

1-1-2016

The Effects of the Structural Components of 4-H Residential Summer Programs on the Achievement of the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and the Acquisition of Targeted Life Skills

Alayna Naro

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td>

Recommended Citation

Naro, Alayna, "The Effects of the Structural Components of 4-H Residential Summer Programs on the Achievement of the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and the Acquisition of Targeted Life Skills" (2016). *Theses and Dissertations*. 4449.
<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td/4449>

This Graduate Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com.

The effects of the structural components of 4-H residential summer programs on the
achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development
and the acquisition of targeted life skills

By

Alayna Naro

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in Agricultural and Extension Education
in the School of Human Sciences

Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2016

Copyright by

Alayna Naro

2016

The effects of the structural components of 4-H residential summer programs on the
achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development
and the acquisition of targeted life skills

By

Alayna Naro

Approved:

Laura L. Greenhaw
(Major Professor)

Tommy M. Phillips
(Minor Professor)

Kirk A. Swortzel
(Committee Member)

Michael E. Newman
(Graduate Coordinator)

George M. Hopper
Dean
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Name: Alayna Naro

Date of Degree: December 9, 2016

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Agricultural and Extension Education

Major Professor: Laura L. Greenhaw

Title of Study: The effects of the structural components of 4-H residential summer programs on the achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development and the acquisition of targeted life skills

Pages in Study 152

Candidate for Degree of Master of Science

Youth-serving organizations, such as 4-H, place a large emphasis on positive youth development and experiential learning in order to assist youth in acquiring specific life skills. The literature suggests that residential summer camps are one of the best ways to provide positive youth development, experiential learning, and targeted life skills. This study was a mixed methods design which utilized four residential summer programs throughout the state of Mississippi in order to compare the differences between the residential 4-H summer programs that took place on a university campus to those that took place within the naturalistic environment. The results of this study indicate that on-campus residential summer programs achieved the essential elements of positive youth development more so than those that took place within the naturalistic environment. The on-campus program participants also acquired targeted life skills more so than those that participated in programs that took place within the naturalistic environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank all of my committee members for their constant dedication to my educational career. Dr. Kirk Swortzel, thank you for guiding me into this program beginning when I was an undergraduate. I appreciate all the support you have given me over the years and helping me realize how my desires for my future career could fit perfectly into Agricultural and Extension Education. Dr. Tommy Philips, thank you for providing me with such a strong foundation in positive youth development. Without your knowledge and passion for this particular realm, I would not be able to succeed as a youth development professional. Finally, Dr. Laura Greenhaw, I honestly do not think I can thank you enough. You have been the greatest mentor I could have ever asked for. You have challenged me and pushed me to be the absolute best student I can be. You encouraged me to persevere anytime things did not go as planned, which happened a lot. Again, thank you all for ensuring my success throughout this educational process.

I would also like to acknowledge my wonderful family. Mom and Dad, thank you for your unwavering support through all of my educational pursuits. Thank you for encouraging me throughout this process and always being just one phone call away. To my siblings, Jared and Felicia, thank you for always having words of inspiration and for always reminding me to mix a little fun with your work. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank Will. Thank you for being my rock throughout the entirety of this

process. Thank you for your unwavering love and faith in my ability to succeed. I appreciate every single one of you and would not have been able to make it through this without you all.

Finally, thank you to all of my friends, my string of office mates, and my fellow graduate students. To my friends, thank you for all of the support, and consistently encouraging me despite the distance between us. To my office mates T.J., Carley, Teresa, and Georgia, thank you for entertaining my questions (no matter how ridiculous), for listening to my complaints, and for being the absolute best office mates I could have ever asked for. My fellow graduate students within the School of Human Sciences, thank you for always being so friendly and creating an atmosphere of acceptance and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Background of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study and Research Objectives	8
Significance of the Study	8
Limitations	9
Assumptions	10
Definitions	10
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
Organized Activities: Out-of-School Time and Youth Development Programs	13
Summer Programs	18
The Summer Camp Experience	24
4-H Youth Development	27
4-H Residential Programs	29
Residential Camping	29
Residential Conferences	31
Conceptual Framework	32
Positive Youth Development	32
Experiential Learning Theory	38
Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development	39
4-H Targeted Life Skills	43
Summary	47
III. MATERIALS AND METHODS	49
Research Objectives	49

Research Design	50
Population.....	51
Sample	54
Quantitative Component.....	55
Variables.....	55
Instrumentation.....	56
Data Collection and Procedures	62
State Congress	63
Youth Conservation Camp	63
Camp 24/7	63
Cooperative Leadership Conference	64
Data Analysis.....	64
Qualitative Component.....	65
Type of Study	65
Participants	67
Data Collection.....	68
Data Analysis.....	71
 IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS.....	 73
Quantitative Findings	74
Objective One.....	74
On-Campus Residential Summer Programs	77
State Congress	77
Cooperative Leadership Conference	77
Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs.....	77
Youth Conservation Camp	77
Camp 24/7	78
Objective Two	78
On-Campus Residential Summer Programs.....	79
Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs.....	80
Comparison.....	81
Objective Three	83
On-Campus Residential Summer Programs.....	84
Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs.....	85
Comparison.....	85
Qualitative Findings	87
Objective Four	87
On-Campus Residential Summer Programs.....	87
Demographics and Characteristics	87
Theme One: Developing Social Skills and Making Friends	90
Theme Two: Teamwork and Respecting Others	92
Theme Three: Leadership: Who, What, When, Where, and How.....	93

Theme Four: Overcoming Personal Barriers and Accepting Self	94
Theme Five: Promoting 4-H through Local County Outreach	95
Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs.....	96
Demographics and Characteristics	96
Theme One: Making Friends and Accepting Others	99
Theme Two: Satisfaction of Hands-On Learning Activities.....	99
Theme Three: Challenges of Group Living.....	100
Theme Four: Mixed Perceptions of the Naturalistic Environment	101
V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	103
Discussion.....	104
Objective One.....	104
Objective Two	104
Relationship with a Caring Adult.....	106
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	110
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment.....	111
Physically Safe Environment	111
Objective Three	112
Life Skill Acquisition through Experience.....	113
Objective Four	116
On-Campus Residential Summer Programs.....	117
Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs.....	120
Conclusion.....	121
Recommendations	122
Research Recommendations.....	122
Practitioner Recommendations.....	124
REFERENCES	127
APPENDIX	
A. PARENTAL CONSENT DOCUMENTS	134
B. CHILD ASSENT DOCUMENTS	139
C. COMBINED QUESTIONNAIRE DOCUMENT FOR ON-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL SUMMER PROGRAMS	142
D. COMBINED QUESTIONNAIRE DOCUMENT FOR NATURALISTIC ENVIRONMENT RESIDENTIAL SUMMER PROGRAMS.....	146

E. FOCUS GROUP DOCUMENTS	150
--------------------------------	-----

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Typology of Summer Programs.....	20
2.2	Percentage of all children aged 6 to 11 participating in summer programs, by various child socioeconomic, demographic, and other characteristics	22
2.3	Features of Positive Developmental Settings	34
3.1	Camp Context—Questions and Alpha Scores	60
3.2	Camp Life Skills—Questions and Alpha Scores	61
3.3	Characteristics of a Phenomenological Approach	67
3.4	Focus Group Questions.....	70
4.1	4-H Residential Summer Program Demographics.....	75
4.2	Camp Context Questionnaire—Shapiro-Wilk’s Test of Normality.....	79
4.3	Camp Context Questionnaire—Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances.....	79
4.4	Camp Context Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (On-Campus).....	80
4.5	Camp Context Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (Naturalistic Environment)	80
4.6	Independent Samples t-test for Camp Context Questionnaire	82
4.7	Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Shapiro-Wilk’s Test of Normality	84
4.8	Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances.....	84
4.9	Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (On-Campus).....	84
4.10	Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (Naturalistic Environment)	85

4.11	Independent Samples t-test for Camp Life Skills Questionnaire.....	86
4.12	Demographics and Characteristics of Cooperative Leadership Conference Focus Group	89
4.13	Demographics and Characteristics of Camp 24/7 Focus Group.....	98
5.1	Features of Positive Developmental Settings	108

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Eight Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development Condensed into Four Core Concepts.....	37
2.2	Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model	39
2.3	Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development	40
2.4	Targeting Life Skills Model.....	44
2.5	Thirty Five Life Skills Categorized by the Four H’s	46
3.1	The Convergent Parallel Design	51
3.2	Focus Group Analysis Strategies	71
5.1	Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model	114
5.2	Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development	115
5.3	Targeting Life Skills Model.....	118
5.4	Thirty Five Life Skills Categorized by the 4-H’s	119
A.1	Parental Consent Document for Survey.....	135
A.2	Parental Consent Document for Survey and Focus Group	137
B.1	Child Assent Document for Survey	140
B.2	Child Assent Document for Focus Group.....	141
C.1	On-Campus Program Questionnaire Document	143
D.1	Naturalistic Environment Program Questionnaire Document	147
E.1	Focus Group Documents.....	151

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is at the forefront of discussion that youth are not developing the set of skills necessary to succeed in a 21st century work force. In a global survey, where 72% of the respondents were from the United States, current leaders in all sectors of the economy identified a gap in leadership competencies and skill development among emerging adolescents (Van Velsor & Wright, 2012). Present-day employers are searching for employees who possess self-motivation, effective communication, learning agility, self-awareness, multicultural awareness, and adaptability (Van Velsor & Wright, 2012).

Professionals in youth development create programs structured around helping youth become proficient in life skills. These particular skills enable youth to make decisions and solve problems, set goals, improve communication and social skills, accept differences in others, give back to the community, make healthy lifestyle choices, encourage teamwork, and improve one's character (Norman & Jordan, 2006). Due to the importance of these skills, youth deserve an excess of opportunities to develop and strengthen life skills throughout their journey of adolescence.

Statement of the Problem

Youth development programs designed around the theory of positive youth development and the acquisition of life skills are established in communities all over the nation. One of the largest national youth-serving organizations in the country, serving six

million youth and adolescents, is 4-H (4-H.org). The four main values that members work to improve through their engagement in this program are encompassed by the four H's: head, heart, hands, and health. According to the National 4-H Council (2015), by participating in 4-H, it is the hope that youth acquire and maintain these core values of managing and thinking (i.e., head), relating and caring (i.e., heart), giving and working (i.e., hands), and being and living (i.e., health). Through connections with land-grant institutions, it is of the utmost importance to constantly improve the experiences of youth through participation in 4-H youth development programs.

Though there is a bulk of literature examining and identifying how 4-H helps young people excel beyond their peers (Lerner, Lerner, & Colleagues 2013), little is known about how residential 4-H summer programs can impact youth participants. Current literature identifies two main types of residential summer programs for 4-H youth, summer camps and conferences. Camping is one of the four primary 4-H delivery modes and an important way that youth may be exposed to the essential elements necessary for positive youth development (Garst, Nichols, Martz, McNeely, Bovitz, Frebertshouser, & Walahoski, 2011b). There is documented research evaluating the camp experience exclusively looking at 4-H residential camps and the positive effects they create (Arnold, Bourdeau & Nagele, 2005; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Garst et al., 2011b; Garton, Miltenberger & Pruett, 2007; Snapp, Klem & Nicholson, 2007). Additionally, residential conferences are often cited as a unique way to expose youth to experiential learning, as well as help youth develop and apply targeted life skills (Arnold, 2003; Garst, Hunnings, Jamison, Hairston, Meadows, & Herdman, 2006; Garst, Scheider, & Baker, 2001; Gill, Ewing, & Bruce, 2010; Lester, Carter, Powell, & Dotson, 1974).

Through both of these residential delivery methods, 4-H youth could easily excel beyond their peers.

According to the 2015 Mississippi State University Extension Service Youth Development Status Report, there are currently 66,361 youth participating in 4-H across the state. Furthermore, this report shows that 33% of those youth are currently enrolled in projects related to wildlife, forestry, shooting sports, and fishing sports, as well as personal development and leadership projects. These outdoor-related projects that a percentage of youth are interested in, are typically encompassed within the traditional 4-H summer camp experience; however, the state of Mississippi lacks access to a residential 4-H camp facility. Though there are 4-H summer programs that contain an overnight component which provides personal development and leadership opportunities, they are few in number and are not always available to the wide range of youth that 4-H serves. Further, there is a lack of literature analyzing the effects of residential 4-H summer programs as it specifically relates to the state of Mississippi.

Background of the Problem

Currently, there is a concern that adolescents are not prepared for the transition and challenges that come with being an emerging adult. In order to effectively address this problem, out-of-school programs have begun to integrate learning experiences that prepare youth for their future (Greene et al., 2012). In addition to the lack of opportunities to develop critical life skills, many children lack access to supportive adults. Due to “fractionalized families, erosion of neighborhood ties, and the time demands on family members”, many youth do not receive the opportunity to interact with

non-family adults and create those constructive relationships that are necessary for positive youth development (Henderson et al., 2007, p. 2).

Research indicates that the period of adolescence, which takes place between the ages of 10 to 18, is a time of excessive physical, cognitive, social, and emotional change and brings about the opportunity to engage in delinquent behavior (Steinberg, 2008).

According to a 2014 U.S. Census, there are 732,553 youth under the age of 18 living in Mississippi, which makes up about 25% of the state's population (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Between 2011 and 2012, in the state of Mississippi, parents of 131,000 children ages two to seventeen reported that their child had been diagnosed by a doctor with autism, developmental delays, depression/anxiety, attention deficit disorder/attention deficit hyperactive disorder, and/or behavioral/conduct problems (Kids Count Data Center, 2012). Furthermore, between 2012 and 2013 in the state of Mississippi, 14,000 adolescents ages 12 to 17 reported dependence on or abuse of illicit drugs or alcohol (Kids Count Data Center, 2012).

In order to minimize risks associated with the developmental changes that accompany adolescence, youth-serving organizations develop a variety of programs and opportunities, both nationally and in local communities. Most youth-serving organizations structure their programs around the framework of positive youth development. This particular approach benefits participants by “providing youth with positive, asset-building experiences and meaningful, supportive relationships to develop resilience and coping skills in the face of risk factors” (Norton & Watt, 2014, p. 2).

Further, researchers are becoming increasingly acceptant that utilizing the positive youth

development framework is likely to prevent problem behaviors in targeted youth (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004).

Youth development professionals and youth-serving organizations contribute to the development of life skills that are significant to the current and future success of youth. The Targeting Life Skills Model represents 35 different life skills and is utilized by 4-H to encourage positive development in youth participants. These life skills include but are not limited to: “decision making, goal setting, leadership, teamwork, communication skills, accepting differences, making healthy lifestyle choices, and character” (Norman & Jordan, 2006, p.1). Because the proper development of any skill is best learned through practice, youth-serving organizations dedicated to positive youth development, such as 4-H, provide experiences that teach a skill and allow for meaningful repetition to strengthen said skill.

Another important aspect to youth development programs is being able to participate in experiential learning opportunities. Kolb (1984) defines experiential learning as, “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). Essentially, through experiential learning, youth participants are consistently creating new knowledge through the various experiences they encounter. Further, with this new knowledge gained through different experiences, youth are continuously learning new ways to approach problem solving, decision making, and attitude changing (Kolb, 1984). Overall, 4-H places specific emphasis on providing youth the chance to participate in experiential learning opportunities based on the framework of positive youth development which enables them to cultivate important life skills (Kress, 2004).

During the summer months, when school is out of session, working parents typically find it hard to keep their children occupied in a safe and educational way (Public Agenda, 2004). Summer programs are one of the best viable options for parents and youth alike. Organized activities that take place during the summer are often referred to as summer programs. These programs can be operated by entities such as schools, parks and recreation departments, community-based and faith-based associations, and national youth-serving organizations. Summer programs are often “designed to meet a specific need or offer youth the opportunity to achieve a specific goal” (National Summer Learning Association, 2009, p.4). Examples of summer programs include, but are not limited to, outdoor adventure camps, arts and music camps, sports camps, and academic programs (Child Trends, 2009). It is important to note, however, that summer programs can vary in their content, goals, setting, and duration.

One of the most common summer programs for youth to attend are summer camps. Organized camping has served an important role for over 150 years and “is a social institution that touches more lives than any other except for schools” (Garst et al., 2011a, p. 1). Camps have always been an opportunity for youth and adolescents to explore and yearn for more novel experiences as they approach the transition into adulthood. Camps can differ in their mission, goals, and affiliations, but they all seem to have similar values such as connecting with nature, group living experiences, fun, meaningful engagement, personal growth, and skill development (Garst et al., 2011a). By participating in the camp experience, research suggests that adolescents reinvent themselves through escaping the negative impressions of their peers and reflecting on their inner selves (Garst, Williams & Roggenbuck, 2009). Additionally, camps provide

affective, cognitive, behavioral, physical, social, and spiritual benefits to those participating youth (Garst et al., 2011a). Though a variety of youth-serving organizations provide residential camping experiences for youth all over the country, 4-H is one of the largest providers (Garst & Bruce, 2003). Residential 4-H camps involve the traditional educational camp activities; however 4-H specifically places heavy emphasis on positive youth development and the development of life skills (Garst et al., 2011b). The experiential learning opportunities to which youth are exposed while attending 4-H camp create an environment that supports the development and strengthening of skills (Garton et al., 2007).

4-H also provides non-camping residential experiences, such as conferences, which similarly provide an important outlet for positive youth development, experiential learning, and the acquisition of life skills (Arnold, 2003; Gill et al., 2010). These conferences typically take place on the campus of a land-grant university and can last between two and seven days (Arnold, 2003). The content of the programs typically includes state competitions and leadership conferences. Further, these programs provide youth with hands-on experiences, allowing participants to engulf themselves within the learning environment in an all-encompassing way (Arnold, 2003; Garst et al., 2011a). Though the settings of residential camping and residential conferences are starkly different, the goals of the programs similar—to provide youth the opportunity to participate in unique and meaningful experiential learning opportunities which aid in the acquisition of important life skills.

Purpose of the Study and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to compare and explore the experiences of youth who attended various 4-H overnight summer programs within the state of Mississippi. Specifically, this study examined how 4-H summer programs that have an overnight component differ in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development and the difference in youth participants' acquisition of targeted life skills based on the type of overnight program they attend. The research objectives for this study are as follows:

Objective 1: Describe the demographics of youth who participated in residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 2: Analyze and compare the differences in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development based on the structural components of residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 3: Analyze and compare the differences in the acquisition of targeted life skills for youth participants based on the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Objective 4: Investigate how participants attribute their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Significance of the Study

To date, no research has directly compared 4-H summer programs that contain an overnight component based on the environment or location in which the program takes place. For example, there is a lack of comparison of overnight summer programs that take

place on a university campus versus those overnight summer programs that take place at a camp or retreat facility that is located within the naturalistic environment. For states without a dedicated 4-H camp facility, such as Mississippi, it is important to discover if youth participating in 4-H are at a disadvantage by not having access to such an important delivery method of positive youth development. Comparing how the different summer programs achieve the essential elements of positive youth development and provide youth with an opportunity to acquire life skills could provide meaningful insight and implications to the 4-H experience.

Furthermore, this study could provide beneficial data to those within the camp community as well as those within the Cooperative Extension Service around the country. By examining the essential elements of positive youth development and targeted life skills, the hope is to deliver useful information as to the purpose and effectiveness of overnight 4-H summer programs that take place within the naturalistic environment such as the camp setting. Through comparing youth's experience at different residential 4-H summer programs, the findings of this study have the potential to provide support for the state of Mississippi, and other states lacking access to a 4-H camp.

Limitations

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. Due to the sample consisting only of those programs within the state of Mississippi, the results cannot be generalized beyond this study.
2. Reaching out to parents in a timely manner in order to get consent documents signed and returned in order to maximize participation proved to be a challenge.

3. The large range of ages between the two comparison groups could have affected the comprehension of questions asked, therefore affecting the answers provided.
4. The time and resources available to conduct the questionnaire and focus groups were scarce. The goal of the programs utilized was to get as much structured information and activities into the time allotment of the given program. Therefore, finding “free time” to conduct the study was up to the discretion of the program director.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this study are as follows:

1. Participants were able to read and understand the questionnaire instrument.
2. Participants were honest in the answers provided on the questionnaire.
3. Participants accurately and honestly portrayed their experiences through the focus groups.

Definitions

4-H: a youth development program provided through the Cooperative Extension System and USDA, consisting of clubs, camps, and afterschool and school enrichment programs located in every county and parish within the United States (4-H Positive Youth Develop and Mentoring Organization, n.d.).

Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development: The eight essential elements are components of positive youth development and include (1) positive

relationship with a caring adult, (2) an inclusive environment, (3) a safe environment, (4) opportunity for mastery, (5) engagement in learning, (6) opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, (7) opportunity for self-determination, and (8) opportunity to value and practice service to others (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Martz et al., 2009).

Experiential Learning: The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of an experience (Kolb, 1984).

Life Skills: Life skills are abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, n.d., para. 3).

Organized Activities: Formal, voluntary activities for children 6 to 18 years of age that are not a part of the school curriculum and are characterized by structure, adult-supervision, and an emphasis on skill building (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005).

Positive Youth Development: An intentional, pro-social approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances youths' strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths (Youth.Gov, 2015).

Residential Summer Camp: Well established forms of outdoor education where participants live and stay overnight in cabins; usually in a remote setting,

with other young people, under the guidance of camp counselors (Summer Camp Philosophy, Theory, Research, & Evaluation, 2006).

Residential Conference: Overnight experiences that last between two and seven days, typically take place on the campus of a major university, and aim to enhance a specific set of skills (Arnold, 2003).

Structural Components: Camp or conference programs and activities, rules, symbols, traditions and rituals, competitive events, leadership programs, structures and facilities, and/or setting and physical location (Garst et al., 2011a).

Summer Programs: Organized activities that take place during the months of May through August and include (1) an operator responsible for administration, implementation, and finances, (2) support by revenue and employs paid staff, (3) operates during summer months, (4) targets a specific group of youth to participate, (5) meets a specific youth or community need, (6) has one or more youth-centered goals, (7) has a specific starting and ending time for activities, and (8) offers youth enough exposure to the activities to meet the need or make the goal attainable (National Summer Learning Association, 2009).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review is an extensive look into organized activities and the opportunities youth have to capitalize on a variety of experiences. More specifically, the literature review examines the similarities and differences within existing literature in regards to out-of-school time, specifically related to summer programs and the experiences that accompany them. The literature explores summer programs, the traditional summer camp experiences, as well as 4-H youth development, and the residential camping and conference experiences. Further, positive youth development, experiential learning, and targeted life skills will be explained in depth and utilized as the conceptual framework for this study.

Organized Activities: Out-of-School Time and Youth Development Programs

Organized activities, which include, but are not limited to, a variety of youth development programs, are activities that usually take place during what is referred to as “out-of-school time.” Organized activities are, “important contexts that help young persons build competencies and successfully negotiate the salient developmental tasks of childhood and adolescence” (Mahoney et al., 2005, p. 10). These organized activities can include nationally sponsored youth organizations (i.e. Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Boy Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, YMCA, YWCA, Camp Fire USA, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and 4-H), as well as faith-based

organizations, amateur sports leagues, and community service programs that serve young people during after-school hours, on the weekends, and during the summer time (Mahoney et al., 2005, Nicholson, Collins, & Holmer, 2004). Through offering a safe and inclusive environment that is multicultural and nondiscriminatory, research has shown that participation in organized activities can provide a multitude of positive benefits for youth, such as: social growth, emotional well-being, physical and mental health, civic engagement, skill building, and identity development (Mahoney et al., 2005; Nicholson et al., 2004; Public Agenda, 2004; Simpkins, 2003). However, precisely documenting how positive youth outcomes can be attributed to these programs can be difficult.

The factors that can affect the outcomes of organized activity participation include the amount of time spent in the programs, the quality of the programs, the age of the youth participant, and the reasons youth choose to participate in the programs (Simpkins, 2003). It has been identified that, “associations between activity participation and outcomes appear to be stronger for adolescents than elementary school children,” therefore, finding ways to document outcomes for a program that serves a variety of youth who span over a variety of ages, can be difficult (Simpkins, 2003, p. 3). Even without age being a factor, the amount of time spent in an activity and the reasons youth choose to participate in the program can give the same program varying outcomes when it is implemented in multiple locations nationwide. For example, in a study regarding high school students’ involvement in the National FFA Organization, skills such as goal setting, time management, effective teamwork, and communication skills were observed in and identified by the students participating in the particular chapter (Larson, Hansen,

& Walker, 2005). However, these findings can be viewed as specific to the chapter they were observed in and would be hard to generalize to all youth development programs or even to other FFA chapters due to the variety of advisors and youth involved in the program, as well as the program goals for that chapter in particular.

It is common during adolescence that youth participate in some sort of organized activity during their out-of-school time (Public Agenda, 2004). A study conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project (2006) looked at demographic differences in youth out-of-school time participation by analyzing data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics in 2002 and the National Survey of American Families in 1997, 1999, and 2002. The age groups for analysis of youth participants were divided into young youth (ages six to eleven) and older youth (ages twelve to seventeen). The analyses determined 56% of young white youth, 42% of young black youth, and 30% of young Latino youth participated in some sort of out-of-school time activity (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). Similarly, 65% of older white youth, 58% of older black youth, and 43% of older Latino youth participated in an out-of-school time activity (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). Further, in a study conducted by Balsano, Phelps, Theokas, Lerner, and Lerner (2009), early adolescents' participation in 18 various out-of-school time activities was observed. These activities were divided into five different categories: youth development programs, sports, arts, interest clubs, and service groups. It is important to note that the nationally-sponsored organizations mentioned above (i.e. 4-H Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) are referred to as youth development programs. Of those youth participants in the study, 95% of youth in the fifth grade and 92% of youth in the sixth grade participated in at least one of the 18

out-of-school activities within the five categories (Balsano et al., 2009). Specifically, 44% of those youth in fifth grade and 35% percent of those youth in sixth grade participated in organized activities that could be defined as true youth development programs; however, it was noted that few youth participated solely in youth development programs and that they were likely to be involved in multiple activities that typically included sports or arts programs (Balsano et al., 2009). It has also been documented that boys are more likely to participate in out-of-school time activities related to sports, while girls are more likely to participate in clubs (Child Trends, 2006).

Overall, youth who participate in organized activities that occur during out-of-school time generally have positive experiences. Again, programs, such as the nationally-sponsored organizations listed above, are activities which promote positive youth development and are often referred to as “youth development programs.” These programs, in particular, “ultimately foster better citizenship and responsible adulthood” by structuring their activities around the theory of positive youth development (Balsano et al., 2009, p. 251). Youth describe these programs as being fun, educational, and a good place to make friends (Public Agenda, 2004). In a collection of studies conducted by Larson, Hansen, and Walker (2005), it was determined, “when teens were participating in extracurricular activities and other structured programs, they consistently reported both high motivation and engaged attention” (p. 163). Further, out-of-school time activities are increasingly being viewed by parents and researchers as an opportunity to provide youth with experiences which develop skills and competencies that are often neglected by our school systems (Mahoney et al., 2005). Yet, surprisingly, these skills and competencies do not directly relate to academic advancements and achievements.

Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, many out-of-school time programs have been under pressure to demonstrate academic achievement (Simpkins, 2003). However, a recent study by Public Agenda (2004) indicated that academics are not at the top of the list of things parents are looking for in their children's out-of-school time activities. Nevertheless, youth who participate in properly structured out-of-school time activities are at an advantage because these programs "situate youth in safe environments, prevent youth from engaging in delinquent behaviors, teach youth general and specific skills, beliefs, and behaviors, and provide opportunities for youth to develop relationships with peers and mentors" (Simpkins, 2003, p. 2). Many youth even attribute these activities to helping them deal with boredom and enabling them to know how boredom can easily lead to trouble and poor decision making. According to Public Agenda (2004), who prepared a report commissioned by The Wallace Foundation about what kids and parents want from out-of-school time programs, boredom is a widespread problem in America amongst middle school and high school students. Further, "students themselves recognize the link between boredom and mischief" (Public Agenda, 2004, p. 10).

While many youth tend to have a typical school-day routine with various activities taking up after-school time as well as their summer time, there are still a handful of youth who spend a lot of time without any form of adult supervision. In particular, finding a way for youth to stay busy and involved during the summer time is especially hard for parents. In the commissioned report, "All Work and No Play", 58% of parents reported that summer is the hardest time to make sure their children have things to do (Public Agenda, 2004). As parents continuously search for ways for their children

to be safe and engaged during the summer months, participation in summer programs appears to be a viable means to fill that need.

Summer Programs

Activities that take place during the summer offer youth a unique experience, unlike any other they can get during the traditional school year. The summer months provide youth with a learning opportunity to “expand their horizons, master new skills and build relationships” (Afterschool Alliance, 2010, p. 1). Summer programs are organized, out-of-school time activities that take place during the summer months, typically late May through early August. Explicitly, these programs are “designed to meet a specific need or offer youth the opportunity to achieve a specific goal” (National Summer Learning Association, 2009, p. 4). In order for a summer activity to be considered a true summer program, the National Summer Learning Association states that the following items must be present:

(1) an operator responsible for administration, implementation, and finances, (2) support by revenue and employs paid staff, (3) operates during summer months, (4) targets a specific group of youth to participate, (5) meets a specific youth or community need, (6) has one or more youth-centered goals, (7) has a specific starting and ending time for activities, and (8) offers youth enough exposure to the activities to meet the need or make the goal attainable (National Summer Learning Association, 2009, p. 5).

Summer programs can be operated by schools, parks and recreation programs, child care centers, or community-based and faith-based organizations and can vary in their settings, duration, focus area, and target population (National Summer Learning

Association, 2009). Summer programs can include, but are not limited to, outdoor adventure camps, arts and music camps, sports camps, summer school, summer reading programs, high school transition programs, and college preparatory programs and can focus on developing academic skills, vocational skills, and/or life skills (Child Trends, 2009). A white paper commissioned by the Wallace Foundation and reported by the National Summer Learning Association (2009), describes in great detail the types of summer programs made available to youth. An excerpt from that report (Table 2.1) further explains the typology of those summer programs.

Additionally, a white paper reported by Child Trends (2009) and also commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, describes the characteristics of young youth who participate in summer programs. An excerpt from that report (Table 2.2) explains the percentage of all children aged six to eleven and their participation in summer programs in relation to demographic, socioeconomic, out-of-school time activities, and behavior and health factors.

Table 2.1 Typology of Summer Programs

Operator	Focus	Duration	Target Population	Primary Funding	Connections that Influence Quality
Schools	Academic Development	4-6 weeks	Low-performing students	Government funds	21 st Century Community Learning Centers
Community Organizations	Youth development and social development	1-12 weeks	Youth in the surrounding community	Private philanthropy	City intermediary, statewide afterschool network
Faith-Based Organization	Spiritual development; youth and social development	1-12 weeks	Youth in the surrounding community	Individual contributions and private philanthropy	City intermediary, local funding collaborative
Libraries	Literacy development	All summer	Youth in the surrounding community	Private philanthropy	Collaborative Summer Reading Program (national consortium of library systems)
Cultural Institutions	Artistic and cultural development	1-6 weeks	Youth in the surrounding community	Parent fees	N/A
Colleges and Universities	Athletics; college preparation; academic specialties	1-6 weeks	Varies	Parent fees	N/A
Camps	Outdoor education; youth and social development	1-12 weeks	Varies	Parent fees	American Camp Association Accreditation
Parks and Recreations Centers	Athletics; play; social, artistic, and youth development	1-12 weeks	Youth in the surrounding community	Parent fees	N/A

Table 2.1 (continued)

Child Care Centers	Child development; play; academic and social development	All summer	Youth in the surrounding community	Parent fees	National Early Childhood Accreditation Commission
National Youth-Serving Organizations	Youth and social development	1-12 weeks	Varies	Parent fees	YMCA of the USA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America
Other Public Agencies	Varies by agency type (e.g. workforce development; risk prevention)	4-12 weeks	Youth in the surrounding community; high-risk youth	Government funds (targeted discretionary grant programs)	National Youth Employment Coalition

Note: National Summer Learning Association. (2009). *Building quality in summer learning programs: Approaches and recommendations*. Baltimore, MD: McLaughlin, B. & Pitcock, S.

Table 2.2 Percentage of all children aged 6 to 11 participating in summer programs, by various child socioeconomic, demographic, and other characteristics

Total N = 684		Participates in Summer Programs (row %)	Significance before adding covariates	Significance after adding covariates
Demographic	Gender (% within gender)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Male	25%		
	Female	23%		
	Race (% within race)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Black	25%		
	Other	22%		
	White	24%		
Socioeconomic	Poverty (% within poverty level)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Below 200% of poverty line	18%		
	200% or above of poverty line	29%		
	Family Structure (% within family type)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Single parent household	21%		
	Household with 2 bio/adoptive parents	28%		
	Household with 2 parents (one is a step parent)	14%		
	Lives with no parents	10%		
School and Out-of-School Time	School engagement (% within engagement level)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Low school engagement	15%		
	High school engagement	30%		
	Social clubs (% within each group)		***	*
	Did not participate in clubs last year	20%		
	Participated in clubs last year	29%		
	Extracurricular Activities (% within each group)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Not involved in any activities	15%		
	Involved in 3 or more extracurricular activities	27%		

Table 2.2 (continued)

Behavior and Health	Social Competence (% within each group)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Acts too young for his or her age	14%		
	Acts appropriately for his or her age	26%		
	Behavior (% within each group)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Has high behavior problem scores	13%		
	Has low behavior problem scores	18%		
	Peer Relations (% within each group)		***	<i>ns</i>
	Doesn't get along with other kids	12%		
	Gets along with other kids	25%		
	Health (% within each group)		***	***
	Fair or poor health	55%		
	Good, Very Good or Excellent health	23%		

Note: * $p < .05$ and *** $p < .001$ = statistically significant; *ns* = not statistically significant. Children with bold-highlighted characteristics are more likely to participate in summer programs. Covariates include gender, race, poverty, and family structure. Child Trends. (2009). *Effective and promising summer learning programs and approaches for economically-disadvantaged children and youth*. Bethesda, MD: Terzian, M., Moore, K.A., Hamilton, K.

For this analysis, Child Trends utilized data from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families. The data concluded that males, youth of black race, who participated in clubs, and were involved in three or more extracurricular activities were more likely to participate in summer programs. It is important to note that after controlling for covariates, the factor of participating in clubs was statistically significant (Child Trends, 2009).

The Summer Camp Experience

The summer camp experience has been a prevalent youth development program within the United States for more than a century. Organized youth camping was established in 1861 and currently serves more than 10 million children annually, at more than 12,000 camps nationwide (American Camp Association, 2006). Participating in a camp program has many proven benefits for youth who attend. While at camp, youth are given the opportunity to enhance their growth through affective, cognitive, behavioral, physical, social, and spiritual development (Garst & Bruce, 2003). Furthermore, the camp setting provides “unique relationship-building opportunities and is ideally situated to promote a connectedness among young people” (Sibthorp et al., 2010, p. 3). The camp setting is often uniquely characterized by hands-on experiences that take place within the natural environment. At camp, participants are immersed in a natural, outdoor setting that often contradicts their typical setting in everyday life, allowing for the engagement of experiential learning in a safe and stimulating atmosphere (Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007; Sibthorp et al., 2010). Additionally, by participating in and forming relationships at camp, youth tend to break down societal stereotypes and seek to be a better version of themselves or reinvent themselves through the camp experience (American Camp Association, 2005; Garst et al., 2011a; Garst et al., 2009).

During the summers of 2002 and 2003, the American Camp Association surveyed more than 5,000 campers and parents at 80 different summer camps around the country, the first large-scale national research project focused on camp outcomes. Participating camps included day camps and residential camps that were agency sponsored, religiously affiliated, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations (American Camp Association, 2005).

The goal was to measure growth within 10 constructs: self-esteem, independence, leadership, friendship skills, social comfort, peer relationships, adventure and exploration, environmental awareness, values and decisions, and spirituality, which were conceptualized as fitting into four domains: positive identity, social skills, physical and thinking skills, and positive values and spirituality (American Camp Association, 2005). The research team surveyed campers and parents with pre, post, and six-month follow-up questionnaires. The results indicated positive growth in all four domains and in a majority of the 10 constructs, and that growth was maintained six months after the camp experience (American Camp Association, 2005). Furthermore, the social comfort and peer relationships constructs had no statistical increase from the pre to post survey, but did have a statistically significant increase at the six month follow up (American Camp Association, 2005).

Moreover, during the summer of 2004, the American Camp Association once again conducted a nationwide research project including a variety of 80 different camps, half of which participated in the previously mentioned study, and 7,645 youth campers. The objective of this research project was to determine the quality of the camp experience amongst the various different camp types and by camper characteristics (American Camp Association, 2006). The research team measured four critical domains of developmental supports and opportunities. The four domains included supportive relationships, safety, youth involvement, and skill building, and were measured with a post-camp questionnaire at the end of the camp experience (American Camp Association, 2006). Overall, the results indicated that youth experiences at camp scored optimally in the domains of safety, supportive relationships, and skill building, but were not so optimal in

the domain of youth involvement. However, it was noted that youth involvement increased as campers got older, and was relatively high for youth ages 16 to 18 compared to younger campers (American Camp Association, 2006). This particular change in the youth involvement domain could be due to leadership opportunities for older campers, as well as general maturation of older youth. In the comparison of camp type, it is most notable that when comparing residential camps with day camps, residential camps had a higher percentage of optimal levels in supportive relationships, skill building, and safety (American Camp Association, 2006). Further, camps that offered longer sessions experienced optimal levels in all four domains and youth who had attended camp for multiple summers reported more optimal levels of supportive relationships and safety compared to first time campers (American Camp Association, 2006). In short, youth who attend camp for multiple weeks and multiple summers had more optimal experiences, especially if the camp was a residential camp.

When discussing any type of research related to camp, it is essential that the two nationwide studies conducted by the American Camp Association be included. Both studies were the first of their kinds in attempts to measure the organized camping experience for youth. Further, the results of these studies provided baseline knowledge of camper and camp characteristics, sparking the past decade of research related to the camp experience. For example, when dissecting the camp experience, many researchers have come to conclusions that mirror the results of the American Camp Association research projects and have provided some answers to these conclusions. For example, Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011a), discovered that the length of the camp experience was one of the most influential aspects of camp because the experience is sustained for greater

periods of time, creating greater exposure to the elements of positive youth development. Along with that, it has been determined that structural components of the camp experience add to the positive outcomes of the experience. Camp norms, traditions, and the group living environment enhance the camp experience by instilling a sense of belonging and connectedness in campers who attend (Garst et al., 2011a; Gillard, Watts, & Witt, 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Sibthorp et al., 2010). The American Camp Association sums up the camp experiences by stating, “community living, away from home, in an outdoor, recreation setting provides a foundation for tremendous growth” (American Camp Association, 2006, p. 1).

4-H Youth Development

The Smith-Lever Act of 1914, established 4-H as a youth-serving organization and during the past 100 years 4-H has provided millions of youth with opportunities to learn new life skills, meet new people, learn responsibility, and build self-confidence (Hoover, Scholl, Dunigan, & Mamontova, 2007; Radhakrishna & Sinasky, 2005). Cathann Kress, former Director of Youth Development at the National 4-H Headquarters, explained the purpose of 4-H as “to engage young people in the work of the Land-Grant University and USDA, to teach knowledge and life skills which enhance quality of life, and to create opportunities which promote positive youth development” (Kress, 2004, slide 4). Additionally 4-H places specific emphasis on experiential learning or “learning by doing” which allows for the development and practical application of skills and emphasizes the need for caring, supportive relationships with both peers and adults (Kress, 2004).

In order to determine the effects 4-H has on those who participate, a longitudinal study was launched in 2002 and included eight waves of data collection. The study collected data from more than 7,000 participants from 42 states across the nation and sought to determine if 4-H was meeting the essential elements of positive youth development through their programming (Lerner et al., 2013). The study uncovered that structured out-of-school time learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring were vital components to the success of 4-H (Lerner et al., 2013). Additionally, the study revealed that, on average, youth who participated in 4-H are better equipped with certain life skills and personal characteristics. For example, compared to their peers, those who participated in 4-H were four times more likely to make contributions to their communities, two times more likely to be civically active, and two times more likely to make healthier life choices (Lerner et al., 2013).

In addition to the nationwide longitudinal study, researchers have found that the effects of 4-H extends past the time of participation and has significant influence on adult life. When asking 4-H alumni how they perceived their experience in 4-H as a youth, they attributed challenges, projects, and activities to their own personal leadership development and how they use leadership in their adult life (Radhakrishna & Sinasky, 2005). Even when comparing their experiences in 4-H to their experiences in other youth development programs, 4-H alumni attributed their life skill development to their participation in 4-H (Maass, Wilkin, Jordan, Culen, & Place, 2006). Through the various research projects conducted, it is a safe assumption that involvement in 4-H youth development programs helps youth to learn and utilize a specific set of skills (Fitzpatrick, Gagne, Jones, Loblely, & Phelps, 2005). Furthermore, by participating in various 4-H

delivery modes such as the traditional 4-H club, afterschool programs, school enrichment programs, and camping programs, there is an increase in leadership and developmental skills (Kinsey, 2013).

4-H Residential Programs

Residential, or overnight, programs have been an important delivery mode for 4-H from the very beginning. In 1923, Horace A. Moses, president of the Strathmore Paper Company, funded one of the first 4-H leadership training “schools” for a week-long training (Hoover et al., 2007). Shortly after, in 1927, the first National 4-H Club Camp was held in Washington, D.C., which would be later known as the National 4-H Conference (Hoover et al., 2007). With the first training schools and National 4-H Club Camp as a guiding hand, counties, states, and regions began holding their own camps and conferences and providing 4-H members the opportunity serve as camp counselors in hopes to enhance their leadership skills (Hoover et al., 2007). Even from the start, 4-H residential experiences have provided youth with opportunities to increase skill development and have provided positive effects for those who attend.

Residential Camping

Although other youth-serving organizations provide residential camping, 4-H is one of the largest providers (Garst & Bruce, 2003). A residential camp is a form of outdoor education where participants live and stay overnight in cabins; usually in a remote setting, with other young people, under the guidance of camp counselors (Summer Camp Philosophy, Theory, Research, & Evaluation, 2006). The 4-H camping experience provides youth with an opportunity to better themselves through mastery,

independence, generosity, and through the feeling of belonging, while also enhancing the development of very important life skills. Arnold, Bourdeau, and Nagele (2005) define 4-H camping as, “providing an experience for youth to grow socially, to develop important life skills, and experience nature—all in a fun, hands-on setting” (p. 7).

Importantly, 4-H camping has strong implications in the realms of belonging and generosity through the experiences of making new friends and getting along with others, accepting differences in others, and developing intrapersonal skills (Garton et al., 2007; Shirilla, 2009). Through participation in the 4-H camping experience, campers identify an increase in the life skills of confidence in meeting new people and making new friends (Garst & Bruce, 2003; Sibthorp et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2007). Furthermore, parents of campers, when questioned about their child’s experience at camp, tend to provide similar remarks. Parents noticed an overall increase in the following life skills: confidence of their child, their child’s ability to work through disagreements with others, and the ability to accept one’s own differences, as well as accepting differences of others, and respecting others in general (Snapp et al., 2007).

Through participation in 4-H camp, campers exercise the 4-H concepts of mastery and independence. At camp, youth participants identified the importance of paying attention and an eagerness to learn more about experiences as being benefits of their participation at camp and parents identified that their children had an increased willingness to try new things and ask questions (Snapp et al., 2007). Additionally, parents and campers documented an increased sense of independence after the camp experience. Campers shared that they were better equipped to be on time, to make better decisions, and take better care of themselves which are all important life skills (Garst & Bruce,

2003; Snapp et al., 2007). Parents recorded similar findings. Parents stated that children were more likely to do their part, take care of themselves and their personal belongings, and take initiative as positive outcomes of the 4-H camping experience (Garst & Bruce, 2003; Snapp et al., 2007).

Overall, campers overwhelmingly indicated their want to return to 4-H camp the following summer due to their positive experience (Snapp et al., 2007). Even parents identified that the benefits of their child attending 4-H summer camp, greatly outweighed the costs (Snapp et al., 2007). In sum, campers and parents alike see the overwhelming benefits that 4-H residential camping can provide and most are willing to continue the experience in order to create more potential benefits.

Residential Conferences

Outside of 4-H camp, there are other opportunities, such as State Congress or various leadership conferences, for 4-H youth to participate in a residential experience. These experiences usually last between two and seven days and can take place on the campus of the land-grant institution with which the particular 4-H club is connected (Arnold, 2003). Extension Agents and 4-H youth participants have stated the purpose of these residential programs is to develop leadership abilities, similar to the camping experience (Lester et al., 1974). In addition to enhancing leadership skills, residential experiences provide an opportunity for 4-H youth to participate in hands-on learning, as well as develop and practice valuable life skills (Arnold, 2003; Gill et al., 2010). Further, experiences that do not take place in the naturalistic environment, such as State Congress, have been shown to enhance the development of life skills (Garst et al., 2006). Though participants of these programs typically differ in schools, ethnicity, counties or

geographic location, socioeconomic classification, and social groups, these experiences provide an opportunity for all youth to be seen as equals, as well as expose them to a new and unique learning environment (Garst et al., 2006; Garst, Scheider, & Baker, 2001).

Conceptual Framework

Positive Youth Development

The theory of positive youth development has very diverse origins including academic research, those working in youth-serving organizations, and national policies related to the development of healthy youth and families (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005b). Positive youth development consists of minimizing and preventing risks of youth and adolescents by emphasizing the appropriate use of out-of-school time.

Furthermore, through positive youth development it is believed, “if young people have mutually beneficial relations with the people and institutions of their social world, they will be on the way to a hopeful future marked by positive contributions to self, family, community, and civil society,” (Lerner et al., 2005b, p. 12).

Positive youth development can be seen at the very core of most successful youth-serving organizations and is composed of the Five C’s: (1) competence, the ability to perform adequately in the world; (2) confidence, the perception that one can achieve desired goals through one’s actions; (3) connection, understanding relationships and their importance; (4) character, having respect for societal and cultural rules and a sense of right and wrong; and (5) caring, the feeling of empathy and sympathy and behaving morally based on those emotions (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, 2005a; Martz et al., 2009; Nicholson et al., 2004). By incorporating the Five C’s into the structure of youth development programs, youth tend to strive in the face of adversity. Furthermore, by

accomplishing or meeting the Five C's, a sixth C, contribution, is exposed. In sum, as youth advance in their life trajectory towards adulthood, they will be met with opportunities to develop strengths within the Five C's of positive youth development, and use the sixth C to contribute to their community and maintain their healthy lifestyles into adulthood.

In addition to the Five C's, there are also eight essential elements that contribute to positive youth development. The eight essential elements include:

(1) positive relationship with a caring adult, (2) an inclusive environment, (3) a safe environment, (4) opportunity for mastery, (5) engagement in learning, (6) opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, (7) opportunity for self-determination, and (8) opportunity to value and practice service to others (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Martz et al., 2009).

These essential elements can also be seen in Table 2.3 where they are accompanied by descriptors as well as opposite poles in regards to how they should be used in a positive youth development setting. The descriptors illustrate a setting in which the essential element should be used and how it would look, conversely the opposite poles illustrate a setting in which the essential element is not utilized.

Table 2.3 Features of Positive Developmental Settings

	Descriptors	Opposite Poles
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities; and practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.	Physical and health dangers; fear; feeling of insecurity; sexual and physical harassment; and verbal abuse.
Appropriate Structure	Limit setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; firm-enough control; continuity and predictability; clear boundaries; and age-appropriate monitoring.	Chaotic; disorganized; laissez-faire; rigid; over controlled; and autocratic.
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance; secure attachment; and responsiveness.	Cold; distant; over controlling; ambiguous support; untrustworthy; focused on winning; inattentive; unresponsive; and rejecting.
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity formation; and support for cultural and bicultural competence.	Exclusion; marginalization; and intergroup conflict.
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behavior; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; and obligations for service.	Normlessness; anomie; laissez-faire practices; antisocial and amoral norms; norms that encourage violence; reckless behavior; consumerism; poor health practices; and conformity.

Table 2.3 (continued)

Support for Efficacy and Mattering	Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one's community; and being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.	Unchallenging; over controlling; disempowering, and disabling. Practices that undermine motivation and desire to learn, such as excessive focus on current relative performance level rather than improvement.
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.	Practices that promote bad physical habits and habits of mind; and practices that undermine school and learning.
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community.	Discordance; lack of communication; and conflict.

Note: Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

At a national level, 4-H uses the essential elements of positive youth development as the framework behind all of their youth-serving programs. The eight elements have been further synthesized by 4-H to fit into four core concepts: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (Garst et al., 2011b; Kress, 2004; Martz et al., 2009; Meyer & Jones, 2015). Figure 2.1 is a visual representation of how the essential elements of positive youth development fit into the four core concepts created by 4-H. Further, research has indicated that the camp experience provides youth with all of the opportunities to experience positive youth development (Garst et al., 2011a). By utilizing the positive youth development framework, a means of creating outcomes for camp programs, as well as ways to evaluate and measure those outcomes has been established (Garst et al., 2011a). Through incorporating these essential elements of youth development in experiential learning situations, youth have the opportunity to develop important life skills.

<p>Belonging</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A positive relationship with a caring adult <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Caring adults can serve as advisors, guides, and/or mentors b. Help youth to establish boundaries c. Supporter, friend, advocate 2. An inclusive environment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creates a sense of belonging and encourages support from members b. Healthy groups promote the success of all members c. Take pride in collective efforts 3. A safe emotional and physical environment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Youth should not fear harm while participating in 4-H 	<p>Mastery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Opportunity for mastery <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Building knowledge, skills and attitudes b. Demonstrate competence and use of knowledge, skills, and attitudes c. Process that occurs over time 5. Engagement in learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mindful of subject area b. Builds relationships and connections in order to gain a deeper understanding c. Self-reflection d. Self-motivation
<p>Independence</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have hope and optimism to shape life choices 7. Opportunity for self-determination <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a sense of influence over one's own life 	<p>Generosity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Opportunity to value and practice service to others <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Service to others

Figure 2.1 Eight Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development Condensed into Four Core Concepts.

Note: Kress, C. (2004). *Essential elements of 4-H youth development*. Retrieved from http://www.4h.org/uploadedFiles/Programs/Afterschool/Resources/Training_Resources/EssentialElementsof4-HYouthDevelopment.ppt.

Experiential Learning Theory

David A. Kolb defines experiential learning as, “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Moreover, he explains that there are two reasons as to why this perspective on learning is deemed experiential. Kolb cites that the first reason is so the perspective can be tied to the work of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget and the second reason is “to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process” (Kolb, 1984, p. 20). Experiential learning theory is further explained by Kolb (1984) as “a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior” (p. 21). While experiential learning theory is similar to other learning and behavioral theories that preceded it, there are some stark differences. For example, Kolb (1984) explains that through an experience, ideas and thoughts are consistently “formed and re-formed” (p. 26). Essentially, because no two experiences are the same, our ideas, or our knowledge, will consistently change depending on the associated experiences. He even acknowledges that people have different experiences, therefore they enter into learning situations with varying ideas and knowledge about the subject matter (Kolb, 1984).

The experiential theory is accompanied by a cyclical model which consists of a concrete experience, reflection observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb (1984) states that in order for learners to be effective, all four of these components need to be present. Further, by utilizing the four components of the experiential learning model, learners will achieve “new knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes” (Kolb, 1984, p. 30). A visual representation of the experiential learning model can be seen in Figure 2.2.

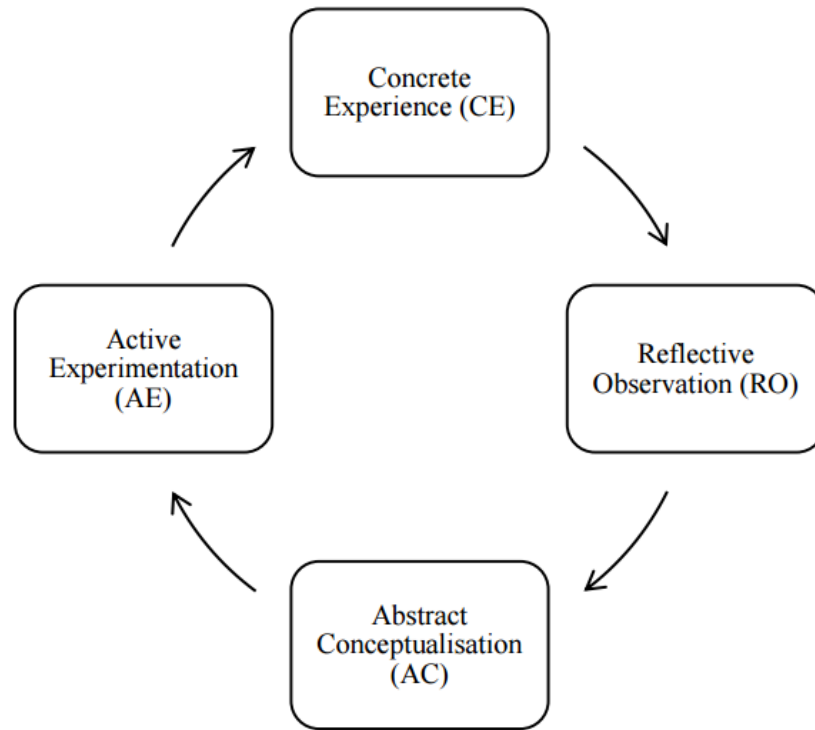


Figure 2.2 Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Note: Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development

Kolb (1984) explains learning as a “major process of human adaptation” (p. 32). Further, he identifies that learning occurs at all stages of life and in a multitude of settings such as schools, the workplace, and through personal relationships (Kolb, 1984). Due to learning being a process of human adaptation, it encompasses things such as problem solving, decision making, and attitude change, life skills which focus heavily on adaptation of an individual (Kolb, 1984). Kolb also describes that through utilizing the experiential learning model, “different developmental strategies” can be mapped (Kolb, 1981, p. 248). The mapping different developmental strategies can be seen in the Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development (Figure 2.3).

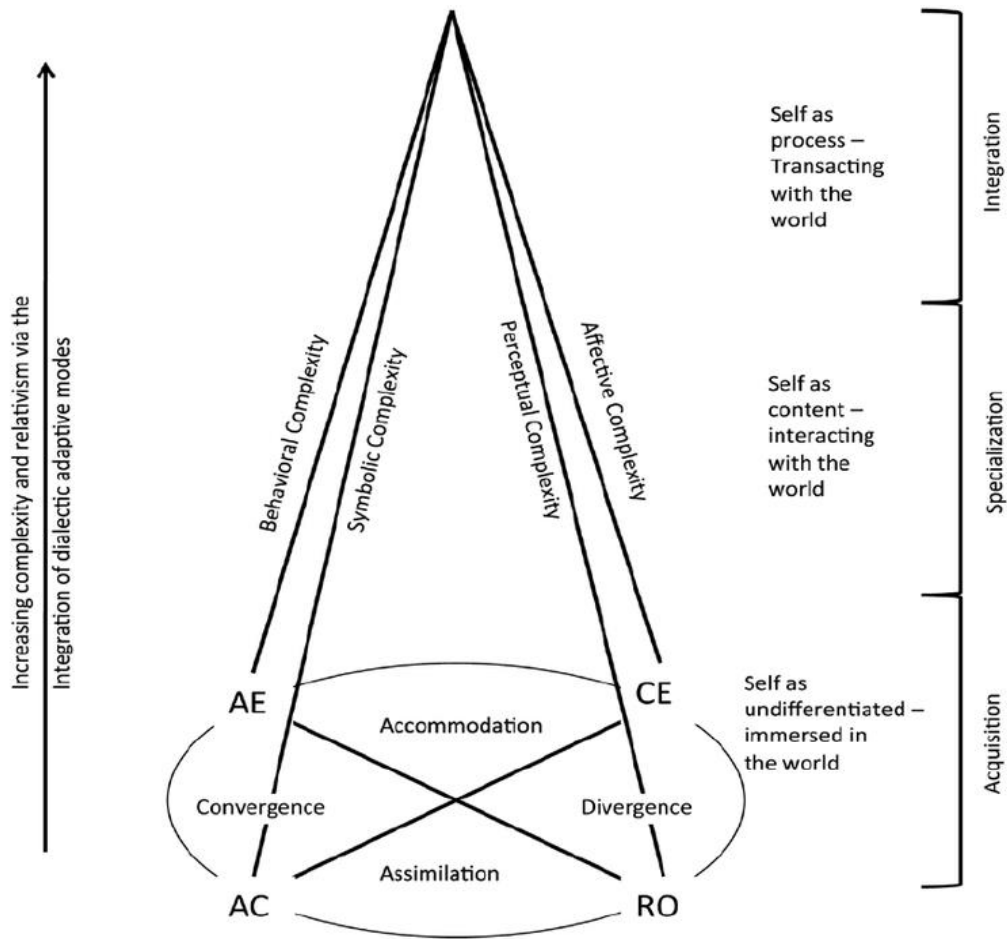


Figure 2.3 Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development

Note: Kolb, D.A. (1981). Learning styles and disciplinary differences. In A.W. Chickering and Associates (Eds.), *The modern American college: Responding to the new realities of diverse Students and a changing society* (pp. 232-255). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

Kolb places an emphasis on the perspective that learning is a centralized life task and how one learns is a determinant of their personal development. Further, he identified a framework for “conceptualizing individual differences in styles of adaptation to the world” otherwise known as learning styles (Kolb & Fry, 1975, p. 40). These learning

styles can be seen within the bottom circle of the model (Figure 2.3) and consist of convergence, divergence, accommodation, and assimilation. The characteristics of the convergence learning style include the practical application of ideas which directly involves active experimentation and abstract conceptualization. The divergence learning style involves having great imaginative ability which incorporates concrete experience and reflective observation. When looking at the learning style of assimilation, the greatest strengths of this style are inductive reasoning and assimilating observations into explanations which correlates with abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. The final learning style identified was accommodation. This style encompasses carrying out plans and engaging in new experiences, directly relating to concrete experience and active experimentation. These learning styles can “affect how people learn not only in the limited educational sense but also in the broader aspects of adaptation to life such as decision-making, problem-solving and life style in general” (Kolb & Fry, 1975, p. 40).

There are also three stages of the growth process associated with the model which can be seen on the right side: acquisition, specialization, and integration. Acquisition is characterized as extending from birth through adolescence, specifically marking “the acquisition of basic learning abilities and cognitive structures” (Kolb, 1981, p. 245). For this study in particular, the acquisition stage of the growth process is the most applicable. The second stage is specialization, which spans the time of formal education or career training through early experiences of adulthood. Specifically, “individuals shaped by social, educational, and organizational socialization forces develop increased competence in a specialized mode of adaption that enables them to master the particular life tasks they encounter in their chosen career path” (Kolb, 1981, p. 245). The third stage is integration,

which illustrates an individual's means of adapting to the world through new career interests, changes in life-styles, or new creativity in their chosen career (Kolb, 1981). Through these stages, an individual shifts from dependency to a state of independence marked by the increase of complexity and relativism when dealing with the world and one's own experiences (Kolb & Fry, 1975). The increase in complexity and relativism can be seen on the left side of the model (Figure 2.3).

Additionally, the model incorporates four dimensions of growth which are depicted in the shape of a cone: behavioral complexity, symbolic complexity, perceptual complexity, and affective complexity. These dimensions of growth are also directly associated with the four primary adaptive modes located in the Experiential Learning Model (Figure 2.2). Kolb explains the relation between the four dimensions of growth and the four primary adaptive modes as:

Development in the Concrete Experience adaptive mode is characterized by increases in the affective complexity. Development in the Reflective Observation mode is characterized by increases in perceptual complexity. Development in the Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation mode is characterized, respectively, by increases in symbolic complexity and behavioral complexity (Kolb, 1981, p. 245).

It is also important to note that as development in one mode increases, development in other modes also increase.

Overall, the Experiential Learning Model of Growth and Development helps to describe “the life cycle of human development through the stage of acquisition of basic cognitive structures, the stage of specialization in dominant learning style and matching

career path, and the stage of integration of non-dominant modes of dealing with the world” (Kolb & Fry, 1975, p. 56). The model depicts the four dimensions of growth and how they increase developmentally as an individual proceeds through the three stages of growth. Further, it indicates that learning styles help to shape an individual’s behavior in educational settings, but also shape the way they adapt to the world.

4-H Targeted Life Skills

The Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996) assists youth developmental professionals in evolving youth towards their fullest potential. The model was created in 1996 as a means to help guide planning, implementation, and evaluation of 4-H programs (Garton et al., 2007). The model contains 35 life skills that can be used as a way to improve the experiences of youth by focusing on achieving specific, measurable goals (Figure 2.4).



Figure 2.4 Targeting Life Skills Model

Note: Reprinted with permission from the author. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (n.d.). Targeting life skills model. Retrieved from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Life skills are “abilities individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life” (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, n.d., para. 3). The life skills model has further been categorized in order to fit into the 4-H Clover, which represents the four H’s: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, with two categories of skills under each of the headings (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, n.d., para. 3). Figure 2.5 is a visual representation of how the 35 life skills fit into the four H’s.

<p>Head Thinking: using one's mind to form ideas and make decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to learn • Decision making • Problem solving • Critical thinking • Service learning <p>Managing: using resources to accomplish a purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Planning/organizing • Keeping records • Resiliency 	<p>Heart Relating: establishing a mutual or reciprocal connection between two people that is wholesome and meaningful to both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Cooperation • Social skills • Conflict resolution • Accepting differences <p>Caring: showing understanding, kindness, concern, and affection for others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for others • Empathy • Sharing • Nurturing relationships
<p>Hands Giving: providing, supplying, or causing to happen (social responsibility)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service/volunteering • Leadership • Responsible • Contribution to group <p>Working: accomplishing something or earning pay to support oneself through physical or mental effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketable/useful skills • Teamwork • Self-motivation 	<p>Health Living: acting or behaving, the manner or style of daily life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy lifestyle choices • Stress management • Disease prevention • Personal safety <p>Being: living one's life; pursuing ones basic nature; involved personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Self-responsibility • Character • Managing feelings • Self-discipline

Figure 2.5 Thirty Five Life Skills Categorized by the Four H's

Note: Norman, M., & Jordan, J. (2006). *Targeting life skills in 4-H* (Extension Publication 4HS FS101.9). Retrieved from University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences website: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h242>

The Targeting Life Skills Model has been an important component of how 4-H youth development programs are planned, implemented, and evaluated (Garton et al., 2007). Furthermore, a majority of 4-H camps have even adopted the model and have used it to structure their programs (Garst et al., 2011b). Though mastering any number of the aforementioned life skills takes repetition, the benefits of utilizing the Targeting Life Skills Model as a way to expose youth to various and skills far outweigh the costs.

Summary

Summer programs are an important component to the organized activities youth participate in with their out-of-school time. These programs are “designed to meet a specific need or offer youth the opportunity to achieve a specific goal” (National Summer Learning Program Association, 2009, p. 4). 4-H is one of the largest youth-serving organizations in the nation that offers this specific type of organized activity. Through incorporating positive youth development, experiential learning, and the acquisition of life skills, youth who participate in these opportunities are provided with a unique experience.

One important component of summer programs is the availability of overnight or residential experience for youth to participate. Specifically, the 4-H summer camp experience provides youth the opportunity to be immersed in the natural environment and engage in group living. Further, through this experience, youth are exposed to the essential elements of positive youth development and acquire important life skills through the experiential learning opportunities provided (Arnold et al., 2005; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Garst et al., 2009; Garst et al., 2011a; Garton et al., 2007; Gillard et al., 2009; Shirilla, 2009; Sibthorp et al., 2010; Snapp et al., 2007).

In addition to the summer camp experience, 4-H provides youth with the opportunity to participate in residential conference experiences. These experiences differ from that of the traditional summer camp by typically taking place on campus of a land-grant university and are more structured around skilled competitions and the development of leadership abilities (Arnold, 2003; Lester et al., 1974). Residential conference experiences incorporate hands-on learning to develop and practice valuable life skills and provide youth with the opportunity to interact with people outside of their local club (Arnold, 2003; Garst et al., 2001; Garst et al., 2006; Gill et al., 2010).

The common factor between these two differing residential programs is their focus on positive youth development, experiential learning, and the acquisition of life skills. Through incorporating positive youth development, 4-h hopes to provide youth with a place where they feel they belong, an opportunity to master their skills, a chance to build independence, and a way to practice generosity to others (Garst et al., 2011b; Kress, 2004; Martz et al., 2009; Meyer & Jones, 2015). Further, by providing experiential learning opportunities, the youth who participate are doing more than just learning, they are going through a process of human adaptation (Kolb, 1981; Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Fry, 1975). Finally, 4-H utilizes the acquisition of life skills by providing specific, measurable goals that can help youth live a productive and satisfying life (Garton et al., 2007; Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, n.d.). When youth are presented with a chance to learn these valuable life skills, they also have the potential to develop those skills to a point of mastery.

CHAPTER III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The general purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of youth who attend residential 4-H summer programs. For the purposes of this study, what the literature refers to as “residential conferences” are described as on-campus programs and what the literature refers to as “residential camps” are described as naturalistic environment programs. Therefore, the aim of this study was to compare the similarities and differences between overnight experiences that take place on campus and overnight experiences that take place in a more naturalistic setting. By analyzing quantitative data measuring the achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development and the acquisition of targeted life skills, the hope was to gain a better understanding of the effects of participating in overnight 4-H summer programs. Additionally, by describing the experience through qualitative data via focus group, the hope was to gain better insight as to how the youth’s acquisition of targeted life skills can be attributed to the structural components of the overnight experience.

Research Objectives

The goal of this study was to describe the demographics of participants and identify any similarities or differences between the two types of residential 4-H summer programs. Further, the study aimed to decipher the experiences based on the structural components (i.e. rules, norms, activities, traditions, rituals, facilities, and physical

location) of the summer program attended. The specific research objectives for this study were:

Objective 1: Describe the demographics of youth who participates in residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 2: Analyze and compare the differences in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development based on the structural components of residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 3: Analyze and compare the differences in the acquisition of targeted life skills for youth participants based on the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Objective 4: Investigate how participants attribute their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design was utilized in this study. This particular method was selected due to an anticipated a lack of significant differences between the two comparison groups in terms of the quantitative questionnaire. However, a qualitative component could reveal themes that would conclude differences between the two groups. Otherwise stated, “the limitations of one method can be offset by the strengths of the other method, and the combination of quantitative and qualitative data provide a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach by itself” (Creswell

& Plano Clark, 2011, p. 8) The convergent parallel design was utilized in this study.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) describe this design as,

When the researcher uses concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative strands during the same phase of the research process, prioritizes the methods equally, and keeps the strands independent during analysis and then mixes the results during the overall interpretation (p. 70-71).

Figure 3.1 is an example of the convergent parallel design.

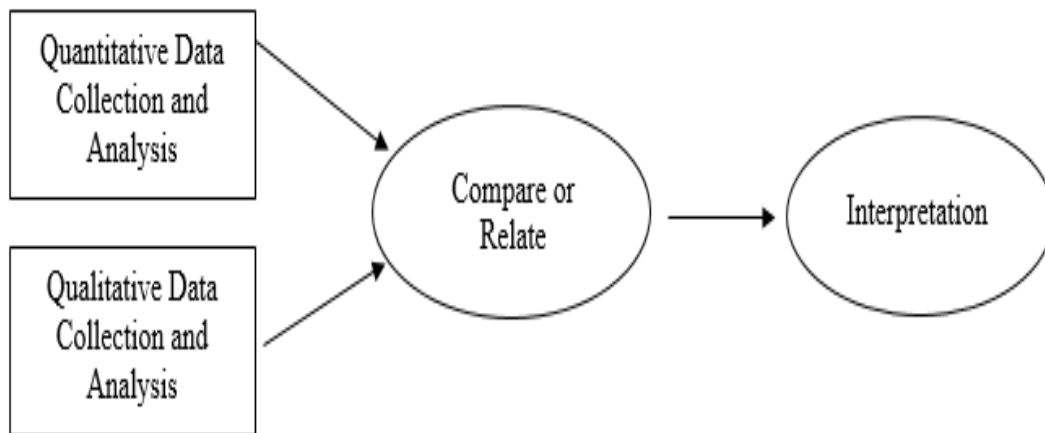


Figure 3.1 The Convergent Parallel Design

Note: Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Population

The population for a study refers to all of the cases or members of a specific group. For this study, the overall population was participants in residential 4-H summer programs. All programs within the population took place during the summer and were equipped with an overnight component. Further, all residential summer programs served youth ages eight to eighteen, and were directly connected to the national youth-serving

organization, 4-H. Though all programs were similar on the basis of taking place during the summer and having an overnight component, there were differences between the programs. For example, programs varied on setting, content or purpose, and duration. The target population for this study consisted of participants who attended residential 4-H summer programs within the state of Mississippi. Finally, the accessible population consisted of those participants who attended four multi-county, residential 4-H summer programs that took place in Mississippi during the summer of 2016. Two of the overnight programs took place on-campus at Mississippi State University and two of the programs took place in a naturalistic summer camp setting. The two programs that took place on campus were State Congress and the Cooperative Leadership Conference. The two programs that took place off campus, in a more naturalistic setting, were the Youth Conservation Camp and Camp 24/7.

Mississippi 4-H State Congress is an annual state event designed to supplement county 4-H programs. The event provides positive leadership and educational opportunities for senior 4-H members, ages 14 through 19, from across the state in an effort to develop young people to their full potential to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society. The 2016 State 4-H Congress took place on the campus of Mississippi State University from June 1-3, 2016. The major purposes of State 4-H Congress were to improve delegates' knowledge and skills through practical learning experiences, life skills training and leadership development opportunities; provide opportunities for delegates to participate in the democratic process through campaigning for and election of State 4-H Council Officers; and to provide recreational and social experiences for delegates (Larry

Alexander, personal communication, September 2, 2016). There were a total of 445 youth who participated in State Congress.

The Mississippi 4-H Cooperative Leadership Conference was an experience offered to the youth ages 14 to 19 that were a part of the State 4-H leadership team, the State 4-H ambassadors, and the winners of their respective State 4-H contests. The conference took place on campus at Mississippi State University from July 18-21, 2016. The youth participated in a variety of activities designed to further their understanding and application of leadership. The conference was sponsored by the Mississippi Council of Cooperatives, and participants enjoyed tours of different types of cooperative businesses in order to learn more about the cooperative business model. Conference participants also engaged in leadership workshops, games, and activities as well as completing a service project (Dr. Laura Greenhaw, personal communication, August 30, 2016). There were a total of 35 participants at this conference.

The Youth Conservation Camp took place at Tara Wildlife Camp located in Vicksburg, Mississippi from June 12-17, 2016. The purpose of this camp was to educate children concerning the value and importance of wisely using natural resources. All of the activities pointed to the inter-connectivity of soil, water, plant, and animal communities. Participants learned that humans are intimately dependent upon natural resources for life and that those resources must be properly cared for and used wisely. Youth participants also learn that wildlife conservation often includes sport hunting and fishing, therefore safe handling of weapons via the Mississippi Hunter's Education Curriculum is taught. Additionally, the camp offered structured recreational time such as canoeing, swimming, fishing, and nature tours. Further, campers learn social skills by

interacting with other children in a non-school setting (Don Bales, personal communication, August 30, 2016). There were a total of 40 youth participants that attended this camp ages nine to sixteen.

Camp 24/7 took place at Camp Tiak located in Wiggins, Mississippi from July 11-15, 2016. This camp was offered to Mississippi 4-H youth in the southeast district. The goal of the camp was to utilize Mississippi State Extension agents and specialists, Mississippi Agriculture Forestry Experiment Station personnel, and other industry professionals to promote projects offered by the Mississippi State 4-H program through the process of experiential learning. Attendants could choose from a variety of 4-H project tracks that include livestock, creative arts, and outdoor skills. Campers not only increased their knowledge of 4-H project areas, but also got the opportunity to build friendships with other 4-H members from different areas of the state (Alex Shook, personal communication, September 15, 2016). There were a total of 43 youth participants that attended this camp ages eight to thirteen.

Sample

Due to the fact that this was a mixed-methods study, two different nonrandom sampling methods were utilized for the quantitative and qualitative components. For the quantitative portion of the study, convenience sampling was used. All youth ages eight to eighteen who attended one of the four residential 4-H summer programs previously mentioned were eligible to participate in the quantitative component of the study. For the qualitative portion, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is typically used in qualitative research because selected individuals “can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell,

2007). The directors of Camp 24/7 and the Cooperative Leadership Conference were asked to select individuals to participate in a focus group. The directors selected individuals in order to represent a variety of ages, gender, and experience in the particular program. Overall, 16 individuals participated in the qualitative component of the study.

Quantitative Component

Variables

There was one categorical, independent variable for this study; location of the summer program, either on campus at Mississippi State University or took place in a more naturalistic environment. Further, there were two dependent variables for this study, the achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development and the acquisition of targeted life skills. Through conducting quantitative research directly comparing the residential 4-H summer programs based on their structural components, the research sought to identify any statistically significant differences in the achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development and acquisition of targeted life skills.

Additional independent variables were identified by the research that could potentially affect the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Personal characteristics such as gender, age, and racial ethnicity were collected as additional independent variables. The number of years participated in 4-H was collected due to the fact studies show that 4-H contributes to the dependent variables, therefore more constant and consistent exposure to 4-H programs could enhance the outcomes of the dependent variables regardless of the specific experience at hand (Fitzpatrick et al., 2005; Kinsey, 2013; Lerner et al., 2013; Maass et al., 2006; Radhakrishna & Sinasky,

2006). Further, the American Camp Association (2006) has concurred that attending camp for multiple summers can have an effect on the camper. It has also been identified by Garst and his fellow researchers that the duration of camp experiences can play a role in the development of the dependent variables. Therefore it was important to include the duration of the summer programs being studied as an independent variable that could cause an effect (Garst et al., 2011a). Specifically, the summer programs involved with this study varied in duration with the shortest program consisting of two complete overnight experiences and the longest lasting for five complete overnight experiences.

Instrumentation

Two questionnaires utilized by previous studies were used to measure the dependent variables: achievement of the essential elements of positive youth development and the acquisition of targeted life skills. Both instruments were created by the National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC) in response to the need for systematic evaluation across multiple states (Garst et al., 2011b). Through the NCRC, the National 4-H Camp Evaluation Tool Kit was created. This tool kit includes three logic models, recommended practices for 4-H camp evaluation, and survey instruments regarding 4-H camp context (i.e., essential elements of positive youth development) and 4-H camp life skills. Furthermore, the evaluation tool kit was built upon two assumptions. The first assumption was that “certain characteristics or features are necessary in youth programs in order for a particular experiential context to provide positive youth development,” and the second assumption was that “the goal of any 4-H camping experience should be to provide opportunities to practice life skills in a real-life setting such as camp,” (Garst et al., 2011b, p. 3).

The 4-H Camp Context Questionnaire was specifically designed to measure whether or not a 4-H camp includes each of the eight essential elements of positive youth development throughout the residential camping experience. As previously stated, the eight essential elements of positive youth development are:

- (1) a positive relationship with a caring adult, (2) emotionally and physically safe environment, (3) an inclusive environment, (4) engagement in learning, (5) opportunity for learning and mastery, (6) opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, (7) opportunity for self-determination, and (8) opportunity to value and practice service for others (Garst et al., 2011b).

These elements have been further synthesized into four core areas of belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity (Kress, 2005). The questionnaire contains 30 items that measures the essential elements of positive youth development. The creators of the questionnaire identified four specific essential elements that are measured by the document: (1) opportunity to build a relationship with a caring adult, (2) opportunity for self-determination and mastery, (3) emotionally safe and inclusive environment, and (4) physically safe environment.

Garst et al., (2011b) identified that the instrument measures three essential elements of positive youth development: relationship with a caring adult, self-determination and mastery, and emotionally safe and inclusive environment. However, when looking at the eight essential elements of positive youth development created by Eccles and Gootman (2002), it can be identified that the instrument really measures five essential elements: a positive relationship with a caring adult, an inclusive environment, a safe environment, opportunity for mastery, and opportunity for self-determination. It is

important to note that opportunity for mastery and self-determination were combined to be measured as one factor: opportunity for self-determination and mastery.

The response categories are a Likert-type scale and include *1 = strongly disagree*, *2 = disagree*, *3 = agree*, *4 = strongly agree*. The original Camp Context Questionnaire created by Garst et al., 2011b was modified in order to better fit this study (Table 3.1). A total of three questions were removed from the original document to ensure that the questionnaire was applicable to all programs that took part in this study. Questions that were reversely coded are indicated with an asterisks and each construct is accompanied by a Cronbach's alpha score used to determine reliability.

The 4-H Camp Life Skills Questionnaire was created to measure the acquisition of life skills during a residential 4-H camping experience. The questionnaire contains 26 items that measure targeted life skills. The creators of the questionnaire identified three specific life skills that are measured by the document: (1) accepting self and others, (2) accomplishing goals, and (3) taking responsibility (Garst et al., 2011b). These specific life skills fit into the three of the four categories of 4-H life skills described in Figure 4 of chapter two; head, heart, and hands. As of 2011, the NCRC was working on an additional questionnaire that would include measurable items related to healthy lifestyles, which would incorporate the final H of the 4-H model. The response categories are a Likert-type scale and include *1 = strongly disagree*, *2 = disagree*, *3 = agree*, and *4 = strongly agree*. The original Camp Life Skills Questionnaire created by Garst et al., (2011b) was modified in order to better fit this study (Table 3.2). A total of three questions were removed from the original document to ensure that the questionnaire was applicable to all

programs that took part in this study. Each construct is bolded and accompanied by a Cronbach's alpha score used to determine reliability.

Table 3.1 Camp Context—Questions and Alpha Scores

	Alpha
Opportunity to Build a Relationship with a Caring Adult	.85
Leaders were people I could trust.	
Leaders thought that helping others was important.	
I could go to a leader if I had a problem.	
Leaders understood campers'/participants' problems.	
Leaders tried to make homesick campers/participants feel better.	
Leaders liked being around campers/participants.	
Leaders helped campers/participants be successful.	
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	.72
My skills in some activities improved.	
My activities were interesting.	
I pushed myself to try harder because of challenging activities.	
I learned things that will be useful in the future.	
I felt good about something I accomplished.	
Campers/Participants taught each other.	
Campers/Participants could be a part of making group decisions.	
Campers/Participants accomplished something they couldn't do on the first day.	
Campers/Participants had the opportunity to learn about different careers.	
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	.81
Other kids did not like me.	
Other kids made fun of me.	
I was teased.	
Campers/Participants messed with others' belongings.	
Campers/Participants picked on one another.	
Mean jokes were played on campers/participants.	
I felt free to express my opinion.	
I felt accepted by other campers/participants.	
Physically Safe Environment	.80
I felt safe in my cabin/dorm.	
I felt safe at night.	
I felt safe in my activities.	

Note: Garst, B.A., Nichols, A., Martz, J., McNeely, N.N, Bovitz, L., Frebertshauser, D., Walahoski, J. (2011b). Examining youth camping outcomes across multiple states: the National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC). *Journal of Youth Development*, 6(1). Retrieved from http://www.nae4ha.com/assets/documents/JYDfinal_110601x.pdf

Table 3.2 Camp Life Skills—Questions and Alpha Scores

	Alpha
Accepting Self and Others	.87
I was proud of my camp group.	
I respected others who were different than me.	
I accepted people who thought or acted differently.	
I learned that some decisions are better than others.	
I learned that others' ideas were as important as mine.	
I made new friends.	
I respected other campers.	
I learned about my strengths and weaknesses.	
I treated others fairly.	
I was concerned about the well-being of others.	
I encouraged others to do their best.	
Accomplishing Goals	.81
I asked for help when I needed it.	
I felt comfortable asking for help on a project.	
I always tried to do my best.	
I contributed to the success of the team.	
Taking Responsibility	.85
I was usually where I was supposed to be.	
I tried to do what was expected of me.	
I tried to solve problems without being violent.	
I was a good listener.	
I was responsible for my own behavior.	
I thought about a problem before trying to solve it.	
I thought carefully before making decisions.	
I tried to help if someone needed something.	
I cleaned up after myself.	

Note: Garst, B.A., Nichols, A., Martz, J., McNeely, N.N, Bovitz, L., Frebertshauser, D., Walahoski, J. (2011b). Examining youth camping outcomes across multiple states: the National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC). *Journal of Youth Development*, 6(1). Retrieved from http://www.nae4ha.com/assets/documents/JYDfinal_110601x.pdf

Data Collection and Procedures

4-H residential summer programs within the target population were contacted via recruitment emails in April 2016. By early May, the accessible population was identified as the following summer programs: 4-H State Congress, Youth Conservation Camp, Camp 24/7, and the Cooperative Leadership Conference. As soon as the participating programs were identified, the application process for approval by the Mississippi State University Office of Regulatory Compliance Institutional Review Board (IRB) began. Full IRB approval was attained in late May with modifications receiving approval throughout the summer as were necessary.

After receiving IRB approval, contact with the program directors was made explaining the approval of the study as well as the next steps that needed to occur. It was asked that program directors include information regarding the study and the parental consent document be included with other forms the parents would need to sign in order for their child to participate in the specific program.

On the last night of the program experience, parental consent documents were collected. A list was compiled of those youth whose parents had granted consent for their child to participate in the study. At a previously established time, the youth participants who had been granted parental consent were taken into a separate area to begin the questionnaire. Before receiving the questionnaire, the purpose of the study was explained and the assent process for the youth was conducted. Once the youth had completed the assent process and decided whether or not they would like to participate, the combined questionnaires were passed out. The complete questionnaire document included a page

with demographic questions, the camp-context questionnaire, and the camp life skills questionnaire.

State Congress

4-H State Congress took place on campus at Mississippi State University. This group was utilized due to the fact that it is one of the largest residential 4-H gatherings within the state, therefore it would have the most exposure to the target population of the study. The program took place from Wednesday, June 1, 2016 through Friday, June 3, 2016. Parental consent documents, child assent documents, and the questionnaire document were completed on the final night of the experience. A total of 19 youth program participants were included in this group.

Youth Conservation Camp

The Youth Conservation Camp took place at Tara Wildlife Camp in Vicksburg, Mississippi. This group was utilized because, for the purposes of this study, it was identified as a residential 4-H summer program that took place in the naturalistic environment. The program took place from Sunday, June 12, 2016 through Friday, June 17, 2016. Data collection took place on the last night of the program experience including the collection of parental consent documents, child assent documents, and the dissemination of the questionnaire document. A total of 29 youth program participants were included in this group.

Camp 24/7

Camp 24/7 took place at Camp Tiak in Wiggins, Mississippi. Similar to the Youth Conservation Camp, this group was utilized because it was identified as a

residential 4-H summer program that took place within the naturalistic environment. The program took place from Monday, July 11, 2016 through Friday, July 15, 2016. The last night of the camp experience was utilized for data collection. Parental consent documents, child assent documents, and questionnaire documents were returned by a total of 37 youth participants from this program.

Cooperative Leadership Conference

The Cooperative Leadership Conference also took place on campus at Mississippi State University. This group was utilized because it was a multi-county gathering which mostly included youth participants that were present at State Congress, but were not included in the study due to the lack of parental consent documents being available in a timely manner. The program took place from Monday, July 18, 2016 through Thursday, July 21, 2016. The final round of data collection took place on the last night of the Cooperative Leadership Conference. A total of 18 youth participants provided parental consent documents, child assent documents, as well as the questionnaire documents.

Data Analysis

All quantitative data collected for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Levene's test determined homogeneity of variances. The test was able to determine if equal variances could be assumed for the two groups. Additionally, the Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality determined if the answers reported from the groups were normally distributed. Finally, an independent samples t-test was conducted. This test made it possible to accurately compare the summated mean

scores between the two groups and determine whether the results were statistically significant.

Qualitative Component

Type of Study

For this element of the study, focus groups were utilized in order to determine how youth participants attributed their acquisition of targeted life skills to the residential summer program they attended. Youth program participants were asked a series of questions which enabled them to reflect on their experiences that occurred throughout the duration of their program. Further, the reflective questions and associated answers provided meaningful discussion and encouraged participation among those chosen for the focus group.

Specifically, this qualitative component is considered to be a phenomenological study. Creswell (2007) describes a phenomenological study as the meaning of lived experiences or the “concept of a phenomenon” (p. 57). Table 3.3 explains characteristics that are typically associated with phenomenology. For this study in particular, the transcendental approach to phenomenology was utilized. Moustakas (1994) explains the methodological procedures for the transcendental approach as:

1. Discovering a topic and question rooted in autobiographical meanings and values, as well as involving social meanings and significance.
2. Conducting a comprehensive review of the professional and research literature.
3. Constructing a set of criteria to locate appropriate co-researchers

4. Providing co-researchers with instructions on the nature and purpose of the investigation, and developing an agreement that includes obtaining informed consent, insuring confidentiality, and delineating the responsibilities of the primary researcher and research participant, consistent with ethical principles of research.
5. Developing a set of questions or topics to guide the interview process.
6. Conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview that focuses on a bracketed topic and question. A follow-up interview may also be needed.
7. Organizing and analyzing the data to facilitate development of individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite textural description, a composite structural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences. (Moustakas, 1994, p. 103-104).

However, it is important to note that numbers three and four of the approach were not performed due to the nature of this study. Further, Moustakas (1994) describes that phenomenological research should have both “social meaning and personal significance” and “the researcher’s excitement and curiosity” should inspire the purpose of the study (p. 104).

Table 3.3 Characteristics of a Phenomenological Approach

Focus	Understanding the essence of the experience
Type of Problem Best Suited for Design	Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon
Discipline Background Unit of Analysis	Drawing from philosophy, psychology, and education Studying several individuals that have shared the experience
Data Collection Forms	Using primarily interviews with individuals, although documents, observations, and art may also be considered
Data Analysis Strategies	Analyzing data for significant statements, meaning units, textural and structural description, description of the “essence”
Written Report	Describing the “essence” of the experience

Note: Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Participants

Purposive sampling was utilized as a way to identify participants for the qualitative component of this study. Creswell (2007) identifies that through purposive sampling, the researcher can “show different perspectives on the problem, process, or event” that is being studied (p. 75). He further states that for phenomenological research, because it is necessary for all participants to have experienced the phenomenon being studied, criterion sampling also works well (Creswell, 2007). In this particular study, all youth in the accessible population participated in the experience, and consequently, the criteria was met. Therefore, purposive sampling was used for the focus group to identify specific youth who would serve as a representation sample of the program participants within the population.

The first focus group consisted of youth participants from Camp 24/7. On the first day of the program experience, as youth participants turned in their camp documents, as well as their consent forms for the study, the camp director purposefully selected individuals to participate in the qualitative component of the study. The camp director specifically chose individuals in order to get a variation of age, gender, and years of participation in 4-H. There were a total of ten youth who participated in the focus group.

The second focus group consisted of youth participants from the Cooperative Leadership Conference. Similar to the process director of Camp 24/7 adhered to, the director of the conference purposefully selected individuals to participate in the qualitative component of the study. The conference director specifically chose individuals in order to get a variation of age, gender, and years of participation in 4-H. In addition to those qualities, the conference director included variation in years of participation in that particular conference, as well as individuals who served in leadership roles within 4-H. There were a total of six youth who participated in the focus group.

Data Collection

Focus groups were utilized in order to determine how youth participants attributed their acquisition of targeted life skills to the residential summer program they attended.

Morgan (1998a) explains that focus groups contain a three-part process of communication:

- (1) The research team members decide what they need to hear from the participants;
- (2) the focus groups create a conversation among the participants around these chosen topics; and
- (3) members of the research team summarize what they have learned from the participants (p. 9).

He also emphasizes that conducting a focus group is not a passive process for the researcher because it is the researcher's responsibility to decide which topics should be the focus of the discussion. However, the researcher should not be too controlling of the discussions brought about by the group (Morgan, 1998a).

A moderately structured approach was used in order to conduct the focus groups. Morgan (1998b) emphasizes that “moderately structured groups are most appropriate when a project calls for learning about both the research team's focus and the participants' interests” (p. 52). The Camp 24/7 group consisted of ten participants and the Cooperative Leadership Conference group consisted of six participants, which directly aligns with Morgan's suggestion of focus group sizes being between six and ten participants in order to stimulate meaningful discussion without participants competing for speaking time (Morgan, 1998b). Ten questions were developed to help guide the discussion (Table 3.4). The questions were peer reviewed by individuals who had expertise in youth development programs, 4-H common measures, and conducting qualitative research with youth participants. Further, the number of questions also aligns with Morgan's recommendation of eight to twelve questions for the group size that was utilized (Morgan, 1998b).

Table 3.4 Focus Group Questions

-
1. What has been your favorite part of attending Camp 24/7 or Cooperative Leadership Conference?
 2. What type of things did you learn at Camp 24/7 or Cooperative Leadership Conference?
What parts of your activities helped you to learn those things?
 3. What would you say is the most important thing you learned?
 4. Were the things you learned at Camp 24/7 or Cooperative Leadership Conference similar to what you have learned at other 4-H experiences?
 5. What type of things have you learned just by being in 4-H?
 6. Tell me about how you plan to practice one thing you have learned at Camp 24/7 or Cooperative Leadership Conference.
 7. Tell me a story about something you did during Camp 24/7 or Cooperative Leadership Conference that made you feel good about yourself.
 8. Tell me a story about how you got along or worked together with other participants, even if it was that you did not get along with them.
 9. How does this overnight experiences compare to other day camps or 4-H programs you have attended this summer?
 10. What do you think you will take away from this experience?
-

All focus group questions, consent, and assent documents were approved prior to the focus groups taking place. On the final morning of the Camp 24/7 experience, selected individuals completed the assent process and proceeded with the focus group. This focus group lasted approximately 30 minutes. On the final night of the Cooperative Leadership Conference experience the selected individuals completed the assent process, and participated in the focus group. This focus group lasted approximately one hour. All focus groups were recorded with an audio device and were accompanied by note taking.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2007) asserts the process for qualitative data analysis consists of “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p. 148). Focus groups, in particular, can be analyzed four different ways: transcript-based analysis, tape-based analysis, note-based analysis, and memory-based analysis (Krueger, 1998). All four options can be seen in Figure 3.2 and are located on a scale based on time intensity and rigor.

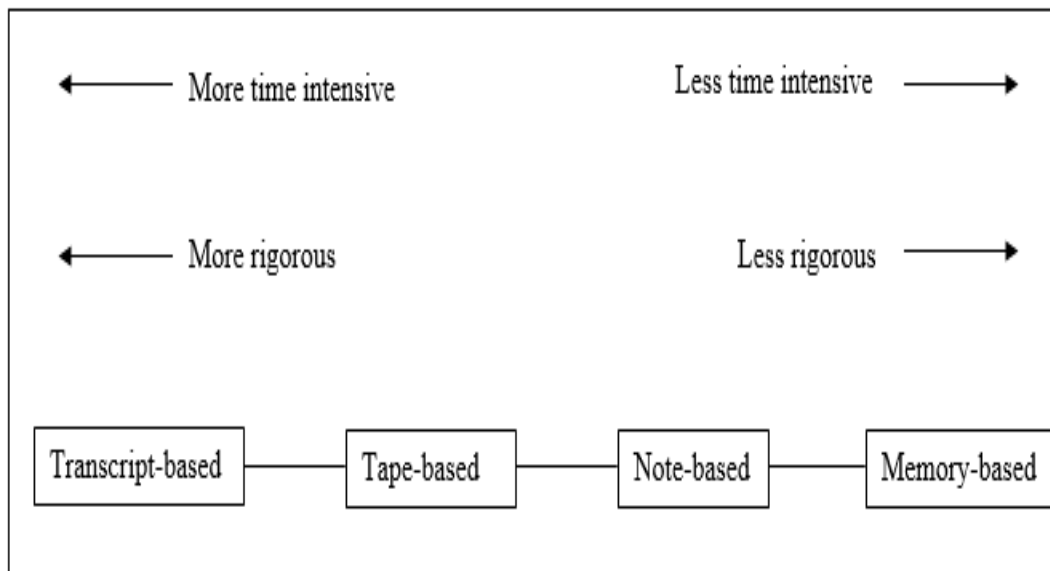


Figure 3.2 Focus Group Analysis Strategies

Note: Krueger, R.A. (1998). *Analyzing & reporting focus group results*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

For this study, transcript-based analysis was utilized. Transcript-based analysis is a rigorous and time-intensive choice in which “tapes are transcribed, and the analyst uses the transcription, along with field notes and the discussion from the debriefing” (Krueger,

1998, p. 45). Focus groups were transcribed verbatim from an audio recording and were accompanied by notes taken during the process. Once the groups were transcribed, responses were critically reviewed and coded in order to identify emerging themes. After initial themes were observed, they were then examined and refined in order to create honest and encompassing themes. Further, utilizing Merriam's (2002) strategies for promoting validity and reliability, trustworthiness was ensured through an audit trail (i.e. detailed account of methods, procedures, and decision points), maximum variation (i.e. purposefully seeking variation or diversity in sample selection), rich descriptions (i.e. providing enough description to contextualize the study), and triangulation (i.e. using multiple data collection methods to confirm emerging findings).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of youth who attend residential 4-H summer programs. The specific research objectives include:

Objective 1: Describe the demographics of youth who participated in residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 2: Analyze and compare the differences in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development based on the structural components of residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 3: Analyze and compare the differences in the acquisition of targeted life skills for youth participants based on the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Objective 4: Investigate how participants attribute their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Chapter four will present the quantitative results for objectives one, two, and three, as well as the qualitative results for objective four.

Quantitative Findings

Objective One

The first page of the questionnaire document contained demographic questions for each participant. The demographics for each participating group are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 4-H Residential Summer Program Demographics

Program	Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
State Congress	Age	14-15 years old	5	26.3%
		16-17 years old	10	52.6%
		18 years old	4	21.1%
	Gender	Male	5	26.3%
		Female	14	73.7%
	Race	White	16	84.2%
		Black	3	15.8%
		Other	0	0.0%
	Years in 4-H	0-3 years	4	22.3%
		4-6 years	6	33.4%
7-9 years		4	22.3%	
10 or more years		4	22.3%	
Cooperative Leadership Conference	Age	14-15 years old	6	38.4%
		16-17 years old	7	38.9%
		18 years old	5	27.8%
	Gender	Male	6	33.3%
		Female	12	66.7%
	Race	White	12	66.7%
		Black	5	27.8%
		Other	1	5.6%
	Years in 4-H	0-3 years in	2	11.8%
		4-6 years	6	35.3%
7-9 years		5	29.4%	
10 or more years		4	23.5%	

Table 4.1 (continued)

Youth Conservation Camp	Age	9-11 years old	14	48.2%
		12-14 years old	10	34.4%
		15-16 years old	5	17.2%
Gender	Male		20	69%
	Female		9	31%
Race	White		19	67.9%
	Black		9	32.1%
	Other		0	0.0%
Years in 4-H	0-3 years		22	75.8%
	4-6 years		6	20.7%
	7-9 years		0	0.0%
	10 or more years		1	3.4%
Camp 24/7	Age	8-9 years old	13	35.1%
		10-11 years old	10	27%
		12-13 years old	14	37.8%
Gender	Male		16	43.2%
	Female		21	56.8%
Race	White		37	100%
	Black		0	0.0%
	Other		0	0.0%
Years in 4-H	0-3 years		30	81%
	4-6 years		7	18.9%
	7-9 years		0	0.0%
	10 or more years		0	0.0%

Note: All percentages are Valid Percentages due to some missing data

Youth Conservation Camp had one piece of missing data on Race

State Congress had one piece of missing data on Years in 4-H

Cooperative Leadership Conference had one piece of missing data on Years in 4-H

On-Campus Residential Summer Programs

State Congress

Out of the total number of youth program attendants who participated in the study from 4-H State Congress ($N = 19$), 26.3% ($n = 5$) were male, 73.7% ($n = 14$) were female, with a mean age of 16 years old ($M = 16.26$, $SD = 1.37$). In terms of race, 84.2% ($n = 16$) self-identified as white and 15.8% ($n = 3$) self-identified as black. The minimum number of years of participation in 4-H was one year and the maximum was thirteen years, with a mean of six years ($M = 6.39$, $SD = 3.56$).

Cooperative Leadership Conference

Out of the youth program attendants who participated in the study from the Cooperative Leadership Conference ($N = 18$), 66.7% ($n = 12$) self-identified as white, 27.8% ($n = 5$) self-identified as black, and 5.6% ($n = 1$) self-identified as other. The minimum number years of participation in 4-H was three years and the maximum number of years was eleven years, with a mean of seven years of participation ($M = 7.24$, $SD = 2.46$). Further, 33.3% ($n = 6$), 66.7% ($n = 12$) were female, with a mean age of 16 years old ($M = 16.33$, $SD = 1.33$).

Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs

Youth Conservation Camp

Out of the total number of youth program attendants who participated in the study from the Youth Conservation Camp ($N = 29$), 69% ($n = 20$) were male, 31% ($n = 9$) were female, with a mean age of 12 years old ($M = 12.07$, $SD = 2.07$). In terms of race, 65.5% ($n = 19$) self-identified as white and 31% ($n = 9$) self-identified as black. In this group in

particular, 37.9% ($n = 11$) of youth had not participated in 4-H prior to the camp taking place. Therefore, the minimum years of participation in 4-H was zero and the maximum number of years was eleven, with a mean of two years of participation in 4-H ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 2.50$).

Camp 24/7

Out of the total number of youth program attendants who participated in the study from Camp 24/7 ($N = 37$), 100% of the participants self-identified as white. In terms of race, similar to the Youth Conservation Camp, a majority of the participants did not have a lot of years of participation in 4-H. For 45.9% ($n = 17$) of the participants, they had only been participating in 4-H for one year. Therefore, the minimum years of participation in 4-H was one year and the maximum was six, with a mean of two years ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.61$). Further, 43.2% ($n = 16$) were male, 56.8% ($n = 21$) were female, with a mean age of 11 years old ($M = 10.57$, $SD = 1.52$).

Objective Two

A test of normality was conducted prior to beginning data analysis. The Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality was significant at $p < .05$, indicating that the responses were not normally distributed (Table 4.2). Further, Levene's test for equality of variances was conducted in conjunction with the independent samples t-test, which determined that equal variances could not be assumed for the variable of physically safe environment (Table 4.3).

Table 4.2 Camp Context Questionnaire—Shapiro-Wilk’s Test of Normality

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.
Relationship with a Caring Adult	.889	103	.000*
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	.971	103	.025*
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	.914	103	.000*
Physically Safe Environment	.766	100	.000*

Note: *Values are significant at the .05 alpha level

Table 4.3 Camp Context Questionnaire—Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances

Variable	F	Sig.	t
Relationship with a Caring Adult	3.67	.058	2.45
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	.711	.401	1.77
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	.015	.902	3.13
Physically Safe Environment	4.53	.036*	1.41

Note: * Values are significant at the .05 alpha level

On-Campus Residential Summer Programs

Descriptive statistics were calculated in order to determine the summated mean and standard deviation for each factor related to the essential elements of positive youth development. Relationship with a caring adult ($M = 25.32$, $SD = 2.61$) and physically safe environment ($M = 11.01$, $SD = 1.23$) were the two elements that had the highest summated mean score out of the four essential elements listed. Results of the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Camp Context Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (On-Campus)

Variable	n	Range	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Relationship with a Caring Adult	37	0 – 28	18	28	25.32	2.61
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	37	0 – 36	23	36	30.78	3.15
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	37	0 – 32	14	32	28.73	4.55
Physically Safe Environment	36	0 – 12	9	12	11.06	1.29

Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs

Descriptive statistics were calculated in order to determine the summated mean and standard deviation for each factor related to the essential elements of positive youth development. Though relationship with a caring adult ($M = 23.64$, $SD = 3.69$) and physically safe environment ($M = 10.63$, $SD = 1.74$) were the two elements that had the highest summated mean score out of the four essential elements listed, emotionally safe and inclusive environment had a higher minimum score than those in the on-campus group. Results of the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Camp Context Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (Naturalistic Environment)

Variable	n	Range	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Relationship with a Caring Adult	66	0 – 28	13	28	23.64	3.69
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	66	0 – 36	19	36	29.54	3.57
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	66	0 – 32	18	32	26.05	3.96
Physically Safe Environment	66	0 – 12	6	12	10.63	1.74

Comparison

An independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the means of the two groups (Table 4.6). It is important to note that for the purposes of reporting effect size for this study, Cohen (1992) determines in terms of r , .10 is a small effect size, .30 is a medium effect size, and .50 is a large effect size.

Table 4.6 Independent Samples t-test for Camp Context Questionnaire

Variable	Comparison Group	M	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	t	df	Sig.
Relationship with a Caring Adult	On-Campus	25.32	1.68	.69	2.45	101	.016*
	Naturalistic Environment	23.64					
Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery	On-Campus	30.78	1.24	.70	1.78	101	.080
	Naturalistic Environment	29.54					
Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment	On-Campus	28.73	2.69	.86	3.13	101	.002**
	Naturalistic Environment	26.05					
Physically Safe Environment	On-Campus	11.06	.43	.31	1.41	90.77	.162
	Naturalistic Environment	10.63					

The results indicate that on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 25.32$, $SD = 2.61$) achieved the essential element of creating a relationship with a caring adult more so than residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 23.64$, $SD = 3.69$). This difference, 1.68, was significant ($t(101) = 2.45$, $p = 0.05$) and represented a small to medium effect size ($r = .24$). Additionally, on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 30.78$, $SD = 3.15$) achieved the essential element of opportunity for self-determination and mastery more so than residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 29.54$, $SD = 3.57$). This difference, 1.24, was not significant ($t(101) = 1.78$, $p = .05$) and represented a small effect size ($r = .17$). Further, on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 28.73$, $SD = 4.55$) achieved the essential element of emotionally safe and inclusive environment more so than residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 26.05$, $SD = 3.96$). This difference, 2.69, was significant ($t(101) = 3.13$, $p = .01$) and represented a medium effect size ($r = .30$). Finally, on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 11.06$, $SD = 1.29$) achieved the essential element of physically safe environment more so than the residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 10.63$, $SD = 1.74$). This difference, .43, was not significant ($t(91) = 1.41$, $p = .05$) and represented a small effect size ($r = .15$).

Objective Three

Again, a test of normality was conducted prior to beginning data analysis. The Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality was significant at $p < .05$, indicating that the responses were not normally distributed (Table 4.7). Further, Levene's test for equality of variances

was conducted in conjunction with the independent samples t-test, which determined that equal variances could not be assumed for all variables (Table 4.8).

Table 4.7 Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Shapiro-Wilk’s Test of Normality

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.
Accepting Self and Others	.932	102	.000*
Accomplishing Goals	.867	99	.000*
Taking Responsibility	.928	102	.000*

Note: *Values are significant at the .05 alpha level

Table 4.8 Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances

Variable	F	Sig.	t
Accepting Self and Others	.019	.891	2.46
Accomplishing Goals	.817	.368	1.36
Taking Responsibility	.508	.477	2.28

On-Campus Residential Summer Programs

Descriptive statistics were ran in order to determine the summated mean and standard deviation for each factor related to each targeted life skill. Out of the three life skills, accomplishing goals was the scored the highest by youth participants in terms of summated means ($M = 14.14$, $SD = 1.93$). Results of the descriptive statistics in terms of life skills can be seen in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (On-Campus)

Variable	n	Range	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Accepting Self and Others	36	0 – 44	32	44	39.59	4.25
Accomplishing Goals	35	0 – 16	10	16	14.14	1.93
Taking Responsibility	36	0 – 36	25	36	32.15	3.53

Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs

Descriptive statistics were calculated in order to determine the summated mean and standard deviation for each factor related to the targeted life skills. All of the life skills were also highly scored by this group. Results of the descriptive statistics can be seen in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Camp Life Skills Questionnaire—Descriptive Statistics (Naturalistic Environment)

Variable	n	Range	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Accepting Self and Others	66	0 – 44	22	44	37.22	4.84
Accomplishing Goals	64	0 - 16	9	16	13.56	2.08
Taking Responsibility	66	0 - 36	19	36	30.32	4.06

Comparison

An independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the means of the two groups (Table 4.11). Again, Cohen (1992) determines in terms of r , .10 is a small effect size, .30 is a medium effect size, and .50 is a large effect size.

Table 4.11 Independent Samples t-test for Camp Life Skills Questionnaire

Variable	Comparison Group	M	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	t	df	Sig.
Accepting Self and Others	On-Campus	39.59	2.37	.96	2.46	100	.016*
	Naturalistic Environment	37.22					
Accomplishing Goals	On-Campus	14.14	.58	.43	1.36	97	.176
	Naturalistic Environment	13.56					
Taking Responsibility	On-Campus	32.15	1.83	.80	2.28	100	.025*
	Naturalistic Environment	30.32					

The results indicate that youth participants who attended on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 39.59, SD = 4.25$) acquired the targeted life skill of accepting self and others more so than youth participants who attended residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 37.22, SD = 4.84$). This difference, 2.37, was significant ($t(100) = 2.46, p = .05$) and represented a small to medium effect size ($r = .24$). Youth participants who attended on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 14.14, SD = 1.93$) acquired the targeted life skill of accomplishing goals more so than youth participants who attended residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 13.56, SD = 2.08$). This difference, .58, was not significant ($t(97) = 1.36, p = .05$) and represented a small effect size ($r = .14$). Finally, youth who attended on-campus residential summer programs ($M = 32.15, SD = 3.53$) acquired the targeted life skill of taking responsibility more so than the youth participants who attended residential summer programs that took place in the naturalistic environment ($M = 30.32, SD = 4.06$). This difference, 1.83, was significant ($t(100) = 2.28, p = .05$) and represented a small to medium effect size ($r = .22$).

Qualitative Findings

Objective Four

On-Campus Residential Summer Programs

Demographics and Characteristics

Out of the total number of youth who participated in the focus group from the Cooperative Leadership Conference ($N = 6$), 50% ($n = 3$) were male, 50% ($n = 3$) were female, with a mean age of 16 years old ($M = 15.83, SD = 1.17$). In terms of race, 83.3% ($n = 5$) self-identified as white and 16.7% ($n = 1$) self-identified as black. The minimum

years of participation in 4-H was three years and the maximum was eleven years, with a mean of seven years ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 3.16$). Further, 66.7% ($n = 4$) of the youth participated in youth development organizations outside of 4-H, 83.3% ($n = 5$) participated in organizations or clubs that were not necessarily considered true youth development organizations, and 100% ($n = 6$) had participated in some other 4-H experience during that summer. Table 4.12 further describes the demographics and characteristics of this group.

Table 4.12 Demographics and Characteristics of Cooperative Leadership Conference Focus Group

Identification Number	Age	Gender	Race	Years in 4-H	Participation in other Youth Development Organizations	Additional Organizations	Other 4-H Summer Experiences
1	16	Male	White	11	-	-	State Congress
2	15	Female	Black	5	Girl Scouts, Church Youth Group	Choir	State Congress
3	15	Female	White	5	Church Youth Group	Mississippi Girl Choir	State Congress
4	16	Male	White	10	Church Youth Group	-	State Congress, State Shooting Sports, Project Achievement Day
5	15	Male	White	3	Church Youth Group	Cumberland Valley School of Gospel Music, Fellowship of Christian Athletes	State Congress
6	18	Female	White	8	-	-	State Congress, District Shooting Sports

Theme One: Developing Social Skills and Making Friends

All of the youth attendees who participated in the focus group discussed the program as an opportunity to make new friends, reconnect with old friends, as well as an opportunity to further develop their social skills. When asked what their favorite part of attending the Cooperative Leadership Conference was, one participant responded with, “For me, it’s definitely reconnecting with old friends. Just really getting to spend time with people I made connections with over the years, whether it be from the last year or seven years ago, I have friends here” (Participant 4). Another participant responded to the same question with, “I’ve met new friends, I’ve connected with old ones. Just being around my peers, I just enjoy that so much” (Participant 6). When asked how participants planned to practice something they had learned at the conference, a participant discussed how her perception of 4-H had been changed through this conference. She had seen more of an emphasis on friendship, rather than on strictly competing, and because of that, she wanted to become more active in her local 4-H group, “4-H, to me, is definitely about being able to make friends, [you] get to know people that you probably would have never known if you never got involved in 4-H” (Participant 3). Still another participant described his friendships as the thing he would take away from the conference experience and how he could use this experience to be more outgoing in future endeavors, “I think the absolute, most biggest thing I will take away from this trip is all the new friendships that I have. I’m a very keep to myself kind of guy and I’ve met new people and I’ve learned more about the people I already knew, I can use all of it” (Participant 1). Though all of the participants expressed how much they enjoyed making friends, there were some obstacles that arose.

Due to the conference being a residential program, attendants were assigned a dorm, as well as a roommate, during their stay on campus. Many participants voiced their initial concern of being given a roommate as opposed to choosing their own, though they eventually saw the silver lining. One attendant described his experience, “I was kind of nervous about the given roommate thing and I wanted to be roommates with someone I knew because I didn’t want to meet someone, it would just be weird for me. But we’ve [me and my roommate] become really good friends and I feel like we’ll be lifelong friends” (Participant 5). Others discussed how being given a roommate helped them to meet new people, “Although I like to know who my roommate is in advance, when you don’t know who your roommate is, it just helps you meet new people” (Participant 1) and, “I like the fact they give us a roommate, that gives a chance to automatically make a friend and lets you meet people you don’t know” (Participant 2). Though not knowing their roommate seemed like an obstacle to the attendants, many used that experience and the conference in general as an opportunity to enhance their social skills.

When discussing situations that attendants encountered throughout the conference that made them feel good about themselves, many discussed how they had stepped out of their comfort zone, especially in terms of socializing. For example, one participant discussed how he had set a goal for himself to be more sociable throughout the week, “Before this trip, I challenged myself to be more outgoing. That was something that I had a problem with. It seems like I’ve opened up a lot and become a lot more outgoing” (Participant 1). Also, with 4-H not being a school-sanctioned program, youth from public school, private school, and homeschool can participate. Therefore, there was a representation of homeschool attendants at the conference. One youth, who attends

homeschool, described how events like this conference have helped him develop his social skills, “With a smaller event like this, it really does give you an opportunity to better your social skills. I know a lot of 4-Hers are homeschoolers, we don’t necessarily get out much. So 4-H is a good opportunity for you to develop social skills through the opportunity to attend events like this that have a smaller, more tightly-knit group of young folks” (Participant 4). Overall, the residential program created the opportunity for attendants to enhance their social skills while also developing meaningful friendships.

Theme Two: Teamwork and Respecting Others

One of the greatest things youth attendants discussed learning at the conference was how to work with as team with others. A youth attendant described her learning experience, “I’ve learned about teamwork because there are a lot of people who can’t work with each other and I feel like we learned to be able to work with other people that have different opinions than ourselves” (Participant 3). Even when asked what was the most important thing they had learned, a portion of the participants spoke to the values of teamwork and described specifically how they utilized teamwork, “Bring all of your team members together and instead of just telling them what to do, listen to each and every one of their opinions and sort out which is the best opinion and which is the best tactic” (Participant 5). Further, when prompted by this researcher as to how their activities helped them to learn these things, an attendant responded with how the games played on the first day of the conference really helped her to practice teamwork, “You know, our team had three power-house leaders on it and three or four not so strong leaders, they were content to follow but they weren’t going to voice their opinions. We had to strive to work together to come to compromise. It was hard at times, but it wasn’t impossible and

we realized it wasn't impossible, we just had to communicate that with each other" (Participant 6). When working as a team, youth program participants also had to listen to and respect other team members' opinions.

Respect was a reoccurring topic throughout the entirety of the focus group. Multiple attendants equated it to being the most important thing they had learned during the conference and spoke to the fact that respect assisted them in working well in a team. In regards to teamwork an attendant said, "I'm going to link it to respect, respecting people's opinions. Respecting that in the different games, they have opinions because we're all a bunch of leaders trying to lead the group, so you have to respect that they have an opinion that you kind of have to put your opinion to the side sometimes because your opinion might not be the best opinion" (Participant 2). Another attendant stated, "I think one of the most important things I've learned this week is to be sure to consider everybody's feelings and opinions in the matter. Whether its people asking questions, they're trying to find out information, you need to be respectful and mindful of them trying to pursue that" (Participant 1). It was evident through the focus group that youth attendants saw respect as an essential component to effectively working in a team with others.

Theme Three: Leadership: Who, What, When, Where, and How

With a large emphasis of the conference being on leadership, the participants in the focus group often discussed the new things they had learned about leadership. It was often brought up that the events and activities that took place at the conference assisted them in discovering what being a leader means, "I think I've also learned the true definition of being a leader. It all ties together [and] that actually makes you think of the

real definition of a leader and if someone asked me I probably could actually tell them from this experience” (Participant 2). Further, attendants spoke to the fact that they learned how to determine the best time to apply themselves as a leader, “I learned a little bit more about the proper time to apply myself to a situation as a leader or a follower. Just a little bit more about when and what to do at certain times. When to rely on someone or when to know that, really you’re the one being relied upon” (Participant 4). It was also discussed that sometimes, working with a lot of other leaders can be challenging, “All of us here are more than likely leaders in some form or fashion, whether it’s church group, in 4-H, or whatever. As we come together in a team playing games, we all find it hard because we want to lead the team, but in some different circumstances we’re not as good leaders as another person is, so we had to let everybody pitch in” (Participant 3). Another attendant discussed how he had seen leadership enacted in a different way, “I’ve learned that leadership isn’t just for one person, it’s for whoever thinks that they have good opinions and they feel it’s the right time to step up and give that opinion” (Participant 5). Overall, there was a general consensus that the conference had broadened their perspective of leadership, as well as taught them how to be leader and when the right time was to act on those leadership qualities.

Theme Four: Overcoming Personal Barriers and Accepting Self

A theme that became apparent through this focus group was that attendants not only broke out of their comfort zones during this conference, but they also gained confidence in themselves. One attendant stated, “4-H has helped me learn about myself. [Through this experience] you learn to grow in certain skills that maybe you didn’t know you had or that you weren’t as strong in” (Participant 6). Another similarly stated, “It’s

shown me that I can do anything. That whatever I put my mind to, I can accomplish. It's motivated me in so many ways to do so" (Participant 1). Participants also discussed how they felt accomplished through the conference and how it created a sense of confidence in them, "I learned to be good at things that I never thought I'd be good at, do things that I never thought I could do, and it's a boost of confidence. It's a real big boost of confidence because you feel like, 'hey, I can fit in here'. I feel like I can relate to everyone and I feel like everybody wants to be friends and I feel really accepted" (Participant 2). When asked what attendants thought they would take away from the experience, the same participant spoke to how she felt like a different person because of it, "I'm a better person, I feel like I'm leaving here differently than when I came here on Monday. Monday, I was a person who didn't know as much as everyone else knew, and now I feel like I'm the same, I kind of caught up on things that I didn't know, it has really changed my perspective on everything" (Participant 2). The conference seemed to have been a good opportunity for attendants to learn more about themselves and feel more confident in their abilities.

Theme Five: Promoting 4-H through Local County Outreach

Through this experience, attendants also had a passion of wanting to promote 4-H further in their home communities. One participant discussed how she wanted others to know that there are many aspects to 4-H and that there is more to it than meets the eye, "I plan to use what 4-H has shown me and what I've learned at this trip and just take it back home and tell others. There's more to 4-H than what you think; it's not just livestock, or that sewing group that meets once a month, or that group that goes out and collects leaves after church one Sunday. There's so many outlets involved and amazing experiences you

can have, and that's what I want to take home. I personally feel like it's up to us to go out there in our counties and our communities and just promote it and get the word out" (Participant 6). Attendants also wanted to make sure that others were able to have positive experiences similar to their own, "[I plan to] use my experience and all of the things I've done to promote it. To further promote it in my community and try to inspire 4-Hers and even kids who aren't a part of 4-H to join 4-H, become active, do as much as they can so that maybe they can have similar experiences to what I've had" (Participant 4). They often spoke to the fact that they are the current face of 4-H and that it is their responsibility to keep the program growing, "I'm going back to where I'm from and I'm going to spread the word and I want people to join 4-H so in 20 years 4-H will be here and 4-H will be thriving" (Participant 2). Overall, through the conference experience and other 4-H experiences, these youth attendants wanted to make others aware of the opportunities that are offered through being an active participant in 4-H.

Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs

Demographics and Characteristics

Out of the total number of youth who participated in the focus group from Camp 24/7 ($N = 10$), 40% ($n = 4$) were male, 60% ($n = 6$) were female, with a mean age of 11 years old ($M = 10.70$, $SD = 1.83$). In terms of race, 100% ($n = 10$) self-identified as white. The minimum years of participation in 4-H was one year and the maximum was six years, with a mean of three years ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.73$). Further, 70% ($n = 7$) of the youth participated in youth development organizations outside of 4-H, none of the youth in the focus group participated in organizations or clubs that were not necessarily considered true youth development organizations, and 10% ($n = 1$) had participated in

some other 4-H experience during that summer. Table 4.13 further describes the demographics and characteristics of this group.

Table 4.13 Demographics and Characteristics of Camp 24/7 Focus Group

Identification Number	Age	Gender	Race	Years in 4-H	Participation in other Youth Development Organizations	Additional Organizations	Other 4-H Summer Experiences
1	12	Female	White	3	Church Youth Group	-	-
2	12	Male	White	2	Church Youth Group	-	-
3	13	Male	White	4	Church Youth Group	-	-
4	8	Female	White	1	YMCA	-	-
5	9	Female	White	1	-	-	-
6	12	Female	White	3	Church Youth Group	-	-
7	10	Female	White	-	-	-	-
8	8	Male	White	2	Boy Scouts, Church Youth Group	-	-
9	12	Male	White	5	Church Youth Group	-	-
10	11	Female	White	6	-	-	District and State Competitions

Theme One: Making Friends and Accepting Others

Many of the youth who attended Camp 24/7 and participated in the focus group mentioned making friends as one of the highlights of their camp experience. For example, when explicitly asked what their favorite part of attending the camp was, one of the participants responded, “I had a ton of friends here and I made lots of new ones too” (Participant 9). It also became apparent that youth participants were accepting to others who might be different than themselves and even sought to make sure that everyone got along. Participants discussed how this particular experience compared to other 4-H experiences they had participated in, “You’ve got all kinds of different people coming and it’s just different in general, all the people here” (Participant 3). Another participant talked about playing with another camper that was on the Autism Spectrum while and how that made her feel good about herself. Further, another participant discussed how he had stopped some of his cabin mates from picking on another person, which made him feel good. A participant even mentioned how having friends at camp made her feel safer, “having friends, because I actually know some people and met some more people at camp and I feel a lot safer” (Participant 5). Overall, participants enjoyed having old friends at camp, had the opportunity to make new friends, and found themselves in situations in which they accepted others despite their differences.

Theme Two: Satisfaction of Hands-On Learning Activities

The second theme that arose was how much the participants enjoyed the diversity of hands-on activities that took place at camp. Participants described learning a variety of skills through their experience, including “how to herd sheep” (Participant 5), “how to

float a horses teeth” (Participant 2), and “[how to identify] different kinds of leaves and the leaves of trees and different kinds of trees” (Participant 9). The participants also described specific components of their activities that helped them to better learn skills, such as “the horse was here” (Participant 2) and “the items themselves” (Participant 9). Many of the participants described some of their favorite activities including arts and crafts, such as making survival bracelets, tie-dying t-shirts, and sewing. While others answered with activities related to livestock, such as working with the cows, horse, and goats. One participant described their favorite experience as, “I liked sticking my hand inside the cow’s stomach, it was cool!” (Participant 2). Finally, participants talked about how they planned to practice something they had learned at camp, a participant responded with, “I learned more that I didn’t know about cows and I can take it back home to the cows at home” (Participant 1). Overall, participants seemed to really enjoy all the varying components of the hands-on activities they were able to partake in.

Theme Three: Challenges of Group Living

One of the unique aspects of the summer camp experience is the opportunity to interact with other participants in a group living setting. Participants discussed different things they would take away from the experience and one participant in particular stated, “How to live without your parents because they’re not here” (Participant 3). However, not all campers expressed the same feelings. When discussing how the overnight experience compared to other 4-H experiences, a majority of the campers in the focus group talked about their sleeping patterns. Many of them expressed that they did not like waking up early; one camper in particular described it as, “the only thing I didn’t like was how early we got up; it just feels like right when you close your eyes, you open them

again and it's morning" (Participant 9). One participant even contributed the lack of sleep to her cabin mates, "I got barely any sleep because the girls in my cabin stayed up until 12" (Participant 10). That comment was echoed by other campers saying they didn't like staying up late, while some had trouble falling asleep in general. Sharing shower time also arose as a problem amongst the campers. A cabin typically had 10 to 12 campers, yet only one bathroom with one shower for all to share. One participant described her feelings about this situation as, "I didn't like that we only had one shower to take a shower and we had like 11 people in our cabin" (Participant 5). In sum, the group living component of the residential program experience posed some challenges for the youth who experienced it.

Theme Four: Mixed Perceptions of the Naturalistic Environment

The fourth and final theme brought about in the focus groups dealt with how the campers felt about the naturalistic environment in which the camp took place. Some of the campers really seemed to enjoy being out in nature. One participant described "being outdoors" as her favorite part of the experience (Participant 8). Another discussed how the environment felt safe, "How safe the cabins are. It was a safe destination where they're all in a good place not close to the city or anything, it's out here in the woods, it's just peaceful" (Participant 9). Yet, some of those same participants disliked the fact that they had to typically walk a long distance to get from activity to activity. For example, while Participant 9 enjoyed the peaceful setting of camp, he also disliked the long walks. When discussing how this overnight experience compared to other 4-H experiences, he said, "How far you had to walk, way down there, to get to the archery range. It's really kind of a long ways away" (Participant 9). Another camper echoed that feeling when

talking about a day when the activity location changed by saying, “I liked that we got do the shooting sports up here because usually it’s far away” (Participant 8). Overall, there was not a communal like or dislike about the naturalistic environment, it seemed as though all participants had their own pros and cons about the experience.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to compare and explore the experiences of youth who attended various 4-H overnight summer programs within the state of Mississippi. Specifically, how the structural components (i.e. setting, norms, traditions, symbols, etc.) can have an effect on the outcomes of essential elements of positive youth development and the acquisition of targeted life skills. There were four important research objectives associated with this study:

Objective 1: Describe the demographics of youth who participates in residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 2: Analyze and compare the differences in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development based on the structural components of residential 4-H summer programs in the state of Mississippi.

Objective 3: Analyze and compare the differences in the acquisition of targeted life skills for youth participants based on the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Objective 4: Investigate how participants attribute their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the residential 4-H summer program they attended.

Discussion

Objective One

The demographics of these four groups do not completely align with previous research. For example, Child Trends (2009) found that males were more likely than females to participate in summer programs. However, in three out of four of the groups that participated in this study, females made up the majority. Child Trends (2009) also found that youth who self-identified as black were more likely to participate in summer programs; yet in this study, the majority of participants self-identified as white. Finally, Child Trends (2009) notes that participation in clubs such as 4-H is a component that is significantly related to participation in summer programs. For three out of the four groups, this statement holds true. The one exception to this statement was the Youth Conservation Camp, which had a majority of attendants who had never participated in 4-H up until the point of the camp. It is important to note however, that the youth surveyed in the Child Trends paper were only ages six through eleven, and this study included youth ages eight to eighteen.

Objective Two

Research objective two sought to determine if there were differences in achieving the essential elements of positive youth development based on the structural components of an overnight 4-H summer program. Based on the results of the independent samples t-test, a difference can be seen between the comparison groups. The results suggested that the on-campus residential 4-H summer programs achieved the essential elements more so than the residential programs that took place within the naturalistic environment.

Between the two comparison groups, the summated mean scores of the essential elements

were relatively close; however the on-campus residential programs achieved higher mean scores for the elements of relationship with a caring adult and emotionally safe and inclusive environment at a statistically significant level.

These findings are important because they directly relate to the Five C's of positive youth development, specifically for competence and connection. The essential element measured that directly relates to competence, or the ability to perform adequately in the world, is opportunity for self-determination and mastery. Though the difference between the two comparison groups for this element was not statistically significant, it was still achieved at a higher rate for on-campus programs. The essential elements measured that directly relate to connection, or the understanding of relationships and their importance, are emotionally safe and inclusive environment as well as relationship with a caring adult. The differences between the two comparison groups for both of these elements were statistically significant, indicating that on-campus programs achieved these elements at a higher rate also than those within the naturalistic environment.

These results of this study reveal interesting contradictions when compared to previous residential summer program literature. For example, the American Camp Association (2006) identified that traditional residential summer camps that took place within the naturalistic environment had more optimal levels of supportive relationships, skill building, and safety than day camps. Though there was no comparison to day camps in this study, the structural components of the on-campus program strongly mirror those of a day camp. Specifically because the on-campus program did not take place in nature, participants conducted most activities indoors, and field trips were included in the program curriculum.

Further, the American Camp Association (2006) also determined that session length of the program contributes to the achievement of those elements. In this study, the residential programs that took place within the naturalistic environment were significantly longer than those that took place on-campus. Specifically, the Youth Conservation Camp spanned six days and five nights and Camp 24/7 took place for five days and four nights. These camps were compared to State Congress, which took place for three days and two nights and the Cooperative Leadership Conference that took place for four days and three nights. Though the on-campus programs were shorter in duration, the essential elements of positive youth development were still achieved at a higher rate than those that were longer in duration and took place in the naturalistic environment. This finding is important because it directly contradicts the existing literature.

Relationship with a Caring Adult

Utilizing the descriptors of the essential elements of positive youth development located in Table 5.1 can help differentiate how the structural components of the two comparison groups in this study could have affected the outcomes of achieving the elements measured.

For example, in regards to relationship with a caring adult, the characteristics are important because at the residential programs that took place in the naturalistic environment, the staff varied in age and ties to the 4-H youth. At the Youth Conservation Camp, there was one extension agent present, and the campsite at which it took place provided their own set of counselors. These counselors could be classified as young adults; however, they had no previous relationships with the campers. This factor could have impacted the youths' perception and answers regarding a relationship with a caring

adult. Similarly, Camp 24/7 had six 4-H extension agents present, one from every county that participated. However the camp counselors utilized consisted of youth who had “aged-out” of the camp program. These camp counselors ranged in ages from 14 to 16 years old. The surveyed youth could have easily based their answers to questions regarding a relationship with a caring adult off their interactions with the young camp counselors, rather than with their adult 4-H agents. Conversely, the staff at State Congress and the Cooperative Leadership Conference consisted solely of Extension professionals and 4-H agents from varying counties throughout the state of Mississippi. Due to the fact that the camp counselors at the Youth Conservation Camp and Camp 24/7 were not Extension professionals, youth’s perceptions and answers regarding a relationship with a caring adult could have been impacted in some way.

Table 5.1 Features of Positive Developmental Settings

	Descriptors	Opposite Poles
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe and health-promoting facilities; and practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions.	Physical and health dangers; fear; feeling of insecurity; sexual and physical harassment; and verbal abuse.
Appropriate Structure	Limit setting; clear and consistent rules and expectations; firm-enough control; continuity and predictability; clear boundaries; and age-appropriate monitoring.	Chaotic; disorganized; laissez-faire; rigid; over controlled; and autocratic.
Supportive Relationships	Warmth; closeness; connectedness; good communication; caring; support; guidance; secure attachment; and responsiveness.	Cold; distant; over controlling; ambiguous support; untrustworthy; focused on winning; inattentive; unresponsive; and rejecting.
Opportunities to Belong	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disabilities; social inclusion, social engagement, and integration; opportunities for sociocultural identity formation; and support for cultural and bicultural competence.	Exclusion; marginalization; and intergroup conflict.
Positive Social Norms	Rules of behavior; expectations; injunctions; ways of doing things; values and morals; and obligations for service.	Normlessness; anomie; laissez-faire practices; antisocial and amoral norms; norms that encourage violence; reckless behavior; consumerism; poor health practices; and conformity.

Table 5.1 (continued)

Support for Efficacy and Mattering	Youth-based; empowerment practices that support autonomy; making a real difference in one's community; and being taken seriously. Practice that includes enabling, responsibility granting, and meaningful challenge. Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels.	Unchallenging; over controlling; disempowering, and disabling. Practices that undermine motivation and desire to learn, such as excessive focus on current relative performance level rather than improvement.
Opportunities for Skill Building	Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional and social skills; exposure to intentional learning experiences; opportunities to learn cultural literacies, media literacy, communication skills, and good habits of mind; preparation for adult employment; and opportunities to develop social and cultural capital.	Practices that promote bad physical habits and habits of mind; and practices that undermine school and learning.
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Concordance; coordination; and synergy among family, school, and community.	Discordance; lack of communication; and conflict.

Note: Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (2002). Community programs to promote youth development. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Opportunity for Self-Determination and Mastery

Returning to Table 5.1, in regards to opportunity for self-determination and mastery, age and maturation may play an important role. The youth participants who attended the residential programs in the naturalistic environment ranged in ages from eight to sixteen, while the youth participants at the on-campus residential programs ranged in ages from 14 to 18. Because of the large age distribution between the two comparison groups, it can be expected that different skills and different levels of skills will be developed. Further, the content of the programs were different. The programs that took place in the naturalistic environment were more closely focused on skills that attendants would be able to utilize in the 4-H programs in which they participate during the typical school year while also incorporating traditional structured camp activities such as crafts, swimming, fishing, and recreational games. Though the on-campus programs also incorporated recreational games and activities, their focus was more closely centered around the application of skills. For example, State Congress was a series of competitions related to specific skills and local 4-H programs. Those winners of the competitions at State Congress were then invited to attend the Cooperative Leadership Conference where they could further develop leadership skills. It may be acceptable to consider that the residential programs that took place in the naturalistic environment can act as experiences for youth to discover their niche within 4-H which will help prepare them to apply their skills and participate in competitions such as State Congress. Ultimately leading to their participation in a conference such as the Cooperative Leadership Conference where skills for future adult employment can be developed. Therefore the structural components of

content, norms, and traditions may be the factors affecting these particular elements rather than the physical setting and facilities of the programs.

Emotionally Safe and Inclusive Environment

When looking at the characteristics of an emotionally safe and inclusive environment, it is more difficult to determine specific instances that would have affected the difference between the two groups. However, the largest contribution to that difference is most likely age and maturation. The age and maturation differences could have led to exclusion within the groups, as well as intergroup conflict in the residential programs that took place in the naturalistic environment.

Physically Safe Environment

Finally, for the characteristics associated with the element of a physically safe environment, there were noticeable differences that might be attributed to the complete contrast of settings or locations in which the programs took place. Those in the naturalistic environment had drastically different facilities than those who participated in on-campus programs. Those programs took place within nature, typically out in the woods, away from the city. The youth who attended those programs lived in cabin-like facilities and spent a majority of their time outdoors, whereas those who participated in the on-campus programs were just that—on campus of a major university. They stayed in dorms that were located on campus and spent a majority of their time indoors. Because the settings were starkly different, there is the potential that it affected the difference in achievement of this specific element.

Objective Three

Research objective three sought to determine if there were differences in the youth's acquisition of targeted life skills based on the structural components of an overnight 4-H summer program. The specific life skills measured were accepting self and others, accomplishing goals, and taking responsibility. Based on the results of the independent samples t-test, there is a perceivable difference between the two comparison groups. The results suggested that the youth who attended on-campus residential 4-H summer programs acquired targeted life skills more so than those youth who attended a program that took place within the naturalistic environment. Between the two comparison groups, the summated mean scores of the targeted life skills were again relatively close. However, the on-campus residential programs achieved higher mean scores that were statistically significant for the life skills of accepting self and others and taking responsibility.

The literature suggests that, typically, residential 4-H camping enhances life skills in youth participants. For example, studies conducted by Garton et al., (2007) and Shirilla (2009) both determined that 4-H camping contributes to the development of accepting differences in others. Further, studies conducted by Garst and Bruce (2003) and Snapp et al., (2007) discovered that both parents and campers noticed an increased sense of independence in terms of making better decisions, being on time, and taking better care of themselves after attending a 4-H residential summer camp.

The 4-H camps that can be seen in the literature operate at the state level of 4-H, whereas the camps utilized in this study did not. In the United States, there are only seven states that do not have a state 4-H residential summer camp, with Mississippi being one

of those states. Therefore, the two camps that took place in the naturalistic environment in this study were simply run by individuals who saw a need for a residential summer camp amongst Mississippi 4-H youth and created that experience for them. There was no set camp curriculum and no large overarching entity that helped to manage the camp effectively. This factor could have affected the way youth were exposed to certain life skills, especially compared to a more organized curriculum of State Congress and the Cooperative Leadership Conference under which they operate.

Life Skill Acquisition through Experience

The best way to describe the differences in life skill acquisition between the two comparison groups can be illustrated through Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (Figure 5.1) and Personal Growth and Development Model (Figure 5.2).

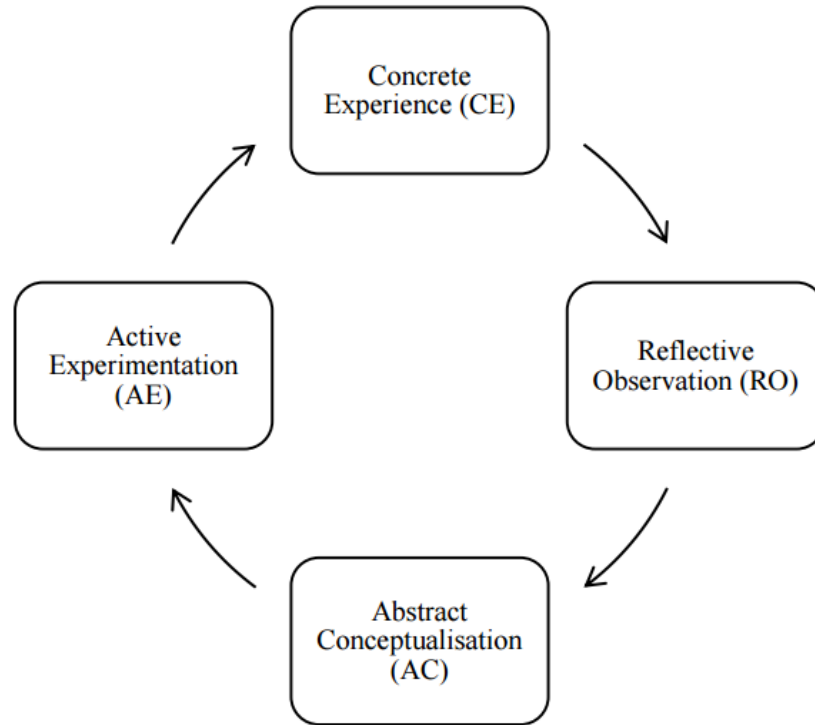


Figure 5.1 Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Note: Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

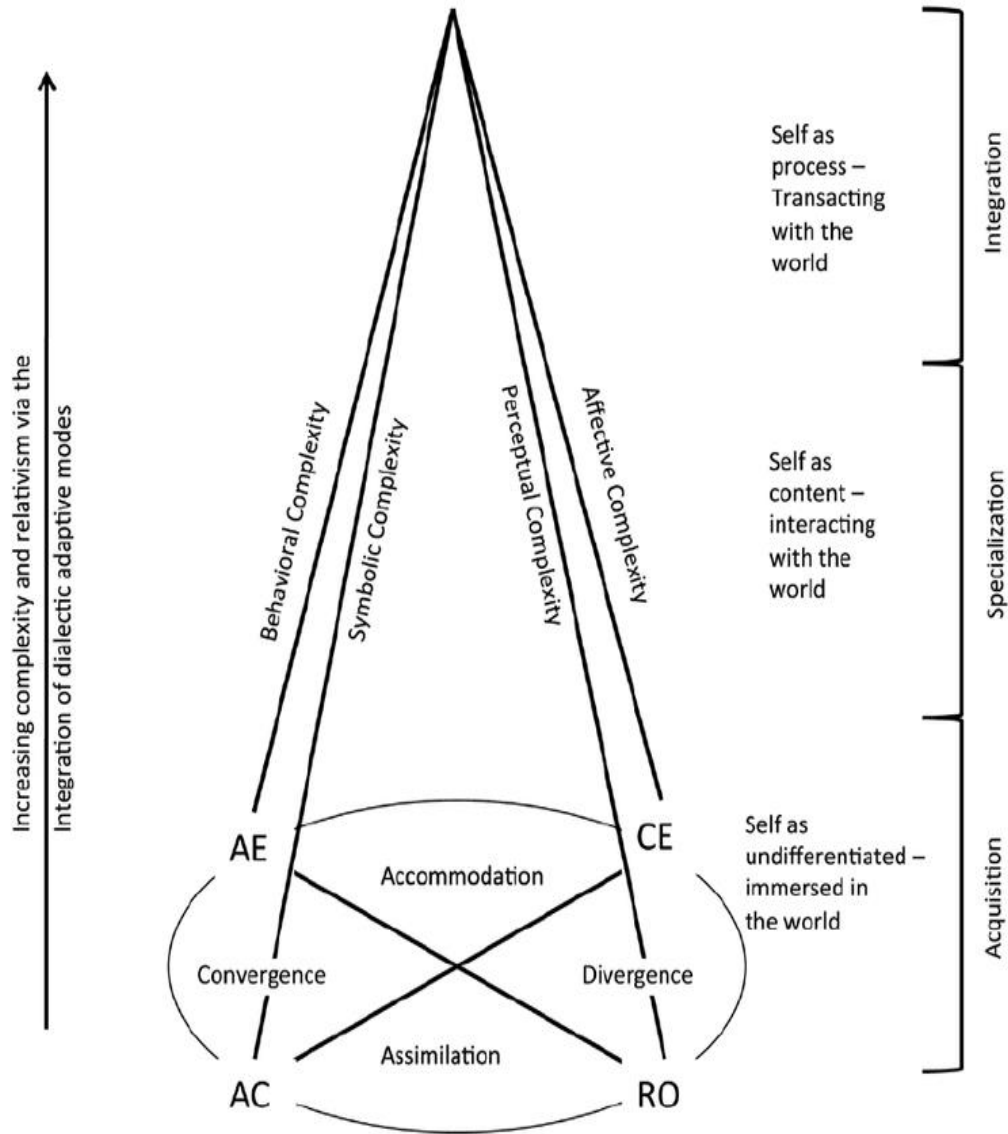


Figure 5.2 Experiential Learning Model of Personal Growth and Development

Note: Kolb, D.A. (1981). Learning styles and disciplinary differences. In A.W. Chickering and Associates (Eds.), *The modern American college: Responding to the new realities of diverse students and a changing society* (pp. 232-255). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.

The first component of the cyclical model is a concrete experience. Kolb explains that people have different experiences and thus enter into learning situations with varying ideas and knowledge about the subject matter (Kolb, 1984). This can be seen when

viewing the differences in the acquisition of targeted life skills between the two groups. Again, looking at the age and maturation of the youth participants will help to further explain this discrepancy. For both of the naturalistic environment programs, the average span of participation in 4-H was two years. With a mean of two years of experience in 4-H, those who participated in those programs, who were significantly younger than the on-campus participants, have had less exposure to 4-H. This mirrors the findings of the American Camp Association (2006) which noted that youth involvement increased as camps got older, and was relatively high for youth ages 16 to 18 compared to younger campers.

On the other hand, when looking at the on-campus programs, the range of participation in 4-H was between six and seven years. That triple the amount of number of the comparison group. With this significant increase of time and opportunities for varying experiences in 4-H, those youth have not only developed a set of skills but have refined them to a certain extent. Because these youth have had more experiences, experiences that vary in terms of content and application, they enter into each new learning situation with different knowledge, ideas, and capabilities. Kolb (1984) further indicates that because learning is a process of human adaptation, it encompasses things such as problem solving, decision making, and attitude change which are all things that can be within the Targeting Life Skills Model. As youth participate in more experiences and learn new things, it can only be determined that these skills will consistently enhance.

Objective Four

Research objective four sought to determine if participants attributed their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the overnight 4-H

summer program they attended. The structural components include the content, traditions, norms, the physical setting, and facilities related to the specific programs observed. Though the skills acquired were directly connected to the content and activities provided to youth through the specific experiences, the two experiences were starkly different in their purposes, therefore different outcomes were observed.

On-Campus Residential Summer Programs

For the residential summer program that took place on campus, five themes arose. The themes gathered from the Cooperative Leadership Conference are as follows:

(1) developing social skills and making friends, (2) teamwork and respecting others, (3) leadership: who, what, when, where, and how, (4) overcoming personal barriers and knowing thyself, and (5) promoting 4-H through local county outreach.

Four of the themes can be directly related to the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996). While the fifth theme was enlightening, it does not fit within the model. The theme of “developing social skills and making friends” aligns with the life skills of social skills and nurturing relationships. Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 illustrate that social skills is located in the “relating” section of the “heart” component of the four H’s.

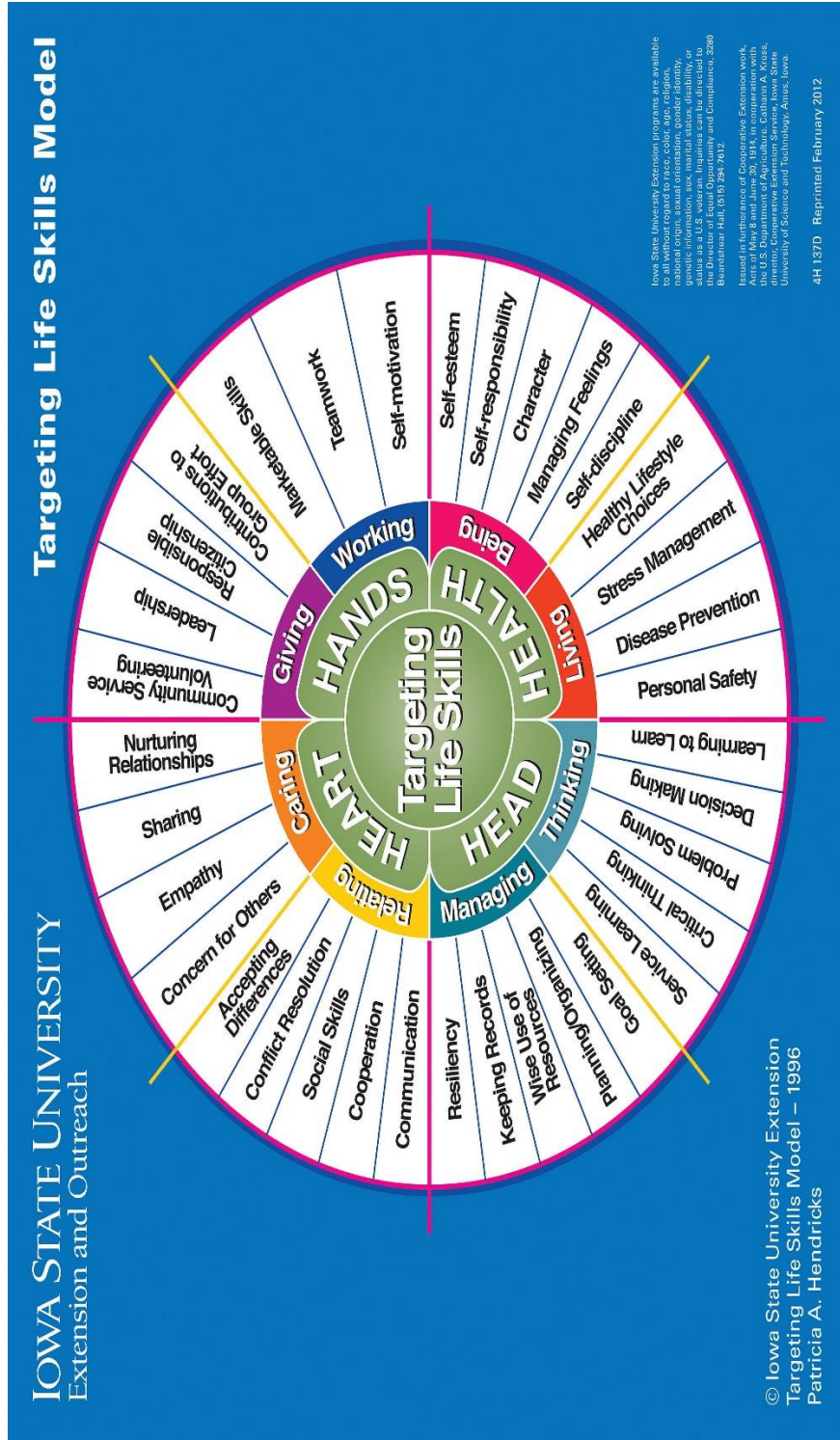


Figure 5.3 Targeting Life Skills Model

Note: Reprinted with permission from the author. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (n.d.). *Targeting life skills model*. Retrieved from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

<p>Head</p> <p>Thinking: using one's mind to form ideas and make decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to learn • Decision making • Problem solving • Critical thinking • Service learning <p>Managing: using resources to accomplish a purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal setting • Planning/organizing • Wise use of records • Keeping records • Resiliency 	<p>Heart</p> <p>Relating: establishing a mutual or reciprocal connection between two people that is wholesome and meaningful to both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Cooperation • Social skills • Conflict resolution • Accepting differences <p>Caring: showing understanding, kindness, concern, and affection for others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern for others • Empathy • Sharing • Nurturing relationships
<p>Hands</p> <p>Giving: providing, supplying, or causing to happen (social responsibility)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community service/volunteering • Leadership • Responsible • Contribution to group <p>Working: accomplishing something or earning pay to support oneself through physical or mental effort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketable/useful skills • Teamwork • Self-motivation 	<p>Health</p> <p>Living: acting or behaving; the manner or style of daily life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy lifestyle choices • Stress management • Disease prevention • Personal safety <p>Being: living one's life; pursuing ones basic nature; involved in personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Self-responsibility • Character • Managing feelings • Self-discipline

Figure 5.4 Thirty Five Life Skills Categorized by the 4-H's

Note: Norman, M., & Jordan, J. (2006). Targeting life skills in 4-H (Extension Publication 4HS FS101.9). Retrieved from University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences website: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h242>

In the same way, it can be seen that nurturing relationships is located in the “caring” section, also of the “heart” component. The second theme of “teamwork and respecting others” can be seen in the life skills of teamwork, located in the “working” section of the “hands” component and character, located in the “being” section of the “health” component. The third theme of “leadership” can be seen in the life skill of leadership, located in the “giving” section of the “hands” component. Finally, the fourth theme of “overcoming personal barriers and knowing thyself” can be seen in the life skill of self-esteem, located in the “being” section of the “health” component. This conclusion is important because it sheds light upon the fact that 4-H youth are developing a multitude of life skills through their participation in residential summer programs.

Naturalistic Environment Residential Summer Programs

For the residential summer program that took place within the naturalistic environment, four themes arose. The themes gathered from Camp 24/7 were as follows:

- (1) making friends and accepting others,
- (2) satisfaction of hands-on learning experiences,
- (3) challenges of group living, and
- (4) mixed perceptions of the naturalistic environment.

Three of the themes can be directly related to the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996), the fourth provides valuable insight but does not fit within the model. The theme of “making friends and accepting others” aligns with the life skills of nurturing relationships and accepting differences. Again, this researcher utilized Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4, observing that nurturing relationships is located in the “caring” section of the “heart” component. Accepting differences can be seen in the “relating” section also of the “heart” component. The second theme of “satisfaction of hands-on learning experiences”

can be seen in the life skill of learning to learn, located in the “thinking” section of the “head” component. Finally, the third theme of “challenges of group living” can be seen in the life skill of cooperation, located in the “relating” section of the “heart” component. Similar to the on-campus group, it can be seen that youth are acquiring a multitude of life skills, though the varying experiences provide different skill development.

Conclusion

Youth who attended a residential program in the naturalistic environment developed different life skills than those who participated in an on-campus program. However, both program types provide meaningful experiences that help youth to mature in an all-encompassing way. For example, both programs had a theme of making friends, in fact, it was a relatively dominant theme throughout the two focus groups. According to the literature, youth typically describe organized activities as being fun, educational, and a good place to make friends (Public Agenda, 2004). All of these things can be seen in both groups. Further, the Afterschool Alliance (2001) identifies that the summer months provide youth with a learning opportunity to “expand their horizons, master new skills, and build relationships” (p. 1). Again, all of those components can be seen across both groups.

Kress (2004) identifies that 4-H as an organization places specific emphasis on experiential learning, which allows for the development and practical application of skills. It can be seen through the content and activities associated with both programs that there is a focus on the development and application of important life skills as well as an emphasis on creating meaningful relationships. Therefore, these programs could be viewed as building blocks for one another. For example, programs in the naturalistic

environment that are aimed at younger youth could assist in developing the skills necessary to succeed in county programs and competitions. As youth get older they participate in state level contests, which could ultimately lead them to on-campus conferences where skills could be further developed before entering adulthood.

Recommendations

Research Recommendations

Recommendations for research can be drawn from this study. First, more research should be conducted in regards to summertime programming for 4-H youth. Summer is a time when working parents are looking for ways to keep youth occupied because school is out of session. In a paper compiled by Public Agenda (2004), it was reported that, of those surveyed, 58% of parents say that summer is the hardest time to make sure their children have things to do. The former Executive Director of the National Summer Learning Association, Ron Fairchild, stated, “Summer presents a unique and essential opportunity to provide children with fun, engaging learning experiences—something every child deserves” (Afterschool Alliance, 2010). If there are successful day camp-type or residential 4-H summer programs for youth to attend, their effectiveness needs to be documented in order to be further replicated by other 4-H entities that may have not yet capitalized on the opportunity.

Another unique attribute of summertime programming is that youth have the opportunity to attend overnight programs that can last longer than just over the weekend. The second recommendation would be to increase opportunities to further document how the overnight component makes a difference in the programs offered through 4-H by comparing 4-H summer programs that do have an overnight component to those 4-H

summer programs that do not have an overnight component. To date, there has been very little research, if any, that directly compare these differing 4-H programs. As previously stated, the American Camp Association (2006) did conduct a nationwide study in which day camps and residential camps were compared; however, it was not specific to 4-H. That same study also documented that session length was a large indicator of growth in developmental supports. This could also shed some light on the how long these experiences should last. For example, it was documented in this study that the programs that took place in the naturalistic environment lasted longer than those on campus. However, a day camp-type program could look completely different in terms of duration. They could last for six to eight hours a day, for a week at a time. They could also last for a shorter amount of time, possibly two to four hours a day, for only three days a week. Therefore, general and in-depth comparisons of residential 4-H programs and non-residential 4-H programs should be examined in the future.

The final recommendation would be to conduct more research about residential 4-H summer programs over multiple sites. As previously mentioned, the state of Mississippi does not have a state-run 4-H residential summer camp. With that being said, the camp outcomes of those programs might differ than, for example, the state of Georgia, which not only has one state-run 4-H residential summer camp but has four different camp locations across the state. This would also provide meaningful implications for the 4-H residential conferences. For example, most states have an annual 4-H State Congress meeting, as well as some form of leadership conference. It would be beneficial to utilize multiple sites in a study that looked at the effects of residential conferences in order to increase the likelihood of generalizable results. Studies have been

conducted researching 4-H residential camps (Arnold et al., 2005) and 4-H residential leadership conferences and retreats (Arnold, 2003). However, both of these studies were conducted at multiple sites located within the same state. Through the utilization of multi-site research and evaluation, across multiple states, 4-H as a national organization would be able to confidently state how their residential summer programs are systematically effective, providing more incentive for youth to attend those programs.

Practitioner Recommendations

In addition to recommendations related to research, the study provided recommendations that are applicable for practice. One recommendation in particular would be the utilization of group living experiences. Researchers often cite the residential experience as an opportunity for relationship-building and a means to promote a sense of belonging and connectedness amongst young people (American Camp Association, 2006; Garst et al., 2011a; Gillard et al., 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Sibthorp et al., 2010). It can be seen through this study that the youth attendees built relationships in-part to the group living experience. For example, at the Cooperative Leadership Conference, participants described living with a roommate as, “I like the fact they give us a roommate that gives a chance to automatically make a friend and lets you meet people you don’t know” (Participant 2). The literature also discusses how parents notice an increase in independence after their child has attend a 4-H residential summer program (Garst & Bruce, 2003; Snapp et al., 2007). This sense of independence can be seen in an attendee of Camp 24/7 when discussing his experience at camp, “how to live without your parents because they’re not here” (Participant 9). However, it is important to keep certain factors in mind when preparing these group living situations,

such as the facilities in which the program will take place. For example, having enough dedicated space and time for personal hygiene practices. One participant indicated that there were too few showers for the number of participants in the group living environment. If properly established facilities are incorporated, the group living environment tends to be a positive experience that benefits youth in terms of interpersonal skills.

The final recommendation would be to equip all staff personnel with the goals and objectives of the residential summer program. Specifically, providing this information would be important when the staff consists of volunteers or those who are not directly associated with the particular program. It can be seen in the programs observed in this study that a variety of individuals were utilized in supervisory roles. For example, youth volunteers served as camp counselors at Camp 24/7, young adults who were not associated with 4-H served as camp counselors at the Youth Conservation Camp, and State Congress consisted of 4-H agents from a multitude of counties throughout the state of Mississippi as well as parent volunteers as chaperones. When dealing with such a variety of staff personnel, it is important that the goals of the program are clearly stated and explained to those serving in specific roles.

The first step in this process would be for the manager or director to identify the goals and objectives of the program at hand. The second would be, once staff is selected and determined, to provide those individuals with the defined goals and objectives so they understand the specific outcomes the manager or director are trying to achieve with the program. In some instances, training may even be a necessary component of this process. When working with a vulnerable population, such as youth, it is of the utmost

importance that those supervising the program are aware properly informed of their responsibilities and expectations. Further, through knowing the intentions of the program they are working with they will most likely do their best to ensure the program meets the predetermined goals and objectives set by the director or manager.

REFERENCES

- 4-H Positive Youth Development and Mentoring Organization. (2016). *What is 4-H?* Retrieved from <http://www.4-h.org/about/>
- Afterschool Alliance. (2010, June). *Summer: A season when learning is essential* (Issue Brief No. 43) Washington, DC.
- American Camp Association, Philliber Research Associates, & Lilly Endowment Inc. (2005). *Directions: Youth development outcomes of the camp experience*. Retrieved from http://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/resource_library/report-directions-youth-development-outcomes.pdf
- American Camp Association, Youth Development Strategies, Inc., & Lilly Endowment Inc. (2006). *Inspirations: Developmental supports and opportunities of youths' experiences at camp*. Retrieved from http://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/resource_library/Inspirations.pdf
- Arnold, M.E. (2003). Using multi-site methodology to evaluate 4-H youth leadership retreats. *Journal of Extension*, 41(6). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2003december/rb1.php>
- Arnold, M.E., Bourdeau, V.D., & Nagele, J. (2005). Fun and friendship in the natural world: the impact of Oregon 4-H residential camping programs on girl and boy campers. *Journal of Extension*, 43(6). Retrieved from <https://joe.org/joe/2005december/rb1.php>
- Balsano, A.B., Phelps, E., Theokas, C., Lerner, J.V., Lerner, R.M. (2009). Patterns of early adolescents' participation in youth development programs having positive youth development goals. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 19(2), 249-259. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2009.00595.x
- Bialeschki, M.D., Henderson, K.A., & James, P.A. (2007). Camp experiences and developmental outcomes for youth. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America*, 16(4), 769-788.

- Catalano, R.F., Berglund, M.L., Ryan, J.A.M., Lonczak, H.S., Hawkins, J.D. (2004). Positive youth development in the United States: Research findings on evaluations of positive youth development programs. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 591(1), 98-124. doi: 10.1177/0002716203260102
- Child Trends. (2006). *Out-of-school time is critical for children: Who participates in programs?* [Fact Sheet]. Bethesda, MD: Theokas, C., & Bloch, M. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/2006-20OSTCritical.pdf>
- Child Trends. (2009). *Effective and promising summer learning programs and approaches for economically-disadvantaged children and youth*. Bethesda, MD: Terzian, M., Moore, K.A., & Hamilton, K. Retrieved from <http://kflickcurriculumdevelopmentaction.pbworks.com/f/Summer+Learning+Program+for+ED+Children+and+Youth.pdf>
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Fitzpatrick, C., Gagne, K.H., Jones, R., Lobley, J., & Phelps, L. (2005). Life skills development in youth: impact research in action. *Journal of Extension*, 43(3). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2005june/rb1.php>
- Garst, B.A., & Bruce, F.A. (2003). Identifying 4-H camping outcomes using a standardized evaluation process across multiple 4-H educational centers. *Journal of Extension*, 41(3). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2003june/rb2.php>
- Garst, B.A., Browne, L.P., & Bialeschki, M.D. (2011a). Youth development and the camp experience. *New Directions for Youth Development*, 130. doi:10.1002/yd.398
- Garst, B.A., Hunnings, J.R., Jamison, K., Hairston, J., Meadows, R.R., Herdman, W.R. (2006). Exploring the adolescent life skill outcomes of state 4-H congress participation and the different outcomes of gender and race groups. *Journal of Extension*, 44(6). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2006december/rb2.php>
- Garst, B.A., Nichols, A., Martz, J., McNeely, N.N, Bovitz, L., Frebertshauer, D., Walahoski, J. (2011b). Examining youth camping outcomes across multiple states: The National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (NCRC). *Journal of Youth Development*, 6(1). Retrieved from http://www.nae4ha.com/assets/documents/JYDfinal_110601x.pdf

- Garst, B.A., Scheider, I., & Baker, D. (2001). Outdoor adventure program participation impacts on adolescent self-perception. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 24(1), 41-49. Retrieved from <http://jee.sagepub.com/content/24/1/41.full.pdf>
- Garst, B.A., Williams, D.R., & Roggenbuck, J.W. (2009). Exploring early twenty-first century developed forest camping experiences and meanings. *Leisure Sciences*, 32(1), 90-107. doi:10.1080/01490400903430905
- Garton, M.S., Miltenberger, M., & Pruett, B. (2007). Does 4-H camp influence life skills and leadership development? *Journal of Extension*, 45(4). Retrieved from: <https://www.joe.org/joe/2007august/a4.php>
- Gill, B.E., Ewing, J.C., & Bruce, J.A. (2010). Factors affecting teen involvement in Pennsylvania 4-H programming. *Journal of Extension*, 48(2). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2010april/a7.php>
- Gillard, A., Watts, C.E., & Witt, P.A. (2009). Camp supports for motivation and interest: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 27(2), 74-96.
- Greene, K., Lee, B., Constance, N., & Hynes, K. (2012). Examining youth and program predictors of engagement in out-of-school time programs. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 42, 1557-1572. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9814-3
- Henderson, K.A., Bialeschki, M.D., Scanlin, M.M., Thurber, C., Whitaker, L.S., & Marsh, P.E. (2007). Components of camp experiences for positive youth development. *Journal of Youth Development*, 1(2). Retrieved from http://campspirit.com/wp-content/themes/CampSpiritTheme/pdf/academicjournals/ComponentsCamp_from_JYD.pdf
- Hendricks, P. (1996). *Targeting life skills model*. Retrieved from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. (n.d.). Targeting life skills model. Retrieved from <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4h/explore/lifeskills>
- Hoover, T.S., Scholl, J.F., Dunigan, A.H., & Mamontova, N. (2007). A historical review of leadership development in the FFA and 4-H. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 48(3), 100-110. doi:10.5032/jae.2007.03100
- Kids Count Data Center. (2012). *Children who have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions*. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6031-children-who-have-one-or-more-emotional-behavioral-or-developmental-conditions?loc=26&loct=2#detailed/2/26/false/1021,18/any/12694,12695>

- Kinsey, S. (2013). Using multiple youth programming delivery modes to drive the development of social capital in 4-H participants. *New Directions For Youth Development*, (138), 61-73. doi:10.1002/yd.20058
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kolb, D.A. (1981). Learning styles and disciplinary differences. In A.W. Chickering and Associates (Eds.), *The modern American college: Responding to the new realities of diverse students and a changing society* (pp. 232-255). San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Kolb, D.A. & Fry, R. (1975). Toward an applied theory of experiential learning. In C. Cooper (Ed.). *Theories of group processes*. New York: Wiley.
- Kress, C. (2004). *Essential elements of 4-H youth development*. Retrieved from http://www.4h.org/uploadedFiles/Programs/Afterschool/Resources/Training_Resources/EssentialElementsof4-HYouthDevelopment.ppt.
- Krueger, R.A. (1998). *Analyzing & reporting focus group results*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Larson, R., Hansen, D., & Walker, K. (2005). Everybody's gotta give: Development of initiative and teamwork within a youth program. In J.L. Mahoney, R.W. Larson, & J.S. Eccles (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts of development: extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp.160-181). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Lerner, R. (2005a). *Promoting positive youth development: Theoretical and empirical bases*. Paper prepared for Workshop on the Science of Adolescent Health and Development, Washington, DC.
- Lerner, R., Almerigi, J., Theokas, C., & Lerner, J. (2005b). Positive youth development: a view of the issues. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 10-16. doi:10.1177/0272431604273211
- Lerner, R., Lerner, J., & Colleagues (2013). *The positive development of youth: Comprehensive findings from the 4-H study of positive youth development*. Retrieved from the national 4-H website: <http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-research/positive-youth-development-study>
- Lester, S., Carter, C., Powell, B., Dotson, R. (1974). *Some Opinions of Selected Senior 4-H Members and Extension Agents Regarding Tennessee Camps and Conferences* (Unpublished master's thesis summary). University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED095289>

- Maass, S.E., Wilken, C.S., Jordan, J., Culen, G., & Place, N. (2006). A comparison of 4-H and other youth development organizations in the development of life skills. *Journal of Extension*, 44(5). Retrieved from <https://www.joe.org/joe/2006october/rb2.php>
- Mahoney, J.L., Larson, R.W., Eccles, J.S., Lord, H. (2005). Organized activities as developmental contexts for children and adolescents. In J.L. Mahoney, R.W. Larson, & J.S. Eccles (Eds.), *Organized activities as contexts of development: extracurricular activities, after-school and community programs* (pp.3-22). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Martz, J., Mincemoyer, C., McNeely, N., Bledsoe, L., Dart, P., Johannes, E., Worthington, K. (2009). *Essential elements of 4-H youth development programs*. Retrieved from <http://www.4-h.org/resource-library/professional-development-learning/4-h-youth-development/youth-development/essential-elements/>
- Merriam, S.B. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Practice*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers.
- Meyer, S., & Jones, K.R. (2015). Promoting the essential elements of 4-H youth development through an experiential learning model. *Journal of Extension*, 53(5). Retrieved from <https://joe.org/joe/2015october/iw4.php>
- Mississippi State University Extension Service. (2015). 4-H youth development status report. Retrieved from <http://msucare.com/pubs/publications/p2872.pdf>
- Morgan, D.L. (1998a). *The focus group guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Morgan, D.L. (1998b). *Planning focus groups*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- National Summer Learning Association. (2009). *Building quality in summer learning programs: Approaches and recommendations*. Baltimore, MD: McLaughlin, B. & Pitcock, S.
- Nicholson, H.J., Collins, C., & Holmer, H. (2004). Youth as people: The protective aspects of youth development in after-school settings. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 591, 55-71. doi: 10.1177/0002716203260081
- Norman, M., & Jordan, J. (2006). *Targeting life skills in 4-H* (Extension Publication 4HS FS101.9). Retrieved from University of Florida, the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences website: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/4h242>

- Norton, C., & Watt, T. (2014). Exploring the impact of a wilderness-based positive youth development program for urban youth. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 37(4), 335-350. doi: 10.1177/1053825913503113
- Public Agenda. (2004). *All work and no play? Listening to what kids and parents really want from out-of-school time*. New York, NY: Duffett, A., Johnson, J., Farkas, S., Kung, S., & Ott, A.
- Quinn, J. (1999). Where need meets opportunity: Youth development programs for early teens. *The Future of Children*, 9(2), 96-116. Retrieved from <https://www.princeton.edu/futureofchildren/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=48&articleid=238&ionid=1560>
- Radhakrishna, R.B., & Sinasky, M. (2005). 4-H experiences contributing to leadership and personal development of 4-H alumni. *Journal of Extension*, 43(6). Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2005december/rb2.php>
- Shirilla, P. (2009). Adventure-based programming and social skill development in the lives of diverse youth: Perspectives from two research projects. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 31(3), 410-414.
- Sibthorp, J., Browne, L.P., & Bialeschki, M.D. (2010). Measuring positive youth development at summer camp: Problem solving and camp connectedness. *Research in Outdoor Education*, 10(1), 1-12.
- Simpkins, S. (2003). Do out-of-school time activities make a difference? *The Evaluation Exchange*, 9(1), 2-3 & 21.
- Snapp, G., Klem, M., & Nicholson, D. (2007). An evaluation of the effectiveness of life skill development in Missouri's 4-H youth resident summer camps. Retrieved from the American Camp Association website: <http://www.acacamps.org/sites/default/files/images/research/symposium/klem.pdf>
- Steinberg, L. (2008). A social neuroscience perspective on adolescent risk-taking. *Developmental Review*, 28(1), 78-106. doi:10.1016/j.dr.2007.08.002
- Summer Camp (Residential Camping) Philosophy, Theory, Research, & Evaluation. (2006). *What is residential camping?* Retrieved from <http://www.wilderdom.com/camp.html>
- United States Census Bureau. (2014). *Mississippi population under 18 years by age*. Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_1YR_B09001&prodType=table

Van Velsor, E., & Wright, J. (2012). *Expanding the leadership equation: developing next-generation leaders*. Retrieved from Center for Creative Leadership website: <http://www.ccl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/ExpandingLeadershipEquation.pdf>

Youth.Gov. *Positive youth development*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

APPENDIX A
PARENTAL CONSENT DOCUMENTS

**Mississippi State University
Parental or Legally Authorized Representative Permission Form
for Participation in Research**

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research project. This form provides you with information about the project. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate.

Title of research project: Achieving the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and Discovering Life Skills at 4-H Summer Learning Programs: Does Duration Matter?

Site of research project: Extension Services in the following counties in Mississippi: Amite, Bolivar, Claiborne, DeSoto, and Jefferson. Tara Wildlife Camp in Vicksburg, MS. Camp 7 in Wiggins, MS. Bost and Lloyd-Ricks Watson buildings on the campus of Mississippi State University.

Name of researcher(s) & University affiliation: PI: Alayna Naro, Graduate Student
Advisor: Dr. Laura Lemons, MSU Faculty, Committee Member

The purpose of this research project:

- The purpose of this study is to collect information about the experiences of youth at 4-H summer learning programs by measuring the life skills obtained and the essential elements of positive youth development met.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this research project, we will ask your child to do the following things:

- Complete a questionnaire regarding their experience at a 4-H summer learning program.

The total estimated time to participate in this research project: 30 minutes

The risks of participation:

- None.

The benefits of participation:

- By participating in the study, subjects will provide researchers with information regarding how experiences at 4-H summer learning programs affect the youth who attend. By being part of a Land Grant Institution, it is our responsibility to improve the experiences of our youth through 4-H youth development programs.

Compensation:

- None.

Confidentiality and privacy protections:

- Participants will not write their name on any part of the survey documents, therefore answers will be confidential. There are no foreseeable risks to

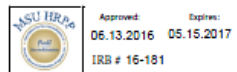


Figure A.1 Parental Consent Document for Survey

privacy for participants. Participation is voluntary, and only the researcher will know the participants' responses. All documents to the study will be kept secured in a locked office at all times. It is important to understand that these records will be held by a state entity and therefore are subject to disclosure if required by law.

Contacts and questions:

- If you have any questions, please ask now. If you should have any questions later or want additional information, please contact Alayna Naro at acn77@msstate.edu. For information regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the MSU Research Compliance Office at 662-325-3994.

If you do not want your child to participate:

Please understand that your child's participation is **voluntary**. Your refusal to allow your child to participate will involve **no penalty** or loss of benefits to which you or your child is otherwise entitled. You may discontinue your child's participation **at any time** without penalty or loss of benefits. Your child may skip any items that he or she chooses not to answer. Your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with Mississippi State University. To do so, simply tell the researcher that you wish to stop.

If after reading the information above, you agree to allow your child to participate, please sign below. If you decide later that you wish to withdraw your permission, simply tell the researcher. You may discontinue your child's participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____ Will participate: Yes No
Child's name (please print)

_____ Date
Parent or *Legally Authorized Representative's Signature

_____ Date
Parent or *Legally Authorized Representative's Signature

_____ Date
Investigator's Signature

If a Legally Authorized Representative (rather than a parent), must have documentation to show LAR status.



Figure A.1 (continued)

Parental Consent Document for Survey

Mississippi State University
Parental or Legally Authorized Representative Permission Form
for Participation in Research

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research project. This form provides you with information about the project. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate.

Title of research project: Achieving the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and Discovering Life Skills at 4-H Summer Learning Programs: Does Duration Matter?

Site of research project: Extension Services in the following counties in Mississippi: Tara Wildlife Camp in Vicksburg, MS. Camp 7 in Wiggins, MS. Bost and Lloyd-Ricks Watson buildings on the campus of Mississippi State University.

Name of researcher(s) & University affiliation: PI: Alayna Naro, Graduate Student
Advisor: Dr. Laura Lemons, MSU Faculty, Committee Member

The purpose of this research project:

- The purpose of this study is to collect information about the experiences of youth at 4-H summer learning programs by measuring the life skills obtained and the essential elements of positive youth development met.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in this research project, we will ask your child to do the following things:

- Complete a questionnaire regarding their experience at a 4-H summer learning program.
- Your child will also have the option of volunteering to participate in a focus group where they will be asked questions regarding their experience at a 4-H summer learning program.

The total estimated time to participate in this research project:

- 30 minutes for the survey
- 1 hour for the focus group

The risks of participation:

- None.

The benefits of participation:

- By participating in the study, subjects will provide researchers with information regarding how experiences at 4-H summer learning programs affect the youth who attend. By being part of a Land Grant Institution, it is our responsibility to improve the experiences of our youth through 4-H youth development programs.

Compensation:

- None.

Confidentiality and privacy protections:

- Participants will not write their name on any part of the survey documents, therefore answers will be confidential. There are no foreseeable risks to privacy for participants. Participation is voluntary, and only the researcher will know the participants' responses. All documents to the study will be kept secured in a locked office at all times. It is important to understand that these records will be held by a state entity and therefore are subject to disclosure if required by law.
- Audio recording will be utilized for the focus groups. The researcher will use the audio recordings to transcribe participants' responses verbatim. Participants' names will only be associated with their responses for transcription purposes. After transcription has occurred,

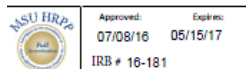


Figure A.2 Parental Consent Document for Survey and Focus Group

pseudonyms will be applied to protect the anonymity of the participants. Names will not be connected to any comments to protect confidentiality.

Contacts and questions:

- If you have any questions, please ask now. If you should have any questions later or want additional information, please contact Alayna Naro at acn77@msstate.edu. For information regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact the MSU Research Compliance Office at 662-325-3994.

If you do not want your child to participate:

Please understand that your child's participation is **voluntary**. Your refusal to allow your child to participate will involve **no penalty** or loss of benefits to which you or your child is otherwise entitled. You may discontinue your child's participation **at any time** without penalty or loss of benefits. Your child may skip any items that he or she chooses not to answer. Your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with Mississippi State University. To do so, simply tell the researcher that you wish to stop.

If after reading the information above, you agree to allow your child to participate, please sign below. If you decide later that you wish to withdraw your permission, simply tell the researcher. You may discontinue your child's participation at any time. You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____ Will participate: Yes No
Child's name (please print)

Parent or *Legally Authorized Representative's Signature Date

Parent or *Legally Authorized Representative's Signature Date

Investigator's Signature Date

If a Legally Authorized Representative (rather than a parent), must have documentation to show LAR status.



Figure A.2 (continued)

Parental Consent Document for Survey and Focus Group

APPENDIX B
CHILD ASSENT DOCUMENTS

Child Assent Form

Project Title: Achieving the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and Discovering Life Skills at 4-H Summer Learning Programs: Does Duration Matter?

Investigator: Alayna Naro

Your parent knows that we are going to ask you to fill out this survey. We want to know about kids' attitudes towards their experience and participation at camps and summer programs. It will take 30 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your name will not be written anywhere on the survey document. No one will know these answers came from you.

If you don't want to participate, you can stop at any time. There will be no bad feelings if you don't want to do this. You can ask questions if you do not understand any part of the survey.

Do you understand? If you would like to participate, please print your name on the first line and sign and date your name on the second line.

Thank you!

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____



Figure B.1 Child Assent Document for Survey

Child Assent Form

Project Title: Achieving the Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development and Discovering Life Skills at 4-H Summer Learning Programs: Does Duration Matter?

Investigator: Alayna Naro

Your parent knows that you were given the opportunity to volunteer for this focus group. You have been asked to participate in this focus group because I want to know about your attitudes towards your experience and participation at camps and summer programs. This focus group will take about an hour of your time.

I will be using an audio recorder to help me record your responses and discussion today. Your names will only be connected to your responses for right now. Once I type up all of your responses word for word, I will give you a pseudonym, or a different name, fake name. Your real name will not be connected to any comments to protect confidentiality, so nobody will know what responses came from you.

If you would like to participate, please print your name on the first line and sign and date your name on the second line.

Thank you!

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____

Signature Date

Investigator's Signature Date



Figure B.2 Child Assent Document for Focus Group

APPENDIX C
COMBINED QUESTIONNAIRE DOCUMENT FOR ON-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL
SUMMER PROGRAMS

Mississippi 4-H Summer Learning Program Questionnaire (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each question carefully and provide an answer. If you have any questions ask a leader for help.

1. What is the name of the program you attended? _____

2. What county are you from? _____

3. What is your age? _____ years old

4. What is your sex? Male Female

5. Which of these words best describes your race and ethnicity?

- White
- Black or African American
- American Indian of Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other _____

6. How many years have you been a 4-H member? _____ years I am not a 4-H member

Figure C.1 On-Campus Program Questionnaire Document

Demographic Questionnaire

Mississippi 4-H Summer Learning Program Essential Elements Questionnaire (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each statement and then circle a number from 1-4 based upon how much you agree that the statement describes your experience this summer.

During the program....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Participants accomplished something they couldn't do the first day	1	2	3	4
2. Participants build friendships that will last after the program	1	2	3	4
3. Participants could be a part of making group decisions	1	2	3	4
4. Participants had the opportunity to learn about different careers	1	2	3	4
5. Participants messed with other people's belongings	1	2	3	4
6. Participants picked on one another	1	2	3	4
7. Participants taught each other	1	2	3	4
8. Participants were expected to be honest	1	2	3	4
9. Leaders helped participants be successful	1	2	3	4
10. Leaders liked being around the participants	1	2	3	4
11. Leaders thought that helping others was important	1	2	3	4
12. Leaders tried to make homesick participants feel better	1	2	3	4
13. Leaders understood participants' problems	1	2	3	4
14. Leaders were people I could trust	1	2	3	4
15. Mean jokes were played on participants	1	2	3	4
16. My activities were interesting	1	2	3	4
17. My skills in some activities improved	1	2	3	4
18. Other kids did not like me	1	2	3	4
19. Other kids made fun of me	1	2	3	4
20. I could go to a leader if I had a problem	1	2	3	4
21. I felt accepted by other participants	1	2	3	4
22. I felt free to express my opinion	1	2	3	4
23. I felt good about something I accomplished	1	2	3	4
24. I felt safe at night	1	2	3	4
25. I felt safe in my activities	1	2	3	4
26. I felt safe in my dorm	1	2	3	4
27. I learned things that will be useful in the future	1	2	3	4
28. I pushed myself to try harder because of challenging activities	1	2	3	4
29. I was teased	1	2	3	4

Figure C.1 (continued)

Camp Context Questionnaire

Mississippi 4-H Summer Learning Program Life Skills Questionnaire (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each statement and then circle a number from 1-4 based upon how much you agree that the statement describes your experience this summer.

During the program....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I tried to help if someone needed something	1	2	3	4
2. I was usually where I was supposed to be	1	2	3	4
3. I was responsible for my own behavior	1	2	3	4
4. I was proud of my group	1	2	3	4
5. I was concerned about the well-being of others	1	2	3	4
6. I was a good listener	1	2	3	4
7. I learned that others' ideas were as important as mine	1	2	3	4
8. I tried to solve problems without being violent	1	2	3	4
9. I tried to do what was expected of me	1	2	3	4
10. I treated others fairly	1	2	3	4
11. I thought carefully before making decisions	1	2	3	4
12. I thought about a problem before trying to solve it	1	2	3	4
13. I respected others who were different than me	1	2	3	4
14. I respected other participants	1	2	3	4
15. I made new friends	1	2	3	4
16. I learned that some decisions are better than others	1	2	3	4
17. I learned about my strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4
18. I felt comfortable asking for help	1	2	3	4
19. I encouraged others to do their best	1	2	3	4
20. I contributed to the success of the group	1	2	3	4
21. I cleaned up after myself	1	2	3	4
22. I asked for help when I needed it	1	2	3	4
23. I always try to do my best	1	2	3	4
24. I accepted people who thought or acted differently	1	2	3	4

Figure C.1 (continued)

Camp Life Skills Questionnaire

APPENDIX D
COMBINED QUESTIONNAIRE DOCUMENT FOR NATURALISTIC
ENVIRONMENT RESIDENTIAL SUMMER PROGRAMS

Mississippi 4-H Summer Camp (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each question carefully and provide an answer. If you have any questions ask a leader for help.

1. What is the name of the camp you attended? _____

2. What county are you from? _____

3. What is your age? _____ years old

4. What is your sex? Male Female

5. Which of these words best describes your race and ethnicity?
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian of Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Other _____

6. How many years have you been a 4-H member? _____ years I am not a 4-H member

Figure D.1 Naturalistic Environment Program Questionnaire Document
Demographic Questionnaire

Mississippi 4-H Summer Camp Essential Elements Questionnaire (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each statement and then circle a number from 1-4 based upon how much you agree that the statement describes your camp experience this summer.

At camp....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Campers accomplished something they couldn't do the first day	1	2	3	4
2. Campers build friendships that will last after camp	1	2	3	4
3. Campers could be a part of making group decisions	1	2	3	4
4. Campers had the opportunity to learn about different careers	1	2	3	4
5. Campers messed with other campers' belongings	1	2	3	4
6. Campers picked on one another	1	2	3	4
7. Campers taught each other	1	2	3	4
8. Campers were expected to be honest	1	2	3	4
9. Leaders helped campers be successful	1	2	3	4
10. Leaders liked being around the campers	1	2	3	4
11. Leaders thought that helping others was important	1	2	3	4
12. Leaders tried to make homesick campers feel better	1	2	3	4
13. Leaders understood campers' problems	1	2	3	4
14. Leaders were people I could trust	1	2	3	4
15. Mean jokes were played on campers	1	2	3	4
16. My activities were interesting	1	2	3	4
17. My skills in some activities improved	1	2	3	4
18. Other kids did not like me	1	2	3	4
19. Other kids made fun of me	1	2	3	4
20. I could go to a leader if I had a problem	1	2	3	4
21. I felt accepted by other campers	1	2	3	4
22. I felt free to express my opinion	1	2	3	4
23. I felt good about something I accomplished	1	2	3	4
24. I felt safe at night	1	2	3	4
25. I felt safe in my activities	1	2	3	4
26. I felt safe in my cabin	1	2	3	4
27. I learned things that will be useful in the future	1	2	3	4
28. I pushed myself to try harder because of challenging activities	1	2	3	4
29. I was teased	1	2	3	4

Figure D.1 (continued)

Camp Context Questionnaire

Mississippi 4-H Summer Camp Life Skills Questionnaire (overnight)

Instructions: Please read each statement and then circle a number from 1-4 based upon how much you agree that the statement describes your camp experience this summer.

At camp....	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I tried to help if someone needed something	1	2	3	4
2. I was usually where I was supposed to be	1	2	3	4
3. I was responsible for my own behavior	1	2	3	4
4. I was proud of my camp group	1	2	3	4
5. I was concerned about the well-being of others	1	2	3	4
6. I was a good listener	1	2	3	4
7. I learned that others' ideas were as important as mine	1	2	3	4
8. I tried to solve problems without being violent	1	2	3	4
9. I tried to do what was expected of me	1	2	3	4
10. I treated others fairly	1	2	3	4
11. I thought carefully before making decisions	1	2	3	4
12. I thought about a problem before trying to solve it	1	2	3	4
13. I respected others who were different than me	1	2	3	4
14. I respected other campers	1	2	3	4
15. I made new friends	1	2	3	4
16. I learned that some decisions are better than others	1	2	3	4
17. I learned about my strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4
18. I felt comfortable asking for help	1	2	3	4
19. I encouraged others to do their best	1	2	3	4
20. I contributed to the success of the group	1	2	3	4
21. I cleaned up after myself	1	2	3	4
22. I asked for help when I needed it	1	2	3	4
23. I always try to do my best	1	2	3	4
24. I accepted people who thought or acted differently	1	2	3	4

Figure D.1 (continued)

Camp Life Skills Questionnaire

APPENDIX E
FOCUS GROUP DOCUMENTS

Mississippi 4-H Summer Learning Program (Overnight)

Youth Development Experience Inventory

Name: _____

Instructions: Please read each question carefully and provide an answer.

1. What is your age? _____ years old
2. What is your sex? Male Female
3. Which of these words best describes your race and ethnicity?
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - American Indian of Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic or Latino
 - Other _____
4. How many years have you been a 4-H member? _____ years
5. What other youth development organizations are you involved in? (check all that apply)
 - Boy Scouts / Girl Scouts
 - Boys and Girls Club
 - YMCA
 - Church Youth Group

Please list any other organizations you may be involved with that were not listed above:

6. Please list all 4-H experiences you have participated in this summer:

Figure E.1 Focus Group Documents

Demographic Questionnaire

Mississippi 4-H Summer Learning Program (Overnight)

Focus Group Questions

How do participants attribute their acquisition of targeted life skills to the structural components of the overnight 4-H summer learning program attended?

1. What has been your favorite part of attending Camp 7 / Cooperative Business Leadership Conference?
2. What type of things did you learn at Camp 7 / Cooperative Business Leadership Conference?
 - a. What parts of your activities helped you to learn those things?
3. What would you say is the most important thing you learned?
4. Were the things you learned at Camp 7 / Cooperative Business Leadership Conference similar to what you have learned at other 4-H experiences?
5. What type things have you learned just by being in 4-H?
6. Tell me about how you plan to practice one thing you have learned at Camp 7 / Cooperative Business Leadership Conference.
7. Tell me a story about something you did during Camp 7 / Cooperative Business Leadership Conference that made you feel good about yourself.
8. Tell me a story about how you got along or worked together with other participants, even if it was that you did not get along with them.
9. How does this overnight experience compare to other day camps or 4-H programs you have attended this summer?
10. What do you think you will take away from this experience?

Figure E.1 (continued)

Focus Group Questions