



Welcome to the club : education where the bell never rings
by Kirk Alan Astroth

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University

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Abstract:

As the nation's largest nonformal youth development program, 4-H has been challenged to develop life skills in young people to help them become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society. Professional 4-H faculty have often asserted that participation in the program results in the development of life skills, yet research documenting such impacts is sparse. This descriptive research study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the 4-H experience from participants' perspective. Three counties were randomly selected for study, and all 4-H clubs leaders in these counties were administered an inventory to assess their orientation towards working with youth. Five 4-H clubs' were purposely selected for study based on leadership styles that were either more control-oriented or more autonomy-oriented. Members in clubs led by autonomy-oriented leaders reported that 4-H was more fun, that they learned more life skills, and were more satisfied with their club experience than members in control-oriented clubs. Characteristics of effective clubs are outlined based on this research.

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of

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MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY--BOZEMAN
Bozeman, Montana

April 1996

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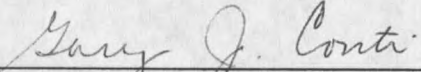
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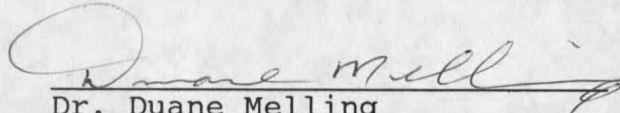
This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.



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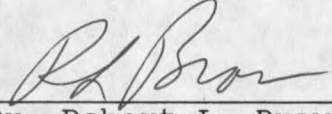
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Dedicated to my parents
and to 4-H members past, present, and future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study originated several years ago and owes its fruition to a number of people. A special thanks to my graduate committee that gave me valuable guidance and input all along the way: Dr. Gary Conti, Dr. Robert Fellenz, Dr. Doug Herbster, Dr. Oakley Winters, and Elizabeth M. McCoy. Ms. McCoy deserves a special acknowledgement for her support and never-ending encouragement to me while I tried to carry on the responsibilities of my job while working on this project. She also generously made funds available to ensure that I had the resources to carry out this research project. Thanks, Betty. A final thanks to the people of Latvia who see the immense potential of 4-H for the future of their country.

Of course, I would especially like to acknowledge the support of Tana Kappel. Tana has been a source of encouragement and inspiration during my work on this research project all along the way. Without Tana's help and support, this project would not have been possible. In many ways this is her dissertation too.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues who have provided support and inspiration all along the way. What a long, strange trip it's been....

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ABSTRACT

As the nation's largest nonformal youth development program, 4-H has been challenged to develop life skills in young people to help them become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society. Professional 4-H faculty have often asserted that participation in the program results in the development of life skills, yet research documenting such impacts is sparse. This descriptive research study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the 4-H experience from participants' perspective. Three counties were randomly selected for study, and all 4-H club leaders in these counties were administered an inventory to assess their orientation towards working with youth. Five 4-H clubs were purposely selected for study based on leadership styles that were either more control-oriented or more autonomy-oriented. Members in clubs led by autonomy-oriented leaders reported that 4-H was more fun, that they learned more life skills, and were more satisfied with their club experience than members in control-oriented clubs. Characteristics of effective clubs are outlined based on this research.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Pick up almost any newspaper or magazine today, and you will undoubtedly find some expert raising the alarm about today's youth crisis. Researchers, businessmen, human resource professionals, educators, and policy makers alike almost universally bemoan the fate of today's younger generation (Carnegie Corporation, 1988; Casey & Tucker, 1994; Dryfoos, 1990). Whether they be called "youth at risk," children without conscience, punks, "Generation X," or some other moniker, today's authorities generally agree that young people, by and large, are not being equipped to succeed in the present let alone to take on the responsibilities of adulthood in the future (Schorr, 1988). As one well-known youth authority put it, "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that all is not well on the home front" (Dryfoos, 1995, p. vii).

Certainly, such concerns for the competencies of American youth are nothing new (Postman & Weingartner, 1969). Similar concerns were heard about high school graduates shortly after World War II (Newsweek, 1954). In

the 1950's the launch of Sputnik seemed to point anew to the failures of American education, especially in the sciences. In the 1960's and early 1970's, policy makers blamed children and their blighted environments for the failure to develop the requisite skills to keep America competitive. During the 1970's, public education focused on "back to basics" and blamed the teachers for low academic achievement of students. In the 1980's parents were blamed for failing to support education's goals and to sufficiently monitor homework assignments (Hamburg, 1990; Hechinger, 1992; Lerner, 1995). Yet, despite all the efforts at accountability, the cry we continue to hear is that American youth are not being prepared socially or academically for the modern world. Seemingly, the youth crisis has reached epidemic proportions (Dryfoos, 1990; Lerner, 1995).

Just how bad is the current youth crisis? Of course, it depends on who is asked. Some authorities maintain that today all youth are born at high risk and are not developing the skills to lead capable lives (Glenn & Nelson, 1988; Schorr, 1988). A recent Carnegie Commission (1988) estimated that about half of all youth are at risk and would experience such negative outcomes as school failure, early teen pregnancy, substance abuse or delinquency. The other half (about 14 million youth) appear to be growing up healthy, but "even these young people are not immune to risk since most of them at the very least lack sufficient

problem-solving skills" (Hechinger, 1992, p. 22). Others (Dryfoos, 1990; Helge, 1990; Lerner, 1995; Palmer, in press) estimate that one-quarter of 10-17 year olds are at high risk, and an additional 25% are at moderate risk. Helge (1990) suggests that rural youth are disproportionately at risk for negative outcomes when compared to urban youth. One authority asserted that if action is not taken soon to restore America's precious human capital, its democratic way of life may be at risk (Brown, 1987).

What concerns many human service and educational professionals is that today's youth are at risk for failing to develop the requisite skills and abilities to live full, productive lives. Specifically, these authorities believe that youth are not developing the leadership skills, self-confidence, social and basic academic skills to succeed in the years ahead. Business leaders have also voiced their concerns about spending millions of dollars on costly remedial education and training programs for individuals who have graduated from high school but who are still ill-equipped to assume positions in the modern workplace (Lacey, 1988). Education is failing to help young people develop the necessary skills to live full, productive lives.

The most recent major wake-up call about the condition of American youth and our educational system was sounded in A Nation At Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). This report came as a result of

then-Secretary of Education T.H. Bell's concern about "the widespread public perception that something is seriously remiss in our educational system" (p. 1). What was required was equivalent to a declaration of war:

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. (p. 5)

A Nation At Risk challenged the U.S. to launch a reform movement of public education lest the future of the nation be in jeopardy. This commission claimed that public schools were failing to prepare young people with the requisite skills to make the successful transition to adulthood and enter the workplace. Yet, this commission's recommendations had more to do with the structure of education than with content: assigning more homework, lengthening the school day, increasing admission standards at colleges, and increasing graduation requirements, and giving more tests. Significantly more time should be given to focusing on what this report called the "New Basics" (p. 29). The national goals proposed by The Nation at Risk report have been criticized by educators as unrealistic and wrong-headed (Kamii, Clark, & Dominick, 1994).

Subsequent reports and commissions have echoed the concerns expressed in A Nation at Risk but have offered different recommendations. Rather than emphasizing a return to basics, others have suggested that education look at ways

to develop lifelong learning skills in youth that will serve them outside the confines of the classroom. "Our conclusion is that these [problem-solving] skills are the foundation of reliable work habits and behaviors that will increasingly be required in the workplaces of the 21st century" (Lacey, 1988, p. 9).

Background to the Problem

While many commissions and reports have placed primary responsibility on public schools for developing America's youth potential, few have recognized the role that nonformal education could play in this goal. Even Postman and Weingartner (1969) in their call for radical changes in public schools believed that schools had the singular responsibility for teaching critical thinking skills: "We believe that schools must serve as the principal medium for developing in youth the attitudes and skills of social, political, and cultural criticism" (p. 2). Non-school organizations were notably absent from their call for an educational revolution.

In A Nation At Risk, out-of-school youth programs are never mentioned nor does the report acknowledge the contributions nonformal education could make in turning the nation's youth crisis around (National Commission, 1983). Yet, other studies (Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1979; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983;

President's Science Advisory Committee, 1974; National Panel on High Schools, 1976; Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983) have argued for some time that nonformal youth groups can provide many experiences that are lacking in formal education.

Specifically, nonformal youth groups provide:

- Closer contact for youth with adults from the community.
- Opportunities for active, responsible roles
- Experiences in community service
- Opportunities to learn practical skills beyond academic subjects.

Of all the federal commissions, only the National Commission for Employment Policy (Lacey, 1988) came close to recognizing a role for agencies outside of public schools: "Essential resources through the community must be mobilized, coordinated, and focused on the needs of at-risk youngsters" (p. 3). Others have called for greater cooperation between public and non-school youth organizations to help accomplish common goals (Palmer, in press; Sesow & VanCleaf, 1985).

Historically, public education is perceived as fulfilling a more important role in the development of critical thinking skills than nonformal education, but because of the lack of knowledge about the role of nonformal education it is not known what contributions can be provided by differing forms of education. In discussion about

educational reform to improve youth development, nonformal education is rarely considered.

After five decades of failed reforms, perhaps it is time to look at the complementary contribution nonformal education can make to national education goals. Many of those who see the indispensability of nonformal learning beyond youth do not see the necessity of nonformal learning environments during youth (Beder, 1989).

Why should there begin to be a consideration of the role of nonformal education to help youth acquire the critical skills needed for the future?

We cannot expect children to accept ready-made values and truths all the way through school, and then suddenly make choices in adulthood. (Kamii, 1991, p. 387)

Schools by themselves may not be able to develop the kinds of skills in youth that they will need to succeed. Research on the prevention of anti-social behaviors indicates that greater emphasis must be put on developing one's self-concept and on the acquisition of life skills both in formal and in nonformal education (Palmer, in press; Shrum, 1987). It is known from research that children who succeed academically and who also make the successful transitions to adulthood are those who have participated in a wider array of opportunities beyond the school and the family. These community offerings include work experience, 4-H, scouting, athletics, and a host of others (Heath & McLaughlin, 1987;

Heath & McLaughlin, 1991; Steele, Miller, & Rai, 1993). As one expert concluded:

It would seem that the time is right to attempt to forge a partnership between formal and non-formal education, in which the latter is taken seriously, provided with resources, and held accountable for the tasks undertaken. (Erickson, 1986, p. 23).

Few people include nonformal education as an important player in helping youth develop the necessary skills to succeed in the modern world. Yet, intuition suggests that experiential nonformal youth programs could be another important contributor in the movement to help youth develop such skills. Certainly, families and schools are fundamental for all youth, but a variety of community-based programs and organizations can provide youth with access to adults with a wide range of interests and perspective. Such nonformal groups can also stimulate children's motivation for academic learning as well as help them learn skills to adjust and adapt in a changing world (Heath & McLaughlin, 1987). Tyler (1961) acknowledged the beneficial role that nonformal education could play and observed that 4-H was an effective educational organization when compared to school or extra-curricular activities. Moreover, nearly three-fourths of 14-15 year olds participate in nonformal youth organizations every year (Hafner, 1990).

The Cooperative Extension Service, which includes 4-H, in association with land-grant universities has a long history of providing educational programs and services to

American youth, families, and communities. During previous national emergencies--such as during the depression and during World War II, Extension played a supportive role in assisting with America's response to these crises (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). However, it is not clear if nonformal educational programs today like 4-H are willing and able to respond to the current youth emergency. To what extent is 4-H willing to play a role in helping youth develop the critical skills needed to make the transition to adulthood? Some suggest that nonformal education must participate in these efforts if our nation is to survive:

Whatever the solutions may be to the youth crisis, enlightened public policies, community service based on quality research, and dedicated efforts of professional and volunteer workers are all essential ingredients to help youth reach their potential. (Snider & Miller, 1991, p. 4).

The question is what role, if any, can the 4-H youth development program play in helping youth develop the leadership life skills necessary in a changing world? Perhaps nonformal education can supplement and complement other forms of education.

Statement of the Problem

In the 1970's Cooperative Extension national report called 4-H in Century III, 4-H was challenged with the goal of helping young people develop "life skills" that would enable them to become self-directing, productive, and

contributing members of society (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA], 1976). In order to meet the needs of a changing society, the 4-H program should help youth develop inquiring minds, learn how to apply science and technology to their everyday lives, strengthen abilities to make intelligent decisions, improve communication skills, develop effective interpersonal relationships, and "acquire positive attitudes toward self and a feeling of self-worth" (p. 3). These skills are the broad, generic problem-solving and leadership skills that should help youth assume leadership roles in the future.

Since then, professional 4-H staff have often asserted that a wide variety of experiences in the 4-H program result in the development of these kinds of skills, yet research documenting such impacts is sparse. In fact, for an organization that prides itself on the delivery of research-based programs, the paucity of supporting evidence of the positive impacts on personal development skills is curious. Little research has been conducted in the United States on the effects of participation in nonformal youth groups like 4-H.

Although largely unknown prior to the 1960's, nonformal education has begun to receive attention from the academic community. Several researchers have emphasized the importance of structured out-of-school programs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cremin, 1976) and have suggested that

it is "now a likely subject for inquiry" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 313).

While there are numerous studies of student achievement in public schools, few studies have investigated participant outcomes in nonformal youth programs. For example, there are only a handful of studies on the benefits of participating in Girl Scouts (Cole, 1984; Edwards, 1994; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983; Ragoff et al., 1995). Only slightly more studies of Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCA or YWCA can be found (Braverman & d'Onofrio, 1986; Erickson, 1986; Frecknall & Luks, 1992; Hamburg, 1990; Hines, 1988).

There is somewhat more research on Boy Scouts (Kleinfeld and Shinkwin, 1983, 1984; Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983). Unfortunately, though, much of the research on Boy Scouts has dismissed the organization as an extremely rigid institution aimed at keeping boys occupied in trivial activities, or the research has explored covert sexual themes in all-male scouting or has investigated the social class ideology of scouting (Gillis, 1981; Hantover, 1978; Hollingshead, 1975; Kett, 1977; Mechling, 1978; 1980; 1981). Kleinfeld & Shinkwin (1984) undertook one of the few detailed studies of the Boy Scout experience from an ethnological point of view. Yet, these researchers hesitated to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of leadership styles on member outcomes.

Possibly because 4-H is sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service in affiliation with land grant universities, the 4-H program has been the subject of significantly more research studies (Abbott, Sutton, Jackson & Logan, 1976; Banning, 1979; Boyd, 1991; Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992; Brown, 1987; Ellis, 1990; Erickson, 1983; Gottlieb & Lewis, 1974; Hall, 1991; Hanna, 1988; Heinsohn & Cantrell, 1986; Kappa Systems, 1979; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Mueller, 1989; Risdon & Swain, 1990; Sawyer, 1987; Schlutt, 1987; Steele & Everson, 1978; Steele & Rossing, 1981; Suso, 1984; Williams, 1983). Only a few of these studies have tried to learn more about the nature of the club experience from participants' points of view (Baker, 1991; Banning, 1979; Boyd, 1991; Cook, 1991; Jeffiers, 1989). Few have studied the youth participants in a holistic way focusing on the club as a learning environment (Fetsch et al., 1993; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983; Waguespack, 1988).

Limitations of Previous Research

There is some question about whether participation in nonformal youth programs provides significant benefits to participants. Research on participants in the Big Brothers program, for example, showed that the big brothers' self-esteem improved significantly but there was no improvement in self-esteem for the little brothers (Hines, 1988). In

other cases, participation in nonformal youth programs has increased one's likelihood of engaging in risk behaviors. For instance, participants in nonformal youth organizations are more likely to use cigarettes than their non-participating peers (Braverman & d'Onofrio, 1986; Dewalt, 1992). In many instances, the claims of benefits for participating in nonformal youth groups are often more conjecture than substantiated (Cole, 1984; Erickson, 1983; Ragoff et al., 1995).

Since a greater number of studies on 4-H have been conducted and since these studies are usually more rigorous by research standards, it seems appropriate to focus on the 4-H program as a basis for investigating the impact of participation in nonformal youth programs. 4-H members typically belong to a large community club which meets once a month. Monthly club meetings serve as a social gathering for club members and their families and to teach skills in conducting meetings, voting democratically, and doing public presentations. In addition, members of 4-H clubs join one or more small project groups that meet several times throughout the year. These project groups focus on subjects like raising swine, learning photography, woodworking, electricity, or learning about foods and nutrition. Project leaders are usually parents of club members who have an interest or expertise in a particular area. Sometimes, parents serve as leaders for several projects. The skills

that are taught in project meetings are typically skills that are not commonly thought to be learned in school or at home. The goal of project meetings is to teach specific skills. For example, in a foods project members learn among other things how to cook nutritious foods. Through such experiences, members are also believed to gain confidence, develop an interest in inquiry, learn how to make wise decisions, develop empathy, and get along with others (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983; Suso, 1984; Scriven, 1980; Tyler, 1961; USDA, 1976; Waguespack, 1988; Williams, 1983).

Over the years, efforts to assess the effectiveness of the 4-H program have been rather limited and have reported mixed results. In fact, many evaluation efforts (e.g. Bakker, 1994; Ellis, 1990; Erickson, 1983; Forest, 1989; Gottlieb & Lewis, 1974; Jones, 1969; Kappa Systems, 1979; Krietlow, Pierce & Middleton, 1961) have focused on such concerns as the program's ability to reach increasing numbers of participants without addressing the impact of 4-H programs on its participants. Evidence is needed concerning who benefits, by how much, and what difference, if any, 4-H makes for individuals who participate.

Whether membership in 4-H is beneficial has been examined in several studies. So far, previous studies of the impacts of 4-H membership have shown only weak results or mixed results. Generally, these studies can be divided into three categories: (a) those that indicate that 4-H may

make a positive difference; (b) those that indicate that 4-H membership may not make any difference; and (c) those which exhibit methodological weaknesses so one cannot tell whether 4-H membership makes a difference or not.

Studies Indicating Positive Results

In the first category of research studies, the most comprehensive study of those involved in informal educational programs was the 4-H alumni study conducted by Ladewig and Thomas (1987). This nationally-supported study looked at 4-H alumni, alumni of other youth organizations, and adults who did not participate in any organizations as a youth. After surveying a weighted random sample of more than 16,000 participants, this study concluded that, in general, membership in youth development programs did make a difference for the participants. Specifically, adults who had participated in any variety of youth programs benefitted, and former 4-H members reported greater benefits than alumni of other youth groups or adults who were never members of any youth group. The most useful experiences to develop life skills were social contacts with other people in the organization. Interestingly, 4-H alumni were less satisfied than other youth group alumni with their opportunities for leadership, and 4-H alumni indicated that other organizations contributed more to their personal leadership development and a sense of responsibility.

Length of membership and age of entry into the program were the most important variables in assessing life skill development in 4-H participants.

In their study of 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Kleinfeld & Shinkwin (1983) found that 4-H "created the most extensive network of relationships between young people and adults" (p. 5). In Girl Scouts, youth developed relationships primarily with their own leaders. Boy Scouts specifically taught members to work with adults they did not know. In contrast, 4-H helped develop a broader social network between youth and adults. 4-H also taught the greatest diversity of skills compared to other youth programs. 4-H was also found to emphasize skill development more than scouting and "the skills had less ideological overlay" (p. 9).

Other research has examined the impact of special, short-term 4-H programs aimed at a particular audience. Special 4-H programs targeted to at-risk youth could result in the development of positive skills, attitudes, and knowledge that also carried over into regular classroom work. 4-H programs had a positive influence on community service, leadership roles, task completion, self-esteem, and a number of other parameters (Valentine, 1990). Participation in 4-H also instilled a sense of responsibility for task completion in young people (Rollins, Scholl & Scanlon, 1992; Scott, Clark, & Reagan, 1990).

Significant differences between 4-H and non-4-H members were found in terms of life skills development (Boyd, 1991; Boyd et al., 1992). This study revealed that 4-H members' perceptions of their development of life skills were significantly higher than the perceptions of non-4-H youth for all measurement scales. A Pennsylvania study of 4-H members revealed that youth perceived themselves as having developed "good" levels of leadership, communication, and personal development skills (Heinsohn & Cantrell, 1986).

4-H members participating in animal projects have been a special focus of some research projects looking at the impact of 4-H membership. Because of their participation in 4-H, members reported that life skills were among the highest rated skills learned by them, and the single most important skill was responsibility (Baker, 1991; Sawyer, 1987). In fact, life skills were mentioned as often as knowledge-based skills (Sawyer, 1987). Other highly rated skills were making new friends, getting along with other people, and helping others. Less than half of these respondents reported developing communication or leadership skills (Sawyer, 1987). Similar studies in three other states have come to similar conclusions about life skills development among 4-H members (Drake & Baumgardner, 1978; Steele & Everson, 1978; Williams, 1983).

Studies Indicating No Differences

In the second category of research studies, a preliminary global analysis of nearly 1,000 4-H members and non-members found no evidence that participation in 4-H programs increased self-competence levels more so than non-participation (Fetsch et al., 1993). Similarly, Miller (1991) was unable to find significant differences in the life skills values of 4-H members as compared to other youth who had never participated in 4-H. Even the use of multiple regression was unable to explain very much of the variance in life skills values of the two groups.

A four-year study in Kansas in which participants were categorized as 4-H and non-4-H members found similar non-significant results from 4-H membership when compared to non-members (Hanna, 1988). This study involved 1,516 students in grades 5-11 and found that 4-H membership had only a slightly positive effect in 23 of 30 indicators of life skill development. At best, findings were mixed and yielded no strong correlation. In some cases, 4-H members reported lower levels of self-concept than youth who had never participated in 4-H. Hanna reported that the low reliability estimates of the research instruments may have contributed to these confounding results.

Using data collected by the U.S. Office of Education NELS:88 Study, researchers at the University of Wisconsin were able to make some generalizations about 4-H

participation among eighth graders nationally. For example, about one out of every six eighth graders has participated in 4-H at some time during their lives, and these 4-H members are like average kids in many respects. 4-H does not just work with the "cream of the crop" and includes youth of varying abilities and backgrounds. Yet, this study too was unable to document that taking part in 4-H programs resulted in measurable advantages in such areas as grades, self-concept, or future plans (Steele et al., 1993).

Studies with Methodological Flaws

In the third category of research studies, Collins (1984, 1986) found that 4-H members self-reported developing valuable life skills through 4-H programs and also reported that parents and 4-H volunteer leaders were the most influential in the development of these skills. However, the validity and generalizability of her study suffers from a number of methodological flaws. For instance, her study used a systematic sample and included only a 4-point Likert-type scale for responses with no category for "don't know" or "not sure". Her sample size was also much less than 10% of the 4-H membership in the state usually expected for statistical validity (Gay, 1987). Finally, this study did not include non-4-H members as a comparison group (Collins, 1986).

In a similar way, Bakker's (1994) study of 4-H ambassadors failed to use a reliable and valid instrument. The study did not include a comparison group, and he relied upon a convenient sample.

Implications of Previous Research

Formal educational programs are able to document impacts on their students in a number of arenas. For example, schools can readily point to student achievements on standardized tests as evidence that their students are excelling in relevant areas, or they can point to graduation rates or scores on the ACT or SAT. Nonformal educational programs like 4-H, however, have been less successful in documenting impacts on their members. Standardized tests do not exist. Thus, it would be useful to know what factors influence the development of life skills in 4-H members and whether membership in out-of-school programs like 4-H contributes in significant ways to the development of life skills.

A review of the previous studies of the 4-H program raises several concerns. First, each of these studies relied exclusively on quantitative data collection. None involved interviews or field observations of 4-H members as they participated in their club environment. Naturalistic techniques were never utilized in these studies. Perhaps a mixed design using both quantitative and qualitative methods

would be more useful to fully understand the dynamics and impacts of nonformal education in an ecological perspective.

Second, most of these studies failed to examine the influence of the leadership style of the adult volunteer on the experiences and development of life skills in 4-H members. All of these studies lack a holistic view of 4-H as a social environment. Some studies simply survey 4-H members, devoid of the context of the learning environment in which adult volunteers play a critical role and have great influence. Other studies (e.g. Jeffiers, 1989) have asked the adults what they perceive members are learning without asking the members themselves. Few studies have included both leaders and members in their analysis.

A consistent feature of all these studies is that researchers try to study 4-H members devoid of their club context. Yet, individual 4-H clubs are different and provide a different experience to members and adult leadership is part of that difference. In the previous studies cited, all 4-H members were pooled together for data analysis purposes without regard for the differences in the kinds of clubs in which they participated. Thus, it is difficult to differentiate between those members who participated in learning environments that treated them as resources and those who participated in learning environments that treated them as objects or recipients. Data analysis tends to eliminate the extremes and moves

everyone to the average. For such studies, discriminate analysis would be more appropriate for learning what different club environments mean for 4-H members.

Hence, 4-H participants should be studied in context of the club experience. Researchers should examine clubs as total learning environments in which leaders, parents, and members all interact under a common set of assumptions and rules. Without this kind of complete picture, it is little wonder that previous studies have not been able to uncover significant differences between participants and nonparticipants in nonformal youth programs.

Third, all of these studies were relatively short-term research projects--one time studies using pencil and paper tests to measure impacts. What is needed is a project which covers a significant period of time using several milestones to chart changes. Moreover, an approach which triangulates various sources of data would be useful to uncovering the significance, if any, of the 4-H experience (Lerner, 1995).

Finally, none of these studies have been able to determine the influence of the county agent's attitude or characteristics on the kind of 4-H program offered to young people. While this influence may be small, it has never been adequately assessed (Baker, 1991; Schlutt, 1987). One research study suggested that 4-H members interacting with a county Extension agent will develop coping skills, but the strength of this influence is unclear (Schlutt, 1987).

Others have questioned how much influence a county agent can have on individual members, particularly younger members who have few occasions to participate in county level activities (Miller, 1991). Does the leadership orientation of the county agent impact the quality of the program and/or the kind of adult leadership that is delivered at the club level?

4-H is a large program which has had nearly a century of work with both youth and adults, but the research base on the impacts of participation are deficient. What meanings do the members attach to their experiences? How are their experiences different from those they might have in other settings? What are the benefits of 4-H participation? How does the 4-H club socialize young people to live in a modern society?

A new approach to research on 4-H is needed. Professional educators have defined what youth and adults should be learning and gaining through their participation in the 4-H program. Professionals have framed the meaning of such experiences in terms of "life skills." In some cases, professionals have enumerated what skills are valuable and should be developed as a result of 4-H participation. For example, many state programs have identified specific life skills such as decision-making, communications, contributory or helping skills, developing an inquisitive approach to issues, problem solving or

others. Yet, there appears to be no firm connection between the goals of the 4-H program and mechanisms or procedures to develop such specific skills. The connection is merely assumed: by being involved in "good" 4-H programs, youth will develop lifelong skills in a variety of areas.

Few studies have been able to demonstrate that such skill development is occurring or that 4-H members differ significantly in such skills from other youth who do not participate in 4-H programs (Evaluation of Economic and Social Consequences, 1980; Hanna, 1988; Miller, 1991; Steele et al., 1993). Perhaps, with their over-emphasis on quantitative methods, researchers have been taking the wrong approach. Perhaps, too, researchers have been asking the wrong questions.

What is missing from the research literature is a description of what experiences youth actually have in these kinds of nonformal educational organizations and what young people find important about belonging to such groups.

LaBelle (1981) perhaps summarized the gaps which still exist in research in his overview of nonformal youth groups:

We know very little, for example, about the kinds of things that we take for granted when we talk about school, like who are the actors, what is the scope of their relationship and on what does the nonformal education process focus. We also know little about how nonformal education contributes to child development, its relationship to family socialization, or its effects on values, literacy and numeracy, or on a youngster's problem solving skills. Furthermore, we know little about what adults and youngsters who live in different size

communities or regions seek from nonformal participation and whether it has agreed upon impact. (p. 323)

The Role of Leaders

An important and little-investigated feature of the 4-H program is the adult volunteer leadership. 4-H is an organization which relies on adult volunteer leaders to carry out the program. Without these volunteer adults, there would be no 4-H program since the number of salaried staff in the nation is actually quite small. Thus, leaders play several important roles in 4-H. Indeed, the three major reasons for the failure of youth organizations are absence of a leader, lack of commitment, and need for leader support (Erickson, 1983; Stephen, 1983). Some studies have suggested that to be effective, adult volunteers need competence in effectively using incentives and recognition when working with youth (Treat, 1975). One study indicated that the quality of adult leaders can be quite influential on whether members complete their 4-H projects (Scott et al., 1990).

Despite limited evidence that the kinds of adult leaders influence the quality of a youth's experience, the influence and impact of adult leaders and parents in non-formal youth programs has not been extensively researched. In most of the preceding research studies, members were studied but not as a part of a particular club environment.

Recent trends in research would argue for a more holistic approach which would study the club as a learning environment.

Such an ecological approach is rare. Even in 4-H studies, there is a dearth of research-based information about how adult leaders influence the organizational culture and values of youth groups. One exception to this situation is a case study of two Scout troops in Alaska conducted over a seven month period (Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983). While the researchers declined to draw any evaluative conclusions from their research, there are some clear patterns which emerged from their data. First, a controlling style of leadership was beneficial to boys in a downtown troop and gave them a sense of responsibility and structure. Second, participation of adults in youth meetings can have a great influence on perpetuating a group's dominant culture and inculcating the preferred ideology. Third, the troop in which leadership roles were diffuse among all troop members was more effective in developing leadership abilities in members.

As this study suggests, the orientation of 4-H leaders may greatly influence the kind of experiences young people have in the program. If leaders are autonomy-oriented in their approach to working with young people, treating them with dignity and respect, and helping them to assume some responsibility, young people could be expected to develop

critical life skills and report a greater satisfaction with the 4-H experience. On the other hand, young people who have leaders who are heteronomy-oriented, controlling and disempowering, and who take responsibility away from youth may report less satisfaction with the youth group and might report less skill development than youth with other kinds of leaders. As Lofquist (1983) has explained, adult leaders tend to exhibit three basic orientations towards working with young people: as objects, as recipients of adult wisdom or as resources or partners. Which style results in greater youth outcomes? The research on this question is not extensive.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the leadership style of 4-H adult club leaders and 4-H member's experiences in these clubs. This relationship was described from a multivariant perspective. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to triangulate observations and develop a holistic view of the club experience as influenced by the adult's leadership style.

Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe demographic data collected for the study. Qualitative analysis was used to interpret extensive field notes, interview transcripts, and artifacts collected during the

study. Finally, statistical procedures were used to explore relationships between adult leadership styles and member development of life skills and club satisfaction.

Research Questions

This study examined the 4-H club environment as revealed through the behavior of leaders, parents and members and as revealed through the researcher's nonparticipatory observations of clubs. The following research questions were formulated for this study:

1. Why are youth attracted to join the 4-H program?
2. What are the factors that keep youth involved in 4-H clubs?
3. What is the effect of different adult leadership styles on member satisfaction with the club environment?
4. What skills do youth develop as a result of their participation in 4-H?
5. What difference, if any, does the adult leader's style have on the skill development of youth? Are autonomy-oriented leaders more effective in helping youth develop these skills than control-oriented leaders?
6. Is there a relationship between the county agent's leadership style and the leadership style of adult 4-H club leaders in the same county?
7. What are the characteristics of effective 4-H clubs?

Definition of Terms

Adult Education: "The process whereby persons whose major social roles are characteristic of adult status

undertake systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 9).

Autonomy: "The ability of a person to be self-governing; the ability to think for oneself and to decide between right and wrong in the moral realm and between truth and untruth in the intellectual realm by taking all relevant factors into account" (Kamii, Clark & Dominick, 1994, p. 673).

Club: Five or more youth and at least one caring adult who serves as the organizational leader in 4-H.

Controlling Environment: "Events that pressure people toward specific outcomes, thereby denying them the experience of choice" (Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner & Kauffman, 1982, p. 852).

Education: "The deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to transmit, evoke, or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values or skills" (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982, p. 2).

Experiential Learning: Participatory, hands-on engagement in tasks and activities by learners outside the classroom (Rose, 1989).

Facilitators: Those who assist rather than direct learners. Resource persons, helpers who are accepting of learners, have a high regard for learners' self-

planning abilities, are engaged in an equal dialogue with learners and are open to change and new experiences (Brookfield, 1989).

Family: "A group in which people typically live together in a household and function as a cooperative unit, particularly through the sharing of economic resources, in the pursuit of domestic activities" (Popenoe, 1993, p. 529).

Fieldnotes: "The written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 107).

Formal Learning: "The institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured educational system, spanning lower primary school and upper reaches of the university" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8).

4-H: The nonformal youth and adult education program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, land-grant universities, and county governments.

4-H Member: Any youth between the ages of 9 and 21 who has been or is currently enrolled in a 4-H club.

Heteronomy: subjection to external controls and impositions, especially a lack of moral freedom or self-determination.

Informal Learning: "The lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment" (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p. 8). Others (Verner & Booth, 1964) refer to informal learning as natural or accidental learning--such as watching television, reading and experiencing everyday life.

Key Informant: "Individuals who possess special knowledge, status, or communicative skills and who are willing to share that knowledge and skill with the researcher" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 119).

Leadership: "A process to maximize individual contributions to organizations and society" (Osbourne, 1984).

Leadership Style: A pervasive quality of behavior that persists even when the content changes (Fischer & Fischer, 1979, p. 245).

Life skills: Skills, behaviors and abilities that are useful for everyday living.

Nonformal Learning: "Organized, systematic teaching carried on outside of the formal, usually chronologically graded and hierarchically structured, school system that is intended to provide particular types of learning to specific populations" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 315).

Socialization: "Activities that are devoted to the inculcation and elicitation of basic motivational and cognitive patterns through ongoing and spontaneous interaction with parents, siblings, kinsmen, and other members of the community" (Cohen, 1971, p. 22).

Teaching: "The inculcation of standardized and stereotyped knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes by means of standardized and stereotyped procedures" (Cohen, 1971, p. 22).

Limitations and Delimitations

This research study was limited to an examination of the leadership styles and impacts of the 4-H experience on members in five randomly selected 4-H clubs over a 12-month period. The study involved about 200 individuals directly associated with 4-H clubs in Montana.

The study was delimited to the state of Montana and the 4-H clubs within the state. Only officially chartered 4-H clubs in Montana were eligible to participate in this study.

Assumptions

During the course of this research project, the researcher operated from several assumptions. First, it was assumed that the presence of an observer from the state 4-H office in the clubs would not influence the interactions of members, leaders, and parents. Moreover, it was assumed

that the presence of an observer would not alter the kind of programming in which the club would normally engage.

Second, it was assumed that the presence of an observer did not bias the kinds of responses received on the quantitative instruments used in the research. It was also assumed that the presence of an observer in the clubs would not inhibit members from expressing their true feelings and observations.

Another assumption in this research study was that the modifications to the original FACES III instrument did not significantly change the reliability and validity coefficients obtained for the original instrument.

These assumptions are valid for several reasons. First, the duration of the research continued over a twelve month period. During this time, it would be difficult if not impossible for individual 4-H clubs to artificially alter their format or programming simply to impress an observer. In addition, a review of club minutes from meetings missed indicated that there were no changes in club meeting formats. Moreover, the observer assumed an unobtrusive position at each club meeting and did not participate in club activities. Finally, during interviews or observations, club members and leaders were not reticent about expressing their views or functioning as they would without the presence of an observer. The duration of this

study helped foster a sense of trusting and belonging between the clubs and the observer.

Summary

For decades, American policy makers have expressed concerns about the preparation of young people to successfully assume adult roles in our society. All the previous solutions--more testing, greater accountability, tougher graduation requirements, new curricula, changed financing strategies, required participation of parents--share a common failing. These solutions are all instrumental approaches that focus on the delivery system of public education and merely attempt to standardized all the components to achieve more effective and efficient education for all children. None of these solutions start with a basic question of the function of educating, nurturing and supporting children to become competent adults. Tinkering has failed.

Solutions to our educational crisis can only be found by looking beyond the scope of the schools by focusing on more than the individual component parts of the education matrix. If we are to address America's educational issues, we must include nonformal educational programs like 4-H in any strategies or solutions. 4-H is an important part of the nation's educational matrix and one part of the community network that makes up a child's environment.

Before turning to nonformal education for help, though, we need to know more about the kinds of environments which result in positive outcomes for youth. An important feature of these environments is the kind of leadership provided by adult volunteers. The impact of adult leadership styles on the quality of the 4-H member's experience has not been extensively investigated. Members may experience 4-H in different ways depending on the specific environment in which they find themselves. These environments are critically influenced by the adult leadership selected to lead each club.

This study attempted to examine the factors and situations that combine to create the most positive learning situations for 4-H members in club settings. Future training and leader selection may be influenced by the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In studying the learning environment of 4-H clubs, several issues emerge as important. First, the leadership style of the adults who provide organizational leadership to the club is critical. To understand the interaction between leaders and members, a firm understanding of leadership theory is needed. Second, since life skill development is the avowed aim of the 4-H program, an inquiry into the development of life skills is central to such a research project. Understanding the meaning of life skills development is a pivotal part of understanding the 4-H experience. Third, since 4-H is both a youth and adult education program, an investigation of nonformal education--both youth and adult--is important to understanding the totality of the 4-H experience. Finally, an understanding of the socializing role played by nonformal youth groups in society is needed.

The Role of Leaders and Leadership Style

For well over a century, leadership has been a major topic in social and organizational literature. Researchers have investigated the influence of leadership and teaching styles in the family, in schools, and in the workplace. While there are certainly other factors which affect the interactions of people in all these settings, the potential consequences of a leader's style should not be underestimated.

Leadership can be understood in many ways, but one characterization defines leadership as "a process to maximize individual contributions to organizations and society" (Osbourne, 1984, p. 8). Leaders have an important influence on the performance and satisfaction of subordinates. Leaders can control interpersonal and material rewards or punishments that can impact subordinates' motivation, performance, and attitude. Leadership styles can also influence an individual's self-image and competence. Moreover, leaders can impact an individual's health and well-being by creating stimulating environments or by creating ones filled with stress and tension. Just as a leader's style can affect individuals, they can likewise affect total group performance.

While the connection between leadership and performance has been widely described in business and school settings,

it has been less well described in nonformal learning environments. Since leadership is so important in work environments, it would be reasonable to assume that leadership style also matters in nonformal educational settings like 4-H clubs, but just how much and in what ways is not clear.

4-H adult volunteers are considered both leaders and teachers in addition to their biological role as parents. How 4-H volunteers function in club settings is influenced by their perceptions about and skills in each of these roles. It would be important, therefore, to understand something about the theoretical foundations of leadership, teaching, and parenting styles.

Leadership Theories in the Workplace

When the concept of "leadership" is mentioned, many people immediately think of how managers and administrators function in the business world. In fact, much of the literature on leadership comes out of a workplace context.

Leadership theory has evolved over time not in a linear fashion but in a broadening manner which has increased the scope of the concept. Five theoretical approaches to understanding leadership have been developed. These five approaches are referred to as the trait, behavioral, situational-contingency, transactional, and attributional

dimensions. Each of these approaches has contributed to an understanding of leadership qualities and styles.

Trait Approaches. From the trait perspective, leadership is defined as the influence one has on others. Specific leader traits are considered to have certain influences on followers. For example, the trait of charisma is thought to be a distinct characteristic of leaders. Trait research has focused, then, on identifying those traits that distinguish leaders from followers and effective leaders from ineffective leaders. Stogdill (1974), for example, reviewed approximately 280 studies of trait research and identified 6 key traits that are most often associated with effective leadership. Others have criticized this approach and have suggested that no such reliable and conclusive pattern exists (Chemers, 1984; Chemers, Hays, Rhodewalt, & Wysocki, 1985). Others, such as Bennis (1984, 1989), however, have concluded that effective leaders have certain known "competencies" which can be discerned. Trait approaches to understanding leadership were one of the earliest schools of thought although this concept of leadership is no longer held in much currency.

Behavioral Approaches. Like the previous school of thought on leadership, behavioral research on leaders places great emphasis on influence, but this influence is thought to come from a leader's particular behaviors and not from

personality traits. Thus, behavioral research in leadership has tried to identify those behaviors that are most effective for leaders. Those who have investigated behavioral approaches to understanding leadership were initially disillusioned with the trait research and began to look at what leaders actually do.

The initial research on leadership behavior was conducted in Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio. The Iowa research (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939) classified leaders as either authoritarian, laissez-faire, or democratic. Eventually, this three-part conceptualization of leadership led to thinking about leadership on a continuum. A linear model of democratic-authoritarian styles was popularized by Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1957, 1984). Leaders, it was believed, could be located along some point of this continuum which would classify their preferred leadership style. This linear approach is still discussed in business circles today.

The Ohio State and Michigan studies (Katz, MacCoby, & Morse, 1950; Stogdill & Coons, 1957) resulted in a more complex model of leadership behavior. Leadership was defined as having two broad components: consideration (employee-orientation) and initiating structure (production-orientation). These two dimensions are sometimes called process and product orientations. The distinguishing feature of these two research studies on leadership was that

these dimensions were conceptually distinct and separate and were not either/or ends of a continuum. In other words, leaders are not one dimension or the other but rather are a combination of the two. Research was directed at trying to identify the optimal combination of styles.

This search for the "one best style" formed the basis of Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1978) managerial grid. This model suggested that there is one best style for all situations--one that is high structure or task consideration and high people or process consideration. Blake and Mouton (1981, 1982) cite numerous studies to demonstrate that there is only one best leadership style, regardless of the situation.

As one can imagine, this model has received much criticism. Some have suggested that different situations demand different leadership styles. Others have criticized the model on the basis that it is superficial and ignores belief and value systems of both leaders and followers. Finally, others have criticized the model on the basis that there may be other variables that are important in leadership behavior rather than just the two dominant dimensions postulated by Blake and Mouton. Dissatisfaction with this model led to the evolution of another school of thought identified as "situational-contingency" leadership.

Situational-Contingency Approaches. Situational-contingency research on leaders still posits influence as the central defining element of leadership, but this influence is affected by the context of the situation (Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Leader's traits and behaviors, then, are affected by the specific situation and must change accordingly. Research in this area has focused on traits and behaviors that are most effective in particular contexts (Fiedler & Chemers, 1984). This leadership paradigm is currently much in vogue and numerous research studies are being conducted on this orientation.

Within situational-contingency research, there are several specific approaches. Contingency theory (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974) suggested that effectiveness of leaders depends on the interaction between a single personality trait and the favorableness of a situation. Leadership behavior is likened to specific traits that are not variable and transitory but rather are permanent and fixed. Thus, leaders should be matched to those situations that are most favorable to their particular traits in order to be effective. If this is not possible, the situation should be changed to fit the leader's orientation. According to this school it is presumably easier to change the situation rather than the leader.

Another approach within this broad category of situational-contingency leadership is called the "leader

match theory." This approach suggests that leaders analyze their specific leadership style or orientation and fit their style to fit certain situation variables (Fiedler, Chemers & Mahar, 1977). In this category, leaders are provided with specific behaviors they can adopt to change their leadership style to best fit the circumstances.

Path-goal theory is yet another way of understanding this kind of leadership (House & Baetz, 1979). This theory suggests that leaders can increase follower satisfaction and performance by helping them achieve their goals by steering them along the right paths and/or by providing rewards for goal achievement. Four types of leader behavior are considered in this model: supportive, directive, participative, and achievement-oriented. Several research studies have indicated that certain of these leadership styles are effective in certain situations. For example, in ambiguous task situations, a directive leadership style has been shown to be effective and increased motivation and satisfaction. When the task is stressful, frustrating, or boring, a supportive leadership style has been shown to be more effective.

The normative decision theory or the Vroom-Yetton (1973) model also falls within the situational-contingency model of leadership. This model is prescriptive in that it suggests how leaders should make decisions in certain circumstances. According to this theory, the effectiveness

of a decision is impacted by three things: its quality, its acceptance by others, and the time required to make it (Vroom & Yetton, 1973). This model includes five leadership styles on a continuum which range from autocratic (no follower participation) to participative (followers and leaders decide together). In order to choose the best style for a particular situation, a leader needs to know the expected support of followers for a decision, the amount of information available to the leader relevant to the decision, and the time available to make the decision. Chemers (1984) outlined seven rules to guide a leader's choice of style, but his basic recommendation is that if all things are favorable, use the autocratic style because it is less time consuming and therefore the most efficient. A recent study (Heilman, Hornstein, Cage, & Herschlag, 1984) found that followers always viewed participative decision-making at least as effective as the autocratic style and always rated participative behavior of leaders as effective (even when not prescribed by the model). Thus, participative decision-making is more effective and creates greater follower satisfaction than the model suggests.

Of all the contingency theories, situational leadership is possibly the most well-known within this approach to understanding leadership styles. This theory suggests that the most effective style (with "effective" connoting increased production) depends on the followers' maturity

level. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) are considered the founders of this theoretical model although it shares certain characteristics with other models. Situational leadership is viewed as an extension of the Blake and Mouton managerial grid. Like the Vroom-Yetton model, situational leadership is also prescriptive, specifying which behaviors are most effective in particular situations, but it is more flexible than the managerial grid. Thus, situational leadership incorporates features of previously developed models of leadership.

As in the managerial grid, only two leadership behaviors are deemed important--task behavior (similar to structural considerations) and relationship behavior (similar to process considerations). However, flexibility of style is emphasized. As followers become more mature (meaning the ability to do the work and willingness or confidence to do it), leaders should modify their style accordingly. The model is prescriptive in that when a worker's maturity increases, the leader must change his/her task behavior from high to low and increase relationship behavior from low to high. In this model, maturity only describes the level of a worker's ability to complete certain tasks without the need of close supervision. This model, while quite popular in business circles, has been criticized for its lack of supporting research, narrowness, and conceptual clarity (Beck, 1982; Yukl, 1981).

Transactional Approaches. All of the foregoing approaches have been "leader centered" in that leaders are considered the primary repository of certain traits, skills, behaviors, or attributes that are a source of influence on follower performance and satisfaction. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, looks at the mutual influence of leaders and followers, and thus research has focused primarily on the interaction between leaders and followers. Thus, in this view, there is a mutual influence between leaders and followers in an exchange process. Research in this area has focused on the nature of the interaction between leaders and followers and has focused on what kinds of relationships are most effective and how these relationships might change over time and in particular situations (Hollander, 1961, 1978).

Attributional Approaches. Finally, the attributional perspective of leadership suggests that every person has certain conceptions about leadership and certain expectations about how effective leaders should behave. Thus, leadership is not so much a personal trait or behavior but is a measure of how others perceive the competence of a leader in a certain situation. Effective leaders are those who are perceived by others as effective. Leadership cannot be defined because it is a relative concept (Calder, 1976; Pfeffer, 1977). In this field, research must focus on

individual perceptions or beliefs about leadership since leadership is a social construct of reality. This approach has also been labelled the "emerging paradigm" in leadership research (Hunt, 1984).

Summary

A major element in the environment affecting motivation and productivity is leadership. The relationship between leader behavior and subordinate motivation appears to be most prevalent in research concerning the path-goal theory of leadership (House, 1971; House & Mitchell, 1974). However, most of this research involves a business or work context and not an educational setting. Moreover, studies of leadership have avoided the basic questions of social class, inequalities of power, the influence of hierarchial control, and the impact of ideology. Many leadership theories have emphasized only control and manipulation for increased output (Watkins, 1986). As a result, much of this research has not enjoyed wide application beyond workplace contexts.

These theories posit that to the extent that a person feels that a leader is directive, that person will feel less influence over the leader or supervisor. To the degree that a person feels less influence, then the person also feels less self-determination over events and subsequently less intrinsically motivated. Thus, there is a relationship

between self-determination and self-competence. Self-competence is hypothesized to have a direct effect on intrinsic motivation and as an indirect effect through increasing self-determination. This is an important finding.

Leadership style has been found to affect motivation and productivity in environments than the workplace. For example, leadership style or orientation affects motivation in educational environments (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ferris & Rowland, 1981; Klimonski & Hayes, 1980). But this influence is not one-sided. Deci and Ryan (1985) suggest that how a person interprets a leader's behavior is also contingent upon characteristics of the subordinate, which are influenced by the person's self-esteem and locus of control. Thus, perceptions of a work environment are a result of the person and the environment. Leaders who provide information to subordinates rather than trying to exercise control are more effective in increasing intrinsic motivation (Tretick, 1989). However, motivation is also influenced by one's perceptions of psychological influence and the subordinate's perception of role clarity. These perceptions (role clarity and influence) are influenced by one's perceptions of self-determination and self-competence as well as the leader's informational behaviors (Tretick, 1989).

Controlling behaviors are those which are coercive or disciplinary in nature. Coercive behaviors have been found

to reduce role clarity by prompting individuals to question whether they understand what is to be done. Controlling behaviors can also create ambiguity by generating conflict between what an individual thinks should be done and what the leader expects to be done (Frost, 1983).

While all these theories and approaches to understanding leadership have received wide attention in the business and management world, their application to other settings is not certain. Clearly, relationships between supervisors and subordinates are not the same as those between a teacher and student or the same as those between a parent and child. For a greater understanding of these relationships, a review of relevant research about teaching styles in school settings and parenting styles in family settings is needed.

Teaching Styles in the Classroom

Teachers and students interact in different kinds of ways than do managers and employees in workplace settings. Teachers' primary roles are not as managers or administrators but rather as educators. Teachers are often in a role of encouraging students to develop intrinsic motivation to learn rather than increasing production. Unlike managers or supervisors, teachers have relatively few coercive strategies they can use on students to exact

compliance. Thus, most teaching situations involve an interaction characterized by persuasion and give-and-take.

The question of a leaders/teacher's style in educational settings is critical because most researchers conclude that the particular style will impact the level of learning and student achievement in such settings. Indeed, several research studies have found a direct correlation between teaching style and student achievement (Alexander, 1991).

Teaching Style and Andragogy

In the field of adult education, teaching style has received a great amount of attention, particularly in recent years. While "the field of adult education has evolved a vocabulary possibly unparalleled in its confusion" (Peterson and Associates, 1979, p. 13), teaching style usually refers to a pervasive quality of teaching behavior that persists even when the content changes (Fischer & Fischer, 1979, p. 245). Knowles (1970) also suggested that teacher style is the most important variable which influences the climate of learning. Kuchinskas (1979) affirmed this view and concluded that "the most revealing thing in the classroom was the overwhelming effect of the teacher's style on everything and everybody else" (p. 270). Gregorc (1979) concluded that "teaching style is more than a methodology. It places subjective demands on the learner who may or may

not have abilities to match such demands" (p. 236).

Brookfield (1989) chooses to employ the concept of facilitation rather than teaching style.

In both adult and youth education, a major focus in recent years has been on the interaction of teaching and learning styles. While many investigations have looked only at teaching style in a descriptive manner (Smith, 1982), more recent research has begun to look at learner outcomes rather than school inputs as a measure of teaching style effectiveness (Conti, 1984; Green & Foster, 1986; Wiley, 1986).

Teachers differ widely in their individual practices in the classroom. Brookfield (1986) suggests that adult educators are not just passive facilitators servicing adults but rather are active leaders who bring specific values and needs to a learning environment and who therefore influence the teaching-learning interaction. An effective facilitator of adult education is ready and willing to challenge learners with contradictions and ambiguities rather than act merely as a customer service manager (Brookfield, 1989).

Various researchers have referred to these practices in different ways, but Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) suggest that control and responsiveness are "key common denominators that can be empirically demonstrated" (p. 203). Others (Deci & Ryan, 1987, 1994; Green & Foster, 1986) characterize a teacher's style as supportive of either autonomy or

control in the classroom. Like previous leadership theories in the world of work, Deci and Ryan (1987) conceptualize teaching style as a continuum. Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) suggest that while teachers may theoretically engage in both styles during the course of their instruction, "this event is quite unlikely" (p. 203). Deci and Ryan (1987) agree that a teacher engages in one style or another and a teacher does not vacillate between styles.

Beder and Darkenwald (1982) found that teachers teach adults differently from the way they teach youth, and that these differences in teaching orientation result primarily from the teacher's perceptions of adults' intellectual curiosity, openness, and degree of self-direction. Darkenwald (1982) suggested that since different teaching styles result in different kinds of actions from students, students probably achieve at different rates when exposed to each style. Thus, the key question for adult educators revolves around the issue of what is the most appropriate style for teaching adults.

According to Rosenshine and Furst (1973), teacher effectiveness should ultimately be measured in learner growth since "it is now becoming recognized that focusing on dimensions of pupil behavior will probably reveal far more about the effectiveness of teaching than directly studying the teacher" (Bennett, 1976, p. 103). The importance of the student in the learning process has only recently been

acknowledged by educators. Ames (1984) and Ames and Archer (1988) reported that student achievement is affected by a student's expectations, affects, goals and attributions. Another factor of particular importance across all levels of education is the person's perceived level of control.

Students with a higher sense of perceived control think, feel, and respond differently when faced with academic challenges than students with a lower sense of perceived control. (Perry, Menec, & Struthers, 1996, p. 80)

Thus, the extent to which students feel a sense of mastery and control over outcomes influences achievement.

American adult education has tended to support the goal of individual self-actualization as well as personal and social improvement. These are learner outcomes rather than teacher outcomes, and this represents a "Copernican Shift" as Wedemeyer (1981, p. 78) termed it. This fundamental shift is characterized as a move away from an emphasis on what schools and teachers put into education and toward the outcomes of learning for the learners (Kidd, 1976; Rose, 1989).

In the adult education literature, a collaborative model of teaching/learning tends to be favored. The roots of this model extend back to the writings of Lindeman (1926, 1961) and are linked to the writings of Dewey (1916, 1938) who advocated for participatory learning. The goal of education should be to apply subject matter to individual needs and interests at the time (Wiley, 1986).

Bergevin (1967) stressed that education should be democratic in nature and not unlike a cooperative relationship in which the teacher and learner are full partners. Learning is a personal endeavor, and the teacher's role is to help learners identify problems, set goals, locate resources, and evaluate the outcomes. Thus, learners are put ahead of subject matter content or the curriculum. In much the same vein, Kidd (1976) supported experience-based learning in which the needs of the learner superseded the needs of the teacher. The teacher's role was to foster a stimulating, supportive environment in which learners could begin to assume more responsibility for their own learning.

As one might expect, the effectiveness of a particular teaching style depends on the learning environment and qualities of the learners themselves (Brookfield, 1989; Rose, 1989). For example, research has shown that there is a relationship between student achievement and teaching style (Conti, 1984, 1985; Munroe, 1983). In fact, adult education is often viewed as a "sociopsychological process, neither subject- or student-centered, but interaction centered" (Courtney, 1989, p. 19). Teaching style may need to be modified to fit the learning goals and learning styles of the students.

Different approaches will be called for depending on the class, ethnicity, cultural conditioning, and personality characteristics of learners. The

demands of the context within which learning is occurring is paramount. (Brookfield, 1989, p. 207)

The necessity for different approaches in adult education have been demonstrated in several arenas. For example, differences in student achievement as related to teaching style have been found in ABE (Adult Basic Education) courses. While adult education literature suggests that the collaborative style is the most effective in adult education settings, Conti (1984, 1985; Conti & Wellborn, 1987; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985) found that certain kinds of students learned more in a teacher-centered environment. Conti suggested that this may be because General Education Degree (GED) students are very goal-oriented and are focused primarily on the short-term task of passing an examination and getting a certificate. In these situations, task achievement is well-defined and immediate, and the goal is clear.

In English as a Second Language (ESL) settings and basic level English education, however, a different strategy may be necessary (Conti, 1984, 1985). In these settings, the goal is much more long-term and relates to a gradual improvement in skills. Moreover, the skills needed by these students are strongly related to self-image and self-concept, requiring a different kind of learning environment than in GED courses. "Risk taking for personal exploration requires a supportive environment" (Conti, 1984, p. 48).

Hence, students in this setting were learning both subject matter information and developing interpersonal skills. Conti suggested that in this setting, a safe learning environment was required for student learning, and hence a different teaching style was required to build an open, supportive and warm relationship between teacher and student. Thus, situational specificity and learner characteristics may be an important variables in discerning what kind of teaching style is most effective in terms of learner outcomes. Other studies have corroborated this finding (Bloome, 1976; Bonham, 1989; Hayes, 1989).

Research (Conti, 1985; Conti & Wellborn, 1987) also suggests that student characteristics must also be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching-learning encounter. For example, students differ in maturity level. Leadership theory refers to this kind of maturity as "the level of achievement-motivation and experience of an individual or group" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982, p. 28). In the use of this term, maturity is not a value-laden concept but rather a measure to determine the type of leadership needed by a group (pp. 28-29). In low-maturity groups, leadership authority must be high; in high-maturity groups, leadership authority can be low.

Teaching style is a critical factor in learning situations, but the effectiveness of the teacher's style does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, the characteristics

of the students are just as critical in knowing what style will enhance learner outcomes (Conti, 1985; Conti & Wellborn, 1987).

Throughout adult education literature, some common themes emerge. The curriculum should be learner-centered; learning should be experience-based; the learner should identify problems, set goals, and evaluate outcomes; and the teacher should serve more as a facilitator than as a fountain of knowledge (Brookfield, 1989; Kidd, 1976; Knowles, 1970).

Some have suggested using the concept of "educational broker" for the kind of person described in adult education literature as a teacher. The concept of a broker begins with the premise that "the needs and interests of students take precedence over those of institutions, agencies and staff" (Heffernan, Macy, & Vickers, 1976, p. 2). Accordingly, an educational broker helps the learner to define goals, set objectives, select the appropriate learning experiences to develop their competencies, and access resources and learning opportunities (Heffernan, 1981).

Teaching Style and Pedagogy

Since the beginnings of public education, observers have been interested in the link between teaching style and student achievement. Dewey (1916) was one of the first

people to suggest that more collaborative, participatory styles of teaching were better for students than didactic approaches.

In a study of three leadership styles, Apps (1967) found that the majority of rural youth, regardless of socio-economic status, preferred teachers who exhibited a democratic style of leadership rather than displaying an authoritarian or laissez-faire style.

The influence of teachers has been shown to be especially influential when teachers felt responsible for their students' performing up to standards of learning and thus adopted a much more controlling style of teaching than those who did not feel such a responsibility (Ames, 1984; Deci et al., 1982). When teachers are told that they are responsible for the learning of their students, these teachers tend to "lecture and explain more, and they give children less choice and less opportunity for autonomous learning" (p. 854). Such behavior had a negative impact on children's intrinsic motivation (Ryan, 1982). Moreover, children who have controlling teachers have lower self-esteem and intrinsic motivation than those whose teachers support their ability to make choices (Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman, & Ryan, 1981).

In contrast, children in classrooms with autonomy-oriented teachers saw their teachers are more supportive of autonomy, were more intrinsically motivated, and had higher

perceived levels of competence than children in classrooms with controlling teachers (Deci et al., 1981). Teacher orientation also correlated with children's general feelings of self-worth.

However, neither extreme style may be best for fostering student outcomes. Several studies (Brophy, 1983; Halperin, 1976; Prawat & Nickerson, 1985) suggest that teachers who use small groups yet who also provide a good deal of structure and guidance for students may help students achieve higher cognitive and affective outcomes. Teachers with different goals and values create different classroom environments (Halperin, 1976).

In a qualitative study of classroom teacher styles (Halperin, 1976), the researcher examined the differences in student achievement and satisfaction as related to either strict or permissive teaching styles. Strict teachers were defined as those whose goals were primarily on controlling children. Strict teachers spent a lot of time discussing classroom rules and had a low tolerance for noise. Permissive teachers, on the other hand, were much more tolerant of noise and were more likely to give children a choice of classroom activities.

This study found that children in classes taught by strict teachers decreased in listening more than children who were taught by more permissive instructors. In fact, children in strict classroom had significantly higher

incidences of non-attending behaviors such as ignoring the teacher, talking to other children, and moving around the room. Strict teachers also imposed more rules, rarely explained such rules, and spent less time trying to involve students in a participatory way. Children in classrooms taught by more permissive teachers actually decreased the frequency of non-attending behaviors and were involved by the teacher in classroom activities (Halperin, 1976). This research suggests that strict, control-oriented teachers in fact produce results contrary to their goals of order and control. A teacher emphasis on structure and dominative behaviors is counter-productive to creating a positive learning environment and instead increases chaos and non-attending behaviors.

Just as with the classroom teacher, the orientation of adult leaders is a critical component in understanding the development of life or interpersonal skills in youth. Teachers who are controlling, distant, disempowering, and who feel personally responsible for the performance of their students use more control in learning situations and thus inhibit intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, elementary school students demonstrated higher self-esteem and a greater sense of academic competence in situations where the teachers enhanced their sense of self-determination and fostered adaptation and adjustment in classroom situations (Harter, 1983; Kleinfeld, 1970; Lepper & Greene, 1975;

Prawat & Nickerson, 1985; Ryan, 1982; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986).

Ryan (1982) suggests in his extension of cognitive evaluation theory that individuals perceive events in the environment as either controlling or informational. Controlling events are those the individual interprets as attempts to coerce certain behaviors whereas informational events are those providing relevant information without pressure to produce certain behavioral outcomes. If an event is perceived as controlling, it affects one's perception of self-determination which in turn affects one's intrinsic motivation. In the same way, if an event is perceived as informational, it influences one's perception of self-competence which in turn affects one's intrinsic motivation. Teachers who are involved with their students and supportive of student autonomy improve academic outcomes for these students (Stiller & Ryan, 1991). In fact, one study suggested that students of

highly facilitating teachers missed fewer days, had increased self-concept, made greater academic gains, presented fewer discipline problems, committed less vandalism, increased scores on IQ tests, made gains in creativity scores, were more spontaneous, and used higher level thinking. (Winzer & Griggs, 1992, p. 402)

From other studies (Brophy & Good, 1970; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) it is known that teachers' different expectations of students often influence their achievement levels leading to self-fulfilling prophecies in the

classroom. Teachers demand better performance from those children whom they had higher expectations and were more likely to praise such performance when it occurred whereas they were more likely to accept poor performance from those for whom they held low expectations and were less likely to praise good performance from these students when it occurred.

There is some research that suggests that a balanced approach to teaching is more effective than either extremes on a continuum. Prawat and Nickerson (1985) found that high-affective teachers were less successful than mixed style teachers in promoting affective outcomes in students. The researchers suggested that valuing one outcome (affective education) to the exclusion of another (cognitive skills) may be detrimental to both. Interestingly, this same research indicated that cooperative learning was more successful in environments where teachers were more directive (in terms of what work was to be done and who would work together) than teachers in more informal settings where students could define these parameters. Teacher supervision and direction appeared to enhance the quality of interpersonal interaction in the classroom. These researchers suggest that a balanced approach which includes both cognitive and affective goals is optimal for student motivation and achievement (Prawat & Nickerson, 1985).

Finally, for some youth, some research suggests that teachers can have a greater impact on a young person's self-concept than even parents. For African-American students, teacher's perceived evaluation of students was more strongly related to the student's academic self-concept (Kleinfeld, 1972). The strength of this relationship was especially strong for black females, and the influence was stronger for teachers than parents. For white students, parent's evaluation of student's abilities was stronger than the teacher's evaluation.

Parenting Styles in Family Settings

Since the publication of Coleman's et al. (1966) controversial conclusions that family background and social context are the primary influences for student achievement, a number of researchers have tried to investigate the connection between home and school. Recently, studies have begun to show a relationship between specific attributes of parent style or behavior to child achievement and adjustment to school (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987).

Relationships between parental styles and school achievement have been the subject of several key studies. Grolnick and Ryan (1989) investigated those parental styles that were believed to have significance on the child's development of autonomy and competence in school. Parenting

styles that fostered and supported child autonomy were positively correlated with self-regulation, competence and adjustment in children. Yet, the correlational nature of this research leaves open other interpretations. The first explanation is that by fostering autonomy in children, parents better prepare their children for an education environment which requires independent mastery and self-regulation for success. Another possibility is that children who exhibit little autonomy and self-regulation stimulate parents to exercise external control and punitiveness.

A growing body of research has also shown the differential influence of parents on the development of control and autonomy in school settings. More involved mothers had children who were both better adjusted according to teachers and who evidenced higher achievement (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). This finding is consistent with studies of younger children and toddlers (Belsky, 1979; Russell & Russell, 1987).

In their analysis of studies of pre-school, primary, and middle-school children, Hess and Holloway (1984) identified five processes linking family and school achievement: (1) verbal interaction between mother and children; (2) expectation of parents for achievement; (3) positive affective relations between parents and children; (4) parental beliefs and attributions about the child; and

(5) discipline and control strategies. The fifth process-- discipline and control strategies--appears to have a major influence on school achievement (Baumrind, 1971, 1973; Marjoribanks, 1979). In fact, such familial features tend to develop a greater reliance in children for extrinsic motivators and contribute to lower academic achievement (Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993).

Baumrind's (1971, 1973) pioneering studies of family relations revealed three primary parenting styles-- authoritative, authoritarian and permissive--that have consequences for the development of cognitive and social competence in children. Authoritarian parenting is defined as being high in demandedness on the part of parents and low in parental responsiveness to the child. Authoritarian parents attempt to shape, control, and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of their children according to absolute standards. In addition, authoritarian parents demand obedience, respect for authority, work, and tradition, and there is an emphasis on order and stability. Her research on such parenting styles with pre-school children revealed low levels of independence and social responsibility in children of authoritarian parents (Baumrind, 1971, 1973). By ages 8 and 9, Baumrind found that girls from authoritarian families were more socially assertive than the boys. Moreover, for both sexes, children from authoritarian

families showed lower cognitive competence (Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993; Lamborn, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1990).

Authoritative parents, in contrast, tend to expect mature behavior from their children and set clear rules and standards for their children. Authoritative parents also engage in firm and consistent enforcement of the rules and standards, using sanctions when necessary. They encourage independence, individuality, open communications and recognize the rights of both children and parents. Female children of authoritative parents tended to be more socially responsible and independent than other children raised under other parenting styles. Male children were as independent and more socially responsible compared to other children. By ages 8 and 9, such children were also higher in social and cognitive competence than children raised under other parenting styles (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Permissive parenting is characterized by tolerance and acceptance of a child's impulses, minimal use of punishment strategies, few demands for mature behavior, and reliance on self-regulation by the child. Permissive parents tend to be immature, lacked impulsive controls and self-reliance, and lacked a sense of social responsibility or independence. By ages 8 and 9, children of permissive parents were low in both social and cognitive competence compared to other children (Baumrind, 1973; Ginsburg & Bronstein, 1993; Lamborn, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1990).

Dornbusch et al. (1987) extended these concepts to adolescent children and similarly found that children from families with mixed parenting styles did less well in school. In addition, children from families that were high in authoritarian or permissive styles tended to do less well in school. On the other hand, children raised in authoritative families got higher grades in school (Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989). Children from neglectful or indulgent households similarly did less well in school than children from other types of parenting styles (Lamborn, Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1990).

However, it is important to point out that this typology of parenting styles was primarily developed for studies of middle-class white families. Permissive and authoritative parenting are not as consistently related to grades across ethnic lines (Dornbusch et al., 1987). For example, research shows that the success of Asian children in public schools cannot be adequately explained by reference to parenting styles (Chao, 1994; Dornbusch et al., 1987). There also may be differences in parenting style and academic success in Native American families (Sterling, 1992). Finally, authoritarian patterns of parenting also appear to negatively affect Hispanic females more than it affects Hispanic males (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Parental involvement is also directly related to socio-economic status. This finding suggests that economic

factors allow certain parents, particularly mothers, to spend more time with their children. Interestingly, it is not maternal work status or the number of hours spent at home that make the difference, but rather it is just the greater availability to interact with a child's school (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

The most relevant finding for our purposes was in the amount of structure provided at home and how that affected a child's ability to self-regulate in the academic domain. Home environments "where there are clear and consistently applied expectations and rules" help a child know how to deal with control in the school and guard against a sense of helplessness when the path to success is not clear (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 152). However, the presence of structure was not directly related to other indices of child self-regulation or competence, and there was not a linear relationship between structure and academic success. Indeed, the relationship was more curvilinear "such that moderate levels of structure appeared optimal" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 152). However, these results only applied to two-parent families since single parent families were not included in the study.

The inner resources that might be expected to be influenced by parents are those involving self-regulatory and self-evaluative capacities. One of the most important goals of affective education is the capacity to be self-

regulating or autonomous in the learning process and in one's own behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kamii, 1991; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1974).

A second goal of affective education is self-competence in relation to learning and achievement. The sense of competence in school is reflected in the child's knowledge concerning control over academic outcomes and in the belief that one is able to influence such outcomes. Harter (1983) referred to this internalized belief as "perceived competence." In formal school settings, self-regulation and competence outcomes can be measured by examining such things as grades or scores on standardized tests. These measures are not available in nonformal educational programs like 4-H, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. Other means must be used to gauge self-regulation and self-competence.

Teaching and Leadership Styles in Nonformal Settings

4-H is an organization which relies on adult volunteer leaders to carry out the program. Without these volunteer adults, there would be no 4-H program since the number of salaried staff in the nation is actually quite small. In 1995, there were approximately 1.2 million adult volunteers compared to only 3,000 paid 4-H faculty. Thus, adult volunteer leaders play an important role in the delivery and implementation of the 4-H.

Adult leadership is critical in nonformal youth programs like 4-H because these leaders interact with youth on a regular, sustained basis. In fact, the three major reasons for the failure of youth organizations are absence of a leader, lack of commitment, and need for leader support (Erickson, 1983; Stephen, 1983). Whether paid or unpaid, leadership "is consistently named as a central issue, perhaps the central issue, in strengthening programs for young adolescents" (Hechinger, 1992, p. 204).

Moreover, to be effective, adult volunteers need competence in effectively using incentives and recognition when working with youth (Treat, 1975). Adult leaders have also been found to be quite influential for members completing their 4-H projects (Scott et al., 1990). However, some evidence exists that county Extension agents may be even more influential in members' project completion. However, research has not been able to find a strong relationship between characteristics of the county Extension agent and the youth involved in the program (Baker, 1991).

The influence and impact of adult leaders and parents in non-formal youth programs has not been extensively researched. In fact, outside of a handful of 4-H studies, there is a dearth of research on the influence the organizational culture and values of youth groups. A review of research indicates that leaders of nonformal youth groups affect the organizational milieu in several ways:

organizational content, trust, communication, youth involvement, and use of incentives and awards (Gibb & Gibb, 1967; Palmer, in press).

One notable exception to this situation is a case study of two Boy Scout troops in Alaska conducted over a seven month period (Shinkwin & Kleinfeld, 1983). Although each troop followed the official scout program and formal organizational structure, the scoutmaster and other involved adults set the tone for a scout troop's ideology and thus influenced greatly the kinds of learning experiences of members. While the researchers were unwilling to describe one troop as "better" than the other, there were marked differences in how the two troops operated. For example, in the "university" troop, the scoutmaster projected a benevolent image to his boys and meetings were raucous and full of joking and horseplay. In this troop, the scoutmaster selected boys to lead the troop and led the planning meetings. Leadership among the boys was clearly centralized, and assistants were often not expected to be involved. Adult participation in the troop was very low, and if adults did attend troop meetings, they often went into another room to discuss issues away from troop members. Adults' biggest contributions were in money rather than in time since the leader felt that scouting should be "fun" rather than requiring members to spend a lot of time on fund-raising.

By contrast, in the "downtown" troop, more formal roles were assigned to all boys. Everyone had a chance to lead something, and assistants were often as involved as the primary boy leaders. Boys in the downtown troop elected their leaders, and there was more rapid turnover in leadership positions so that everyone had a chance to lead. Thus, informal responsibilities were more diffuse in the downtown troop. Yet, the scoutmaster maintained a no-nonsense approach to the troop and imposed high standards and expectations on members. There were clear rules and expectations that applied to everyone, and these could not be changed. Challenges to the rules were dealt with through angry outbursts from the scoutmaster who gave clear signals that there was a right and wrong way to do things. Youth members were involved as resources, but the meetings were quite structured and did not involve horseplay or much joking. The scoutmaster in this troop maintained a direct, controlling style of leadership. Adults who participated in the meetings supported this style and also took a more active role in troops meetings and activities. Adults often sat with troop members during meetings and interacted frequently with them, giving guidance and advice. Adults gave more of their time than money since the scoutmaster believed that members should be actively involved in fund-raising projects.

This case study revealed that differences between the two troops derived primarily from three sources:

- (1) the degree of differentiation of the leadership structure, e.g., the number of boys holding leadership roles in each troop;
- (2) the way youth and adults in formal leadership positions actually performed their roles;
- (3) the operation of an informal system of adult roles in each troop.

While these researchers declined to draw any evaluative conclusions from their research, there are some clear patterns which emerged from their data. First, a controlling style of leadership was beneficial to boys in the downtown troop and gave them a sense of responsibility and structure. Second, participation of adults in youth meetings can have a great influence on perpetuating a group's dominant culture and inculcates the preferred ideology. Third, the troop in which leadership roles were diffuse among all troop members was more effective in developing leadership abilities in members.

Other researchers have come to similar conclusions about effective work groups (Gibb & Gibb, 1967; Palmer, in press). The designated leader of any group impacts to a very great extent the productivity and flavor of a group (Gibb & Gibb, 1967). In fact, research indicates that there are four critical elements influencing group productivity:

leadership style, mutual trust, open communications, and the ability of group members to set goals and organize themselves to achieve these goals (Gibb & Gibb, 1967). A follow-up correlational study found that the leader's style influenced group morale and that the leader's style could help or hinder a group's goals and actions (Palmer, in press).

Summary

The impact of the orientation and style of adults in leadership and teaching positions should not be minimized. Studies from business, schools, adult education, families, and volunteer organizations indicate that the approach taken by those in leadership or brokering positions is quite important to outcomes.

Because most of the studies cited above have been conducted in work or school settings, the results may not apply to a 4-H context or other nonformal youth programs. There are several explanations for this lack of applicability. First, although many experimental studies have shown that excess control can undermine motivation to engage in interesting tasks (Deci & Ryan, 1987), 4-H leaders do not engage in the kinds of controls studied in the research. Second, although recent studies (Eghrari & Deci, 1986) have suggested that surplus control may undermine internal regulation and motivation for nonintrinsically

motivating tasks, 4-H programs are voluntary and typically do not involve many tasks that would be considered nonintrinsically motivating except perhaps record keeping.

Life Skills

Background

Nearly every youth organization has a mission statement replete with lofty statements about the the ultimate purpose of participation in the agency's programs. Overwhelmingly, the goals of youth organizations are remarkably similar: enhancing communications between youth and adults; strengthening the family; fostering physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development; developing a concern for others; developing leadership skills and responsibilities; providing opportunities for community service; and increasing self-esteem (Erickson, 1983; Scriven, 1980). Regardless of the specifics, the development of these kinds of skills form the core of each group's purpose.

Since its inception, 4-H has had as its purpose the development of lifelong, practical skills in young people. The goal of the 4-H program has been to develop not only the technical subject-based knowledge needed to solve practical everyday problems, but also the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to make effective use of such

knowledge. These are the skills that are considered to be essential for success in later life (USDA, 1976, 1983).

These more personal goals were the basis for the development of the 4-H name and emblem. As early as 1893 Buisson and later in 1905 President Beardshear of Iowa State College argued for building character in youth not through the 3-R's but rather through the three H's--head, heart, and hands (Reck, 1951). In this way, youth could become competent for "self-government, self-control, self-help; a living, thinking being" (Reck, 1951, p. 26).

By 1911, the notion of adding a fourth H was advanced by O. H. Benson, former superintendent of schools in Wright County, Iowa, who had just been selected to head up demonstration work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to Benson, a 4-H person would be "a leader with a head trained to think, plan, and reason; with heart trained to be true, kind, and sympathetic; and with hands trained to be useful, helpful, and skillful; and the hustle to render ready service, to develop health and vitality" (Reck, 1951, pp. 96-97). Later that same year, "health" was officially added as the fourth H. Today, 4-H stands for head, heart, hands, and health symbolizing the four-fold development of well-rounded young people.

4-H as Youth Development

From the beginning, then, the 4-H program was conceived as a nonformal, out-of-school youth development program designed to enhance the character and well-being of rural youth. The goal was personal growth through practical, real-life experiences relevant to the needs of rural residents (Forest, 1989; Reck, 1951; Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Today, this goal of personal growth is often referred to as youth development. In this view, young people are more important than the subject matter or the project.

Drawing upon a definition of developmental education from Mosher (1979), 4-H can best be understood as a program that emphasizes education of the whole person by stimulating cognitive or intellectual growth, moral reasoning and action, emotional growth, social skills, vocational competencies, and a sound body. Others (Boyd, Apps, and Associates, 1980) have discussed such development and growth in terms of "the progressive movement towards the solution of problems and the development of abilities to encounter similar future problems with greater competencies" (pp. 10-11). Hence, the youth development goals of the program are intentional rather than accidental or merely the result of some haphazard process.

The curriculum of 4-H is focused on the twin missions of personal growth as well as knowledge and technical skill development. The challenge comes in measuring the program's

success in developing these two skill areas. As a matter of fact, this is a challenge faced by most nonformal youth programs. Erickson (1983) observed that definitive data on organizations' success in meeting these goals is scarce and often just anecdotal in nature.

On the one hand, technical skill development is relatively easy to assess and evaluate. Like various aspects of formal education, objective qualitative measures can be developed for such skills as the ability to read, make accurate computations, balance a budget, shoe a horse, or construct a functional lamp. In these examples, there is a tangible, material product or outcome that can be assessed against a known standard (Scriven, 1980).

On the other hand, though, measuring personal growth is not so easy nor direct. For example, it is often difficult to determine to what extent participation in an out-of-school program has helped a young person. What factors contributed most to the development of a particular belief, attitude, or value? In other cases, the effects of participation may not appear until later in life, long after participation in the program has ended. In part, the difficulty of measuring personal growth comes in identifying the indicators (Erickson, 1983; Scriven, 1980).

Life Skills

The specific indicators which comprise personal growth are often referred to using the concept of "life skills." Unfortunately, the precise meaning around the concept "life skills" is rather confused and depends on a particular context. Some authors (Corak, 1987; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Kohl, 1982) refer to "basic skills" and tend to mean those basic academic skills necessary for employment and family functioning (What Work Requires of Schools, 1991).

The concept of basic skills has also been used to refer to those skills required by handicapped or disabled people trying to make the transition into mainstream life (Cummins, Polzin, & Theobald, 1990; Hamre-Nietupski, Nietupski, & Strathe, 1992; Kirkham & Schilling, 1989; May, Gazda, Powell, & Hauser, 1985). Others (e.g., Hamburg, 1990) use the concept of "life skill training" (LST) and generally refer to the cultivation of self-protection skills for young children.

Still others describe "life management skills" as the day-to-day social skills of holding a job, making the bed, using a telephone, and buying groceries (Amato & Ochiltree, 1986; Hyndman & Evans, 1989). In a study of Australian children, younger children's social skill competence (here defined as such skills as making the bed, using a telephone, or washing dishes) was significantly associated with parental attention, parental loss, and whether the mother was employed outside the home. Adolescents' life management

skill competence was affected by the frequency of family activities, family size, the level of parental education, and again whether the mother was employed outside the home (Amato & Ochiltree, 1986).

Despite these differing interpretations, most authorities agree that life skills are different from academic skills which are primarily learned and applied in school settings (Palmer, in press; Schlutt, 1987; Scriven, 1980). Most of these authors would concede that life skills--which are useful in all avenues of living--are rarely taught directly in schools. These life skills include (1) competency skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, responsibility for choices; (2) coping skills; and (3) contributory skills such as teamwork, leadership, inter-, and intra-personal skills (Palmer, in press; Rollins, Scholl & Scanlon, 1992; Schlutt, 1987; Shrum, 1987; USDA, 1986). A recent Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development suggested that life skills training can be "conceptualized as the formal teaching of the requisite skills for surviving, living with others and succeeding in a complex society" (Hamburg, 1990, p. 18). By connection, life skills training is part of the socialization process for children and youth (Bailyn, 1962; Brophy, 1977).

For the purposes of 4-H, life skills are generally understood as the non-academic skills, knowledge, attitudes,

and behaviors which must be learned for future success, happiness, and leadership functions in real life (Forest, 1989; Hoopfer, 1981; Miller, 1987; Palmer, in press; Rollins, Scholl, & Scanlon, 1992; Sawyer, 1987; Schlutt, 1987). They consist of the skills by which people adapt to and master their life situations, which are indispensable and fundamental for most other life functions, which give individuals a frame of reference for perceiving and responding to life situations, and which enable them to achieve an inner contentment to get joy out of life (Cisek & George, 1985; Rubin, 1975).

Used since the early 1970's to describe the outcomes of 4-H participation (Forest, 1989; USDA, 1976), this connotation of life skills has been described in a variety of ways by a number of authors. Kohl (1982), for example, defined them as "basic skills needed to be effective citizens in American society and are drawn from the fundamental ideas of democracy" (p. 106). Others have described five basic life skills (Rubin, 1975; Scales, 1985) necessary for successful living while others refer to the "significant seven" skills of capable people (Glenn & Nelson, 1989). A few people in nonformal education call these critical skills "leadership life skills" (Boyd, 1991; Hoopfer, 1981; Mueller, 1989; Palmer, in press; Sawyer, 1987). Even the business world has acknowledged the importance of these kinds of skills with the popularization

of Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (1989).

Note the subtle transition from what began as a learned skill to what in today's business world should be an acquired habit.

Unifying all these divergent threads is the concept that life skills are more important than the technical subject matter expertise required in any particular setting. Certainly, life skills are much more than the physical skills of sewing or grooming an animal for show for which 4-H is best known (Scriven, 1980). Life skills are a combination of acting, thinking, and feeling. Several experts refer to these as higher order thinking skills (Cole, 1990; Hamburg, 1990). Covey (1989) prefers to define such "habits" as the "intersection of knowledge, skill and desire" (p. 47).

Whether habits or skills, these attributes help people function as competent, contributing people in society (Erickson, 1983; Miller, 1991; Waguespack, 1988; Weatherford & Weatherford, 1987). Life skills should enable a person to (1) perceive and respond to significant life events in positive ways, (2) live in an interdependent society, (3) lead a satisfying life, and (4) function effectively in an ever-changing world. These are skills that everyone needs, regardless of age, sex, race, income, or residence (Hamburg, 1990).

Limitations of Previous Research

In the past two decades, the development of life skills through experiential learning has become the avowed cornerstone of 4-H youth programming. In fact, the development of life skills in 4-H programs has received a considerable amount of verbal support although Steele et al. (1993) feels that the emphasis has waned in recent years. Through participation in 4-H programs and activities, young people are supposed to develop critical life skills such as the ability to communicate, inquire and learn how to learn, solve problems, make decisions and take responsibility for choices, plan and organize, deal with and adapt to change, respond and relate to other people in positive ways, and acquire a sense of community commitment (USDA, 1976, 1983; Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

Unfortunately, little research exists on the effectiveness of experiential, nonformal programs like 4-H to enhance such skills. From a research standpoint, such outcomes are more suggestive than definitive. In fact, a review of research revealed the pervasive lack of hard life skill impact evidence from a variety of experiential education programs (Conrad, 1979; Conrad & Hedin, 1981a; 1981b). A recurring theme, in fact, in experiential programs is the paucity of empirical data to support its continuation and support (Richards, 1994; Sakofs, 1991).

Proponents for experiential programming often claim that there is a transformation that occurs in participants and that this impact lasts beyond the length of the actual program (Stremba, 1989). Others (Weatherford & Weatherford, 1987) have implied that by bringing together the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of learning, experiential education is more effective than other approaches. Such beliefs are generally lacking in supportive research although there is limited evidence that skills and attitudes formed during youth carry over into adulthood (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987). Alumni of youth-serving organizations consistently report that their participation in such organizations contributed significantly to their personal development (Hechinger, 1992; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Schlutt, 1987). Whether the formation of these skills and attitudes were directly attributable to a particular program, however, has been difficult to substantiate (Erickson, 1983). One youth worker commented that perhaps "our touch is too light" (Erickson, 1983, p. 5). On the other hand, a 1986 Louis Harris poll of alumni of Boys Clubs of America reported that the program had contributed to their success in later years (Hechinger, 1992). Similar testimonies can be found for 4-H (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Schlutt, 1987) and Boy Scouts (Erickson, 1983; Hamburg, 1990).

There have been some limited efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of experiential education programs with respect to specific life skills such self-esteem, self-concept, and problem-solving skills in young people (Gray & Patterson, 1994; Mueller, 1989; Rollins, Scholl & Scanlon, 1992; Sawyer, 1987; Waguespack, 1988; Weatherford & Weatherford, 1985). Research on participants in extended, mandatory outdoor education have shown that such programs can improve overall self-esteem, particularly among males (Kolb, 1988), but the evidence is far from conclusive and quite sparse.

Others have attempted to compare life skills and leadership development in 4-H youth with other non-4-H youth (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992; Heinshon & Cantrell, 1986; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Rockwell, Stohler, & Rudman, 1984; Schlutt, 1987). Participants in Texas 4-H programs self-reported significantly higher levels of skill development on scales of working with groups, understanding oneself, communicating, making decisions, and leadership than non-4-H club members. However, other studies (Fetsch et al., 1993; Miller, 1991) have failed to show any significant differences in life skills between 4-H and non-4-H youth.

In two Pennsylvania studies, 4-H members perceived themselves as having "good" levels of leadership, communication, and personal development skills (Heinshon & Cantrell, 1986; Suso, 1984). However, in these studies no

comparison groups were used, and researchers relied on self-reports of respondents to assess life skill development and the impact of the 4-H program on such skill development. As can be expected, 4-H was attributed by these respondents to have been the major influence on their abilities to conduct meetings, perform officer duties, demonstrate skills to others, take responsibility for a group, participate in community affairs and perform community service.

4-H was not the major factor, though, in helping members learn how to set goals, develop self-confidence, be independent, make career decisions, prepare for college, plan for the future, develop pride in oneself, or appreciate competition (Heinsohn & Cantrell, 1986). Respondents felt that home or school were more important influences in the development of these skills. Similar results have been found in Nebraska (Rockwell et al., 1984).

In a study of cognitive skill development, 4-H participants were below national norms in four out of five skill areas (Rollins et al., 1992). In the one area where 4-H members were above national norms, the differences were not great. Although this study indicated that 4-H participants are lacking in cognitive skill areas, 4-H members were more willing to work at a difficult task until completed or without adult supervision. 4-H members were also found to be more willing to verbalize and state opinions even if others disagreed with them. Researchers

concluded that 4-H programs needed to do more to help youth develop cognitive skills to help youth learn how to think (Rollins, Scholl & Scanlon, 1992; Steele et al. 1993).

A limited number of studies have tried to assess the impact of experiential programs on decision-making abilities, intellectual curiosity, social responsibility, and interpersonal skills (Gray & Patterson, 1994; Hanna, 1988; Sawyer, 1987; Seevers & Dormody, 1995; Valentine, 1990). While results are mixed, some evidence suggests that participation in certain types of activities are more effective at developing such skills than other types of activities. Direct involvement in leadership roles appears to be a key element for life skill enhancement (Seevers & Dormody, 1995; Valentine, 1990).

Participants in 4-H animal projects appear to develop both subject matter knowledge and life skills (Sawyer, 1987; Williams, 1983). In a stratified sampling design in Oregon, nearly two-thirds of respondents reported learning a lot about accepting responsibility, getting along with others, and making decisions (Sawyer, 1987). In fact, developing responsibility and relating to others have surfaced in at least six different studies as the most important skills learned by 4-H members (Sawyer, 1987). Less than half of the Oregon participants reported gaining leadership or effective communications skills as a result of their participation in 4-H (Sawyer, 1987). Yet, "when asked to identify the two

most important things they had learned in 4-H, members gave life skill responses about as often as they gave animal science responses" (Sawer, 1987, p. 27). These studies did not examine the leadership styles of the adult 4-H leaders with whom these youth worked.

These kinds of research results are rare, however. There are a number of reasons for this dearth of research on life skill development. First, it is often difficult to find a comparison group to include in the study. Second, it is often easier to simply ask participants about their perceptions about program impacts than to construct rigorous, long-term studies to assess impacts more objectively. Third, measuring life skill development is difficult at best and problematical at the very least. For example, there are few agreed-upon, reliable and valid measurement tools for self-esteem or decision-making. For example, Kohn (1994) pointed out that there are nearly 200 instruments which purport to measure self-esteem, few of which are comparable.

In addition, there is wide disagreement in the field about whether self-esteem is generic or domain-specific (Poole & Evans, 1989). There is also some evidence to suggest that self-esteem varies according to experience, gender, age, and other role-defining conditions (Coopersmith, 1981; Poole & Evans, 1989) with females consistently underrating their own competence. Finally,

other than asking people about their own perceptions, it is difficult to know how to measure one's ability to make decisions, communicate, investigate, and other life skills except through direct observation. A major problem for research on life skills is the need for more adequate measurement tools (Hamburg, 1990). Qualitative methods may hold the best hope for discerning the impact of nonformal youth programs on the development of life skills.

Summary

Life skills are critical to effective functioning in life for all people, yet what situations lead to the development and extension of life skills is not clear. Intuitively, it is believed that those situations wherein youth learn to take leadership, make decisions, practice communication skills, participate in group activities, perform community service activities, investigate and solve problems, and learn how to seek out resources should enhance life skills acquisitions (Hamburg, 1990; Weatherford & Weatherford, 1987). Experiential programs that include cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skill development should enhance life skills development, but hard research data is lacking.

Piaget (Kamii, Clark & Dominick, 1994) suggested that adults helped youth develop autonomy by refraining from using rewards and punishments and by instead exchanging

points of view with children through dialogue and collaboration. Yet, there is little research to substantiate these intuitions.

Life skills programs have been shown to be effective when they are soundly designed and well-implemented (Erickson, 1983). Comprehensive programs have been shown to be more effective than those that have more limited core elements. Involvement of parents and community persons and agencies also appear to enhance program effectiveness. Finally, putting young people in leadership positions can help them cultivate the skills needed to solve everyday problems (Hamburg, 1990; Schlutt, 1987; Suso, 1984).

Much of the extant research on the effectiveness of nonformal youth programs has focused on late adolescents or program alumni. While some positive attributes have been reported, there remain significant gaps and gray areas in our understanding of the impacts of participation in nonformal youth programs. Many research studies have only included self-report data and are ex-post-facto in nature. As one researcher summed it up, "Though the literature suggests that the overall impression of 4-H is favorable, little is known concerning the relative effectiveness of the many unique and different 4-H programs" (Miller, 1991, p. 28).

There is a growing consensus that societal changes have weakened the traditional role of family and community in

educating children and adolescents for life skills. For a sizeable portion of children and youth in America, the lack of opportunity to dependably acquire necessary social competence and life skills puts them at risk of failure to achieve many valued health and social outcomes (Pittman, 1991). 4-H, along with other nonformal youth programs, could play an important role in helping all youth succeed in later life.

Future research needs to investigate the relationship between specific 4-H activities and life skill development in youth. What activities and what level of participation (length and intensity) contribute more to the development of such skills? What are the factors which contribute to the development of life skills? What specific kinds of activities or programs are best at developing life skills? Answers to such questions can help in designing more effective learning experiences for youth. Many questions remain.

Nonformal and Formal Education

Introduction

Nonformal education has been around as long as societies have existed. Tribal puberty rites, religious ceremonies and instruction, and occupational apprenticeships all represent very old forms of nonformal education. Many new varieties of nonformal education have appeared on the

scene in the past century. Some examples include agricultural extension services; farmer training centers and cooperatives; various technical skill training schemes; adult literacy classes; school-equivalency courses; women's programs in home economics, child care, health, nutrition, or family planning; university extension programs; and of course a myriad of voluntary groups for youth.

Today, nonformal youth organizations rank second only to public schools in the number of young people they serve (Hechinger, 1992). Results from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) of 1988 revealed that 71% of eighth graders "participate in some type of organized activity outside of school" (Hafner, 1990, p. 54). Many of these same young people participate in more than one out-of-school youth group.

Judith Erickson (1986), author of the Directory of American Youth Organizations, estimates that there are more than 400 national youth organizations. The fifteen largest groups in the United States serve about 30 million young people per year. Of the leading national youth organizations, 4-H is the largest overall and involves over 5 million participants nationwide (Hechinger, 1992). The experience of young people in such organizations is of interest, particularly as related to the kind of learning that is occurring within such programs.

Learning is a human activity that occurs without prompting (Bloom, 1976). However, learning does not ensure that learners acquire the skills and information that society, employers, teachers, or educators desire.

Therefore, learning opportunities "are constructed to create a framework for the transfer of knowledge that is more commonly viewed as 'education'" (Heimlich, 1993, p. 3).

Most definitions of learning center around the issue of who holds control over the inputs and outcomes of the learning exchange (Heimlich, 1993). Mocker and Spear (1982) provide one taxonomy to distinguish between four types of learning distinguished by who controls the objectives or the means of education. What is being taught, or the content, does not determine whether the type of education is formal, nonformal, informal, or self-directed. The type of education is determined by other factors. Seaman and Fellenz (1989), for example, suggest that content can often be dictated by a number of factors that have nothing to do with who controls the objectives or the means of education. There are other, more meaningful ways to distinguish between formal and nonformal education.

In a discussion of nonformal education, several questions immediately surface. What is the difference between nonformal and formal education? Do nonformal and formal education compete with or complement one another? What is the difference between nonformal education for youth

and nonformal education for adults? Since 4-H is a program which involves both youth and adults in learning, an examination of educational theory is important to understanding the nature of the 4-H experience.

Pedagogy to Andragogy

The concept of adult education was first introduced in 1924 and was used as a generic concept to describe a whole group of unrelated activities (Courtney, 1989). Eduard Lindeman, an early leader in adult education, never provided a succinct definition of adult education, but he recognized that adult education was indeed unique "because adulthood, maturity defines its limits" (Lindeman, 1926/1961, p. 6). Others have taken an approach similar to Lindeman's by denoting that any activity is adult education "when it is part of a systematic, planned instructional program for adults" (Verner & Booth, 1964, p. 1-2). Identifying the audience by age may be the clearest way to distinguish adult education from youth education.

Malcolm Knowles (1970) is perhaps most well-known for his proposition that adult education is different from the education of youth, and he proposed the term "andragogy" to make the distinction clear. The debate over the concept of andragogy has been going on ever since (Beder, 1989; Beder & Darkenwald, 1982; Delahaye, Limerick, & Hearn, 1994; Merriam & Cafferella, 1991). Authorities have not reached consensus

about whether andragogy refers to a theory, method, technique, or set of assumptions. There seems to be little agreement about how much it might differ from pedagogy. In fact, Rachal (1983) observed that "we oversimplify and ultimately mislead ourselves if we treat the two approaches as neatly dichotomous and mutually exclusive" (p. 15). Brookfield (1986) and others have even challenged the empirical soundness of Knowles's concept of andragogy and questioned whether there is a difference between the way we teach adults and children (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991).

Indeed, in discussions about the distinguishing features of adult education, few differences (other than the age of the participants) can be detected from nonformal youth education. For example, in 1955 nine well-known adult educators attempted to provide a working definition of adult education that would distinguish it from other levels of education ("What is Adult Education?", 1955). What all definitions held in common was the voluntary nature of learning, the commitment to growth, and the deliberate structuring of activities (Courtney, 1989). Yet, these same elements are also fundamental in nonformal youth education (Erickson, 1983).

Other characterizations of adult education are equally less definitive. Bailyn (1962) defined adult education as the "entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations" (p. 14). Beder (1989) attempted to

draw a distinction between adult and youth nonformal education by focusing on goals. He argued that that adult education had four basic purposes: "(1) to facilitate change in a dynamic society; (2) to support and maintain the good social order; (3) to promote productivity; and (4) to enhance personal growth" (p. 39). Yet none of these characterizations successfully help distinguish between adult and youth education. These same four goals are just as important in nonformal youth programs.

Currently, most educators have abandoned the andragogy-pedagogy dichotomy that claims that teaching adults is significantly different from the teaching of youths. Eventually, even Knowles admitted that the two concepts may be two ends of a continuum (Merriam & Cafferella, 1991), although this conceptual model strikes some as still too simplistic. An orthogonal model to explain the relationship between learners and facilitators appears to be gaining some currency in adult learning (Delahaye, Limerick & Hearn, 1994).

There seems to be agreement that it is difficult to distinguish between the methods used to teach adults and youth (Gorham, 1985). Most authorities agree that adults learn differently from youth largely because of their greater wealth of experience. Beyond this acknowledgement, there seems to be little to distinguish between the learning strategies that are effective with either youth or adults.

With both youth and adults, it appears that using different strategies is appropriate at different times in different situations. Strategies and techniques for teaching youth and adults are not neatly distinct just because of age.

Formal and Nonformal Education

In just the past two decades, nonformal education--regardless of the age of the learners--has finally achieved legitimacy as a serious field for inquiry. Largely unknown in our vocabulary until the 1960's, nonformal education at one time was used to refer to "socialization in kin-based societies in which the family is the dominant institution" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 314). In contrast, formal education was considered to be more standardized and appeared only in social systems in which non-kinship and universalistic values were primary.

Today, however, nonformal education refers broadly to the "organized, systematic teaching carried on outside the formal, usually chronologically-graded and hierarchically-structured, school system that is intended to provide particular types of learning to specific populations" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 315). Although it is relatively easy to distinguish between formal and nonformal education, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that they have a complementary relationship. Overlooking this complementarity will limit one's understanding of the interrelationships

between formal and nonformal education. For example, ignoring the interrelationship between the two denies the dynamic influence that occurs when children move from the formal school setting where children are educated and when they move to nonformal programs that simultaneously socialize them in behaviors appropriate to other settings.

At the same time, nonformal education is not just another avenue to provide schooling to children nor is it an alternative delivery system for schooling. Nonformal education programs are not schools because they do not receive or deliver the same medium of exchange--credits, grades, and diplomas--that are recognized and sanctioned by the society's most legitimate and formal system of teaching and learning (Cremin, 1976). Teachers of nonformal education typically do not need certification or entry requirements beyond an interest in people and the subject. In fact, because of the strictures around formal education, some have labelled it as "corporate schooling" and defined it as "a certified teacher teaching a standardized curriculum topic to a registered student in an accredited school" (Pohland, 1987, p. 9). Freire (1970) described this as banking education.

Nonformal education is not a system in the sense that formal education is a system. Nonformal education is merely a convenient label to describe an assortment of organized educational activities outside the formal system. Nonformal

education is intended to serve identifiable learning needs of particular "subgroups in any given population--children, youths, or adults; males or females; farmers, merchants, or craftsmen; affluent or poor" (Coombs, 1976, p. 282).

Since the learning needs of these groups are diverse and demanding, nonformal education is most often distinguished from formal education by its flexibility, adaptability, and versatility. Nonformal education purports to meet the diverse learning needs of virtually any clientele, and it can change as the needs change (Forest, 1989). While some programs may fail to live up to this unique potential, enough fulfill the basic description to warrant the generalization.

Paradigms of nonformal education include apprenticeships, agricultural extension programs, and the health education activities of China's "barefoot doctors" (Grandstaff, 1976). As in the very beginnings of 4-H and Extension work, nonformal education was designed not as a competitor to formal education but rather as a supplement to it. Concerned about the crisis in formal education, nonformal strategies were designed to attack problems relating to family income, living standards in rural areas, urban migration from the countryside, food supplies, rural unemployment, and poverty (Coombs, 1976; Reck, 1951; Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

Another major distinction is that planning of nonformal programs must be decentralized and brought as close to the scene of action as possible (Coombs, 1976; Coombs & Ahmed, 1974). The voluntary nature of nonformal programs is also unique when compared to formal education. People only turn out and participate and stick with the program if they are convinced it is worth their time. There are no "captive audiences" as in formal education. Nonformal educational programs must also be as concerned with fostering learning as they are with creating opportunities to transfer and apply what is learned (LaBelle, 1976, p. 328).

Nonformal education should also be understood in terms of its role as a vehicle for social change and its influence on social stratification. LaBelle (1981) believes that nonformal youth education in the U.S. is based on assumptions that youth need structured activities to prevent "idleness." "Adults are expected to be at the center of control, and the emphasis is on the application of adult authority" (p. 328). Not surprisingly, many nonformal youth programs in the U.S. began right at the time of rapid industrialization and urbanization. Social reformers were worried about the increased leisure time available to youth in cities (Charles, 1993; Erickson, 1983).

Nonformal education can either reinforce or dismantle social stratification by limiting or facilitating social mobility. LaBelle (1981) suggested that nonformal education

may actually reinforce a sense of group consciousness and thus contributes to the maintenance of one's socioeconomic status if the group is composed of people from similar backgrounds. For example, children from low-income families are more likely to participate in public or free activities while children from upper-income families are more likely to participate in programs which require some fees or dues. Children from low-income families are more frequently involved in sports activities while children in upper-income families are more likely to participate in fine arts activities (Rubin & Medrich, 1979). Private, for-profit programs are even more socially stratified. These programs typically perpetuate and hold in common a network of individuals who share the same socioeconomic and ethno-religious backgrounds (Rubin & Medrich, 1979; Steele et al., 1993).

Regardless of its type, the major misconception about nonformal education is that it provides the equivalent of regular school subjects and skills through out-of-school channels for the benefit of the unfortunates who were deprived of real schooling earlier in their lives. In fact, nonformal education can meet the extremely diverse and real learning needs of people. Nonformal education can extend and broaden the goals of formal education.

What makes nonformal youth groups different from schools? Although diverse in many respects, all nonformal

youth organizations tend to reflect certain common elements: a commitment to the character development of young people; strengthening family life through the support of core values; an emphasis on experienced-based education; reliance on small group activities under the guidance of committed adult leaders (usually volunteers) so that youth and adults work collaboratively; providing experiences in democratic decision-making; expanding horizons through new experiences; and the engagement of participants in the process of cooperative learning coupled with competitive reward systems (Erickson, 1983; Hamburg, 1990). The most successful programs link youth with the community and involve parents and other significant adults in mentor roles with young people (Hamburg, 1990).

The Important Role of Nonformal Youth Programs

Despite the increasing tendency of researchers (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1992) to employ an ecological approach to understanding human development, the impact of participation in nonformal youth groups at the community level has not been given much consideration. Yet, recent research has revealed that in spite of numerous risk factors that may exist at the individual and family levels, having a caring, supportive relationship with another adult outside the home can be a protective factor for young people and may help them overcome the other adversities in their

life (Schorr, 1988; Werner, 1992; Werner & Smith, 1992). In fact, the availability of an informal network of kin to help with child-rearing was one of the variables that distinguished between vulnerable children who grew up as competent adults and those who did not (Werner & Smith, 1992). As one social activist put it:

The supports that improve life for young children are those which convey the message that one is not alone in carrying out one's child-rearing responsibilities. (Schorr, 1988, p. 153)

Hence, nonformal youth groups can play a critical role in enhancing youth resiliency to negative outcomes by providing a support system to youth at risk for negative outcomes (Erickson, 1986; Heath & McLaughlin, 1991).

Another important role of nonformal youth groups is in the re-vitalization of America's social capital. The presence of many voluntary associations can serve to enhance the quality of life in communities. In fact, research indicates that social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated. "The greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens" (Putnam, 1995, p. 73). Putnam points out that the establishment of the Cooperative Extension system is just one illustration that the government can actively encourage the formation of vital social capital.

However, the results of participation in nonformal youth programs may not always support the dominant ideology.

Consequently, children who participate in nonformal youth groups may experience a sense of social dissonance, especially if the content of the nonformal education is at odds with or omitted from formal education. If the state allows such content to be the sole responsibility of the family or community, it may provide substance for what will emerge as the local community's nonformal education activities.

In other cases, the state may actively try to restrict what local groups may provide for nonformal education unless it serves to maintain or enhance the goals of the state. "Even when the state does not monopolize nonformal education, however, it may be a major sponsor of such activity to extend the influence of the state beyond the formal school" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 317). However, just as schools cannot do it alone, neither can nonformal education. Nonformal education is not a panacea:

To suppose that nonformal education has mystical powers to banish the economic constraints, the bureaucratic snags, and the human frailties that have kept the schools and adult education out of balance with the real needs of those they were supposed to serve would be simply to set the stage for another later crop of disappointments. (Coombs, 1976, p. 286)

A final feature of both nonformal and formal education that needs to be mentioned is the concept of the "hidden curriculum." This term refers to all the unintended aspects of the educational experience. Specifically, the hidden

curriculum can refer to participant's learning how to "work the system," or their socialization into the lore, traditions, rituals, perceptions of time and space, dealing with bureaucracy, learning of sex-role stereotyped behavior, and many other kinds of learning that are not part of the officially-defined curriculum. Much of the learning that occurs with the hidden curriculum subverts the formally-expressed goals of the educational program although they are not formally acknowledged as existing. The hidden curriculum in nonformal education has not been investigated by many researchers (Casey & Tucker, 1994).

The gaps in our understanding of nonformal youth organizations are still great. Little is known about nonformal youth organizations as learning environments. A need exists to know, for example, what kinds of experiences in youth organizations lead to positive outcomes and life skill development for the participants. How do nonformal youth organizations supplement family environments? What role are nonformal youth programs playing in the socialization process for pre-adolescents and adolescents? As one expert on nonformal youth groups observed:

At their best, [nonformal youth organizations] provide access to interesting and concerned adult friends, social and technical resources, and meaningful roles in the broader community--all difficult for youths to obtain readily on their own. (Erickson, 1986, p. 23).

Socialization and Training in Youth Groups

Introduction

America is a culture of joiners. From the colonial period to the present, Americans have actively formed social groups--clubs, committees, lodges, fraternities, associations, troops, and societies--to foster camaraderie and a spirit of fellowship, find strength in numbers, strengthen community cohesion, build a common identity, and inculcate members to a unique culture the group could call its own. These nonformal groups play a central role in American society. The ideology of associationalism, as one observer has called this, permeates American history and finds its expression in both adult and youth groups, male and female (Charles, 1993, p. 47). Clubdom is a distinctly American idea (Griffin, 1983; Lynd & Lynd, 1929). As one observer of American life commented, "For most of us, groups are important elements in the structure of our culture" (Gibb & Gibb, 1967, p. 161).

However, nonformal social groups also play a larger role in our society beyond the local level. Nonformal groups have been important transmitters of culture and have served as a basis for sustaining national values and cohesion (Erickson, 1983; LaBelle, 1981; Lee, 1996). In fact, the national character and close ties to government funding for many nonformal youth groups suggest some larger

national interests. "The result is often a close bond between dominant group symbols and goals and the national interest" (LaBelle, 1981, p. 327). Even when nonformal groups emphasize local autonomy, local groups may be restricted to choosing from a limited number of available pre-packaged options that are coordinated and administered nationally. Thus, local groups can also function as extensions of some national ideology.

As a part of this tradition of nationally-sponsored nonformal youth groups, 4-H clubs have formed a distinct and unique subculture within American society. Why this culture has not received more attention is not clear. Certainly, ethnographers studying a culture would be justifiably curious about an educational organization that co-existed outside the formal education system; that actively recruited children who had not yet reached puberty; that reinforced and celebrated its core values through a unique set of oaths, pledges, mottos, and rituals; and that featured exotic insignias, symbols, and uniforms in small groups led by adult mentors. Describing such a culture would take on great significance and meaning, perhaps suggesting to outsiders that critical needs within the dominant culture were not being met by traditional, formal educational institutions. Yet, 4-H clubs play just this kind of role (Lee, 1996).

What niche do these kinds of out-of-school groups fill? What distinguishes them from formal education? Why did they arise and what historical forces were behind their creation and perpetuation? The answers to these questions may help us understand more about the socializing influence of nonformal groups in our society.

The Historical Context of Nonformal Youth Groups

Certainly, before the advent of the twentieth century, there are numerous examples of nonformal adult and youth groups. In the U.S., nonformal youth organizations did not begin in earnest until the 1830's when schools began to replace in-home and on-the-job training for adult roles (Erickson, 1986; Griffin, 1983). Many adult organizations formed youth branches which were designed to carry out the social goals of groups like The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Knights of Labor, the Farmer's Alliance, and the Loyal Temperance Legions (Erickson, 1983, 1986; Griffin, 1983; Stubblefield & Keane, 1989). Commonly, these organizations sought to make older values seem fresh and contemporary to the new younger generation (Griffin, 1983). However, it was not until the dawn of the 1900's that voluntary youth groups came into full development.

During the 1890's, America was experiencing profound and fundamental changes--communications had improved creating a national economy, transportation systems linked

all areas of the country, inter-urban railroads were bringing farmers to the city to trade and consume, industrialization had created urban centers and an industrial work force, and rural areas were losing population. Great social upheavals were characteristic of this period--the rise of populism, huge labor strikes, agrarian unrest, and the Great Depression of 1893.

In the 52 years between the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862 (which established the college land-grant system) and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (which established the Cooperative Extension Service), profound changes in education were taking place as a result of these other changes in America. The ideal independent rural family economic production unit was being replaced by an urban-dwelling consumption unit. Women and children were being taken out of the home and placed into the industrial workplace. Many urban families no longer produced the majority of day-to-day commodities that they would need. People no longer worked on their own property but rather worked for someone else somewhere else. In fact, the 1920 census showed that for the first time in the U.S. more people lived in urban areas than lived in rural areas. Increasingly, young people who had learned the make the transition to adulthood by working and learning alongside their parents were being compelled to spend more time in schools. America was changing, and many people looked for

ways to re-create connections and foster the cohesion and interdependency once known in rural American life.

Out of these profound changes, Progressive reformers nurtured nonformal youth groups as a way to bridge the widening gaps between home and school and work (Griffin, 1983). In addition, adults began to be more concerned about how young people, particularly in cities, spent their time free from the social controls of small town life (Kett, 1977; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984). Adults felt a compelling need to regulate and structure their free time outside of school in sex-segregated activities. (This was the end of the Victorian age after all.) Leisure time was a new commodity for youth that had not existed to a great degree in pre-industrial America, and there was "widespread concern about the development of the character of youth" (Erickson, 1983, p. 2).

At the same time, colleges and universities began to exert control over the extracurriculum for sports, dramatic clubs, debating societies, fraternities, and religious organizations (LaBelle, 1981). At universities, many more people were being exposed to a belief in the primacy of science and scientific efficiency. With an almost unquestioning acceptance of science, many people began to believe that they could "direct social change to rational purposes" (Griffin, 1983, p. 167). Progressive reformers especially believed that people could translate social

ideals of the simple virtues of small-town America into reality in a world of large-scale organizations (Griffin, 1983). In fact, one contemporary during the Progressive era remarked that "government is the most potent factor in social uplift and that inefficient administration can manufacture more social ills than a generation of social programs can remedy" (Griffin, 1983, p. 151). If social problems were to be overcome, scientific investigation and efficient administration were the remedies. Efficiency, in this view, demanded an emphasis on planning, on grass-roots control, on practicality, on decentralized power, and on the encouragement of individualism (Griffin, 1983).

Progressives believed that a new vision of democracy would emerge which would perfect the small-town notions of "neighborliness" (Griffin, 1983, p. 175). Hence, a proliferation of local groups fit well in this image of renewal and reaffirmation.

During this period, then, it is no coincidence that most of the major nonsectarian adult and youth groups emerged between 1904 and 1920. In a single decade, between 1910 and 1919, eight of today's largest national youth groups were officially established (Erickson, 1983). Something was going on, and it was no mere coincidence.

Membership in all-male clubs and fraternal orders (following the strict gender separation of Victorian ideals at the time) was also at an all time high during this period

of history (Erickson, 1986). For example, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Elks, Moose and other male societies emerged at this time (Charles, 1993).

Women's auxiliaries were also proliferating at this time. In 1905, for example, "Chicago was home to more than one hundred women's clubs, two-dozen charitable societies, eighteen social settlements, and a dozen civic betterment clubs" (Charles, p. 42). All these organizations offered members a sense of togetherness and mutuality, a refuge from turbulent times through recreation and relaxation, and a way to demonstrate self-sacrifice and stewardship through community service. Moreover, they fit into the Progressive's notions of creating a social order in which all men and women could develop to their full potential (Griffin, 1983).

Several of the adult and youth groups at the turn of the century drew its members from numerous existing, moribund groups. The Elks, for example, had begun in the 1860's as a drinking club of actors called "the Jolly Corks" but soon attracted businessmen to its ranks (Charles, 1993). The Boy Scouts were created by combining a number of older youth groups which included the Sons of Daniel Boone, the Knights of King Arthur, and Seton's Tribe of Woodcraft Indians (Leslie, 1984). Other middle-class service clubs drew from such organizations as the Knights of Pythias, the Dramatic Order of Knights of Khorassan, The Sons of Malta (a

fake order), the Maccabees, Royal Arcanum, and the Ancient Order of United Workmen (Charles, 1993).

Origins of Youth Work

Originally relegated to the work of women's auxiliaries, concern about youth began to dominate discussions among male clubs about 1910. Many of these original adult organizations sponsored youth groups as a part of their dedication to the ideal of service and social responsibility as well as out of a concern for boys as "men in the making" (Charles, 1993; Kett, 1977). The Elks, for example, sponsored Boy Scout troops and the Salvation Army. Lions Clubs also sponsored Boy Scout troops. Rotary sponsored YMCA groups. The government sponsored 4-H.

Support to such groups was not without controversy, however, and revealed a hidden connection between urban fraternal organizations and loyalty to business. Boy Scouts were a particular target of both the labor and the socialist movement in America. The American Federation of Labor, for instance, refused to recognize the Boy Scouts until they modified their "pledge of loyalty to employers" that was borrowed from the British (Leslie, 1984, p. 469). Chief Scout Ernest T. Seton was removed from his office in 1915 for his supposed socialist leanings which offended business and middle-class interests. Even in the 1920's radical intellectuals voiced their suspicions that scouting was "a

capitalist plot to train a new generation of armed strikebreakers" (Kett, 1977, p. 224). Mechling (1984) has repeated the charge in modern times.

Interestingly, scouting explicitly "advertised itself at a substitute for the farm and frontier" (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984, p. 4). Writing in one of the early histories of Boy Scouting, Daniel Carter Beard wrote in 1914:

The wilderness is gone, the buckskin man is gone, the painted Indian has hit the trail over the Great Divide, the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history, and we must depend upon the Boy Scout movement to produce the MEN of the future. (cited in Hantover, 1978, p. 193)

However, other groups sponsored "boy's work" simply to join in an organizational movement focused on youth that had been developing since the late 1800's. Women's groups had existed for years and had been formed for the dual purposes of self-culture and defense of home and community (Charles, 1993). The emphasis in club meetings was on efficiency (making sure to run businesslike meetings following strict parliamentary procedure) and on inculcating scientific housekeeping and child care methods. By the 1880's, over 900 women's groups had formed in communities all over America (Charles, 1993).

For men's service groups, boy's work provided the least controversial endeavor of service club activities. The

Moose organization, for example, launched a children's project for orphans called "Mooseheart." During their 1916 convention, Rotarians appointed a standing committee on "Work Among Boys." Other organizations followed these trends. A central purpose was to protect children from the evils of city life and help poor children (Kett, 1977).

While these adult clubs were primarily located in urban areas, similar efforts were emerging in rural areas. However, the impetus for creating youth groups in rural areas would be left to others besides business interests or the middle class, most notably the Federal and state governments.

Business clubs did not completely ignore the needs of rural areas, however. Anxieties about the situation of youth growing up amid all the temptations of the early twentieth century, and business interest in tapping the economic resources of rural areas solidified interest in connecting with rural populations. Adult clubs in urban areas, for example, conducted goodwill tours "to see crops and build good-fellowship," sponsored product fairs and gave prizes to the boy or girl who grew the best crops, and held "Buy Our Town" days with special discounts for farmers (Charles, 1993, p. 74). The construction of the interurbans (special short rail lines) were designed to lure rural residents into nearby cities on the weekends. Many of these efforts were aimed primarily at making economic gains for

the business classes located in urban areas and not in organizing youth groups.

4-H as Nonformal Education

Like other youth groups, 4-H emerged at a time in American history when the population was shifting from rural to urban areas and a middle class was just emerging. During the period of 1900-1910, farm prices were rising and there was a growing rural prosperity in the nation, but the agrarian unrest of the 1890's was not yet forgotten. As a result,

It was as though the conscience of the nation had suddenly been awakened to the thought that rural children had been neglected, that the drift to the city had gone too far, and that it was time something was done about it. (Reck, 1951, p. 23)

Although it is impossible to pinpoint its exact beginnings, 4-H began in the early 1900's from the desire of formal educators to improve the conditions in rural schools. Student morale was low, the school curriculum seemed unrelated to real life in the countryside, few farm boys went on to high school, and only one in five hundred went on to college (Reck, 1951; Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Rural schools were deteriorating from the lack of an adequate property tax base to keep up with the necessary repairs.

L. H. Bailey, a naturalist at Cornell University, took a special interest in rural life. Bailey was particularly disturbed that rural schools were not teaching rural young

people about the environment all around them. Moreover, most school subjects had little connection to rural young people's everyday experiences or problems.

At about the same time, A.B. Graham, a county superintendent of schools in Springfield, Ohio, wanted to find a way to improve the interest and participation of rural youth in schools by revitalizing the curriculum; it was not until 1918 were compulsory education laws enacted in all 48 states. His notion was to form a boys' and girls' experiment club. Since he was not sure his school board would approve, he decided to hold the meeting in an old warehouse on a Saturday afternoon when the youth's parents would be in town shopping (Reck, 1951). This meeting took place in 1902.

Graham was a convert to the primacy of science and wanted rural youth to appreciate how science and efficiency could improve their standard of living. Graham's first lesson was to teach his young students how to use litmus paper to test their farm soil at home. Later, he promised to help them select the best corn from their family's crop and to plant experimental plots.

It was fortuitous that Ohio State University's experiment stations were looking for a way to disseminate their new-found information out to rural groups. With the help of a college agricultural student organization, Graham was able to make the connection. With a cadre of college

students, Graham travelled in rural areas generating enthusiasm and interest in scientific agriculture. Young people were instructed to gather the largest ears of corn on their family farm and save the kernels. Then, these young people were instructed in how to plant experimental plots. Initially, young people would compare their yields to the yields of their fathers. The intent here was to show young people how they could apply science to their everyday lives and how science would help them become more efficient in raising crops (Reck, 1951).

Within a year of his first Saturday morning meeting, Graham had formed 13 clubs in 9 Ohio counties--all of them directed by the local county school superintendent. All of these clubs elected youth officers, kept records, and met more or less regularly. Graham's work was noteworthy enough that he was hired away to the Ohio State University College of Agriculture as the first superintendent of Extension (Reck, 1951).

This pattern was repeated in many other states. In all instances, county superintendents of schools were the impetus behind the genesis of what would become eventually become known as 4-H. From the beginning, 4-H was created as one avenue to help youth in rural areas learn about their environment, to learn how to apply scientific practices in agriculture, and to foster positive self-image among rural youth. "Learning by doing" reflected the Progressive notion

of unity of mind and body. At the time, it was believed that "physical action actually shaped practical morals" (Mrozek, 1983, p. 36).

However, like the youth groups sponsored by middle-class urban adult groups, 4-H groups shared a hidden economic motive. County superintendents were instrumental in the beginnings of 4-H because they saw improved agricultural production as a key to better schools and an improved tax base. County superintendents were well aware that low-income farms could not support a good school system or provide the necessary financial base to keep schools modern.

It has been demonstrated that our soil is capable of producing one hundred bushels of corn to the acre, yet our average production is less than twenty bushels per acre....We have the best pasture and corn lands, but we are bringing our meat and corn from the West. (Reck, 1951, p. 49)

Others shared this view. Rural areas badly needed higher farm incomes. Something needed to be done to make farm life more attractive and to make farming more profitable.

A major obstacle in improving rural economies was the reluctance and disinterestedness of rural adults. Few had any motivation to learn. Fewer had any motivation to change. Tradition was the teacher. In part because education was considered to be restricted to schooling and therefore to be the province only of childhood, many adults avoided any education (Beder, 1989). Yet in the early

1900's, for the first time in a long while, there was something new to teach in agriculture. Advancements in scientific understanding, particularly new methods developed at the Agricultural Experiment Stations, could help change productivity levels on family farms. Science and efficiency were the watchwords of the day, yet adults seemed to take little notice. Some felt that adult motivation might be stimulated through a challenge from their children.

In fact, in an early attempt at rural adult education, Will B. Otwell, president of the Farmer's Institute in Macoupin County, Illinois, sent out personal invitations to adult farmers in 1898. He hoped to show them some improved methods which would increase their production and yields. When the doors opened, only the officers of the Farmer's Institute and a chaplain entered. When other attempts yielded similarly low turnouts, Otwell decided to ignore parents and concentrate on the boys. As one person phrased it: If you can't teach an old dog new tricks, "then next year we'll try the pups" (Reck, 1951, p. 57).

The superintendent's work with boys resulted in a similar push for an organization for girls. The first Girls' Home Culture Club was organized in 1903 (Reck, 1951). Other groups soon followed. Like boy's clubs, the goals were the same--how to apply science and efficiency to result in better management practices and improved farm income.

Thus, 4-H youth groups began as a subversive form of adult education. In order to reach the parents unmotivated to learn new techniques, the strategy now was to teach the children. 4-H groups began as ways to enhance rural farm incomes so the resident taxpayers could fund better schools. Not surprisingly, club work owed its existence to school superintendents (Reck, 1951, p. 121).

4-H represented a unique unity of principles that had not existed before in the U.S. Unlike the current situation, 4-H represented a partnership between formal and nonformal education. 4-H became coeducational before any other nonformal youth groups. 4-H had an avowed aim of improving practical skills while also enhancing life skills such as decision-making, self-concept, and a spirit of inquiry. 4-H brought together a unity that heretofore was lacking--between formal and nonformal education and between adult and youth education. The same demonstration methods used to teach youth were employed to teach adults.

4-H Today

Today, 4-H is known as one of the major youth organizations. 4-H has become a widely recognized institution in American culture whose name and symbol, the green 4-leaf clover emblazoned with four white H's, are well known to many people. Mention 4-H today and a Norman Rockwell-image of pastoral simplicity and docility is still

evoked through images of animal husbandry, weekly meetings in one-room schoolhouses, displays at fairs, and fund-raising events such as bake sales.

One sees so much of this agricultural image from a bygone era in parodies of country life that one can fail to see that 4-H also creates new kinds of educational opportunities for young people and adults (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1982). These experiences offer young people opportunities to expand their relationships with youth of different ages and with adults in the community and to provide training in practical skills that are not available from other community organizations. Through 4-H activities, young people are able to assume active, responsible roles that they rarely have in school (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983). 4-H groups also offer parents an avenue to teach their children and intensify parents' role as teachers of early adolescent children.

The appeal of 4-H has been so wide that the program now reaches young people in every demographic area--farm, rural non-farm, suburban, and central city--and involves young people of every race and creed. Today, 4-H can also be found in over 80 countries worldwide. While many people believe that the modern 4-H program works only with white, privileged middle- and upper-class youth, the NELS:88 study showed otherwise (National Center, 1988). 4-H members are more likely to come from lower socio-economic status groups,

exhibit several risk factors, have siblings who have dropped out of school, and come from multi-ethnic families where neither parent had completed high school (Steele et al., 1993).

As one part of the Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H is the youth component of the state land-grant university system staffed by tenured and adjunct faculty who are charged with extending practical research, information, and resources to the public. The Extension network includes:

Land-Grant Universities: 72 institutions of higher learning, including colleges of agriculture, home economics, and family life; and agricultural research and experiment stations.

Professional Staff: 17,000 Extension agents, based in over 3,000 counties nationwide implementing programs in 4-H, agriculture, home economics, family living, community resource development, and natural resources.

Volunteers: Nearly 3 million volunteer leaders, committed to delivering Extension's programs and services. 4-H volunteers nationwide contribute more than \$1 billion annually in terms of time, travel, and support; this is far in excess of the total combined public and private dollars invested in 4-H.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: The federal partner, linked to all state land-grant universities to support research and educational outreach programs.

National 4-H Council: A non-profit, private educational foundation established to mobilize resources to support the work of the Cooperative Extension System on behalf of youth and volunteers. Only about 20% of 4-H funding comes from public sources with the remainder being provided by private sources.

Since its beginnings in the early 20th century, 4-H has focused on the growth and development of young people using a wide variety of hands-on projects as the attraction for attracting them. For some 80 years, 4-H has espoused as its goal helping young people become mature, competent adults by teaching skills through experiential methods that will be useful in adult life. Many of the skills taught in 4-H are particularly useful in civic organizations and community leadership (Reck, 1951; USDA, 1986).

However, 4-H is more than just a youth program. As a component of the land-grant university system, 4-H is also an adult education program, involving hundreds of thousands of adults in teaching and leadership roles. Programs like 4-H that include parental and community involvement have been shown to improve the effectiveness of life skills

education. Moreover, linking youth and adults is a hallmark of successful programs (Hamburg, 1990).

Like youth, adults develop skills which can be used to enhance the quality of their own lives as well as the well-being of the communities in which they live. Without adult volunteers, there could be no 4-H program. In Montana 4-H, for example, the salaried staff of about 90 field faculty are supported by a volunteer force of over 5,000 volunteer leaders.

The 4-H program remains one of the oldest and largest nontraditional educational programs in the United States. Enrollment in 4-H during the 1960's was at about 5.2 million. Membership declined slightly during the 1970's and has recently experienced a resurgence in the 1980's and 1990's so that today nearly 6 million youth are 4-H members.

Misconceptions about membership in the 4-H program abound. Many consider it an exclusively rural program teaching only agricultural concepts. This image is more stereotype than factual. The NELS:88 study (National Center, 1988) has been useful to define who participates in the 4-H program. While nearly 72% of all eighth graders participate in some outside of school activity, less than one-tenth of eighth graders were current members of 4-H. About 14% participate in scouting, almost 11% percent participate in Boys/Girls' Clubs, 15% participate in YMCA/YWCA programs, and 33% participate in religious youth

groups (Hafner, 1990). However, the NELS:88 study revealed that 19% of all eighth grade girls and 15% of all eighth grade boys had taken part in 4-H at some time in their lives (Steele et al., 1993). Youth from rural areas are twice as likely as urban and suburban youths to participate in 4-H programs. However, rural youth are also more likely to participate in religious youth groups.

Despite conventional stereotypes, 4-H youth are not just the "cream of the crop," and they instead represent the average of American youth in terms of academic achievement and grades. Youth in the lowest socioeconomic status quartile take part more often than those in the highest socioeconomic status quartile in Boys' and Girls' Clubs and 4-H clubs. In addition, over one-third of those who had been in 4-H were "at risk" in at least one area and one-third of those who took part in 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade were from families with incomes of less than \$15,000 (Hafner, 1990).

Clubs as Families

While nonformal youth organizations continue their more traditional roles of serving as educational, social, and recreational centers for youth, increasingly they are filling a void for children formerly filled by parents. In the changing world of families, they also serve as supplements for incomplete or inadequate families who cannot

provide for their children's needs. This new and emerging role for nonformal youth organizations is exciting but also daunting.

Policy makers and practitioners concerned with American youth acknowledge the special and critical contribution of community organizations as resources that extend beyond family and schools. They recognize the limitations of today's schools and families. Schools as social institutions are inadequate because they are built on outmoded assumptions about family and community. "Too many families simply lack the emotional, financial, experiential, or cognitive supports that a developing youngster requires" (Heath & McLaughlin 1991, p. 624).

A 4-H club may function as a surrogate family for some youth. This kind of relationship has never been investigated, but the parallels are striking. Like a family, clubs are led by adults who exercise control and exact sanctions over the behavior of members. Members of clubs have a wide age range and abilities. 4-H groups provide environments that have rituals, traditions, a culture, social networks, and support systems that are the missing ingredients for some home environments. Not surprisingly, Heath and McLaughlin assert that successful youth organizations share many of the features "that in earlier eras characterized family life" (p. 625).

Nonschool organizations provide multiple services that sustain them [teens] in their family roles and give them broad support for their identities as teenagers. (p. 624)

Like a family, then, there must be a balance between adaptation to change and cohesion in the face of the unknown within a club. Clubs can function as havens from a turbulent, chaotic world. Out-of-school organizations can provide a buffer to the outside world and surround members in a socializing environment that holds them accountable for their own actions. Members are also held accountable for the institution's well-being and for the actions of others within the organization.

The activities of these organizations, like the idealized family life whose features they reflect, structure fields for action, reflection, and constructive social interaction. In the process, nonformal youth groups can create social cohesion and bonding that may be absent within families. As in any culture, children may learn how they "should behave, grow, develop, think, feel and adapt" through participation in nonformal groups (Palmer, in press, p. 52).

Recent research indicates that effective strategies that promote life skills development must help promote attachment to schools and parents together with a commitment to the conventions of social order and the law (Hawkins & Weis, 1980).

The Social Development Model proposes that if the primary units of socialization (families, schools, peers and the community) are to influence youth away from delinquent activity, youth must have the opportunity to be involved in conventional activities, have the skills necessary to be involved successfully, and those with whom the youth interact must consistently reward desired behaviors.

When their experiences lead to the development of a social bond of attachment, commitment and belief, young people are more likely to become positive, contributing members of their schools, families, and communities. (Cuervo, Lees, & Lacey, 1984, p. 29)

Summary

A common feature of the U.S. is a highly specialized and complex society in which many socialization agents or systems operate simultaneously and parallel to each other and without much coordination. Yet, these socialization institutions influence the social development of young people not only through the explicit and intended educational goals but also by the way they are organized and actually operate. These latter influences are by-products, sometimes of an unintended character. Yet, they are just as important to understanding the role of socialization agents as the intended goals.

4-H clubs, like other nonformal youth groups, need to be understood as agents of socialization. What role they play in this process is still not well understood.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

This descriptive ethnographic study was a mixed design of qualitative and quantitative data-gathering research methods. Typically, descriptive research studies involve "collecting data in order to test hypotheses and to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects" or programs (Gay, 1987, p. 189). Case studies are a bounded system which is "an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (Merriam, 1988, p. 10).

In addition, descriptive research studies are concerned with the way things are and as such are typically "concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures" (Gay, 1992, p. 218). Descriptive studies collect data through techniques such as interviews, observations, or questionnaires. Descriptive studies attempt to describe things as they are in the present, not as they should be or have been. This descriptive study used a combination of ethnographic and rationalistic procedures to collect data.

Principles of Ethnographic Research

Ethnographic research is not new to education. In fact, ethnographic research has proliferated in recent years as researchers have accepted that single, rationalistic approaches do not necessarily help in understanding the world as it is. This kind of research uses a variety of research techniques to gather data and does not rely only on one source (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Wolcott, 1990). The multiplicity of data sources and the immersion of the researcher with the participants are unique characteristics of such research designs, "providing a depth of understanding often lacking in other approaches to research" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 9). Ethnographic research is also holistic, attempting to construct descriptions of total phenomena within various contexts and then generating from these descriptions the causes and consequences that affect human behavior (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Gaining an understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and member outcomes requires a research methodology designed to discover, model, and verify these interactions. This research model is inductive rather than deductive. In deductive research, researchers hope to find data to match a pre-conceived theory. Inductive research, by contrast, begins with the collection of data and builds theoretical propositions from the relationships discovered in the data. The aim is to develop findings that can be

compared and translated to groups not investigated rather than outright transference (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; McMillan, 1996).

Ethnography has an advantage over other research methodologies because it provides the tools for focusing on natural settings such as the club meeting, uses participants' constructs to structure the research, and describes in depth the participants' perspectives and experiences (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The primary disadvantage of ethnography is that the data are difficult to verify. A challenge to all ethnographic researchers is to be able "to enter unfamiliar settings without generalizing from their own experiences to the new setting and to enter familiar settings as if they were totally unknown" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 10).

As one way to deal with threats to validity, ethnographers have developed methods of systematic, controlled elicitation and formal analytical procedures. The primary strategy in minimizing threats to validity involves alternating between direct observation and systematic indirect questioning to discover logically related principles used by individuals and groups to order relevant phenomena. These techniques and strategies were employed in this descriptive study to discover the influence of club leadership styles on participants in 4-H clubs.

To understand the essence of the 4-H program, it was necessary to use a design which allowed leaders, members, and parents of the program to fully express their ideas and reflections on the 4-H experience. Data were collected through a variety of strategies so that each could be used to cross-check the accuracy of the other.

Just as a surveyor locates points on a map by triangulating on several sights, so an ethnographer pinpoints the accuracy of conclusions drawn by triangulating with several sources of data. (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 11)

In this research study of 4-H clubs, this triangulation technique was used to insure accuracy of observations. The purpose of this educational ethnography was to provide a thick and rich description about the contexts, activities, and beliefs of participants in 4-H clubs. The success of such an ethnographic study is if the result recapitulates the cultural scene accurately enough so that readers envision the same scene as witnessed by the researcher (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Rather than seeking generalizability or outright transference to groups that were not investigated, qualitative research aims for translatability and comparability (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Sample and Population

There are more than 10,000 4-H community club members in the state of Montana who participate in approximately 1,000 organized clubs. Since the purpose of this research

was to investigate the club experience, for the purpose of this study the population was all 4-H community club members in the state of Montana. All counties in the state were classified into one of three categories: urban, rural, or frontier. These categories were based on U.S. Bureau of the Census Bureau (1993) data for numbers of people per square mile.

County units were selected as the basis for this study since counties are the fundamental unit around which the Cooperative Extension system is organized and administered. County agents are hired to serve a county population by the county commissioners. Funding for the Cooperative Extension Service also relies, in part, on county monies. Counties were also the logical unit of study since 4-H clubs participate in just one county's Extension program and cannot belong to two counties at the same time.

Definition of County Categories

The state of Montana has a total of 56 counties. For the purposes of this study, counties were divided into three distinct groups. Urban counties were those with more than 10.0 people per square mile. There were 10 counties in this category. They ranged from Ravalli County with a density of 10.0 persons per square mile to Silver Bow County with 47.0 persons per square mile.

Rural counties were those with a population density of less than 10 persons per square mile but more than 2.0 persons per square mile. Such counties typically have a populated center with many small towns and rural farms elsewhere. There were 23 counties in this category.

Finally, frontier counties were those with less than 2.0 persons per square mile. While such a classification may seem novel, this category was originally used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in the late 19th century to designate "unsettled" areas of the nation. Frontier areas were those areas considered below the threshold of civilization.

Today, over 100 years later, there are still a total of 132 counties in 15 western states in the lower 48 states with a population density of less than 2 people per square mile. The overall population density for the U.S. is 71 people per square mile. Interestingly, the 132 frontier counties account for nearly one-third of the total U.S. contiguous land area. In Montana, 23 of the 56 counties fall into the frontier category and one county, Prairie County, is the size of Connecticut (Duncan, 1993). Finally, it is important to point out that the number of homeless people in the U.S. is greater by half than the number of people who live in the contemporary frontier.

Thus, in the late 20th century, the frontier still exists and accounts for an important cultural milieu in

America which is considered in this research project. The frontier provides a unique and significant variable for the western experience, particularly related to 4-H clubs.

Phase 1: Selection of Clubs for Research

After classifying all fifty-six Montana counties (Yellowstone National Park was not included since even the Census Bureau admits that this is a jurisdictional anomaly) in one of these three categories, one county in each category was randomly selected using a computer-generated random number scheme for the purposes of this study. Lewis & Clark (urban), Park (rural), and Liberty (frontier) counties were selected.

Leadership Style Survey Instrument

Having randomly selected three study counties, all 4-H club organizational leaders and county Extension faculty were administered an instrument designed to measure adult orientations toward fostering either control or autonomy in young people. This instrument, named the Deci instrument for its primary originator E. L. Deci of the University of Rochester (New York), reportedly provides "an internally consistent, temporally stable, and externally valid" measure of an adult's basic orientation towards working with young people (Deci et al., 1981, p. 649). The Deci scale was

developed from concepts developed in cognitive evaluation theory.

After each person completed the survey instrument, each individual received a score which can be interpreted on a continuum of behavior--from highly controlling (-18) to highly supportive of autonomy (+18). A high, positive score indicates a high autonomy-oriented style while a low, negative score indicates a highly control-oriented style of working with children. Presumably, a score of zero indicates a style that is neither highly controlling nor highly autonomous but midway in between.

Each individual's score is believed to measure a relatively stable orientation in adults towards children and is believed to reflect a personality variable that does not change over time (Deci et al., 1981). Scores from the Deci instrument were used to purposely select clubs for further study.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The Deci instrument uses a variety of vignettes which ask adults to indicate from their perspective what alternative courses of action would be most appropriate in each situation (see Appendix B). In his description of the instrument, Deci asserts that the instrument exhibits good internal consistency in subscales and that it is not

necessary to standardize items before combining them to obtain subscale totals.

Reliability coefficients for each of the four subscales range from .77 to .82. The test-retest reliability of the total scale is .70, slightly lower than that of the individual subscales. In addition to temporal stability, the instrument was externally validated in two studies (Deci et al., 1981). Permission was granted to use this instrument in this research study.

The original instrument without modifications or changes was pilot-tested on selected adult 4-H volunteer leaders in the fall of 1993. The instrument was found to be useful and provided an accurate characterization of adult orientations to youth since it was used on leaders of known orientations towards working with youth.

Administration

In the three randomly selected counties, all 4-H club organizational leaders as identified by the county Extension agent were requested to complete the Deci instrument. In the urban county, there were a total of 33 4-H clubs; in the rural county, there were 13 clubs; and in the frontier county there were only 3 4-H clubs. In each club, one person is traditionally identified as the organizational leader, but in those clubs where two leaders were identified, both were administered the Deci instrument.

The Deci Adult Orientation instrument was distributed and administered through a combination of personal visits by the researcher or through the mail. In some cases, a second follow-up mailing was necessary to obtain nearly complete return rates.

In all cases, return rates were high. From Lewis & Clark County, 27 of the 33 club leaders completed and returned the Deci instrument (82% return rate). In Park County, 11 club leaders returned the completed survey (85% return rate). In Liberty County, all three leaders returned the surveys (100% return rate). When all counties were combined, a total of 41 of the 49 club leaders returned the Deci survey instrument (an overall return rate of 84%).

Initially, the research design called for a purposive sample of clubs based on the leadership style and orientation of the club leader. This criterion-based selection process was designed to select 4-H clubs based on set criteria and attributes that were assumed to be important to the 4-H club experience (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The design called for selecting a total of six clubs to study: three clubs with leaders scoring high on the Deci instrument for controlling behavior and three clubs with leaders scoring high on the Deci instrument for autonomy-supporting behavior. However, when the scores from the Deci instrument were calculated, concerns developed that the scores did not accurately describe each leader's particular

style of working with youth. As a check, it was decided to conduct a criterion-related validity check of each leader's style.

Criterion-Related Validity Check

Within the 4-H program, there is a lot of communication and contact between program staff and volunteers. Therefore, when results from the Deci instrument were scored, several scores did not conform to what was believed to be known about particular leaders. For example, some leaders who were believed to exhibit high controlling behaviors with children did not score near this end of the continuum. In the same way, leaders who were thought to have a autonomy-oriented approach did not score this way on the Deci instrument. The data were re-checked and re-tabulated to ensure that mistakes were not made in entering or in calculating scores. No errors were found. In fact, it was interesting to note that none of the 4-H leaders who completed the Deci instrument scored below -3.0, indicating few control-oriented leaders. The highest score on the autonomy-oriented scale among leaders was +12.0. Yet, these numerical results did not correlate well with what was known about particular leaders and their styles. Scores for county agents also did not align with what was known about their styles of leadership.

Rather than proceed under faulty assumptions, it was decided to survey each of the county agents in the selected counties to solicit their personal evaluation of the leadership style for all their club leaders. This kind of reality check would hopefully ensure that the study was not being blinded by a rationalistic model of defining what is knowable and allowing numerical scores to dictate what was felt to be contrary to what was believed to be true about certain 4-H leaders.

Using the definitions of control and autonomy presented in Deci et al. (1981), county agents were sent a list of their club leaders and asked to rate them on a 10-point scale with 1 indicating indicating a high control orientation and 10 indicating a high autonomy orientation. In addition, county faculty were given the option to indicate "Don't Know" for those leaders who were not well-known to them (see Appendix A). Each rating was based on pre-selected criteria known to be important in adult interactions with youth.

Comparisons of the Deci numbers and the evaluations by county agents indicated great discrepancies. Perhaps some leaders were "test-wise" and gave responses that they felt were appropriate. Others may have been defensive and given erratic responses to the vignettes. Perhaps, too, the Deci instrument is not appropriate for use on volunteer leaders with no formal teaching experience or background, the Deci

instrument was developed for and validated on classroom teachers. Other factors may have influenced the results obtained from the Deci instrument.

Regardless of the reasons why the Deci results may not have been accurate, it was decided to proceed with the study based on the county agents' personal evaluations of the leadership styles of 4-H club leaders rather than the Deci instrument scores. Based on evaluation results obtained from the county Extension faculty, five clubs were eventually selected for study. Three clubs were selected because the leaders of these clubs were perceived to be highly control-oriented, and two clubs were selected because the leaders were perceived by the county agent to be highly autonomy-oriented. Originally, there was to have been an even balance in number of clubs for each extreme orientation; however, this was not possible because of scheduling problems. A third club with a high autonomy-oriented leader was not selected because of conflicting meeting dates with previously selected clubs. Since each club would be observed by the researcher for a period of months, clubs had to meet on different days. Clubs were separated by as many as 450 miles.

Phase 2: Naturalistic Research

After each club was selected based on the county agent's perception of the club leader's orientation as

either highly controlling or highly autonomous, the club leaders were personally contacted and asked if they would be willing to have their club participate in this research project. Organizational leaders were not specifically informed about why they were selected nor were any of the leaders told what their perceived leadership style was-- either from the Deci instrument or from the county agent's evaluation.

Each club leader was asked if he/she would be willing to participate in a research project investigating the impact of the 4-H club experience on life skills development in 4-H members. Each leader was also told that the researcher would be attending each of their meetings to observe, record observations, review club documents, take notes and photographs, and occasionally interview members, parents, and leaders over a period of months. The role of the researcher was to be an unobtrusive nonparticipant observer (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Observations

The observations commenced in January 1995 and observations were conducted over 12 months, culminating in the final collection of data in December 1995. The intent of collecting information during this time period was to observe clubs over a considerable amount of time. Moreover, since the formal 4-H program year begins each October 1,

this period of observation would enable research to follow a club from one program year through its annual reorganization during the fall. Twelve months of observation are considered to be adequate for most qualitative studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

This study used nonparticipant observation to record the kind and quality of interactions between youth and adults in the selected clubs. Observations included the physical setting of the club meeting, signage (if applicable), behaviors, language, and interactions between leaders and members. Quasi-ethnographic research methods were employed (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Because fieldnotes cannot include everything that happens during a club meeting, there exists a potential bias in the selection of events to record. An attempt was made to overcome this and other possible biases through several triangulation techniques. Artifacts such as record books, speeches, minutes of meetings, demonstrations, or award applications were used to gather qualitative data related to the significance of the 4-H experience to members. Following most observation periods, I also kept fieldnotes of relevant interactions and impressions from each meeting. All these sources of information were triangulated so that the image reproduced is an accurate verbal photograph of the 4-H club experience based upon a thick and rich description

provided by the participants themselves (Goetz & LeCompte, 1982).

Interviews

In addition to the observations, the researcher conducted interviews to collect supporting data. Interviews differed in their structure and formality, but all were designed to generate and test hypotheses about the nature of the 4-H club experience.

Youth Interviews. Key youth informants within each club were identified and interviewed using a formal interview protocol as a starting point. Key informants are those whom the researcher observed as having influence and informal status among club members. In some cases, these key informants were the elected youth leaders, but in other cases they were those who played more behind-the-scenes roles of influence in the club. These key informants were interviewed using an interview protocol as a basis for questioning (see Appendix C) which was pilot-tested in the fall of 1993.

Formal interviews were either audiotape recorded or transcribed by hand by the researcher for later content analysis. After the first three interviews, the key informant protocol was revised and refined. Formal interviews served a hypothesis-testing situations in which hypotheses were developed and tested by subsequent interview

questions. The initial interviews were semi-structured. Each interview began with a prepared introduction about the general purpose of the interview, assurances of anonymity, and a request for permission to record the interview. The interviews began with open-ended questions, such as: Tell me why you first got involved in 4-H? What kinds of skills do you feel you are developing through your 4-H experience?

Club Leader Interviews. 4-H club organizational leaders in each of the five clubs were also interviewed using a pre-designed interview protocol (see Appendix C). This protocol was adapted from one used in research by Prawat and Nickerson (1985) and has proven to be useful in determining whether adults place priorities on cognitive or affective goals for the youth with whom they work. Interviews included open-ended questions such as: Of the various things you do as a 4-H leader, which do you consider to be most important? Every so often, 4-H leaders tell me they have a really good meeting. Could you tell me what a really good meeting is like for you? What happens? Interviews lasted about 45 minutes, and each leader was encouraged to provide any additional information she wanted that was not asked during the interview.

Parental Interviews. Several parents of 4-H members were also interviewed during this research project although they were not originally intended as a collection group.

There was no formal protocol for interviews, and the researcher asked broad questions about their perspective on the 4-H experience. Interviews with parents typically occurred at county fairs or after 4-H club meetings.

Interview Environment. All interviews were conducted only after five months of observations to ensure that interviewees would feel more comfortable and open with the researcher and to minimize the potential bias of researcher influence. Interviews were conducted in a wide variety of settings from county fairs to club meeting sites. A few were done by phone. All interviews were done privately.

Interviewees were asked a variety of broad, open-ended questions to initiate discussion of their perceptions of their 4-H experience. Additional questions were developed during the course of the interviews to probe particular salient points made by each interviewee.

Data were collected over the 12 months of the research study during 1995. Forty-eight hours of interviewing and nearly 200 hours of observations were conducted over the course of this project. General ethnographical techniques, including "grand tour" questions and wide-ranging observations of club meetings and other club get-togethers were used.

On the basis of interviews and observations, hypotheses concerning the 4-H club experience were built, validated,

and/or altered as necessary. Alternating between observations and informal conversations with club participants, the researcher gradually developed hypotheses about the impact of the club leader's style on member outcomes. These initial hypotheses were tested against the leader's observed behaviors and adjusted as necessary. Standards of validity and reliability were met by using multiple methods of data collection and long-term observation. The influence of researcher bias was accounted for in the research design and assumptions.

Interview Analysis

The analysis of data began as soon as it is collected. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) emphasize the critical nature of analyzing data as it is gathered. Data analysis, then, was ongoing and constant. The constant comparison method was used throughout the course of this research project to ensure accurate interpretation of the data.

Such an approach to data collection and analysis has been propounded by a number of qualitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). The constant comparison method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggests using a process whereby information is gathered and classified into categories which emerge through the entire data collection process. This study was well-suited to this kind of

process. Data were constantly being reviewed and analyzed while it was being collected to see what patterns might emerge from the information. Hypotheses were tested and re-tested based on additional information as it was collected.

After all interviews were completed and field notes assembled, the researcher reviewed all the data once more. Keywords and concepts began to emerge from the data and these categories were listed. All notes and transcripts of interviews were reviewed at least three times to get an overall sense for what the data was saying. The key was to look for patterns and trends which emerged naturally from the data rather than imposing patterns on raw data.

On the fourth reading of the data, a highlighter pen was used to begin to mark off information that seemed to support emerging patterns. Notes were made in the margins about what pattern each piece of data appeared to support.

With the information now highlighted, fields in a WordPerfect file were developed to input the data according to the larger patterns which were emerging from the data. Each piece of data was given a keyword which identified the important concept expressed by the information.

Once the data input was completed, a sort was run according to the defined fields using WordPerfect file sorting. A computer print out of these sorted fields by club allowed for examination of the data according to

categories. As the quotes or information were grouped together, patterns revealed themselves in the data and specific pieces of information could be grouped in the appropriate place. All data were finally manipulated and sorted in this format. Comparisons were made between clubs since a primary purpose of the research was to discern differences between club leadership and the impact on youth members.

Field notes, reflections, photographs, and artifact analysis were also used to help create headings for the data within each club. After the first draft of the text was completed, it became apparent that additional refinement was necessary since extensive small categories tended to obstruct a view of larger patterns and trends. In this final refining process, categories were merged together and went from the micro to the macro view. Analysis of the data was completed through a dynamic process of putting it into text.

Phase 3: Rationalistic Research

At the close of the observation and interview period, all members of the clubs involved in this research study were asked to complete one or two survey instruments. These instruments were not administered until the end of the observation period in order to ensure a level of comfort with the presence of the researcher and minimize the effects of the presence of a researcher. By this time, most members

were familiar with and comfortable with the presence of the observer.

The researcher administered the questionnaire in each club personally and provided a uniform set of oral instructions. Only those members who had participated in the club during the previous months completed the research instruments. New members who had joined were excluded from the survey.

Two instruments were administered: (1) the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI); and (2) the Club Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (CASES IV) instrument. Since a major focus of the research was the impact of leadership style on the development of life skills, all members of the 4-H clubs in this study completed the Coopersmith self-esteem inventory. Because of the readability level of the CASES IV instrument, only those 12 years of age and older were instructed to complete this instrument.

Self-Esteem Inventory

All youth members of the 4-H clubs in this study were requested to complete the Coopersmith Inventory. The Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook (Mitchell, 1985) indicates that this instrument is perhaps one of the best tools for measuring the self-concept of youth in the age group common in 4-H clubs (8-15 years). According to one of the reviewers, "We find the Coopersmith self-esteem measures to

possess enough reliability and validity to recommend their use in research" (p. 395). It was hoped that this instrument might provide a useful comparison of youth in 4-H clubs under different styles of leadership.

The Coopersmith Inventory was designed for use with children aged 8 through 15 and consists of 58 items--50 self-esteem items and 8 items that constitute the Lie Scale, which is a measure of a youth's defensiveness or test-wiseness. According to the author,

The Coopersmith Inventory was developed to measure an individual's evaluative attitudes toward self in social, academic, family and personal areas of experience. In relation to the SEI, the term "self-esteem" refers to the evaluation a person makes, and customarily maintains of him- or herself; that is, overall self-esteem is an expression of approval or disapproval, indicating the extent to which a person believes him- or herself competent, successful, significant and worthy. (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 1-2).

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was developed from extensive studies of self-esteem in young people and is based on the belief that self-esteem is tied to personal satisfaction and efficacy in everyday life. All SEI items are short statements to which a person indicates that these statements are either "like me" or "not like me." An example of an SEI item is "I am a lot of fun to be with."

Certainly, self-esteem may change as a result of sudden or drastic situations which might inflate or deflate self-concept. Typically, however, a person's self-evaluation usually remains constant over a period of several years

(Coopersmith, 1981). Other factors may diminish the usefulness of the SEI, but coupled with supplemental observations such as used in this research study, the instrument has proven valuable in research (Coopersmith, 1967, 1981).

Reliability and Validity

While all self-esteem measures share some common drawbacks, the Coopersmith Inventory was chosen because of its strong theoretical base and extensive use over time. This instrument has been used in more than 100 studies nationwide (Coopersmith, 1981). Moreover, unlike the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, the Coopersmith instrument has been re-normed in recent years. The Piers-Harris instrument has not been re-normed since the 1960's (Mitchell, 1985).

Test-retest reliability for the Coopersmith Inventory ranges from .70 to .82. Through research studies, the instrument has been demonstrated to have temporal stability. Finally, reliability coefficients (KR20s) for the instrument have been obtained for different grade levels: .81 for grade 5, .86 for grade 9, and .80 for grade 12. Even higher reliability coefficients have been reported when the SEI was used on other groups (Coopersmith, 1981).

The Coopersmith Inventory results in a total score, and if desired, separate scores for four subscales: General

Self-Esteem; Social Self-Esteem with peers; Home and Parents; and School or academic self-esteem. The results from a study of 7,600 school children from grades 4 through 8 "confirmed the construct validity of the subscales proposed by Coopersmith as measuring sources of self-esteem" (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 13). Other studies have revealed low concurrent validity (a coefficient of .30) and predictive validity of reading achievement based on the Coopersmith SEI (a coefficient of .33). Finally, various studies have also demonstrated fair convergent validity for the SEI instrument, generating coefficients of .44 with the Behavior Rating Form (BRF) and .45 with the California Psychological Inventory (Coopersmith, 1981). In a comparison of the Coopersmith SEI scale with three other self-report measures, the Bledsoe Self-Concept Scale, the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, and the Purdue Self-Concept Scale, "the requirement for convergent validity was met by the significant correlations among the self-report instruments" (Coopersmith, 1981, p. 14). All this research data indicated that the Coopersmith SEI would be a useful tool in this research project and would appropriately measure self-esteem in 4-H club members.

Adaptability and Cohesion:
The Circumplex Model

During the evolution of the research project, one pattern that emerged was how closely 4-H clubs resembled a

kind of family environment. After all, the parallels are striking--a group headed by adults who exercise various levels of authority and control over youth of various ages and abilities who function in close proximity and engage in a variety of activities and sharing common goals. Moreover, the 4-H club is primarily family-based, and the club work through families for its primary activities. The 4-H club also brings together multiple family units in joint experiences that is analogous to a family unit. Others have already noted the surrogate family role that clubs can play for some young people (Erickson, 1986; Heath & McLaughlin, 1991). Hence, studying 4-H clubs as family environments emerged as a possible avenue of inquiry which might yield interesting results, especially in terms of leader orientation and member satisfaction, when combined with other data being collected.

The Circumplex Model. Various studies (Olson, 1986; Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979; Russell, 1979) have advanced the notion that a circumplex model of family functioning provides an explanatory tool for analyzing the relative health of family systems. This model suggests that family functioning can be understood by reference to two dimensions: family cohesion and family adaptability. Moderate levels of these two dimensions are believed to be more functional than either

extreme. "Too much or too little of family cohesion or family adaptability is detrimental to family functioning" (Russell, 1979, p. 29). Research in education has similarly indicated that a balanced approach is more desirable than extremes or one-sided approaches (Brophy, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1970; Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci & Ryan, 1994; Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Koestner & Kauffman, 1982; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984; Prawat & Nickerson, 1985).

Adaptability. Olson (1986) and Olson, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) suggested that balanced families exhibit certain characteristics related to the two dimensions of adaptability and cohesion. In the circumplex model, family adaptability or flexibility is defined as "the extent to which the family system is flexible and able to change" (Olsen, 1985, p. 1). Within the family adaptability dimension, key elements include assertiveness, control, discipline, negotiation skills, role definition, rules, and type of communication feedback loops. Balanced families are firm yet flexible, neither extremely rigid nor dysfunctionally chaotic.

Feedback loops are a unique characteristic of the adaptability dimension in the circumplex model. According to Olsen et al. (1979), positive feedback loops are those which amplify deviant processes. Positive feedback loops

are those things that increase the deviation from a set of norms. In contrast, negative feedback loops are those communication devices in families which counteract deviant processes. Negative feedback loops serve to decrease deviations from a set of norms. Hence, more balanced families would be characterized by informal norms and feedback systems which keep deviant behaviors in check--such as a group norm that would expect respect, quiet, and attention to family matters.

Cohesion. The other major dimension of the circumplex model is cohesion. According to Olsen, family cohesion is defined as the "degree to which family members are separated from or connected to their family" (Olsen, 1985, p. 1). The cohesion dimension can be further broken down into seven key elements of independence, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, and decision-making. Balanced families have moderate levels of cohesion and are not extremely enmeshed nor extremely separated.

According to Olsen (1985), family communication facilitates movement on the cohesion and adaptability scales. Finally, family satisfaction is measured by obtaining a perceived/ideal discrepancy score on the survey instrument.

Several studies have identified cohesion, adaptability and communication as salient dimensions of family systems (Olson, 1986; Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985; Olson,

Sprengle, & Russell, 1979; Russell, 1979). The circumplex model, developed by Olson, allows one to identify sixteen different types or three general types (i.e., balanced, extreme, mid-range) of family systems by dividing the two primary dimensions of cohesion and adaptability into four levels (see Figure 1). These two primary dimensions are curvilinear--families that fall into the very high or very low ranges are considered dysfunctional while families that are more balanced appear to function more satisfactorily (Olson, 1986).

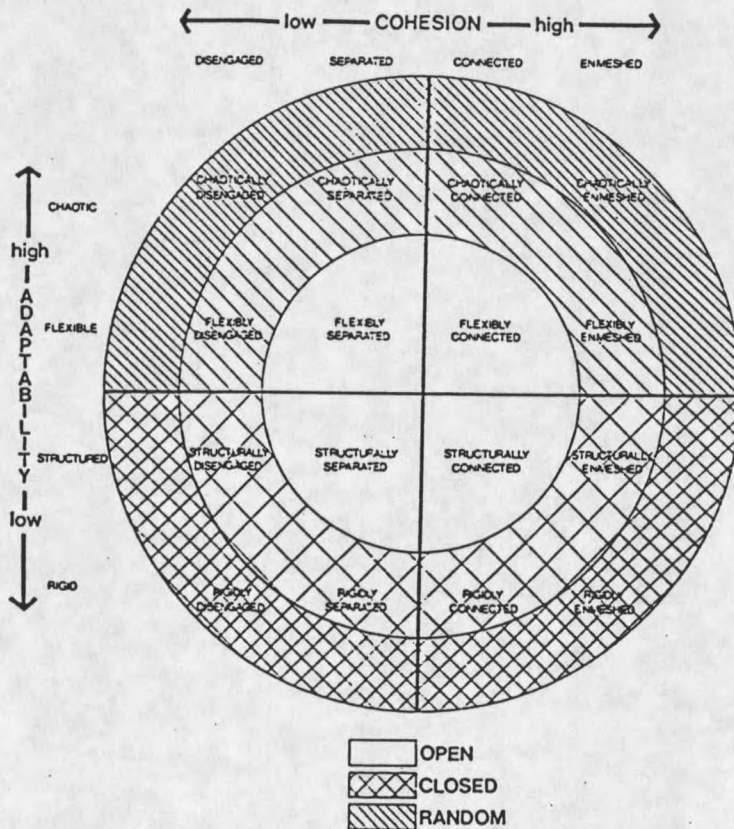


Figure 1. Circumplex Model: Sixteen types of family systems.

The FACES III instrument was the latest version developed by Olson, Portner, and Lavee (1985) to assess the two primary dimensions of the circumplex theoretical model. The instrument was designed to be administered to families across the life span from newly-wed couples with no children to retired couples. The original instrument was also designed to be administered to adolescents 12 years of age and older.

As previously indicated, the instrument also includes a perceived and ideal family functioning scale which provides an inverse measure of family satisfaction. The instrument allows respondents to assess how they see their family now (perceived) and how they would like it to be (ideal) (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985). This scale is important since it provides information about how satisfied family members are with their current family system regardless of where it falls in the circumplex model. Olson, Portner, & Lavee (1985) have developed an alternative hypothesis that extreme types may not always be dysfunctional if all members of the family accept that pattern:

This hypothesis states that extreme types will function well as long as all family members like it that way. This is particularly relevant for cultural groups that have norms that support family behavior at the extremes (i.e., rigidly enmeshed patterns in Mormons, Orthodox Jewish, and Amish families). (p. 6)

Thus, within the circumplex model, families serve as their own norming scale, but it is necessary to measure overall

family satisfaction from each member of the family unit. Discrepancy scores can help understand whether all members are satisfied with the families current patterns of communication, cohesion, and adaptability.

With permission from Olson, the original FACES III instrument was modified and adapted for use in 4-H club settings. Minor changes in wording by eliminating references to families and inserting "club" and in phraseology were made to the instrument. The revised instrument was subsequently pilot-tested on select 4-H club members from the five clubs in this research study. Comments about unclear or ambiguous statements were used to further refine the instrument. After four revisions, the revised instrument was named CASE IV, and it was ready for use with 4-H clubs.

Like FACES III, CASES IV uses a 20-item scale containing 10 items related to cohesion and 10 items related to adaptability. There are two items for each of the following concepts related to cohesion: emotional bonding, supportiveness, club boundaries, time and friends, and interest in recreation. There are also two items for the following concepts related to adaptability: leadership, control, and discipline. Finally, there are four items for the combined concept of roles and rules. Like the original instrument, CASES IV was only administered to those who had

been in the club for the past year of research and who were at least 12 years of age.

Reliability and Validity

Olson, Portner and Lavee (1985) have done extensive testing to obtain statistical information on the FACES III instrument. In fact, several reliability and validity studies have been done to increase the scientific rigor of the scales. Face and content validity have been shown to be very good. With respect to construct validity, the correlation between cohesion and adaptability have been reduced to nearly zero in FACES III ($r=.03$). Test-retest coefficients are .83 for cohesion and .80 for adaptability.

The reliability of FACES III, using Cronbach's Alpha, ranges from .62 for adaptability to .77 for cohesion. The total scale has a reliability coefficient of .68. Olson reports that one reason for the lower reliability coefficients "is the large number of concepts used to adequately represent the complexity and richness of the adaptability dimension" (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985, p. 24).

Finally, FACES III was nationally normed with over 2,000 adults from across the life span. In addition, it was normed with 412 adolescents and several types of problem families. Research on a variety of families has validated

that balanced family types are more functional than extreme types (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected from both the Coopersmith SEI and FACES IV were analyzed using SPSS. Both instruments were analyzed following the instructions by the instrument originators. Raw data for each were entered into SPSS and Coopersmith data were summed for each subscale, subscales were totalled and multiplied by two, and a final self-concept number derived. Several individual analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures was used to determine if there were significant interactions between club leadership styles, gender, and age on self-esteem.

For the FACES IV instrument, each statement included a 5-point Likert scale: 1= Almost Never; 2=Once in a While; 3=Sometimes; 4=Frequently; and 5=Almost Always. This 5-point scale was used for both the members' reactions to how the club is now as well as how they would like the club to be. Cohesion and adaptability scores were obtained by adding the odd numbered statements for cohesion and the even numbered statements for the adaptability scale. Discrepancy scores were obtained by comparing the cohesion and adaptability scores for both present and ideal. The total discrepancy score was simply the two subscale discrepancy scores added together. ANOVAs were run to determine if

there were significant differences between clubs as well as determine if there were significant interactions between club leadership style, age, and gender.

Summary

This study combines the mutual benefits of both quantitative and qualitative methods while also examining members, leaders, parents, and county Extension faculty's attitudes toward youth development education. Such research must be done in the field over an extended period of time with the people one hopes to learn more about.

This descriptive research project assesses the impact of 4-H participation and adult leadership styles on life skill development among 4-H club members. Data were collected through a variety of means--observations, interviews, artifact analysis, and rationalistic surveys. Collectively, data collected through quantitative and qualitative methods were combined with official 4-H documents and artifacts to present a picture of the influence of 4-H on the development of life skills in young people.

CHAPTER 4

THE PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

In a study which places the researcher in the role of a nonparticipant observer, it is critical to know something about the background and setting of the participants. Indeed, it would be difficult to fully grasp the implications of this kind of naturalistic research without a description of the participants and the settings in which the observations occurred.

All club meetings shared some similarities which can be mentioned at the outset. All clubs followed the same agenda outline. Club meetings began with a call to order by the club president, followed by the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag and then the 4-H pledge. Small flag sets were almost always on the officer table. In each case, members led the pledges. Then, roll call was done with members usually answering according to some theme (e.g., "Your favorite sport.").

After roll call, the secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting, the treasurer gave a report of the club's finances, any correspondence received was read, and then old

and new business were handled, respectively, in that order. At the end of each meeting were announcements, a motion to adjourn was entertained by the president, and then the club enjoyed refreshments brought by some previously assigned family or families.

Each club followed this general pattern with minor variations. For example, demonstrations and speeches sometimes occurred in the middle of a meeting, in other cases they occurred at the end. One club tried to start each meeting with a song, led by an elected song leader, but this was short-lived. One club initiated some get-acquainted activities to help members get to know one another better. Another club engaged in community service activities after the official business meeting. Each club put its own particular stamp of uniqueness on the overall traditional club meeting structure.

Beyond these similarities, every club was unique, in part, because of its location and the participants who comprised each of the clubs. In the following descriptions of the participants, real names have been used to honor and acknowledge the people and clubs who made this study possible. In the rest of this manuscript, the clubs' and participants' anonymity has been protected.

Two clubs were selected for study in Lewis and Clark county, a county which was randomly selected to represent urban counties in Montana.

Last Chance Livestock 4-H Club

The Last Chance Livestock 4-H Club is located in Lewis and Clark County and met in an elementary school about 10 miles north of Helena, the capital of Montana. The school where the club meets is along the Lincoln Road which is a main route to the northern portions of the county and runs through a rural/suburban mix of communities. The club draws its members from all over the Helena valley from as far away as East Helena (15 miles).

Lewis and Clark county is one of the biggest counties in Montana with a total population of 47,500 people and with a population density of about 13 people per square mile. Of this total, 96.8% are white and Native Americans comprise about 2.2% of the total. The county's youth potential (those between 5-14 years of age) is about 16%, or 7,600 youth.

The club generally meets in the cafeteria and all-purpose room of the school. There are no specific 4-H signs or posters in the meeting spot since the club merely uses it once a month for meetings during the school year. In summer months, when the school is closed, the club meets at the county fair grounds or in various members' homes. During meetings, any member needing to use the restroom must be accompanied out in the halls by an adult since the school administration has very strict rules about unsupervised

children in the building. Participation in club meetings during the summer months is much less than during the other months.

This club was only two years old when observations began. In its first year, the club was comprised of only five members from two families. When observations of this club commenced, there were officially 26 members. At most meetings, 23-25 members were in attendance. By the end of observations, the club had grown to 35 members. Most are under the age of 12 with only 17 members 12 years of age and older.

All members of the club are Anglo-American, and girls outnumber boys about three to one. Parents are generally middle-class and many work in Helena for different businesses or for state government agencies. Many have small acreage lots where a menagerie of animals can be raised. Livestock projects are very popular with most members. Typical 4-H projects in which members participate are horse, rabbits, poultry, swine but others also include woodworking, leathercraft, entomology, foods, and clothing.

During meetings, there were typically between 9-14 parents present, mostly women. At most meetings, though, there were usually one or two male parents present. Several parents work for state agencies like the Department of Agriculture. One parent is the manager of the fair grounds in Lewis and Clark County.

There are three organizational leaders for this club. Jolene Novak is the head organizational leader and she has two children in the club (another child is not yet old enough). Paula Grossman and Vickie Stephanik are assistant organizational leaders and were present at every meeting observed. These three women share organizational responsibilities for the club. There are several single-parent families in this club.

The physical set-up for club meetings was in part dictated by the tables used in the school cafeteria for lunch--long tables with attached benches. The officers of the club sat at a small table in front of and separated from the rest of the members. Members sat in one long row of tables, and behind them in one long row sat the parents in chairs (the tables were designed for elementary children, not large adults).

During the summer months, when the club met at the fair grounds, the club meetings were set up with chairs in rows. This time, parents were more interspersed among the members and did not all sit in the back of the room. At the final club observation, the club had grown in size so much that the first 20 minutes of the meeting were spent in a get-acquainted activity so that everyone could learn something about everyone else. The club's basic seating arrangement had also changed from rows to a horse-shoe shaped design.

Gold Nuggets 4-H Club

The Gold Nuggets 4-H Club met in Clancy, Montana, a part of Lewis and Clark County. Clancy is about 8 miles south of the state capital, Helena. While some consider Clancy a bedroom community for Helena, a number of families do not work in that city but rather work in local businesses. Clancy is located alongside Interstate 15 which runs through a valley between the Elkhorn and Bull Mountains south to Butte. Clancy is a town of only about 300 people and is a former mining and logging community. Clancy is surrounded by mining activity, and the nearby town of Alhambra and various ghost towns are reminders of Montana's mining history.

The Gold Nuggets 4-H Club met in a Catholic church in Clancy. This small church sits up on the hill overlooking the valley. Because the club meets in a church, the seating arrangement is dictated by the placement of the pews. A small table is set in front of the altar for the club officers who preside at each meeting. Members and parents sit together throughout the pews. A group of boys sits together up front on the left side while girls mainly sit on the right side.

This club officially had 26 members enrolled although at each meeting there were always slightly less than this because of conflicts with school activities. Nearly all

members were Anglo-American although one Hispanic family participated in some early meetings, but they were never present again. There is almost an even number of girls and boys in this club.

The co-leaders of the club when observations began were Donna and Wendy. Donna was giving up the primary leadership role and turning it over to Wendy. Wendy has three children enrolled in the club, and Donna has three also. Both leaders are Anglo-American. One of them typically arrived a few minutes prior to the start of each meeting to work with officers and discuss the meeting's agenda. Wendy always sat out in the pews with members, but it was always near the aisle since she got up on several occasions during meetings to make announcements.

At this club, several men were usually in attendance, although the adult women outnumbered men by 4 to 1. Only at the last meeting were a significant number of adult males present--7 males and 9 females. At this last meeting, too, the club had grown considerably and now included 33 members. One man, a swine project leader, was at nearly every meeting during the course of observations and showed interest in knowing how to assist the youth enrolled in the swine project.

The physical set-up for club meetings was always the same--officers in front at a separate table and members in

the pews sitting with parents. Most members always sat in the same place.

Meetings of this club were generally very short compared to other clubs. Most meetings never lasted more than 30 minutes. Demonstrations or public speaking presentations were always done after officially adjourning the business meetings.

By the final observation, this club had moved to the local school cafeteria. Wendy explained that the move was necessary "because the church really didn't want us there anyway" and because the school works better for such a large and growing club. The December 1995 meeting had 33 members and 16 parents in attendance in addition to the organizational leader and "tag-along" siblings.

Prairie Pals 4-H Club

The Prairie Pals 4-H Club was a part of the Liberty County Extension program and represented a club from a frontier county. Liberty county is a part of what is known as the "Hi-Line" in Montana where the Great Northern Railway ran from Minneapolis to Seattle. In fact, the local Chamber of Commerce has posted a sign on the outskirts of the town announcing "Chester--Heart of the Hi-Line." Liberty county also prides itself on being in the heart of the "Golden Triangle," an area of Montana renowned for its production of winter wheat.

Liberty county is bounded on the north by Alberta province, Canada, and includes one border-crossing station at Whitlash. Liberty county is perhaps best known as the location of the Sweetgrass Hills, an island of mountains that can be seen for miles on the prairies of north-central Montana. Native Americans believe these mountains to be sacred, but recently mining interests have been looking at the hills for mineral production. There are only three population centers in the entire county, although Whitlash would not be considered a town by many people.

The Prairie Pals 4-H club met often during the period of observation in a Catholic church in Chester, the county seat. Chester has a population of about 900 people while the entire county has just over 2,200 people (density of 1.6 people per square mile). Of the population, 99.3% are white, and the county youth potential (those between 5 and 14 years of age) is about 20%, numbering 443 youth.

Even though the club meets in Chester, it includes members from distant points, some as many as 30 miles away. However, one of the distinguishing features of this club was its tendency to meet in a variety of locales. The club met at member's home, at skating rinks in another county, and at the fair grounds during the fair. The location did not seem important. What seemed important to this club was meeting regularly, but the venue was not critical.

The Prairie Pals 4-H club officially included 25 members, but during the course of observations, an average of 20 members attended the meetings. The club had one main organizational leader and two assistants, all female. In contrast to other clubs, many more male adults participated on a consistent basis in club meetings. This club also had a more even balance of male and female members, and it was about evenly split between those over 12 and those under 12 years of age.

Members of the Prairie Pals club came typically from farm and ranch families who lived outside Chester. Many had large acreage farms or ranches, and some even raised registered livestock. The responsibility for each monthly meeting was assigned to a particular family. The assigned family was responsible for designating the meeting spot and planning some sort of educational program. If the family had a large enough place at their home, the meetings were held there. If not, the Catholic church in Chester was used for the meeting.

During the year, too, this club held several fun get-togethers which were counted as meetings. For example, each January, the club went skiing together at a nearby ski area. Another time, the club held its meeting at the roller skating rink in a town in a nearby county. This club was also the only club observed that held a meeting during the county fair.

At each meeting of this club, the physical set-up changed in part due to the changing location of club meetings. In most instances, the club sat in a circle or rectangle, and adults sat right with the members.

This club was not hesitant to change things. Although the club followed the typical business meeting outline followed by all clubs, this club did many other things that were unlike any other club in the research study. While meetings in other clubs generally lasted no more than an hour to an hour and a half, this club's meetings lasted much longer because they did so many other things. Community service activities, parties, recreation--all were incorporated as a part of club meetings. For example, here is the outline for a average meeting for this club:

2:00--3:30 - Ice skating
4:00--4:30 - Work on record books--Bring a photo of yourself
4:30--5:00 - Meeting. Bring \$5.00 for Senior Center instead of a food item this month.
5:15 - Eat potluck supper. Bring a hot dish and a salad or dessert.
6:00 - Project workshops. 1 hour on endangered species; 1 hour on animal tracks. Hands-on demonstrations. Hot chocolate will be provided. Otherwise, bring your own beverage.

When meetings were held in homes, project work or work on record books was frequently included. Each time the club met, there was also some community service work included.

Paradise Experimenters 4-H Club

There were two clubs selected for study in the county which represented a suburban county. The Paradise Experimenters 4-H Club is part of the Park County Extension program and meets near the town of Pray, which is about 20 miles south of the county seat of Livingston. Park County is so-named because its southern boundary is included within Yellowstone National Park. Park county's total population is about 14,500 people and has a density of about five people per square mile.

There are several population centers within the county, notably Livingston, Gardiner, Wilsall, Clyde Park, Emigrant, Springdale, Pine Creek, Pray, and Jardine. Park county represents a suburban county. Ninety-seven percent of all residents are white, and the county's youth potential (children between 5-14 years of age) is about 15% of the total population, or 2,180 youth.

The club meets at a local elementary school which serves the dispersed ranch families in the Paradise Valley around Emigrant and Chico Hot Springs. This club is an old club, celebrating 57 years of continuous membership. Many of the parents in this club had been members of it when they were young. In fact, many members are second and third generation families for the club. The club's history book is a source of pride to many parents and some club members.

The Paradise Experimenters typically met on the first Sunday of each month in the evening at 6:00 p.m. Parents interviewed mentioned that this was one time everyone could get together, and they have kept to this schedule time for several years. Also, parents mentioned that the meetings do not last as long because "they are on a Sunday night and everyone wants to get home." Meetings took place in the school cafeteria and seating was dictated by the shape and size of the cafeteria tables. Because the club did not use this space exclusively, there were no specific signs or posters related to 4-H.

Officially, this club had 30 members enrolled, and 8 leaders and most members usually showed up at the meetings. The club membership is about evenly split between males and females. All members are Anglo-American and typically enroll in agricultural projects since most come from ranch families from the surrounding area. Some parents work as carpenters, electricians, and business people in Livingston.

Sharon Malcolm is the organizational leader for this club and has been the leader for several years. Sharon Malcolm has three children in the club, some of whom have served as officers. At each meeting, between 5-12 adults are in attendance. About a third of those were males.

The set-up for each meeting at the school building does not vary--one table in front for the officers and a

rectangular shape for the other tables at which members and parents alike sit together. Not all meetings are held at the school, however, and particularly during the summer meetings are held in other locations. For club animal weigh-ins and project tours, family homes are used for meetings. Some meetings are held at a church in Emigrant.

The Paradise Experimenters club makes and sells salt feeders as a major fund-raising project. The club also is involved in cleaning three miles of highway in Paradise Valley as a community service project. In addition, the club has a food concession stand each year at the Emigrant Fair Turkey Shoot as a community service project. The club participates each year in the July 4th parade in Livingston, and their float often wins first prize.

Dome Mountain 4-H Club

The second club in the suburban county category met some 40 miles south of the Paradise Experimenters. The Dome Mountain 4-H Club meets in the town of Gardiner, Montana (pop. 500), only a few yards from the boundary of Yellowstone National Park and only about one mile from the Wyoming state line. Gardiner is the location of the first and original entrance to Yellowstone National Park, and the Roosevelt Arch is only a few blocks from the club meeting site. During the winter, elk are frequently seen in town, standing on people's front lawns or in motel parking lots.

One local hotel posts a sign indicating that "children stay for 1/2 price, elk stay free." In fact, each time the researcher drove to Gardiner, he almost struck wildlife on the highway into town. The Dome Mountain 4-H Club is in Park County, Montana, and is located 53 miles from the county seat.

The club meets in what is locally-known as the Scout House, an old log building used primarily by a local Boy Scout troop during the winter months. The building has no restroom and only a noisy gas heater with a blower. During the other half of the year, the club meets at Point of Rocks Guest Ranch, owned by parents of one of the families involved in the club because the scouts are using the building in Gardiner.

The Dome Mountain Club was comprised officially of 43 members during the period of study. The vast majority of those were below the age of 12, and most were female. Girls outnumbered boys about 4 to 1. All members were Anglo-American. Most meetings included between 30-35 members along with numerous younger siblings who were too young to officially belong to the 4-H club. This often made for raucous meetings.

The organizational leader of the club, Jodi Laney, quit prior to my arrival and another woman, Debbie Demaree, had taken her place since Debbie was the assistant organizational leader the previous year. Since this new

leader fit the same leadership profile as the old leader, the club was still included in the study. Debbie has two of her own children in the club. She and her husband own the local and only grocery store in Gardiner. The leader of the club is an Anglo-American with no formal teaching experience. The leader typically arrived about 15 minutes before the start of each meeting to confer with the officers and set up chairs and tables for the meeting.

During meetings, there were few adult men in attendance; in fact, except for the first meeting another man was never present during my observations. This single male parent attended that early meeting probably because his daughter had just been elected president and this was the first year for his children to be in 4-H. Typically, there were about five women present to provide support and assistance to the leader.

Members of the club come predominantly from two types of families--families involved in ranching or families who are employed in government service. With Gardiner located on the fringe of Yellowstone National Park, a number of families were employed by the federal government as park employees or with another federal agency such as the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, or Bureau of Land Management.

The physical set up for club meetings was always the same. Upon entering the building, a small table for the

officers was there right in front. Rows of chairs were set out for members with a couple of couches along one side of the wall that were never moved. The leader sat off to one side but up front with the elected officers. With this set up, anyone arriving late had to walk by the table of officers and in front of everyone in order to find a seat. On one occasion, the leader brought in an easel and wrote out the agenda for all to see. Those parents in attendance usually sat in the back of the meeting room and not with the members.

In the summer, when the club met at the guest ranch, they met in a large living room, and club members were spread out in a variety of seating arrangements. Parents were more likely to sit with their own children during these meetings than during the meetings at the Scout house.

By the final observation period, the physical layout for club meetings had switched. Instead of the officers sitting closest to the entry door, the meeting arrangement was switched around 180 degrees from the previous year. Now, members arriving late could simply take a chair in the back of the building and not walk in front of everyone. Otherwise, the rest of the seating arrangement had stayed the same.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to describe the 4-H club experience from the participants' point of view and to assess the influence of adult leadership styles on youth life skills development in 4-H clubs. Specifically, this study was concerned with the extent to which different leadership styles influenced life skills such as self-concept, decision-making, responsibility, communications skills, and getting along with others. In addition, members' level of satisfaction with the club environment was also assessed through both qualitative and quantitative methods. Both methods were used to triangulate data and provide for accuracy and consistency of the findings.

Research Methods

Leadership behaviors of 4-H adult club leaders were measured using the Deci instrument (Deci et al., 1981). Life skills development was measured using both the quantitative methods of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1981) and qualitative methods of

interviews and observations. In addition, a modified version of the FACES III instrument developed by Olsen et al. called CASES IV was used to measure club cohesion and adaptability as well as members' satisfaction with the club environment.

One county was randomly selected from each of the three categories based on population density. Within each county, all club leaders were administered the Deci instrument. From these results and from the subjective evaluations of the county Extension agents, a purposive sample of five clubs were selected for study--three clubs ostensibly led by control-oriented leaders and two clubs led by autonomy-oriented leaders. A third autonomy-oriented club was intended to be selected but was not able to be selected to balance the study because of conflicting club meeting dates. 4-H clubs often meet just once per month and meeting dates are rather limited.

These five clubs were observed over a period of 12 months, from January 1995 through December 1995. In total, more than 160 hours were spent in observing the clubs. Observations were made at monthly club meetings, at project meetings, during community service activities, at training workshops, at speech and demonstration contests, and during the county fair. A total of 53 people were interviewed, including all 7 4-H club organizational leaders, select parents and project leaders, and 27 4-H members identified.

as key informants. In all, 45 hours of interview transcripts were transcribed and coded. In addition, photographs were taken to capture significant events and physical set-ups in each club. Finally, official club records such as secretary's books, publications, and award applications were studied to corroborate other data collection techniques.

The Participants

All 4-H club leaders in the five clubs were females. Three clubs were led by single organizational leaders; two clubs were led by two co-leaders who shared club leadership responsibilities. Two clubs were initially identified by county agents as led by more autonomy-oriented leaders while three clubs were identified by agents as led by more control-oriented leaders. These five clubs were purposely selected for study based on the evaluations of county agents.

After observation and further study, though, the Deci scores of adult orientations towards working with youth appeared more accurate. Thus, clubs were re-classified with three as more autonomy-oriented and two as more control-oriented. Although one of these latter clubs exhibited a mix of the two styles, it was included as a more control-oriented club because the Deci scores were closer to the score of the other control-oriented club.

In the five clubs selected for study, there were a total of 129 members. Of this total, 54% were female, and 46% were male. All members were between the ages of 8 and 19 although in all clubs "tag-along" members who were under the age of 8 came to the meetings with siblings and parents. These "tag-alongs" were not included as a part of the study and did not fully participate in club meetings or project workshops. The average age of 4-H members was 12 years.

Quantitative instruments were only administered at the conclusion of the study in order to minimize researcher influence and to maximize the trust level between participants and the researcher. Since all members do not attend every meeting, only 100 members (78%) completed the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. Since CASES IV was only designed to be administered to those 12 years of age or older, 55 individuals (42%) completed this instrument.

Findings from this research study are discussed in three areas highlighted in the literature review: leadership style, life skills development, and the role of the club as an agent of socialization. First, though, one must understand from members themselves what they think of the 4-H experience and why they joined the program as well as why they continue in it. The findings begin with an overview of the 4-H experience from the members' and leaders' points of view.

The 4-H Experience

Participants are in the best situation to describe to an observer what the 4-H experience is like from their point of view. What is it like to be a member of a 4-H club? How do members characterize the overall 4-H experience?

Several patterns or trends emerged from the data. 4-H members were quick to point out the positive features of the program that appealed to them. Several indicated that 4-H was "neat," and that they were drawn to the program because they thought it would be "fun." In all communities studied, 4-H was perceived by youth and adults alike as a positive program with many attractive features.

4-H is just one big experience that's all pretty fun. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Being in 4-H is like being a member of a little group. You're all members of a group and all doing the same thing. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

Fieldnotes (1/17/95): At the close of the 4-H club meeting, I interviewed the only adult male in attendance. He has two kids in this club. He mentioned that they had been in Scouts, but this year they switched. He mentioned that his wife had been in 4-H in Michigan and believed it was a more solidly supported program that was always being improved. So, they gave their kids the choice and they decided to try 4-H since their boy especially never seemed to get into the Scout program. They like the affiliation of 4-H with the land-grant university and the Extension Service support. His main concern was that in 4-H we seem to thrust people into positions with little training. His daughter is president of the club this year.

Kids hear it at school: "I brought my pig to the fair and it was cool." Parents will say, "This is really neat. I didn't know kids could do this in 4-H." Parents are amazed at what kids can do in 4-H--like the indoor exhibits at the fair.
(Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Despite what some professionals assert about the image of the program, 4-H is perceived positively by the participants in this study, and 4-H offers an attractive after-school alternative to both youth and adults.

Reasons for Joining

While turnover is natural in any program, most of the 4-H members interviewed in this study as key informants had been in the program for several years. Part of the reason they were selected as key informants was because they had the depth of experience to provide insights into the nature and content of the program after several years of participation.

This study specifically tried to identify patterns for explaining why young people joined 4-H. In the literature (Astroth, 1984; Banning, 1979; Boyd, 1991; Cook, 1991; Krietlow, Pierce, & Middleton, 1961), one can read that family or sibling participation is a major factor in deciding to join. In this study, this same trend was expressed by several members:

My mother was in 4-H all her life. She thought it would be a good learning experience, and I found it fun after the first year. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

My brother was in it. He's two years older than me. He'd been in it for two years, and I was jealous, and he always got to raise animals and stuff, and my dad was in it when he was a kid. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

My brother was in 4-H before I was, so I kind of like hung around with him. And then when I was 9 years old, I joined. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Finally, some families have been 4-H members for several generations, like this youngster from an autonomy-oriented club:

My dad's sister was in 4-H, she raised a steer, and my grandpa was in 4-H also. My grandpa had a steer named Frolic, and my aunt had a steer named Frolic, and then [my brother] went on and has a steer named Frolic, so it kind of goes on down through the family. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

In addition, 4-H history was often mentioned during visits to 4-H club meetings. One club, the Paradise Experimenters, recently celebrated more than 50 years of existence, and it was obvious that many adults in the club took special pride in the long history of the club.

Fieldnotes (8/28/95): A parent mentions that he found some old secretary books from the 1950's. He proceeds to read of the list of the club's members--some families who are still represented today in the club or close neighbors. It's obvious that this instills a sense of pride in their history and continuity for the club.

In fact, in an official county publication profiling all the 4-H clubs in Park County, this publication specifically pointed out that this is the 57th year for the club. "A lot of our members are second and third generation

families for the club" (Park County, Montana National 4-H Week publication, October 1, 1995).

However, the tradition of 4-H membership as a reason for joining is not nearly so universal as assumed. 4-H participants reported other reasons for joining. Among those reasons was that 4-H had a reputation for being "neat" or fun:

I joined for something to do. I thought it would be neat. Other people were telling me how neat it was. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

I joined 4-H 'cause it seemed like it was a lot of fun, and you got to do a lot of stuff. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H is a great way to meet friends, speak a lot more, meet people, have fun, go on a lot of trips, learn leadership. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The opportunity to participate in the county fair, not simply as a bystander but as a participant and an exhibitor, appeared as a major motivator for joining 4-H:

Well, I had a friend in 4-H, and she told me about what she did at the fair, and I just wanted to join it to be a part of the fair, not just to watch. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

Another motivator for joining was word-of-mouth advertising from friends, particularly in school:

I thought it sounded like a lot of fun, a lot of kids you knew were in it, and I thought I would try it out. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

I rode the bus with other kids who were in 4-H and they talked about the fun, and so to be a part of

it, I joined. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

While some bemoan 4-H's primarily agricultural "cows & plows" image, the opportunity to work with animals of all sizes and types is an important attractor for youth.

I heard 4-H had things to do with animals, and I really like animals, and it would be a way I could get an animal and do things with it. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

We wanted some goats, and we knew a woman who used to be pretty big into goats, so we went over and got some goats from her and she was a leader in the Outs and Abouts 4-H Club, we talked to her and I joined up then. (17 year old member, control-oriented club)

I had some friends in rabbits, and then my sister went and got rabbits from them. They were in the 4-H club, so we joined. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

I bought a rabbit for a pet, and then joined 4-H to learn about rabbits and how to raise them. No one really asked me to join. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

Friends--my friends were in it. I joined just to have some fun. I wasn't looking for leadership at the time. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Thus, young people are attracted to the 4-H program for a variety of reasons: past parental participation, influence of friends, the opportunity to learn about live animals, the opportunity to participate in the county fair, and the ability to participate in a youth program outside of school that has a reputation for fun. This 4-H member perhaps sums it up best:

I told my other friends that it's fun, interesting, and you learn a lot. You get to go to fairs, win prizes and money and other stuff. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

Staying In

After joining a 4-H club, what keeps members interested and motivated to stay in? Again, there are as many reasons for staying involved in 4-H as there are for joining. A frequently mentioned reason is fun:

My cousins were in it (my parents never were) and so I went to a couple of meetings. It was fun-- that's why I stayed in. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H is a lot of fun and you can learn quite a bit of stuff, especially if you do work with animals. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

It's a lot of fun. We do a lot of fun things. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I think I've stayed in it because it's a really great opportunity and you meet a lot of people and learn a lot of new things. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Another motivation for staying in is the county fair. The attraction of the county fair emerged as a consistent trend in the data and was often a topic a conversation in club meetings:

The best thing about 4-H is the fair. I love the fair. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

Coming to the fair is the best--I look forward to it every year. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I like going to the fair. That's the funnest, and that's why I'm in 4-H, so I can take animals to

the fair and raise them all year, show them, and sell them. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Another major motivation for remaining in 4-H is the money that can be earned through 4-H projects, particularly through the market livestock sale at the county fair.

I'm in it for the money. That's why I keep coming back. (12 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The big kicker is that you get money, too, in 4-H. That's what everyone likes about 4-H. You get money. But it's also a lot of fun, and they'd find out, even if you didn't get the money, it'd still be worth it. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Through 4-H, you can get money, especially for steers. 4-H has the only rabbit shows you get paid for--a definite keeper. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

The money we get from selling our animals is pretty appealing. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

You make a lot of money--in most things you do at least. My sister and I have been raising steers for three years, and we put the money together in our college fund. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Money, while a significant attractor for youth and parents, is not the only reason youth continue in the program. Many members mentioned more altruistic reasons for continuing to participate in 4-H. Primary among such reasons was the ability to serve in mentoring and helpship roles to younger kids.

You learn so much from other people and what they do, and I like that a lot about 4-H, and I like that you help other people. Like the nursing

home. I like doing community things like that. Cleaning up the highway. It makes you feel proud of yourself. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Helping is the fun part. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The thing I like most about 4-H is being able to help out. Being able to do things for my community. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Just being around all these nice little kids and stuff. And when I was a little kid, being around all those big kids and getting the opportunity to talk with a big kid and thinking these people are so cool because they're so big and now I'm one of the big kids, and thinking back to how that was, and how these little kids must be thinking the same about me. It's kind of like a--almost like a friend. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H is so good--helping little kids and being a role model. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

During the course of observations and interviews, 4-H members cited a number of reasons why they continued to be involved with the program: fun, friends, opportunity to earn money, participate in the fair, and help others and serve as a positive role model. This study did not interview any members who had quit 4-H during the observation period, so knowing why members quit was beyond the scope of this study.

Leadership Style

All seven club leaders completed the Deci instrument which purported to measure an adult's orientation to either control or autonomy-oriented behavior in working with young

people. The Deci instrument provides a composite range of scores from -18 (highly control-oriented) to +18 (highly autonomy-oriented). Scores for each leader are given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Deci orientation scores for 4-H club leaders, October, 1994.

CLUBS AND LEADER(S)	DECI SCORE	AGENT RATING
Club 1		
Leader	-1.12	7.0
Club 2		
Leader 1	-0.50	4.0
Leader 2	+0.63	3.0
Club 3		
Leader 1	3.13	3.0
Leader 2	3.25	5.0
Club 4		
Leader	6.00	7.0
Club 5		
Leader	6.38	3.0

Initially, there were concerns about the accuracy of the Deci instrument in describing each club leader's particular orientation to either control- or autonomy-oriented behaviors with young people. In order to conduct a criterion-related validity check, county agents in each of

the three counties were asked to rate all their 4-H club organizational leaders on a scale of control versus autonomy. For simplicity, a scale of 1 (highly controlling) to 10 (highly autonomous) was used. County agents also had the option of indicating "Don't Know" for each leader with whom they may have been unfamiliar.

County Extension agents in each of the three counties provided ratings for these club leaders. Agent ratings appear in Table 1.

As a comparison of these numbers reveals, county agents, for the most part, characterized 4-H club leaders as much more controlling than indicated by the Deci instrument. Only one club leader (in club four) was confirmed by both the Deci instrument and the agent evaluation as consistent. This leader was evaluated as being more autonomy-oriented. One club exhibited a mixed score: one positive and one negative. Although this club could have been classified as a mixed style club, it was considered a more control-oriented club since the scores tended to this end of the Deci continuum. Thus, clubs 1 and 2 were categorized as control-oriented clubs while clubs 3, 4, and 5 were categorized as autonomy-oriented clubs.

Observations of each club and interviews with both leaders and members uncovered the inaccuracy of the agent's ratings and instead confirmed the validity of the Deci

scores. In three of the five clubs, few instances of controlling behavior were observed.

Leaders' Perceptions of Their Role

How do 4-H club leaders themselves describe their role in working with young people? Despite actual practices, when asked about their particular leadership style, all leaders indicated a preference for an autonomy-oriented approach and philosophy:

An ideal leader should help the kids become independent, be able to think on their feet, express their ideas. (Leader, control-oriented club)

I try to develop a relationship with the kids. I know all the kids personally, I think they respect and like me, and I think you have to develop that to work with kids. I try to be a good role model in the things that I do. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Fieldnotes (1/15/95): The leader of this club is only slightly involved. Adults participate just to add corrections, to correct, to guide, or to coach. They make suggestions to help the process along. (Autonomy-oriented club)

Fieldnotes (2/12/95): At one point, when the club is struggling with how to decide an issue, the leader suggests: "Maybe you should form a committee to learn more about this." (Autonomy-oriented club)

Another leader commented about her goal as a club leader:

So, one of my big goals is just to keep my mouth shut and let the kids conduct their meeting, but when I have to interject something, then go ahead and do it. But I think it's important that they run their own meeting and they don't feel like us adults are doing it. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Consistently, adult leaders expressed a preference for an autonomy-oriented style of leadership even though they found it hard to "walk the talk." As might be expected, leaders who ranked higher in autonomy behavior on the Deci scale were more often observed practicing such a style; the more control-oriented leaders more often lapsed back into controlling behaviors that tended to direct and dictate to youth.

Members' Perceptions of the Club Leaders

4-H club members also expressed that an autonomy-oriented approach, not a controlling approach, was the ideal situation for the club:

I think the ideal leader would be somebody who sits back and has everything we need to talk about in a meeting, in order, and knows what's going on at all times. And at the beginning of the meeting, just throw out a subject or a topic that we need to talk about for a while, just say, "Well, we need to talk about this," and then just sit back and let us talk about it and come to a conclusion. The best leader is like an overseer, or somebody that stand back and watches us do what we can do to the best of our ability, and to help us every once in a while make decisions. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The best leaders in 4-H are the one that wanted to be there. The ones that would help out with you. And I actually got to do a lot of the work with them. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

If I wanted to recruit somebody who's older into our club, I would tell them how they get to voice their opinions in a meeting without being ridiculed or being told, "That's dumb!" by other people. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

This club is a lot of fun. I mean, you can come here and relax. You can have fun with your friends, and your ideas count. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Several members in both autonomy-oriented and in control-oriented clubs observed that adults should minimize their role or influence in club meetings and in club affairs.

All the adults make too many decisions about what we can or can't do. Adults should consult with kids before deciding rules and making decisions--especially at the county level. I feel this way about my own club. Adults should be in their own room some times. Adults shouldn't be able to speak sometimes at club meetings. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The problem in our club is too many leaders. Everyone wants to be in charge. But then that's probably the way it is in country clubs. (Parent, autonomy-oriented club)

I've noticed throughout the years as I've went through 4-H that it's the adults sort of taking over, and the adults are making the changes and stuff like that, especially at the county level. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H is for the kids, and you kind of get sick and tired of parents belly-achin', you know. (17 year old member, control-oriented club)

Poor leaders are those who want to have their own way--all the ideas have to be their own or it isn't right. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H members are also pretty clear about the kinds of leaders that they find less desirable. The worst kinds of leaders are those who are never around or who do not provide support or assistance when needed:

The worst leader was a person I never saw. He never provided any help, wasn't around. He didn't

care--just said, "Did you get it done?" (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The worst leaders I've had didn't allow any input from the kids. The adults would make the agenda, and the kids would have to read it off. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

My first year in cooking--which I didn't finish--the leader was always doing something else so we couldn't ask questions. She was never in the kitchen, so we never got any help or guidance. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

A caring attitude is often cited as an important characteristic:

My sheep leader was one of the best--he never put anybody down and always helped people. Everyone got equal attention no matter how many people were there. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

Really good leaders took the time to help me. They didn't say, "Here's your work and get to it." They're caring and they knew what to do to help me learn. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

4-H leaders themselves recognize the importance of a caring attitude as a hallmark of an effective leader:

Really good leaders are ones who are honestly interested in you. Good leaders care about kids, get down and work with them. They're real conscientious people. They want to see whoever they're working with succeed, follow through. (Leader, control-oriented club)

We have some kids from split families and they don't have the guidance that my kids have. I would like to see those kids benefit from 4-H like my kids. I have a soft spot for these kids. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

When I see kids standing off on the edge of a crowd, I'll go grab them and bring them into the group. I like making sure kids aren't left out, making kids feel okay when they haven't done so well--it all builds self-esteem. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Youth members said they liked adult leaders who were knowledgeable, who were caring and supportive, who were organized, and who pushed and challenged them.

Importance of Order

Both leaders and members were asked about the characteristics of some of the best leaders they have had. The purpose of these questions was to solicit from participants themselves what common themes emerged from their experience as the best or ideal leaders with whom they have worked. 4-H members were effective at describing the characteristics of their best leaders:

The best leaders I have had listened to me, were organized. They let us have input. There were regular officers meetings before the regular meeting. Good leaders know what's going to go on.
(15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The circumplex model of family functioning indicates that a balanced family is flexible yet not chaotic. In the same way, it was hypothesized that effective 4-H clubs would be those that were neither chaotic nor extremely rigid. Effective clubs, like balanced families, would express some balance in the variables of adaptability and cohesion. This hypothesis was confirmed in observations and interviews with club leaders and participants. All were clear that clubs need to have some order and should not devolve into chaos:

The best leaders know what they're doing--it's just really organized. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

A really good meeting is one where the business gets done, but anyone who wanted to say something had that chance. There can be fun, giggling, joking, but the meeting gets done. It's not so strict by Robert's Rules that no one has fun, but not so loose that it's chaos. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Our old leaders, they weren't very strict. When you made a motion, someone would second it, and someone would third it, and so on. Now, you know, the leaders are strict, but they're not overly strict. You can have fun, but there was a certain line. That's the way it should be. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Our meetings are fun, but we should have more order, rules. It would make our meetings more efficient, people would remember more about what they're supposed to do. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Our club is pretty successful--it's run pretty good, there's order, it's a group thing. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

These sentiments were echoed by some of the parents. For example, fieldnotes from an autonomy-oriented club indicated the following:

Fieldnotes (1/15/95): One parent told me that she travels with her children all the way from Shelby (which is in another county) to participate in this club because "they know what they're doing here." She mentioned that she tried a club in a neighboring county, but the kids wanted to come back to this club for 4-H because they're doing things that are fun. "The adults get out of the way and let kids go." She mentioned that they get involved with community service, get photos in the paper, and the older kids show the younger kids what to do.

Maintaining order and minimizing confusion is a theme that emerged in interviews with the more highly

control-oriented leader. The more control-oriented club leader observed:

A successful 4-H meeting is where you get all your business done, the kids are at a dull roar, not too crazy. We as leaders have agreed that we're not going to have real organized, quiet meetings for several years because of the age of the kids. We just want to keep them at a dull roar.

Members of this club were also concerned about the confusing and chaotic nature of club meetings:

Personally, I don't think our club is that organized, and we need to get it together and be more organized. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

Poor leaders are those that sit back and let others run the meeting, when they're not running it in order, and people are screaming and yelling. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

An older member, expressed obvious frustration with the chaotic nature of the club's monthly meetings:

The thing I like the least are the little kids-- the ones that are misbehaving at the meetings. I can't stand them. I would tell them to be quiet-- I'd make them stick their nose in a corner! (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

Still, more autonomy-oriented leaders recognized that a certain noise level was indicative of an involved, thriving club. More than just a "dull roar," these leaders want kids to be actively involved in every meeting.

The best meeting is where kids are participating, giving ideas, dialogue, throwing out ideas, getting involved. You can tell by the noise level. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Satisfaction

The CASES IV instrument provided a way to assess members' satisfaction with their club. All club members 12 years of age and older were administered this instrument in November or December 1995. A total of 55 useable instruments were obtained. Frequency totals for each club are listed in the table below:

Table 2. Responses and mean discrepancy scores for members completing the CASES IV instrument, by club, November 1995.

CLUB NUMBER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	MEAN
Club 1	13	-15.9
Club 2	9	-10.3
Club 3	15	-6.6
Club 4	7	-6.0
Club 5	11	-6.7
TOTAL/MEAN	55	-9.4

The CASES IV instrument provides a response for members to reflect on how they perceive their club currently and a second response for how they would like their club to be. Twenty statements are listed, and responses can range from 1 = Never to 5 = Always. Appendix D includes a copy of this instrument.

Adapted from the FACES III instrument (Olsen et al., 1985), the ideal-perceived discrepancy score is an indirect measure of club satisfaction. Specifically, the greater the ideal-perceived discrepancy, the less the satisfaction with the club environment.

Several analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests revealed that there were significant differences between club member's satisfaction scores between clubs. Post-hoc analysis using Duncan's test revealed that club members' satisfaction in the control-oriented Club 1 differed significantly from club members' satisfaction scores in the autonomy-oriented clubs 3, 4, and 5 ($F = 2.76$; $df = 4/54$; $p = .0373$). Club members in the control-oriented club reported a significantly higher level of dissatisfaction than members in these three other clubs. In fact, a frequency count revealed that there were nearly twice as many dissatisfied members in this club compared to satisfied members. Numbers of dissatisfied members were much lower in all other clubs. There were no significant differences between club members' satisfaction scores between the control-oriented Club 1 and control-oriented Club 2. In addition, there were no significant differences based on the number of years a member had been in 4-H or gender.

These quantitative results also supported the qualitative data related to club satisfaction. Several members of the control-oriented Club 1, as well as the

leaders, reported in interviews that the club was disorganized and needed more order. What is surprising about this state of disorder is that this club is run by the more control-oriented leader. Yet, club members commented on the chaotic nature of the club environment in Club 1:

I kind of would like to have more things to know what's going on; they've changed dates on me and I don't know what's going on. (13 year old member)

The best leaders are those who speak loud enough so you can hear them, and run the meetings in order. (12 year old member)

Poor leaders are those that sit back and let others run the meeting, when they're not running it in order, and people screaming and yelling. (12 year old member)

Personally, I don't think our club is that organized and we need to get it together and be more organized. (12 year old member)

This last individual, who was president of the club during most of the time observations were conducted, had one of the highest discrepancy scores on CASES IV of any club members surveyed (-36).

My observations of this club confirm this state of disorder and lack of cohesion which is indicative of a chaotic club type.

Fieldnotes (2/21/95): In the discussion about changing the date of next month's meeting, the club is rather loose and chaotic. Nobody-- especially the kids--seems to know what is going on. The same thing happens with the discussion about holding a Tupperware dance. More chaos. One parent remarks aloud, "This group is not mature enough to put on something like this." There is endless negotiation about this until an adult finally makes a motion.

Fieldnotes (2/21/95): At the end of this meeting, there was no formal motion to adjourn; it just dissolved.

Fieldnotes (3/12/95): After the chaotic meeting last time, I noticed that the leader had obtained an easel and flip chart and put up the order of business for all to see.

Fieldnotes (11/25/95): There were no minutes of the previous meeting, but the secretary tried to give a verbal report. And they all got a lecture from the club leader about what officers are supposed to do. There is a lot of noise and hub-bub. The president raps the gavel (loudly) to try and gain order. It even startles me.

Fieldnotes (11/21/95): When it comes to voting on whether to plan a Senior Citizens's Christmas dinner, the president speaks so softly that it's difficult to hear over the roar of the heater in the building. A motion is made, seconded, and then the president calls for a vote. One parent in the back interjects: "Shouldn't there be some discussion here?" There is chaos--kids don't really know what they're voting on. The president raps the gavel again and shouts, "Order!" Details for the senior citizen dinner are discussed, with the club leader directing the discussion and other parents participating. In the middle of all this, the secretary decides to read off the roll call. Finally, the club leader asks, "Do you feel the Senior Citizen dinner is planned out alright?" But there is still a lot of chaos, so the president raps the gavel again. One kid in the club yells out, "You must really like that thing!" Others laugh.

Life Skills

A primary focus of this research study was to assess the influence of leadership style on the development of life skills. A secondary focus was to determine what life skills 4-H participation specifically helped develop in its participants.

Self-Esteem

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was employed as one tool to assess life skill development. This instrument provides a overall self-esteem score as well as subscale scores in four areas: general self-esteem (26 points possible); social self-peers (8 points possible); home-parents (8 points possible); and school-academic (8 points possible). A "lie scale" consisting of 8 items purports to measure test defensiveness or test second-guessing. A higher lie scale score suggests that the individual's other scores may be questionable.

One hundred 4-H club members were administered this instrument. Frequencies and total SEI scores for each club are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Self-esteem totals from Coopersmith SEI, 1995.

CLUB NUMBER	RESPONSES	MEAN SEI
Club 1	28	73.1
Club 2	17	78.9
Club 3	23	78.9
Club 4	10	74.0
Club 5	22	75.5
TOTAL/MEAN	100	76.0

Several one-way ANOVA tests of the Coopersmith results found that there were no significant differences between

clubs in the self-esteem scores on any of the subscales or in total scores. In addition, there were no significant differences based on age or gender. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances revealed that there was no evidence that group variances were unequal. Individual SEI subscales scores follow in Table 4.

Table 4. Subscale self-esteem scores, Coopersmith SEI, November-December 1995.

CLUB TYPE	GENERAL	HOME	SCHOOL	SOCIAL
Autonomy-oriented club	19.70	5.90	5.20	6.20
Autonomy-oriented club	19.09	6.32	5.54	6.77
Control-oriented club	20.65	6.71	5.58	6.53
Control-oriented club	18.85	6.10	5.57	6.04
Autonomy-oriented club	20.65	6.27	5.74	6.83
AVERAGE	19.70	6.27	5.57	6.48

These quantitative results were verified by the qualitative data. In interviews with key informants, only a few members mentioned the impact that 4-H had specifically had on their self-concept or self-esteem.

In 4-H, you learn self-confidence. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

I'm probably the same, but I believe in myself a little more. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

4-H has affected me quite a bit--I can't say exactly how, but it has changed who I am. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H has been responsible for a lot of the changes that have happened in my life and who I am now. It really builds character. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

While the impact of 4-H on self-concept is not often cited by many 4-H members, helping youth have positive experiences that would help them believe in themselves is often an expressed goal of the leaders. Several club leaders mentioned that in 4-H, they hoped to be able to help youth develop a strong sense of self:

A successful club is where all the kids feel wanted and important--it develops good self-esteem. Everything I do comes back to that. "I can't" is one of my least favorite phrases. My response to them is "I can't never did nothin'." (Leader, control-oriented club)

The best leaders are those who can teach kids self-respect, self-esteem. (Leader, control-oriented club)

I don't want a child to feel put down because maybe they had a white ribbon on their lambs, or their lambs weren't good enough to go to the fair. I want that child to feel good about their project, no matter what it is. Be proud of what you did, and feel that you, inside, have accomplished something and learned something and grown a little bit with what you did. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

The findings from this study indicate that self-esteem is neither enhanced nor harmed by the kind of club leadership style practiced adults. Moreover, self-concept appears to depend on a number of variables. As suggested in much of the literature on self-esteem, overall self-esteem

may be more global in nature, and it is difficult to identify specific contributors to an individual's self-concept (Coopersmith, 1967, 1981; Harter, 1983; Wylie, 1961).

Leadership

In a youth development program like 4-H that emphasizes leadership development, it is not surprising that youth would report that this is a primary benefit of their participation. Indeed, many youth members cited this area as a major outcome of their participation in the program.

I think it's made a lot of difference in my leadership abilities. Leadership is a big part of 4-H. 4-H prepared me for the FFA. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I've developed leadership skills in 4-H. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H had helped me a lot in the leadership area. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

My observations also support this outcome of 4-H participation. 4-H members are typically asked to assume leadership positions for various tasks such as chairing committees, organizing special events, or coordinating groups of people for a special event. During one meeting, a youth officer asked: "Who would like to chair this committee?" not "Would anyone like to chair this committee?" The difference in language is suggestive.

In clubs led by autonomy-oriented leaders, members were given more opportunities to participate in the meeting than

in control-dominated clubs. Club officers were well-trained to call on various members at each meeting to give reports about recent events. This practice not only got members involved in the meeting, but it also gave youth practice in public speaking.

Autonomy-oriented leaders were also quite consistent in ensuring that members take on meaningful leadership roles in the club. The more autonomy-oriented leaders were insistent about getting youth involved in leadership opportunities. Club members were expected to volunteer for committee assignments and chairmanships.

Communication Skills

Many people would say that through their participation in 4-H they learned speaking skills. Through demonstrations, speech contests, and reports of committee assignments, 4-H members have numerous opportunities to practice and hone public speaking skills.

4-H members often cited their improved speaking abilities as one of the benefits of their association with the program. Through 4-H they learned how to communicate with others and speak in public as well as meet other people, particularly people who were not well known to them.

Before, I had a hard time speaking in front of groups. But in 4-H, I've learned speaking skills and leadership skills. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

When I wasn't in 4-H, I don't think I was getting as good of grades as I do now. I didn't have as many friends as I do now. It's just influenced my life quite a bit, and I don't really know what it would be like without 4-H. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Probably knowing how to speak so well is one thing I got out of 4-H. I took my first public speaking class in college, and I can do so well. Other kids don't do so well. I wouldn't be so social either. Heck, I talk with anyone anymore. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I've learned how to talk to people, negotiate, how to keep your cool within. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

I've learned to be sociable with other people, to make friends. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

Even leaders expressed the importance of being able to speak in public.

Successful people are those who can speak in public, so they should learn to be able to do it in front of their buddies. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Several young people readily distinguished the benefits of their participation in 4-H from more formal types of education. This youngster provided an example:

If I were going to try and recruit kids to join 4-H, particularly younger kids, I would tell them its a great way to meet friends, speak a lot more, meet people, have fun--unlike school where you sit at a desk--[in 4-H you] go on a lot of trips, and learn leadership skills. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Other 4-H members also expressed similar perceptions.

4-H is so good--you develop speaking abilities, responsibility, being able to get up in front of people, leadership skills, and helping little

A lot of the adults are just kind of like one of us. They joke around with us, you know, and that helps a lot because its not like having a teacher stand over you all the time. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The skill of speaking in public to groups of people is a commonly cited outcome of the 4-H program. Not surprisingly, all clubs had an expectation that members would make at least one public presentation to the entire club each year. Of course, how this expectation was communicated distinguished control-oriented from autonomy-oriented clubs. The most control-oriented leader from Club 2, for example, simply announced one evening: "Everyone must do a demonstration during the year." This declaration was given in such a way to exclude debate or discussion.

In an autonomy-oriented club, though, the leader went about this another way. Rather than simply stating that everyone was expected to do a demonstration or public speech at some club meeting during the year, she had two members do the following:

Fieldnotes (11/17/95): At the end of the meeting, two members get up and announce that they're going to show everyone how to do a demonstration. They say that the club would like everyone to do at least one demonstration during the coming year, and since some kids may not know what a good demonstration is like, they're going to role model one. They say they were the county winners last year who got to represent the county at the state 4-H congress and learned a lot about giving a good demonstration.

4-H congress and learned a lot about giving a good demonstration.

In this autonomy-oriented club, then, the leader involved two young people in showing everyone how to give a demonstration and passing along the expectation that everyone would do such a presentation at some time during the year. These members covered the do's and don'ts of a good demonstration and tried to help other members think about topics they could present to the club.

Autonomy-oriented clubs were distinguished by how they involved officers in getting members involved in the club action. These clubs used several means to get engagement:

(Fieldnotes 1/10/95). Several clubs used reports to involve members in public speaking. Often, the club officers would call upon various members who had participated in some event to give a report of what it was like. The emphasis was not so much on an accurate or complete report, but rather on getting the youngster to stand up and speak in front of the entire group. In other cases, the club president would specifically ask certain members to make a motion during the discussion of proposals.

Many participants also said that they were quite shy at one time, but 4-H had helped them overcome this early reticence.

I think in 4-H I've learned how to speak in front of people. I'm a pretty shy person. I couldn't even talk in front of anyone a couple of years ago. Now I think I've gotten the courage so I'm not as nervous when I get in front of people. I'm able to stand up and talk and it's a lot easier.
(15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I think I've learned to be kind of a "people" person, you know. It's made me more sociable,

too. If you'd have been trying to do this [interviewing] four or five years ago, it would've been like one word answers. (17 year old member, control-oriented club)

I've learned how to work with people in 4-H, so I'm not so shy or unsure of myself anymore. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

Even the adults acknowledge that helping kids become more outgoing and social is a big benefit of 4-H participation.

Serving as an officer really brings kids out of being shy--like my daughter. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

The kids start out real quiet and shy and not wanting to do much, or come forward, but by the end of the year, the kids are more self-confident and put out more as a club member. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Responsibility

Responsibility is another skill commonly mentioned as a beneficial outcome of 4-H participation. However, responsibility is not a skill that is directly taught like public speaking. Instead, this attribute is learned through the process of being involved in the various projects offered by 4-H. Responsibility is a skill youth learn through project work.

4-H is kinda teaching me to be more responsible in handling rabbits and guns. It teaches you to be more responsible for things you're in, to be on time and such. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

4-H taught me a lot about responsibility. I wasn't like that four years ago. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

4-H's impact on my life is mainly in public speaking and responsibility. They both carry over to school. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Many members cited learning to be more responsible as an outcome of their 4-H experience. By implication, members also acknowledged that they were learning to take personal responsibility for their choices and actions. Members learned that their actions had consequences--if the rabbits weren't fed, they would go hungry and no one else would do the feeding for them.

Practical Skill Development

In addition to the life skills of self-confidence, decision-making, communications, and responsibility, 4-H members and leaders observed that 4-H also taught youth practical skills and knowledge that they can use throughout their lives. In addition, hands-on learning is stressed so that young people develop appropriate motor skills. Perhaps more importantly, 4-H provides a wide range of activities and projects so that youth can choose what kinds of things they want to learn about rather than having the curriculum dictated to them.

When you do something in 4-H, you don't have to do it. And your friends are in it, too. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H is not a whole lot different than school. I learn a little bit about different things, though. It's more fun and you get to choose what you want to learn. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I told my other friend that it [4-H] is fun, interesting and you learn a lot. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

I've taken woodworking and photography and range management and rabbits and breeding beef. In 4-H there's a lot of variation. I don't just do one thing and stick with it. I kind of like to get some variety in. (17 year old member, control-oriented club)

In 4-H, you learn something new every day. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

In addition to the variety, 4-H members report that through these projects they acquire lots of useful knowledge and skills that they can apply to their projects to help them improve.

If I hadn't joined 4-H, I wouldn't be where I am now with my rabbits. I have 12 rabbits now and am a professional breeder with a pedigree. I'm now considered a professional breeder, and a judge taught me everything I know. Now I can go to any other show and be professional. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

In 4-H, I've learned how to work with leather, and how to feed a steer properly to get him to a certain amount of weight in a certain number of days, and how to get him to lose weight. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Observations of clubs support the strength of 4-H clubs in helping youth develop practical skills. At nearly every club meeting, several members gave demonstrations or speeches on topics such as how to properly clean a gun, making an origami crane, making a "dream catcher," and cooking. These presentations serve not only to help youth develop public speaking skills, but they also serve as one

way to instruct others in the procedures necessary to accomplish some specific goal.

At the same time, because of 4-H's emphasis on competition and evaluation, 4-H'ers may learn more than technical skills as this parent attested:

The fair has been especially hard on my son because he only got reds and whites [ribbons], not blues and purples like his older sister. All my son learned out of the fair is that he hated leatherwork and wasn't going to do that again.
(Leader, control-oriented club)

Influence of the County Extension Agent

One of the areas investigated by this study was influence of the county Extension agent on the leadership style of club leaders. Each of the three Extension agents in the selected counties completed the Deci instrument. Individual scores were: Park County agent, -2.0; Lewis and Clark county agent, 4.5; Liberty county agent, 1.5

There was no relationship between the county agent's score and the leadership style of the club leaders. Moreover, qualitative analysis failed to detect any direct influence from the county agent on club structure or functioning. In no interviews was the county agent's name ever mentioned as a factor in how the club operated.

The Club as an Agent of Socialization

America is a culture of joiners. From the colonial period to the present, Americans have actively formed social

groups--clubs, lodges, fraternities, associations, troops, and societies--to foster camaraderie and a spirit of fellowship, find strength in numbers, strengthen community cohesion, build a common identity, and inculcate members to a unique culture the club could call their own. The ideology of associationalism, as one observer has called this, permeates American history and finds its expression in both adult and youth groups of both sexes (Charles, 1993, p. 47). Clubdom is a distinctly American idea (Lynd & Lynd, 1929).

At the same time, though, American culture has also fostered a value for self-sufficiency and individualism. From the Revolutionary war with Britain to the Civil War to the "Me Generation," American society has romanticized the individual who adopts the "go-it-alone" approach. Throughout American history, there is evidence of a struggle between those who strive to preserve a sense of individual significance in a mass society. American culture reveres the "rugged individualist" who can stand alone without the crutch of a mass society. Yet, as Frederick Jackson Turner observed, "The tendency is anti-social. It produces an anti-pathology to control" (Potter, 1954, p. 152). As a result, individuals felt little need to be cared for by society and also had a minimum tolerance for control by that society.

These dual tendencies--a desire to be a part and yet apart--are evident in many facets of American society, and the 4-H club movement is no exception. 4-H clubs, a central

and unique creation of American society in the early 20th century, carries with it this cultural dichotomy. As a result, 4-H clubs serve as both agencies of change and independence and agencies of socialization and belonging for young people. Within each club there is an emphasis on stability, predictability, order, tradition and "clubdom," yet at the same time there is a value placed on personal change, individual improvement, and personal advancement. In the interaction between these contradictory tendencies, conflict, and stress can result. Understanding the dynamics that operate within clubs between leaders, members, and parents, then, is important to knowing what impacts are occurring for members. What are the features of the "club" environment?

4-H clubs perform many functions. 4-H clubs can be effective at teaching life skills and at helping youth acquire technical and practical skills. 4-H clubs also serve as community agents of socialization, helping inculcate youth with notions of how to behave, act, feel, and develop. Several members, in fact, made this kind of observation about their experiences in 4-H:

They teach you about how to be around people, and you know, how to act. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I gotta try and be a positive role model, they say. (17 year old member, control-oriented club)

And now we're the older kids, and we need to show the younger ones a good example--how we act and

stuff like that. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

In addition, 4-H clubs teach members about civic responsibility, reciprocity, equality, delayed gratification, and the importance of documentation for future reference. While all of these values are taught, some are incorporated and learned more than others. The discrepancy demonstrates the dynamic tension which exists in 4-H clubs between adults who would like to direct the program toward certain outcomes and empowered youth who would like to have more control over the direction and content of the program. Several important patterns which emerged from the qualitative data related to this.

Civic Responsibility

An important formally-stated goal of the 4-H program is to teach youth to care for their community and to participate in its betterment. 4-H also trains youth to be able to function in a democratic society. Every club, for example, began its meetings with the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance and the 4-H pledge--even when no flags were available. Every meeting followed the same general format as well, adhering closely to the order of business suggested in Robert's Rules of Order. All votes were by simple majority, and only youth members were allowed to vote. Adults never participated in voting although they often influenced the way their children voted. The formal process

of making a motion was common in all clubs. A subtle but important part of the 4-H experience is training youth to be able to function in civic organizations in the future.

Leaders often expressed that one of their goals was helping members learn how to conduct well-organized meetings.

You have to go to meetings for the rest of your life, and 4-H can help you learn how to run meetings. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

However, 4-H members themselves saw this development as an important result of their 4-H experience.

In 4-H, I've learned to be sociable with other people, make friends, learned about rabbits, about buying them, and parliamentary procedure and stuff. (14 year old member, control-oriented club)

One of the skills I've developed in 4-H is my parliamentary procedure and speaking skills. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Perhaps the most important aspect of the club experience, though, is service to one's community. Community service is an openly avowed value in 4-H and is touted as one of five essential life skills developed through the 4-H experience. Several leaders supported this goal and were quite vocal about its importance to their club.

An ideal 4-H member is one that's involved in the community, where they're active in doing things for others in the community. 4-H operates a lot on volunteer work and donations, and the club needs to give that back to the community. (Leader, control-oriented club)

The ideal member loves to do citizenship and community service, and even if it's a task they don't like, they still try to do their best at it.
(Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

The importance of community service is also a view frequently shared by members.

I like that you help other people. Like the nursing home. I like doing community things like that. Cleaning up the highway. It makes you feel proud of yourself and I like things like that.
(15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Being able to help out is one of the best things about 4-H. Being able to do things for my community. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Every club was involved, to varying degrees, in community service activities--from donations to the local food bank, to decorating the local nursing home, to cleaning up a section of highway. Training members to contribute to their community through voluntary efforts is a major function of 4-H clubs.

Connection Between Effort and Outcomes

Through their participation in 4-H, the club teaches youth the connection between effort and outcomes. 4-H members learn that in order to reap certain payoffs, a certain amount of time and effort must be dedicated.

The work is actually worth it because at the end it all pays off. It's hard work during the whole time. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

It's hard work, but it pays off in the end.
(15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

You didn't do a lot of work, but you did your fair share. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

In 4-H, you've got a lot of responsibility, but the work is fun. It's not just work to do work. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

Opportunities

As a socializing agent, 4-H clubs help youngsters become aware of wider opportunities that are available to them. These opportunities help expand their horizons and get beyond their local environments. Leaders are clearly aware that this is a major function they perform in helping develop the young people in their charges.

I have to remember to let them know there are all these opportunities, that they can go on. That's part of my job as an organizational leader. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Fieldnotes (2/14/95): I arrived right at 7:00 PM. There is a noisy atmosphere with adults and kids spread out in the one-room church building. The president of the club raps the gavel at 7:05 PM. "This meeting will now come to order." Most kids sit up front in the first two rows while the adults sit in back rows. During the discussion of the Grand Foods event, the adult leader encourages members to participate in this event, saying it is good experience. The leader then circulates and asks individual kids what they're making for Grand Foods--not if. She encourages participation. (Autonomy-oriented club)

Fieldnotes (6/13/95): The leader hands out the county fair books at this meeting and gives an example of how to fill out an entry tag. It strikes me that this is training in how to deal with forms. Then she makes the announcements--rattling off a whole series of dates and events that I can't even keep up with. (Autonomy-oriented club)

A major benefit of participating in 4-H is having wider opportunities to experience things outside one's own community. 4-H clubs can encourage youth to participate in these wider opportunities.

Empowerment

By focusing on and developing leadership skills in young people, 4-H assists the process of helping youth become empowered. This result can only happen when adults view youth as resources rather than as objects or recipients (Lofquist, 1988). Autonomy-oriented clubs are more effective at developing empowered youth than control-oriented clubs. While youth participants do not frame this as empowerment, autonomy-oriented leaders are clearly aware of their central role in helping youth become self-sufficient and self-directed.

I want the kids to look at me as their leader, but more as a resource for ideas when they want to expand on something. Not telling them how to do something. We're not to that point yet, but that's my goal. I don't want to tell them how to do everything. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

I tell parents that it's not a parent's club--it's your kids' club. I like to have the kids do it themselves. No rescuing. The leaders have to be informed in order for the club to know what's going on and what options they have, but kids have the decision-making power. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

I encourage kids that their opinion matters. It does not have to agree with the judge. It's not wrong. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

I think to be able to work as a group is one of my goals. I think that's a real important goal for them--to be able to work as a group and see how things function with a president and a treasurer and with members. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

What our club strives for is: we don't want to tell these kids what to do. It's their club. It's their choice what they do. We're here as leaders to advise them and sort of show them the way, and then they take the road and go. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Making sure that youth feel that they are in control and have influence over the direction of the club emerged as a common theme in interviews with more autonomy-oriented leaders.

Interviews with the more control-oriented leader never produced these kinds of observations. Helping youth become self-sufficient and independent was not mentioned during these exchanges. Skills in project work, responsibility, and public speaking were more often emphasized.

By comparison, autonomy-oriented leaders wanted youth to assume more leadership and decision-making authority in the 4-H club.

Kids are doing the business, not the leader. Leaders are there to present the facts. Leaders have to be informed in order for the club to know what's going on and what options they have, but kids have the decision-making power. If we get off track, the leaders get together and discuss what the goal is. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Another leader shared this view:

A successful club is when the leaders put forth some suggestions and then the kids decide what they're going to do. It's not the leaders telling

the kids what to do--it's the kids listening to what we advise and then making up their own minds. I like the fact that the kids are so involved. It gives the kids a lot of skills that they'll need later on, like leadership. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Record-Keeping

Talk to anyone in 4-H, and quite early in the conversation you are bound to hear about record books. Record books have perennially been the bane and nemesis of 4-H members and the crusade of 4-H leaders. 4-H clubs, as socializing agents, try to train members to compete in the "paper chase" world of records and documents. In fact, paperwork is more than a priority in the 4-H program; it has achieved the level of primacy. Reports, attendance records, enrollment cards, health forms, liability forms, and record books get some mention at nearly every 4-H gathering. 4-H is a program that is paper-intensive and requires extensive record keeping--from the national to the state to the county and to the local club level.

The importance that leaders attach to record books emerged early as a pattern in the data:

I keep coming back to this and I've had people come down on me for this, but record books are an important life skill. It teaches kids how to write letters, file things, keep chronological track of things. It teaches what we will all be doing forever--check books, anything. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

One of my immediate goals that I'd like to see for the members is that I'd really like for them to do

a lot better on their record books. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

During several observed meetings, record keeping was the major educational program presented by either the adult leaders or former club leaders.

Fieldnotes (1/15/95): Mary (a former 4-H leader and member) is the guest speaker at today's meeting and gives a session on keeping records. With records, "you realize the benefits of all the hard work you've put into 4-H." She emphasizes cause and effect--how did you grow, what did you learn, how did it benefit you? She also tries to help members understand why good record-keeping skills are important--for jobs, scholarship, state and national awards. She even talks about how learning how to keep good records helped her get her current job--a loan officer at the Federal Land Bank.

Fieldnotes (12/10/95): This meeting was supposed to start at 4:00 PM but bad weather kept everyone from arriving on time. Record books was the subject of this meeting--how to fill out, etc. The leaders explain how to fill out the forms and that they will be judged this year so it will be important to fill them out. One leader says to me: "Maybe they'll keep it up--that's the hope." The leaders mention various events that should be included--"if you worked the auction sale, that counts as community service. The same if you decorated windows for national 4-H week. Put in the awards you got at Achievement Night this year." The work is aimed mainly at younger kids. The older boys leave the room after a few minutes and go into the living room. Only one male parent comes in to check on his son--to see how the record book is being done. Otherwise, no other parents come in during this work session.

The importance and centrality of record keeping is not shared by all leaders. In fact, a fair amount of ambivalence was observed about the role and importance of record keeping

in the 4-H program. One leader recognized that it might be something best reserved for older members:

Keeping journals is really important--but it's an older kid project. Younger kids don't understand why they should do it. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Some see it as less important than the development of the young person:

Record books are not really a life skill--it's the interpersonal skills that are most important. Record books, yes, are nice, but you need other skills. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Still another leader saw record books as one way of developing important life skills:

I'm really hard on kids about record books because I think it teaches them responsibility and financial record keeping. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Youth members themselves felt strongly about this subject and were pretty clear about records and how they felt about them:

They have to be done, but I don't like them. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

One of the things I like the least about 4-H is doing the journals--just the fact of having to do them. I don't like them because you may forget to write something down, and it screws the whole thing up. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

I like the record books least in 4-H. Cody and I were donated by my dad all the feed for our steers because it's our donation for our college fee. So we don't have to pay that back, but then we have to--in our record books--act like we bought all that because the forms have all this stuff about how much feed they had and what it cost--so it's

how much feed they had and what it cost--so it's kind of a pain. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Competition

In addition to record books, competition is another one of the most discussed features of the 4-H program. 4-H began using competition as a motivator for youth to excel from its earliest beginnings. Corn clubs and cooking clubs often competed to see who could raise the most corn per acre or can more food the fastest.

Today, competition remains a central fixture in the 4-H program. However, there is not universal agreement on its place or usefulness in motivating youth to excel. Clubs used competition in a variety of ways to try and motivate members. The club led by a more control-oriented leader used awards and prizes to try and get youth to pay attention and be polite during demonstrations. Another club used prizes as a part of the clubs's recreation activity--at Thanksgiving, for example, through guessing the number of feathers on a turkey.

Leaders who were autonomy-oriented did not rely on competition or extrinsic incentives to motivate members in their club although all of them saw competition as an important part of the 4-H program, particularly at the fair. As with records, interviews with both leaders and members revealed the ambivalence towards competition that exists in

competition, but they often elevate other values above winning.

The ideal member would be a youth who isn't so heart set on winning that the personal side is put aside--someone who's willing to help other kids, teach other kids all she knows. (Leader, control-oriented club)

My main goal is to help the kids become confident enough to feel good about themselves whether they receive a white ribbon or purple ribbon. If you try your best, that's the best you can do and try not to compare yourself to other people. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Competition is most prevalent at the county fair, and while many members said that the fair is one of the most important reasons they join or stay in 4-H, the competitive part of the fair can provide challenges to developing positive youth potential.

The fair is not the goal, but it seems to be the showplace where everyone gets together and says: "This is what I've done all year." I like the ribbons, and I don't like the ribbons. The fair should be a showplace, but not competition--especially for younger kids. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Yet, it is interesting to note that this very same leader used competition and rewards as a method of exercising control over the members of the club. On her Deci instrument, she wrote: "I love bribery--it works!"

Members share some of these views about the importance of competition. When asked to think about the most significant experience they had had in 4-H, many members mentioned winning the top designations at the county fair.

The most memorable thing was last year at the 4-H fair. It was my first year at the fair, and I won two grand champions. (13 year-old member, control-oriented club)

I got reserve grand champion, and that was my first year. That was the most significant thing I remember. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

Last year in the speech contest was my most meaningful experience in 4-H. I won the contest and because of that I got to be the master of ceremonies at the 4-H achievement night. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Some members defined their club as successful by how well they did in competitive activities at the fair:

I think we've done really good. This year in animals we've all done good. We're improving. One boy won grand champion. We got purple ribbons. I think our club's been really successful. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Other members, however, do not place as much emphasis on winning:

I'm not really concerned about grand champion. I just want to do good. (17 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I had a horse for two years, and then I just decided that I'd rather do different things with my horse besides showing, so I gave it up. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H's emphasis on competition, even using a Danish judging system in which exhibits are awarded ribbons based on objective standards of excellence, can undermine some the life skills goals of the program.

The fair has been especially hard on Larry because he only got reds and whites [ribbons], not blues and purples like his older sister. All my son

learned out of the fair is that he hated leatherwork and wasn't going to do that again. (Leader, control-oriented club)

This same leader, though, expressed some of the ambivalence about competition and life skills development that exists in the 4-H program.

Most of what they're learning won't even show up until much later. They won't trot off to third grade and say I'm a better kid this year because I was in 4-H last year. That won't even show up until high school when they decide not to go out and drink and such stuff. We came home from the fair with ribbons up the ying-yang, and it was a real morale booster for most kids. We were successful from that perspective. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Despite this concern with the destructive effects of competition, this leader used rewards on a consistent basis to try and reinforce certain desired behaviors in her 4-H club members. Not surprisingly, then, this club was characterized by occasions where rewards and bribes were used by the leader to try and gain cooperation from the members.

Fieldnotes (1/17/95): After the club leader hands out member project award pins to those who weren't at the county award banquet, she announces that any kid who can recite the 4-H pledge will get a coupon for a free soda pop.

Fieldnotes 3/12/95): After the announcements, the club leader says that there will be awards given to members who can do certain things. Certificates for the local video store will be given to those with the three best record books. Certificates will also be given to those who can say the 4-H pledge.

Fieldnotes (11/21/95): A parent suggests that the club use awards to reinforce good listening skills

for the members since they were so noisy during Emma's talk on her rabbits. The club leader has prepared for this, and announces that she will give a prize to anyone who can answer a question from Emma's speech. When questions are asked, many kids raise their hands even though they don't know the answers--they just want to participate and try for a prize.

A leader in another club shared her perspective about the importance of just winning ribbons and awards:

And if they can come home with those ribbons, even if they're a red ribbon or a white ribbon, not a blue ribbon, they're proud of it, and they know that they did a good job. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Of course, another leader within the same club expressed a slightly different perspective on winning awards:

And it's nice to go to the county level or more than the county level and do your things at the fair and win your awards and things like that. But I don't necessarily think that should be the goal. I don't know that if you took that away from the members in our club if we'd have as many people in it, but I know that they'd enjoy being here. Otherwise, they's just do what was required and go to the fair. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Still another leader in another club saw the role of ribbons quite differently.

I want the child to feel good about their project, no matter what it is. And to me it doesn't matter whether you get the grand champion or you have the white ribbon one. Be proud of what you did, and feel that you--inside--have accomplished something and learned something and grown a little bit with what you did. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

This notion of receiving external validation for personal effort is a common theme in 4-H and is perceived to provide motivation to members. Members liked winning, but

did not talk about competition as particularly motivating. Losing was never mentioned during the interviews or during the club observations. The recognition received from competitive outcomes seemed most valuable to those receiving it rather than the actual competition.

Completion and Follow-Through

Adults consistently commented that a major goal of theirs was to help young people learn how to set goals, achieve them and complete them. Perseverance, completion, and follow-through, even on unpleasant tasks, was a trend which emerged in the data.

I think it's most important that kids learn skills--lifelong skills--such as communication and being able to get up in front of a crowd. Also, to start something, to see it through to the end. I think if they can learn this now, they're going to have it easier in their adult life. They can maybe see the end result from being in 4-H.
(Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H teaches people to complete things to the end, to stay with things. (Parent, autonomy-oriented club)

In 4-H, kids learn not only how to complete something, but also to apply it to other areas of life. They've learned by completing a project it was something to be proud of, that we all have to do things that we don't get rewarded for. (Leader, control-oriented club)

My goal for members is just to take projects and complete them. An ideal 4-H member follows through on a lot of things. Finishing, completion--I'm big on that. (Leader, control-oriented club)

In discussions with 4-H leaders and parents, the notion of project completion is often mentioned. In fact, many people will ask what needs to be done by a member to complete a project.

At the same time, leaders are willing to keep project completion in perspective of what youth members are capable of doing. Leaders recognized that youth have varying abilities and that they need to acknowledge this.

The other leader is an over-achiever and really gets her kids into everything. They finish it perfect. Not me--they finish it, but not perfect. If a white ribbon was to the best of their ability, then that's fine. If not, I ask them what they are going to do about it. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Developing Social Networks

Like many social groups, an important component of the 4-H experience is the development of social contacts and friendships with others--both of the same age and with others of different ages. A common theme in all interviews was the friendships and social contacts that 4-H helped young people develop.

I have a lot more friends from other places--like Livingston--because of the fair. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

The best part of 4-H is getting to meet other kids. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

I like the fair and socializing with friends. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The thing I like most about 4-H is the friends. The socializing part mostly. You get to meet new

friends, new people. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I think I've stayed in 4-H because it's a really great opportunity and you meet a lot of people and learn a lot of things. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

The best thing about 4-H is probably the friends I meet and the things we get to do. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

4-H provides another avenue for young people to establish friendships and relations with other people of different ages and backgrounds.

Notions of Success

During the course of this research project, it became evident that each club felt in its own way that it was successful. In fact, this sense of success on the part of each club is one of the significant findings from this study. The 4-H program provides enough avenues for recognition and achievement that every club had developed a belief that they were successful as a group. This belief in their own success and achievement emerged as a consistent pattern in the data.

Notions of success were particularly evident in the interviews with members. Key informants were specifically asked what they would characterize as a successful 4-H club and then if their club met such criteria.

Participants in clubs led by more autonomy-oriented leaders clearly expressed their convictions that their club was a model of success for a variety of reasons.

Ours is pretty successful--it's run pretty good, there's order, everybody has a different job. It's a group thing. Everybody helps. You see different people at different things. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

We have almost 30 members in our club, and we all get along and there's no fighting. We're also the richest club in the county at this point in time, which shows that we get out and do stuff. We have fund-raisers, and we sell fruit, and we clean roads. We're here to have a good time and the kids enjoy that a lot. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

We don't just meet every month, we do all kinds of stuff. I mean there's gotta be at least, at least two things that this club does each month on average. We go all over, even with our meetings. We're really original in the way we have our meetings. (16 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

I think I would describe my club as successful. When I first started, there was not very many kids in it. It's grown a lot. I bet 15-20 people have added onto it in just a year, and I think that's been really successful. (15 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

While the members tended to define success in terms of organizational characteristics--number of members, size of the club treasury, absence of infighting--leaders couched success in other terms.

Our club's successful because there's second or third generations coming back. That says something about the experience mom and dad had in the club. And then especially where some kids want to come back and help the younger kids. That's a point of success. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

A successful club helps kids learn but yet have them do it themselves and have fun doing it. Everyone should be treated equally on their knowledge and availability of time. (Leader, control-oriented club)

Even members of the most chaotic club felt their club was successful although the importance of order and organization surfaced again as a common theme.

A successful club is one that can be organized and run meetings smoothly; do things, not necessarily do them well, but everyone is a good sport and participates. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

A successful club is one where people like each other, get along, there's organized meetings, and people aren't in conflict. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

A successful club is one that's always on top of things--has the journals done, knows what they're going to do next year, and does fun activities. I think our own club is successful--in ways. (12 year old member, control-oriented club)

A successful club is when everybody feels good about what they did and how they did it. Yes, our club is successful--pretty much. (13 year old member, control-oriented club)

During the observations of all five clubs, it was evident that members of each club took collective pride in the individual accomplishments of various members. If there was only one person enrolled in the dog project, for example, when that person attained any level of excellence as judged at the county fair, the entire club took pride in that fact and were sure to let others know how well one of their own had done.

In the same way, clubs revelled in their collective achievements, particularly at the end of the year, and they would list off all the distinguishing accomplishments of their members. Every club, regardless of leadership style or history, felt themselves to be successful.

The Club as a Family

During the course of this research, club environments began to closely resemble that of a family. After all, clubs are led by adults working with a group of young people spanning several ages, dedicated to working cooperatively toward some mutually-agreed goals. This theme of the club as a family emerged continually during the interviews and observations.

4-H is a wonderful program--it gives kids a great sense of family and life. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

We want to create one big family--we're a team; we're working together. (Leader, control-oriented club)

4-H is like a family project. (Parent, autonomy-oriented club)

Like families, though, clubs can be either balanced, extreme, or mid-range types according to the circumplex model of family functioning. Using the CASES IV instrument, all members over the age of 12 years were administered this tool to obtain a measure of club satisfaction and a description of the club type. As Olsen (1985) suggested, communication patterns facilitate movement on the twin

dimensions of adaptability and cohesion. Thus, communications can reveal something of the club's type related to the circumplex model.

When separated by the adult's orientation towards control or autonomy in working with children, clear differences were evident. The more control-oriented leader and other parents in this club used more language that was disrespectful and discounting than the more autonomy-oriented leaders.

Fieldnotes (1/17/95): The club is full of little kids with just a couple of older kids. The radio is blaring rock-n-roll music--Lynard Skynard I believe. The club is all abuzz. The gavel is rapped to bring order to the meeting. The leader yells out: "Turn that radio off!"

Fieldnotes (2/21/95): During the discussion of the dance, a parent sitting in the back states: "This group is not mature enough to put on something like this." The club leader chimes in: "My advice is you'll fall flat on your face if you do a dance."

Throughout the meeting, the adults "shhish" the kids when they're out of control or unruly. Finally an adult makes a motion, and a kid seconds it. The leader intervenes and says: "Call for a vote" to the president. There is lots of confusion and voting. No one's really sure what they just voted on.

Eventually, someone in the club says: "I move we get on with the meeting." The leader says: "I second it."

During this meeting, the leader also announces an attendance policy that they've established for club members: (1) members must attend eight out of eleven meetings; (2) members must attend two community service activities; (3) members must call if they are going to miss a meeting; (4) if a member misses more than three meetings, they are dismissed from the club and cannot show at the fair.

My observation of this club is that the adults are struggling with their role in 4-H which is supposed to be "for the kids." They want to be able to give some direction without taking over, but don't know how.

Fieldnotes (3/12/95): After the chaotic meeting last time, I noticed that the leader had obtained an easel and flip chart and put the order of business up for all to see. A parent sees four boys coming in to the meeting rooms and says: "Oh sure, you guys showed up just so you wouldn't have to calve!" Implying that they only came to the club meeting to get out of work on the family farm.

After the meeting is officially called to order, lots of late kids come into the room. One parent says: "It starts at 2:00, folks!" to no one in particular. Another parent moves to discipline a kid who is talking by pinching his shoulder--hard.

During the discussion of doing a fund-raising activity, a parent blurts out: "They won't go for a slave auction--it's too much work!" However, the kids eventually vote for this.

The slave auction wins and now the club decides they need to set a date for this. The kids suggest waiting until the next meeting--big sighs from a couple of the adults. The leader says they'll come up with a format for the slave auction so they're not traipsing off with some stranger. At this point, another parent blurts out: "We sell you off--for good!"

Fieldnotes (11/21/95): At the end of the meeting, the leader mentioned that all club members are required to give one speech and one demonstration during the club year. "This is not an option!"

Adults who perceive that kids are out-of-line use physical sanctions (pinching, grabbing) to straighten them up.

The observations from other, more autonomy-oriented leaders in a couple of other clubs present a sharp contrast to the control-oriented club.

Fieldnotes (1/8/95): There is a informal, polite atmosphere in this club. No adults even spoke until 10 minutes had passed, and then it was only

to give information and provide an update on training workshops. The adults raise their hands to be recognized by the club president.

Fieldnotes (1/10/95): The leader was working with the officers in advance of the meeting to plan out the agenda. All the officers are girls I notice. This appears to be a young club by appearances--lots of little kids. When a group of kids come in later, the leader says: "Alright! Look who's here!" In this club, the adults raise their hands to speak.

Fieldnotes (2/5/95): A new member is introduced at this meeting--and everyone claps for him. After the meeting, I interview a parent who says that he thinks the club has gotten better because "more responsibility has been turned over to the kids."

Fieldnotes (8/16/95): During this meeting, members of this club are asked to stand up and tell what they took to the county fair last month and what placings they received. Everyone claps after each kid speaks.

During this meeting, the leaders also pass out an evaluation form for the members to critique the club. "This is your club" a leader says. "We need your suggestions and ideas how it could be better for you as well as what you liked."

Fieldnotes (8/28/95): One of the parents says that this year, the kids really pitched in the most on the July 4th float so leaders had to do the least. This was the best year in his memory and compliments the kids in the club.

The language differences between leaders who are control-oriented and leaders who are more autonomy-oriented is marked. Autonomy-oriented leaders defined their role mainly as informational and procedural. They also saw themselves as needing to provide more positive feedback to youth for their work and efforts. Autonomy-oriented leaders strived to provide support and guidance to youth members as

they learn how to conduct and direct their own affairs. Autonomy-oriented leaders gave respect and expected it in return. Such leaders used a language that did not criticize or belittle club members for short-comings or mistakes. Autonomy-oriented leaders were not always successful in playing these roles, but they were more apt to assume the posture of a "guide on the side" than the leaders who were more control-oriented. For example, the following incident illustrates when a leader, who scored between control and autonomy, felt a need to become more control-oriented:

Fieldnotes (2/1/95): During the discussion of fund-raising events, there is some momentary confusion, but no one gets upset. It's not clear who made a motion. The leader asks: "What's going on?" as a way to get the club members to re-focus. The problem solving process continues to flounder. There is no experience to guide the group-- everyone is so young. The officers talk among themselves. The leader intervenes to get the president to have an open discussion with the club, not just among themselves. There is patience on the part of the adults, even with repeated questions around the same issues.

One of the leaders intervenes again to keep the process on track--you have to have a motion on the floor, etc. Chaos still ensues, frustration. The leader cuts in: "This is your club and you can make your own decisions, but I don't think you know what you've just voted on. You're mumbling, every kid is mumbling, and no one can hear. I'm going to step in here at this time and do what I'm here to do as the organizational leader which is leadership. What I'd like to see is...." The vice-president makes the recommended motion.

In contrast, leaders who are more control-oriented tended to be more concerned about directing each meeting and ensuring quiet and order through physical and coercive

means. Ironically, leaders who were more control-oriented presided over more chaotic club situations than the autonomy-oriented leaders. This finding could be related to lack of internal loci of control among members, age of members, or lack of relevance to the meeting.

Leaders of 4-H clubs who were more control-oriented in their dealings with youth used belittling language, physical sanctions and discipline strategies, and rigid, explicit rules. Clubs dominated by control-oriented leaders often shifted between authoritarian leadership and a complete lack of leadership. For example, during an interview, the more control-oriented club leader made the following observation:

One parent told me I butt in too much. At first, parents told me I needed to control meetings more. Now they tell me I butt in too much. (Control-oriented club)

Youth members in such clubs exhibited passive-aggressive behavior and had come to require external incentives for their compliance to the leader's standards.

Fieldnotes (11/21/95): At 8:10 p.m., at the end of this meeting, someone makes a motion to adjourn. The president announces the meeting is over, but a parent says: "You should pick someone to second it." Some kid in the group shouts out: "Who cares!"

Fieldnotes (3/12/95): During this meeting, the club discusses a community service activity for Easter. Everyone will need to meet together the day before to stuff Easter egg baskets. One kid asks: "If we miss this meeting, will it count towards the number of meetings we can miss?"

Ironically, clubs dominated by more control-oriented leaders were less orderly, were characterized by endless negotiations and discussions and frequent outbursts from members and leaders alike, and were less fun for the members. In the club led by the more control-oriented leader, only one member ever mentioned fun as a descriptive characteristic of the club. Rather, members of such clubs mentioned the skills that could be learned, opportunities to be with friends, and the chance to participate in the county fair. Fun was not something that readily came to mind.

Summary

Twelve months of research on five 4-H clubs in Montana revealed a number of findings. Club environments take on certain unique characteristics based on the club leader's orientation and style. In addition, clubs affect the life skill and technical skill development of young people in complex ways. Finally, clubs also serve as a socializing agent, training young people how to function in a modern, democratic society run by rules, documentation, and teamwork. Clubs, like families, exhibit certain characteristics which can help or hinder the development of autonomous behavior.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this research project was to describe the 4-H club experience from the perspective of the participants. This inquiry into the 4-H experience focused on two areas. First, this inquiry sought to describe the day-to-day experience in 4-H programs and what members found meaningful about their experience. Second, this study sought to determine the influence of adult leadership styles on the skill development of young people in 4-H clubs. This descriptive research project which utilized a mixed design of qualitative and quantitative methods. This research project explored such aspects of the 4-H experience as its appeal to youth and parents, satisfaction with the club environment, ideal characteristics of leaders, development of life skills, as well as other features of the 4-H experience.

Results and ConclusionsAppeal to Youth

Why are youth who have many choices and opportunities available to them attracted to the 4-H program? As a

voluntary, after-school youth program with a focus on education, what niche does 4-H fill in young people's lives? From this research study, several important answers emerged.

4-H is Fun and Friends. 4-H is perceived by members and parents as an appealing after-school activity. Those interviewed mentioned fun, the opportunity to be with and make new friends, and the ability to participate in events and activities both within and outside their community as important attractors for them. Among current members, these factors were both appealing reasons to enroll in 4-H as well as compelling reasons for staying involved.

The fun factor of the 4-H program was especially significant compared to views about formal education. Several members contrasted the 4-H experience as more fun and practical than school settings where youth felt treated as objects and mere pawns rather than regarded as originators with their own initiative and ideas. Young people contrasted the fun and interaction of 4-H to school as sitting in desks with adults looming over them and being critical of their ideas or performance.

In contrast, from the members' perspective, 4-H provided an avenue for them to exert some influence over the course of events in which they were involved. 4-H put youth in charge of meetings and various activities. Youth opinions mattered, and they had fun. 4-H was, as one member

put it, a place where you "have fun unlike school where you sit at a desk." This youngster also observed that in 4-H youth "get to voice their opinions in a meeting without being ridiculed or being told, 'That's dumb.'"

Is not this what all nonformal youth groups are like? This is not necessarily so. This finding about 4-H is significant since Kleinfeld and Shinkwin (1984) reported that they found little support for the "fun and friends" in Boy Scouts. While both Boy Scout and 4-H literature mention fun as the lure to attract members, only in 4-H is fun mentioned as an aspect of participation. Kleinfeld and Shinkwin reported that

serious [Boy] scouts were under considerable pressure to advance in rank and keep up with boys in the troop. Nor was scouts a setting where boys made new friends or particularly strengthened existing friendships. (p. 72)

Even the parents of scout members did not mention fun or friends as an important benefit of scouting. Scouting is hard work (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984), and fun was not necessarily an valued part of the program by members, leaders, or parents.

In contrast, 4-H members, leaders, and parents all mentioned fun and friends as important attributes of the 4-H program. The environment in 4-H is fun for members in autonomy-oriented clubs, and youth made new friends and strengthened existing friendships. Friends were a major reason for becoming involved in 4-H. Perhaps because 4-H

has no rigorous advancement program like the one in Boy Scouts, 4-H'ers did not feel pressure to excel or keep up with others in the club. 4-H appears more able to accommodate the differing abilities and interests of young people and allows them to progress at their own rate. In addition, the 4-H program embodies the frontier spirit of egalitarianism and socialization from the 19th century, minimizing stratification and "class consciousness" between members.

Other research (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984) has found that in environments where academic success is narrowly defined (i.e. the ability to master a small set of specific skills) stratification among students increases based on ability. Such unidimensional classrooms tend to accentuate student self-concepts of ability, and the researchers concluded that schools are, to a small degree, limiting students' perceptions of their own abilities to learn. Multidimensional environments, by contrast, were more mellow because academic ability was not so narrowly defined. Students were able to excel in ways others than academics. Such classrooms placed little importance on excelling in academic work and as a result had fewer discipline problems (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984).

Like the multidimensional environments described by these researchers, 4-H provides numerous ways for youth to excel. "Making the best better," 4-H's motto, implies

competing against yourself and trying to improve on what you have done before. The meaning of the motto is not about beating someone else or about keeping up with everyone else in the group. It is about doing your best and doing it according to your ability. The broad scope of the 4-H program and its lack of emphasis on forcing everyone into a narrowly defined, rigorous achievement program opens many avenues for youth to find their niche and succeed. 4-H appears more able to accommodate the differing abilities and interests of young people and allows them to progress at their own rate. 4-H appeals to youth because it provides fun and camaraderie.

Moreover, autonomy-oriented leaders created environments that were perceived as more fun to 4-H members than youth in clubs led by control-oriented leaders. Youth in the autonomy-oriented clubs were much more likely to mention fun as an important feature of their club than others. These same participants also felt less pressure to excel or beat others. 4-H members in clubs directed by autonomy-oriented leaders were also more likely to express satisfaction with the club environment than other members.

The County Fair. Another important motivator for joining and staying involved with 4-H is the fair and the money that can be earned through premiums and in particular through the market livestock sale. Many members mentioned

this aspect of the program as a unique feature which appealed to them. While some professional Extension faculty bemoan the amount of work and time the county fair consumes, the fair is obviously important for member recruitment and member retention. This study has shown that the fair should be supported and enhanced as an important compliment to the 4-H program.

The county fair also serves as a community celebration that once a year brings together diverse elements of the community to socialize and interact. As a community celebration, the fair allows everyone to showcase their accomplishments during the past year and learn from those who excel. Far more than simply a series of competitions, the fair provides an open learning laboratory environment where there is a free exchange of ideas and techniques. During the fair, young people work together cooperatively to accomplish tasks, they support one another, and teach each other skills to succeed. Younger members learn from older, more experienced members how to present themselves to a judge. Many members cite the annual county fair as the highlight of their year in 4-H and look forward to it each year. Like the 4-H program itself, the fair provides youth with numerous opportunities for fun and socializing that are not found in other parts of their lives.

The county fair also serves as a valuable socializing influence. The fair helps families connect with the larger

community and social fabric, showing young people how they are part of a community. Many families use the county fair as their time for a family vacation, hauling trailers onto the fair grounds and camping out during the entire length of the fair. This intensive time together strengthens family bonds and unity.

During the fair, the 4-H club acts as an organizing unit to give individual families a group identity and sense of cohesion. Thus, the 4-H club serves to provide a larger identity for community members. During the fair, this group cohesion is further reinforced by a number of mechanisms. Clubs have designated areas in barns for which they are responsible and which they must keep clean. Various awards are given to the club with the most attractive, neat, and creative areas. Clubs are also expected to create an attractive booth or display highlighting the various accomplishments of club members and describing club members' unique contributions to the 4-H program or local community.

An important attraction about participating in the county fair was the possibility of earning money from the exhibits. While no parents or leaders mentioned this as an important attribute of 4-H, many youth members specifically cited this feature as attractive. Earning money from premiums paid for the best exhibits, particularly in the market livestock projects, is important to youth. Of the key informants interviewed who cited earning money from the

fair as an important reason for being involved in 4-H, all indicated that the money was put into a savings account for future educational needs. All indicated a desire to go on to college, and premiums from fair entries were providing some initial seed money to achieve this goal.

Premiums have recently become a hotly discussed issue in the 4-H program because of abuses which have been revealed at the large state fairs, particularly in the Midwest. Revelations about cheating, physical alterations of animals, and the use of illegal drugs to gain an edge on competitors have all fueled a movement to reduce or eliminate premiums from 4-H exhibitions (Steel, 1995). Yet, the possibility of earning such premiums is a significant attraction to keeping 4-H members involved in the program. Any movement to eliminate or reduce premiums could affect membership numbers in the long run.

An Ethic of Service. Another significant feature of 4-H that keeps young people coming back each year is the opportunity for community service. In particular, older teens mentioned the opportunities to be involved in community service activities by helping others less fortunate or in need as an attractive feature of 4-H. Helping others generated a feeling of pride in both individual and collective self-worth that was long lasting

enough to be mentioned in interviews months after the original events.

Unlike Boy Scouts which emphasizes the individual nature of service, 4-H places value on group community service activities. Kleinfeld and Shinkwin (1983) pointed out that Boy Scouts expected young people to initiate and carry out a community service project on their own. For example, the Eagle Scout program requires a young man to develop and implement a community service activity.

4-H, on the other hand, expected youth to work together as a group to carry out community service activities. These club activities took a wide variety of forms, but all were centered around contributing to the local community well-being. These community service activities also provided a way for individual and group sharing of pride in accomplishments. Typical projects included cleaning a section of highway, cleaning or refurbishing a local park, making clothes for those in need, organizing a community recycling program, or other such efforts. Community service activities, performed as a club, were an attractive feature of the 4-H program for members and was often mentioned by key informants as a reason to staying involved.

4-H: Learning Environments Where the Bell Never Rings

Not surprisingly, education is a major theme in official 4-H literature. Even the organization's

watchwords, "Learning by doing," emphasize the educational nature of the 4-H experience. 4-H can be fun, but its educational nature is not hidden, glossed over, or disguised. Participants in 4-H are expected to learn something useful and to do it in a participatory way.

Youth members of the program approached this educational mission of the organization in an almost casual way. While fun and friendships are attractions for youth, most accepted the educational nature of the program at face value and gave it little thought. Many youth indicated that the reason they became involved in 4-H was to learn a practical skill they could not learn anywhere else. Learning was what 4-H was all about, and no one questioned that goal although the extent of learning varied from individual to individual. Learning is an integral, implicit, embedded characteristic of the 4-H program.

This emphasis on learning has led some to refer to nonformal youth groups as a "third educational environment" after the family and schools (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1982, p. 3). Yet, the small percentage of youth who participate in such programs raises questions about why some youth participate while others do not. The NELS:88 study (National Center, 1988) revealed that among all eighth graders, only a small number participate in community-based youth programs like Scouts, 4-H, Boys & Girls Clubs, or others (Hafner, 1990; Steele, Miller, & Rai, 1993). While

nearly 80% of all eighth graders participate in either school or community-based programs, the vast majority participate in sports activities and not in educational programs. Religious groups involved more youth than 4-H, scouts, or other youth educational programs.

Although the underlying philosophy of learning permeates all of 4-H, the program attracts a wide variety of people who see different things in the program. As a result, then, this organizational goal receives little critique or questioning. Total participation will always be rather small since the purpose is educational rather than recreational. It was evident that parents see 4-H as a way to develop their children into self-directed learners. 4-H is perceived as one way for children to learn skills that are not taught in schools. Yet, these goals are little discussed between parents and children. In 4-H families, there is a tacit and unquestioned agreement about the value of educational experience that is 4-H.

The reason that the learning aspect of 4-H is not discussed is because learning is the process that carries everything else in 4-H. Learning is what makes all of the other things in 4-H work. Learning is the vehicle for fun, friendships, responsibility, projects, community service, and everything else. This is true informal learning.

When asked about the reasons for joining 4-H, both members and parents described a rather casual process that

belied the intense support the program enjoyed among some parents, especially in clubs with a long history. In these clubs, membership was an expectation of each sibling in a family. There was never a question that one sibling would belong and another would not belong.

In families with no long history of membership in 4-H, parents were less influential in the decision to participate and let their children decide whether or not to participate. Few youth in these families perceived that they were pressured to join by their parents.

Young people talked more about fun, friendships, and the fair than education as a reason for joining. Some members mentioned that an older sibling had been in 4-H so that when they attained the right age, they just joined. Some were aware that their parents supported the program, but this seemed to be a minor consideration in their view. A few members gave discrete responses about how parents had influenced their decision to join.

However, these are not always the same as the adults' concepts of why 4-H is important. Parents tended to emphasize the practical skills that could be gained from the program. Leaders and parents alike spoke often about "learning how to conduct meetings," and "developing responsibility," contributing through community service, or learning how to complete a project. For example,

observations and interviews include the following parent's comment:

Fieldnotes (2/12/1995): The reason our club is growing is that there is no home economics taught in the local schools and parents want their kids to learn these skills--how to prepare food, etc.

However, not one club member interviewed mentioned this as a reason for joining or staying in 4-H. Parents typically had one set of reasons why they wanted their children to participate in 4-H while children emphasized other reasons for joining and staying involved. There did not appear to be much discussion between parents and children about these differing reasons or motivations for participation. Still, both parents and youth find in the 4-H program things that meet their differing needs and interests.

4-H parents saw 4-H as an important avenue to equip their children with skills that were not being taught in schools. Practical, noncognitive skills were valued by these adults. 4-H also provided parents with the opportunity to actively participate in the education and training of their children.

Developing Life Skills

Several research questions which directed this study inquired about the extent of life skill and practical skill development in 4-H club members. While learning was not mentioned as often as a reason for joining, learning practical skills and critical life skills were important

outcomes the program. Many youth members cited life skill development as an outcome of their participation in the 4-H program. As one member put it: "When I joined 4-H, I wasn't looking for leadership at the time," yet this was indeed an important outcome for this young man.

Is 4-H more effective at developing some life skills more than others? So far, something is known about why youth are attracted to the 4-H program and why some members continue to stay involved, but what kinds of skills do members develop as a result of their participation in the program? What effect do different leadership styles of adult club leaders have on the development of these skills? How does the type of club leadership style affect overall satisfaction with the club experience?

Self-Esteem. This study indicated that, despite the orientation of adult 4-H club leaders towards working with youth, club member's self-esteem was not positively nor negatively impacted by different orientations. In fact, it is interesting that there were no significant differences in the self-esteem of youth in any of the five observed clubs despite the differing leadership styles. Further analysis showed that there were also no significant differences based on age or gender.

These results are different from those found in research results from others (Deci & Ryan, 1987; Deci &

Ryan, 1994; Deci, Schwartz, Sheinman & Ryan, 1981; Deci, Spiegel, Ryan, Kostner, & Kauffman, 1982). These studies have found a positive relationship between autonomy-oriented teachers and learner self-competence, motivation and self-worth. Several of these studies have also found differences in self-esteem based on gender with females typically rating themselves lower than males. This was not found to be true in this study, however.

No relationship between leader style and self-concept was found in this study. On the contrary, self-esteem appeared unaffected by the club leader's style and orientation. There are several possible explanations for this result. First, self-esteem of 4-H members may be quite resilient to various leadership orientations. As Coopersmith (1981) and Wylie (1961) have noted, self-esteem is a complex attribute with many influences. Club leadership styles may not have any impact on an individual's self-concept. Despite research in other areas (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 1985), there was not a strong relationship established in this study between self-determination and self-esteem or self-competence.

Moreover, as suggested in the self-esteem literature, self-esteem is a complex phenomenon (Kohn, 1994; Wylie, 1961). It is not clear what the antecedents to self-esteem are or how overall self-esteem is impacted by isolated events in a person's life. 4-H's touch, as one observer

noted, may be too light to make much impact on self-esteem (Erickson, 1983).

What this finding suggests is that youth with either high or mid-range levels of self-esteem are not negatively impacted by a control-oriented style of adult leaders. The self-concept of the young people in these 4-H clubs, it appears, were relatively unaffected by leadership style.

Throughout the interviews, though, a number of youth members mentioned that as a result of their participation in 4-H, they now felt more self-confident and self-assured. Others spoke of their increased ability to speak in public settings and overcoming some shyness which was characteristic of earlier years. Members specifically credited 4-H with helping them become more confident about themselves. Yet, there was no difference between youth in control-oriented or autonomy-oriented clubs. While the Coopersmith instrument failed to detect any significant differences in self-esteem between members in different clubs, members themselves acknowledged the contribution that their participation in 4-H had made toward improved confidence and competence. This impact appeared to be unaffected by leadership style.

There may be a couple of explanations why the Coopersmith instrument failed to detect any differences in self-esteem between members in different club environments. First, the self-esteem instrument was only administered at

one point in time. Trend analysis would provide better evidence of what might be occurring to each individual's self-concept. Coupled with long-term observations of the club environment, this trend analysis may provide more insight into the impact of various leadership styles on individual self-esteem. Second, self-esteem is a rather complex attribute that is impacted by a myriad of events in a person's life. The impact of the 4-H experience may be too light to affect self-esteem. In other respects, a recent memorable event may have a disproportionately important influence on self-concept when the instrument is administered.

Finally, this study used only the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory as the instrument to assess self-concept. However, other instruments could be employed and compared. All self-esteem instruments seem to suffer from certain limitations and flaws, and to evaluate self-concept based on one quantitative tool is simplistic. As Kohn (1994) mentions, there are well over 200 instruments for measuring self-esteem--few of which are comparable. Measuring self-concept remains a problematic issue for social researchers.

Leadership. 4-H is quite effective at developing leadership skills in 4-H members. This pattern consistently emerged in the data, and nearly all those interviewed spoke about the ways that 4-H helped them learn leadership skills.

4-H provides young people with systematic skills in group organization and the exercise of leadership.

Through the 4-H experience, young people effectively learn how to lead as well as follow. Leadership positions are changed every fall, and in an average club of 25 members, a minimum of one-fourth serve in some leadership capacity each year. By serving in such roles--either as an officer or committee chair--members learn how to conduct business meetings, develop an agenda, plan a yearly program of activities, run events and plan social activities, conduct elections, appoint committees, and evaluate the success of their activities. All these activities are important for training youth to live in a democratic society and thus an important part of the socialization process.

In the autonomy-oriented clubs, members held both the formal leadership positions and also exercised leadership authority although some members still resented the smallest intrusions of adults into "their" program. In these clubs, youth were really in charge of the meeting and were not simply serving as figure heads or pawns.

In clubs led by more control-oriented leaders, members simply held formal positions of leadership, but they had less actual authority. In many instances, their authority was usurped by the leaders or the parents. In these clubs, officers felt little investment in the club meeting and

consistently turned to the adults for direction and leadership.

Responsibility, Decision-Making, and Other Life Skills.

4-H is effective in developing other life skills. Many members mentioned developing more responsibility in 4-H, learning how to make decisions, and learning to help others. Moreover, the adult's style of leadership impacts the extent to which the development of such skills are supported. While leader style may not have a discernible impact on self-esteem, leader style did impact self-competence and other learner outcomes.

Qualitative methods used in this research project effectively elicited from members themselves numerous testimonies to the benefits of their participation in the program. Members in autonomy-oriented clubs spoke more often about learning speaking skills, responsibility, and social skills than members in control-oriented clubs. Members in such clubs also mentioned their opportunities to serve in leadership roles and to serve as mentors to younger members more than members in control-oriented clubs. As others have found (e.g., Conti, 1984; Stiller & Ryan, 1991), leaders who establish an open, supportive environment are able to foster student learning and interpersonal skill development more effectively than those who maintain a closed environment. Learner outcomes improve in more autonomy-oriented environments.

As Halperin reported in her research on teacher's styles (1976), control-oriented leaders tend to be more concerned about procedural rules and organizational goals with youth development. Results from this study confirm these observations. Control-oriented leaders described their goals as focusing on project completion, prioritizing tasks, keeping good records, and keeping peace in the club. Control-oriented leaders tended to be more task oriented. The more control-oriented leaders rarely spoke of enhancing interpersonal skills as a goal nor of fostering self-directed learning. These outcomes were viewed as off-shoots of getting things done right.

Autonomy-oriented leaders, in contrast, were more concerned with youth development outcomes--developing positive self-concept and self-worth, teaching decision-making skills, developing young peoples' communication skills, and fostering a sense of pride in accomplishment. As Halperin (1976) discovered, this study found that autonomy-oriented leaders were not bothered by noise or playfulness if they knew that youth were learning and having fun in the process. For example, one autonomy-oriented leader made the following observation:

A really good meeting is a meeting where the business gets done, but anyone who wanted to say something had that chance. There can be fun, giggling, joking, but the meeting gets done. It's not so strict by Robert's rules that no one has fun, but it's not so loose that it's chaos.

Control-oriented leaders were bothered by noise and disruptiveness, and they saw it as counter-productive to reaching club goals. Noise was equated with lack of focus or direction.

Others (Brophy, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1970; Prawat & Nickerson, 1985) suggest that neither extreme style is appropriate but rather that a balanced approach with some structure and some flexibility is more appropriate to enhancing youth outcomes. This research study supports this finding, and several 4-H leaders (such as the one above) suggested that a firm yet flexible approach to club meetings was more appropriate. Even several youth members mentioned the need for some structure and order, but they did not favor an overly strict environment.

It seems reasonable to ask at this point if 4-H members are developing life skills despite the leadership style of their club leaders. This does not appear to be the case. Yet, this study suggests that some youth members are successful at developing critical life skills in spite of control-oriented leaders. What is unknown is to what extent this development is being hindered by such leaders. However, the ideology of youth involvement and leadership development in 4-H is strong enough to reign in some of the overt tendencies of control-oriented leaders to take total control of the club. In some respects, it is evident that the methodology of the club program is pervasive enough to

subdue the inclinations of even highly-controlling leaders so that young people are able to practice and enhance their skills in leadership, decision-making, communications, problem-solving, and developing a sense of personal responsibility.

Practical Skill Development

4-H also helps youth develop practical, noncognitive skills that they are not able to develop elsewhere. This finding is consistent with other studies (Evaluation of Economic and Social Consequences, 1980; Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1983; Sawyer, 1987; Scott, Clark, & Reagan, 1990; Williams, 1983). Members often cited 4-H's opportunities to work with animals as an important factor in joining and staying involved. One youngster mentioned having developed the knowledge and abilities to become a professional rabbit breeder. Another mentioned raising cattle. One member learned how to train dogs.

However, as in the case of self-concept, leadership orientation does not appear to affect the development of these skills. In fact, as noted earlier, members in control-oriented clubs mentioned this kind of skill development just as often as youth in autonomy-oriented clubs. Evidently, despite a controlling leader, youth members are able to seek out and develop subject matter knowledge that they can apply. Regardless of the kind of

leadership exhibited by the club leader, youth reported the development of these kinds of skills through their participation in 4-H. This kind of skill development was not perceived by either parents or youth as being developed in schools.

In 4-H, as in other nonformal youth programs, youth have the unique opportunity to exert influence over the success or failure of various parts of the program. An outsider entering a 4-H club meeting would be immediately struck by the fact that adolescent youth were presiding at the meeting rather than the adults. Youth officers are expected to run the meetings, set up an agenda, delegate tasks, appoint committees, manage finances, maintain order, and generally get the business of the meeting completed while trying to keep the group together.

Nonformal youth programs like 4-H are rare settings, then, "where what a twelve- or thirteen year old does really matters" (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984, p. 69). In these programs, what youth do can influence the success or failure of certain activities--a situation which is rare for youth in schools. In schools, only a very few youth can hold any positions of leadership, and most of the important decisions are made by the adults without consulting youth. This situation is particularly true in middle schools, the age group of many of the participants in this study. Moreover, in schools, the consequences of failure are too great to

allow youth much influence over curriculum, school activities, monetary disbursements, or other management decisions. Yet in 4-H clubs, young people make these kinds of decisions every time they meet. Because the impact of such decisions is not so critical, youth can be more involved in the process of determining outcomes. Mistakes are viewed as opportunities to learn.

In sum, 4-H is able to teach those noncognitive skills that the school is unable to teach precisely because of the voluntary and marginal nature of the nonformal youth programs. Leaders can allow members to flounder in chaos as a learning experience because the end results are not catastrophic. Moreover, members would rather have these experiences than be rescued by well-meaning adults.

Even highly controlling leaders do not intervene as much as they might prefer to because of the strong preference to let youth run the program. Again, it appears that the philosophy and methodology of "learning by doing" is stronger than the leader's controlling behavior. Obviously, autonomy-oriented leaders would practice behaviors which would enhance these skills. However, the fact that youth in clubs where leaders who were more controlling also reported developing these skills is curious. Apparently, leadership style does not significantly affect youth's abilities to develop these skills. This study did not seek to measure differences in

the level of skill development. Although all youth reported developing such skills, it is unknown to what extent control-oriented behaviors might impede the full potential of developing such skills.

Project leaders who were observed as a part of the study tended to be less-controlling than club leaders. In part, this may be due to the underlying philosophy of the 4-H program to which all adults subscribe at least in theory if not in practice. Project leaders, when conducting workshops, put youth in teaching and leadership roles and served primarily as coaches or as a resource person. Rarely did project leaders, even from control-oriented clubs, put themselves in directing roles with youth. Because the nature of project meetings was of interest to youth and imparted practical information of immediate value, youth were more attentive, and discipline or control was less of an issue at project meetings. There was a relevance here that did not exist at the monthly club meetings which tend to be focused on organizational issues, monetary questions, and policy issues.

The 4-H methodology is apparently capable of overshadowing personal leadership styles. Even adults who treated youth as objects were not able to affect them long enough and consistently enough to stop the development of skills and talents.

Identifying Leadership Preferences

Several methods were used to identify adult's orientation to working with young people. The Deci instrument was used initially, and then subjective evaluations from county agents were requested to further assess the predominate leadership style of 4-H club leaders.

Results from observations and interviews suggest that the Deci instrument was a relatively more accurate measure of an adult leader's style of working with young people than the agents' subjective ratings. Participant observations of club leaders in natural settings seemed to bear out the validity of the Deci instrument. Several reasons for this conclusion can be suggested.

First, county agents may not be fully aware of how their adult 4-H club leaders function with young people in the club environment. County agents only rarely visited club meetings even when their children were in a club. Hence, these county agents probably only saw these adults acting as leaders in activities with other adults such as at county 4-H council meetings, fair board meetings, policy setting meetings and in which few youth participate. How these adults act and perform leadership tasks would differ from the orientation and style they exhibit during 4-H club meetings. Yet if this is the primary basis for their knowledge of the adult leader's orientation as either controlling or autonomous, their evaluation may be skewed.

Thus, the results of this research study suggest that the Deci instrument could be used as an initial assessment tool of an adult's leadership style in working with youth. Clearly, other means of assessment should also be employed especially qualitative observations, but the Deci instrument would be a useful initial intake instrument to assess a new leader's orientation toward working with youth.

4-H Appeals to More Autonomy-Oriented Adults

Official 4-H ideology and philosophy emphasizes youth empowerment and "learning by doing" activities which actively engage youth in their own learning. Perhaps because of this emphasis, the 4-H program may attract and retain adult leaders whose preference is for a style that is more autonomy-oriented than control-oriented. In this study, only a few leaders scored below zero (the midpoint on the continuum) on the Deci scale, indicating that most leaders in the three counties had a more autonomy-oriented approach toward working with youth. While the highest positive score was 12, the lowest negative score was -3. In fact, 37 out of the 42 scores (88%) were above zero on the Deci scale, indicating a more autonomy-oriented approach. Only two leaders in this study scored below the zero point.

While leadership styles vary, the 4-H program appears to attract adult leaders who act largely from an autonomy-oriented style of working with youth. Highly control-

oriented leaders would perhaps experience high levels of frustration with the official and hidden curriculum of the program and would self-select out or find clubs where such control was supported by a majority of participants.

Olsen et al. (1986) recognized that an extreme style of family relationships may be functional under some conditions. Olsen observed that in highly rigid environments if enmeshment and rigidity are supported and part of the family's norm, then this style may be just as effective as a more balanced approach. However, he suggested that this would only be in cases where such rigidity and extreme enmeshment were the norm such as in Mormon, Amish, and other religious communities. Olsen also recognized that an extreme style may be appropriate under special circumstances and in the short run only. For instance, an extreme family type may be functional after a family has experienced a crisis such as the loss of a family member or after the birth of a child (Olsen, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979). Yet, Olsen et al. emphasized the short-term nature of this relationship:

For example, the extreme family type of being rigidly enmeshed might be functional for taking care of an infant, but would be less functional when the child becomes an adolescent. (p. 18)

4-H club leaders who attempted to function in this way would experience considerable dissonance with the dominant ideology of the 4-H program and would be hard-pressed to

reconcile the differences between theory and practice. Perhaps the 4-H program ideology helps extremely control-oriented leaders self-select out of the program. This area requires more investigation.

In every meeting observed, youth conducted the business and were perceived by other youth as largely in charge. Adults coached from the sidelines. While youth officers and some members were involved in planning various parts of the 4-H program, they were not as involved as official ideology suggested nor as much as club leaders intended. In the more control-oriented clubs, the adult leader put together the written agenda for each monthly meeting and simply told the officers what to do. As a result, officers were observed to feel lost, floundered, and turned to the adult leader more often for cues and signals that they were doing alright. Officers in such control-oriented clubs felt less influence and experienced an external locus of control.

In more autonomy-oriented clubs, officers helped to build the monthly club meeting agenda. In some cases, the adult leader contacted officers as much as one week prior to the actual meeting. In other cases, the leader met with officers in an executive session before each club meeting and developed an agenda. Even if these leaders had prepared a typewritten agenda ahead of time, they still met with officers to go through the agenda and added things the officers wanted to discuss or hear reports on. Officers in

more autonomy-oriented clubs depended less on the adult leader for cues and detailed information.

Future research in this area would do well to purposely select highly controlling club leaders for study. While this was an original intent of this research project, leaders with very high control-oriented scores could not be identified. It would also be useful if these control-oriented leaders had been club leaders for at least 3 years. This length of club leadership would provide enough background so that a researcher could study how such a leader performed in the club environment beyond trying to learn how to manage a club.

Satisfaction with the Club Environment

Club leadership style affects members' satisfaction with the club environment. Club members in clubs where leaders were more autonomy-oriented were more satisfied with the club and mentioned the fun aspects of the club more often than members in control-oriented clubs. Members in autonomy-oriented clubs had consistently lower discrepancy scores on the CASES IV instrument. In addition, these members mentioned fun and other attractive features of their 4-H clubs on numerous occasions.

By contrast, club members in clubs where leaders were more control-oriented indicated significantly lower levels of satisfaction and were less likely to mention fun as a

significant feature of the club. These youth were more likely to describe the kinds of practical skills they were learning, the friends they could associate with, or the opportunity to participate in the county fair as attractive features of the 4-H program rather than they were to mention fun. These features, which members in control-dominated clubs mentioned, are all elements which are independent of the club leader's style.

These results regarding leadership style support research results from other fields (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ferris & Rowland, 1981; Klimonski & Hayes, 1980). To the degree that a leader is directive and controlling, subordinates feel less influence over and less satisfaction with that person. In addition, internal motivation also decreases under directive or control-oriented leadership. This study supports these observations from other fields.

Providing a Social Network for Communities

Why do parents support enrolling their children in 4-H? Why do youth find the 4-H experience positive? 4-H serves as an effective agency for building and enhancing the informal social network of local communities. Throughout the observations and interviews, it became apparent that the 4-H experience brought together people with shared interests and values who wanted to actively participate in community life and who expected their children to share this value.

People involved in 4-H see this as a way to connect with the social fabric of their community and the larger world.

Through exchange trips, club outings, community service, and other social events, 4-H clubs provide families with a variety of methods to connect to society outside the local arena.

4-H Develops a Camaraderie

Participation in the 4-H experience creates a sense of uniqueness among those involved. 4-H members feel special and apart from those who do not belong. Those who participate in 4-H feel a special bond and connection which does not exist with others in the community who do not participate in the program. Like an exclusive club, membership in 4-H is held in high regard and imparts a special status among those who participate. Families feel a special kinship that overcomes many obstacles to open communication. Benjamin Barber perhaps framed this special relationship which exists between people:

The point where democracy and education intersect is the point we call community....If little learning is taking place in American schools and colleges it may be because there is too much solitude and too little community among the learners (and the teachers, too). (Barber, 1991, p. 166)

This sense of a special status permeates the local community and helps generate support for 4-H in the market livestock sale and other auctions or fund raisers.

Community businesses are proud to sponsor 4-H fund raising efforts or contribute to 4-H events and activities because of the positive image of the program.

4-H Broadens Horizons

4-H often provides members with opportunities that are not available through other avenues in the local community. Many members mentioned the attractiveness of the county fair as an important reason for becoming involved in 4-H. Others mentioned trips. For youth who live in particularly isolated locations, 4-H may be the only avenue to experiencing the larger world. This is especially true for youth who may not excel in academic environments.

Adults were particularly impressed with the range of activities offered within the 4-H program. Despite its largely agricultural and rural image, parents described their amazement at the breadth of options available to their children. They also expressed surprise about the abilities of youth to make and do things to the extent that they did. Apparently, parents were unaware of the extent of the talents and abilities of their own children, and through participation in 4-H, they were able to gain a fuller appreciation for the skills of their own children when challenged.

Kleinfeld and Shinkwin (1983) arrived at similar conclusions about the diversity and breadth of the 4-H

program especially when compared with Girl Scout and Boy Scout programs. 4-H taught the greatest variety of skills compared to scouting. These researchers also identified that 4-H was more effective than other nonformal youth programs at mixing youth of different ages and "created the most extensive network of relationships between young people and adults" (p. 5).

This research project found that 4-H was effective at cross-age relationships both between youth of different ages and between youth and adults. 4-H was also effective in putting youth in contact with civic-minded adults who were concerned about youth and gave of their time and energy. By creating such opportunities, members learned the value of service and volunteerism. Perpetuating this sense of service, 4-H is able to endure as a viable community organization.

However, since this study did not survey program drop-outs or those who had consciously decided never to join, it is unclear what the larger public perception of 4-H is among these groups. Some studies (Boyd, 1991; Ladewig & Thomas, 1987; Warner & Christenson, 1984) have indicated that while the public image of 4-H is positive, many people really know very little that is specific about the program. The good news is that the program does not have a negative image with the general public.

Training and Support

Club leaders want and need training on effective strategies for working with youth in nonformal youth groups. From this study, it is evident that club leaders are not receiving training or support for knowing how to work with youth in nonformal learning environments or for managing clubs. Several club leaders, particularly those who were more control-oriented, openly expressed their frustration with the lack of orientation and training provided to them as 4-H club leaders from the local county Extension office. They felt in many cases that they had been thrust into a role without any support or training, and when things went awry, they had no support system to fall back upon while having to shoulder all the blame.

Results from this study suggest that in order to maximize the positive outcomes for youth participants in the 4-H program, adult leaders should receive training in ways to increase their autonomy-oriented behaviors with youth and to reduce their heteronomous behaviors. Training programs which give leaders specific skills in asking questions, refraining from giving specific, step-by-step instructions, and providing support and encouragement would help leaders who are struggling with how to manage a club.

Influence of the County Agent

One area that this study sought to investigate was the impact of the county agent's personal orientation to working with youth on the total county 4-H program. Each county Extension agent completed the Deci instrument and results were compared with all club leaders in each relevant county.

The county agent's leadership style appears to have no impact on the kind of leadership style practiced at the club level. County agents have only a tangential influence on club programs and activities. County agents' leadership style or orientation to working with youth may be expressed at the county level, but appears not be a factor within local clubs. A more important influence on the club is the dominant 4-H ideology contained in numerous official publications, documents, newsletters, and slogans (e.g., "learning by doing," or "to make the best better").

4-H as an Agent of Socialization

A common feature of our highly specialized and complex society is that many socialization agents or systems operate simultaneously and parallel to each other and without much coordination. Still, these socialization institutions influence the social development of young people not only through the explicit and intended educational goals but also by the way they are organized and actually operate. These latter influences are by-products while are sometimes of an

unintended character, yet they are just as important to understanding the role of socialization agents as the intended goals.

Socialization theory suggests that the power of certain settings to influence attitudes, values, and behavior depend on a number of factors. Factors in the effectiveness of socialization include (1) the power to control valued rewards; (2) the level of involvement of participants; (3) the explicitness of normative goals; (4) the extent to which the experience is voluntary or self-chosen; (5) the strength of the emotional bonds between participants; and (6) the consistency of the particular setting to other settings in which the individual participates, or the degree of congruity between settings (Brim & Wheeler, 1966; Cohen, 1971; Coleman, 1972; Mosher, 1979; Putnam, 1995; Ragoff et al., 1995; Scott, 1965; Vreeland & Bidwell, 1965).

As a voluntary, nonformal youth program, 4-H is not as powerful a socialization agent by these criteria as some other elements of the community such as the family or formal education. To only a limited extent, 4-H provides awards that are valued by relatively few adolescents. Participation in 4-H, while voluntary, is limited to a small amount of time. 4-H club meetings are held once a month over a period of 12 months, and there are limited additional meetings for project work and community service activities. Altogether, these activities take up a relatively small amount of time.

However, the norms and values expressed through 4-H are typically consistent with the norms and values of the family. The norms of 4-H may not be consistent, however, with the values of peer groups or schools. The interaction between all these settings is important to understanding the socialization process.

4-H Ideology. This study demonstrates that 4-H serves as a agent of socialization, but its impact is more covert than overt, more latent than blatant. Clubs have consistent norms and values which are inculcated in both youth and adults. There are many opportunities to practice skills that reinforce these values. While much of the original ideology about training youth to live in a democratic society using science and efficiency are still evident in the 4-H program, they are less powerful than in earlier years.

4-H has matured, and with this maturity the 4-H program has modified some of the ideological overlay which characterized many activities in the past. For instance, in the past, a young person learned how to cook using the latest science to make their household more efficient and to improve their family's nutritional level. Today, a young person still learns how to cook, but the emphasis on learning is slightly changed. Just learning how to cook is valued in and of itself. While efficiency is no longer as

important an ideal as in the past, the application of science and the importance of nutrition still adhere. Members learn these skills to learn what is best by following recommended practices, but they also learn these skills to learn some things about themselves and to develop a sense of accomplishment. Still, on occasion, there are instances when even the principles of science and nutrition take a back seat to fad or expediency. In several clubs, demonstrations were given on making "Rice Crispy Treats," the nutritional value of which can be questioned.

Mentoring. Socialization can occur in the interactions between adults and youth, in the interactions between youth and youth, and within groups that share a common set of norms and values. All of these instances were in evidence in 4-H clubs. When parents actively participate with their children in educational programs, socialization influence is even stronger (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin, 1984). Numerous examples of adult-youth interactions and within club relations were found in this study. The socialization process also occurs when youth work with one another.

An important aspect of socialization which occurs between youth is from the role modeling which older teens are able to do with younger members. Older members are quite conscious of their position as mentors, role models, and examples to younger members, and they try to serve in

positive ways. By involving youth from a wide range of ages, 4-H provides meaningful ways for older members to serve as role models for younger children. Older members are quite conscious of the reality that younger members look up to them and regard them with some awe and respect. Older members felt such a role gave them stature and a sense of importance in the 4-H club.

Dualism. Clubs represent the dual goals of progress and preservation. A creation of the Progressive era in American history, 4-H operates both as an agency of socialization and an agency of change. On the one hand, 4-H strives to help educate and raise young people to assume leadership roles in society. On the other hand, it also attempts to develop in these young people individual initiative, self-direction, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving and decision-making abilities which can lead to discontinuities with the past and with authority figures. The dual nature of these tendencies often result in controversy and conflict.

Conflict comes as no surprise to those who work in 4-H. While revelling in its past and strong traditions, 4-H also expands young people's horizons, creates opportunities, and develops in youth the sense that they can be whatever they want to be. At times, the goals of youth may conflict with the goals of adults. This kind of dualism can give rise to

conflict, stress, and dissonance in the program. While adults may be working to "stay the course," young people may be pulling in another direction, using the skills of leadership that 4-H had helped them develop. How such conflicts are resolved says a lot about the strength of the program.

At the same time, young people are imbued with democratic principles while trying to co-exist in an authoritarian environment. This is particularly true in clubs led by control-oriented leaders. The irony of this situation is not lost on older club members who feel they should be in charge of the program but feel that adults keep taking away their power and influence, particularly at the county level.

Summary. 4-H is an agency of change, but it also has its traditionalists who see change as a threat to the old ways and as a subversion of the adult leadership's authority. Autonomy-oriented leaders, however, celebrate this nascent self-direction and see their role as stepping back in order to allow youth to enter positions of leadership and influence.

This study found that 4-H is an important socialization agent for young people. It teaches them how to conduct meetings, speak in public, fill out paperwork, and deal with bureaucracy. It also teaches them politeness and respect

and conveys community standards of behavior. Regardless of the leader's orientation, clubs effectively trained youth in the norms and expectations of the local community.

Autonomy-oriented leaders consistently spoke about their roles in helping youth take more responsibility for the direction and leadership of the club. Control-oriented leaders tended to discount the abilities of youth to lead and often snatched away opportunities before youth had a chance to experience real leadership.

Recommendations

From the results of this study, recommendations have been formulated for three specific groups: County Extension agents, 4-H club leaders, and state 4-H program faculty.

Recommendations to County Extension Faculty

Include youth on county 4-H councils. 4-H is a program for youth and should match its official rhetoric with actual practice. A major step in this direction would be including youth representatives of each club on the county 4-H council. As the policy-making group for the county 4-H program, the 4-H council needs to include youth members who have equal voting privileges with current adult representatives.

In one county, each club was represented by an adult representative and a youth representative. Youth were 50%

of the council membership and had a voice in county policies. No youth members interviewed in this county voiced frustration with the lack of input on county-wide policies or rules.

In those counties where youth were not represented on the council, though, members voiced frustration with the amount of adult influence in the program. As one member bluntly put it:

All the adults make too many decisions about what we can or can't do. (18 year old member, autonomy-oriented club)

Others echoed this sentiment, and even members in autonomy-oriented clubs felt that at the county level adults made too many decisions without youth involvement. 4-H councils would be well-advised to include youth members as full partners.

Provide ongoing training to organizational leaders.

County Extension faculty should also provide training to leaders on a regular, consistent basis. One-time training at the beginning is not enough. Club leaders need periodic updates and should be receiving the most up-to-date training based on the results of research which reveal improved strategies for working with youth.

From the results of interviews and club observations, 4-H club leaders would like to receive more training and ongoing support from the county Extension office. Several

leaders expressed frustration that they were put into positions of leadership without any training or guidance.

In addition, the more autonomy-oriented leaders were those who had attended in-county and out-of-county training and were using ideas they had gained during various workshops. Seating arrangements, for example, were redesigned after a leader attended a workshop on different strategies for club communications. Leaders benefit from training and are willing to implement new ideas, but training must be made available and attractive to volunteer leaders.

Periodically and regularly, visit each club in your county. Personal contact and observations of club leaders are absolutely necessary to ensuring that the club program is being implemented according to the most up-to-date research and methods. This cannot be done from the county office or impacted through newsletters. A personal touch is needed in this age of high-tech.

Develop an assessment process to gauge the orientation and leadership style of potential 4-H leaders. This study indicated that there were evident differences and impacts based on the leadership styles of 4-H club leaders. While this study failed to detect significant numeric differences in the self-concept of youth under various leadership styles, there were obvious differences in other areas.

Leaders who are overly controlling can create a negative club atmosphere in which everyone becomes frustrated. Measures of club satisfaction were statistically significant based on leadership style. In addition, youth members in clubs led by autonomy-oriented leaders mentioned the development of decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, communication skills, and other life skills more than members in control-dominated clubs. By trying to find out what kind of style a leader might practice, the county Extension staff can take steps to train and orient leaders toward using more autonomy-oriented behaviors and reducing control-oriented behaviors. The focus should be on influencing behaviors, not a person's leadership style or values.

High levels of dissatisfaction can have several results which should be of concern to county Extension faculty. First, rigid or chaotic clubs result in high turnover and member attrition. Second, these clubs can create controversy and problems in which a significant portion of agent time will be consumed trying to remedy it when it is a personality style.

Young people may self-select over time and find the club environment that is right for them. Youth desiring more autonomy and self-direction may gravitate toward a club with more autonomy-oriented leadership. At the same time, youth looking for external direction, who are motivated by

extrinsic rewards and incentives, will gravitate toward clubs led by more control-oriented leaders.

A final scenario may be that overly controlling leaders self-select out of the 4-H program all together because of frustration. Given that such a leadership style is at odds with official dogma and philosophy, such leaders may simply leave the program. This may explain why the preponderance of leadership styles were on the autonomy-oriented side of the continuum rather than evenly distributed on the Deci scale.

Recommendations to 4-H Club Leaders

Pay attention to the seating arrangement. While the physical nature of each club meeting place restricts what can realistically be done, careful thought should be given to how best to maximize the potential of the meeting location. Seating and the physical setup of the club meeting is critical to enhancing communication and interaction. Physical arrangements may send out a psychological message about whether people or things are more important. Clubs that did not consciously think about seating arrangement experienced many more discipline problems and disruptions. As a result, control-oriented leaders spent more time lecturing and chastising members than on education.

Autonomy-oriented clubs kept experimenting with different arrangements until they found one that worked for them. In one case, a club moved to a different meeting place in order to be able to set up the club meeting differently. This club leader recognized that the physical set-up was more important than the location of the meeting.

Get rid of the gavel. At one time, it may have been necessary to place a gavel in the hands of the president as a symbol of leadership and authority or even as a part of training. However, effective clubs have no use for a gavel. In control-oriented clubs, the president resorted to banging the gavel in frustration. Hammering with a gavel only contributes to the noise level and is not held in much esteem by club members. Other means of creating order and respect in the club environment can be found.

Meet with club officers in executive sessions before each club meeting. In clubs where club officers felt empowered and in positions of real leadership, it was due in part from club leaders who took the time to meet in advance of each meeting to discuss the agenda, describe critical issues that needed to be discussed, and generally familiarize the youth officers with the course of the meeting before it occurred.

Some club leaders even contacted officers in the week prior to the club meeting to check signals and coordinate

for the upcoming meeting. Even though it was obvious that the adult leader did much of the preparatory work for the meeting (securing a meeting place, ensuring that refreshments would be there, or obtaining necessary information), during the actual meeting most adult leaders took a back seat so the officers could conduct the meeting.

Develop a "buddy system." A buddy system should be developed to pair new, younger members with older, more experienced members. In two of the observed clubs, the buddy system was an effective method of helping new, younger members feel some connection to the club. Although the amount of interaction between "buddies" obviously depends on each individual, just having the system in place created a sense of bonding for the younger members. They had someone they could turn to for advice, and buddies often presented gifts or other mementos on important occasions--birthdays or holidays.

Start each year with a group goal-setting session. In clubs where trust is high and communication good, rules and sanctions become less necessary. To solve the problem of lack of commitment to group goals, clubs often resort to extrinsic motivators, contests, or merit systems to gain compliance or commitment. Instead, club leaders could devote a special meeting for group goal setting and actively involve all club members in determining what the club should

do during the coming year. Such participatory involvement is consistent with the ideology of the 4-H program and could lessen the dependence on extrinsic motivators to gain compliance or commitment.

Use group consensus rather than Robert's Rules of Order to arrive at decisions. There is an interesting dichotomy in the contemporary 4-H program. On the one hand, an important goal of 4-H is to train young people to live in a democracy based on the principles of majority rule while maintaining a respect for minority rights. On the other hand, 4-H groups are designed to elicit involvement from all members and develop a sense of trust and togetherness--like a family. Often, these two goals are in conflict.

Herein lies a paradox. A family, for example, does not vote on whether to expel someone from the group due to that person's failure to meet minimum requirements for participation. Likewise, a family does not only plan events by majority rule. Yet, this is the approach most clubs take which use parliamentary procedure.

In essence, when examined closely, there is an ambivalence about democratic rule in 4-H clubs. In all clubs, leaders did not vote although, like lobbyists, they had great influence over how their children did vote. In some cases, adults intervened to exercise veto power over certain decisions, particularly where dates for certain

activities were in question. In other instances, adults often ignored the official and unofficial bounds of ideology and found themselves introducing motions or even voting. Understandably, the adults probably had a more complete understanding of family commitments and family schedules than did youth members of the club. Yet, the point remains: clubs are not run strictly by democratic rule.

From this study, it became evident that the process of parliamentary procedure makes a full and open discussion of various points of view difficult if not impossible. First, a motion must be made, and then seconded before any debate occurs. Often, in the confusion, a club officer calls for a vote before there is any discussion. As a result, adults feel compelled to step in and direct affairs for the club. In other cases, very young members were so anxious to participate in any kinesthetic way that they would raise their hands in favor of motions without understanding what they were voting on.

Another aspect of this parliamentary process is the impact on youth involvement and confidence. Whoever introduces a motion that fails feels that they, too, have somehow failed. Children are not able to distinguish between a motion they have made and their own integrity. A defeat of their motion is perceived as a personal rebuke. Over time, younger members were reluctant to introduce or make motions for fear of rejection. No one wants to be a

loser, but everyone would like to think of themselves as a winner; the parliamentary process practiced in clubs is undermining this intent.

It would be better if the discussion could occur first, and then after a group consensus had evolved, a motion could be made, seconded, and agreed upon. In this way, there would be few or no losers, and motions would not need to be made that stood little chance of being approved.

While the system of majority rule and parliamentary procedure have been used purportedly to train youth for living in a democratic society, the elements of the process have become an obstacle to effective group decision-making and deliberation. Such rigidity is also an impediment to training young people to live in a democracy. Parliamentary procedure, which is followed to train members in its finer procedural points, is an impediment to an open discussion of critical issues and for gaining larger group consensus. Not surprisingly, Robert's Rules of Order was written by a military general with an interest in restricting input and open deliberations. In several clubs where close votes were taken, the minority opinion obviously felt unappeased and resentful at the outcome. Divisions were created and hard feelings resulted. Had another procedure been used to arrive at a solution, more people may have felt vested in and supportive of the outcome. Palmer recognized the limitations of parliamentary decision-making processes:

If the groups leader's views usually prevail but are not strongly supported by a majority of the members, morale may suffer and the commitment to carrying out group goals will likely become the responsibility of just the leader or a few of his or her close supporters. (p. 95)

Work to create a sense of trust and communication within the club. Supporters of control-oriented styles of leadership often operate this way because of their experiences with low-trust groups hindered by distorted communications. In other cases, control-oriented leaders express a basic distrust in the abilities of other people. Membership requirements, attendance policies, parliamentary procedures that guarantee minimal opportunities for people to talk, merit systems, competitions which create artificial motivation are all set up to deal with the lack of trust and dysfunctional communications in groups. However, "as groups grow, the necessity for these formal control systems disappears" (Gibb & Gibb, 1967, p. 169). Really effective groups should be able to minimize their rules and their dependence on parliamentary procedure.

4-H clubs should make changes to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Control-oriented club leaders were much more explicit about listing rules and requirements for membership than autonomy-oriented leaders. Members in control-oriented clubs felt less welcomed and less informed than members in autonomy-oriented clubs. The goal should be

to provide avenues of participation rather than barriers to membership.

In his work to identify the characteristics of "quality schools," Glasser (1992) points out that courtesy is a core element of how effective leaders operate with others. In a quality environment, there is no sarcasm or put-downs. Quality schools and organizations also do not come to depend on rules as the last bastion of defense against chaos. In contrast, control-oriented leaders depend on rules and when they are in charge, "rules tend to proliferate" (p. 123).

Boss-managers accept the cliché that workers do not want to work or that students do not want to learn, and they depend on rules to keep them on task. They do not realize that what workers and students want is satisfying work and that having many rules, with a variety of punishments for breaking them, makes work less satisfying.
(p. 123)

This is not to say that effective teachers or managers do not have any rules but rather that their rules are simple and few. Moreover, rules are developed collaboratively with those in the organization. Such is the case with autonomy-oriented leaders as well.

Recommendations to State 4-H Program Faculty

Develop useful organizational leader support materials.
Club leaders are anxious for support materials--particularly videos and audio tapes that they can use at their leisure. The state 4-H staff can provide a useful function in developing consistent, research-based leader support

materials that will help all leaders do their best. Even control-oriented leaders expressed their frustration with what was happening in their clubs but did not know where to turn for help.

Develop training programs for county faculty to use with their leaders. County Extension faculty have so many responsibilities and issues pulling at their time that they do not have time to develop training curriculum for their leaders. Instead, state 4-H program faculty should be developing training modules that county agents can use with their leaders.

Another approach would be to identify exemplary club leaders who have exhibited the kinds of traits identified as desirable in this study and use them as trainers. County agents could identify key leaders who would take responsibility for training other leaders within the county.

Finally, state 4-H program faculty should develop a training program of autonomy-supporting techniques that leaders can use in working with young people in 4-H settings. In the absence of techniques, leaders seemingly resort to control strategies in 4-H groups. Developing specific strategies and techniques that all leaders could implement to enhance the autonomy-orientation of club meetings would go a long way towards changing the internal

dynamics of club meetings and result in better outcomes for youth participants.

Identify tools to measure program outcomes more accurately. Several previous studies on nonformal youth programs have not been able to identify the extent to which life skills are enhanced by participation in the program. Intuitively, it makes sense that leadership style would be quite influential on the development of life skills in youth, but measuring the differences leadership style makes this difficult. Tools or techniques are needed to assist with this kind of evaluation.

This study has shown that more autonomy-oriented leadership styles affect life skills development as well as club satisfaction. However, there is a need to develop more tools or instruments to measure these impacts more effectively.

Train club leaders and agents in consensual decision-making. Before parliamentary procedure can be replaced, club leaders will need help in understanding what can be put in its place. State 4-H program faculty are in the best position to help train both field faculty and club leaders in consensual decision-making processes which will help clubs arrive at workable solutions that nearly everyone can support. As it is now, 49% of the club members can disagree

with a club plan of action, but they have no way to change the result.

Future Research Needs

Finally, this study has resulted in an awareness about future research which can further elucidate the impact of the 4-H club experience on members.

Include ability level as an independent variable.

Future studies would do well to include youth ability levels in the analysis of the impact of leadership style on self-esteem and other life skills. Previous research studies have indicated that this may be an important defining variable in determining the impact of a control or autonomy-oriented leadership style.

Study leaders who are at the extremes. In order to gain further insights into the impact of leadership styles on 4-H member outcomes, future studies would do well to purposely select leaders who represent the very far extremes of control and autonomy as identified by the Deci instrument.

Assess parenting style. Using the FACES III instrument developed by Olsen et al., future research ought to include an assessment of parenting styles to see if there is any congruity between parenting style and club leadership style.

Focus on project leaders and parents. Future research on the impact of the 4-H experience on participants should include a study of project leaders and parents who often work more regularly with 4-H members. Community clubs meet at most only once a month, yet project groups may meet more often for a specific period of time. Future research would do well to inquire into the experiences of youth in these settings.

Trend analysis of self-esteem. Future research efforts should try to measure self-esteem over a period of time rather than only at one time. Perhaps trend analysis of self-esteem scores would provide more insight into the effect of the 4-H experience on participants.

Use a comparison group. Although it was beyond the scope of this project, future research should include youth who participate in another nonformal youth group as well as youth who do not participate in any community-based youth organizations. The comparisons between these groups would provide useful insights into the impact of the experience. Qualitative and quantitative methods should be used.

Collect demographic data. The NELS:88 study has provided a detailed national description of 4-H families. However, data is needed within states to determine how closely 4-H families resemble this national study. Future

research efforts should collect more demographic information about families who participate in 4-H. Useful information would include income categories, educational attainment, residence, race and community involvement.

Summary

This research study has provided a number of results and a variety of recommendations for three key audiences-- club leaders, county Extension faculty, and state 4-H program faculty. These are brought together in the final chapter in a description of the traits of effective youth groups.

CHAPTER 7

CHARACTERISTICS OF VIBRANT YOUTH GROUPS

Introduction

Studies of youth organizations have revealed some common elements of success (Erickson, 1984). First, successful nonformal youth programs "adopt an approach that is both firm and flexible" (Health & McLaughlin, 1991, p. 625). Second, successful organizations empower members and view them as resources to the program rather than treating members as infants, objects of adult wisdom, or recipients of adult largesse. Third, successful youth programs are also clear about their goals and their rules for membership. Finally, successful youth programs develop in participants a sense that the organization can be a fortress against an often unfriendly outside world--a place that is safe and constructive where a teen can count on knowing what would happen (Heath & McLaughlin, 1991). The goal of such programs is to create a family-like atmosphere that fosters a sense of mutual support and loyalty.

Certainly, this study supports some of these characteristics. However, others surfaced as well. An appropriate term for these characteristics is vibrancy--the

state of psychological health and well-being described by Pipher in Reviving Ophelia (1994). Vibrancy is a characteristic of people whose psychological health is such that "they accept themselves rather than waiting for others to accept them" (p. 37). This concept of vibrancy is similar in many ways to that of autonomy as developed by Piaget and Kamii (1991). Vibrant youth groups are pulsating with life, vigor, and activity and help foster a sense of control over life's events rather than a submission to the will and whims of others.

While the language may differ, others have also recognized this uniqueness of health. Terry (1993) employed the concept of authenticity as a major defining characteristic for effective leadership. Authenticity in this view refers to "certain fulfilled characteristics of an action" (p. 110). Authenticity is more than "genuineness and a refusal to engage in self-deception" (p. 128). Authenticity contains within itself a drive toward change; it impels one to participate in life, and it sets direction toward a desirable future.

In the same way, vibrant youth groups are those which share some of the characteristics of authenticity identified by Terry. Vibrant groups are those which have achieved a sense of genuineness and a drive toward the future. This is not in some smug way but rather in a way that they believe in themselves and have a sense of inner confidence. Vibrant

youth groups believe in what they do, celebrate their commitments to action, and express a sense of hope and courage for the youth and their role in the future. Vibrant youth groups develop a strong sense of autonomy in young people. They are alive with activity, and visually vibrate with life and energy. Vibrant youth groups exude vigor. What are the characteristics of vibrant youth groups? As a result of this study, several consistent traits emerged.

Vibrant youth groups change how they do things but not what they do. In the language of previous research, vibrant youth groups are those that are "firm yet flexible." The two most vibrant clubs in this study met in many different locations and did many different kinds of activities at those meetings. Vibrant clubs were those that experimented with seating arrangements until they found one that worked for them. Vibrant clubs tried new activities, new fundraisers, and new ideas all the time. One member specifically mentioned that "our club is really original in our meetings."

At the same time, though, vibrant clubs provided a consistency and reliability on which members could count. As Grolnick and Ryan (1989) found in their study of families, moderate levels of structure were characteristic of healthy groups. Dates for meetings, for example, were set far in advance and rarely changed. Times for meetings

were adhered to regardless of minor conflicts with other events. Vibrant clubs met regularly and consistently. In addition, vibrant groups created their own unique celebrations. Traditions, rituals, and ceremonies were used to foster a sense of continuity with the past and with an organization larger than the local club.

Less effective clubs, on the other hand, were always changing meeting times and dates, formats for meetings varied from meeting to meeting, and the club rarely functioned as a calm eye in the center of the storm of adolescence. Less effective clubs were characterized by irregularity and inconsistency. As a result, communications were poor and often a source of concern among members and parents.

Vibrant youth groups work hard and play hard. Several clubs scheduled many different kinds of activities throughout the year to provide variety and fun. One club, for example, plans an annual ski trip. This same club also has a roller skating party and campground clean-up party as a part of community service. Another club took a trip to a nearby water slide. The common theme was that clubs were not meeting just to meet or just to conduct business. The club meeting provided opportunities for groups to do things together in a fun way.

While playing hard is a hallmark of vibrant youth groups, hard work is also a common feature. Vibrant clubs were involved in community service activities and fundraisers that spanned a wide variety of interests; these included such diverse activities as cleaning up a highway, providing programs at the local nursing home, and working at a food booth at a Fourth of July rodeo. Effective clubs get involved and train members to be contributing members of their community. As one youth put it, "It's hard work, but it's worth it."

Vibrant youth groups "take time for training." A common feature of the vibrant groups in this study was the concerted and conscious effort to set aside time to train youth for the roles they will assume in adulthood. Effective club leaders, for example, regularly met with the club's officers before each meeting to ensure that everyone knew what was going to happen and what needed to be accomplished. Young people were involved as equal partners in the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

This deliberate action on the part of the adult leaders is a key aspect of vibrancy. Research has demonstrated that well-functioning groups do not just happen. Rather, "they result from consistent teacher efforts to create, maintain, and (occasionally) restore conditions that foster effective learning" (Brophy, 1983, p. 266).

Vibrant youth groups empower rather than embalm youth.

Empowerment means "to authorize, delegate, give authority, enable or permit a person to do something" (Palmer, in press, p. 7). In short, vibrant youth groups enable young people to do what they are qualified to do. Rather than try and preserve young people in some child-like state, vibrant youth groups empower members to develop responsibility.

Vigorous youth clubs focus on helping youth of all ages assume positions of influence and leadership rather than trying to keep them as children subjective to the whims and fancies of adult experts. Mistakes are made, but the long-range view of the process is uppermost in the minds of leaders. Teens especially feel motivated to stay active because they can exert influence and a sense a control over the group that is absent in other arenas of their lives. Leaders of such groups recognize that the process is more important than the solution.

Vibrant youth groups help young people develop feelings of autonomy or self-determination "to experience one's actions as emanating from the self" (Kohn, 1994, p. 281). This is possibly the most important attribute of vibrant youth groups. Such groups help young people develop a sense of oneself as competent and effective as they function in a supportive atmosphere were setbacks are no big deal and are viewed as opportunities to learn. By encouraging young people to work together to solve problems and take action,

4-H helps create what one person has called "a small republic of the intellect--democratic, participatory, active" (Matthews, 1996, p. 102).

As others have found (Kohn, 1994; Lofquist, 1983), when young people get together to make decisions and solve problems, they develop a positive sense of self. Moreover, they learn that their voices matter and that they are not merely at the mercy of fate, luck, or whimsy. Finally, through the process of actively participating in making decisions that affect them, young people are able to sharpen their reasoning and analyzing skills.

A clear message from this research is that when you put young people in charge and get them involved in the activities of planning, implementing, and evaluating programs, they can overcome even extremely poor leadership. Simply by being engaged and committed, young people can rise above controlling leadership and develop the requisite skills necessary for success in life.

Supportive environments help empower youth and enhance their skills to become contributing adults later in life. In contrast, disempowering environments try to keep young people as children and do not recognize or accept the processes of growth and development. Such environments try to preserve young people as children who, like the characters in Peter Pan, never grow up.

Vibrant clubs make the effort to communicate. Members in vibrant youth groups frequently mentioned that they felt listened to, respected, and that their input was valued. Vibrant youth groups make a conscious effort to involve members in discussions. Effective groups also communicate well with one another. They keep members informed about dates and locations of special meetings, and help members meet deadlines.

Another important feature of communicating is listening, and vibrant youth groups listen to one another. Such groups viewed communication and leadership as a two way process in which adults and youth shared responsibilities. Young people in vibrant youth groups felt listened to and included. Youth members felt that their ideas would be considered fairly and not criticized or devalued.

Vibrant youth groups are able to achieve a balance between chaos and rigidity. According to the circumplex model of effective family functioning (Olsen, Sprenkle & Russell, 1979), a key element of a balanced family is adaptability. Adaptability is characterized by the ability of the family unit to change its power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to some outside stresses. A balanced family unit is able to achieve a stasis between chaos and rigidity. Balanced youth groups, in the same way, have been able to achieve a harmony between

too much chaos and too much rigidity. When circumstances change, the club is able to adapt by making the necessary changes in rules, power structures, or relations to move on. Ineffective groups are devastated by change and are so rigid as to be unable to change to fit new circumstances.

The circumplex model proposed by Olsen, Sprenkle and Russell (1979) also suggests that cohesion is an important variable that distinguishes between balanced families and extreme types. The cohesion dimension ranges from enmeshed (extreme bonding and limited individual autonomy) to disengagement (low bonding and high autonomy from the group). In the same way, effective youth groups have also achieved this tenuous balance between providing too much structure and not enough. Vibrant youth groups have a powerful shared identity, but this identity is not constrictive. Members feel free to do things with members of the group, but also enjoy the freedom to interact with those not in the 4-H club.

Vibrant youth groups are chaordic. Chaordic groups are able to maintain a balance between chaos and order, to incorporate both elements and thrive. Those groups that may appear chaotic are really ordered in a way that is flexible and enhances adaptability.

Vibrant youth groups affirm and support one another.

From this research, it was evident that healthy youth groups

celebrated the successes of all members and did not define themselves by any single accomplishment of the group. Instead, they took pride in and celebrated the collective efforts of all members. During the county fair season in particular, it was obvious that each club felt a certain pride in what various members of their club were doing to bring recognition and honor to their club by excelling in specific fields. One parent commented that their goal was "not necessarily to be the best but to do our best." This club supported each member of the group and only asked each member to do the best to their ability. The importance of such affirmations has been advanced by Palmer (in press):

People will assume increased responsibility for their own learning and education when they're accepted and encouraged by significant others in their lives as resources and partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs which are organized for their benefit.
(p. 114)

Adult leaders in vibrant youth groups encouraged members with specific, positive feedback. Discouraging comments were rarely heard in vibrant youth groups whereas discounting and demeaning comments were voiced in control-oriented youth groups.

Fortunately, 4-H is effective in helping provide numerous forms of recognition for the accomplishments of members regardless of their areas of interest or abilities. All the opportunities for recognition are important in 4-H and help provide numerous ways for clubs to celebrate their

accomplishments. At year end, each club is able to feel successful based on the various awards and recognition received.

Effective 4-H clubs take pride in the accomplishments of all its members, and they exude a sense of success in which everyone shares. Effective 4-H clubs all express that they are "the best."

Vibrant youth groups use a mentoring system to socialize newcomers into the club environment. Helping new members feel welcomed into the club is a hallmark of vibrant youth groups. Such efforts help new members learn the language and traditions of the organization. Buddy systems were common in two clubs where older members adopted younger members and served as practicing role models for them. Vibrant youth groups saw such mentoring system as a critical feature for inculcating novitiates into the program but also as a way to place older members in leadership positions. As one leader said:

I'd like to see the older kids works better with the younger kids and really make the buddy system work out. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Mentoring systems like this were one of many tools vibrant youth groups used to help the club function more effectively and keep youth involved.

Vibrant youth groups structure the physical environment to enhance learning. A particular interest during the

course of research was to see how 4-H clubs set up their seating arrangements and why. The more effective clubs used a semi-circular or horseshoe style of seating so that all members could see each other. Rows--common in the classroom--were never used in vibrant clubs. Clearly, clubs are limited by the space and kind of facilities, but I was struck by the ingenuity and purposiveness that leaders in vibrant groups took to maximize the space to ensure participation and eye contact. Leaders of vibrant clubs had a purpose in mind with their seating arrangements.

Initially, when we set up for the meeting, we always put the chair in a line, in rows. But at the Leader's Forum, I learned about putting them in a circle, and we've tried that and it seems to hold the kids' attention. It works great!
(Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Well, our current seating arrangement was a parent's suggestion. We just met the first couple of times and had the tables just next to the wall. I don't know how to describe that, but it seemed like it was a lot more chaotic. You couldn't... There were parents and kids all mixed together and we could see parents kind of telling little kids what and how to vote, so Bruce came up with the suggestion to put the tables in a square--parents on the outside and the kids on the inside.
(Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

We decided...this is something we just started last year. And it works so much better--is to put our officers at a separate table up front. They sit up front, and then the rest of them are kind of in a U-shape. If it's ideal and a U-shape around, they can see everybody, and everybody can see them. That way, the officers have the full attention of everyone. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Contrast these observations with those of this control-oriented leader:

I didn't even think about the meeting set up this time--the table was just there, and we put the chairs in rows.

Effective youth groups make conscious decisions about how to structure the environment for learning and know that this is important.

Vibrant clubs are more concerned with weaning, not winning. Kids are the focus in vibrant clubs. Effective youth groups help youngsters develop a sense that they "own" the group. Young people in such programs, particularly older members, want to feel that the club is theirs and want adults to reduce their part in decision-making. Fun, learning, growth--these are the important concerns in vibrant clubs. Training youth to become independent, thinking people is the goal of vibrant groups.

Shinkwin and Kleinfeld (1983) discovered in their study of boy scout troops that the troop in which leadership roles were spread among all members was more effective at developing leadership skills than in the troop where leadership positions were held by adults and only a few youth. Vibrant youth groups put young people in charge, giving them both the responsibility and the authority.

Less effective groups are focused on winning. Winning awards, competitions, contests, numbers of ribbons, and

"being the best" are the greatest concerns in less effective youth groups. Winning has become more important than the young people who are pawns in this contest of domination.

One leader put it succinctly:

We were in a club where winning was everything. When we formed this club, we wanted the kids to have fun and learn, and that winning is not everything. If you get a white ribbon, that's okay. We're trying to get project leaders on the same wave length now. We want them not to worry about the competition and instead be doing fun things with the project. (Leader, autonomy-oriented club)

Even the youth members in this club sensed that there is more than winning to their 4-H experience:

I'm not really concerned about grand champion. I just want to do good.

Vibrant youth groups value and practice service to others. Although community service is a key value in the 4-H program, vibrant youth groups actively practiced and treasured community service. Community service was not viewed in these groups as a requirement for a charter or as a program expectation, but rather community service was valued as important in itself. Indeed, vibrant youth groups perceived community service as a part of the club's fundamental experiences. Members shared this commitment to service and looked upon service as one of the more important parts of their club experience.

Finally, in vibrant youth groups, the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. All the components of vibrant youth groups work together to foster a synergistic relationship. There is a synergy in vibrant clubs that creates an energy far in excess of the contributions of its various individual components. Effective youth groups are effective precisely because all the various parts work in harmony toward the larger goal of youth development. Palmer (in press) described this kind of synergy as central to the empowerment process:

Achieving synergistic results is the principle goal of an integrated approach to empowerment (p. 4).

Synergy can be felt in these groups and documented in the ways they approach tasks and activities. Synergy is part of being a vibrant group.

Summary

What kinds of youth programs are best for youth? Fern Marx lists four critical features of good programs: children must have friends in the program; the activities must be of immediate interest; the adults in charge must understand youngsters; and they must allow them to develop a feeling of autonomy (Hechinger, 1992).

4-H shares many of these characteristics, but as this study has shown, the degree to which a club is effective in providing a healthy environment for youth development

depends to a large extent on the orientation and style of the adult leaders. Autonomy-oriented leaders bring certain sets of skills and interests to youth groups that maximize youth potential for healthy growth and development. Control-oriented leaders impede or at least slow this development.

In the end, effective youth programs that help develop life skills focus on developing these skills in an educational context. As Kohn observed, youth "acquire a sense of significance from doing significant things, from being active participants in their own education" (Kohn, 1994, p. 282). Real success will mean doing a better job of listening to young people and sharing the leadership with them.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS

Wednesday, September 7, 1994

Dear Montana 4-H Organizational Leader:

I am writing to you because I am conducting some research on how 4-H clubs help young people learn and develop life skills. In addition to being a specialist on the Montana State 4-H staff, I have been working on my doctoral degree in education for the past three years. My classwork is now over, and now my research begins. I need you to help me.

Three Montana counties were randomly selected for my research project, and your county was one of those. So, it's very important to me that I have your support and participation in this project if the results are going to be useful.

Attached with this letter is a survey that I would like you to complete. Your answers will be held in strict confidence. No one else will see your responses except me, and you will never be identified by name in my research dissertation or any other publications. I've asked for your name, club and county simply to keep track of who has responded as well as those who haven't so I can be assured of collecting complete information. **I must have every club organizational leader complete this survey in order for my research to be valid.** For a few of you, I may also need to do some follow-up contacts, but that will depend on all the responses I receive in all three counties.

The survey is not long and is easy to complete. Please read the instructions inside the cover and then answer each question by circling the appropriate number on the 7-point scale.

I've enclosed a stamped, self-addressed return envelope for you to return the completed survey to me. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey now and return it to me as soon as possible. Your quick response will speed my research project along.

Thanks in advance for your support of my research. I anticipate that the results will be very useful to all of us in the Montana 4-H program. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this research project.

Best Wishes,

Kirk A. Astroth
Extension Specialist
4-H Youth Development

APPENDIX B
DECI INSTRUMENT

Name: _____ Club: _____

Date: _____ County: _____

The Problems in Schools Questionnaire

On the following pages you will find a series of vignettes. Each one describes an incident and then lists four ways of responding to the situation. Please read each vignette and then consider each response in turn. Think about each response option in terms of how appropriate you consider it to be as a means of dealing with the problem described in the vignette. You may find the option to be *perfect*, in other words, *extremely appropriate*, in which case you would circle the number 7. You may consider the response *highly inappropriate*, in which case you might circle the 1. If you find the option reasonable, you would circle some number between 1 and 7. So think about each option and rate it on the accompanying scale. Please rate each of the four options for each vignette. There are eight vignettes with four options for each.

There are no right or wrong ratings on these items. People's styles differ, and we are simply interested in what you consider appropriate given your own style.

Some of the stories ask what you would do if you were a teacher. Others ask you to respond as if you were giving advice to another teacher or to a parent. Some ask you to respond as if you were the parent. If you are not a parent, simply imagine what it would be like for you in that situation.

Please respond to each response option by circling one number on its rating scale.

1. Jim is an average 4-H member who has been working at his skill level. During the past two months he has appeared listless and has not been participating during club meetings. The work he does is accurate, but he has not been completing assignments. A phone conversation with his mother revealed no useful information. The most appropriate thing for Jim's 4-H leader to do is:

- a. She should impress upon him the importance of finishing his assignments, since he needs to learn this material for his own good.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- b. Let him know that he doesn't have to finish all of his work now and see if she can help him work out the cause of the listlessness.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- c. Make him stay after school until that day's assignments are done.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- d. Let him see how he compares with the other children in terms of his assignments and encourage him to catch up with the others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

2. At a parent conference last night, Mr. and Mrs. Greene were told that their daughter, Sarah, has made more progress than expected since the time of the last conference. All agree that they hope she continues to improve so that she does not have to repeat the grade (which the Greenses have been kind of expecting since the last report card). As a result of the conference, the Greenses decide to:

- a. Increase her allowance and promise her a ten-speed if she continues to improve.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- b. Tell her that she's now doing as well as many of the other children in her class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Tell her about the report, letting her know that they're aware of her increased independence in school and at home.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- d. Continue to emphasize that she has to work hard to get better grades.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

3. Donny loses his temper a lot and has a way of agitating other children. He doesn't respond well to what you tell him to do and you're concerned that he won't learn the social skills he needs. The best thing for you to do with him is:

- a. Emphasize how important it is for him to control himself in order to succeed in school and in other situations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- b. Put him in a special class which has the structure and reward contingencies which he needs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Help him see how other children behave in these various situations and praise him for doing the same.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- d. Realize that Donny is probably not getting the attention he needs and start being more responsive to him.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

4. Your son is one of the better players on his junior soccer team, which has been winning most of its games. You are concerned, however, because he just told you he failed his unit spelling test and will have to retake it the day after tomorrow. You decide that the best thing to do is to:

- a. Ask him to talk about how he plans to handle the situation.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- b. Tell him he probably ought to decide to forego tomorrow's game so he can catch up in spelling.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- c. See if others are in the same predicament and suggest he do as much preparation as the others.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

- d. Make him miss tomorrow's game to study; soccer has been interfering too much with his school work.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

5. The Rangers spelling group has been having trouble all year. How could Miss Wilson best help the Rangers?

a. Have regular spelling bees so the Rangers will be motivated to do as well as the other groups.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

b. Make them drill more and give them special privileges for improvements.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

c. Have each child keep a spelling chart and emphasize how important it is to have a good chart.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

d. Help the group devise ways of learning the words together (for example, skits, games, and so on).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate		appropriate	appropriate

6. In your class is a girl named Margy who has been the butt of jokes for years. She is quiet and usually alone. In spite of the efforts of previous teachers, Margy has not been accepted by the other children. Your wisdom would guide you to:

- a. Prod her into interactions and provide her with much praise for any social initiative.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- b. Talk to her and emphasize that she should make friends so she'll be happier.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Invite her to talk about her relations with the other kids, and encourage her to take small steps when she's ready.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- d. Encourage her to observe how other children relate and to join in with them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

7. For the past few weeks, things have been disappearing from the teacher's desk, and lunch money has been taken from some of the children's desks. Today, Marvin was seen by the teacher taking a silver dollar paperweight from her desk. The teacher phoned Marvin's mother and spoke to her about this incident. Although the teacher suspects that Marvin has been responsible for the other thefts, she mentioned only the one and assured the mother that she'll keep a close eye on Marvin. The best thing for the mother to do is:

- a. Talk to him about the consequences of stealing and what it would mean in relation to the other kids.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- b. Talk to him about it, expressing her confidence in him and attempting to understand why he did it.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- c. Give him a good scolding; stealing is something which cannot be tolerated, and he has to learn that.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

- d. Emphasize that it was wrong, and have him apologize to the teacher and promise not to do it again.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

8. Your child has been getting average grades, and you'd like to see her improve. A useful approach might be to:

a. Encourage her to talk about her report card and what it means for her.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

b. Go over the report card with her; point out where she stands in the class.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

c. Stress that she should do better; she'll never get into college with grades like these.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

d. Offer her a dollar for every A and 50 cents for every B on future report cards.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very			moderately			very
appropriate			appropriate			appropriate

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

YOUTH INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

You know that I'm working on my dissertation which is about 4-H. My research is going to be useful to people who work with youth in informal educational programs like 4-H, Scouts, and YMCA.

Your answers to the questions I'm going to ask will help these people understand young people better. No one will hear this tape except you and me. In my dissertation, all the people whom I interview will be disguised so no one will know which answers are yours. The answers from all the people I interview, and I'm interviewing about 10 people, will be combined into an overview of 4-H before anyone sees what people said. Nothing you say will ever be identified with you personally.

I'm going to record our interview as well as take notes as you talk to help me fully understand what you are saying. Is that OK? As we go through the interview, if you have any questions about why I'm asking some particular things, please feel free to ask. Or if there's anything you don't want to answer, just say so. We can turn off the tape recorder any time you want.

As someone who has been in the 4-H program, you're in a unique position to describe what the program does and how it affects people. And that's what this interview is about: your experiences with the 4-H program and your thoughts about those experiences. The purpose of this interview is to get your insights about the program, how it operates, and how it affects people.

This interview will take about an hour or so, but we can take a break anytime you need to. Do you have any questions you want to ask me before we start?

[REMEMBER]: Identify who is being interviewed, date, time and location.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Think back and tell me about when you first got involved in 4-H. How did you come to join 4-H? What were the motivating factors for you?

2. Describe to me a 4-H experience that has been especially meaningful to you. What made this experience so important?

3. What kinds of skills do you think you've gained from your association with 4-H?

4. What improvements or changes would you like to see made in your 4-H program?

5. Would you recommend 4-H to your friends? Why or why not? What specifically would you say that might be of interest to them?

6. When you think about the most important impact of 4-H on your life, what would it be?

7. What do you like most about 4-H?

8. What do you like least?

9. In thinking about how you've changed over the past several years, how much has 4-H caused those changes compared to other things that we happening in your life?

10. What's it like to be a member of your 4-H club?

11. Tell me about characteristics of 4-H adult leaders you have worked best with. What qualities do you appreciate in an adult leader? Under what kind of leadership do you flourish?

4-H CLUB LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Remember to begin by asking the leader to state her name, the name of the club, and the number of years she has been the club's organizational leader.

1. Of the various things you do as a 4-H leader, which do you consider to be the most important?

2. Every so often, 4-H leaders tell me they have a really good meeting. Could you tell me what a good meeting is like for you? What happens?

3. Of the teachers or leaders you had yourself at one time or another, which do you consider were outstanding? Could you describe one of them to me?

4. How do you generally arrange the meeting space? Why do you use this particular setup? (Note: emphasis here in on reasons for the seating arrangement).

Would you change it if you could? How might you do it differently?

5. I want you to conjure up an image of an "ideal" 4-H member. What would that youngster be like? Could you describe that youngster to me?

6. Next, let me ask you if you have any goals for your 4-H members, things you'd like to help them achieve. Tell me what some of them are.

7. We hear a lot about life skills development in 4-H. How do you go about doing that? Can you give me some concrete examples?

8. How would you describe the "ideal" 4-H club? Could you describe that kind of club to me?

9. We also hear a lot these days about leadership styles. How would you describe the role you play in this club as the leader?

APPENDIX D
CASES IV SURVEY

Cases IV

How you would describe your club now:

How you would like your club TO BE:

DIRECTIONS: PLEASE READ EACH SENTENCE AND PUT A CHECK IN THE BOX THAT DESCRIBES YOUR 4-H CLUB NOW AND A CHECK IN THE BOX FOR HOW YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR CLUB TO BE.	How you would describe your club now:					How you would like your club TO BE:				
	Almost Never	Once in a While	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always	Almost Never	Once in a While	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always
Club members ask each other for help.										
In solving problems, youth member's suggestions are followed.										
The adults in this club approve of most of my friends.										
Members of the club have a say in the rules.										
I like to do things with just the people in this club.										
Different people, not just the elected leaders, participate in leadership roles in our club.										
As club members, we feel closer to each other than to other people outside the club.										
Our club changes its ways of handling tasks.										
Club members like to spend their free time with each other.										
When someone in the club starts to act up and gets disruptive, both the leader and the person discuss the problem and together they agree about what should be done.										
Club members feel very close to each other.										
Youth members make the decisions in our club.										
When our club gets together for activities, everyone is present.										
Rules change often in our club.										
We can easily think of things to do together as a club.										
Our club shifts club responsibilities from person to person.										
The adults and youth members in our club consult with each other before making decisions.										
It is hard to identify the leader(s) in our club.										
Club unity is very important.										
When there is a job to do, everyone pitches in and helps.										

APPENDIX E
OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

NONFORMAL LEARNING OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

EVENT OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS

Date: _____ Time: _____ Duration: _____

Type of Event: _____ Name of Event: _____

Setting: _____

Context and Content of Event:

Number of Participants:

- Type
- Sex
- Ages
- Ethnicity
- Residence
- Roles

CATEGORIES OF OBSERVATION

PHYSICAL SETTING

VOICE QUALITIES OF LEADER(S)

OBSERVED CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN ADULTS AND YOUTH

BEHAVIORS OF LEADER(S)

<u>Behaviors which foster autonomy:</u>	<u># of Times Observed</u>
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- ◇ Non-directive/non-threatening
- ◇ Empowering/Youth take initiative
- ◇ Helps youth take responsibility for choices
- ◇ Encourages non-threatening risk-taking
- ◇ Fosters perceptions of competence
- ◇ Supportive of autonomy behaviors
- ◇ Atmosphere is intrinsically-motivating
- ◇ Puts emphasis on self-interests rather than satisfying others
- ◇ Supportive of attempts at mastery
- ◇ Fosters curiosity/inquiry
- ◇ Encourages self-directed learning
- ◇ Demonstrates ease with relinquishing control

<u>Behaviors which foster control:</u>	<u># of Times</u>
--	-------------------

- ◇ Directive
- ◇ Discounts/Dismisses
- ◇ Need for excessive control of situations
- ◇ Discourages attempts at mastery
- ◇ Relies on external controls/rewards
- ◇ Discourages risk-taking
- ◇ Takes leadership role

ROLE EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH

What roles do you occupy?

of Times/Duration

FUNCTION OF EVENTS

What are the intended and unintended consequences?

IDEALS TRANSMISSION

Educational Relationships

OBSERVER COMMENTS:

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