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Motivational Factors Impacting Youth Participation in West Tennessee 4-H

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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Crystal Paige Pipkin entitled "Motivational Factors Impacting Youth Participation in West Tennessee 4-H." I have examined the final electronic 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 Leadership, Education and Communications.

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Motivational Factors Impacting Youth Participation in West
Tennessee 4-H

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

Crystal Paige Pipkin
August 2016

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Abstract

The 4-H Youth Development Program is an organization that is offered through the Cooperative Extension System. 4-H is mandated to provide youth with opportunities for experiential learning in the field of agriculture and home economics. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that motivate high school youth participation in 4-H programs in West Tennessee. The central research question guiding this study was: What motivates high school youth to participate in the 4-H program after 8th grade? The findings of this study can be broken down into three themes (a) Why 4-H members continue participation into high school, (b) Why 4-H members discontinue participation in high school, and (c) 4-H involvement after high school. The following six subthemes were also found: (a) personal relationships and social factors, (b) 4-H prepares students for life, (c) competition and scholarships, (d) negative stigma, (e) not well publicized, and (f) over committed and other activities. Recommendations for practice and future research were made based on the literature and findings.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The 4-H Youth Development Program is “one of the largest educational efforts in the United States” (Bankston & Cano, 1992, p. 23) and is offered through the Cooperative Extension System. Cooperative Extension is mandated to provide community members with opportunities for hands-on learning, enhanced methods of practice, and practical demonstrations in the field of agriculture and home economics (Carter, Harder, & Strong, 2010). Extension fulfills these mandates through 4-H by offering (a) leadership opportunities; (b) service learning projects; (c) competitions at the local, regional, state, and national levels; (d) recognition through awards; and (e) educational trips (Bowman & Butler, 1998). The 4-H program embraces the idea of *learn by doing*, and regardless of the state or Extension program area, Extension prides itself on educating youth through experience (Torock, 2009).

As a result of the opportunities and educational programming by 4-H, youth involved in the program are more likely to earn higher grades in school, attend college, and make positive contributions to their communities (Taylor, 2013). In addition, Brown and Killian (n.d.) stated youth involved in positive development programs, such as 4-H, feel physically and emotionally secure, a sense of belonging and ownership, a heightened degree of self-worth, have engaged in positive relationships with peers and adults, been given opportunities to explore and decide upon their own values, and have developed a sense of direction and hope for their future. Furthermore, a longitudinal study of youth development in 4-H programs found 4-H youth were four times more likely to contribute

to their communities (7th-12th grade); two times more likely to partake in service-learning projects (8th-12th grade); two times more likely to participate in science, engineering, and computer technology programs outside of school (10th-12th grade); and girls enrolled in 4-H were two time (10th grade) and three times (12th grade) more likely to take part in science programs compared to girls that were enrolled in other out-of-school activities (Lerner, Lerner & Colleagues, 2013).

Even with all of the opportunities and positive outcomes associated with 4-H participation, the organization struggles to maintain membership at the high school level (Gartin, Lawrence, Meighan, Wingenbach, & Woloshuk, 1999; University of Tennessee, 2012). This is a reoccurring issue that continues to persist, and has been researched as far back as 1983 (Baney & Jones, 2013; Harder, Lamm, Lamm, Rask, & Rose, 2005). With that in mind, how can 4-H programs offer a variety of leadership and educational opportunities with documented benefits struggle with retaining and recruiting youth past the 8th grade (Gartin et al, 1999; Baney & Jones, 2013; Ferrari & Turner, 2006; University of Tennessee, 2012)? This study will examine this issue.

Statement of the Problem

As early as 1983, 4-H has struggled with enrollment and retention of older youth, notably youth who are enrolled in high school (Gartin et al, 1999; Harder et al., 2005). The low enrollment and retention of high school students in 4-H leaves one speculating what is preventing students from participating and/or persisting in 4-H. Research has shown student motivation is an important factor in educational programming that influences human behavior (Williams & Williams, 2011), and as a result, this study seeks

to understand what motivates high school youth participation in 4-H programs in West Tennessee. Understanding why youth participate in 4-H during the high school years may shed light on motivational factors and barriers to participation. This information may prove to be key in solving the reoccurring issue of youth not continuing 4-H membership into the high school years.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that motivate high school youth participation in 4-H programs in West Tennessee. The central research question guiding this study was: What motivates high school youth to participate in the 4-H program after 8th grade?

Significance and Stakeholders

The participation of high school youth in 4-H is important to the United States Department of Agriculture since the department, through the Cooperative Extension System, seeks to prepare “young people to make a positive impact in their communities and the world” (4-H, 2015, About section). Participation is also significant, because 4-H offers hands-on educational experiences and community involvement that enable youth to build and strengthen important life skills (University of Tennessee, 2012). Participation and success of the 4-H program is not only essential to the program itself, but also to parents, volunteer leaders, and Extension agents (Bowman & Butler, 1998). Parents of youth involved in the 4-H program are interested in their child gaining knowledge and important life skills through their participation in the program (Boleman, Briers, &

Cummings, 2004), and volunteers are dedicating their time, talents, and resources to invest in today's youth. The information gained in this study is important to the University of Tennessee Extension and Tennessee State University Cooperative Extension and their employees, because they are striving to meet the needs of the communities in which they serve. This study is also important to the federal, state, and county governments who fund the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Extension offices. Increased enrollment would be of interest to these groups, because these agencies measure the overall success of a 4-H program largely by the number of youth actively involved or enrolled in the program itself (Gartin et al, 1999). Local businesses that sponsor 4-H events, as well as community clubs and organizations such as Rotary Clubs and Family and Consumer Education Clubs, are interested in the growth and overall effectiveness of the 4-H program, since they make charitable donations to 4-H (Galloway, 2004). Local Board of Educations also work closely with 4-H and, in most cases, allows programs to be offered during school hours as an enrichment program (Diem, 2001). Lastly, the success of 4-H programing is important to the individual as well as the community in which the program is being offered, because students engaged in 4-H programs develop life skills and a desire for life-long learning opportunities (Gartin et al., 1999).

Limitations of the Study

This study was bound by the participants and available resources. Resources limited the number of youth that participated and contextual characteristics influence

transferability. Therefore, generalizations derived from this study should be done with caution as the findings may not be transferable to other regions of Tennessee or states.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made for the purpose of this study:

- Participants involved in this study answered the questions truthfully and thoughtfully.
- Participants involved felt free to contribute because of a safe social environment.
- The researcher did not bias the participants' responses.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for this study:

- 4-H members are youth ages 8-18 who are actively enrolled and participate in 4-H clubs and school programs (National 4-H Council, 2015).
- The Western Region of Tennessee is made up of 31 counties bordered by the Mississippi River to the west and extending past the Tennessee River on the east.
- Motivation is the “processes that can (a) arouse and instigate behavior; (b) give direction and purpose to behavior; (c) continue to allow behavior to persist; and (d) lead to choosing or preferring a particular behavior” (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 12).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Chapter 1 highlighted the overall lack of youth participation in the 4-H program at the high school level (Gartin et al., 1999; Harder et al., 2005). Chapter 1 also provided the study's central research question, defined key terms, and stated assumptions and limitations of the study. This chapter describes the theoretical framework and literature relevant to learner/youth motivation.

Theoretical Framework

Wlodkowski's (1984) theory of motivation and learning served to frame this study. Wlodkowski described three critical periods during learning experiences: (a) *beginning*, (b) *during*, and (c) *ending*. Also, Wlodkowski identified six motivational factors (attitude, needs, stimulation, affect, competence, and reinforcement) that influence learning experiences, and each critical period is linked to two of these motivational factors – attitude and needs (beginning), stimulation and affect (during), competence and reinforcement (ending) (Wlodkowski, 1984). According to Wlodkowski (1984), the motivational factors have varying degrees of influence depending on the learning situation.

The first critical period, the *beginning*, is the time in which the learner enters and starts the process of learning (Wlodkowski, 1984). In the beginning, student motivation can be increased when attitude and needs are adequately planned for by the educator (Wlodkowski, 1984). Wlodkowski (1984) defined attitudes as “the combination of a perception with a judgment that often results in an emotion that influences behavior” (p.

36), and Wlodkowski divided learner attitudes into the following: (a) attitude toward the teacher, (b) attitude toward the subject and learning environment, (c) attitude toward self, and (d) expectancy for success. In regard to needs, Wlodkowski (1984) defined need as “a condition experienced by the individual as a force that leads the person to move in a direction of a goal” (p. 59). Wlodkowski stated needs motivate learning and purported Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which include (a) physiological, (b) safety, (c) love and belonging, (d) esteem, and (e) self-actualization needs, can be used to motivate learners.

The second critical period identified by Wlodkowski (1984) is *during*. During is described as the time frame in which the student is immersed in the main subject matter of the learning experience (Wlodkowski, 1984). Within the during period, two elements of motivation an educator should consider are stimulation and affect (Wlodkowski, 1984). Stimulation is “an optimal change in a person’s perception or experience with her/his environment” (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 83). Stimulation aids students in continuing a learning experience and must “occur to sustain student learning behavior” (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 83). Wlodkowski posited the following can be used to enhance stimulation in a learning environment: (a) introduction and connection of educational activities; (b) variety in content, instructor’s content delivery, and mode in which students receive content; (c) interest and involvement; (d) questions; and (e) disequilibrium or tension between new or different information from prior knowledge and the need for assimilation or accommodation of the new or different information. Wlodkowski defined affect as the emotional experience (feelings, concerns, values, and passions) of the learner or group of learners and divided affect into four subcategories: (a) feelings, (b)

confluency or relationship between feeling of content and relation of content to the learner's life, (c) value clarification, and (d) climate or interrelationship among learners and instructor.

The third critical period is *ending* and refers to the completion process of learning (Wlodkowski, 1984). The two factors that are identified in the ending period are competence and reinforcement (Wlodkowski, 1984). Competence is the value in which the student feels they have gained knowledge and mastery as a result of the learning behavior. Wlodkowski (1984) identified two factors for increasing a students' competence: (a) awareness of progress and mastery of the learning task and (b) responsibility for completion and accomplishments. Reinforcement is the value that is linked to the student's learning experience (Wlodkowski, 1984). Wlodkowski (1984) recognized three subcategories for reinforcement: (a) artificial reinforcement, (b) natural consequences, and (c) grades.

Literature Related to Wlodkowski's Six Motivational Factors

Attitude

A student's attitude toward the educator is the first subcategory for attitude. Montalvo (as cited by Williams & Williams, 2011) and Phipps, Osborne, Dyer & Ball (2008) stated students who like their teachers display more motivational tendencies over students who dislike their teachers. Gartin et al. (1999) also suggested the most important factor, in terms of recruitment and retention of youth in 4-H programs, is the outlook of youth towards the agent or club leaders.

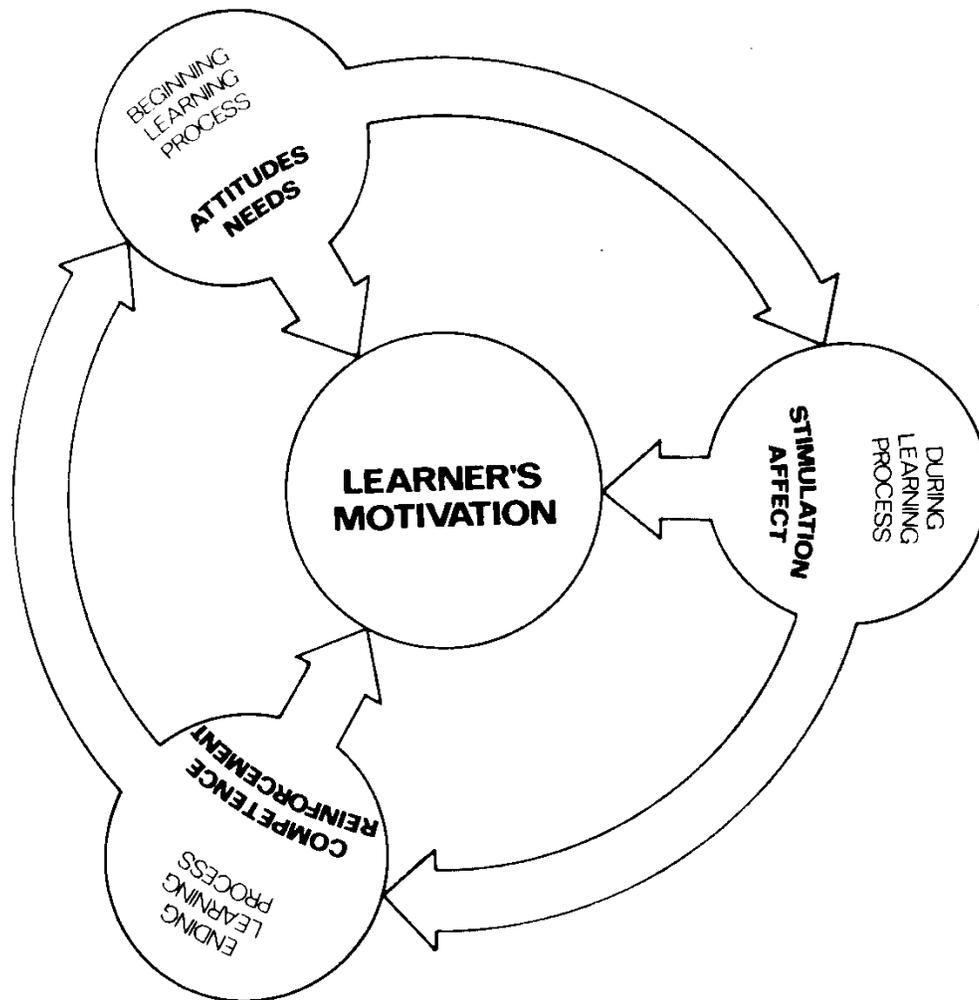


Figure 1. Learner's Motivation Model (Wlodkowski, 1984, p. 21).

Student's attitude toward subject matter and the learning situation are the second and third subcategories for attitude, and are also contributing factors of student motivation. Prior academic success or failure in a certain subject can greatly effect a student's motivation in a learning environment (Williams & Williams, 2011; Wlodkowski, 1984). Also student's perception of what he/she believes to be meaningful context or subject matter can also affect a student's motivation (Williams & Williams, 2011). The learning environment, which is the third subcategory of attitude, can also greatly impact the learning experience. Two key features of motivation that create optimal learning situations are supportive social context or a learning community that encourages learning goals rather than performance goals, and challenging content and activities (Brophy, 1999). A study was done asking 4-H'ers why they joined 4-H. In that study, 70% indicated they joined because their family had participated in 4-H, and 69% of 4-H youth indicated they joined because they enjoyed participating in other 4-H events (Baney, & Jones, 2013). Baney and Jones (2013) also found that youth, from both livestock and non-livestock programs, enrolled and continued to participate in 4-H, because they felt that it was fun and enjoyable. This research suggests a student's preconceived notion towards the subject matter and learning situation have an influence on motivation.

Student's attitude toward self is the fourth subcategory for attitude, and also has an impact on their level of motivation in a learning setting (Wlodkowski, 1984). Students behave in a manner that is directly correlated with how they view themselves (Phipps et al., 2008). In other words, if a student has a positive self-concept then that student will

seek opportunities for success, and the opposite holds true for students with negative self-concept (Phipps et al., 2008). The 4-H program helps to build self-esteem and a positive self-concept through competitive events, activities, and camps (Boleman et al., 2004; Dick, Hedrick, & Homan, 2009; Everhart, Radhakrishna, & Sinasky, 2006).

The final motivational subcategory for attitude is the expectancy for success (Wlodkowski, 1984). A student's expectations for success directly connect with related attributions for success and failure (Phipps et al, 2008). Furthermore, conscientiousness and achievement motivation have a positive correlation with a student's level of success (Williams & Williams, 2011).

Needs

The student's need for physical well-being and the need for personal safety are contributing factors of motivation (Wlodkowski, 1984). If the learning environment is unsafe physically, emotionally or mentally, then the student will be unable to put all of their effort into learning (Williams & Williams, 2011). Youth experiencing positive development and learning situations in 4-H after-school programs will have a sense of physical and emotional safety (Ferrari & Paisley, 2005).

Belongingness and love are the third subcategory for needs (Wlodkowski, 1984). DiBenedetto (as cited by Huebner, 1998) identified an environment of closeness and appreciation as factors contributing to positive self-esteem and a sense of empowerment of teens. Furthermore, youth need caring adults and positive relationships within their learning environment in order for youth to flourish (Ferrari & Paisley, 2005; Ferrari & Turner, 2006). Moreover "relationships are at the heart of teaching since it is an activity

based on communication” (MacGrath, 2011, p. 8). Through inclusivity and development, the 4-H program provides positive youth development opportunities (Hensley, Israel, Jordan, & Place, 2007).

The student’s need for positive self-esteem and self-actualization are the fourth and fifth subcategories for needs (Wlodkowski, 1984). Low self-esteem makes people feel unvalued and unrecognized in the learning environment (Williams & Williams, 2011). Therefore, educators must do as much as possible to increase the student’s satisfaction in order for their attention to turn towards learning (Williams & Williams, 2011). With that being said, participatory activities, such as 4-H Camp, are an important part of the education process that allow youth to get a sense of self-value and explore their interests, values and what they are capable of (Dick et al., 2009).

Stimulation

The introduction and connectedness of the subject matter being taught is the first subcategory for stimulation (Wlodkowski, 1984). When educational planning is directed by meaningful purposes and goals, then the curricula will be valued by the students and deemed worthwhile; therefore being appreciated (Brophy, 1999). In addition, goal oriented curricula should consist of clear and connected objectives that are based around powerful ideas (Brophy, 1999). 4-H competitive events are goal oriented and equip youth with knowledge and skills that will help them thrive in a competitive world (Boleman, et al., 2004; Everhart et al., 2006).

Variety in activities and the learning environment is the second subcategory identified for stimulation (Wlodkowski, 1984). Williams and Williams (2011) stated

variety is “very relevant to student motivation” (p. 11). Furthermore, learning components that encourage physical activity, dramatizations, exhibits, and involvement outside of the classroom can be used to increase the variety in an educational setting (Williams & Williams, 2011). Additionally, incorporating a variety of learning activities in youth development programs will make learning fun and interesting, resulting in increased motivation (Ferrari & Turner, 2006).

The third subcategory for stimulation encompasses student’s interest and involvement in the learning activities (Wlodkowski, 1984). In order for content of a learning environment to be motivational, it must be applicable to not only specialists in the discipline, but to everyday life of the student (Brophy, 1999). Storytelling, humor, examples and questions can be used to engage students by creating common meanings and understandings (Williams & Williams, 2011; Wlodkowski, 1984). Non-formal after school programs offer meaningful activities that build on life skills in a fun and friendly environment (Ferrari & Turner, 2006). Competitive events and camps also provide opportunities for youth to develop life and social skills (Dick et al., 2009).

Questions are the fourth subcategory for stimulation (Wlodkowski, 1984). The question portion of stimulation highlights the importance of comprehension, critical thinking, synthesis, and evaluation questions (Wlodkowski, 1984). Brophy (1999) suggested coursework needed to provide optimally challenging content and learning exercises. While Brophy (1999) suggested coursework needs to be challenging, Williams and Williams (2011) emphasized testing should contain relevance and real-life applications. Content that sparks higher interest and is more personally relevant creates

more motivation within the student (Williams & Williams, 2011). Competency, according to Williams and Williams (2011) is built when assignments challenge student beliefs, actions, and imaginations. Guided discussions are also important because they allow the student to demonstrate their comprehension of coursework as well as use critical thinking to analyze and synthesize information (Williams & Williams, 2011). The 4-H program takes an experiential approach to education (Torock, 2009). Within the experiential learning model used by 4-H programs, the reflection stage occurs at the end of the learning experience and requires critical thinking and application of the knowledge gained (Torock, 2009).

Disequilibrium is the fifth and final subcategory for stimulation (Wlodkowski, 1984). Disequilibrium is the spontaneity and unpredictability of the educator, different and original ideas and teaching styles used, and incorporation of contrasting information (Wlodkowski, 1984). In addition, novel content should be incorporated in order to spark short-term arousal of interest in a student (Williams & Williams, 2011). Novel content creates this reaction because the information is surprising or unusual and causes a discrepancy in the student's mind that interests them until they are able to resolve it (Williams & Williams, 2011). Experiential learning forces youth to apply prior knowledge to the new learning experience and build and make connections (Torock, 2009).

Affect

The first subcategory for affect is feelings (Wlodkowski, 1984). A student's perceptions can become clouded by incidents not only in the classroom, but outside of the

classroom as well (Williams & Williams, 2011). For example, a disagreement with a peer before the beginning of class can have a negative impact on the students feeling of well-being, therefore decreasing motivation (Williams & Williams, 2011). It is important for the educator to be in tune with the students to the point where encouragement or opportunities are available to give support, when necessary (Williams & Williams, 2011). As a valued part of the 4-H organization, youth input is a key component to program success (Hensley et al., 2007). One-on-one interactions between adults and youth are extremely important in developing and maintaining a positive learning climate (Ferrari & Paisley, 2005).

Confluency and value are the second and third subcategories of affect (Wlodkowski, 1984). Confluency encompasses how the learning experience relates to his/her life, while value is relevant to the importance of the information learned by the student (Wlodkowski, 1984). These two subcategories are important because motivation arises when a student perceives content as purposeful or meaningful (Williams & Williams, 2011). However, a student should not merely understand the content, but value it because they recognize the value of it (Brophy, 1999). Youth development organizations need to strive to have programs that matter (Ferrari & Turner, 2006). Staff and volunteers need to emphasize skills gained through learning activities by incorporating reflection into the learning process (Torock, 2009). During the reflection phase, youth can recognize new knowledge gained and how it can be applied to situations outside of the learning environment, therefore making information relevant and valuable (Huebner, 1998; Torock, 2009).

The fourth and final subcategory for affect is climate (Wlodkowski, 1984). A line of open communication between the instructor and the student, as well as, student-student interactions can cause the student to be more engaged in learning (Williams & Williams, 2011). It is important for the educator to be available to offer guidance and support (Huebner, 1998). A learning environment where the educator and students are unified can help to facilitate a positive experience and provide opportunities for youth to grow (Ferrari & Paisley, 2005). Teamwork is encouraged through competitions and teams should celebrate success and accomplishments (Everhart et al., 2006; Hensley et al., 2007).

Competence

Awareness of progress and mastery is the first subcategory for competence (Wlodkowski, 1984). The goal of the educator is to have moderate, yet achievable levels of difficulty in order for the student to experience success in their own understanding (Williams & Williams, 2011). The content needs to be relevant and provide real world connections in order for students to be motivated (Williams & Williams, 2011). Therefore, when a student experiences success in the learning situation, the student becomes more engaged in the learning objectives (Williams & Williams, 2011). In a youth survey by Everhart et al. (2006) youth stated 4-H competitive events allow them to demonstrate skills learned through the program and better prepare for a world full of competition.

The second and final subcategory for competence is responsibility (Wlodkowski, 1984). Class objectives and goals should be effectively communicated before each task, because clarity of knowing what is to be expected can be extremely motivating (Williams & Williams, 2011). At the completion of an assignment or activity, it is beneficial for students to celebrate successes and examine what was learned (Huebner, 1998). By doing this, students recognize the skills mastered during the assignment and how these skills can be applied to situations outside of the classroom (Huebner, 1998). 4-H allows youth to grow in areas of responsibility for actions, becoming self-starters, taking on a work load or assignment through areas of competitions and camping (Boleman et al., 2004; Dick et al., 2009).

Reinforcement

The first subcategory of reinforcement is artificial reinforcement (Wlodkowski, 1984). Artificial reinforcements are used when the subject matter is so difficult that the other five critical factors do not influence student motivation (Wlodkowski, 1984). Some incentives an educator might provide in these situations are help in seeking a job, scholarships, or financial rewards (Williams & Williams, 2011). Even though artificial rewards may stimulate motivation in the immediate setting, it is unlikely to foster a long-term desire to learn (Williams & Williams, 2011).

Natural consequences is the second subcategory for reinforcement (Wlodkowski, 1984). If the educational environment causes a student to be intrinsically motivated to learn then positive natural consequences have occurred (Wlodkowski, 1984). Some

examples of positive natural consequences in learning are experiential learning or self-learning (Williams & Williams, 2011). Experiential learning happens when youth have to apply prior knowledge to the new learning experience, in order to build and make connections (Torock, 2009). Self-learning happens when a student “cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally processes, knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes such that knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Williams & Williams, 2011).

The third and final subcategory for reinforcement is grades (Wlodkowski, 1984). According to Anderman, Anderman and Meece (2006) when youth perceive their learning environment as one that is focused on competitive grading they are more likely to adopt performance oriented goals. Through 4-H competitive events, such as livestock judging, youth have a sense of achievement through their efforts (Baney & Jones, 2013). Baney and Jones (2013) found that the sense of achievement youth receive from their success is a contributing factor of youths continued participation in 4-H.

Chapter 3

Methods

Chapter 1 highlighted the overall lack of youth participation in the 4-H program at the high school level. Chapter 1 also provided the study's central research question, defined key terms, and stated assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 described the theoretical framework and literature relevant to learner/youth motivation. This chapter describes the methodology used to conduct the study.

Researcher Subjectivity Statement

Three researchers were involved in this study: (a) an agricultural leadership, education and communication graduate student, (b) one assistant professor and undergraduate coordinator of agricultural leadership, education and communications, and (c) one professor of agricultural leadership, education and communications. The graduate student researcher holds a bachelor's of science degree in animal science from Middle Tennessee State University and is a former 4-H Extension agent for the University of Tennessee. During her time as a 4-H agent, the graduate student researcher developed hands-on educational programming primarily centered on agriculture and life-skills. The graduate student researcher also hosted county-wide contests, such as public speaking and baking contests, organized service-learning projects for youth in the community, and assisted at regional and state-wide camps, conferences, retreats and judging events. Currently, the graduate student researcher is a marketing representative for a promotional and printing company in West Tennessee. The assistant professor and professor are former school-based agricultural education teachers and have recently published works in

the areas of education, college instruction, leadership, 4-H Youth Development, and STEM. Both have experience with qualitative research methods, including facilitating focus groups, and have published qualitative works.

Collectively, we believe 4-H members construct attitudes and perceptions of 4-H programming that influence their level of involvement. In addition, we believe motivation for participation changes over time and is influenced by multiple factors. These beliefs influenced and provided the basis for the theoretical lens chosen for this study.

Research Design and Sample

This study utilized a basic qualitative research approach (Ary, Jacobs, Sorenson, & Walker, 2014; Dooley, 2007). This research design was selected, because basic qualitative studies “provide rich descriptive accounts targeted to understanding a phenomenon, a process, or a particular point of view from the perspective of those involved” (Ary et al., 2015, p. 484). Basic qualitative study aid in understanding, describing and interpreting the events, processes, and activities of participants (Ary et al., 2014). This study sought to describe factors that motivate high school youth participation in 4-H programs in West Tennessee and was approved by the University of Tennessee’s Institutional Review Board.

The Western Region of Tennessee was chosen due to the proximity to the researcher and funds available for travel. 4-H members, grades ninth through twelfth, from Crockett County, Henry County, Dickson County, and Madison County were invited by their respective agent to participate in a county-wide focus group meeting.

Thus, one focus group was conducted in each county for a total of four focus groups. These counties were selected by the Western Region 4-H Specialist due to their relatively large high school enrollment and 4-H participation in 2013. The Western Region 4-H Specialist reviewed the 2013 enrollment report for these counties in the System for University Planning Evaluation and Reporting (SUPER) to determine the counties with the largest high school enrollees. The Western Region 4-H Specialist also referred to the 2013 County Participation Report that lists the number of youth involved in Regional Events throughout the calendar year. This aligns with our study since we are looking at high school enrollment and participation in the West Tennessee 4-H Program.

Participation, for this study, is measured as youth that have been accepted into the Honor Club and/or All Stars, as well as, youth that are currently attending meetings, going on academic trips with 4-H, judging team members, and those that are working on their portfolio.

There were eight participants from Crockett County, nine from Henry County, five from Dickson County, and six from Madison County; for a total of twenty-eight participants. There were sixteen female participants; one African American female and fifteen Caucasian females. There were twelve male participants; two African American males and ten Caucasian males. There were eight ninth grade participants, eleven tenth grade participants, five eleventh grade participants, and four twelfth grade participants.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data were collected through face-to-face focus groups. All four focus group meetings lasted approximately forty-five minutes. A researcher-developed semi-structured

interview guide was used during the focus groups. The questions for the semi-structured interview guide were developed based on Wlodkowski's (1984) work – *Motivation and Teaching: A Practical Guide*. The following six factors aided in the development of the semi-structured interview guide: (a) attitude, (b) needs, (c) stimulation, (d) affect, (e) competence, and (f) reinforcement (Wlodkowski, 1984). By using a semi-structured interview guide, the moderator is able to modify the questions as the interview progresses and allows the participants in the focus group to express their views and opinions in their own way (Ary et al., 2014). The following open-ended questions comprised the semi-structured interview guide:

1. What do you like about 4-H?
2. What do you dislike about 4-H?
3. Describe the importance or unimportance of 4-H in your life?
4. What are your perceptions of the learning experiences and projects provided by 4-H?
5. Why did you decide to participate in 4-H?
6. Who or what were the major influences for you to join 4-H?
7. What do you feel are factors that motivate high school youth to participate in 4-H?
8. What do you feel are factors that discourage high school youth from participating in 4-H?
9. Why did you continue 4-H after middle school?
10. Why would others continue 4-H after middle school?
11. Why would others not continue 4-H after middle school?
12. Do you plan on continuing with 4-H after high school? (Why or Why not?)

Analyses of Data

Focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each participant was assigned a county letter (A-D) and student number (1, 2, 3 etc.) to protect their identities. Data were analyzed using the thematic analysis method. This method allowed researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This will allow for “rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). The data collected from the focus groups, through transcriptions and recordings, were sorted into themes by words, sentences, phrases, and paragraphs that were taken during the interviews (Dooley 2007). Once there are themes present, the moderator can merge the data together into categories (Dooley 2007). After the themes and categories of the data have been determined, the interpretation of the data can begin (Ary et al., 2014).

Interpretation of the data is about finding meaning in the data and developing it into explanations surrounding the phenomena (Ary et al., 2014). The transferability of the research was enhanced by providing “rich, detailed, thick descriptions of the context so that potential users can make the necessary comparisons and judgments about similarity and hence transferability” (Ary et al., 2014, p.535). The credibility of this research was enhanced using member checks. Member checks were conducted by the researcher asking clarifying questions throughout the focus group meetings. The dependability or trustworthiness of the study was addressed by use of an audit trail (Ary et al., 2014). The audit trail consists of the raw data collected through well-organized notes, recordings, records of event or interviews, and the peer review documents (Ary et

al. 2014, p. 536). Information of the sample population, the process for selecting the sample group, and other descriptive materials were also included. A third-party auditor will then be able to use the audit trail to examine the study “in order to attest to the dependability of procedures employed and to examine whether findings are confirmable” (Ary et al., 2014, p. 537). The audit trail was chosen because it is the “main strategy for demonstrating confirmability” (Ary et al., 2014, p. 538). In addition, two of the researchers analyzed the data independently and compared coding to reach a consensus on the emergent themes.

Chapter 4

Results

Chapter 1 highlighted the overall lack of youth participation in the 4-H program at the high school level. Chapter 1 also provided the study's central research question, defined key terms, and stated assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 described the theoretical framework and literature relevant to learner/youth motivation. Chapter 3 described the methodology used to conduct the study. Additionally, Chapter 3 addressed the research design, procedures, sample, data collection and analysis, and research subjectivity. This chapter presents the findings which have been divided into three themes: (a) why 4-H members continue participation into high school, (b) why 4-H members discontinue their membership at the high school level, and (c) desire to give back.

Why 4-H Members Continue Participation into High School

The theme, why 4-H members continue participation into high school, is divided into three subthemes: (a) personal relationships and social factors; (b) 4-H preparation for life; and (c) competition and scholarships.

Personal Relationships and Social Factors

Participants expressed several people played a role in influencing them to join 4-H. Parents (A4, A5, B5, C1, D7), siblings (B1, D4, D5), friends (A6, B3, B4, C2, D8), mentors/older 4-H members (C1, C3, C6, C7, C8, D5, D1, D3, D6), and county 4-H

agents (A5, C1, C2, C4, C6, C7, D1, D5) were cited as major factors in the initial enrollment for most participants.

Participant B5 stated their mom was an active 4-Her and enrolled them into the county 4-H program. B5 admitted they “realized how many opportunities there were” in 4-H after participating. Another participant, C1, said their dad was in 4-H when he was growing up, and he would share stories with them about his experiences in 4-H.

Other participants had siblings who were active 4-H members. One member stated they “basically followed in [their] sisters’ footsteps. Both of them went through high school 4-H” (D4). Participant D5’s brother “held several positions” in the 4-H clubs he participated in, and “really encouraged” them to get involved in 4-H, because he knew his sibling would enjoy 4-H.

Friends were also factors for youth joining the 4-H program. Participant D8 said after moving to the county, their friends “really encouraged [them] to raise animals through the 4-H program, and that is how we got started”. Others, like participant B4, saw “how much fun” their friends were having, and that was why they joined.

Several participants cited older youth or mentor’s as reasons for, not only joining, but continuing with 4-H. Participant C7 said that when they first started 4-H, they “looked up to the older kids, and saw what they were doing; and they seemed to have a lot of fun, so I thought I would enjoy it, too”. Participant C1 stated seeing the older youth, and the things they did through 4-H “made you strive to want to be like them”. Participant C6 expressed their relationship with their mentor was “a really big reason” why they stayed involved.

County 4-H agents are also credited with youth's motivation to not only join, but to continue to participate in 4-H programming. Participant C1 said they "joined 4-H, and probably decided to participate for as long as I have, because of [4-H agent] and her willingness to serve and get you more motivated....she's always finding new things to keep it interesting and keep us involved". Participant A5 expressed agents "actually care and want you to do well in 4-H and in school. They give you that motivation to go beyond what you think you can do". One participant, A6, even wanted to quit on several occasions, but they "didn't want to let my agents down. I felt obligated, because they saw something in me and I wanted to see that in myself". Participant A6 expressed the opportunities given by agents to raise their expectations "always feels great".

Aside from relationships that motivated initial enrollment, youth expressed having a place to hang out with friends and/or opportunities to meet new people (A4, A6, B1, B3, C1, C2, C7, D4, D3, D4, D6, D7), and volunteering and giving back to the community (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, B3, B4, B5, C2, C6, D1, D6, D7) were also key factors in continued participation for high school youth.

Participants cited something to do outside of the house or school (A4, A5, A6, B1, B5, C8, D3, D4, D5) as a major factor in 4-H enrollment. Participant B1 stated, before joining 4-H, they used to be extremely shy and they spent most of their time at home watching television or playing video games. Participant D3 said they were unable to join sports teams for various reasons, and 4-H "gave me a place where I could meet friends and be able to do stuff outside of school". Participant A6 stated, "Socially, it's one of the

best things that ever happened to me, because I get to meet so many different people from so many different backgrounds”. Participant B3 stated, “

You get to meet so many different people. There is your project where you meet people that you are going to stick with throughout your 4-H career and you just get close to them. By the end of your career you do not want to let them go.

Additionally, 4-H offered service learning projects that gave youth opportunities to serve their community. Participant B3 expressed how much they enjoyed “being able to help people through the service projects”. Participant C6 stated after getting involved with 4-H, they could tell their “life was on a better path; giving back to the world”.

4-H Preparation for Life

The most prominent reason why participants were influenced to continue their enrollment and participation in the 4-H program at the high school level was because of the life skills gained (A4, A6, B3, B4, B5, C1, C2, C3, C6, C7, D1, D2, D9). Participant A6 stated, “You get a lot of real life experiences. You can get life skills that another kid might not have the opportunity to encounter”.

The life skills mentioned by participants were career preparation (A5, B3, B4, C6, C8, D1), leadership (B3, B5, C3, C6, C7, D4, D5, D7, D9), teamwork (A5, B2, B4, B5, C2, C6, C7), social skills (A4, A5, A6, B3, C7, D4), public speaking (A4, B3, B5, C2, C6, D4, D5, D6), responsibility (A4, A6, B3, C1-8, D2, D6), study skills (B3, B5), money management (A6, C1), cooking/baking (A5, B1, B3, B4, C1), design [arts, crafts, sewing, photography] (B1, B3, B4, B5, C1, C8, D7), animal husbandry (B2, B3, B4, B5, C3, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D8, D9), and shooting sports/gun safety (B1, B2, B5).

Participant C6 expressed the importance of the skills they have learned through 4-H and stated they “will be lifelong...I think that I can use those when I go into college and into my professional field”.

The programs and project areas credited for the life skills listed above were: 4-H clubs such as Honor Club and All Stars (A6, B3, B5, C3, C4, C7, D4, D9), retreats such as summer camps, Congress and Round-Up (A4, A5, A6, B1, B3, B4, B5, C2, C3, C6, D1, D4, D5, D7), Public Speaking Contests (A4, B5, D1-9), Consumer Decision Making (A6, C1), Outdoor Meat Cookery (A5), Line and Design (A4, B3, B5, C1, C8, D7), Horse (B2, B4, B5, C3, D6), Livestock (D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, D8, D9), Dog (B3, B5), Forestry (B5), county contests and workshops (B1, B3, B4, C1, C6, C8, D7), and Shooting Sports (B1, B2, B3, B5). Participant D8 commented on the “wide range of different projects and stuff that [youth] can learn different skills from”. Participant A6 noted 4-H “just doesn’t leave stuff on paper, they actually give you hands-on experiences with anything you do. That way there is no doubt at all that you know what you are doing”.

4-H challenges youth (A4, A5, A6, B5, C1, C7, D5, D1, D5), incorporates real-world application and career prep (A4, A5, A6, C1, C2, C6, D1, D5, D6), and exposes youth to learning opportunities they may not have had without the organization (A4, A5, A6, B3, B5, C1, D3, D4, D5) in the programs and/or project areas. Participant A4 stated 4-H is responsible for breaking them out of their comfort zone.

Before I started 4-H I didn't have a lot of things to break me out of my comfort zone. So that helps me do different things that I would not be comfortable doing that will help me later on in life. (A4)

As a result of the skill sets, opportunities, and challenges provided by the 4-H program, several youths felt they were better or a more well-rounded individual (B5, C6, D1). Participant B5 stated, 4-H "made me a better person through all of the different [programs]. I think it is important because it helps shape the youth around us into better people; who are going to be the next great leaders of the United States or even other countries". Similarly, participant D1 stated they felt "like 4-H has a big impact on making youth a better rounded person".

Competition and Scholarships

Competition (A6, B3, B4, B5, C2, C6, D1, D7) within 4-H projects and other contests was a reason why participants enjoyed participating in the 4-H program at the high school level. Participant D7 expressed they are "really competitive", and 4-H gave them another outlet for competition. Participant C6 felt 4-H offered opportunities for youth to be competitive, without putting too much focus on competition.

Lastly, two youth (C1, D1) cited scholarships as reasons for continued participation in the 4-H program. Participant C1 stated 4-H gives youth an opportunity, regardless of background or financial status, to receive scholarships to go to "nice colleges". Participant D1 expressed how cool the places are that youth can go to compete, and as a bonus youth "can also get scholarships".

Why 4-H Members Discontinue Their Membership at the High School Level

The theme, why 4-H members discontinue participation in high school, is divided into three subthemes: (a) negative stigma, (b) not well publicized, and (c) overcommitted and other activities.

Negative Stigma

4-H had a negative stigma; mainly as being “uncool” (B3, B5, C1, C6, D4), or a club that is for “little kids” (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, B3, B5, D1). Participant D3 stated they “know a few people personally that do not do 4-H, because they say it’s not cool”. Participant B3 expressed “one of the main factors” for the decline in participation at the high school level is because 4-H is “automatically associated with elementary school”. Participant D1 spoke about the transition from middle school to high school as being a time to find you “clique”. According to D1, during this time, youth are trying to “find what is cool, to make you popular in high school”, and 4-H is “not always the cool thing to do”. Participant A4 said people think 4-H is uncool, therefore, “some people think I shouldn’t be in it, because it’s not making me look cool”. Participant A4 went on to say that they feel “there are some people who dropout because of that”.

Not Well Publicized

Another reason for the decline of participation after middle school, according to participants, has to do with the fact that 4-H lacks presence in high schools (B5, C2, C8, D5), and the program is not publicized (A6, B3, C2, C6, D1, D5, D7). Participant C8 disliked the fact that 4-H “is not really school related” once youth reach high school.

Participant C2 said youth “aren’t aware of what all you can do in high school”; therefore, youth do not participate. Participant D7 did acknowledge announcements for 4-H events are sometimes posted “on the wall”, but feels that no one takes the time to “look at that”. Participant D1 and D5 agreed with D7, that youth are rushing to class, or simply never paying attention to the walls or announcements. D5 claimed youth “just talk right through [announcements]”, and as a result, D5 did not believe the announcements were effective.

Over Committed and Other Activities

When participants were asked about factors that could deter high school youth participation in 4-H, almost all said there was not enough time due to in-school clubs, sports, or other activities (A1-6, B1-5, C6, C7, C8, D1-D9). Participant A4 stated 4-H is “very time consuming”, and when youth commit, they “commit a lot”. Participant A4 expressed, “half of my life is 4-H”. Participant B3, an athlete and honors student, expressed “it’s very hard to be very active and try to maintain homework with all of the honors classes and soccer”.

4-H Involvement After High School

When participants were asked if they plan on continuing with 4-H after high school most stated that they plan to as members of collegiate 4-H (B3, B5, C7, D1), volunteers (A4, A5, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, C1, C6, C7, D1, D5, D8), or one day as a parent (A6). Participant D8 stated their motivation behind coming back as a volunteer is because of their gratitude for “all of the people that have made it possible” for them. Participant C6 expressed their plans to “move over to the alumni stage and work with collegiate 4-

H". Participant A6 felt their plans after high school would hinder any participation at a collegiate level, but they would "definitely" come back if they were to have kids in the future.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 1 highlighted the overall lack of youth participation in the 4-H program at the high school level. Chapter 1 also provided the study's central research question, defined key terms, and stated assumptions and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 described the theoretical framework and literature relevant to learner/youth motivation. Chapter 3 described the methodology used to conduct the study. Additionally, Chapter 3 addressed the research design, procedures, sample, data collection and analysis, and research subjectivity. Chapter 4 provides the findings from the focus group meetings. In Chapter 4, the findings were divided into three themes: (a) why 4-H members continue participation into high school, (b) why 4-H members discontinue their membership at the high school level, and (c) involvement after high school. Chapter 5 will discuss the conclusions and recommendations from the findings of this study.

The first theme to emerge was why 4-H members continue participation into high school. The emergent motivational factors behind high school aged youth's participation in West Tennessee 4-H programs can be broken down into three subthemes: (a) personal relationships and social factors, (b) preparation for life after high school, and (c) competition and scholarships.

The subtheme of personal relationships and social factors supports Brophy (1999). Brophy (1999) stated social context and learning community can effect a student's motivation. This subtheme is also supported by Baney and Jones (2013) who indicated 4-H youth were likely to join when they have had family who participated in 4-

H. Additionally, Phipps et al. (2008) concluded students who like their teachers will display more motivational tendencies than students who dislike their teachers. Gartin et al. (1999) also suggested 4-H agents and/or club leaders are the most important factor in recruitment and retention of youth. In our study, we also found family members and parents were influencing factors on youth enrollment in West Tennessee 4-H at the high school level. With that in mind, Wlodkowski (1984) suggested students have a need for belongingness and love. Ferrari and Paisley (2005) found youth need positive relationships within their learning environment in order for youth to flourish. In our study, we found friends and mentors influenced enrollment and retention of youth at the high school level in West Tennessee. Several participants stated 4-H gave them a place to hang out with their friends, as well as, provide opportunities for youth to meet new people through club meetings, retreats, camps and other social gatherings. Participants also stated that service learning projects were an outlet they could use to serve and help others. We recommend further research on the role relationships with agents, parents, siblings, friends, and mentors play on retention of high school youth in the West Tennessee 4-H program. We also recommend further research on social settings and their impact on motivation of high school youth. This research could help us understand how students' need for belongingness and love are being met in 4-H and help identify best practices for developing a sense of citizenship among youth.

The second subtheme, 4-H prepares youth for life after high school is related to Williams and Williams (2011). Williams and Williams (2011) found a student's perception of meaningfulness, in relation to context or subject matter, can affect the

student's motivation. Williams and Williams (2011) suggested that learning content needs to be relevant and linked to real life situations. We found youth felt they had gained knowledge and applicable life skills from the projects, retreats, and events they participated in as 4-H members. We also found youth believed they were better prepared for careers and life after high school as a result of participation in 4-H programming. Wlodkowski (1984) professed variety aids in motivation. We recommend further research on which programs, events, and activities are associated with life preparation; and which skills are associated with each learning activity. We also suggest research look at how much variety is needed to sustain motivation. To that end, we found students perceived they were more well-rounded individuals, due to their learning experiences as active members of West Tennessee 4-H programs. Some participants also cited they felt like better members of their community because of the leadership skills and community involvement through participation in 4-H programs.

The third subtheme, competition and scholarships, also supports Williams and Williams (2011). Competitions and scholarships validate a student's self-perception of achievement. To that end, Williams and Williams (2011) have found a student's level of success is positively correlated with conscientiousness and achievement motivation. Phipps et al. (2008) reported student's behavior is a direct correlation of their self-perspective. Dick et al. (2009) concluded 4-H programs help youth build self-esteem through competitions, programs, and retreats, and competitive events and activities are factors of motivation for youth. 4-H competitive events help youth gain skills that will allow them to thrive in a competitive world (Boleman et al., 2004). In our study, we

discovered competition plays a key role in the retention of high school youth in West Tennessee 4-H. Youth expressed 4-H gave them an opportunity to be competitive within their different project areas, while learning valuable life skills. Several youths expressed this was motivating, because they enjoyed competition and were better prepared for life after high school.

Reinforcement through scholarships, the second part of the third subtheme, aligns with Wlodkowski (1984) who suggested educators can use reinforcement as a tool to increase motivation. Williams and Williams (2011) found scholarships could be used by educators as an incentive for motivation, and this is consistent with our findings. West Tennessee Youth felt the opportunities for scholarships were beneficial for youth from households of lower socioeconomic status.

We suggest further investigation into 4-H competitions and scholarship opportunities to determine which programs are the most motivating to students and what aspects of the programs provide the motivation. Also, future research should determine the motivational strength of competitions and scholarships. This information may be helpful in recruiting students into the 4-H program and aid 4-H personnel in designing appealing programming. We also recommend Tennessee 4-H continue to offer programming which incorporates competitions and scholarships.

The second emergent theme was why 4-H members discontinue participation at the high school level. The reasons behind high school aged youth's disinterest or lack of participation in West Tennessee 4-H programs can be broken down into three subthemes: (a) negative stigma, (b) not well publicized, and (c) over commitment to other activities.

The subtheme of negative stigma may be related to the student's prior knowledge of 4-H. Williams and Williams (2011) stated prior knowledge or experiences in a learning situation can greatly effect a student's motivation. Similarly, Wlodkowski (1984) reported a student's attitude toward subject matter and the learning situation is positively correlated to student motivation. The negative stigma was partially a result of youth believing 4-H was for younger kids and that it was no longer the cool thing to do. Participants also noted this stigma came from youths' involvement with 4-H when they were in elementary and junior high. Many felt that high school youth associated 4-H as being a program for poster contests, cookies, and other in school contest; therefore, irrelevant to high schoolers. According to Brophy (1999), educational planning needs to be directed by meaningful purposes and goals, so that curricula will be valued by students and deemed worthwhile. Future research should investigate the appropriateness of high school programming in regard to the needs of high school youth. Future research should also be conducted at the junior high level to discover if current programming is age appropriate. If junior high programming is not age appropriate this may be contributing to the negative stigma. This research will help agents and curricula specialist to develop programming that is age appropriate and is seen as relevant to 4-H members.

The subtheme, not well publicized, was also found to deter 4-H participation in high school. Williams and Williams (2011) stated a line of open communication between student-student and student-instructor can cause youth to be more engaged in the learning environment. Huebner (1998) expressed the educator needs to be available to offer guidance and support. In our research, we found communication and/or publicizing was a

shortcoming of West Tennessee 4-H programs. Many participants expressed there was a decline in participation due to the program no longer being a part of in-school activities, and as a result, the youth received less communication regarding 4-H programming.

Future research should investigate the most effective way of communicating with high school youth (i.e., social media, school announcement, text messaging, etc.).

Additionally, we recommend future research explore models for partnerships between 4-H and high schools and agricultural education programs.

The third subtheme, overcommitted and other activities, was the final reason found for why members discontinue participation in high school. Williams and Williams (2011) stated a student's perception of what he/she believes to be meaningful context or subject matter can also affect the student's motivation. Simply put, youth will find time for programs that are a priority. We suggest further research into what youth look for in extracurricular activities and programming.

The third, and final, theme presented in this research was 4-H involvement after high school. The youth discussed their desire to give back as volunteers. This theme supports Tennessee 4-H (2012), who has suggested that many 4-H volunteers are 4-H alumni and 4-H parents. Our findings also support RSA Animate (2010), who found volunteers today are driven by their desire to be self-directed, have fun, and gain knowledge or skills. Additionally, they are looking to make a difference. Another way that 4-H'ers plan to continue participation after high school is through collegiate 4-H. Our findings support the Tennessee 4-H Foundation (2016) statement that collegiate 4-H'ers priority is to give back to the 4-H program and serve the 4-H'ers in the community

and state. We recommend further research to investigate what motivates West Tennessee 4-H alumni to serve as volunteers and collegiate members.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Consent Form

Informed Consent Form Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Protocol Title: What Factors Motivate High School Youth Participation in West Tennessee 4-H?

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to understanding what motivates high school youth to participate in 4-H programs in West Tennessee.

What you will be asked to do in the study: You will be asked to participate in an audio recorded focus group.

Time required: The focus group will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

Risks: Confidentiality of content revealed in a focus group setting cannot be guaranteed. Others in the focus group will know what was said and by whom. You are asked not to discuss the content of the focus group outside this setting.

Benefits: The information gained can be used to improve 4-H programming in Tennessee.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. The only record of participation is the informed consent. This form will be stored in a locked file cabinet, will be destroyed three years after completion of the study, and only the researchers will have accesses to them. The focus group audio will be destroyed after transcription, and only the researchers will have access to the audio and the transcripts. The transcripts will not contain your name or other identifies. Your name will not be used in any report. Reported data will be aggregated and not linked to you.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. If you choose to participate, you do not have to answer any question that you do not wish to answer.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Christopher Stripling, Assistant Professor, 320 Morgan Hall, 2621 Morgan Circle, Knoxville, TN 37996-4511, 865-974-3344, cstripling@utk.edu; Crystal Pipkin, 4-H Agent Lauderdale County, xxx-xxx-xxxx, ctinsley@utk.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the UT Office of Research (865-974-7400).

Consent: I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02398-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 07/07/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE:

07/06/2016

Appendix B

Parental Consent Form

Parental/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Please read this consent document carefully before you allow your child to participate in this study that involves human research conducted by researchers at the University of Tennessee.

Protocol Title: What Factors Motivate High School Youth Participation in West Tennessee 4-H?

Purpose of the research study: Your child is invited to participate in research that seeks to understand what motivates high school youth to participate in 4-H programs in West Tennessee.

What your child will be asked to do in the study: Your child will be asked to participate in an audio recorded focus group with approximately seven other 4-H members. The researcher will ask your child a series of questions related to factors that motivate youth to participate in 4-H.

Time required: The focus group will take approximately 30-45 minutes.

Risks: Confidentiality of content revealed in a focus group setting cannot be guaranteed. Others in the focus group will know what was said and by whom. Participants will be asked not to discuss the content of the focus group outside this setting.

Benefits: The information gained can be used to improve 4-H programming in Tennessee.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: Your child's identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. The only records of participation are the informed consent and assent. These forms will be stored in a locked file cabinet, will be destroyed three years after completion of the study, and only the researchers will have access to them. The focus group audio will be destroyed after transcription, and only the researchers will have access to the audio and the transcripts. The transcripts will not contain the name or other identifies of your child. Your child's name will not be used in any report. Reported data will be aggregated and not linked to your child.

Voluntary participation: There is no penalty for not participating. Your child will not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer and may withdraw at any time. Additionally, you will be provided with a copy of the informed consent and assent to keep for your records. Even if you agree to allow your child to participate, your child retains the right to choose not to participate.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: Christopher Stripling, Assistant Professor, 320 Morgan Hall, 2621 Morgan Circle, Knoxville, TN 37996-4511, 865-974-3344, cstripling@utk.edu; Crystal Pipkin, 4-H Agent Lauderdale County, xxx-xxx-xxxx, ctinsley@utk.edu.

If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the UT Office of Research (865-974-7400).

Consent: I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02398-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 07/07/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE:

07/06/2016

Appendix C

*Participant Assent Form***Participant Assent**

Hello. Your parents have given their permission for you to participate in a research project, which includes a group discussion related to factors that motivate youth to participate in Tennessee 4-H. You are asked to participate in this discussion with approximately seven other 4-H members from your county. The group discussion will be approximately 30-45 minutes and will be held at your local UT Extension Office. You are not required to answer questions that you do not want to answer.

Participation is voluntary, and if you do not want to participate, that is okay. If you do participate, we ask you not to share what is said during the focus group. Even though we ask all participants not to share what is said in the focus group, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

I have read and understand the above information. I voluntarily agree to participate in the group discussion. Participant's signature _____ Date _____

IRB NUMBER: UTK IRB-15-02398-XP IRB APPROVAL DATE: 07/07/2015 IRB EXPIRATION DATE:

07/06/2016

Appendix D
Approval Letter

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE 
KNOXVILLE
Office of Research & Engagement
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

1514 White Ave.
Knoxville, TN 37919-7629
(865) 924-7629
fax (865) 974-7900

June 24, 2016

Crystal Pipkin,
UTIA - EXT-Lauderdale County - EXT-Lauderdale County

Re: **UTK IRB-15-02398-XP**
Study Title: **What Factors Motivate High School Youth Participation in West Tennessee 4-H?**

Dear Crystal Pipkin:

The UTK Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed your application to continue your previously approved project, referenced above. It has determined that your application is eligible for expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1). The IRB reviewed your renewal application and determined that it does comply with proper consideration for the rights and welfare of human subjects and the regulatory requirements for the protection of human subjects.

Therefore, this letter constitutes approval of your renewal application. Approval of this study will be valid from 06/24/2016 to 07/05/2017.

Any revisions in the approved application must also be submitted to and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. In addition, you are responsible for reporting any unanticipated serious adverse events or other problems involving risks to subject or others in the manner required by the local IRB policy.

Finally, re-approval of your project is required by the IRB in accord with the conditions specified above. You may not continue the research study beyond the time or other limits specified unless you obtain prior written approval of the IRB.

Sincerely,



Colleen P. Gilrane, Ph.D.
Chair

Vita

Crystal Pipkin grew up in Cheatham County, TN; Home of former Lady Vols Head Coach, Pat Head Summitt. Crystal grew up with a love of all things water, basketball and horses. Crystal graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science in August of 2011. In December of 2011, Crystal moved to West Tennessee after accepting the position of 4-H agent with The University of Tennessee Extension in Lauderdale County. Crystal enrolled in the Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications graduate program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in the Fall of 2013. Crystal left Extension in November of 2015, due to her husband's new position as a Soil Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Carroll County, TN. Crystal is working in Jackson, TN as a promotional and printing sales representative and plans to graduate with her Master's Summer of 2016.