

AN EXAMINATION OF LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT BY LOUISIANA 4-H CLUB OFFICERS

Mark G. Tassin, LSU AgCenter
Chadwick C. Higgins, LSU AgCenter
Joe W. Kotrlik, Louisiana State University
Janet E. Fox, LSU AgCenter

Abstract

Louisiana has had a successful 4-H program for more than 100 years. 4-H program leaders and developers know that this success has not occurred simply by repeating the past, but by implementing innovative strategies and adapting to a constantly changing social environment. Louisiana 4-H is dedicated to an ongoing evaluation of life skill development and learning activities to ensure that our youth become positive contributors to society.

During a recent legislative impact audit of the Louisiana 4-H program, it was noted that there was very little data to support the level of impact 4-H programming has on the state's youth. Though it was apparent that substantial effort was being exerted by the state and parish 4-H leaders to impact the positive development of 4-H members, it was difficult to determine the level of this impact. Because of the nature of 4-H, informal and/or authentic assessments have been the cornerstones of evaluation, but innovative strategies have been and are being implemented to strengthen the results of the program's evaluation efforts. One area of particular concern is the life skill development of Louisiana's 4-H youth participants.

Purpose and Objectives

The overall goal of the study was to explore and validate the impact that Officer Training programs have on 4-H club officers. A strong part of the mission of the Louisiana 4-H program is to develop selected life skills of its participants. Though many parishes were and are currently conducting impact assessments of certain 4-H parish-specific programming efforts, there were very few concerted research efforts examining the life skill development of 4-H participants in Louisiana. Because the majority of clubs in the state are based on a club officer design, it was deemed appropriate to examine the club officers and the development of selected life skills associated with 4-H officers. The research project focused on 4-H officers enrolled in 4th to 6th grade because of the lower possibility of outside officer experiences influencing the instruction received by 4-H officers at parish officer training sessions.

1. Describe 4-H Club/Group officers on the following selected demographic characteristics:
 - A. Officer training participation
 - B. Number of years participating in officer training
 - C. Previous 4-H offices held
 - D. Number of years served in 4-H office(s)
 - E. Other club/group offices held
 - F. Number of years served in other club/group office(s)
2. Determine if selected life skills associated with specific 4-H offices increased during the school year.

3. Determined if a relationship existed between selected demographic characteristics and the Life Skill Observation score.

Relevant Literature

Several national and statewide studies have reported the magnitude of the impact 4-H has on the youth of the nation and Louisiana. In 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducted a national study of youth and adult perceptions about the benefits of 4-H youth development programs. The researchers reported significant findings in several areas, including a strong belief that 4-H made young people feel good about themselves, provided a safe environment for academic experimentation, that the program enhanced problem solving and group interaction skills, that it positively impacted decisions to help others in their communities by participating in volunteerism, and developed a sense of empathy within the organization. Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Yee (2000) reported that young adults who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate, vote and be philanthropic.

Astroth and Haynes (2002) found that 4-H youth are more likely to report they succeed in schools, are more involved as leaders in their schools and communities, are looked up to as role models by other youth, and help others in their community. The researchers also reported that 4-H youth were less likely to report they steal, use illegal drugs, ride in a car with someone who has been drinking, smoke cigarettes, vandalize property, or skip school. Their study found 4-H youth feel more socially competent and self-assured than other youth and are more likely to have a positive view of their community and the future.

Several local studies have examined the impact of 4-H on the state's youth. Louisiana 4-H Agents are keenly aware that 4-H youth are more likely to report that they succeed in schools, are more involved as leaders in their schools and communities (Spoto, 2001), are looked up to as role models by other youth, and help others in their community. Guidry (1988) found that 4-H members participated in other clubs and groups at a higher rate than non-members and that 4-H members won more awards in academic and extra-curricular activities. Guidry's findings mirrored a 1987 Texas survey on 4-H participants. In a similar study, Sarver (1997) reported that 4-H members defined a worthy youth organization as one promoting the fulfillment of adolescent development needs, and encouraged involvement from parents, promoted leadership, community service, enthusiasm, honesty, morality, dignity of work, mature adolescent relationships, economic security, family life, health, and independence from their parents. Further, the researcher reported the study participants highly agreed that the Louisiana 4-H youth organization paralleled the same characteristics used to describe a worthy youth organization.

An examination of self-perceived abilities of participants of the Louisiana 4-H Challenge Camp showed that members felt the camp had a positive influence on perceived life skill development at the junior high school level (Fletcher, 1994). Griffin (1995) reported that 4-H Camp was seen as having a high degree of educational value. The researcher reported that nearly 50% of all 4-H educational programs were rated as having a high educational value. Exemplifying the reach of 4-H programs, over 90% of the respondents were aware of the 4-H program in their community (Cannizzaro, 1998). In a study researching why volunteers chose to devote their efforts to 4-H, Boz, Verma, and Richard (2001) reported they did so to altruistically promote the achievement of the youth.

Method

Population and Sample. The population was determined to be fourth, fifth, and sixth grade 4-H club officers in Louisiana. Twenty parishes were randomly selected to participate in the officer life skill study. These parishes submitted the names of the 4-H clubs/groups that fit the frame of fourth, fifth, or sixth grade 4-H officers. From this list, five randomly selected 4-H clubs/groups from each parish were designated as participants in the study. Utilizing this procedure, a potential of 100 officers in the categories of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Reporter, and Committee Chair for service projects, were possible participants in the study. The response rates for the 4-H club offices were as follows: President = 78 (78%), Vice President = 79 (79%), Secretary = 80 (80%), Treasurer = 64 (64%), Reporter = 74 (74%), and Committee Chairman = 21 (21%). The percentages shown are based on a total possible number of 100 for each office. The total response (N) for this study was 396.

Instrumentation. The officer life skill rubric was developed by 4-H youth development professionals, 4-H regional coordinators, 4-H state evaluation and curriculum specialists, and Extension evaluation specialists. Life skill information from *Four Fold Youth Development* (Horton, Hutchinson, Barkman, Machtmes, & Myers, 1999) and *Iowa Targeting Life Skills Model* (Hendricks, 1998) was used as a basis to establish the rubric. Because a youth may demonstrate a wide variety of life skills while acting as a 4-H club officer, a panel of experts determined the essential life skills associated with each 4-H club office. As determined by the panel, the instrument measured four life skills for president; club management, parliamentary procedure, planning and organization, and oral presentation. The vice president life skills measured were oral presentation, educational programming, and organization. Life skills measured for the secretary and treasurer positions were the same, oral report and written report. The committee chair life skills measured were oral report and service learning. Four levels of performance were then assigned to the specific life skills. The lowest level of performance corresponded with poor demonstrations of selected life skills and the highest level corresponded with excellent demonstration of the specific life skills associated with the office.

To minimize the possibility of a biased score and to increase rater reliability, the 4-H youth development professionals received the 4-H Club Officer Score Sheet Rationale for Evaluating Life Skill Development and were trained on how to use the score sheet and rate the life skill level obtained by the officers. 4-H officers were observed demonstrating the selected life skills associated with the office held and received a performance score on the 4-H Club Officer Score Sheet. Training materials based on the 4-H Club Officer Score Sheet were developed for each officer position and supplied to the 4-H youth development professionals in the 20 parishes participating in the study. A Life Skill Training Manual was developed using 4-H officer associated publications of the LSU AgCenter and other national 4-H officer materials. Internal consistency of the scales in the instrument was measured using Cronbach's alpha and the internal consistency coefficients for all scales in the instrument ranged from .70 to .80.

Data Collection. Demographic data concerning the officers were collected at the beginning of the school/club year. The data collected included: information of whether the officer had attended officer training (one training per year) and if so how many times; whether they had held a prior office in 4-H, and if so, how many years; and whether they had held a prior office in another organization, and if so, how many years. The 4-H youth development

professionals from the participating parishes completed the Officer Life Skill Score Sheet at three different times during the course of the 4-H year. They initiated the project by completing the first observation during October or November, the second observation was in either January or February, and the final observation was in April or May.

The observational ratings utilizing the officer life skill rubric were completed by the same rater each of the three times. Completed rubrics along with the demographic information from the 20 participating parishes were forwarded to the state 4-H department.

Data Analysis. Selected life skills were analyzed for each of the officers utilizing paired *t*-tests. The scores on the rubric from the first observation were tested against the scores from the rubric on the third observation to determine if significant differences existed. Additionally, correlations and independent *t*-tests were computed to determine if there were differences in the final observation rating by selected demographic variables. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to determine if there was a difference in the first observation score and the 4-H officers attending officer training.

Findings

Limitations. It should be noted the data analyses incorporated multiple *t*-tests and the authors acknowledge that inflated alpha levels may have occurred. Multiple raters were used to assess the life skills. These raters were all trained uniformly. It is acknowledged that individual biases may have occurred. It is also acknowledged that the leadership abilities of the club leaders vary and may have had an impact on life skill development of individual officers.

Objective One. The first objective described the population in terms of participation in 4-H Officer Training programs at the parish level and of previous and/or current experience of holding offices in 4-H and/or other clubs. Table 1 displays the demographic information related to objective 1 for each office category. The data show a majority of current 4-H officers received officer training (63%), had not held previous 4-H offices (82%), and had not held previous offices in other clubs/groups (95%). A breakdown of the specific offices shows that a higher percentage (67.5%) of presidents participated in officer training compared to the vice presidents (64%), secretaries (63.9%), treasurers (62.3), committee chairs (59.1%), and reporters (57.1%). The 4-H club officer reporting the highest percentage of previous 4-H offices held was president (35.5%) followed by committee chairs (22.7%), vice presidents (20.3%), secretaries (15.5%), treasurers (15%), and reporters (13%). Likewise, those holding the office of president reported the highest percentage (9.3%) for previously holding offices in clubs other than 4-H followed by secretaries (7%), committee chairs (4.5), vice presidents (4.1%), and treasurers (3.3%).

Table two displays the mean number of years associated with the officers' prior experience regarding 4-H Officer Training, previous 4-H offices held and previous non-4-H offices held. As a group, the presidents had more years of experience with 4-H Officer Training ($M=.86$) and treasurers had the least years of experience ($M=.57$). In terms of previous 4-H offices held, presidents had more experience ($M=.45$) and the secretary group had the least experience in holding other 4-H offices ($M=.15$). The secretaries, however, reported more experience in holding offices in non-4-H settings ($M=.10$), whereas reporters demonstrated no prior experience holding non-4-H offices.

Table 1
Officer Experience by Office Held

Officer		Officer training		Previous 4-H Office held		Previous non-4-H Office Held	
		<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
President	Yes	52	67.5	27	35.5	7	9.3
	No	25	32.5	49	64.5	68	90.7
Vice-President	Yes	48	64.0	15	20.3	3	4.1
	No	27	36.0	59	79.7	71	95.9
Secretary	Yes	46	63.9	11	15.5	5	7.0
	No	26	36.1	60	84.5	66	93.0
Treasurer	Yes	38	62.3	9	15.0	2	3.3
	No	23	23.7	51	85.0	58	96.7
Reporter	Yes	40	57.1	9	13.0	0	0.0
	No	30	42.9	60	87.0	69	100.0
Committee Chair	Yes	13	59.1	5	22.7	1	4.5
	No	9	40.9	17	77.3	21	95.5
Totals	Yes	237	63.0	66	18.0	18	5.0
	No	140	37.0	296	82.0	353	95.0

The 4-H presidents reported only 3% had three years of officer training. This is possible for 6th graders in that they could have received officer training in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade. It should be noted that 27 (38%) of the presidents reported they had no officer training experience. Sixty-seven percent (*n*=50) of the presidents reported they had no prior 4-H office experience and 68 (70%) reported no experience of holding non-4-H offices.

Table 2
Years Officer Experience in Officer Training, 4-H Offices, and Non 4-H Offices

	President		Vice-President				Secretary		Treasurer		Reporter		Committee Chair	
	<i>N</i> =75		<i>N</i> =74		<i>N</i> =71		<i>N</i> =60		<i>N</i> =69		<i>N</i> =21			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Years in officer training	.86	.82	.70	.66	.62	.63	.57	.57	.61	.63	.6	.68		
Years in 4-H offices	.45	.74	.21	.51	.14	.39	.18	.45	.17	.48	.32	.65		
Years in non-4-H offices	.09	.33	.07	.34	.10	.38	.03	.18	0.0	0.0	.05	.21		

The 4-H vice presidents reported that 42 (59%) had received at least one year of officer training and 60 (82%) had never held a previous 4-H office. This groups also reported 71 (96%) had never held an office outside of 4-H. The secretary group reported 36 (55%) had received at least one year of officer training, 66 (93%) had never held a previous 4-H office, and that 60 (87%) had never held an office outside of 4-H. Of those reporting to be treasurers, 28 (53%)

received at least one year of officer training, 51 (85%) had never held a previous 4-H office and 58 (97%) had never held an office outside of 4-H. Thirty-five (54%) of the reporters received at least one year of officer training, 60 (87%) had never held a previous 4-H office, and none of the reporters had held offices outside of 4-H. Committee Chairs reported that 10 (50%) received at least one year of officer training, 17 (77%) had never held previous 4-H offices, and 21 (96%) had never held an office outside of 4-H.

Objective Two. The second objective of the study was determine if selected life skills associated with specific 4-H offices increased throughout the school year. Four life skills were measured for the office of president. A paired *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the first and third observations. All four of the life skills for president showed a significant increase from the first observation to the third observation. The life skill which showed the greatest increase from the first observation ($M = 1.75, SD = .74$) to the third observation ($M = 2.89, SD = .89$) was the presidents’ “club management” skills. See Table 3.

The vice presidents were measured on three life skills; oral presentation, educational programming and organizational skills. A *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the first and third observations. All three of the life skills measured showed a significant increase from the first to the third observation. The life skill “oral presentation” had the largest increase from first ($M = 1.75, SD = .70$) to the third ($M = 2.76, SD = .93$) observation. A complete listing of the life skill scores for the vice presidents are found in Table 4.

Table 3

4-H Club/Group Life Skills Observational Measurement for Presidents

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>	ES
Club Management	Obs 1	1.75	.74	-10.89	78	< .001	79	-1.39	Large
	Obs 2	2.89	.89						
Parliamentary Procedure	Obs 1	1.77	.74	-11.67	77	< .001	78	-1.39	Large
	Obs 2	2.86	.83						
Planning & Organization	Obs 1	2.01	.97	-9.86	77	< .001	78	-1.27	Large
	Obs 2	3.12	.77						
Oral Presentation	Obs 1	1.95	.79	-11.35	77	< .001	78	-1.39	Large
	Obs 2	3.06	.81						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Table 4

4-H Club/Group Life Skill Observational Measurement for Vice Presidents

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Presentations	Obs 1	1.75	.70	-9.55	79	< .001	80	-1.25	Large
	Obs 2	2.76	.93						
Educational Programming	Obs 1	1.81	.88	-7.19	78	< .001	79	-.86	Large
	Obs 2	2.62	1.00						
Organization	Obs 1	1.63	.74	-9.84	78	< .001	79	-1.11	Large
	Obs 2	2.59	.98						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

The Secretaries and Treasurers of the 4-H Clubs/Groups were measured on the same two life skills, oral reporting and written reporting. A paired *t*-test was conducted for each of these offices to determine if a difference existed between the first and third observations. Both life skills for the officers reporting to be secretaries and treasurers had a significant increase from the first to the third observations. The life skill “oral reporting” for the secretaries had a mean of 1.66 (*SD* = .69) for the first observation and a mean of 2.88 (*SD* = .86) for the third observation (See Table 5). The life skill “oral reporting” had the largest increase from first (*M* = 1.69, *SD* = .64) to the third (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = .96) observation for the officers that were treasurers (Table 6).

Table 5

4-H Club/Group Life Skill Observational Measurement for Secretaries

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Reporting	Obs 1	1.66	.69	-11.41	79	< .001	80	-1.56	Large
	Obs 2	2.88	.86						
Written Reporting	Obs 1	1.61	.83	-10.20	79	< .001	80	-1.33	Large
	Obs 2	2.83	1.00						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Table 6

4-H Club/Group Life Skill Observational Measurement for Treasurers

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Reporting	Obs 1	1.69	.64	-7.95	63	< .001	64	-1.89	Large
	Obs 2	2.66	.96						
Written Reporting	Obs 1	1.78	.86	-6.48	63	< .001	64	-.81	Large
	Obs 2	2.53	.98						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Reporters were measured on two life skills; oral reporting and 4-H club news. A paired *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the first and third observations on both life skills. The two life skills had a significant increase from the first to the third observations for the officers that were reporters. The highest increase was observed with the life skill “oral reporting” with the first observation mean equaling 1.53 (*SD* = .74) and the third observation mean equaling 2.54 (*SD* = 1.08). See Table 7. Committee Chairmen were measured on two life skills; oral reporting and service learning. A paired *t*-test was conducted to determine if a difference existed between the first and third observations on both life skills. Both life skills had a significant increase from the first to the third observation for the officers that were committee chairman. The life skill “oral reporting” had the largest increase from the first (*M* = 1.76, *SD* = .89) to the third (*M* = 2.86, *SD* = .85) observation (See Table 8).

Table 7

4-H Club/Group Life Skill Observational Measurement for Reporters

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Reporting	Obs 1	1.53	.74	-7.99	73	< .001	74	-1.09	Large
	Obs 2	2.54	1.08						
Club News	Obs 1	1.60	.85	-6.34	74	< .001	75	-.98	Large
	Obs 2	2.60	1.17						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Objective Three. The third objective of the study compared the life skills scores of the officers that attended officer training, youth that were previous officers in 4-H and youth that were previous officers in other clubs, with the officers who did not fit into these demographics. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to determine if there was a difference in the first observation score between the 4-H officers who participated in officer training and those who did not. Table 9 shows that two of the four life skills scores measured were significantly higher for the 4-Hers participating in officer training. The life skill “oral presentation” score was significantly higher (*p* = .012) for those participating in officer training and had a mean of 2.06 (*SD* = .81) whereas, those not participating had a mean of 1.58 (*SD* = .58). To determine if there was a difference in the first observation scores for 4-Hers who had previously been 4-H officers and those who had not been 4-H officers, independent *t*-tests were conducted. The oral presentation life skill score was significantly higher (*p* = .002) for 4-Hers previously holding offices in 4-H. Youth that had previously held offices in 4-H had an oral presentation mean score of 2.22 (*SD* = .75) and those who had not previously held an office in 4-H had a mean score of 1.68 (*SD* = .66). (Table 10)

Table 8

4-H Club/Group Life Skill Observational Measurement for Committee Chairmen

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Reporting	Obs 1	1.76	.89	-5.65	20	< .001	21	-1.26	Large
	Obs 2	2.86	.85						
Service Learning	Obs 1	1.55	.83	-4.70	19	< .001	20	-1.15	Large
	Obs 2	2.60	.99						

Note. Obs = observation. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Table 9

Whether 4-H Club/Group Presidents Participated in Officer Training

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Presentation	Participated	2.06	.81	2.57	73	.012	51	.68	Medium
	No participation	1.58	.58						
Club Management	Participated	1.86	.75	2.03	73	.046	51	.51	Medium
	No participation	1.50	.66						
Parliamentary Procedure	Participated	1.94	.77	1.96	72	.054	50	.51	Medium
	No participation	1.58	.65						
Planning & Organization	Participated	2.10	.81	1.33	72	.187	50	.44	Small
	No participation	1.79	.58						

Note. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Table 10

Whether 4-H Club/Group Presidents Held a Previous 4-H Office

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Presentation	Participated	2.22	.75	3.22	72	.002	27	.76	Medium
	No participation	1.68	.66						
Club Management	Participated	1.96	.71	2.40	72	.019	27	.57	Medium
	No participation	1.57	.65						
Parliamentary Procedure	Participated	2.00	.78	1.94	71	.056	27	.47	Small
	No participation	1.67	.63						
Planning & Organization	Participated	2.18	.88	1.54	71	.128	27	.37	Small
	No participation	1.85	.92						

Note. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Comparisons between the vice presidents that attended officer training and those who did not revealed the youth attending officer training scored higher on all three life skills measured in the first observation. Independent *t*-tests were conducted to compare the scores of the vice presidents that attended officer training with the vice presidents who did not attend officer

training. The life skill “organization” was significantly higher ($P = .001$) for those vice presidents participating in officer training and had a mean score of 1.79 ($SD = .72$), whereas those not participating in officer training had a mean score of 1.27 ($SD = .45$). (See Table 11). To determine if there was a difference in the first observation scores for vice presidents who had previously been 4-H officers and those who had not been 4-H officers, independent t -tests were conducted. The “oral presentation” life skill score was significantly higher ($P = .022$) for vice presidents previously holding offices in 4-H. Youth that had previously held offices in 4-H had an “oral presentation” mean score of 2.00 ($SD = .68$) and those who had not previously held an office in 4-H had a mean score of 1.58 ($SD = .59$). (See Table 12)

Table 11

Whether 4-H Club/Group Vice Presidents Participated in Officer Training

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>	ES
Organization	Participated	1.79	.72	3.32	71	.001	47	.87	Large
	No participation	1.27	.45						
Oral Presentation	Participated	1.83	.72	2.57	72	.012	48	.66	Medium
	No participation	1.42	.50						
Educational Programming	Participated	1.96	.83	1.93	71	.058	47	.48	Small
	No participation	1.58	.76						

Note. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

Table 12

Whether 4-H Club/Group Vice Presidents Held a Previous 4-H Office

Life Skill		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>	ES
Oral Presentation	Participated	2.00	.68	2.34	71	.022	14	.66	Medium
	No participation	1.58	.59						
Organization	Participated	1.92	.64	2.33	72	.023	13	.69	Medium
	No participation	1.49	.60						
Educational Programming	Participated	2.00	1.00	1.06	71	.294	13	.29	Small
	No participation	1.75	.73						

Note. ES = Effect Size. Effect Sizes interpreted according to Cohen (1988).

On the first observation, secretaries participating ($N=45$) in officer training received a significantly ($P=.037$) higher score on the rubric section associated with “oral reports” ($M=1.71$) than non-participants ($M=1.40$). The score sheet requested the evaluator to judge the secretary’s “oral report” based on eye contact, proper grammar, clarity and tonality. On the first observation, treasurers participating in officer training ($N=33$) received a significantly ($P=.012$) higher score on the score sheet section associated with “oral reports” ($M=1.78$) than non-participants ($N= 23$, $M=1.39$). The score sheet requested the evaluator to judge the treasurer’s “oral report” based on eye contact, proper grammar, clarity and tonality. On the first observation, club reporters participating in officer training ($N=33$) received a significantly ($P=.037$) higher score on the score sheet section associated with “oral reports” ($M=1.71$) than non-participants

($M=1.40$). The rubric requested the evaluator to judge the secretary’s “oral report” based on eye contact, proper grammar, clarity and tonality.

Objective three also explored if relationships existed between selected demographic variables (years of officer training and years of holding previous 4-H offices) and specific 4-H officer skills. Table 13 displays the relationships between the demographic variables and 4-H Presidents’ “club management” skills, “parliament procedural” skills, “planning and organizing” skills, and “oral presentation” skills. The correlation coefficient for years of officer training and “club management” was .29, which suggests as years of officer training increased, so did the level of “club management”. Likewise, the correlation coefficient for years of holding other 4-H offices was .25, which suggests holding other 4-H offices did increase the level of “club management” at the time of the first evaluation. The correlation coefficient for years of officer training and “parliamentary procedure” was .308, suggesting as years of officer training increased, so did the level of employing “parliamentary procedure” during club meetings.

Table 13

Relationships Between Life Skills of Presidents and Selected Demographics

Demographic Variable	<i>r</i>	Interpretation	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Club Management				
Years of officer training	.29	Low	.007	68
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.25	Low	.019	73
Parliamentary Procedure				
Years of officer training	.308	Moderate	.005	67
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.161	Negligible	.140	72
Planning and Organization				
Years of officer training	.186	Negligible	.086	67
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.142	Negligible	.186	72
Oral Presentation				
Years of officer training	.442	Moderate	< .001	68
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.311	Moderate	.004	73

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

The relationships between the demographic variables and 4-H vice presidents’ “oral presentation” skills, “educational programming” skills, and “organization” skills are displayed in Table 14. The correlation coefficient for years of officer training and “oral presentation” skills was .360, suggesting that as number of years a vice president participated in officer training their “oral presentation” skill level increased. Likewise, the correlation coefficient for other 4-H offices held and “oral presentation” skills was .267, suggesting that as the number of other 4-H offices held increased, so did the level of “oral presentation” skills. The correlation coefficient for years of officer training and vice president “organizational” skills was .355, suggesting that as the number of years of officer training increased, so did the officers’ “organizational” skills. Likewise, the correlation coefficient for other 4-H offices held and vice president “organization”

skills was .274, suggesting that as the number of other 4-H offices increased, so did the officers' "organizational" skills.

The relationships between the demographic variables and 4-H secretary "oral report" and "written report" skills at the time of the first observation are displayed in Table 15. The correlation coefficient for years of participating in officer training and secretary's "oral reporting" skills was .335, suggesting that as the number of years the secretaries participated in officer training increased, their "oral reporting" skill level also increased. The correlation coefficient for years of participating in officer training and secretary's "written report" skills was .285, suggesting that as the number of years the secretaries participated in officer training, their "written report" skill level also increased.

Table 14

Relationships Between Life Skills Of Vice Presidents And Selected Demographics

Demographic Variable	<i>r</i>	Interpretation	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Oral Presentation				
Years of officer training	.360	Moderate	.001	69
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.267	Low	.019	72
Educational Programming				
Years of officer training	.204	Negligible	.069	68
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.115	Negligible	.303	71
Organization				
Years of officer training	.355	Moderate	.002	68
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.274	Low	.017	71

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

Table 15

Relationships Between Life Skills of Secretaries and Selected Demographics

Demographic Variables	<i>r</i>	Interpretation	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Oral Report				
Years of officer training	.335	Moderate	.005	64
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.156	Negligible	.193	67
Written Report				
Years of officer training	.285	Low	.015	64
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.070	Negligible	.552	67

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

The relationships between the demographic variables and 4-H treasurers' "oral reporting" and "written" report skills at the time of the first observation are displayed in Table 16. The correlation coefficient for years of participating in officer training and treasurer "oral reporting" skills was .442, suggesting that as the number of years the treasurers participated in officer training increased, their "oral reporting" skill level also increased.

The relationships between the demographic variables and 4-H reporters' "oral reporting" skills and "written report" skills at the time of the first observation are displayed in Table 17. The correlation coefficient for years of participating in officer training and reporter "oral reporting" skills was .225, suggesting that as the number of years reporters participated in officer training increased, their "oral reporting" skill level also increased.

Table 16

Relationships Between Life Skills of Treasurers and Selected Demographics

Demographic Variables	<i>r</i>	Interpretation	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Oral Report				
Years of officer training	.442	Moderate	.002	50
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.135	Negligible	.301	56
Written Report				
Years of officer training	.181	Negligible	.176	50
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.088	Negligible	.489	56

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

Table 17

Relationships Between Life Skills of Reporters and Selected Demographics

Demographic Variables	<i>r</i>	Interpretation	<i>P</i>	<i>N</i>
Oral Report				
Years of officer training	.255	Low	.037	61
Years of holding other 4-H offices	.131	Negligible	.282	64
Written Report				
Years of officer training	.101	Negligible	.394	62
Years of holding other 4-H offices	-.121	Negligible	.304	65

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

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions. A majority of 4-H officers received at least one officer training, had not held previous 4-H offices, and had not held previous offices in other clubs/groups. As a group, the 4-H officers had less than one year of former experience as an officer. This data supports the researchers' initial design to target a population with limited officer experience.

All of the life skills measured significantly increased from the first observation to the third observation for the 4-H officers. Although not all of the officers had participated in some type of officer training or had experience as an officer, the life skills required to perform their job as a 4-H officer increased when measured as an entire group. However, those officers that attended officer training scored higher when observed in the first observation (President - Oral Presentation and Club Management; Vice President - Oral Presentation and Organization; Secretary – Oral Reports; Treasurer – Oral Report; Club reporter – Oral Reports) on several of the life skills measured for President and Vice President. Additionally, those officers that held previous offices in 4-H tended to score significantly higher (President – Oral Presentation and Club Management; Vice President - Oral Presentation and Organization) on several life skills measured as compared to those who did not previously hold 4-H offices. Therefore, it can be concluded the life skills associated with the 4-H Offices increased because of the training received. A vast majority of the officers reported they had never held offices outside of 4-H. It is apparent that 4-H offers 4th-6th graders a unique opportunity to get involved in a club and to pursue an office in that club.

Years of officer training and years of holding other 4-H offices was statistically and practically related to the selected life skills of the officers in half of the correlational analyses. The presidents displayed significant correlations between years of officer training and Club Management, Parliamentary Procedure and Oral Presentation. There were also significant correlations for the Presidents between years of holding other 4-H offices and Club management and Oral Presentation. The vice presidents displayed significant correlations between years of officer training and Oral Presentation and Organization. There were also significant correlations for the vice presidents between years of holding other 4-H offices Oral Presentation and Organization. The secretaries displayed significant correlations between years of officer training Oral Report and Written Report. The treasures displayed significant correlations between years of officer training and Oral Report. . The club reporters displayed significant correlations between years of officer training and Oral Report. It should be noted that the relationships were not identical for each officer or life skill with the exception of oral presentation, for which a significant and practical relationship existed for all officers.

Recommendations. Due to the findings, the researchers would highly recommend all 4-H officers receive some type of officer training prior to officially serving as a 4-H officer. Officers who received training performed at a higher level than those who did not receive training. Parish and state 4-H leaders should emphasize the importance of this training to all officers and work to ensure that all officers participate.

The researchers recommend agents or volunteers using a rubric to chart life skill growth of officers allow for time to meet with the individual officers to discuss areas of concern or areas of strength regarding their performance. Similar research is needed for older 4-H officers, however

limitations such as holding offices in other groups and prior experiences in 4-H may be difficult to control. Additional research is suggested, such as a regression procedure that may determine if there are factors that explain positive life skill development of 4-H officers. Also, the researchers suggest replication so that analyses can become longitudinal. This was an exploratory study that can hopefully serve as a model for other life skill development research. As the body of research expands regarding life skill development, so too will the effectiveness of youth programming.

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