, lead more effectively, and enjoy better health than those with low [emotional intelligence] EQ" (Cooper, 1997, p.32). The fact that the 4-H program is producing these emotionally competent youth that will be assets and contributing, responsible adult members (Schlutt, 1987) to any university, workplace or community should be of interest to anyone helping to fund the 4-H program.

Currently there is limited research in the area of emotional intelligence and youth. Replicating this study within other youth programs such as FFA, FCCLA, or the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts would be very beneficial to those working in youth development.

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Healthy Kids, Healthy Families: A Collaborative Program to Address Childhood Overweight

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Abstract: *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* is a program of outreach and research that has been developed to address treatment and prevention of the childhood obesity epidemic through a family-centered, multidisciplinary approach. The American Dietetic Association recommends community-based and environmental interventions as the most feasible methods to support healthful lifestyles for the greatest numbers of children and families (Ritchie, Crawford, Hoelscher, & Sothern, 2006). *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* was developed as an innovative, collaborative program to help children and families maintain healthy weight, through impacting the systemic medical and psychosocial aspects of overweight in children. The program involves in-home, family-based intervention followed by multi-family group education and community outreach.

Program Rationale

Michigan State University (MSU) Departments of Food Science and Human Nutrition and Family and Child Ecology colleagues have developed a family-centered program that addresses nutritional and psychosocial aspects of childhood risk for overweight (body mass index for age $\geq$ 85th percentile but less than the 95th percentile) or overweight (body mass index for age $\geq$ 95% as defined by Centers for Disease Control Growth Charts, in Medicaid populations. Support for the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* program has been provided by the Michigan Department of Community Health, Medicaid, and MSU internal funding sources.

Childhood obesity has become an epidemic in the United States, with serious health and social consequences for millions of children. Medicaid alone now serves some four million overweight children (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2002). The percent of children who are overweight (defined as Body Mass Index-for-age $\geq$95th percentile according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Growth Charts) continues to increase. Over 12

and a half million U.S. youth (ages 2-19) are overweight, which is over three times the number from 1980. Another 15 percent are considered at risk of becoming overweight (a BMI-for-age between the 85th and 95th percentiles) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006; National Center for Health Statistics, 2007).

Health professionals are struggling to halt the dramatic increase in childhood overweight. In addition, there is a critical need for effective strategies for addressing the treatment of overweight in youth. Some consider childhood overweight to be the most serious and prevalent nutrition disorder in the United States -- the consequences of which are both acute and chronic (Rocchini, 2003). Overweight children and adolescents are at increased risk for cardiovascular disease, hypertension, pseudotumor cerebri, orthopedic problems, early onset of puberty, sleep apnea, steatohepatits, cholelithiasis, polycystic ovary disease, and type 2 diabetes (Must & Strauss, 1999; Sorof, 2002). In addition, children who are overweight are at elevated risk for low self-esteem and depression (Mustillo, Wothman, Erkanli, Keeler, Angold, & Costello, 2003).

Obesity in adulthood is often preceded by overweight in childhood (Whitaker, Wright, Pepe, Seidel, & Dietz, 1997). The National Institutes of Health have reported that overweight and obese adults are at increased risk for a number of physical ailments such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, osteoarthritis, obstructive sleep apnea and respiratory problems, and some types of cancer (National Institutes of Health, 1998). Type 2 diabetes, which was once considered an adult disease, has been increasing in prevalence in youth during the last few decades and was categorized as an epidemic by the Surgeon General in 1998 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998).

There is concern that the rising trends of overweight in youth will exacerbate the already increasing rates of type 2 diabetes in youth. With the development of type 2 diabetes at documented ages as young as 5 years, it is possible for the complications of diabetes and their implications such as blindness, kidney disease, stroke, nerve damage, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and limb amputations to fully develop by ages 20 to 30 years especially if the disease is not identified or poorly managed or controlled (Glasser & Jones, 1998). These problems could potentially lead to decades of compromised quality of life and decreased productivity.

In addition to the growing concern associated with type 2 diabetes, the American Diabetes Association has identified a condition called pre-diabetes. Pre-diabetes is defined as blood glucose levels that are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to indicate a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. Although the implications for children are unclear, we do know that 25 to 75 percent of adults with pre-diabetes develop type 2 diabetes within ten years without lifestyle changes (Health and Human Services, 2002). However, research has shown that by taking action to manage blood glucose when diagnosed with pre-diabetes, one can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes from ever developing (Anonymous, 2002).

In addition to the physical implications, children who are overweight can suffer from increased psychological stress. Overweight children are at increased risk for peer group discrimination leading to low self-esteem, poor body image and depression. Studies have also shown that obese persons are less likely to be admitted to college and are at greater risk of maintaining a lower economic status (Dietz, 1998).

The determinants of overweight in our children are multi-factorial including:

- having overweight parents,

- eating diets high in fat and sugar,
- watching many hours of television,
- being of African American, Hispanic American, or Native American descent, and
- coming from smaller or poor families (Green & Krueter, 1991).

We know that television, computer and video games contribute to children's inactive lifestyles, food choices and overweight or obesity risk (Cheng, 2005; Salmon & Campbell, 2006). Evidence demonstrates that overweight and obesity in adults and their associated health problems have significant impacts on the health care system. A recent study focused on state-level estimates of total, Medicare and Medicaid obesity-attributable medical expenditures. Obesity-attributable Medicaid expenditures for Michigan were estimated to be $882 million (total state level estimate was $2.9 billion) (Finkelstein, Fiebelkorn, & Wang, 2004). Michigan has consistently ranked in the top ten states for problems of overweight, and children are increasingly presenting with overweight-related health issues such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia (Freedman, et al., 1999; Sinha, et al., 2002).

In a recent Position Statement, the American Dietetic Association recommended community-based and environmental interventions as the most feasible methods to support healthful lifestyles for the greatest numbers of children and families (Ritchie, Crawford, Hoelscher, & Sothern, 2006). Our strong belief is that a well-designed public health intervention to help children and families maintain a healthy weight will have meaningful impacts on the health of families. *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* was developed as an innovative collaborative program that addresses both the medical and psychosocial aspects of overweight in children. The program involves direct service provision of an in-home, family-based intervention followed by multi-family group education in the community. The program is currently being delivered by a trained MSU Extension paraprofessional in three Michigan counties.

Program Description

The project team consists of university researchers from the Departments of Food Science & Human Nutrition and Family & Child Ecology. The team is currently working with MSU Extension and the medical community in three Michigan Counties to offer and evaluate the impact of the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* program. Additional connections for program referrals have been made with public schools and child protective services in these counties. Each of the three counties was targeted for the public health intervention because of the growing needs in those communities. For example, Medicaid cases for those less than 18 years of age in two of the selected counties is over 35 percent (compared with 25 percent statewide) and the median household income in one selected county is at $35,363 (compared to a state average of $44,667).

The curriculum was developed to address health, nutrition, cognition, and cultural and family dynamics aspects of childhood overweight. A series of six multi-family group and four in-home family sessions for families with overweight children were developed. These sessions provide basic nutrition and health information, and serve as a support for participants and their families for effective lifestyle changes. The sessions include information about goal setting and behavior change as well as practical and application skills, while facilitating community connection, family structure, and group support.

The model for collaboration between clinical and community programs developed by the research team was invested in positive change for those participating in *Healthy Kids, Healthy*

Families. In partnering counties, physicians and other health care providers had identified childhood obesity as a growing problem in their community. The research team worked with health care providers to determine whether the program was appropriate for each community and how recruitment of families into the program should be handled. Partnerships with a total of four medical clinics in the three selected counties were established.

Research assistants in each of the partnering clinics were identified and trained to assist in patient recruitment and data collection. The trained research assistant is responsible for identifying children who are overweight or at-risk for overweight (using BMI percentiles). The research assistant introduces the program, obtains consent, places families into either a control or intervention group, collects necessary lab data, and refers families to the local MSU-Extension office. A Program Associate (MSU-Extension paraprofessional) was hired and trained to deliver the program. The trained MSU-Extension Educator performs an initial evaluation with the family in their home or in some other convenient location. The trained MSU-Extension Program Associate (or paraprofessional) then begins a series of one-on-one home visits with each of the families. After the home visits are complete, the families join a series of six multi-family group sessions. Families return to the clinic for follow-up data collection. Materials were developed to assist clinics with recruitment. Incentives for participation (e.g. back packs, pedometers, gas cards, balls, movie tickets) were made available to families who were referred to the program.

The program recently commenced in each of the three counties. The research team meets regularly with medical personnel at the clinics to address issues with recruitment. Because the clinics are very busy, eligible families are often missed when they come into the clinics. The research team increased coordination with health care professionals to investigate the possibility of hiring Research Assistants to focus only on recruitment for this project. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, most Medicaid funded projects in Michigan were cut. *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* has reinstated efforts to secure funding to continue to deliver and test the curriculum.

An important program objective is to examine whether this intensive collaboration between clinical and community programs can positively impact clinically relevant indicators in children. In order to determine the effectiveness of the intervention in improving the health of participants, the research team has identified several clinical indicators that are being collected at baseline, six months, and one year following participation in the program to assess risk for pre-diabetes, diabetes and heart disease. Psychosocial and behavior change data are also being collected to assess program success in improving healthy behaviors and the quality of lives of participants and their families.

MSU-Extension offices throughout the state have requested permission to use the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* curriculum. In fact, as childhood overweight increases throughout Michigan, we have recognized a growing interest in this program because the availability of material to address the problem especially at family and community level is scarce.

Initial Project Findings

At this time, one entire session (consisting of four in-home family sessions followed by six multi-family group sessions) has been completed. Recruitment for subsequent sessions is underway, and the project team recently met with community partners to generate ideas for increased

engagement of children and families. Data below provide descriptive information from the first session of *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families.*

Thirteen families were recruited into the program through collaborative efforts of the MSU Extension staff and key personnel in the Community Medical Clinics. Physicians and nurses in the medical clinics identified children based on the aforementioned program criteria. Medical staff then provided program information, obtaining consent and assent for MSU extension staff to contact each family for an initial meeting. Of those thirteen families who opted to participate, seven were placed into the intervention group and six were placed into the control group. Each of the seven families completed the home visit sessions in their entirety. However, only four families participated in both the in-home family sessions as well as the group sessions. Of the four families who participated in the in-home and multi-family group sessions, two of the youth participants were girls and two were boys. The average age of these participants was 8.75 years.

BMI percentiles were used to assess the size and growth patterns of individual children. Each of the four children, who completed the entire program, fell above the 95th percentile – indicating that these children are overweight. The National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) classifies children and adolescents with a total cholesterol level that exceeds 200mg/dL as being at high risk for coronary heart disease (170-199mg/dL places them at borderline risk). The mean total cholesterol level of the four program participants who completed the entire program was 193.75mg/dL. NCEP classifies children and adolescents with an LDL cholesterol level that exceeds 130 mg/dL as being at high risk for coronary heart disease (110-129mg/dL places them at borderline risk). The mean LDL cholesterol level of program participants was 133.5mg/dL.

Two non-consecutive 24-hour recalls were collected from each of the four program participants – one weekend day and one weekday were included. According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), girls 9-13 years of age should consume 1600-2000 calories per day and boys of the same age should consume 1800-2200 calories per day. The average caloric intake was 1987 calories. DGA also recommends that total fat intake should be between 25 and 35 percent of the total calorie intake for children and adolescents 4 to 18 years of age. The average percent of fat calories from the 24-hour recalls of program participants was 36 percent. DGA recommends that total protein intake be 34 grams per day. Participants' average protein intake was over 67 grams. Therefore the importance of engaging vulnerable families in a program that provides parents and children with skills to structure and discuss both the quantity and quality of food choices within the family context is clearly evident through initial program data.

Unfortunately due to cuts in the state budgetary constraints, *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* lost a significant portion of funding and was completely cut from two of the three Michigan counties before follow-up data could be obtained. In the third Michigan county, the project is in initial phases of program delivery following an added source for funding that was obtained.

Additional Project Adaptations and Findings

As the initial descriptive data demonstrated a clear need for dietary changes and preventative measures for future health-related problems, the university research team made also efforts to increase and diversify community partnerships to offer the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* as a local program marketed through Parks & Recreation and Youth Assistance. *Healthy Kids,*

Healthy Families was then offered as a class to all interested families through the community center venue without the clinical/medical and home-visitor components. In the community center setting, *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* continued to incorporate information on nutrition, physical activity, cognition, self esteem, culture and family dynamics. The program focus was adapted to explore aspects of prevention and program delivery, highlighting activities such as sports, family activities, aquatics, and other parks and recreation events.

In lieu of the contextual changes that included the absence of clinical data and physician referrals, the method of inquiry was adapted to elicit participant experiences through qualitative focus group findings from an additional 12 families. A focus group method was selected to evaluate the intervention in a community setting. Focus groups were conducted because they provide a venue for processing empirical material so as to interpret richness, complexity, and interpretive processes necessary for researchers to observe the ways in which people interact and construct meanings [around creating healthier lifestyles] (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). The focus group questions facilitated discussion on perceptions about family nutrition, physical intervention activities were discussed. Focus group findings indicated that parents and children found the program to be helpful and were satisfied with how it was offered. However, in the community setting it appeared that without medical referrals, many parents were unclear about the purpose of the *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* group.

Satisfaction with the Intervention

- It helped enhance social skills.
  "I think it was helpful for her. I think it socially was very good for her."
- Working on communication and self-esteem was important.
  "I know it did help in make (child) feel more important to her mother, she's not as clingy to mommy at home now."
- Children expressed multiple ways that their families can help them be healthy: provide healthy foods, not allowing them to eat junk food, being physically active with them, and telling them how they are special.

Satisfaction with the Process

- Many parents were unclear about the purpose of the group.
  "I really had no idea really for sure, but I thought it was going to be something more of a type of a counseling thing for the kids."
- Most parents did not think that the program needed any modifications.
  "Probably nothing. I thought it was really good, the way you presented everything and, made it really understandable for the kids and probably for some adults too, you know."

Areas for Further Study

Efforts are underway to secure *Healthy Kids, Healthy Families* programs in their current venues and to investigate the possibility of expanding the program to additional counties. We will also facilitate additional community center focus groups during the upcoming year to determine participant and county staff perceptions of the program. Focus group data will help modify the program to better address the issues facing families with overweight children such as social support, motivation and readiness to change.

Recommendations

Over the course of program development, the Healthy Kids, Healthy Families curriculum went through a number of changes and adaptations to deal with budgetary changes. Flexibility was an essential component of bridging the program to meet the needs of varied MSU Extension demographics and additional community partners including Parks & Recreation Centers and County Youth Outreach. An overall convergence on program provision for community stakeholders who are charged with promoting health and well-being for community members is recommended. Local needs for each program were established and discussed through a series of meetings with community partners, including parks and recreation, youth assistance, medical clinics, and Extension based staff. A practice-based approach to research was essential in order to effectively engage and secure a variety of community partnerships and participants.

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"Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition"

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"Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition"

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Abstract: Team Building is an important issue for Youth Development professionals. We utilize team-focused work to achieve our objectives in educating youth. The team building skills we integrate into programming serve to prepare youth for the dynamic, highly interpersonal work environment of today. "Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition," by W. Dyer, W.G. Dyer, and J. Dyer (2007), provides a practical theoretical framework for those interested in team building application, training, and practice in everyday work.

Introduction

Working in teams is an essential component of professionals in the youth development field. Not only do we work closely with other youth workers in program planning in delivery, but we train youth and adult volunteers and staff members to work more effectively in group situations. A strong foundation in team building is not only a valuable practical skill to be successful in youth development, but also a life skill that should be a strong component in a well-balanced youth training program. When working in a group or team, the ability to recognize group member strengths and draw upon them to meet common goals is an asset in today's job market.

The authors prepare the readers to not only evaluate their existing organizational teams, but allow them to evaluate their leadership roles in leading teams. The reader is prepared by the text to proactively prepare their teams to work effectively together and educate others using a valuable framework of "4 C's of Teambuilding: Context, Composition, Competencies and

Change." Overall, consider "Team Building, Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, a valuable resource for all youth development professionals.

"Team Building: Proven Strategies for Improving Team Performance, 4th Edition," outlines the four C's in the initial chapters, then proceeds to expand on them in the chapters that follow.

Content

- The Search for The High-Performance Team
- Context: Laying the Foundation for Team Success
- Composition: Getting the Right People on the Bus
- Competencies: Developing Team Skills for High Performance
- Change: Devising More Effective Ways of Working Together
- Bringing the Four C's Together: Designing a Team-Building Program
- Managing Conflict in the Team
- Overcoming Unhealthy Agreement
- Reducing Conflict Between Teams
- Managing the Temporary Team
- High Performance Virtual Teams
- Managing Inter-organizational (Alliance) Teams
- Challenges for Building Effective Teams

Application

The text is a valuable foundation for anyone working in team-focused field such as youth development. Many youth educators build youth programs concentrated on developing the skills in youth to aid them in working effectively with others. The resource's designed activities are valuable in and of themselves, but the reflection of the experience should not be overlooked. In fact, processing the experience with group team members should be considered the most important part of the activity. The authors provide valuable perspective and analysis of team building basics, real-world examples, and methods for dealing with problem situations that give way to laying the ground work for team leaders and facilitators. Personal and organizational assessments are interwoven in the text to provide an opportunity for the reader to evaluate the effectiveness of teams.

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Change It Up!
What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership

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Change It Up!
What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership

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Abstract: A national study conducted by Girl Scouts of the USA and Fluent, a New York-based research firm explores the leadership aspirations of girls and boys. Over 4,000 youth were included in the study which examines perceptions, behaviors, experiences and attitudes regarding leadership. The executive summary includes numerous tables and charts highlighting the research findings and comparative responses of boys and girls. Readers will find the results from this study to be of great value when designing youth leadership programs.

Review

Change It Up! What Girls Say About Redefining Leadership (2008) presents findings from a national study conducted by Girl Scouts of the USA and Fluent, a New York-based research firm. Over 4,000 girls and boys were included in the study which examined youth perceptions, behaviors, experiences and attitudes regarding leadership.

The fifty page executive summary is filled with helpful tables and charts highlighting the research findings and comparative responses of boys and girls. Specifically, the researchers addressed:

- Barriers to Leadership Aspiration
- Enjoyment of Leadership Experiences
- People who Influence You to be a Leader and
- Peer Relationships Influence on Leadership.

Responses are further explored based on gender, age, race and income in relationship to the leadership aspirations of girls and boys. Of interest were insights into how girls view leadership and what girls need to be successful leaders. The study noted that "*Many girls emphasize what leadership should be used for, rather than focusing on specific roles or positions. For example, 72% of girls say a leader is someone who 'brings people together to get things done,' and 65% say a leader is someone who 'stands up for his or her beliefs and values."* (p. 8).

In addition, the study summarizes the following four key insights:

Insight #1 – Girls Redefine Leadership in Meaningful Terms
Insight #2 – Self-Confidence + Skills = New Girl Leaders
Insight #3 – Opportunities + Experiences + Support = New Girl Leaders
Insight # 4- Girls Have a Range of "Leadership Identities"

Youth workers will find the results of this study of great value as leadership programs are designed and youth are recruited for leadership roles. This executive summary, as well as supplemental materials and additional youth-related research may be downloaded from the Girl Scouts of the USA website at www.girlscouts.org at no charge.

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