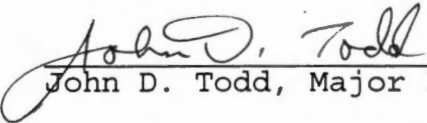
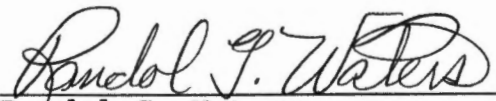


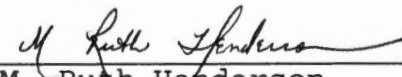
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ricky L. Thomason entitled "Perceptions of 4-H by Public School Educators in Johnson County, Tennessee." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Agricultural and Extension Education.

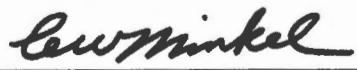

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PERCEPTIONS OF 4-H BY
PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS IN
JOHNSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ricky L. Thomason
December 1996

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Thesis
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife,
Mrs. Jahala L. Thomason,
my two sons,
Jonathan L. Thomason
and
Joshua L. Thomason
and
to my church family
Central Baptist Church
who have given me invaluable support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express appreciation for the support and leadership of his graduate committee, Dr. John D. Todd, Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education; Dr. Randol G. Waters, Associate Professor of Agricultural and Extension Education; and Ms. M. Ruth Henderson, Associate Professor of 4-H. Without their guidance and assistance, the study could not have been accomplished.

Appreciation is given to Mr. Thomas E. Fortune, Johnson County Extension Leader, and the Johnson County Agriculture Committee for their support in allowing me to attend the Extension Winter School in pursuit of a Master's Degree in Agricultural and Extension Education.

Appreciation is given to Mr. Gerald Buckles, Superintendent of Johnson County Schools, for the permission to conduct the study with the public school educators in Johnson County.

Appreciation is also extended to all the educators in Johnson County who cooperated in the study.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to survey public school educators in Johnson County, Tennessee and determine their perception of 4-H. Included in the study is a comparison of the perceptions of 4-H by educators based on whether or not they had ever been a 4-H member or the parent of a 4-H member. The study also examines the relationship of the perception of 4-H by educators based on their years of experience in public school education, job assignment, and grade level taught.

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to study these relationships. Data gathered for the study were analyzed using The University of Tennessee Computing Center IBM 3091 mainframe computer and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) release 4.1. Descriptive statistics and appropriate inferential tests were used in the analysis.

The study revealed no significant differences in the perceptions of 4-H by the educators in Johnson County based on the demographic characteristics used in the study. However, two open-ended questions were included in the study to determine the educators' perceptions as to why 4-H participation declines as students move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school. The educators' responses to these two questions were categorized into ten main ideas on why 4-H participation declines.

The categories identified were:

1. Interest changes
2. Peer pressure
3. Lack of 4-H promotion
4. Competition from other activities
5. 4-H is for younger students
6. 4-H is considered as "not cool"
7. Time constraints
8. Lack of parental support
9. Forced participation in elementary school
10. Too much competition in 4-H

The implications of the study is that the junior and senior high 4-H program should be restructured to meet the needs of the different interests of this audience. Hopefully, this restructuring will relieve some of the peer pressure placed on students who choose to participate in 4-H. The 4-H program should do a better job of promoting 4-H activities in the middle and high school. Some consideration should be given to the time constraints placed on students from other activities and part-time jobs when planning 4-H activities. Parents should be encouraged to continue their involvement with their children as they progress in the 4-H program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEMS

I. INTRODUCTION

Johnson County is a rural county located in upper East Tennessee. The county extension staff consists of one adult agricultural agent, one 4-H agricultural extension agent, and one home economics agent assigned fifty percent to 4-H and fifty percent to adult work. The 4-H program conducted in the county is considered to be a very traditional one. Four-H officers are elected at the local level and are responsible for developing and organizing the clubs, along with teacher volunteers.

According to the 1994-95 state membership report for Johnson County, nine hundred sixty-six youth from grades four through twelve participated in 4-H. These 4-H'ers were divided into thirty-nine local clubs from six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. One hundred percent of the youth from grades four through six which total five hundred sixty-four were enrolled in 4-H and participated in monthly 4-H meetings throughout the school year. Two hundred sixty-eight 4-H'ers were enrolled at the middle school (grades 7-8) and one hundred thirty-four 4-H'ers were enrolled at the high school (grades 9-12). Two hundred thirty-five members reported that they lived on farms while seven hundred thirty-one were non-farm youth.

The Johnson County School system is governed by five

board of education members elected by districts and one school superintendent elected at-large every four years during the county election. There are six elementary schools in the county, one middle school and one high school for a total of eight schools. Each school is directed by a principal; however, two of the elementary school principals have teaching assignments. Twenty-five teachers in the elementary school work directly with 4-H age youth. Two of these teachers are assigned in classrooms with students from two grade levels. Extension agents conduct monthly 4-H meetings in these classrooms.

The 4-H program in the middle school has traditionally been conducted through the student council at the school. An extension agent meets once a month with the student council and each representative is responsible for reporting the information to his/her individual classroom. The high school program has been conducted in cooperation with the vocational agriculture and home economics classes.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It has been observed that enrollment in 4-H decreases as students progress through school. Since these students are enrolled in school and are influenced by teachers and school administrators, the perception of these educators about 4-H could impact student enrollment in the program. A study is needed to determine the perception of these educators toward 4-H work. The problem studied was: what is the perception of

public school educators in Johnson County toward the 4-H program?

III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

As indicated by enrollment reports for Johnson County, 4-H membership declines as students move from elementary school to middle school and then to high school. The largest decline in membership occurs when students move from the middle school to the high school. Why does 4-H participation decline as students move from elementary school to middle school and high school? What role does educators' attitudes toward 4-H play in maintaining student involvement in 4-H? If this information can be determined, perhaps extension agents could alter 4-H programs to improve the perception of 4-H by public school educators.

IV. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the study was to survey public school educators and determine their perception of 4-H in Johnson County. The underlying premise is that the perception of 4-H by educators is positively correlated to participation in 4-H. The study will attempt to study the relationship of perceptions about 4-H between educators who participated in 4-H activities as a youth and those who did not participate in 4-H. Also, included in the study is a comparison of the perceptions of 4-H by educators based on whether or not they had ever been the parent of a 4-H member, their years of experience in education, job assignment, and the grade level

taught by the educator. To study these relationships, the following objectives were developed:

1. To identify demographic information for each educator participating in the study.
2. To determine public school educators' perception of 4-H in Johnson County.
3. To identify any differences in attitudes toward 4-H of educators who were former 4-H members and those educators who were not 4-H members.
4. To identify any differences in attitudes of educators who had been a parent of a 4-H member and those who had never been a parent of a 4-H member.
5. To identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the number of years they had been involved in public school education.
6. To identify any differences in attitudes of educators toward 4-H based on job assignment.
7. To identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the grade level that they taught.
8. To identify educators' perceptions of why 4-H participation declines as members move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school.

V. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study examines attitudes of individuals. These attitudes could have resulted from previous experiences which may differ greatly within the target audience. The study is also limited to Johnson County and is influenced by the quality of 4-H programming that has taken place in the county over a period of several years.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. THE 4-H PROGRAM

Four-H is the youth education program of the Agricultural Extension Service. The Agricultural Extension Service was established by the Smith-Lever Act of the United States Congress in 1914. The Agricultural Extension Service is a part of The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, with Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension Program cooperating.

The 4-H program is directed by county extension agents who are University of Tennessee staff. More than 10,000 adult volunteers help conduct the Tennessee 4-H program. Businesses and individuals contribute over one million dollars annually to supply awards, educational trips, and other activities for Tennessee 4-H members (University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service Publication [UT PUB SP249], 1996).

II. PARTICIPATION IN 4-H

Nationwide, about one out of every six youngsters who were eighth graders in 1988 had at some time taken part in 4-H (Steele, 1993, p.4). The 4-H program stated its mission as, "To create supportive environments in which culturally diverse youth and adults can reach their fullest potential (USDA, 1994, p.3)." Commitment to the mission involves support of specific program objectives including helping youth develop leadership capabilities, personal standards and values,

positive self concepts and effective communication skills (Cox and Walton, 1994, p.40).

Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) found that the level of 4-H participation was a significant predictor of leadership life skills development scores among 4-H youth in Texas (Cox and Walton, 1994, p. 40). Participation in 4-H projects and activities provides hands-on experiences for youth to learn by doing. Life skills gained through 4-H involvement can be used by youth throughout their lifetime.

III. PURPOSE OF 4-H

According to "Some Tennessee 4-H Facts" published by the University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service in 1990, "4-H is people - people helping people." Four-H utilizes the project concept to teach life skills. The project may be raising a calf or a garden, caring for a dog, planting trees, baking bread or any of 49 different subjects that fit the individual child's situation and likes. Four-H is more than learning about agriculture and home economics, it is developing skills in communication, management, citizenship, and leadership. It is caring for others and nature with a desire to make this world a better place. Four-H is a family affair. This involvement includes the parent-child relationship and the extended family of community and state. Four-H is a unique blend of government, private business and volunteers working together to broaden the horizons and life skills of Tennessee's young people. Four-H

is fun for both children and adults.

The 4-H youth programs are an important and integral part of the Agricultural Extension Service of The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. The mission of Tennessee 4-H is to provide research-based Extension educational experiences that will stimulate young people to gain knowledge, develop life skills and form positive attitudes to prepare them to become capable, responsible and compassionate adults (UT PUB SP249, 1996).

IV. VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Tennessee 4-H programs are designed to help improve all Tennessee citizens by training parents and other adults to help work with the 4-H youth, and to assist them with their project activities. These adults also share in the development of life skills, leadership, self-esteem and science and technology application skills. County, state, and federal governments cooperate to provide extension agents, who work with sponsors, volunteers, and 4-H members. Four-H is the largest educationally-oriented youth development organization in the free world (UT PUB SP249, 1990).

According to "Some Tennessee 4-H Facts" (UT PUB SP249, 1990), through local volunteer leadership, 4-H members may have an enriching 4-H experience. These volunteers are instrumental in many ways. In general, some tasks they provide are:

- a. Help spread the 4-H story to members, parents and the community

- b. Secure participation in meetings, projects and events by 4-H members
- c. Provide meaningful learning experiences
- d. Help members become responsible individuals and effective members of the group
- e. Serve as a leader or advisor
- f. Keep the public informed about the 4-H program
- g. Give recognition to 4-H'ers
- h. Evaluate the work of individual members and the club
- i. Encourage members with less ability to challenge those with higher ability.

Volunteer adult leaders are often classified into categories by the job they perform. These categories are:

- a. Organization leader: Work with a local club on an ongoing basis. Assist with enrollment, program planning, evaluation and help guide and direct individuals in the group. Work in cooperation with the Extension office and other leaders.
- b. Project leader: Give short-term assistance to members in a specific project area. Teach skills, encourage participation, evaluate projects and encourage record keeping.
- c. Activity leader: Work with a specific 4-H activity, such as local or county achievement program, county fair, judging events, fashion revue or livestock show.

Educators are considered primarily as organization leaders; however, many also function as project leaders and activity leaders by working with small groups of 4-H'ers or individuals.

V. YOUTH AT RISK

Four-H programs target youth at risk. Juvenile Judge Harvey Hyman, Paulding County, Ohio in 1986 stated, "But they (juveniles) needed something. I thought about it, and thought about it, and one night it came to me. I don't ever get 4-H'ers in court!" (Speigel and Safritt, 1992, p.45).

Serious delinquents are maladjusted, both in school and in their home environment. Several general factors appear, time and time again in the literature in the characteristics of delinquents. These factors include poor home adjustment, poor school adjustments, antisocial tendencies, aggression, poor self-control, and low self-esteem. Money should be spent on programs to help keep families at home (Speigel and Safritt, 1992, p.45). Educators need programs to build self-esteem among these youths at risk.

In our complex and highly technological society, school dropouts are likely to encounter a series of costly personal difficulties. They may place undue economic and social burdens upon society through welfare and unemployment assistance, lost revenues, and crime. It has been estimated that each school dropout will cost society 1.2 million dollars throughout his/her lifetime (Valentine, 1990, p.1).

Valentine (1990) also reports that the West Virginia University Cooperative Extension Service, in conjunction with the West Virginia Department of Education, has designed a 4-H curriculum to provide targeted potential school dropouts with the opportunities to:

- a. Improve decision making processes
- b. Learn basic parliamentary procedure and group decision making processes
- c. Learn public speaking skills
- d. Participate in "learn by doing" educational activities
- e. Participate in successful, non-competitive learning experiences
- f. Participate in organized group activities

- g. Develop leadership and life skills
- h. Develop positive relationships with others (p.1)

Classroom teachers reported seeing "some" or "great" improvement in over 60 percent of the participants. The positive things that are happening in the 4-H club are transferring into regular classroom work and attitudes. From observations and written evaluations, the 4-H program had a positive influence on most of the participants in the areas of (1) participation in school and community/church activities, (2) club leadership roles, (3) completion of tasks, (4) pride in accomplishments, (5) respect for authority, (6) self-concept, (7) attitude toward school, (8) working as part of a group, (9) being responsible, (10) communication skills, (11) getting along with peers, (12) being successful in school, (13) being willing to try, (14) following directions, and (15) controlling their own behavior (Valentine, 1990, p.5).

Extension Service faculty are trained professionals who possess listening and critical reflection skills, motivational development skills, and leadership skills. These skills are used to identify personal strengths. The mediation skills are used to bring together persons with different perspectives (Speigel and Safritt, 1992, p.46).

VI. IMPORTANCE OF 4-H IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mr. Dennis Goodman, Extension Program Specialist 4-H, University of Kentucky, states, "Had I known while I was a public school teacher - the wide variety of kinds of valuable

career education materials put out by 4-H, it would have made my teaching much easier for me" (InterAmerica Research Associates [IARA], 1980, p.227). Dr. Hope S. Dougherty, then Acting Assistant Deputy Director, SEA-Ext., 4-H, USDA, Washington, D.C., stated, "The 4-H people I've talked to at the local level sometimes appear to be operating as though Local Education Associations (LEA's) don't either need or want them. We need to get across to both 4-H persons and to LEA persons that its going to be MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL for them to become involved in working together" (IARA, 1980, p.228).

Pepple (1982) studied factors associated with teacher use and effectiveness of the Illinois Rural Core Curriculum in Agriculture. The study found that the core curriculum influenced teachers to use a greater variety of classroom instructional methods. Norris and Briers (1989) reported:

Teachers' perception toward the change process (need for change, manner in which the change was managed, amount of teacher input into the change, etc.) was the single best indicator of teachers' free choices and actual decisions concerning adoption of the change (Mundt, 1992, p.116).

Perritt and Morton (1990) reported that most youngsters in urban and suburban areas receive little exposure to agriculture. They also concluded that one of the growing responsibilities that agricultural educators face in the 1990's is to develop a positive association with agriculture in the public sector (Mundt, 1992, p.229).

Kenneth Hoyt, former Director, Office of Career Education, United States Department of Health, Education, and

Welfare (DHEW), Washington D.C., stated, "Four-H is a giant in midget's clothing among existing community resources for career education. Because of its very nature in providing "hands on" learning experiences for youth, 4-H has always been involved in career education on a non-formal basis. However, in terms of its potential for formal involvement in career education, 4-H has to date, hardly begun to move. Yet, because of its tremendous potential for positive influence in career education, its results have already been striking and dramatic in many parts of the nation. If 4-H ever develops its full potential for the effective delivery of career education, there is no existing community agency that could match its strength or its contributions" (Hoyt, 1978, p.1).

There is no way one can expect to find the same curriculum for 4-H. This curriculum changes from year to year and from locality to locality depending on the expressed needs and interests of those youth it serves (Hoyt, 1978, p.16-17). Hoyt (1978) also says that effective career education through the 4-H effort lies in an infusion, rather than on an "add on" approach (Hoyt, 1978, p.17).

A national move has been expanded to implement programs to improve the agricultural knowledge and attitude of individuals from kindergarten through the adult level. These programs have been primarily delivered through the public school system and can range from merely incorporating agricultural information into the current curriculum to

complete courses in education about agriculture (Mundt, 1992, p.230).

Four-H should develop and maintain a positive working relationship with the local school system. This relationship will benefit both the educators and students. If 4-H fails to establish a good rapport with public school educators, Extension programs in the county will become either non-existent or ineffective.

VII. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Speight (1984/1985) says that affective support by the school community, as expressed by attitudes toward vocational education and the perceived need for vocational education, has been deemed essential in maintaining quality, accessible programs (Martin, 1990, p.140).

Matulis and Osborne in their research document "Attitudes, Perceptions, and Guidance Practices of Illinois Guidance Directors Concerning Vocational Education in Secondary Schools", reported that almost 90 percent of the responding guidance directors agreed that their vocational teachers were as effective in their teaching as academic teachers. Eighty-four percent of the respondents agreed that students enrolled in vocational education were satisfied with these courses. However, only half of the respondents felt that their school's vocational teachers were doing an adequate job of publicizing the benefits of their programs. Furthermore, almost 65 percent of the respondents felt that

vocational and academic teachers did not collaborate to integrate academic subjects into vocational education courses in their high schools. Guidance directors with sons or daughters who have taken high school vocational education courses had (a) more positive attitudes toward vocational education and (b) more positive perceptions of vocational programs in their schools than did guidance directors without children enrolled in these courses (Martin, 1990, p.142).

Rush (1994) says since agricultural education is a local program, school district administrators play an important role in determining what the agricultural education program will emphasize. Burnett and Miller (1983) says the curriculum, although not totally dictated by local school administrators, is greatly affected by their influence. For implementation, improvement, and growth to occur in these programs, the support of the local school administrators becomes extremely important. Throughout the public school system, high school principals are key decision makers in the overall curriculum and programs offered in their high schools (Martin, 1990, p.147). Administrators who participated in agricultural education during high school tended to have a more positive attitude toward agricultural education programs in California than those who did not participate (Martin, 1990, p.150).

If the vocational youth organizations are to stay, or be, an integral part of vocational education, they must receive the same level of support as the instructional program. It is

apparent that the advisors are, for the most part, giving of themselves over and above that expected of other teachers (Spooner, 1974, p.59).

VIII. SUMMARY

Four-H is the primary youth education program of the Agricultural Extension Service of The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture. Four-H utilizes projects to teach life skills in communication, management, citizenship and leadership. Four-H is a family affair which includes the parent-child relationship and the extended family of community and state. Four-H involves government, private business, and volunteers working together to broaden the horizons of young people.

Participation in 4-H has been a significant predictor of leadership life skills. Volunteers have been instrumental in many ways to provide opportunities for 4-H'ers. Educators should be considered as volunteers in the county 4-H program.

It is mutually beneficial for 4-H agents and educators to become involved in working together. If 4-H fails to establish a good rapport with public school educators, extension programs in the county will become less effective.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

I. SAMPLE

Johnson County operates with one school system serving the entire county. The Johnson County School system is composed of county personnel housed in the Central Office in Mountain City, six elementary schools situated throughout the county, one middle school for grades seven and eight, and one high school for grades nine through twelve. The sample for the study was all teachers, principals, guidance counselors, and administrators for grades four through twelve. The study resembles a population study since all educators working with 4-H age youth were included in the study. However, since the study was done only during the 1995-96 school year, the target audience was considered to be a sample of educators in Johnson County over a period of years.

The study included fourteen staff members in the county-wide central office. It also included twenty-nine educators from the elementary schools, twenty-three educators at the middle school and forty-five educators at the high school for a total of 111 educators. These 111 educators represent one hundred percent of the public school educators in Johnson County that work with 4-H age children.

Surveys were hand delivered containing a self-addressed return envelope and a cover letter explaining the nature of the study. The questionnaire was number coded to aid in

follow-up, although confidentiality of the individual responses was assured.

One hundred one of 111 (91 percent) of the target audience returned the survey. The remaining ten educators were contacted by the researcher, as a follow-up, and chose not to be included in the study.

II. IDENTIFICATION AND LEVEL OF VARIABLES

The dependent variable in the study was the perception of public school educators toward 4-H. An instrument was developed by the researcher to measure the attitudes of public school educators about 4-H. The instrument contained 15 items to be measured on a five point Likert-type scale. Each response was intervally scaled numerically on a 1-5 scale. Scores were calculated on the following scale: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. Seven items in the survey were negative statements. The numerical scores were reversed for these statements so that the scale was: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. Two items were removed from the study to improve the internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument. Overall attitude scores toward 4-H could range from 13 to 65 with a midpoint of 39. All scores below 39 indicate a positive attitude toward 4-H and scores above the midpoint indicate a negative attitude toward 4-H. The mean score and standard deviation for all participants were calculated using

the thirteen items in the study. Total scores were used to determine if significant differences existed between educators demographic characteristics and their overall attitude toward 4-H.

To study the attitudes of educators five independent variables were studied to determine their effect on the dependent variable. The independent variables studied were:

1. Educators who were former 4-H members compared with those who were not members of 4-H.
2. Educators who had been a parent of a 4-H member compared with those who had never been a parent of a 4-H member.
3. The number of years that the educator had been involved in public school education.
4. The educators job assignment (teacher, principal, principal/teacher, guidance counselor, administrator).
5. The grade level taught by the educator (4th-6th, 7th-8th, 9th-12th).

III. DESIGN OF STUDY

The design for the study was a static group comparison. The purpose of the study was to investigate differences in perception toward 4-H based on former involvement in 4-H, educators who were parents of 4-H members versus those who were not, number of years involved in public school education, job assignment, and grade level taught. Since the study was an "Ex Post Facto" study, no control of treatment or pretesting was possible. This design is superior to the one-shot case study because it allows the researcher to compare responses from different groups of respondents. This design

is pre-experimental and reduces the common threats to internal validity of history, testing, instrumentation, and regression.

IV. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument for the study was designed by the researcher and no prior data existed as to the reliability or validity of the instrument. The questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher's graduate committee to determine the content validity of the instrument. The internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

V. SCALE OF MEASUREMENT AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

The instrument was designed on a five point Likert-type scale. To analyze the data, each response was intervally scaled numerically on a 1-5 scale.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Release 4.1) on the IBM 3091 mainframe computer at The University of Tennessee Computing Center. Alpha levels were established a priori at .05 to determine any significant differences. To analyze nominally scaled variables, descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used. When comparing two levels of the independent variable the t-ratio was used, but the F-ratio was used when there were more than two levels.

Nominally scaled variables analyzed using frequencies and percentages were:

- (1) Are you a former 4-H member?
- (2) Have you ever been a parent of a 4-H member?

- (3) How long have you been involved in public school education?
- (4) What best describes your position in the school system?
- (5) Which grade level do you teach?

To analyze the respondents overall attitude toward 4-H, descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations were used. The items analyzed using means and standard deviations were:

- (1) Students should participate in 4-H.
- (2) 4-H builds self-esteem.
- (3) 4-H has a positive influence on youth.
- (4) Competition in 4-H is bad.
- (5) 4-H involves the entire family.
- (6) 4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time.
- (7) Teachers should not get involved in 4-H activities.
- (8) 4-H takes up too much instructional time.
- (9) 4-H helps develop life skills.
- (10) Active 4-H members do better in school.
- (11) 4-H is boring.
- (12) 4-H is only for boys and girls that live on a farm.
- (13) 4-H should not meet during regular school hours.
- (14) 4-H members are more likely to continue their education after high school than non 4-H members.
- (15) 4-H plays a significant role in our schools.

After means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the individual items in the study, an overall attitude score was calculated for each respondent who participated in

the study. The reliability analysis was run and the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was .84. The 15 items were reduced to 13 to improve the internal consistency of the scale. Item number four (Competition in 4-H is bad) and item number six (4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time) were removed from the scale. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was improved to .89 with the elimination of these two statements.

Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to determine educators' perception on why 4-H participation declines as students move from elementary school to middle school and high school. The two questions asked educators were:

- (1) Other than competition from other extra-curricular activities, why does 4-H participation decline as students move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school? (Please be specific)
- (2) Why do students choose to participate in other extra-curricular activities rather than 4-H?

Responses to these two questions were analyzed and categorized by the researcher. The categories for each similar response and frequencies were tabulated from the comments made in reference to these questions.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings about the perceptions of 4-H by public school educators in Johnson County. Public school educators in Johnson County was defined as being all teachers with assignments in grades four through twelve, all school principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, and administrative personnel in the central office for the school system. The study was designed to measure the attitudes of public school educators to determine if their perceptions of 4-H were positive or negative and if differing attitudes occurred based on the demographics among the educators.

I. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS IN JOHNSON COUNTY

The first objective in the study was to identify the demographic characteristics of public school educators in Johnson County. Data in Table 1 describe nominally scaled demographic characteristics of the public school educators in Johnson County who participated in the study. Specific questions which pertained to the demographic data were:

1. Are you a former 4-H member?
2. Have you ever been a parent of a 4-H member?
3. How long have you been involved in public school education?
4. What position do you hold in the school system?
5. Which grade level do you teach?

TABLE 1. Nominally Scaled Demographic Characteristics Of Johnson County Public School Educators

Nominally Scaled Variables	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Are you a former 4-H member?		
Yes	61	60.4
No	<u>40</u>	<u>39.6</u>
Total	101	100.0
Have you ever been a parent of a 4-H member?		
Yes	50	49.5
No	<u>51</u>	<u>50.5</u>
Total	101	100.0
How long have you been involved in public school education?		
Less than 5 years	16	15.8
5-10 years	23	22.8
11-15 years	13	12.9
16-20 years	19	18.8
21-25 years	11	10.9
More than 25 years	<u>19</u>	<u>18.8</u>
Total	101	100.0
Which of the following best describes your position in the school system		
Teacher	78	77.2
Principal	9	8.9
Principal/Teacher	2	2.0
Guidance Counselor	2	2.0
Administrator (County)	<u>10</u>	<u>9.9</u>
Total	101	100.0
Which grade level do you teach		
4th-6th	25	30.9
7th-8th	18	22.2
9th-12th	<u>38</u>	<u>46.9</u>
Total	81*	100.0

* 81 of the 101 participants in the study had teaching assignments.

Educators were asked whether or not they were former 4-H members. Among the 101 educators responding in the survey, 61 (60.4 percent) had been a 4-H member while 40 (39.6 percent) had never been a 4-H member.

Educators were asked if they had ever been a parent of a 4-H member. Fifty (49.5 percent) had been a parent of a 4-H member and 51 (50.5 percent) had never had a child in 4-H.

Educators were also asked how long they had been involved in public school education. They were given six choices to respond to this question. A wide range of experience in education was found among the 101 participants in the study. Sixteen (15.8 percent) had less than five years experience, 23 (22.8 percent) had between six and ten years experience, 13 (12.9 percent) had been involved in public school education from eleven to fifteen years, 19 (18.8 percent) between sixteen and twenty years experience, 11 (10.9 percent) had between 21 and 25 years experience, and 19 (18.8 percent) had been involved in public education for more than 25 years.

Each participant in the study was asked to describe his/her position in the school system. The respondents were given five choices to best describe their position in the school system. Among the 101 respondents in the study, 78 (77.2 percent) were teachers, nine (8.9 percent) were principals, two (2.0 percent) had dual responsibilities at their school as both principal and teacher, two (2.0 percent) were guidance counselors, and ten (9.9 percent) were

administrators who worked in the central office of the Johnson County School system.

There were 81 out of the 101 respondents in the study who had teaching assignments. These 81 were asked which grade level they taught. Twenty-five of the 81 (30.9 percent) taught in grades four through six, 18 of 81 (22.2 percent) taught at the middle school in grades seven through eight, and 33 of 81 (46.9 percent) taught in the high school in grades nine through twelve.

II. OVERALL ATTITUDE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS IN JOHNSON COUNTY ABOUT 4-H

The second objective of the study was to determine the public school educators' perception of 4-H in Johnson County. Data in Table 2 show each of the 15 items in the survey along with the mean score and standard deviation for each item.

Eight of the items in the survey were positive statements and were calculated on the following scale: 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = undecided, 4 = disagree, and 5 = strongly disagree. The eight positive statements were:

- (1) Students should participate in 4-H.
- (2) 4-H builds self-esteem.
- (3) 4-H has a positive influence on youth.
- (5) 4-H involves the entire family.
- (9) 4-H helps develop life skills.
- (10) Active 4-H members do better in school.
- (14) 4-H members are more likely to continue their education after high school than non 4-H members.

TABLE 2. Respondents Attitude about 4-H As Indicated By Ratings of Individual Items In The Attitude Scale

Item	$\bar{x}$	s.d.
1. Students should participate in 4-H	1.55	.64
2. 4-H builds self-esteem	1.50	.61
3. 4-H has a positive influence on youth	1.38	.55
4. Competition in 4-H is bad*	4.20	.76
5. 4-H involves the entire family	2.06	.68
6. 4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time*	2.90	1.04
7. Teachers should not get involved in 4-H activities	3.98	.80
8. 4-H takes up too much instructional time	3.96	.87
9. 4-H helps develop life skills	1.57	.57
10. Active 4-H members do better in school	2.10	.73
11. 4-H is boring	4.29	.64
12. 4-H is only for boys and girls who live on a farm	4.45	.56
13. 4-H should not meet during regular school hours	3.85	.97
14. 4-H members are more likely to continue their education after high school than non 4-H members	2.63	.72
15. 4-H plays a significant role in our schools	2.17	.91

* Items removed to improve internal consistency

(15) 4-H plays a significant role in our schools.

Seven items in the survey were negative statements and were calculated on the following scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The seven negative statements were:

- (4) Competition in 4-H is bad.
- (6) 4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time.
- (7) Teachers should not get involved in 4-H activities.
- (8) 4-H takes up too much instructional time.
- (11) 4-H is boring.
- (12) 4-H is only for boys and girls who live on a farm.
- (13) 4-H should not meet during regular school hours.

Item number four (Competition in 4-H is bad) and item number six (4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time) were removed from the scale to improve the internal consistency of the scale. The potential range for the overall attitude scores was 13 to 65 with 13 being the most positive attitude toward 4-H and 65 being the most negative attitude. Thirty-nine was the midpoint on the scale. All scores below the midpoint of 39 indicated a positive attitude toward 4-H and any scores over 39 indicated a negative attitude.

The calculated mean score for all participants in the study was 25.60 with a standard deviation of 5.72. The scores ranged from 15.00 to 46.00. Of those responding, 89 (95.7 percent) had a positive attitude toward 4-H and four (4.3 percent) had a slightly negative attitude toward 4-H. Of

those four having a slightly negative attitude (ie. higher than 39), most were teachers with teaching assignments in either the high school (grades 9-12) or middle school (grades 7-8) with more than 16 years teaching experience. Eight of the 101 respondents had at least one missing response to an item in the study and were therefore removed from the study.

III. DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARD 4-H OF EDUCATORS WHO WERE FORMER 4-H MEMBERS AND THOSE EDUCATORS WHO WERE NOT 4-H MEMBERS

The third objective of the study was to identify any differences in attitudes toward 4-H of educators who were former 4-H members and those educators who were never 4-H members. Data in Table 3 show that there was not a significant difference in attitude toward 4-H based on whether or not the educator had been a former 4-H member. Eight of the 101 respondents did not respond to all of the items in the survey and therefore were removed from the study. Among the 93 respondents used in the analysis, 56 were former 4-H members and 37 had never been involved in 4-H. The respondents who were former 4-H members had a mean score of 25.70 on the overall attitude scale with a standard deviation

TABLE 3. Relationship Between Overall Attitude About 4-H and Whether or Not Respondents Were Former 4-H Members

Former 4-H Member	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	t	p
Yes	56	25.70	6.05	.19	.85
No	37	25.46	5.25		

of 6.05 and the 37 who had not been a 4-H member as a youth had a mean score on the attitude scale of 25.46 with a standard deviation of 5.25 ($t=.19$, $p=.85$). These overall scores on the attitude scale show that among the respondents in the study, both former 4-H members and those who were never 4-H members had a positive attitude toward 4-H.

**IV. DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS WHO HAD BEEN A
PARENT OF A 4-H MEMBER AND THOSE EDUCATORS WHO
HAD NEVER BEEN A PARENT OF A 4-H MEMBER
TOWARD 4-H**

The fourth objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators who had been a parent of a 4-H member and those educators who had never been a parent of a 4-H member. Data in Table 4 indicate that there was not a significant difference in the overall attitude toward 4-H based on whether or not the educator had a child who had been involved in 4-H. Forty-five of the respondents had a child who had been involved in 4-H while 48 had never been the parent of a 4-H member. Those that were parents of 4-H members had a mean score of 24.64 on the overall attitude scale with a standard deviation of 5.88 and the non-parents

TABLE 4. Differences in Attitudes Of Educators Who were Parents of 4-H Members and Those Educators Who had Never Been the Parent of a 4-H Member

Parent of a 4-H Member	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	t	p
Yes	45	24.64	5.88	-1.58	.12
No	48	26.50	5.47		

had a mean score of 26.50 with a standard deviation of 5.47 ($t = -1.58$, $p = .12$).

V. DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS BASED ON THE NUMBER OF YEARS THAT THEY HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION

The fifth objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the number of years that they had been involved in public school education. The participants in the study were asked how long they had been involved in public school education and were categorized into six groups:

- (1) Less than 5 years experience
- (2) 5-10 years experience
- (3) 11-15 years experience
- (4) 16-20 years experience
- (5) 21-25 years experience
- (6) More than 25 years experience

Data in Table 5 indicate that a relatively even distribution of experience exists among public school educators in Johnson County. Among the 93 respondents used in the study, 16 had less than five years experience, 20 had between five and ten years experience, 13 had 11 to 15 years experience, 17 respondents had 16 to 20 years experience, 10 had been in public education from 21 to 25 years and 17 educators had more than 25 years experience. Even though the participants in the study had a wide range of experience levels in education, there was not a significant difference in

TABLE 5. Differences in Attitudes of Educators Based on the Number of Years that They were Involved in Public School Education

Number of Years Involved in Public School Education	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	F	p
Less than 5	16	26.13	3.84	1.60	.17
6-10	20	25.10	4.13		
11-15	13	26.69	4.25		
16-20	17	25.71	8.08		
21-25	10	28.80	8.07		
More than 25	17	22.88	4.76		

the overall attitude toward 4-H ($F=1.60$, $p=.17$). Those educators with less than five years experience had a mean score on the overall attitude scale of 26.13 with a standard deviation of 3.84. The respondents with between six and ten years experience had a mean score of 25.10 and a standard deviation of 4.13. The mean score for educators with 11 to 15 years experience was 26.69 with a standard deviation of 4.25. When the educators experience level was between 16 and 20 years the mean score was 25.71 with a standard deviation of 8.08. The overall attitude of those educators with 21 to 25 years experience had a mean score of 28.80 with a standard deviation of 8.07. The mean score for those with more than 25 years experience was 22.88 with a standard deviation of 4.76.

VI. DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS TOWARD 4-H BASED ON JOB ASSIGNMENT

The sixth objective in the study was to identify the differences in attitudes of educators toward 4-H based on their job assignment. The respondents were asked to identify

their job assignment and were categorized into one of five groups:

- (1) Teacher
- (2) Principal
- (3) Principal/Teacher
- (4) Guidance Counselor
- (5) Administrator

The 101 respondents who returned surveys were divided into these five groups as follows: 78 teachers, nine principals, two principal/teachers, two guidance counselors, and ten administrators. Eight (seven teachers and one administrator) of the participants did not complete all the items on the attitude scale and were therefore deleted from the study. The researcher decided to combine the principals and principal/teachers to form one group and eliminate the two guidance counselors from this part of the study. Data in Table 6 indicate that there were 71 teachers, 11 principals and principal/teachers, and nine administrators for a total of 91 participants in this part of the study. The mean score for overall attitude of teachers toward 4-H was 26.15 with a standard deviation of 5.62. The principals' and principal/teachers' mean score was 24.09 with a standard deviation of 6.82; while the administrators had a mean score of 21.89 and a standard deviation of 2.62.

Based on these data, there is no reason to conclude that a relationship exists between overall attitude and the

TABLE 6. Differences in Attitudes of Educators Toward 4-H Based on Job Assignment

Job Assignment	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	F	p
Teacher	71	26.15	5.62	2.74	.07
Principal/PT*	11	24.09	6.82		
Administrator	9	21.89	2.62		
Total	91				

* Principals and Principal/Teachers

position one holds in the school system ($F=2.74$, $df=2$, 88, $p=.07$). However, it should be noted that the relationship approaches significance. Although not significant enough to conclude that the difference exists in the total population, the tendency in the sample was for administrators to hold the most positive attitudes followed by principals and principal/teachers and teachers, respectively.

VII. DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS BASED ON THE GRADE LEVEL THAT THEY TAUGHT

The seventh objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the grade level that they taught. The respondents were divided into three groups based on grade level taught:

- (1) 4th - 6th grade
- (2) 7th - 8th grade
- (3) 9th - 12th grade

Data in Table 7 indicate that 74 of the participants identified themselves as having teaching assignments in grades four through twelve. Twenty-five taught in elementary school

TABLE 7. Differences in Attitudes of Educators Toward 4-H Based on the Grade Level that they Taught

Grade Level Taught	n	$\bar{x}$	s.d.	F	p
4th-6th	25	24.76	4.49	1.17	.32
7th-8th	14	27.14	5.59		
9th-12th	<u>35</u>	26.66	6.10		
Total	74				

in grades four through six, 14 taught at the middle school in grades seven and eight, and 35 taught at the high school in grades nine through twelve. The overall attitude toward 4-H by educators teaching in grades four through six had a mean score of 24.76 on the attitude scale with a standard deviation of 4.49. The middle school teachers in grades seven and eight had a mean score of 27.14 and a standard deviation of 5.59 while the educators on the high school level in grades nine through twelve had a mean score of 26.66 with a standard deviation of 6.10 ($F=1.17$, $p=.32$). These data indicate that there was no significant difference in attitude toward 4-H based on the grade level taught.

VIII. EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS WHY 4-H PARTICIPATION DECLINES AS MEMBERS MOVE FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ON TO HIGH SCHOOL

The eighth objective in the study was to identify the educators' perceptions on why 4-H participation declines as members move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school. Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to gather information concerning the perceptions of the educators on why 4-H participation declines.

The two questions in the survey were:

- (1) Other than competition from other extra-curricular activities, why does 4-H participation decline as students move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school? (Please be specific)
- (2) Why do students choose to participate in other extra-curricular activities rather than 4-H?

There was a total of 101 surveys returned by the educators. Fifteen of the surveys did not have a response to either of the questions. The remaining 86 surveys were reviewed and responses tabulated by the researcher. These responses were placed into ten categories which described the educators' perception on why 4-H participation declines as students move from the elementary school to the middle school and on to the high school. Data in Table 8 show the categories and frequencies of the responses. The most frequent response to the questions on why 4-H participation declined was that students' interests change as they mature. Twenty-five educators perceived that students' interests were directed more toward dating, social events, cars, and others. They also indicated that students tend to migrate toward teachers they like and become involved in extra-curricular activities sponsored by those teachers.

Twenty-four educators identified "peer pressure" as being a major reason why students choose not to participate in 4-H. An additional 17 participants reported that 4-H is considered "not cool" among teens. In addition, 4-H is perceived by students to just be for farm youth.

TABLE 8. Educators' Perceptions Why 4-H Participation Declines as Students move from Elementary School to Middle School and on to High School

Responses	Number
Interests Change	25
Peer Pressure	24
Lack of 4-H Promotion	23
Competition from other activities	19
4-H is for younger students	19
4-H considered as "not cool"	17
Time Constraints	16
Lack of Parental Support	15
Forced participation in elementary school	8
Too much competition in 4-H	6

Twenty-three educators indicated that the lack of promotion of 4-H in the middle school and high school was responsible for the decline in 4-H participation. Some examples given were:

- (1) 4-H does not meet during school hours.
- (2) Students are not well informed about 4-H.
- (3) Schools don't stress 4-H enough.
- (4) Lack of teacher support for 4-H.

Students think they have outgrown 4-H and they consider 4-H is just for younger children in the elementary schools. These attitudes are responsible for declining participation according to 19 participants in the study. Another 19 educators identified competition from sports, band, and other organized groups in the school contributed to the decline in participation in 4-H.

Time constraints placed on students who have part-time

jobs were listed by 16 of the participants. The lack of parental support as the students move into the upper grades was cited by 15 educators as causing the decline in 4-H participation. Eight of the participants in the study related that some teachers required students to participate in 4-H in elementary school and these students rebelled when they reached middle school and high school where it is no longer mandatory to participate. Six of the educators indicated that there was too much competition in 4-H.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

I. MAJOR FINDINGS

The findings of the study are reported to coincide with the objectives as stated in Chapter I. The following is a summary of the objectives addressed in the study.

The first objective in the study was to identify the demographic characteristics of public school educators in Johnson County. Specific questions included in the survey instrument to identify these characteristics were:

1. Are you a former 4-H member?
2. Have you ever been a parent of a 4-H member?
3. How long have you been involved in public school education?
4. What position do you hold in the school system?
5. Which grade level do you teach?

The study revealed that 60.4 percent of the educators were former 4-H members while 39.6 percent were not former members. Those educators who had been a parent of a 4-H member represented 49.5 percent in the study and 50.5 percent had never been the parent of a 4-H member. The educators involved in the study had a wide range of experience levels in public school education. The study revealed that 15.8 percent of the educators had less than five years experience, 22.8 percent had between five and ten years experience, 12.9 percent had between 11 and 15 years experience, 18.8 percent

had 16 to 20 years experience, 10.9 percent had been in education from 21 to 25 years, and 18.8 percent had more than 25 years experience in public school education.

The majority of educators (77.2 percent) in the study were teachers while 8.9 percent were principals, 2.0 percent had dual responsibilities as principal and teacher, 2.0 percent were guidance counselors, and 9.9 percent were administrators working in the central office of the Johnson County school system. The educators with teaching assignments were divided into groups according to the grade level that they taught. The majority of the teachers (46.9 percent) taught in grades nine through twelve while 30.9 percent had teaching assignments in grades four through six and 22.2 percent taught in the middle school in grades seven through eight.

The second objective in the study was to determine the public school educators' perception of 4-H in Johnson County. To evaluate the perception of 4-H, an instrument was developed to measure the attitudes of the educators toward 4-H. The instrument contained 15 statements with a five point Likert-type scale to measure these attitudes. Seven statements in the study were negative statements and eight were positive statements. A data matrix was developed and t-tests and F ratios were run to analyze the data. Two of the statements were removed from the study to improve the internal consistency and reliability of the study.

The potential range for the overall attitude scores was 13 to 65 with 13 being the most positive attitude toward 4-H and 65 being the most negative attitude. Thirty-nine was the midpoint on the scale. All scores below the midpoint of 39 indicated a favorable attitude toward 4-H and any scores over 39 indicated a non-favorable attitude.

The mean score for all participants in the study was 25.60 with a standard deviation of 5.72. The scores ranged from 15.00 to 46.00. Of those responding, the majority of the participants (95.7 percent) had a positive attitude toward 4-H and 4.3 percent had a slightly negative attitude. Among those educators with a slightly negative attitude (ie. higher than 39), most were teachers with teaching assignments in either high school (grades 9-12) or middle school (grades 7-8) with more than 16 years teaching experience.

The third objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes toward 4-H of educators who were former 4-H members and those educators who were never a 4-H member. There was not a significant difference in the perception of 4-H by educators based on whether or not the educator had been a former 4-H member ($t=.19$, $p=.85$). The mean score for those educators who were former 4-H members was 25.70 with a standard deviation of 6.05 while the educators who had never been a 4-H member had a mean score of 25.46 with a standard deviation of 5.25. These data show that both groups of educators had a positive attitude toward 4-H.

The fourth objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators who had been a parent of a 4-H member and those educators who had never been a parent of a 4-H member. There was not a significant difference in the perception of 4-H by educators based on whether or not they had ever been the parent of a 4-H member ($t=-1.58$, $p=.12$). Although not significant, the educators who had been the parent of a 4-H member had a slightly more positive attitude toward 4-H with a mean score on the attitude scale of 24.64 and a standard deviation of 5.88 while those educators who had never been the parent of a 4-H member had a mean score of 26.50 with a standard deviation of 5.47.

The fifth objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the number of years that they had been involved in public school education. There was not a significant difference in the perception of 4-H based on the experience level of the educator ($F=1.60$, $p=.17$). The mean score for those educators with less than five years experience was 26.13 with a standard deviation of 3.84. The educators with between five and ten years experience had a mean score of 25.10 with a standard deviation of 4.13 while those educators with 11 to 15 years experience had a mean score of 26.69 with a standard deviation of 4.25 and the educators with 16 to 20 years experience had a mean score of 25.71 with a standard deviation of 8.08. Those educators with 21 to 25 years experience had a mean score of

28.80 with a standard deviation of 8.07 and the educators with more than 25 years experience had a mean score of 22.88 with a standard deviation of 4.76.

The sixth objective in the study was to identify the differences in attitudes of educators toward 4-H based on their job assignment. There was no significant difference in the perception of 4-H by educators based on their job assignment ($F=2.74$, $p=.07$). Although the difference that exists in the total population was not statistically significant, the tendency in the sample was for administrators to hold the most positive attitude toward 4-H followed by principals and principal/teachers and teachers, respectively. The mean score for the administrators was 21.89 with a standard deviation of 2.62 while the mean score for principals and principal/teachers was 24.09 with a standard deviation of 6.82 and the teachers had a mean score of 26.15 with a standard deviation of 5.62.

The seventh objective in the study was to identify any differences in attitudes of educators based on the grade level that they taught. There was not a significant difference in the perception of 4-H by educators based on the grade level taught. However, the attitudes were more positive among the teachers in grades four through six than those teachers in the middle school and high school. The mean score for the teachers in grades four through six was 24.76 with a standard deviation of 4.49 while the teachers in grades nine through

twelve had a mean score of 26.66 with a standard deviation of 6.10 followed by teachers in grades seven through eight with a mean score of 27.14 and a standard deviation of 5.59.

The eighth objective in the study was to identify the educators' perceptions on why 4-H participation declines as members move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school. Two open-ended questions were included in the survey to identify the perceptions of the educators as to why 4-H participation declines. The two questions in the survey were:

- (1) Other than competition from other extra-curricular activities, why does 4-H participation decline as students move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school? (Please be specific)
- (2) Why do students choose to participate in other extra-curricular activities rather than 4-H?

The most frequent response to the questions was that students interests change as they move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school. The second most frequent reason given for the decline in participation was "peer pressure", followed by "lack of 4-H promotion" in the middle school and high school, and "competition from other activities". Four-H is perceived to be for younger students and is considered to be "not cool" were also given as possible reasons for the decline in 4-H participation. Other responses included time restraints placed on students in middle and high school along with the lack of parental support. Eight of the participants implied that students were forced to participate

in the elementary school and rebelled in the middle and high school because of this forced participation. Too much competition in 4-H was given by six participants as a reason for the decline in participation.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The overall attitude of the public school educators in Johnson County was positive. Eighty-nine educators had a positive attitude and four educators had a slightly negative attitude toward 4-H. Among the four educators having a slightly negative attitude toward 4-H, three were former 4-H members and one had never been a 4-H member. Two had been the parent of a 4-H member and two had never been the parent of a 4-H member. Three were teachers and one was a principal. Three had between 16 and 20 years experience and one had been involved in public school education between 20 and 25 years. Three educators had job assignments in the high school in grades nine through twelve and one worked in the middle school in grades seven and eight.

Administrators had the most positive attitudes toward 4-H followed by principals and principal/teachers and teachers, respectively. There was no significant difference in the perception of 4-H among the educators based on whether or not they were a former 4-H member, a parent of a 4-H member, or the number of years of experience in public school education.

III. IMPLICATIONS

While the study revealed no significant differences in the perception of 4-H by public school educators in Johnson County, some of the information gathered will aid the researcher in structuring a 4-H program to better serve the clientele in Johnson County. The 4-H program should be restructured in the middle school and high school to better serve the differences in the students' interests from those in the elementary school. Hopefully, this restructuring will relieve some of the peer pressure placed on students who choose to participate in 4-H. The study revealed that the 4-H program should be promoted more in the middle school and high school and consideration should be given to the time restraints placed on these students because of other extra-curricular activities and part-time jobs. Parents should be encouraged to continue their involvement with the students as they progress in the 4-H program.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following are recommendations for future research studies:

- (1) A similar study should be conducted in other counties to determine the attitudes and perceptions of public school educators toward 4-H.
- (2) A similar study should be conducted to determine the attitudes and perceptions toward 4-H by elementary, middle, and high school students.
- (3) A similar study should be conducted to compare the differences in attitudes and perceptions toward 4-H by educators in rural counties and those in urban counties.

- (4) A similar study should be conducted to compare the differences in attitudes and perceptions toward 4-H by students in rural counties and those in urban counties.
- (5) A similar study should be conducted to compare the differences in attitudes and perceptions toward 4-H by educators and students in different states.
- (6) A similar study should be conducted to compare the differences in attitudes and perceptions toward 4-H by educators and students where the 4-H program is delivered through the school system and those where the 4-H program is not a part of the school system (ie. community 4-H clubs).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SURVEY

Part I of this survey contains 15 statements about 4-H. Part II asks you to complete some questions concerning your perceptions of the 4-H program and some demographics. Please respond to each of the statements in a manner which best represents your attitude. There are no right or wrong answers. We want your honest opinion on each item. Please circle the appropriate response.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
U = Undecided
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

Part I

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Students should participate in 4-H. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 2. 4-H builds self-esteem. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 3. 4-H has a positive influence on youth. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 4. Competition in 4-H is bad. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 5. 4-H involves the entire family. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 6. 4-H club meetings allow teachers more planning time. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 7. Teachers should not get involved 4-H activities. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 8. 4-H takes up too much instructional time. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 9. 4-H helps develop life skills. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 10. Active 4-H members do better in school. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 11. 4-H is boring. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 12. 4-H is only for boys and girls who live on a farm. | SA | A | U | D | SD |
| 13. 4-H should not meet during regular school hours. | SA | A | U | D | SD |

14. 4-H members are more likely to continue their education after high school than non 4-H members. SA A U D SD
15. 4-H plays a significant role in our schools. SA A U D SD

Part II

16. Other than competition from other extra-curricular activities, why does 4-H participation decline as students move from elementary school to middle school and on to high school. (Please be specific)
17. Why do students choose to participate in other extra-curricular activities rather than 4-H?
18. Are you a former 4-H member?
- A. Yes B. No
19. Have you ever been a parent of a 4-H member?
- A. Yes B. No
20. How long have you been involved in public school education?
- A. Less than 5 years
B. 5 - 10 years
C. 11 - 15 years
D. 16 - 20 years
E. 20 - 25 years
F. More than 25 years

21. Which of the following best describes your position in the school system:

- A. Teacher
- B. Principal
- C. Principal/Teacher
- D. Guidance Counselor
- E. Administrator (County office personnel)

If you circled A or C for question #21 answer the following question:

22. Which grade level do you teach:

- A. 4th - 6th B. 7th - 8th C. 9th - 12th

APPENDIX B

222 West Main Street
Mountain City, TN 37683
Date

Public School Educator
Address
Mountain City, TN 37683

Dear Public School Educator:

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service is presently conducting a survey to determine public school educators' attitudes toward the 4-H program in Johnson County. Information from the study will assist us in the development of a quality program that meets the needs of educators, as well as the 4-H youth it serves.

Completion of this survey should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes of your time. In order that your responses will be confidential, we are asking that you not put your name or other identifying marks on the survey form. All individual survey forms will be destroyed once responses are tabulated.

Although your participation is strictly voluntary, we hope you will assist us by completing the attached survey and returning it in the enclosed envelope. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at anytime without any penalty. The return of this completed questionnaire will give us permission to use your responses in our study.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ricky L. Thomason
Assistant Extension Agent
Johnson County Extension office

enclosure

VITA

Ricky L. Thomason was born on June 2, 1956 to Joseph B. and Dorothy W. Thomason of Russellville, Tennessee. He attended Morristown-Hamblen East High School, Morristown, Tennessee, where he was a member of the 4-H club and the Future Farmers of America (FFA). He served as State FFA Reporter in 1975-76 and was a recipient of the State and American Farmer Degree.

He attended Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee where he began his studies in agriculture from 1974-76. He transferred to The University of Tennessee, Knoxville during the fall of 1976 and majored in Agriculture Education. He graduated from The University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture Education in December, 1978.

After graduation from The University of Tennessee, he accepted a position as vocational agriculture instructor with the Johnson County School System in Mountain City, Tennessee in January, 1979. He taught Vo-Ag for thirteen and one-half years in Johnson County. In April, 1992, he accepted a position with The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service as an Assistant Extension Agent responsible for the 4-H agricultural program in Johnson County, Tennessee. He enrolled in the Extension Winter School in 1994 and began work toward a Master of Science Degree in Agricultural and Extension Education.