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EXPLORATION OF ALUMNI PERCEPTIONS REGARDING CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF THE
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Is approved by the final examining committee:

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EXPLORATION OF ALUMNI PERCEPTIONS REGARDING

CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF THE INDIANA 4-H PROGRAM

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

Alli Elizabeth Lee

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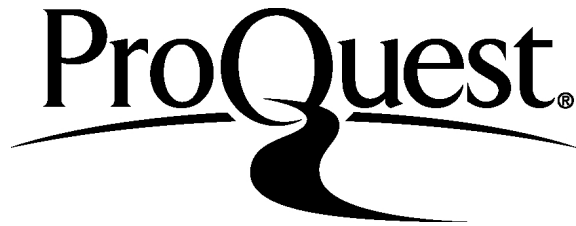
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ABSTRACT

Lee, Alli E. M.S., Purdue University, May 2016. Exploration of Alumni Perceptions Regarding Career Development and Impact of the Indiana 4-H Program. Major Professor: Dr. B.Allen Talbert.

The 4-H program is the largest youth development program in the United States, involving more than six million participants. Operating through Purdue Extension, Indiana 4-H strives to provide educational opportunities for youth to develop life skills and qualities that may positively influence their community and world. This qualitative case study was a response to the absence of updated research and evaluation of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program. Using an embedded design and semi-structured interviews, the study sought to explore the potential relationship between 4-H experiences and the career development and decisions of six Indiana 4-H alumni from the class of 2005. The study revealed a list of skills perceived as necessary in the workforce and the value of experiences and task approach skills in career development. Regarding the Indiana 4-H Program, participants perceived 4-H as an opportunity to develop life skills, resulting in a positive perception of the Indiana 4-H Program overall. Practical recommendations for Indiana 4-H include exploring specific audiences, increase marketing or communication of additional 4-H involvement opportunities, additional

emphasis on health-related life skill development, and developing an Indiana 4-H alumni network. Implications for this study include similar research be conducted using a longitudinal or mixed methods design, with the goal of reaching all stages of human development as well as new audiences within the 4-H Youth Development Program.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 established the Land Grant University System, providing the opportunity for everyone to access an affordable higher education (Rasmussen, 1989). The acts provided public land and federal funds for the establishment of a college or university in each state specializing in agriculture and the mechanical arts. Further legislative acts established a mission for these land-grant universities to act as an institution for education, research, and extension. Specifically, the Hatch Act of 1887 (National Research Council, 1995) required the function of conducting original research for the universities and generated funding for a system of state agricultural experiment stations. The 1914 Smith-Lever Act initiated the addition of extension or the circulation of knowledge generated by the university to the public and specifically farmers. The Cooperative Extension System was intended to be a partnership between the federal government (the United States Department of Agriculture) and the states through the land grant system and county governments. This partnership is included within the organization's name, identifying it as the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) (National Research Council, 1995).

Of the early contributions of the Cooperative Extension Service, the involvement of youth as an indirect way to educate their elders remains key to this research.

What is known today as the 4-H Youth Development Program began as a seed corn growing demonstration, then developed into organized boys and girls clubs with expanding educational interests. Rasmussen (1989) described these clubs as "significant in the development of Cooperative Extension" (p. 34) as they proved when working together, multiple organizations could accomplish extensive goals. Statements such as this distinguish cooperation as a prominent attribute in the work of the Cooperative Extension System.

Smith and Kirkpatrick (1990) referenced the State of Indiana taking advantage of the 1862 Morrill Act after a Lafayette businessman named John Purdue, and other supporters, offered $150,000 and 100 acres of land for the establishment of Indiana's Land Grant College. Purdue University was the name given to the institution in honor of its major sponsor. Purdue responded to federal legislation through the establishment of the Indiana Agricultural Experiment Station in 1887 and included Agricultural Extension in 1905. In 1911, the Department of Agricultural Extension was created, allowing the program to be managed independently. In recognition of its importance, the Indiana State Legislature approved the Clore Bill in 1912, which provided $30,000 annually for Extension and authorized its operation through the Department of Agricultural Extension. During this time, multiple boys and girls clubs developed in communities across the state, with the earliest records referring to a meeting held in Hamilton County in April of 1904 (Smith & Kirkpartrick, 1990).

Today, 4-H is the largest youth development program in the United States, involving more than six million youth participants throughout the nation (*4-H Youth Development & Mentoring Programs,* 2015). The Division of Youth & 4-H within the

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) houses 4-H National Headquarters and serves as the program's government partner through the USDA. National legislation designates the Division of Youth & 4-H responsible for the protection and management of the 4-H name and emblem, which remains a well-known and valued federal mark. NIFA provides federal funds to support 4-H programming to address the issues or problems facing today's youth (*4-H,* 2015). The program's non-profit partner, the National 4-H Council, was established in 1976 and continues to support the program and operate the National 4-H Youth Conference Center today in its headquarters of Chevy Chase, Maryland (National Research Council, 1995). In order to "provide meaningful opportunities for youth and adults to work together to create sustainable community change" (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011c) within the 4-H Mission, educational programming surrounds three content areas, called "Mission Mandates": citizenship, healthy living, and science. The program promotes Positive Youth Development (PYD), a "framework that highlights the things youth need to be successful" that "focuses on strengths rather than limitations" (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011a). Research has shown the 4-H Youth Development Program makes a positive impact on its participants (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987a; 1987b; Lerner et al., 2005; McKinley, 1999; Merten, Locke, Williams, Carter, & Lehman, 2014; Radhakrishna & Sinasky, 2005).

The Purdue Extension program remains at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, continuing in its mission to "deliver practical, research-based information that transforms lives and livelihoods" (*What is Purdue Extension*, 2015, para.7). The organization continues to provide information within its four program areas: Agriculture

and Natural Resources, Community Development, Health and Human Sciences, and 4-H
Youth Development.

The Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program's mission is "to provide real-life
educational opportunities that develop young people who positively influence their
community and world" (*About 4-H,* 2015, para. 2) with the vision of being "the premier,
community-based program empowering young people to reach their full potential"
(*About 4-H,* 2015, para. 3). The Indiana 4-H Program offers a wide variety of ways for
any youth to be involved with 4-H. The club remains a common means of participation,
giving youth the opportunity to lead, serve, and learn alongside their peers and the
support of adult volunteers. Youth can learn even more by enrolling in 4-H subject matter
areas, often called "projects," and by participating in the county fair. They can also
participate in 4-H workshops, camps, or after-school programs. Indiana 4-H offers
multiple initiatives associated with the 4-H Mission Mandates and other special interests
including 4-H military partnerships, International Exchange programs, and participation
in National Youth Science Day (*Types of involvement,* 2015). In 2015, the state program
included 130,713 youth participants with the assistance of 12,772 adult volunteers
(*Indiana 4-H Youth Development 2015 ES-237 Federal Report*, S. McKinley, personal
communication, February 26, 2016).

<center>1.2 Purpose and Research Question</center>

This study was a response to the absence of updated research and evaluation of
the Indiana 4-H Program. It was also designed to explore the possible relationship
between 4-H experiences and the career development and decisions of its past members.
The following research question was answered through qualitative methods in this study.

- How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experiences after completing their participation in the 4-H program?

1.3 Justification of the Study

Several studies (Anderson, Bruce, & Mouton, 2010; Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003; Grégoire, 2004; McKinley, 1999) have demonstrated the impact of 4-H on the life skill development of 4-H members. However, there is a need to explore the perceived impact of 4-H on career development of its members. This study has the potential to provide the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program with a qualitative exploration of the perceived impact the program had upon its past members. The researcher sought to determine if a relationship between the 4-H Youth Development Program and the career decisions and development of its past members exists. This study can demonstrate the extent to which those participating in this study of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program attribute their career decisions to their 4-H experiences, further informing the profession's knowledge of the impacts of 4-H.

Exploratory studies, such as this one, should be replicated on a regular basis in order to evaluate the needs of new generations of participants. McKinley (1999) measured the perceptions of Indiana 4-H Alumni almost 17 years ago and much has changed since then. By reaching out to a new alumni group, the opportunity is presented for more alumni to share their stories and experiences of their career path.

1.4 Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The members of the sample included in this study all had at least six years of membership in the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program, but their experiences

differed based upon factors such as geographic location and level of participation. As a result, the findings of this study are not generalizable to the experience of all 4-H alumni beyond this sample. Results are also limited, as it is recognized that 4-H is a contributing factor to the development of ideas, life skills, and experiences gained. However, the researcher recognizes 4-H as a partial source of overall impact because of participants' exposure to multiple youth organizations, institutions, and life experiences. It is assumed participants answered questions honestly; however, questions asked of participants were based upon past events and thus are limited by the recollection of experience details. This study was funded in full by the Indiana 4-H Foundation through a grant allocating funds specifically for further research of the Indiana 4-H Program. This funding source has the potential to increase bias; however, the Indiana 4-H Foundation was not involved in the design, collection, analysis, or reporting of results in this study to eliminate this potential bias.

<div align="center">1.5 Definition of Terms</div>

4-H: A youth development program of the Cooperative Extension System of land-grant universities (*4-H Youth Development & Mentoring Programs*, 2015) and offered to youth in grades 3 through 12.

Alumnus: "A person who is a former member" (*Alumnus*, 2015), in this case, of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program.

Career: **"**The sequence of roles played over the course of a lifetime" (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2012, p. 15). The term is used broadly as study participants shared roles in various settings (e.g. professional, volunteer, and guardianship).

Career Development: **"**The constant psychological and behavioral processes and influences involved in building one's career path" (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2012, p. 15).

Class: "A body of students or alumni whose year of completion is the same" (*Class*, 2015). This study refers to "class" as the final year of participation in the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program and focuses specifically on the class of 2005.

Experience: "The intersubjective everyday world as it is lived, felt, undergone, made sense of, and accomplished by humans." This includes human "interactions, intentions and the meaning they attach to their actions" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 100). This study analyzed the perceived impact of lived experiences within the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Exploratory: "Open-ended investigation," (Saldaña, 2013, p. 263). [to explore], A major purpose for research in qualitative methodologies meant to, "build rich descriptions of complex circumstances that are unexplored in the literature" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 68).

Impact: "The powerful effect that something has on somebody/something" (*Impact*, 2015). In the Cooperative Extension Service, use of the term references "what has happened to the program participants as a result of their participation" (Poling, n.d., para. 7); and as Peterson stated "the reportable and verifiable difference a 4-H Youth Development program makes in the lives of young people" (as cited in McKinley, 1999, p. 5).

Learning: "The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). This definition is explained further in Chapter 2 as it relates to the Theory of Experiential Learning and Development.

Life Skills: "Ways of applying information learned to real life situations" and "tools to cope with whatever life brings" (Hendricks, 1996a, p. 9). "Categories of life skills include communication and literacy, decision making, occupational requirements, problem solving, time-management and planning" ("Life skills"). This study focused on those life skills identified in the Targeted Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b).

Perception: **"**An idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something" (*Perception*, 2015). In this study, participants share their perceptions of the impact their experiences had on their career development.

Task Approach Skills: Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Jones (1976) defined Task Approach Skills as the result of the interaction between genetic, environmental, and experiential factors. These skills include performance standards, work habits, perceptual and cognitive processes, and emotional responses.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the researcher's comprehension of works about and related to the 4-H Youth Development Program and its components. The methods used by the researcher to obtain literature are discussed in the following section. Theoretical Frameworks, identified by the researcher, are introduced in this chapter. Literature of both qualitative and quantitative nature is presented in three sections: Alumni Studies, Career Development and Life Skill Development.

2.2 Literature Review Methodology

The researcher utilized her student affiliation with the Purdue University Libraries database system to access books and peer-reviewed articles relevant to this study. Google's specialized search engine, Google Scholar, was also used in retrieving sources cited in this study. Early in the review process, the researcher struggled to collect literature when only searching using key words. Key words in searches included: 4-H Life Skill Development, 4-H Career Development, Career Development Programs, FFA Career Development, Career Decision Making, and Youth Career Identification, but these searches resulted in very few relevant sources. With the assistance of colleagues and faculty members, the researcher found searches using phrases within quotations were much more effective in her review.

The use of quotation marks specifies the search engine to perform a search for the entire phrase in context rather than searching for the presence of each word. Some phrases used included: "4-H Youth Development," "4-H Impact Study," and "4-H Alumni Studies." Additional resources were found through a review of references included in relevant literature.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks utilized for this study include the Experiential Learning Theory of Development (Kolb, 1984) and Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976). Both of these theories offer a perspective of learning and development in the form of a process. The Experiential Learning Theory is relevant to this study as it is believed to be the basis of learning experiences in the 4-H program. Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making is relevant because of the study's concentration on career development. The two theories merge in their inclusion and discussion of "an experience" and how it relates to learning, development, and decision making as an individual.

2.3.1 Experiential Learning Theory of Development

Kolb (1984) described a perspective on learning as "Experiential." This concept of experiential learning originated from the works of Lewin, Dewey, and Piaget. Combining the similarities of their three models shapes experiential learning as a perspective and defines its nature with the following characteristics.

Kolb's first characteristic states, "Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes" (Kolb, 1984, p. 26). This characteristic is a key distinction between experiential learning and the ideal perspective of traditional education. Notice the circular

shape of Figure 2.1 (Kolb, 1984, p. 42), where the outline of the circle is made of arrows pointing toward the following step in the learning process. When learning is a process, ideas are not predetermined; instead, they are constantly created and recreated with new experiences. This also means that no two ideas are the same, but are developed further by new experiences. By focusing on the process rather than the outcomes of learning, knowledge expands with experience and regenerates in the future.

The second characteristic identified by Kolb is, "Learning is a continuous process grounded in experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 27). The continuous process referred to in this phrase is not simply a repetitive process. Concrete experiences and expectations exist within the process and are challenged by the intervention of new experiences. When new ideas are accessed, learners must incorporate these new ideas into their learning process by modifying or disposing of prior experiences to accept and develop new knowledge.

Kolb's third characteristic explains, "The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world" (Kolb, 1984, p. 29). There is more to the learning process than recovering experiences; conflicts also exist. Kolb described four skills needed to resolve these conflicts as adaptive learning modes within the learning process: concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualization abilities (AC), and active experimentation abilities (AE). Figure 2.1 (Kolb, 1984, p. 42) displays these skills in a circular motion, but also directly across from, or opposed, to one another. With each learning experience, the learner must choose which set of skills he or she will use to resolve conflict and through this, gain knowledge.

The fourth characteristic suggested by Kolb states, "Learning is a holistic process of the adaptation to the world" (Kolb, 1984, p. 31). This is opposed to the specialized human functions on which related theorists are currently focused. The holistic view focuses on combined functions of the learner: thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving. With this view, the concept of learning is broader and continues as a lifelong process. The expanse includes the concepts of creativity, problem solving, decision-making, and attitude change. However, these adaptations vary in terms of time and depth. Kolb describes the terms "performance" and "development" as they correspond to the variance of holistic learning. A performance is the short-term adaptation to an immediate
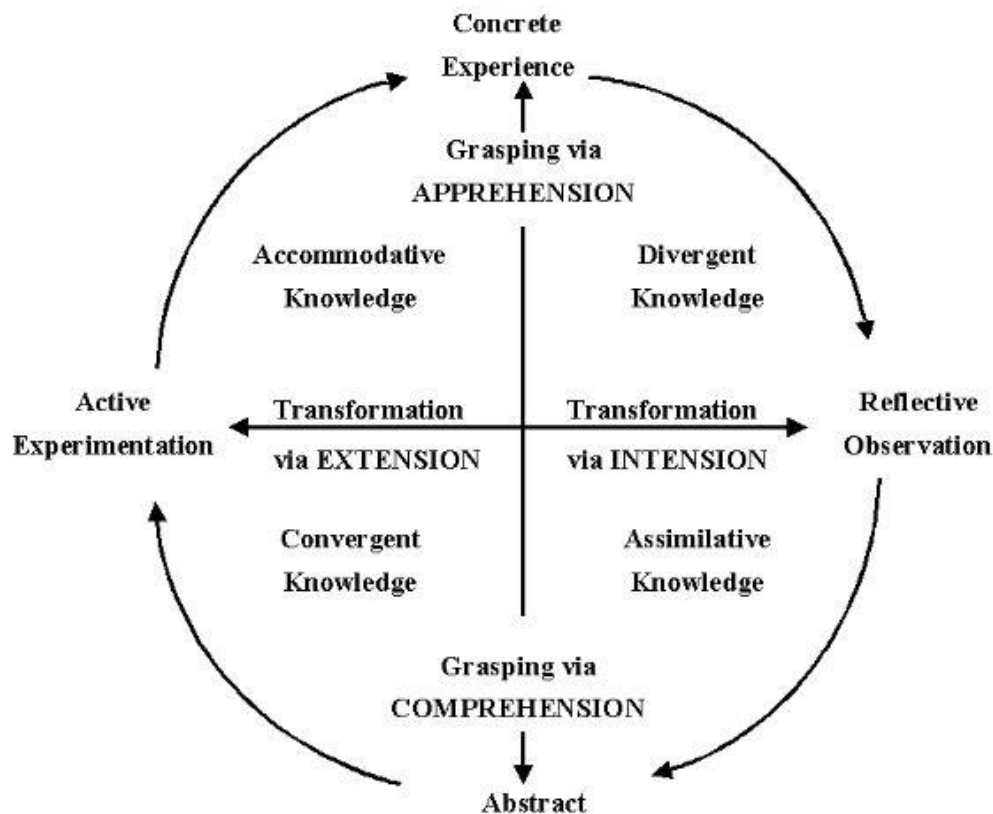
Figure 2.1- Structural dimensions underlying the process of experiential learning and the resulting basic knowledge forms.

From Kolb. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. (p. 42). Prentice Hall.

condition, with the general concept of learning in between. Development is the "lifelong adaptation to one's total life situation (p. 34)."

Kolb's fifth characteristic states, "Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment" (Kolb, 1984, p. 34). Although it seems obvious, this characteristic centers on the dual meaning of the term experience. This includes the subjective (personal experience involving feelings or opinions) and the objective (environmental experience) in terms of participation. Experiential learning purposely describes learning as a transaction to represent the process of the interaction, leaving the objective and subjective transformed.

The final characteristic included in Kolb's experiential learning theory reveals the product of the learning process. "Learning is a process of creating knowledge" (Kolb, 1984, p. 36). Within the learning process, knowledge specifically results from the transactions of one's subjective and objective experiences. Figure 2.1 identifies four basic forms of knowledge resulting from transactions between the two dimensions of learning: prehension (displayed in Figure 2.1 as apprehension and comprehension) and transformation. The dimension of prehension refers to the grasping of experience through apprehension and comprehension. Apprehension is the internal formation of knowledge through the sensations and perceptions of reality, resulting in concrete knowledge. Comprehension is the reformation of apprehensions into concepts, theory, and abstract knowledge communicated through time. The dimension of learning through transformation occurs as intention (internal reflection) and extension (external behaviors or actions). To understand the profound concept of knowledge, Kolb refers to psychology and epistemology.

Together, these six characteristics serve as the foundation of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory of Development (Kolb, 1984). Figure 2.2 (Kolb, 1984, p. 141) serves as a model to this theory illustrating a multilinear process of development. The multilinear emphasis on development is unique among learning and development theories.

Experiential learning recognizes there are individual differences within the learning process and credits development as a product of the transactions between personal experience and social knowledge. There are multiple paths of development through the four developmental dimensions: affective complexity representing a higher order of feeling; perceptual complexity or higher order observation; behavioral complexity with higher order action; and symbolic complexity considering higher order concepts. These dimensions are depicted in the shape of a cone in Figure 2.2, with the base representing early stages of learning and development and the vertex as the highest point in development. The left axis in the model, shown as an ascending arrow, represents the increase of complexity and relativism throughout the process of development. The right axis determines the stages of maturity within the human development process.

There are three stages of maturation, along the right axis of Figure 2.2, which reference the chronological age range where developmental milestones are achievable. The first stage, acquisition, extends from birth throughout adolescence and encompasses securing basic learning abilities as well as developing a distinct sense of self. The specialization stage ranges through one's formal education and into early adulthood. Here individuals are shaped by multiple forces of society and adapt into a specialized version
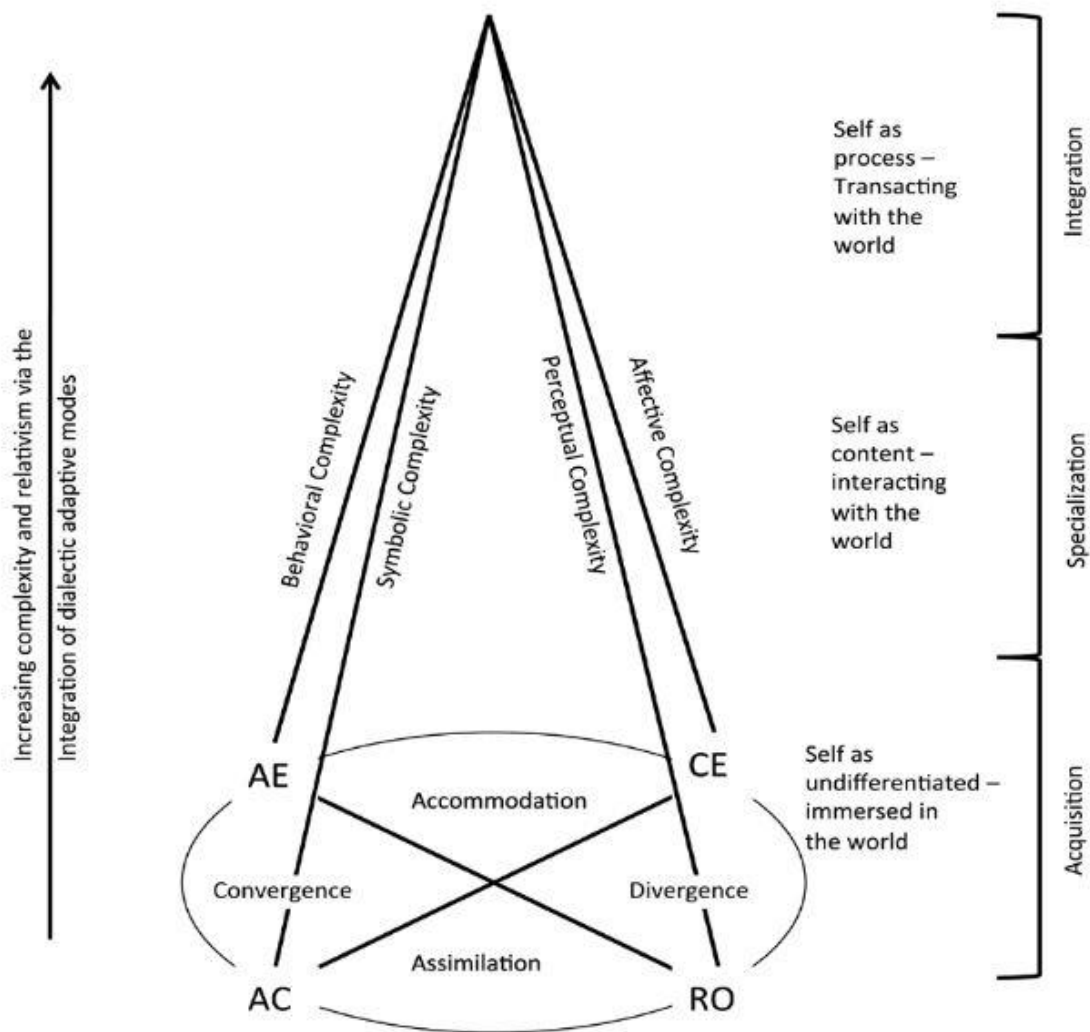
Figure 2.2- The experiential learning theory of development.

From Kolb. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. (p. 141). Prentice Hall.

of themselves that interacts with the world based upon the choices made such as

education/training, career choice, preferences and the enhancement of skills/abilities.

Integration is the final stage of maturation where adults make the transition from being a

specialized individual, influenced and interacting with the world, to one that seeks a new

perspective, influences others, and transacts with the world.

It is important to note the presence of three levels of adaptation or consciousness

within the Experiential Learning Theory representing a higher order of learning in comparison to the process depicted in Figure 2.1 and located at the base of the cone in Figure 2.2. These levels are defined using the terms performance, learning, and development, and are associated with the learning abilities within each stage of maturation. Overall, Experiential Learning Theory offers multiple paths through the process of development, each composed of learning experiences dependent on the individual.

A USDA factsheet (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011c) explains the 4-H Youth Development Program's use of the Experiential Learning approach in teaching new topics and life skills through hands-on activities. Figure 2.3 displays the 4-H model of experiential learning, with modifications from Kolb's original model as shown in Figure 2.1. The process consists of five steps. The first step (Experience) is exclusive to performing or doing an activity. Whereas, steps two (Share) and three (Process) involve reflecting upon the experience as the individual shares and processes the activity. Finally, steps four (Generalize) and five (Apply) refer to the application of new knowledge. 4-H states this as a "learn by doing" process and plans 4-H activities using this model (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011b).

The 4-H Youth Development Program considers Experiential Learning a valuable approach to teaching new skills through multiple hands-on activities and opportunities offered throughout the program. Kolb's expansion of experiential learning in Figure 2.2
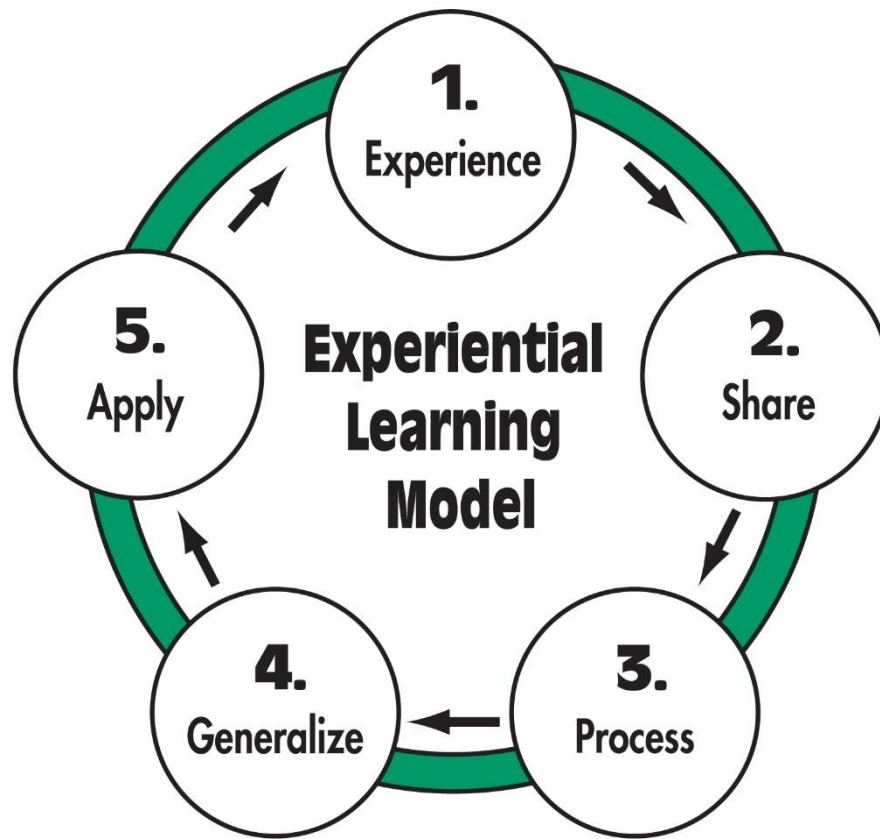
Figure 2.3- 4-H model of experiential learning.

From Pfeiffer, J. W., & Jones, J. E. (1983). *Reference guide to handbooks and annuals.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

suggests this learning process can continue and develop throughout a lifetime. Therefore,

participants in this study have advanced from their completion of the 4-H program and

the stage of acquisition to the specialization stage of maturation. This allows participants

the opportunity to reflect upon their learning experiences and describe what effect it has

had in their career development as an adult.

2.3.2 Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

The team of Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Jones (1976) developed what is now

known as the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making or SLTCDM. Modern

publications (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2012) consider SLTCDM a distinct part of Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counseling or LTCC. LTCC grew through the collaboration of integrating several career development theories to enhance the usefulness of theory to career counselors and other fieldworkers. LTCC is conceptualized by two parts: part one (the SLTCDM) explains the origin of career choice, and part two, also called Learning Theory of Career Counseling, is a practical explanation for the use of career counselors (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). LTCC is based upon Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which explains individual personality and behaviors as a source of one's individual learning experiences. Social Learning Theory proposes two types of learning experiences, described later in this section, that result in the behaviors and skills needed to function effectively within society.

By explaining the origin of career choice, the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making attempts to answer the questions: why do people enter specific educational programs or occupational programs; how or why is it that they change educational programs or occupations; and why do they have different preferences within programs or occupations (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

The theory identifies four factors of influence to career decision making: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. Genetic endowment refers to those qualities and traits that are permanently inherited. An example would be a person's height. Special abilities are slightly different from physical characteristics because they result from the interaction of genetic factors and may thrive when exposed to specific environments. The

second factor of influence, environmental conditions and events, affects individuals

differently as the dynamics of culture, politics, technology, and the economy are

uncontrollable.

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory identifies the presence of two types of

learning experiences, instrumental and associative. Figure 2.4 exhibits the three parts of

the instrumental learning experience in an "H" shape. The first, or left, column of the "H"

displays possible antecedents to the experience. Connecting the first and third columns

are behavioral responses or actions, which can be cognitive and emotional responses

(covert) or apparent behaviors (overt).

Antecedents	Behaviors	Consequences
Genetic endowment Special abilities and skills		Directly observable results of actions
Planned and unplanned environmental conditions or events	Covert and overt actions	Covert reactions to consequences
Task or Problem		Impact on significant others
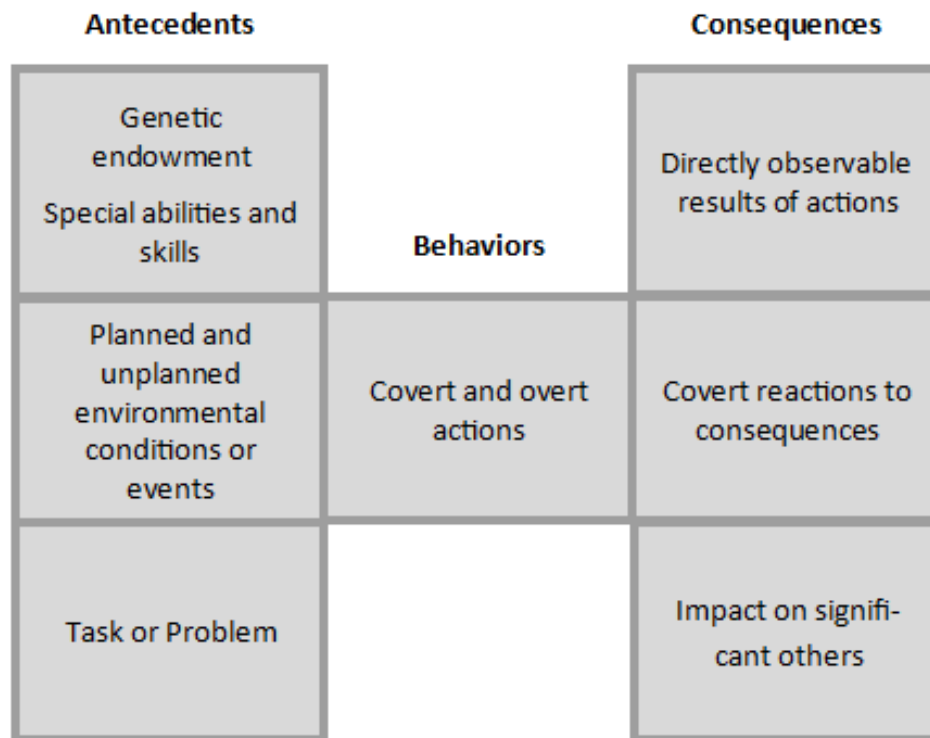
Figure 2.4- Model demonstrating the instrumental learning experience.

Adapted from Brown, Brooks, & Associates. (1996). *Career choice & development* (3rd ed.). (p. 239). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This makes the third, or right, column the results or consequences of the complete experience. Overall, an instrumental learning experience occurs when a person acts upon his or her environment. Results or consequences of the experience can be positive or negative and the decision to continue or change such behaviors is at the discretion of the individual. Slightly different from an instrumental experience, an associative experience is the perception of a neutral stimulus when paired with a positive or negative stimulus, or consequence. Figure 2.5 is a general model of the associative learning experience in the form of a circle. The upper half of the circle represents the environment or specific circumstances to which a person is exposed to paired stimuli, represented by the lower
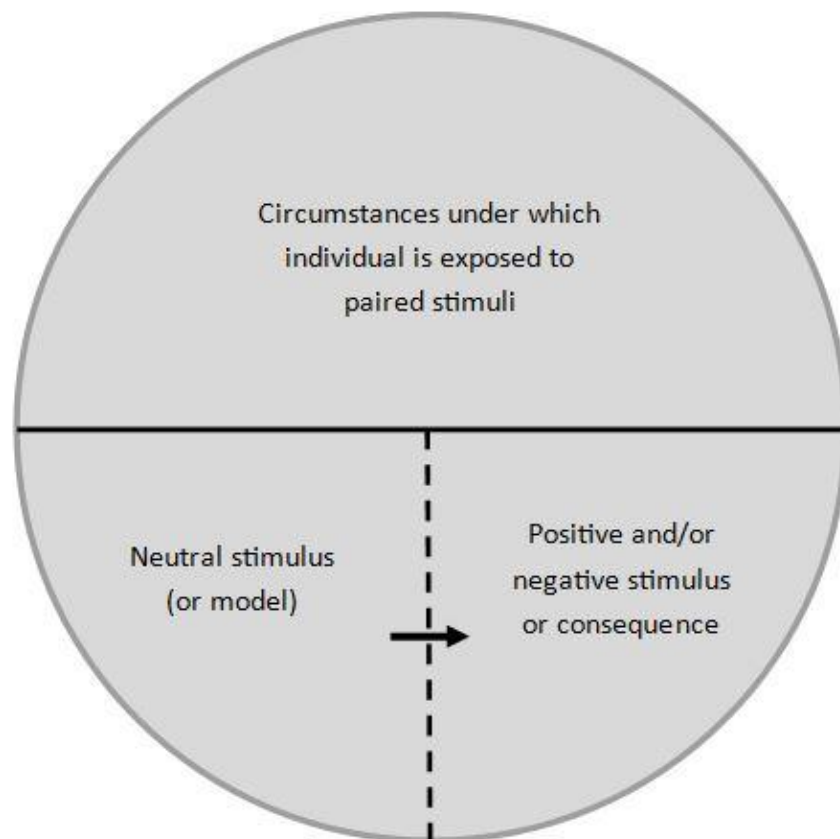
Figure 2.5- Model demonstrating the associative learning experience.

Adapted from Brown, Brooks, & Associates. (1996). *Career choice & development* (3rd ed.). (p. 242). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

half of the circle. The lower left area denotes a neutral stimulus that is paired with the positive or negative stimulus, or consequence in the lower right area. The arrow connecting the two areas signifies the development of the neutral stimulus in its association with the characteristics of the positive or negative stimulus, or consequence. This learning process occurs within the individual and can have a significant effect on preferences and decision making.

Task-approach skills are the fourth influence in career decision making mentioned by Krumboltz et al. (1976). These skills include performance standards, work habits, perceptual and cognitive processes, and emotional responses, and are the result of interactions between the three influences mentioned previously. Task approach skills are valuable outcomes to the individual, but also to employers and can influence further outcomes as well.

As a result of the interactions of these four influencing factors, individuals develop generalizations, beliefs, and associations within their own reality. The phrases "You have to spend money to make money" and "hard work pays off" are examples of some of these generalizations and beliefs individuals may accept as they interact with multiple influencers. SLTCDM (Krumboltz et al., 1976) identifies an individual's beliefs about themselves as self-observation generalizations and those about the world as worldview generalizations. Worldview generalizations are those beliefs and associations involving the environment and are used to explain and predict its phenomena. Both kinds of generalizations result from previous learning experiences as they lead individuals to assess, draw conclusions, and compare. This is also the origin of individual interests and values. Therefore, interests, as a type of self-observation generalization, connect learning

experiences with subsequent choices and actions. These actions include applying to colleges, applying for jobs, choosing a college major or minor, and seeking a promotion. Actions significant to career development occur throughout a lifetime alongside continuous learning experiences.

Multiple factors are involved in the career development and career decision-making process. However, the role of learning experiences is vital to the entire course of action and was the concentration of this research. Participants in this study were asked to describe their career development experience and reflect upon the decisions they made along the way. The inclusion of SLTCDM allowed the researcher to classify data efficiently and properly approach the research question, "How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experience after completing their participation in the 4-H program?"

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework serves as an explanation of all assumptions, concepts, and theories that supported or informed this research and the relationships among them. Figure 2.6 is a visual representation of the relationship between career development and experiential learning, using Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory of Development and Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making and looking exclusively at participant experiences as a member of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Kolb (1984) characterized experiential learning as a holistic and lifelong process grounded in experience. Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) four factors of influence exist within this process. During interviews, participants shared experiences and influences ranging

from early childhood to their current position. Kolb (1984) referenced the human development process as three stages of maturation: acquisition, specialization, and integration. Figure 2.6 displays career development within each of these developmental stages. Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) four factors of influence are each displayed as a shaded ring and Kolb's (1984) recurring four-step process of experiential learning is represented as a circle of arrows. Both are present in all three stages of maturation.

The first stage, acquisition, extends from birth throughout adolescence and encompasses securing basic learning abilities as well as developing a distinct sense of self. Figure 2.6 depicts acquisition as a time where youth are introduced to and their experiential learning opportunities are influenced by the four factors of influence identified by Krumboltz et al. (1976): genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. Genetic and environmental factors are most influential in this stage and are represented by the two innermost rings of influence. Most youth are exposed to experiential learning opportunities during acquisition, but the appropriate reflection and comprehension is dependent upon influences and may not be developed until later in this stage. This explains the blurred appearance of the two arrows representing reflection and comprehension within the process of experiential learning.

While participants in this study experienced varied paths of development and complexity, they have all reached Kolb's definition of the specialization stage of maturity. Within the specialization stage of maturity, individuals are shaped by multiple forces of society and adapt into a specialized version of themselves that interacts with the world based upon choices made such as education/training, career choice, preferences

and the enhancement of skills/abilities. This can be seen in Figure 2.6 as the two outermost rings representing the influence of learning experiences and task approach skills are broader compared to the acquisition stage. Participants in this study demonstrated increased complexity and relativism while sharing thorough reflection and comprehension of their current and prior learning experiences. Figure 2.6 shows this with the continued presence of the circle of arrows in the specialization stage. However, the arrows representing reflection and comprehension are bolder than in the acquisition stage. Integration is the final stage of maturation where adults make the transition from being a specialized individual influenced and interacting with the world to one who seeks a new perspective, which influences others and transacts with the world. Notice the change in the integration stage of Figure 2.6, the experiential learning process now surrounds the rings of influence. Participants in this study share how their visions or goals for the future were not dependent upon, but rather guided by their past influences. Therefore, Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) four factors of influence on career development are less influential within the integration stage. They instead create renewed influence to be distributed through experiences. The clear outermost ring of influence represents this new perspective, as it is guided by past influences, but distinct and indefinite.
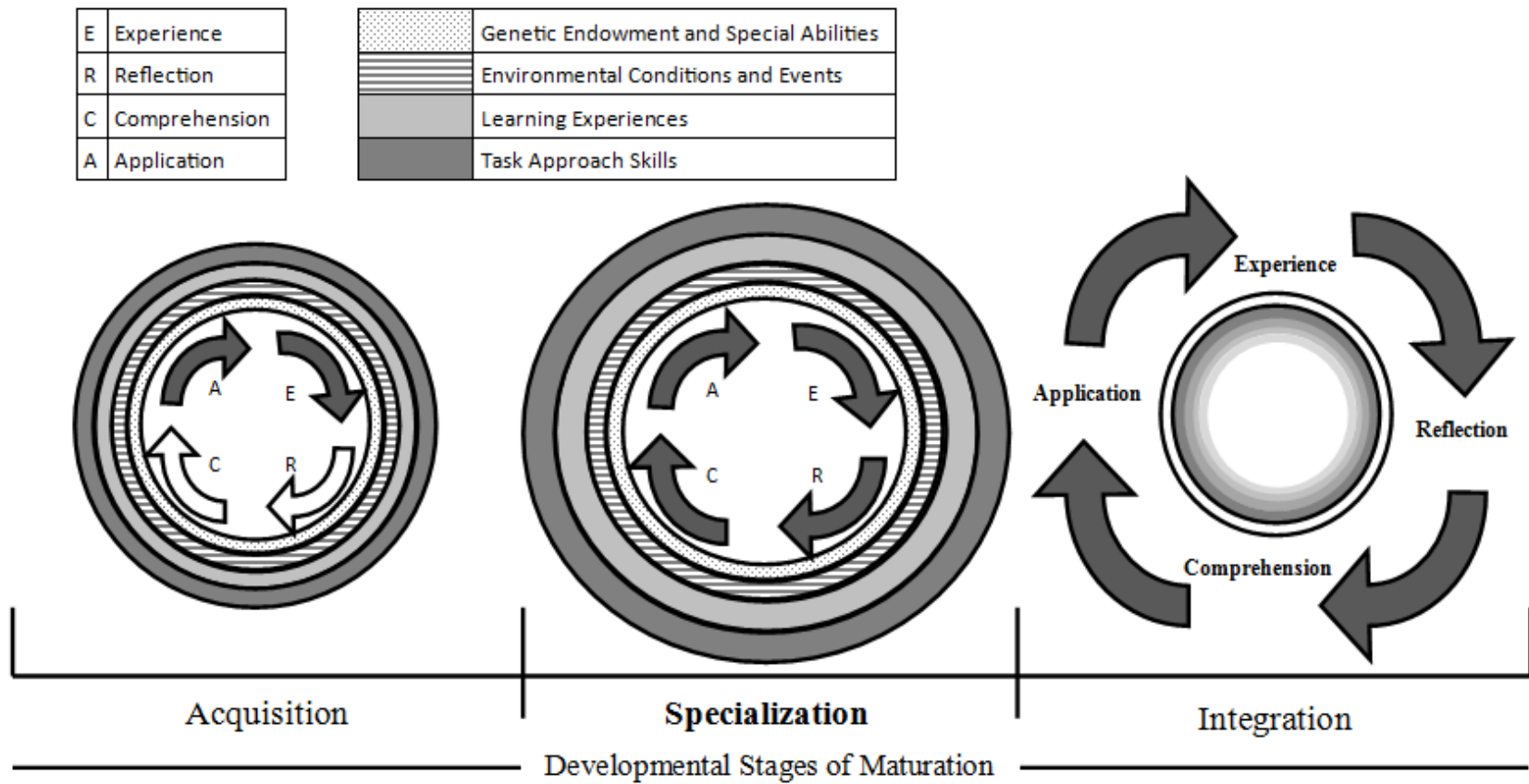
Figure 2.6- Model of conceptual framework.

2.5 Alumni Studies

Assessing 4-H Program alumni has been a research focus since the landmark 1985 study at Texas A&M (Ladewig & Thomas, 1987a; 1987b). Through a national comparative study, Ladewig and Thomas (1987b) found there was a significant difference between participants in youth organizations (including 4-H) and non-participants. 4-H Alumni in the study ranked the program as very positive and offered three points of improvement for the future, including: 4-H marketing, curriculum relative to older members, and leadership opportunities. This study laid the foundation for further quantitative and qualitative research developed for 4-H program alumni.

Individual states have since looked to the experiences of 4-H alumni to learn what the program offers its members. Several studies have shown that 4-H members develop life skills as a result of their active participation in the program (Anderson, Bruce, & Mouton, 2010; Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003; Grégoire, 2004; McKinley, 1999), but other questions have been added to the conversation. Radhakrishna and Sinasky (2005) examined Pennsylvania 4-H alumni to learn what aspects of 4-H contributed to leadership and personal development in members as adults. A recent Texas A&M study (Merten, Locke, Williams, Carter, & Lehman 2014) used similar methods as Ladewig and Thomas (1987a; 1987b) in measuring the 4-H program's impact on community involvement for its former members. They concluded 4-H Alumni are continuing to serve their community and holding leadership positions through volunteering with the 4-H program, church organizations, and other groups.

Anderson, Bruce and Mouton (2010) targeted a specific generation of 4-H Alumni by bounding their study with college-level participants. The qualitative study used

semistructured interviews to measure life skill development and determine its association

with the desire to continue working with the 4-H program. Anderson, Bruce and Mouton

(2010) were the first to study college-level alumni, claiming they "bring a unique

perspective to the reflection of the impact on their development because they are not far

removed from the 4-H program" (p. 38). Most participants responded positively in

regards to the 4-H program's influence on their personal and professional development.

Edge Research (2012) conducted a national survey of 4-H alumni on behalf of the

National 4-H Council. The purpose of the project was to "better understand

demographics, psychographics, youth experiences and propensity to support 4-H in the

future" (slide 3). The project organized five focus groups and an online survey to reach

alumni defined as "18-64 year olds involved in 4-H through a club, camp, or school

program as a youth" (slide 6). Alumni participants responded positively about their

memories of 4-H and credited the program to their personal development. However, they

"do not want 4-H straying too far from tradition" (slide 45). Findings also showed alumni

feel disconnected from the 4-H program and suggested digital channels like email, the

4-H website and social media are most effective for communication and outreach.

McKinley (1999) completed the most recent alumni study exclusive to members

of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program. The purpose of the study focused on the

perception of impact of the Indiana 4-H Program as well as emerging strengths and

weakness. The study used mixed-methods, including focus groups, interviews, and

surveys. Overall, alumni shared the 4-H program made a positive difference in their lives

and the knowledge and skills they learned from the program benefitted them as adults.

Using an alumni sample in studies such as these mentioned, generates mature responses from participants. Being removed from program membership allows time to reflect upon memories, feelings, and experiences from participation in the program. This review of alumni studies addresses the value of measuring programs like the 4-H Youth Development Program from a national, state, and comparative perspective.

2.6 Career Development

In this study career development is defined as, "the constant psychological and behavioral processes and influences involved in building one's career path" (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2012, p. 15). Recalling Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, the four factors of influence (genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills) are present in multiple aspects throughout a person's life. Accordingly, this study extensively examined career development within formal education, extracurricular activities and the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Herr, Cramer, and Niles (2004) shared findings of the earliest career development influences emerging within the communities of elementary-aged children. Early years of formal education also serve as factors of influence in career development as children develop "an awareness of the relationship between learning and work" (p. 346) and motivation or goals for achievement and self-worth. As youth advance through their formal education, their knowledge and familiarity of careers expands, associating people, personal interests, and individual goals with potential careers. Junior high/middle school programs and activities such as career day and career-clusters enhance student opportunities for career aptitude and exploration. Senior high/high school programs

heighten career development with opportunities for participation in extracurricular activities, college prep, job shadowing, and career and technical education programs.

Vocational Education and Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) have expanded since their establishment with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, alongside programs like, but not including the 4-H Youth Development Program. McNally and Harvey (2001) shared the benefits of youth participation in CTSOs as well as their value to special needs students. "There are 10 nationally recognized CTSOs in the vocational education community" (p. 116), each giving students the opportunity to focus on a specific career or trade. The article references the National FFA Organization, Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), and SkillsUSA-VICA as programs promoting career exploration and the introduction to business and industry.

The earliest of the CTSOs and founded as the Future Farmers of America, the National FFA Organization remains prominent in the focus of career development research. A publication by Bakar and McCracken (1994) shared quantitative findings of the factors related to career maturity in agricultural education students. The correlational study utilized The Career Development Inventory as an instrument, collecting data from a sample of 529 Ohio high school agriculture students. More than half of participants were FFA members, worked part-time, and were involved in extracurricular activities. Significant relationships were found between career maturity and multiple FFA variables including years in FFA and leadership in FFA, and the findings supported that participation in the National FFA Organization was related to career maturity. This and other studies added to the conversation of career development and leadership in CTSOs.

The earliest study measuring a specific area of impact in the 4-H program was from Matulis and Hedges (1985). The authors reported 4-H had an impact on alumni's self-awareness or knowledge of things they enjoyed doing and did well. The greatest impact was perceived in career exploration opportunities and the development of life skills critical to the work force. However, alumni did not credit 4-H for developing skills for getting a job (interviewing, resume building, etc.) and overall responded that 4-H did not impact their career planning (Matulis & Hedges 1985). Much later, in a *Journal of Extension* commentary, Lamm and Harder (2009) reported programs within the 4-H Youth Development Program are direct contributors to individual career development and the economy. Programs such as Entrepreneurship and the 4-H SET Initiative, while not offered in all states, are included in research less frequently than others (Lamm & Harder, 2009). It is evident from the findings of these two sources, that further research is needed to address the research gap in career development related programs and measure the 4-H program's current impact in career development.

Some state 4-H programs offer exclusive programs and opportunities for youth that differ from others. For example, the Indiana 4-H Program hosts career development events, including livestock judging contests, alongside Indiana FFA. Rusk, Martin, Talbert, and Balschweid (2002) surveyed alumni of the Indiana 4-H Livestock Judging Program on the impact of career preparation. The program was highly influential in the development of their ability to defend a decision, knowledge of the livestock industry, oral communication, and decision making. The survey included one open-ended question asking alumni to describe how the program influenced their personal growth. Results showed 77% indicated that the program left them better prepared for the workforce. A

participant stated, "It helped my communication skills, which are essential in the day to day running of my operation. It became the foundation of other skills I needed in life" (Rusk et al., 2002).

The Indiana 4-H Program offers an annual conference at Purdue University specializing in career development and exploration called 4-H Round-Up. A. J. Carrell (personal communication, November 23, 2015), an Indiana 4-H Youth Development Extension Specialist and director of 4-H Round-Up, shared that 4-H Round-Up has featured career development programming since the 1990s and is currently offered to youth in grades seven, eight, and nine. Carrell shared, "4-H Round-Up is, for most students, the first out of county experience they've had with 4-H ....[and] probably the first time they've ever been to a [college] campus" (A. J. Carrell, personal communication, November 23, 2015). During the conference, youth attend career development and exploration classes in both small and big group settings. Youth can choose from about 40 classes highlighting potential careers within all 10 colleges of Purdue University. Carrell hopes 4-H Round-Up encourages youth, "to get excited about looking at career options" (A. J. Carrell, personal communication, November 23, 2015) and learning whether or not to continue pursuing their career interests.

2.7 Life Skill Development

The theme of life skill development is present in 4-H literature because of the program's emphasis on the Essential Elements (Kress, 2005) and Positive Youth Development (Lerner et al., 2005). In a presentation, Kress (2005) shared the eight Essential Elements as the product of a 1999 National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team charged with the task of developing the "critical elements in a 4-H experience."

Near the same time the National 4-H Program was shifting to a Positive Youth Development approach in accomplishing the essence of 4-H. This approach to Youth Development came about in the mid-1990s and contrasted preceding approaches concentrated on the problems associated with young people. However, the Lerner et al. (2005) groundbreaking "4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" provided evidence of what guides youth toward a healthy lifestyle. Further studies in life skill development have been conducted with both 4-H youth and alumni participants both using quantitative and qualitative methods.

The earliest research specific to 4-H life skill development is a study from 1995 by Seevers and Dormody. The study sought to determine the predictors of leadership life skill development of members involved in the Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico 4-H Programs (Seevers & Dormody, 1995). Participants were surveyed about their perception of leadership life skill development and were asked to choose and rank specific activities which they felt were most helpful in developing life skills. Four variables (participation in 4-H leadership activities, achievement expectancy, ethnicity, and gender) explained a significant amount of variance in predicting leadership life skill development. Youth also identified holding a 4-H Club office, teaching younger members, and the fair as the most influential in leadership development.

The Targeting Life Skills Model (Figure 2.7) developed by Hendricks (1996b) of Iowa State University Extension, served as a curriculum planning and evaluation tool for youth development programs. Hendricks (1996a) defined a skill as "a learned ability to do something well" (p. 4) and life skills as "ways of applying information learned to real life situations" and "tools to cope with whatever life brings" (p. 9).
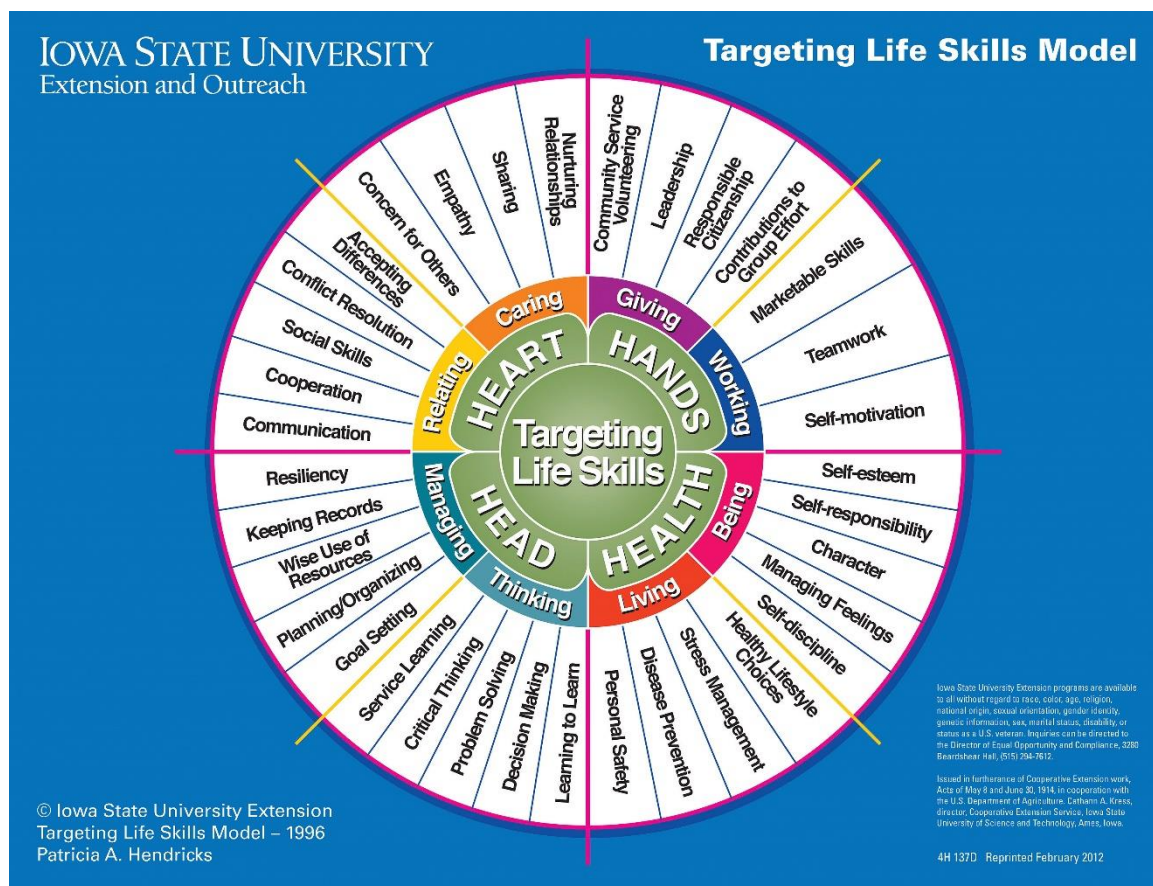
Figure 2.7- Targeting life skills model.

Reprinted with permission from the author. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach *Targeting Life Skills Model*, P. Hendricks. 1996b.

The model was designed using the four H's (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health) represented

within the 4-H Clover to divide the 35 life skills into eight general categories. The model

is intended to be inclusive of all possible life skills desired in planning program

curriculum by its use of broad life skill terms. Hendricks included the definitions and

components of all life skills listed in the model as well as many resources focusing on

aligning objectives with developmentally appropriate tasks targeting desired life skills as

outcomes. Offering experiential learning opportunities in curriculum is recommended for

achieving life skill development. Researchers have since used the model as a source of

indicators for studies evaluating life skill development within the 4-H program and other youth development programs.

Fox et al. (2003) surveyed Nebraska 4-H Alumni on their perceptions of life skill development resulting from their 4-H experience. Data were collected using a survey developed from a preceding focus group of 4-H alumni, extension staff, and volunteers. The Targeting Life Skills Model guided their evaluation (Hendricks, 1996b) (Figure 2.7). Alumni reported the most influence on their development of responsibility, product production skills, and the ability to handle healthy competition (Fox et al., 2003).

The most recent literature measuring life skill development is from a publication by Wilson and McKee (2013) and is exclusive to the Indiana 4-H Program. The study surveyed 4-H members in their final year of program participation and asked youth to rate the influence 4-H had on their development of life skills identified in (Figure 2.7) the Targeting Life Skills model (Hendricks, 1996b). Results showed that participation in Indiana 4-H influenced every life skill included in the Targeting Life Skills model. However, 15 life skills were reported as the most influential ranking above a 3.98 on a one to five scale (1-no influence and 5-major influence). In a survey by Mosier (2008), this same group of life skills was ranked as most influential. This suggests that participation in the 4-H program offers a consistent opportunity for life skill development.

Kress (2005) presented the eight Essential Elements as the "critical elements in (the) 4-H experience" (slide 20) as the 4-H program transitioned to a positive youth development approach. By including these Essential Elements, displayed in Figure 2.8, the 4-H program created opportunities for youth to experience independence, belonging,

generosity, and mastery. 4-H National Headquarters (United States Department of

Agriculture, 2011a) stressed the inclusion of the Essential Elements in 4-H activities.

While each element is individually significant, the combination of the elements meets the

social, physical and emotional needs of youth participants and promotes positive youth

development.

The introduction of the Essential Elements brought about new opportunities for

research about the 4-H program. Grégoire (2004) reported qualitative findings of the 4-H

club experience in New York State. The study confirmed that 4-H clubs are meeting at

least six of the eight critical Essential Elements of 4-H (Grégoire, 2004). Anderson,

Bruce and Mouton (2010), interviewed college-level 4-H Alumni looking specifically at

life skill development and continued desire to volunteer with the 4-H program. Their

findings indicated 4-H Alumni experiences demonstrated the four concepts of Kress's

(2005) Essential Elements: independence, belonging, generosity, and mastery. The

authors claimed the combination of 4-H influence and the Essential Elements are

Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development

Experience	Element
Belonging	Positive Relationship with Caring Adult
	A Safe Environment
	An Inclusive Environment
Mastery	Engagement in Learning
	Opportunity for Mastery
Independence	Opportunity to see Oneself as an Active Participant in the Future
	Opportunity for Self-Determination
Generosity	Opportunity to Value and Practice Service for Others

Figure 2.8- Essential elements of 4-H youth development.

Adapted from Kress, C. (2005). *4-H essential elements*. Washington, DC: National 4-H
Headquarters, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
significant in the life skill development of individuals involved in the 4-H program.

Near this time, the 4-H program adopted a Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach to its curriculum, strengthening their mission to empower youth to reach their full potential. Damon (2004) stated, "the Positive Youth Development approach aims at understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing, or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so-called disabilities" (p. 15). The findings of Lerner et al.'s (2005) "4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" allowed the 4-H program to claim itself as a Positive Youth Development organization. The study disclosed vocabulary within the framework of PYD, recognized now as the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development shown in Figure 2.9. Researchers in PYD have also proposed the potential of a sixth C, contribution, emerging when the original five Cs are present in a young person. Following the approach's emphasis on the

Five Cs of Positive Youth Development

Five Cs	Definition
Competence	Positive view of one's actions in domain specific area including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational.
Confidence	An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain specific beliefs.
Connection	Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.
Character	Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.
Caring or Compassion	A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

Figure 2.9- Five Cs of Positive Youth Development and definitions.

Adapted from Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., & von Eye, A….(2005). Positive Youth Development, participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents: Findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of Positive Youth Development. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71.

role of community in adolescent development, youth exhibiting the presence of all six Cs would ideally "contribute positively to the self, family, community, and civil society" (Lerner et al., 2005, p. 23).

"The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" (Lerner et al., 2005) was a longitudinal study that began in 2002. The project was funded by the National 4-H Council with the goal of "understand[ing] the processes that are involved in the emergence of PYD" (p. 25). The study consisted of eight waves reaching more than 7,000 adolescents among 44 U.S. states. National 4-H Council (2013) developed a fact sheet reporting the study's comprehensive findings, highlighting the major finding that 4-H members excel beyond their peers. Specifically, the findings showed 4-H youth excel in contribution/civic engagement, academic achievement, and healthy living as compared to their peers. Since its publication, the "The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" (Lerner et al., 2005) was influential to the 4-H Youth Development Program and inspired future research.

Relative to work in PYD, Astroth and Haynes (2002) began what would be a series of impact studies measuring the effect of 4-H membership in the lives of young people by comparing Montana youth in grades five, seven, and nine based on their use of out-of-school time. Results were significant when comparing youth who had participated in 4-H to their peers who had not participated in 4-H. Astroth and Haynes stated, "4-H youth are better off than their non-4-H peers in a number of areas" (2002, sec. 4-H youth: making Contributions, not causing trouble, para. 1). Results were shared comparing 4-H and non-4-H youth in their school performance, engagement in risk behaviors, leadership

positions, and areas included in the Five C's of Positive Youth Development (competence, confidence, connection, character, and compassion).

Goodwin, Barnett, Pike, Peutz, Lanting, and Ward (2005) successfully replicated the work of Astroth and Haynes (2002) by surveying Idaho youth. Results showed 4-H members were less likely to participate in at-risk behaviors (Goodwin et al., 2005) such as shoplifting, stealing, smoking, and drug use in comparison to their peers. The study was replicated again in the state of Colorado where Goodwin, Carroll, and Oliver (2007) focused on accentuating the positive and confirmed that 4-H youth are glad to be who they are and have a significantly more positive outlook on life than non-4-H youth.

The 4-H Youth Development Program is well-known for providing youth with the opportunity to develop life skills. However, it is important to recognize the underlying concepts and models that make the 4-H program successful in this area. Research testing the presence and influence of life skill development, the Essential Elements (Kress, 2005), and Positive Youth Development (Lerner et al., 2005) was pivotal for the continued research and financial support of the 4-H program showing that 4-H makes a positive difference in the lives of young people.

2.8 Summary

In summary, this chapter demonstrated the researcher's comprehension of works about and related to the 4-H Youth Development Program and its components. The. Theoretical Framework shared in this chapter, was based on Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory of Development and Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making. A conceptual framework, developed by the researcher,

explains the relationship of concepts within the theoretical framework interpreted through the results of this study.

Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory of Development explains learning as a multi-linear and lifelong process of development producing knowledge from individual experiences. The 4-H Youth Development Program considers Experiential Learning a valuable approach to teaching new skills and utilizes the 4-H Model of Experiential Learning (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1983) for planning hands-on activities and opportunities offered throughout the program. Krumboltz's et al. (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making (SLTCDM) as a part of Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Counseling is based on Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory. SLTCDM attempts to answer the questions why people enter, how or why people choose to change, and why people have preferences of educational programs or occupational programs (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). Krumboltz identified four factors of influence in career decision making: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. As a result of the interactions of these four influencing factors, people develop generalizations, beliefs, and associations within their own reality which guide their career development and decision making. The conceptual framework provided a visual representation of the relationship between career development and experiential learning and an explanation of all assumptions, concepts, and theories that supported or informed this research. Looking exclusively at participant experiences as a member of the 4-H Youth Development Program, the researcher demonstrated the process of learning and career development within the stages of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory of Development, which included factors of

influence identified by Krumboltz's et al. (1976) in the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making.

A review of both qualitative and quantitative literature was presented in three sections: Alumni Studies, Career Development, and Life Skill Development. The volume and results of alumni studies discussed in this review show the value of studying programs, such as the 4-H Youth Development Program, from an alumni perspective and offers the opportunity to measure a national or state audience. Studies measuring life skill development in the 4-H Youth Development Program remain dominant among the subject's literature. The Targeting Life Skills Model, developed by Hendricks (1996b), served as an initial program development and evaluation tool. The program's Positive Youth Development approach has led to the groundbreaking "4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" (Lerner et al., 2005) and the development of the Essential Elements (Kress, 2005). However, a gap persists in career development-related research in youth programs and evaluations of the 4-H program's impact on career development. Research in this area was mostly regarding vocational education programs and Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of research methods and procedures utilized in this study. The chapter briefly revisits the study's justification and research questions before describing the research design and its foundation. It also addresses participant selection and recruitment, data collection through semistructured interviews and data analysis.

3.2 Purpose and Research Question

This study was a response to the absence of updated research and evaluation of the Indiana 4-H Program. It was also designed to explore the possible relationship between 4-H experiences and the career decisions and development of its past members. The following research question was answered through qualitative methods in this study.

- How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experiences after completing their participation in the 4-H program?

3.3 Research Design

This exploratory case study used an embedded single-case design to explore and understand the perceived impact of the 4-H program upon career decisions and development skills of its past members. Figure 3.1 presents the concept of an embedded single-case design in reference to this study. Yin (2014) defined a case study as "an inquiry which investigates a phenomenon in-depth and in a real-world context, specifically when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clear" (p. 16). Focused on a single-case, or in this study, organization, the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program, this design allows the researcher to examine the case for the characteristics of learning and development laid out in the Experiential Learning Theory of Development and the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making. However, the inclusion, or "embedding," of specific components of the case within the study causes this design to be considered embedded rather than holistic design. The three units of analysis: career development experiences, perceived impact, and life skills are embedded within the case (Class of 2005) in context of the Indiana 4-H Program. Overall, the embedded single-case design was determined to be the most appropriate strategy of inquiry in regards to the nature of our case and theories involved in this study.

In reference to epistemology, this study was oriented toward an Interpretivist perspective. Schwandt (2007) defined Interpretivism as "studying social life that accord to a central place to (understanding) as a method of the human sciences" (p. 160). It assumes the meaning of human behavior is inherent, and this inquiry is sought to discover meaning within human behavior. The perspective assumes that there is no separation from the subject and the object and knowledge is constructed intersubjectively through the meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially. The methodology of the interpretivist perspective depends on naturalistic methods such as interviewing and observations to guarantee sufficient discussion between the researcher and participants.
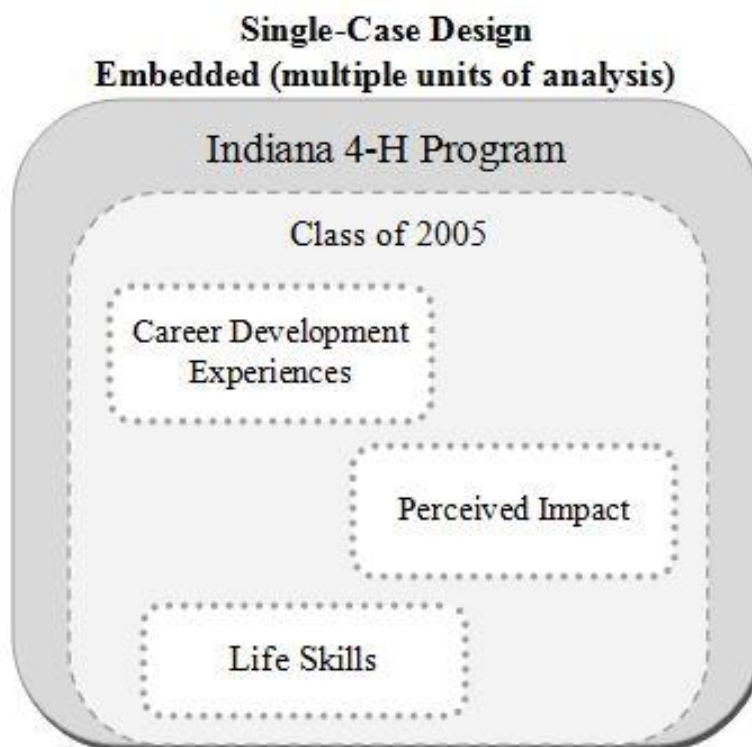
Figure 3.10- Basic model of embedded single-case study design.

Adapted from: Figure 2.4 (p. 50).Yin, R. (2014). Case Study Research Design and Methods (5th ed.) Sage Publications, Inc.

3.4 Social Science Institutional Review Board

To protect the rights of participants, the researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) courses in responsible conduct of research with human subjects. Following the completion of the training, an application including all participant recruitment and data collection materials was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Human Research Protection Program of Purdue University. The study was granted exemption on May 22, 2015, with IRB protocol number 1505016095 "Alumni Perceptions of Career Management Skills Gained through the Indiana 4-H Program" (See Appendix A).

3.5 Pilot Test

Prior to working with the actual participants to be included in this study, research procedures were pilot tested. Pilot testing allowed for clarification of research design, field procedures, and reliability in regards to the interview guide and questions asked of the participants. The researcher's previous participation in the 4-H Youth Development Program granted contact with a group of 4-H Alumni from the class of 2010, meaning these 4-H Alumni had completed participation in the program five years ago. Six participants, two male and four female, were willing to take part in the pilot test and provide feedback to the researcher. Patton (2002) considered methods of sampling similar to this as a convenience sample. These samples are known to yield non-representative information and have low credibility. However, Yin (2014) recommended convenience and geographic proximity to be the main criteria of selection in pilot cases. Further regarding the aspect of convenience, the researcher sampled this population because it remains information-rich through membership in the 4-H Youth Development Program

and proximity to the specialization stage of development (See Figure 2.2) (Kolb, 1984), resembling the intended research participants for this study.

Pilot study participants experienced all aspects of participation in the study, including recruitment via social media, communications through email, both face-to-face and virtual interviews, the opportunity for member checking transcriptions, and compensation for their effort. Participants provided positive feedback on the clarity and simplicity of study procedures including the convenience of the program WebEx™ for virtual interviews. Three of the six pilot study participants chose to be interviewed virtually because of their geographic location in relation to the researcher.

Throughout the pilot study, the researcher discovered ways to strengthen the interview process. During the first interview of pilot study participants, the researcher found it difficult to quickly develop follow-up questions and smoothly transition between each stage of the interview. This led to obvious hesitation from the researcher as the interviewer and weak transitions between questions. Recognizing these issues allowed the researcher to focus on improving transitions to avoid leading participants as well as to practice developing valuable follow-up questions during the interview. Instead of reviewing a participant's demographic guide moments before the interview, the researcher requested these documents before the interview in order to generate potential follow-up questions. However, as the researcher conducted more pilot study interviews, these and other general interviewing skills were strengthened.

3.6 Study Setting

The Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program is a part of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the headquarters of Purdue Extension and Indiana 4-H are located within the College of Agriculture of Purdue University's main campus in West Lafayette, Indiana. As a graduate student working in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University, the researcher chose this setting as it is closely related to the setting of the Indiana 4-H Program. This setting allowed the researcher to remain close to those people involved with the Indiana 4-H Program and the program itself. In addition, this setting provided access to potential participants through the program's system of communication and staff located within each of Indiana's 92 counties. Combined with the researcher's familiarity with the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program, this setting offered the opportunity for the researcher to build trust within her relationship to participants in this study. With these benefits and the resources made available to the researcher, Purdue University, the location of the researcher, was determined the best setting for this study.

3.7 Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the researcher acts as the instrument and remains present in the lives of the study participants. This is crucial to qualitative methodology and authenticity of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). While working with participants, the researcher maintained a stance of "empathetic neutrality" (Patton, 2002, p. 49), a balance between being too involved with, and too distant from, the narratives of the participants. Prior to this study, the researcher was highly involved in the Indiana 4-H Program as a 10-year member and adult volunteer. Therefore, it is appropriate to say the

researcher was familiar with the structure and mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program and considered studying this topic because of her background, interests, and relationship to the program itself. The Interpretivist perspective used in this study assumes individuals cannot separate themselves from what they know. Throughout the study, the researcher was linked to the object of investigation, which allowed for the presence of empathy, a richer interpretation and overall higher quality of qualitative data.

3.8 Participants

Participants were purposefully sampled (Patton, 2002) based upon their participation in the Indiana 4-H Program. In order to be considered for this study, participants must have met the following criteria: been a member of the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program for a minimum of six years and completed their youth membership in 2005. Participants were recruited through advertising on the social media website Facebook© via the Indiana 4-H page and through communications with Purdue Extension county offices. Advertising materials were approved by IRB and the Human Research Protection Program of Purdue University (See Appendix B). Purdue Extension professionals and study participants assisted in recruitment by identifying participants with whom they were familiar and who met the study requirements. This process is a type of snowball or chain sampling (Patton, 2002) and was a useful technique in participant recruitment.

The recruitment process lasted about four weeks, beginning with recruitment via social media. The researcher's initial post on the Indiana 4-H Facebook page (See Appendix B) generated no interest among potential participants. As a final attempt, the advertisement was replicated 10 days later in addition to a second advertisement

distributed among Indiana 4-H Youth Development Extension Educators and yielded improved interest. Throughout the recruitment process, 11 potential participants contacted the researcher with an interest in participating, but for many reasons including not satisfying participant criteria, time commitment, and absence of a response after researcher follow-up, not all 11 were included in the final sample. The final sample included six participants, composed of four females and two males. These participants met required participant criteria and completed the entire interview process.

3.9 Data Collection

This study utilized semistructured interviews as the primary source of data collection. Although Patton (2002) labeled these types of interviews as the topical or interview guide approach, the term semistructured (Esterberg, 2002) is more appropriate for this study. Prior to the interview, an outline or guide is developed to cover specific topics aligned with the framework and research question. The interview guide for this study, included in Appendix C, was approved by IRB and the Human Research Protection Program of Purdue University and contained seven open-ended questions. Esterberg described these types of interviews as open, allowing "interviewees to express their opinions and ideas in their own words" (2002, p. 87). Each interview remained conversational, even as the researcher probed and asked additional questions based upon participants' responses and reflections during the interview. Conducting in-depth interviews, such as these, has been said to provide rich descriptions and an individual perspective of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and opinions (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013).

Individual steps of data collection process began with confirmation that a potential participant met study criteria. The researcher attempted to set up an interview with the subject via email (See Appendix D), offering both face-to-face and virtual interview opportunities using a video conference and online collaboration tool available through Purdue University called WebEx™. Six interviews were scheduled, with each to last no more than 60 minutes. Prior to any data collection, participants were asked to complete a consent form approved by IRB and the Human Research Protection Program of Purdue University and included in Appendix E. In addition to the consent form, participants completed a one-page demographic form (See Appendix F), providing answers to several demographic questions and questions surrounding involvement in the 4-H Youth Development Program and other extracurricular programs. Use of the demographic guide provided a reference for the researcher to develop follow-up questions during the interview and reduced overall interview time.

The six interviews were conducted between August 29, 2015, and September 24, 2015. Two face-to-face interviews were held in public places selected by the participant. The remaining four participants were located various distances from the researcher and were willing to be interviewed virtually via WebEx™. WebEx™ is a video conference and online collaboration tool operated by Cisco. The program offers audio, video, screen sharing and recording capabilities and is constantly expanding its resources and access to users. Purdue University partnered with Cisco systems and offered university-wide access to WebEx™ in September of 2014 (*WebEx replacing Adobe Connect as Purdue web conferencing tool,* 2015). Two interviews intended for WebEx™ use resulted in phone alternatives due to technological issues or the participants' limited access to a

computer. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by a third party company, removing identifiable data such as names and geographic location from the transcription to conceal identities of participants. At the conclusion of the first interview, a follow-up interview was scheduled and conducted over the phone. Participants received their transcriptions through email and were given three to five days to read their transcriptions. The second interview allowed participants to review their interview transcription for errors and accuracy of what they expressed during the first interview. This accuracy-verification method, member-checking, helps ensure credibility in qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). During this time, participants were also asked to share additional information or details they may have recalled after the first interview.

Participants created their own pseudonyms for use in this research by choosing another name starting with the first letter of their surname. Because this was the final opportunity for communication with participants, the researcher collected mailing addresses in order to deliver participant compensation and expressed gratitude to the participants for their time dedicated to the study. All second interviews were audio recorded in the event that a participant provided further information. However, none of the second interviews yielded further information and were strictly related to correcting typographical errors in transcriptions and accomplishing previously mentioned tasks.

3.10 Data Analysis

Analysis of interview data was guided by the research question, theoretical framework and the case study design focusing on three components embedded within one's participation in the Indiana 4-H Program. The first component involves participants' career development experiences and experiences in the 4-H Program. The

second component surrounds new skills acquired during this time. The third component

considers the perceived impact of 4-H in the lives of participants.

Two cycles of coding were applied to analyze participant experiences. The first

used In Vivo coding, which "refers to a word or short phrase from actual language found

in qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). Saldaña (2013), deemed In Vivo coding

appropriate for any qualitative work, but recommended it for novice qualitative

researchers. See Appendix G for a table of In Vivo codes collected. All InVivo codes

were entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet chronologically from transcriptions. The

second cycle used Focused coding as Saldaña (2013) suggested, "Focused coding follows

In Vivo" (p. 213). Focused coding is a method of categorizing the data or developing

repeated codes into significant categories. Alongside focused coding, the researcher

concept-mapped to uncover any relationships or themes among participant experiences.

When analyzing acquired skills, the researcher created a set of codes for

Provisional coding. Saldaña (2013) defined Provisional coding as "beginning with a 'start

list' of researcher generated codes based on what…might appear in the data before they

are collected and analyzed" (p. 266). This type of coding is appropriate for studies that

build on previous research. Saldaña recommended a start list of about 12-60 codes in

Provisional coding. This led the researcher to focus on the 15 most influential life skills

identified by Wilson and McKee (2013) in a report of life skill development of Indiana

4-H Members. The 20 additional life skills acknowledged in the Targeting Life Skills

Model (Figure 2.7) were also evaluated.

The final phase of analysis focused on participants' perception of impact

experiences had on their career development. Perception is defined as, "An idea, a belief

or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something" (*Perception*, 2015). The researcher describes this phenomenon as perceived impact measuring the true nature of the participant's career development over time by reviewing participant dialogue and using Values coding. Values coding is recommended for studies that "explore cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 111). Saldaña (2013) defined Values coding as "the application of codes to qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or worldviews" (p. 268).

3.11 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability, were used to design the study and analyze the data. The primary data collection method employed in this study was semistructured interviews. The interviews were 60 minutes and were audio recorded. The length of the interview, also referred to as prolonged engagement, helped establish credibility for the study. Field and observation notes following the interview guide were also recorded during interviews. Patton (2002) posited that identifying and recording emergent insights during data collection are components of fieldwork and analysis. The audio data were transcribed, then compared with observation notes to ensure confirmability. Coder reliability was established, as there was only one coder. The first cycle of coding used in vivo coding methodology (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding, "refers to a word or short phrase from actual language found in qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91). The second cycle of coding was completed using focused coding (Saldaña, 2013). This methodology is complementary to in vivo coding and provides a

way for condensing data and gleaning themes and constructs. These coding methodologies enabled the researcher to provide thick descriptions from the interview participants, hence, establishing transferability. Finally, the examining of the researcher's graduate committee and subsequent, consistent execution of all phases of the study established dependability.

3.12 Summary

This exploratory case study used an embedded single-case design to explore and identify the perceived impact of the 4-H program upon career decisions and development skills of its past members. Focused on a single-case, or in this study, organization, the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program, this design allows the researcher to examine the case for the characteristics of learning and development laid out in the Experiential Learning Theory of Development and the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making. The study was oriented in an Interpretivist perspective and used naturalistic methods such as interviewing to guarantee sufficient discussion between the researcher and participants.

Participants were purposefully sampled (Patton, 2002) based upon their participation in the Indiana 4-H Program. The study was pilot tested with a convenience sample made up of Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2010. Final study participants were recruited through advertising on the social media website Facebook© via the Indiana 4-H page and through communications with Purdue Extension county offices. Data were collected through a series of in-depth interviews using a semistructured interview guide created by the researcher.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents qualitative findings from this study. It begins with an

overview of participant demographics collected using the Demographic Guide (Appendix

F). Presented next are findings of each component of data analysis: participant

experiences, life skill development and the perceived impact of the Indiana 4-H Program.

The discussion of participant experiences begins with career development experiences,

revealing emerging themes among the data and highlighting supporting stories. The

discussion transitions to participant experiences within the 4-H Youth Development

Program, again, revealing emerging themes among the data and highlighted stories

related to themes. Findings in life skill development are shared, discussing where

participants credit learning life skills and sharing what life skills they exercise in their

current careers. The chapter concludes by discussing participants' perceived impact of the

Indiana 4-H Program overall.

4.2 Participant Demographics

Prior to interviews, participants completed a one-page demographic form (See

Appendix F), providing answers to demographic questions and questions surrounding

involvement in the 4-H Youth Development Program and other extracurricular programs.

Figure 4.1 displays this information for each participant.

Name:	Charlie (F)	Heather (F)	Wilma (F)	Harper (F)	Mark (M)	Oliver (M)
Highest Level of Education	Higher Degree (J.D.)	Higher Degree (M.S.)	Higher Degree (M.S.)	Higher Degree (M.S.)	High School	Bachelor's Degree
Concentration/Major	History	Animal Sciences	Dietetics	Elementary Education	Welding Ag Business	Ag Engineering
Current Occupation:	Associate Attorney	4-H Youth Development Extension Educator	Health & Human Sciences Extension Educator	Kindergarten Teacher	Propane Service Technician	System Engineer
Past Jobs:	-Spanish Teacher -Extension 4-H Intern -Bank Teller	-Administrative Assistant -Research Asst. -Landscaper -Cashier	-Oklahoma Extension -Dietetics Intern	-Before/After School Coordinator -Babysitter	-Custom Applicator -Welder/ Fabricator	-Process and Design Engineer -Farm Hand -Internships
Type of residence:	Town/City	Farm	Farm	Suburb/Farm	Farm	Farm
Years in 4-H	10	10	10	10	10	10
4-H Participation	Sheep, Swine, Sewing, Cake Decorating, Recycling, Junior Leaders, Crafts, Foods, Collections	Dairy, Foods, Floriculture, Scrapbook, Collections, Sewing, Dairy Judging, Fashion Revue	Junior Leaders, Foods, Beef, Swine, Sheep	Photography, Beef, Swine, Crafts, Sewing, Foods, Garden, Floriculture, Junior Leaders, Electric	Junior Leaders, Beef, Swine, Electric, Shooting Sports	Beef, Swine, Junior Leaders, Showmanship, King and Queen Contest
Other extracurriculars	Sports, Band, Youth Group, Honor Society, Tutor, Spanish Club, Student Council	Church Youth Group, Spanish Club, Orchestra, Part-time Jobs	Sports, Honor Society, Student Council, Z-Club, FFA	Cheerleader, Sports, Science Club, French Club, Student Council, FFA	Boy Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, Jr/ Volunteer Firefighter	Sports, Student Council, Spanish Club, FCA, National Honor Society, Boy Scouts

Figure 4.11- Participant demographic characteristics and involvement in 4-H and other organizations.

Participant information is labeled using participant pseudonyms along the top of the figure and answers for each question are listed in the corresponding row. For the protection of the participants, identifiers such as names and county of residence were removed.

Much of the information collected varied among participants, specifically their level of education, college concentration/major, past jobs, and current occupation. However, many similarities existed among participant residence, 4-H participation and extracurricular activities. Most participants classified their childhood residence as a farm, specifically for raising livestock. While living on a farm is not required in 4-H, it was interesting to learn that all participants in the study were active in livestock projects. The Junior Leaders project was also a major 4-H activity among participants. Participants were proud they had completed 10 years of membership and were overall moderately involved in the 4-H program. Of the other extracurricular activities participants listed, most common were school or club sports and academic or student-led clubs.

4.3 Career Development Experiences

Research was guided by the question, "How do participants describe their career development experiences?". Use of qualitative methods allowed the researcher to collect information-rich descriptions of participant experiences throughout their lives. In this study, career development is defined as, "the constant psychological and behavioral processes and influences involved in building one's career path" (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2012, p. 15). When asked about their career path, participants shared memories and experiences ranging from early childhood to the daily experiences in their current position. Throughout the analysis of participant career development experiences,

it was found that experiences accumulate through development and are highly influential in career development and decision making. Three themes emerged among participant experiences as well. The theme of *Family* in career development emerged within participants' consideration of their family's thoughts, opinions, and interests in career development and decision making. Experiences with *Peers* also emerged throughout participant's descriptions of development. Learning experiences including *Mentors* (excluding family) occurred in the dialogue of every participant. These three themes were shared among participants and vital to their career development experiences.

4.3.1 Family

After two cycles of coding, *Family* emerged as a prominent theme in the career development experiences of participants. Despite the consideration of family as a genetic or environmental factor of influence, this theme of *Family* emerged among participants' learning experiences over time. Ranging from early childhood through formal education and even over the last few years, experiences with *Family* influenced the career development and decision making of participants.

When asked what careers she considered as a child, Charlie responded she thought she wanted to be a "daycare provider like my mom." While Charlie is now an associate attorney, her positive experiences at the family daycare and the association to her mother's career would easily make an appealing career goal to a child. Charlie traced her decision to be a lawyer back to third and fourth grade and made it her goal to do her best in school. Her academic performance and involvement presented opportunities for Charlie which required her to leave Indiana. She shared how she depended on her family to help her make these difficult decisions. "My parents and my siblings were all awesome

in helping weigh the pros and cons and figuring out, you know, what the best actions were for me, and when I made the decision [to move], they were there to rally [and help me get there]."

Two participants, Oliver and Wilma, shared how their career development experiences also took them outside of Indiana. Just after graduation, Oliver had to choose between an engineering job in Texas and one in Iowa. After considering both options, he chose the job that was closer to his home and family saying, "The downfall with [Texas] was that it was like over 18 hours of driving to get back home to Indiana....and Iowa was only about a six- or seven-hour drive, so that would be more feasible to make it home Christmas or Thanksgiving."

Wilma chose to study nutrition in college after seeing her family members struggle to stay healthy. She saw it as an opportunity to help educate herself and help others live healthier lives. Her degree program required an internship before her final certification, and she accepted an internship in Oklahoma, where she also landed her first job with extension. But after working out of state for a few years, both Oliver and Wilma decided to move back to Indiana so they could be closer to family.

Another participant, Heather, shared her pursuit of a potential career in agricultural extension or animal science research while obtaining her Master's degree and conducting research on dairy cattle reproduction. Heather described how her passion for agriculture stemmed from being raised on her family dairy farm and how she wanted to learn everything she could about working with animals. When discussing her research, Heather recalled her father managed the artificial insemination herd management program for their farm and her sister worked for a reproductive services company that specializes in

artificial insemination. She later decided research was not the right path. Heather's specialization in dairy reproduction on the farm is another example of family influence on career development and decision making.

<div align="center">4.3.2 Peers</div>

Young people who choose to become involved in school and other organizations have the opportunity to foster relationships among *Peers*. Participants shared experiences of meeting and making friends with similar interests or backgrounds as them, but also how *Peers* influenced them to make choices. Three participants – Mark, Heather, and Oliver – shared the role their *Peers* had in their involvement and career development experiences.

Early in his interview, Mark shared that he was homeschooled and he enjoyed being involved, because it gave him the opportunity to socialize and meet new people. Besides working on the family farm, Mark was an Eagle Scout and a member of the county 4-H program. While discussing his experiences in these two programs, Mark shared the significance of his small group of friends, "Most of my best friends [were the ones] I was in 4-H with." He went on to describe how this same group of friends were all involved in the 4-H Junior Leaders project and Boy Scouts, as well.

Two other participants, Heather and Oliver, discussed the influence of *Peers* in their college plans. Heather shared that she had always been a fan of Purdue University as a potential college choice, because of its great animal sciences program. However, a campus visit with friends helped her make the final decision. "I had some friends [at Purdue] and they kind of showed me around and it just seemed like a really great place to go." Oliver had a similar experience after completing his first year in the Purdue

Engineering program. He recalled what engineering specializations he had considered before choosing agricultural and biological engineering. "Going into ag engineering, I grew up as, you know, kind of on a rural farm in Indiana and was in 4-H...and I visited [Agricultural and Biological Engineering] and there was a lot of kids just like me...you know, farm kids, 4-H kids." Oliver's background and similarities to his *Peers* helped him determine his college specialization in agricultural engineering.

4.3.3 Mentors

Informal and formal *Mentors* who influenced career development were present among all participants. Their influence ranges from childhood experiences, throughout formal education, and within the careers of participants. Three participants shared some direct experiences where mentors influenced their choices and career development over time.

Currently a kindergarten teacher, Harper remembered fifth grade as the year she made her decision to pursue education as a career. She shared, "I loved my fifth grade teacher and so that's kind of what I've always wanted to do." Harper shared how she enjoyed Mrs. Stockwell's (her fifth grade teacher) classroom management practices and creativity as a student. However, her involvement in high school provided her first teaching opportunities. She recalled, "My biology teacher is the one that got me into science club...we did projects with youth in grades two and three...and we would have a science day." Harper shared a similar experience with her art teacher and joining art club. Overall, Harper considered her teachers great mentors and the inspiration for her career choice.

Heather shared the story of a career development and mentoring relationship with Dr. Schutz, her academic advisor in the Animal Sciences program. "I was a teaching assistant under him and I did research with him...he was just really great...encouraging me to go to grad school and...he was just as excited about dairy as I was." Heather reflected positively on her extracurricular involvement as a student at Purdue. She was a member of the Purdue Collegiate 4-H club, the dairy judging team, the dairy club, and the dairy challenge team. Dr. Schutz worked with Heather as the dairy club advisor and on the dairy challenge team. Heather shared that she is happy to still see him and work with him in his current position as the Assistant Director/Program Leader of Agriculture and Natural Resources with Purdue Extension. "He played an instrumental part in helping me see all the opportunities at Purdue and opportunities in the dairy industry. He kind of let me explore my own options, but was very encouraging and kind of pushed me out of my shell."

Charlie's interest in becoming a lawyer stemmed from a pair of lawyers who were friends of the family. She described her admiration for them as a child. "[They were] very respectful. I had a lot of respect for them as a child...I was very in awe of what they were able to do." However, the general subject of mentoring resonated with some of Charlie's formal mentoring experiences while working with her law firm. "My law firm has an actual formal mentorship program, so I have an actual partner who is my assigned mentor, as well as an associate advisor and then a lot of informal mentors." Charlie described her mentors as "awesome," and shared how they helped her learn the basics of the office, and offered her opportunities that someone in her position normally would not get to do.

4.4 4-H Youth Development Program Experiences

Guided by the research question, "How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experiences after completing their participation in the 4-H program?", this study was designed to explore the possible relationship between 4-H experiences and the career development and decision making of Indiana 4-H Alumni. The 4-H Youth Development Program considers experiential learning a valuable approach in teaching new skills through multiple hands-on activities and opportunities offered throughout the program. Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Theory of Development* suggests this learning process can continue and develop throughout a lifetime. Therefore, after completing their 4-H membership in 2005, participants had 10 years to reflect upon their learning experiences within the 4-H program. In all, participants responded positively when asked to describe their experiences as a member of the 4-H Youth Development Program, providing the researcher with information-rich descriptions. Within this component of data analysis, significant discussion emerged regarding the *4-H Club* experience, *Projects,* and *Additional 4-H Involvement*.

4.4.1 4-H Club

When asked about their 4-H experience, most participants began by sharing the creative name of their *4-H Club*. For many local programs, the *4-H Club* remains the primary opportunity to provide positive youth development experiences and the main source of interaction among 4-H members. It was evident from participant accounts that *4-H Club* structure and activity differ among project concentration and counties. Overall, the *4-H Club* experience was found to provide opportunities for youth participants to hold

leadership positions, contribute through community service projects, and interact with their fellow 4-H members.

Charlie recalled both positive and negative memories of her *4-H Club* experience. She described bonding with *4-H Club* friends during club meetings and throughout the fair as some of her most valuable memories in 4-H. However, her club's annual community service project, highway cleanup, was something she did not enjoy. The club's service project was an early experience for Charlie. Despite her feelings toward the activity, she shared how she learned the value of community service and chose to serve in other ways.

When asked about her *4-H Club* experience, Heather identified club meetings as a major part of 4-H. She described her club as an active club, holding monthly meetings throughout the year with multiple club leaders serving more than 100 4-H members. Heather shared how beneficial club activities and community service were to learning and bonding with other members. She described the club as "the place where a lot of the learning occurs." She recalled times when she and other 4-H members spoke and presented demonstrations in front of the club through which they were "getting to learn new things from their peers."

Wilma considered herself very involved in her *4-H Club*, stating she "went to all of [her club] meetings from [her] first year to [her] 10th year." She also served as the club treasurer. However, Wilma was most animated when she discussed a special community service activity and working with younger club members. "We re-did emergency road signs on light poles for people's houses and I was responsible for helping write the project grant...[It's] the only grant writing experience I have...I remember that project

vividly." She also recalled mentoring a first-year club member who was terrified to come to meetings. Being an active member in her *4-H Club* gave Wilma the opportunity to "help to further develop the younger members."

<div align="center">4.4.2 Projects</div>

The 4-H program offers youth the opportunity to explore specific subject areas through hands-on learning activities known as *Projects*. The Indiana 4-H Program offers *Projects* in multiple subject areas with activities ranging in difficulty appropriate to youth in grades 3-12. A final *Project* is completed over time through learning opportunities outside of the formal classroom and are most likely exhibited or displayed at a local county fair. *Project* experiences were discussed and remain some of the most cherished memories of all participants.

The Junior Leaders *Project* was discussed most among participants. Junior Leaders is just one option for youth within the Leadership and Citizenship project category. Charlie shared that after participating in the project for one year, she understood Junior Leaders "was [a] really good [opportunity] in terms of preparing kids to be engaged in their community." However, her involvement in sports and other extracurricular activities limited her ability to participate in club events and activities so she decided not to continue the project.

Mark, Wilma, Harper, and Oliver all expressed positive experiences in the Junior Leaders project. Mark and Wilma recalled working shifts in the Junior Leader food booth at the fair and spending time with friends in the club. Harper remembered her club's annual cheeseball fundraiser and some club service projects. Oliver shared a unique perspective of his experience. He discussed how Junior Leaders helped shape him as a

citizen by allowing him to volunteer alongside adults and contribute to the community. "Usually I'd help volunteer with the weigh-ins for the hogs and check-ins...so those were always led by an adult and they were always accepting of [my help]."

Animal science related *Projects*, commonly termed livestock *Projects*, were present in the experiences of all study participants. Charlie showed sheep and pigs, but only briefly described her experiences, as she was more active in her other projects. Because Wilma was raised on a hog farm, she shared that it was required to show pigs in her family. However, in an attempt to be different from her brothers, she decided to show sheep. Harper's experiences with livestock projects were family oriented, because all of her animals were kept at her grandfather's farm. She said that her memories of taking care of and working with her animals are special, because they were shared with family. She also enjoyed showing animals at the county fair. "When the 4-H week came, we were at the fair and we never left the barn, which I loved! [For some people], the fair was the midway, but to me it was the barn, you know, I had my boots on and stuff all over me from the animals, but I loved it." Oliver recalled a lot of time being dedicated to taking care of the 4-H animals, but he was most impressed with how much he learned during that time. "It's amazing how much you pick up on...what all an animal needs, feeding schedules, cleaning out pens, and [other responsibilities]. It was always a highlight to know the [scientific] terminology." Oliver also had fond memories of the 4-H fair, describing it as a "big social gathering," developing friendships with the family you penned next to, pulling pranks, and playing cards between chores and shows. Mark shared similar memories, but specifically shared the special bond that grows from

working closely with animals. "My first [cow] was my favorite one, and I cried when it went into the auction."

Multiple participants shared their experiences in other 4-H *Projects*, as well. The Indiana 4-H Program strives to offer *Project* opportunities or activities for a wide range of interest areas. Other *Project* areas relate to these categories: Communication and Expressive Arts, Engineering and Technological Science, Healthy Living, and Plant and Environmental Science. Each participant shared experiences from at least one project in each of these categories. Heather was not embarrassed to say that she participated in "probably a crazy amount" of 4-H *Projects*. Besides the dairy livestock project, the foods project was her favorite. "I did foods for all 10 years...I just loved to bake, and it taught me a lot of life skills, too." Mark described the skills he acquired from the electric project to be handy. "The electric project in 4-H got me the basic [skills] I needed. I was able to rewire my own house." Charlie described how she chose to experiment with new 4-H projects and participated in multiple ones each year. The sewing project and arts and crafts project were prominent in her interview. The sewing project was one of her first projects, and she continued it long enough to sew clothes independently. In the arts and crafts project, she completed many cross-stich displays, a craft she continues today. Harper shared that she participated in many 4-H *Projects* because she liked to try new things and meet new people. Most of Harper's projects were things she could do at home, sometimes with the help of her dad or grandmother. However, she specifically remembered her final year in the floriculture project. She said, "my last year of doing flowers I had to make a corsage, and I had no idea where to start with that, so I went to

the local flower shop and I asked the lady in there. I didn't know her at all, but she was so willing to help."

4.4.3 Additional 4-H Involvement

As members of the 4-H program, youth have the opportunity to learn new skills and gain new experiences by participating in as few or as many activities as they choose. Depending on their county of membership, Indiana 4-H members can participate in workshops, 4-H Camp, and other local or area contests. There are also State and National skills contests, educational workshops, and camps youth may attend. All participants were involved in their local 4-H club as well as exhibiting projects at their county fair. However, Mark and Heather shared their experiences of *Additional 4-H Involvement* and participation in statewide 4-H events.

Mark had the opportunity to attend both Indiana 4-H Round-Up and the Indiana State 4-H Junior Leader Conference during his time in 4-H. He described both opportunities as fun, remembering his friends and the social activities. However, he shared that he "hadn't been on a college campus before" and found his first visits to Purdue University and DePauw University to be very interesting. Heather briefly mentioned that she participated in 4-H Dairy judging contests and demonstration contests at the local level. She was excited to share that she also participated in 4-H Round-Up and the Indiana State Fair Achievement Trip. She had earned the opportunity to go on the Indiana State Fair Achievement Trip for her performance at State 4-H Dairy Judging Events. "That was an awesome trip to Washington, D.C., and really kind of a once in a lifetime thing for me, and it was something that I still remember."

4.5 Life Skill Development

Literature has shown the 4-H Youth Development Program contributes to the development of *Life Skills* in youth. The 4-H Youth Development Program provides youth with hands-on activities using the Experiential Learning Model and the Targeting Life Skills Model. Kolb (1984) characterized experiential learning as a holistic and lifelong process grounded in experience. Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Jones' (1976) four factors of influence exist within this process. This study observed the relationship between the two theories and the impact of the 4-H Youth Development Program on participant career development. During interviews, participants were asked to describe what *Life Skills* are required to be successful in their career. As discussion continued, participants shared how and where they developed *Life Skills* as a young person. All *Life Skills* identified by participants during interviews are displayed in Appendix H, presented in the same categories used in the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b).

4.5.1 Life Skills Essential to Career

When asked, "What *Life Skills* are required to be successful in your position?", participants listed and described similar things even though they are in different professions. Throughout the conversation of *Life Skills*, multiple skills were found to be universal among their professions and very important to the success of an employee. Seven *Life Skills* were discussed among the majority of participants, with at least one connected to each of the four quadrants of the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b).

Of those skills that relate to "managing and thinking," participants shared that problem solving and learning to use resources wisely are essential to their success. As a

systems engineer, Oliver oversees the entire process in the production of locomotives and needs to be prepared for problems at any moment. "You're kind of on the forefront of troubleshooting and making sure the build process goes smoothly, and if there's any, you know, issues, try to troubleshoot it and keep production moving." While Harper's professional challenges differ from Oliver's, she also has to be prepared when something goes wrong in her kindergarten classroom when students misbehave. "Classroom management is really important...[kids] still can be a little defiant depending on the kid, but I do try to stay positive at first and, you know, then if I have to pull out my mean voice later or sit them in time-out for a while to let them cool down, we obviously have to do stuff like that." As an associate attorney, Charlie is working to solve problems constantly. She described tasks that can be a back-and-forth process with clients or documents that need reviewed multiple times. "In a sense it's like keep trying until you reach an outcome that is okay for your client." For her current work, "There is a pretty steep learning curve...it is hard for me to learn about how a bond deal works. There are a million laws and regulations so I'm just constantly trying and constantly learning." In terms of managing resources, participants were all concerned about time management. Wilma, Harper, and Oliver all shared the importance of using their time wisely when balancing multiple responsibilities. Wilma said her job "is different everyday...and then sometimes you get another project assigned to you, and so being able to manage your time and get everything done is important."

Skills involving "relating to and caring for others" were shared frequently among participants. Being able to communicate effectively with others was a skill mentioned by all participants that is essential to success in their careers. Both Charlie and Oliver

discussed how important communication is when working with clients. They are

constantly communicating with co-workers and clients in person, on the phone, and via

email to ensure needs are met and questions are answered. Heather agrees on the

importance of communication in her position also. "Communication is probably the

biggest just because you are working with so many different people and groups that you

have to make sure everyone's on the same page or there can be some major issues."

Multiple participants demonstrate concern for others in their positions. When working

with youth, Heather and Harper offer encouragement and strive to spread positive

influence. Mark shows his concern for others through his customer service. As a propane

service technician, Mark approaches his responsibilities by "[being] polite and making

[the customer] feel like their needs are the most important."

"Giving and working" related skills were also considered necessary among

participants, but leadership skills were valued most within this category. Leadership is

difficult to define as it incorporates the functions of other skills. Hendricks (1996a)

described leadership as the skills utilized in assisting or directing a group in meeting its

goals. She also said "the qualities desired in a leader depend upon the situation in which

leadership is needed" and shared multiple qualities or competencies within leadership.

Participant dialogue included statements like, "Leadership is important," but did not

share how it is executed in their careers. Despite its broad definition, leadership skills can

be found within the stories of each participant. Until they advance as leaders within their

company, Charlie and Mark exercise leadership by doing their best, working well with

others and learning from their superiors. Heather and Wilma are leaders within their

communities providing the public with knowledge and resources for a healthy lifestyle

and the opportunity to build a successful future. Harper leads a classroom of children, teaching them basic math and reading skills while reinforcing good character. Oliver leads in decision-making and problem solving to ensure special customer requests are incorporated into their final product. Leadership is exhibited in each of these professions when participants combine their skills to create positive results.

Skills related to "general being or control of the self," such as responsibility and discipline, were discussed among participants. Charlie described how demanding her position can be and shared that responsibility and discipline are a necessity. "My law firm has a minimum hour regimen, and sometimes those hours can be demanding. Projects come in at the last minute and you have to get them done." Wilma has extra administrative responsibilities in her position and exhibits responsibility and discipline by not sacrificing quantity for quality in her work. Mark's position allows him to work from a company vehicle as he responds to calls from clients and the company. Working independently requires individuals to be responsible for themselves and disciplined in their performance.

4.5.2 Life Skills Credited to the 4-H Youth Development Program

After discussing *Life Skills* that are essential in their careers, participants shared stories of how and where they learned those life skills and others. Three *Life Skills*, wise use of resources, leadership, and self-responsibility, from the group of skills considered essential to one's career were developed during participation in the 4-H Youth Development Program. Eight *Life Skills* were discussed among the majority of participants, with at least one connected to each of the four quadrants, representing the four H's: Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, of the Targeting Life Skills Model (1996b).

Study participants credited these and many other *Life Skills* to the 4-H program and shared learning experiences and activities to support their opinions.

Youth in 4-H pledge their Head to clearer thinking. Participants credit two skills related to using their head (managing and thinking) to their experiences in the 4-H program. Four participants shared experiences when 4-H taught them how to learn. Wilma and Oliver both shared how their 4-H projects stimulated questions and created learning experiences. Wilma mentioned a list of people involved in 4-H that would be willing to help her when she had a question. Oliver shared how quickly he was able to learn more about animals from dedicating extra time to his cows and pigs. However, Heather recalled a foods project that taught her a valuable lesson. "I remember one of my foods projects just being awful and having to make them again, but that's kind of the learning process, you know, you try something and maybe it's not very good, so you have to change it a little bit." Using resources wisely is another skill participants shared they learned through experiences with 4-H. Harper reached out to the owner of a local flower shop for help making a corsage for her floriculture project. This is an example of using resources wisely, when answers cannot be found elsewhere. The resource most participants referred to in this case was time. Charlie remembers being a poor manager of time on the topic of completing her 4-H projects in advance. "I was awful at [time management] in 4-H...and learning from that experience has been extremely helpful now." Oliver shared a similar learning experience involving time management.

In 4-H and farming, you know, we're always trying to figure out ways to do things better, do things more efficiently...4-H is a lot of work so you want to make sure that you're using your time wisely...we used to have hog feed bowls and we

changed to an automatic feeder that rationed the feed, and we used to have a basin where we'd pour buckets of water into and we switched over to the water nipples so [the hogs] could drink as much water as they want to drink...that was the biggest thing, you know, I gained from 4-H was to use my time wisely.

The second of four H's represents Heart, while youth pledge their heart to greater loyalty. Two skills concerning the "relating and caring for other people" category were also credited to the 4-H program. All participants shared being in 4-H helped them build social skills and make new friends. Harper's story is a great example, because she did not live or go to school in the county where she participated in 4-H. She shared, "I love the friendships that I made from 4-H...our county is big, but our town is small, and I know a lot of people in our town, but I got to meet a lot of other kids throughout the county by doing 4-H." Mark was homeschooled and claimed that 4-H allowed him to get out and meet new people. Other participants reflected on their friendships and memories with friends during the 4-H fair. The ability to create nurturing relationships was another skill developed from 4-H experiences in this category. All participants shared experiences where nurturing relationships grew between peers and family members while completing their 4-H projects or during the 4-H Fair. Oliver specifically remembered a few of his brother's steers causing trouble at the fair. He shared, "If any steer acted up it was always the family's problem, not just an individual brother's problem...we all took care of one another." However, Wilma shared an example how she learned to develop nurturing relationships by nurturing others. "I remember there was this little first-year member that was terrified to come to [our club] meeting, and so I befriended her and took her under

my wing...[I was able to help] further develop the younger members even when I was obviously still a youth in 4-H."

Skills for "giving and working" were most frequent among participant discussion. These skills relate to the pledge members make using their Hands for larger service. Learning the value of community service, leadership, and to become self-motivated occurs within the 4-H program. Four participants mentioned doing some kind of community service project with their 4-H club or in the Junior Leaders project. These participants collectively described community service as a large part of their 4-H experience and shared how they enjoyed helping others in need. Leadership was another skill in this category. While discussing learning how to be a leader, participants shared their experiences as officers in their 4-H clubs and the Junior Leaders project. Heather described 4-H as one of her first leadership experiences, but also that leadership is "something you can continually learn...something you're always building on." Heather, Wilma and Oliver agreed that their early leadership experiences in 4-H led them to pursue leadership opportunities in other areas. Oliver shared, "The nice thing with 4-H was that it gave you the opportunity for leadership roles earlier on...it made it easier to participate in more clubs as you get into high school and college." Participants also shared instances where 4-H taught them self-motivation. Charlie was motivated by the opportunity to try something new and choose from a wide array of projects in 4-H. She specifically enjoyed the freedom of the requirements of the recycling project, describing how she "could really be creative." Wilma shared a story where she was motivated to improve her showmanship skills after witnessing her brother's disappointment in the overall showmanship contest.

It was kind of a devastating moment for him, and at that point, I had no interest in doing that showmanship contest...something after that made me be like, 'I want to do this.' So the next year I actually made it in [the overall showmanship contest] and didn't win, but my ninth year [of 4-H] I didn't make it into the contest at all...When I didn't make it in, I made a goal to myself that when I was showing livestock around at the jackpot show and what not that I would show at every showmanship contest there was. I didn't care what kind of day it was, I was doing it, because that was the only way I was going to make myself better and be able to win the next year. So I did just that. I stayed, you know, when I showed in the first class in the regular show, I stayed until the end so I could show in that showmanship class. Then my 10th year I came back and I actually didn't think I was going to make it into the contest, but I did in the end and I won.

The fourth H represents Health pledged for a better living. However, skills related to "healthy living and being" were not as significant to study participants. Learning to be responsible was considered to be a valuable skill, but it was the only skill in this category credited to 4-H among participants. Five participants shared experiences where 4-H taught them to be responsible. Most of those stories related to all of the experiences and responsibilities within caring for livestock. However, Charlie and Wilma agreed there were multiple opportunities within the overall 4-H experience that taught them responsibility.

4.6 Perceived Impact of Indiana 4-H Program Membership

This section presents the perceived impact of the Indiana 4-H Program upon the six alumni who participated in this study. Perception is defined as, "An idea, a belief or

an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something" (Perception, 2015). In this study, participants shared their perceptions of the impact from their membership in the 4-H Youth Development Program. As alumni from the class of 2005, participants have since had the opportunity to reflect upon their 4-H experience and may have continued their 4-H involvement in some way. Participants shared reflections on the past as well as perceived impact 4-H had upon their present and future lives.

When participants were asked, "What they consider to be most valuable from their participation in the 4-H program?", they responded by describing life skills. Mark referenced his social skills saying, "the friendships you gain... [is] one of the best things [about 4-H]." Oliver reflected on many life skills saying, "The biggest things I gained from 4-H was to use my time wisely, work hard...and keep a level head [in stressful situations]." "[The skills you learn] will just benefit you later in life for other opportunities and avenues. [It gives you] a few more tools in your pocket." Wilma not only valued the skills she learned, but also credited them for her success in securing a job. "I gained the skills that I need for this job through being in 4-H, and if I wasn't in 4-H, I just don't know that I...I feel like I would have gained some of those skills, but I don't think I would've gained them and honed in on them as much without having those 10 years of practice."

As the discussion of impact continued, some participants shared that participation in the 4-H program influenced their participation in other extracurricular activities. Oliver discussed the value of being involved in 4-H at such a young age. Youth can begin 4-H in third grade and some counties offer the "clover buds" or Mini 4-H program for youth in kindergarten through second grade. "I think the 4-H program made it easier to participate

in more clubs as you got into high school and college... [4-H] gave you the opportunity for leadership roles earlier on as well." Every participant in this study was also a member of another youth program or extracurricular activity. Participants discussed how each club or organization was beneficial in different ways and taught similar skills, but 4-H was unique among them. Wilma compared 4-H to athletics. "I played sports, and those were all really teams, and so, although I can set a goal for a team, I don't in the end have full control over that. [In 4-H] I had 100% control over my outcome, and so I set those goals and I did it!"

Near the end of their interviews, participants moved their discussion from past to present and even the future. All participants shared positive comments on their experiences in 4-H and continue to view the program positively. Harper shared, "I loved 4-H. I'd definitely recommend any kid to do it!" Some participants have since learned about projects and opportunities they wish they had known about in their tenure. Oliver was excited to learn about the 4-H program's science initiatives and reflected on some projects he wished he had tried. "There's a ton more projects offered that I didn't really have as much exposure to, and I really wish I would've done a little bit more, like small engines and electric." Others shared how they wished they had been more involved and participated in more 4-H activities. Heather shared, "I was kind of shy and so sometimes that would hold me back from trying new things and so I think really trying anything would've been helpful in really pushing me out of my comfort zone...[I wish I would have] taken advantage of any opportunity that I didn't try, different projects or different activities, and maybe going on more trips." Mark simply wished he had visited the Indiana State Fair when he was in 4-H. Harper thought, "Looking back I wish I would

have [gone on trips]. The Junior Leaders went on a trip, but for some reason I couldn't go...and my cousin went to 4-H camp every year and loved it, and I really wish I would've went, but I didn't really even know about it."

Five participants discussed how they are currently involved with the Indiana 4-H Program. As Purdue Extension staff, Heather and Wilma are more active than normal 4-H alumni, and have goals to improve the program and provide positive influence to 4-H youth. Harper enjoys continuing her involvement by serving as a project judge, volunteering with Mini 4-H, and recruiting her students to join. "I talk to my kids about [Mini 4-H] and send home papers around [enrollment]." Mark and Oliver simply develop nostalgia upon visiting the county and state fairs.

Some participants shared their plans for future involvement in 4-H. Both Charlie and Mark suggested they would recommend 4-H to their children. In addition, Charlie shared, "Assuming we are still here whenever we have kids, [we'd want] to give them the option to do the fun things that we did...be able to give our kids the same type of upbringing that I think we've both had, where the goal is to do the best that you can, be the best you can, and to give back when you can." Mark talked about the 4-H show supply box that his family has passed down through the generations, "I suppose some day when I have kids I will get it back."

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations interpreted by the researcher as a result of this research. The chapter begins by restating the study's purpose and research question. The researcher's conclusions on career development and impact of the Indiana 4-H Program are presented next. This is followed by a discussion of the purpose of the study, theoretical applications, methods evaluation, and significance of results. The chapter concludes providing the researcher's recommendations for future research.

5.2 Purpose and Research Question

This study was a response to the absence of updated research and evaluation of the Indiana 4-H Program. It was also designed to explore the possible relationship between 4-H experiences and the career decisions and development of its past members. The following research question was answered through qualitative methods in this study.

- How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experiences after completing their participation in the 4-H program?

Answers to the following questions were also found as a result of this research.

- What factors are most influential on the career development and career decision making of youth involved in the Indiana 4-H Program?

- What life skills do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 attribute to success in their career?

- What life skills do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 attribute to their participation in the 4-H program?

- What do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 consider most valuable from their participation in the 4-H program?

- How did participation in the 4-H program influence Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005's participation in other extracurricular activities?

- How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 view and remain involved with the 4-H program currently?

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusions were developed from the analysis of data collected from the six Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 and are presented in the following sections corresponding to the question answered as a result of the research. Participants included in this study all had at least six years of membership in the Indiana 4-H Youth Development Program, but their experiences differed based upon factors such as geographic location and level of participation. As a result, the findings of this study are not generalizable to the experience of all 4-H alumni beyond this sample. In order to retain clarity of study limitations, conclusions are written in passive voice.

5.3.1 Experiences and Task Approach Skills are Perceived as Influential in Career

Development and Career Decision Making

During semistructured interviews, participants shared their career development experiences, describing how they decided to pursue their careers. Half of participant accounts began as early as elementary school, while others considered multiple career options and decided as adults. Krumboltz, Mitchell, and Jones' (1976) *Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making* identifies four factors of influence to career decision making: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. All four factors of influence were present within participant descriptions. However, individual career decisions were dependent upon learning experiences, and those task approach skills developed as a result of them.

Charlie and Harper recognized their career choices in elementary school and claimed their experiences with mentors initially held their interest as further experiences and skills prepared them for their first job. Oliver had a similar path in career development as early interest in engineering and architecture guided him to accumulate more skills and experiences in Agricultural Engineering.

Heather and Wilma considered multiple career options prior to their decision to become Extension Educators with Purdue Extension. Experiences with mentors, personal interests (developed from experiences and environment), and extracurricular experiences eventually lead them to their decisions. Mark first considered the engineering and agricultural industries, but realized he did not want to work in an office setting. His extracurricular experiences helped him develop an interest in serving others and many marketable skills, both valuable in his current job.

All four of Krumboltz's et al. (1976) factors of influence were present in the descriptions of study participants. However, participants perceived their experiences and those skills developed from experience as the main reasons for their individual career development and decisions.

5.3.2 Responsibility, Communication, and Problem Solving Skills are Perceived as Necessary in the Workforce

After discussing the nature of participant career decisions, participants were asked to describe the life skills they perceive as necessary to be successful in their position. There was an overwhelming response to this question as all six participants described multiple life skills and explained how they utilize them in their careers. A complete list of life skills specified in this section of interviews can be found in Appendix H. However, responsibility, communication, and problem solving skills were represented most among all life skills perceived as necessary to participants' individual careers.

Responsibility was discussed among participants in terms of work ethic and undertaking projects or tasks. Participants discussed the additional demands that sometimes occur in their positions. Wilma and Charlie shared some experiences when they exercised responsibility. Wilma assumed extra responsibilities when her office was low-staffed and many assignments were not complete. In Charlie's line of work, projects come in at the very last minute, and this requires her to work more than the daily work hours. These are just a few examples of how participants demonstrate responsibility in their careers.

All participants described how communication was necessary in their careers, despite the difference in their professions. Every participant explained the need for active

communication between co-workers and their supervisor, but Charlie Mark and Oliver shared alternative needs for the communication. All three participants work directly with a client or customer. They shared multiple thoughts on the importance of effective communication and customer service.

Participants also discussed the importance of problem solving in their jobs. Not every day on the job is a good day. Mark solves problems in his daily work servicing propane tanks. Oliver tries to avoid problems while overseeing the production of locomotives, but if something happens, he has to find the most efficient solution quickly. Problem solving is necessary on an individual level, but also when working collaboratively. When improvements need to be made, Heather and Wilma work with committees and volunteers in order to make good decisions.

Participants claimed many life skills as necessary for success in their positions. However, responsibility, communication, and problem solving skills remained most prominent throughout the interpretation of interviews. All three of these skills are valuable across different industries and professions. Therefore, these skills are perceived by participants to be necessary to the workforce.

5.3.3 Life Skills are Perceived as Valuable Assets Gained from Participation in 4-H

When asked what was most valuable from their 4-H experiences, participants responded with life skills. They shared how 4-H taught them skills that helped them develop as a person, and also skills that prepared them for a successful future. Participants shared multiple life skills, which they attributed to their experiences in the 4-H Youth Development Program, but the most profound among participants were skills

relating to the Heart and Hands quadrants of the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b).

Life skills related to the Heart that were perceived to be learned through 4-H were social skills and nurturing relationships. This was evident from the stories that all six participants shared most often within interviews. Making friends and meeting new people was a theme throughout discussion of 4-H experiences, and multiple participants have sustained these relationships over time. Relationships with parents, club leaders, and other community members were also interpreted from experiences in 4-H. Those participants who grew up on farms shared special memories with parents, siblings, and other family members while working on the farm or with animals. However, other participants grew relationships with adults who were willing to share their skills and assist with 4-H projects.

Two skills utilizing Hands for working and giving were also perceived to be learned through the 4-H program. Five participants shared 4-H experiences where both the importance of community service and self-motivation skills were learned. Community service was mentioned as a large part of participant's 4-H experiences. It was included in 4-H club activities as well as Junior Leaders and countywide events. Participants shared that they liked the feeling of doing good for others and learned to give back in many ways. Self-motivation skills were learned through completing projects and achieving personal goals. The 4-H program allows youth the opportunity to be rewarded for their creativity and hard work. This alone was motivation enough for some participants, while others wanted to be champions. Participants shared special memories

of personal goals that motivated them to become a better showman or raise a higher quality animal.

Participants perceived life skills as most valuable because they are still exercising them today. They recognized 4-H was beneficial to them while they were members, but it remains important to them today. As citizens of their communities, employees in their company, and future parents, participants appreciate 4-H for the unique way it taught them life skills and empowered them for a successful future.

5.3.4 Perception of 4-H as Influential to Participation in Other Clubs and Organizations

With membership beginning as early as third grade, the 4-H Youth Development Program offers the opportunity for youth to be involved at a young age. Participants shared stories of the fun they had and opportunities to learn new things as elementary-aged youth. All participants were involved in at least one extracurricular activity in addition to 4-H, and some of them perceived 4-H as the gateway to becoming involved.

Oliver and Wilma shared that their experiences in 4-H made it easier for them to join other clubs in school and become more involved. Oliver suggested that what he had already accomplished through 4-H was similar to a club like student council, and he was less nervous to join. Wilma credited 4-H to her participation in high school and shared that 4-H offered something unique among other activities. She used sports as an example of a team working toward a common goal, but in 4-H she had complete control over her outcome and could set and accomplish her goals independently.

Participants in this study perceived 4-H as a valuable experience from the beginning of their tenure. The program provides opportunities for youth to learn and develop life skills prior to opportunities offered in middle school and high school. Having

this experience prepares youth to assume involvement and possibly leadership positions in other extracurricular activities.

5.3.5 Positive Perception of 4-H

Throughout interviews, participants made clear the value they placed upon 4-H program. They shared statements of love for 4-H and cherished memories that they claimed they would never trade. Overall, participants in this study perceived their memories as 4-H members as positive.

The discussion of overall perception led participants to share how they attempt to remain involved in 4-H as well. Multiple participants are actively involved in 4-H, serving as volunteers, judges, and even Purdue Extension Staff. Other participants shared that they continue to tell people about 4-H and visit the county or state fair often. However, it was most interesting to hear what participant perceptions of 4-H make them think about their future family involvement in the program. One participant specifically mentioned instilling the 4-H motto, "making the best better," within the values of their children and recommending that they do 4-H if they choose to. Another participant is anxious for his children to show livestock in 4-H so they can use the treasured family show box. Again, the participation in the 4-H Youth Development Program was perceived positively among participants in this study.

5.4 Discussion

This section begins by discussing the research question, "How do Indiana 4-H Alumni from the class of 2005 describe their career development experiences after completing their participation in the 4-H program?" and what was found as a result of the

study. The researcher also discusses two theoretical applications, which emerged from results. This is followed by a discussion of study significance.

The purpose of this study was to explore a potential relationship between career development and decision making and participation in the 4-H Youth Development Program. However, the research question was phrased in a broad sense knowing that, because of the nature of qualitative inquiry, the study may produce additional results. Results did provide an answer to the question "how?" as participants shared many stories of memories and people in their lives that played a part in their career development and decision making. Participants also discussed how their education affected their career decisions and how the job search affected them. One participant shared a statement describing how 4-H led them to their career. However, one statement of this nature only encourages the need to pursue further research on this subject.

The two theories used in this study, Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Theory of Development* and Krumboltz et al.'s (1976) *Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making*, provided a frame and guided research and interpretation of results. However, results of the study yielded theoretical applications worth further discussion.

The first application involved the nature of influence from experiences. An Experience was defined in this study as, "The intersubjective everyday world as it is lived, felt, undergone, made sense of, and accomplished by humans. [This includes human] interactions, intentions and the meaning they attach to their actions" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 100). As this study explored perceptions of experiences on career development, contradictions emerged between interpretation of influence from environment or experience. Krumboltz's et al. (1976) *Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making*

identifies four factors of influence to career decision making: genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. He categorizes influence of family and community as an influence of environment. However, results of this study involving influence from these areas were interpreted as experiences. One of Kolb's (1984) characteristics of experiential learning states, "Learning involves transactions between the person and the environment" (Kolb, 1984, p. 34). Although it seems obvious, this characteristic centers on the dual meaning of the term experience. This includes the subjective— personal experience involving feelings or opinions, and the objective— environmental experience in terms of participation. Krumboltz et al. (1976) argued that differences in families produce "conditions for the individual that may make a difference in that individual's educational and occupational preferences, skills, and selections." The researcher argues that this influence is a result of learning experiences. While the presence and resources of family, peers, and mentors remains environmental, influence upon the individual depends upon opinions developed through learning experiences. An example of this wavering influence would be a child's choice of whether or not to pursue a future in agriculture after working and being raised on the family farm. The environment provides exposure to agriculture and the organization of a farm, but career decision making is influenced from opinions developed after a combination of positive and negative experiences on the farm.

The second application is considering an updated label for Krumboltz et al. (1976) factor of influence, task approach skills. Task-approach skills are the fourth influence in career decision making mentioned by Krumboltz et al. (1976). These skills include performance standards, work habits, perceptual and cognitive processes, and

emotional responses, and are the result of interactions among the remaining three factors of influence. These skills are developed over time, and in essence result from experience. This description and the interpretation of results from this study, make life skills a type of task approach skills.

Participant interviews provided a snapshot of what the Indiana 4-H Program looked like in 2005. The majority of participants lingered in discussion of their livestock project experiences and did not participate in local, area, or state workshops, camps, and contests. With a changing society, 4-H must remain relavant to modern youth. This is possible by continuing to offer a wide variety of projects and strategically marketing the Indiana 4-H Program to all audiences. However, opportunities for youth to engage in more than their local club and exhibition at the county fair were perceived very valuable among participants and may be the key to increasing participation in 4-H. The Junior Leaders project and other area and state opportunities should be emphasized in communication and should be accessible to all youth interested.

All of the 35 life skills presented in the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b), were interpreted from participant dialogue. However, those skills related to healthy living (healthy lifestyle choices, stress management, disease prevention, and personal safety) were interpreted the least among participant dialogue. As a mission mandate, Healthy Living knowledge and experiences should be shared with 4-H members as much as Science and Citizenship experiences and opportunities.

Overall, the study results agree with previous literature claiming that the 4-H Youth Development Program contributes to life skill development in youth. This study is also significant in providing a collection of literature relative to the 4-H Youth

Development Program. This collection includes summaries and references of the 4-H

Program's use of experiential learning, the eight Essential Elements (Kress, 2005), the

"4-H Study of Positive Youth Development" (Lerner et al., 2005), and the Targeting Life

Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b). With the Essential Elements (Kress, 2005) and the

Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996b) not included themselves in the peer

reviewed literature base, studies such as this one further demonstrate the usefulness of

these models and serve to validate them among the research community. Finally, results

of this study serve as a response to the absence of updated research and evaluation of the

impact of the Indiana 4-H Program.

<div align="center">5.5 Recommendations for Future Research</div>

In order to further the results of this research, it is recommended that longitudinal

and other methods be utilized. Using the same methods and framework, longitudinal

work could further the knowledge of career development and decision making within

each of the three developmental stages of Kolb's (1976) *Experiential Learning Theory of*

Development. Quantitative or mixed methods would allow this research to reach a larger

and potentially more diverse population, while creating knowledge with fewer limitations

to generalization. It is crucial to expand this research to include the experiences of alumni

and 4-H participants from a variety of racial and ethnic minority groups.

Multiple areas of future research are recommended to answer some remaining

questions about career development and the 4-H Youth Development Program. Specific

evaluations of career development experiences in 4-H activities would be valuable to

improve the impact of 4-H activities and knowledge of career development. Research

exploring use of the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks 1996b) in 4-H and other

youth development organizations could increase validation of the model and knowledge of life skill development in youth. Finally, same as the work of McKee, Talbert, and Barkman (2002), it is recommended the perceptions of change within the 4-H program be measured using an Alumni population.

5.6 Recommendations for Indiana 4-H

Recommendations concerning the Indiana 4-H Program were formed as a result of this research. The reader is reminded the findings of this study are not generalizable to the experience of 4-H alumni beyond this sample. Consequently, this section provides the Indiana 4-H Program with practical recommendations to explore regarding future research audiences, marketing or communication of additional 4-H involvement opportunities, life skill development, and Indiana 4-H alumni relations.

Participation in the Junior Leaders project was not required of study participants, however, most participants were involved and all participants mentioned Junior Leaders during interviews. The Junior Leaders project allows 4-H members to play a more prominent leadership role in their local clubs and throughout the community. Further research of this population is recommended to explore career development experiences, additional life skill development, and perceived impact among this group.

Additional 4-H Involvement emerged as a theme among participant experiences, however, multiple participants shared these opportunities as something they regret not taking advantage of as 4-H members. Most participants were either not aware of these opportunities or did not know how to register to participate in them. Among study participants, additional 4-H involvement opportunities like Indiana 4-H Round-Up and the Indiana State Fair Achievement Trip were perceived as valuable experiences and

should be emphasized in communication and be made accessible to all youth interested. Increased engagement in these activities could be the key to increasing participation in 4-H overall.

Among the life skills perceived by participants as credited to the 4-H program, those skills within the Health quadrant of the Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1999b) were referenced least in the data. As one of the three "Mission Mandates" (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011a) of the 4-H Youth Development Program, extra emphasis on healthy living should be considered in program planning. Volunteers can incorporate health-related skill experiences in their local club activities. Project curriculum can also be developed aligning with the healthy living initiative.

Concerning future research with Indiana 4-H alumni, a formal alumni database would be a valuable tool in study recruitment. Increasing 4-H Alumni relations overall, may broaden 4-H opportunities and promotion of the program. Three of six study participants have continued to be involved with the program since completing their tenure. However, thousands more alumni exist that may be willing to give back to the 4-H program as a donor, research participant, or volunteer.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Purdue University Institutional Review Board letter of exemption

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDS

To:	BRIAN TALBERT
	AGAD 224
From:	JEANNIE DICLEMENTI, Chair
	Social Science IRB
Date:	05/22/2015
Committee Action:	**Exemption Granted**
IRB Action Date:	05/22/2015
IRB Protocol #:	1505016095
Study Title:	Alumni Perceptions of Career Development Skills Gained Through the Indiana 4-H Program

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed the above-referenced study

application and has determined that it meets the criteria for exemption under 45 CFR

46.101(b)(2) .

If you wish to make changes to this study, please refer to our guidance "**Minor Changes**

Not Requiring Review" located on our website at

http://www.irb.purdue.edu/policies.php. For changes requiring IRB review, please submit

an **Amendment to Approved Study** form or **Personnel Amendment to Study** form,

whichever is applicable, located on the forms page of our website

www.irb.purdue.edu/forms.php. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

Appendix B: Recruitment Advertising Materials

Recruitment advertisement on Indiana 4-H Facebook Page

Recruitment advertisement distributed to Indiana 4-H Youth Educators

Appendix C: Semistructured Interview Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Header: (Participants ID) First Interview

Setting: (Location, Date, Time)

Briefing on Interview Subject and Introductions

Interview Guide:

- Career

    o Tell me about your career path…

    o What does a typical day look like in your position?

    o What were your teenage career goals?

- Life skills

    o What life skills are necessary to be a successful (participant's job title)

- Overall 4-H Experience

    o Tell me about your 4-H experience…

    o In which specific 4-H projects, clubs, trips, and programs did you

    participate?

    o What were your most valuable experiences in 4-H?

Conclusion

Express appreciation and schedule second interview.

Appendix D: Participant Email Communication

Thank you so much for your interest in participating in our study!

In order to participate in this study you must meet a few simple requirements that are listed below.

- You were a member of the Indiana 4-H Program for at least six years
- You completed the 4-H program (last year of participation due to age requirements) in 2005

Once you confirm that you meet these requirements, we will begin the process of the study by scheduling an interview with you. This can take place in a public setting near you or virtually through an internet program such as Skype or WebEx. The interview will last no longer than 60 minutes and will be audio recorded. Any identifiable information of yours will be protected with the use of a participant number and pseudonym. You will have the opportunity to review your interview during a follow-up meeting. At the conclusion of our follow-up meeting your audio files will be destroyed, until then all transcripts and recordings will be kept in a password protected folder only accessible to myself and the Principal Investigator.

I have the following dates and times available to schedule your first interview. Please let me know which one works best for you and if you'd like to do a face-to-face or virtual interview.

(List of dates and times)

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study you may contact myself or my advisor, the Principal Investigator of this study, Dr. Allen Talbert at btalbert@purdue.edu.

Thank you again so much for your interest in our study. I look forward to meeting you soon!

Alli E. Lee
Graduate Student and Co-investigator
Dept. of Youth Development & Ag Education
Purdue University
Email: harris49@purdue.edu

B. Allen Talbert, Professor and Principal Investigator
Dept. of Youth Development & Agricultural Education
Purdue University
Email: btalbert@purdue.edu

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form

IRB Protocol #1505016095

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
Alumni Perceptions of Career Development Skills Gained Through the Indiana 4-H Program
Dr. B. Allen Talbert, Principal Investigator
Youth Development Agricultural Education
Purdue University

What is the purpose of this study?

This study will measure the effect of the Indiana 4-H program upon its members who completed the program in the year 2005. It is important that studies such as this one be conduct on a regular basis to ensure the 4-H program remains relevant among a changing society. Funding for this study was available through a research grant with the Indiana 4-H Foundation. Your participation will provide information needed about your experiences as a member of the Indiana 4-H program. This study will continue until 8-10 participants enroll.

What will I do if I choose to be in this study?

As a participant, you will meet with a researcher for a series of two interviews. You have the option to interview in person or with an internet communication tool (WebEx, Skype, etc.). You and the researcher arrange the date, time, and location of your first interview upon your enrollment in the study. Prior to beginning your first interview, you must complete a short demographic questionnaire provided by the researcher in addition to this consent form. Data shared in the questionnaire serves as a resource for potential questions asked during the first interview. After completing the required forms, you answer a series of questions about your experiences as a member in the 4-H program. The first interview will last no more than 60 minutes. At the conclusion of the first interview, you and the researcher arrange a second interview. The second interview allows you to check the transcription of your first interview and add anything you previously forgot.

How long will I be in the study?

Total time commitment to this study includes a maximum of two 60-minute interviews.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?

Participation in this study involves minimal risk, meaning the risk is no greater than you would encounter in daily life.

Are there any potential benefits?

Your participation in this study will directly benefit the Indiana 4-H program in its effort to provide the most positive experiences to its members. We hope that your involvement in this study will also help reconnect you to your local 4-H program and become more involved as an alumni or an adult volunteer.

Will I receive payment or other incentive?

At the completion of the final interview, participants will receive a small 4-H related gift in appreciation for their time spent while participating in this study.

Will information about me and my participation be kept confidential?

Participant information is kept completely confidential. Transcriptions and analysis will not contain participant identifiers. The project's research records may be reviewed by departments at Purdue University responsible for regulatory and research oversight. Identifiable data received through recorded interview audio will be protected with the use of a participant number and a pseudonym for each participant. Transcriptions are kept in a password-protected folder on co-investigators Purdue University account, only accessible by co-investigator and PI, throughout the study. Upon completion of transcriptions, all audio files will be destroyed.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or, if you agree to participate, you can withdraw your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Who can I contact if I have questions about the study?

If you have questions, comments or concerns about this research project, you can talk to one of the researchers. Please contact:

Dr. B. Allen Talbert	Alli E. Harris
Youth Development & Agricultural Education	YDAE
AGAD Rm. 223	AGAD Rm. 221
615 W. State St.	615 W. State St.
West Lafayette, IN 47907	West Lafayette, IN 47907
btalbert@purdue.edu	harris49@purdue.edu
765-494-8423	765-496-3266

If you have questions about your rights while taking part in the study or have concerns about the treatment of research participants, please call the Human Research Protection Program at (765) 494-5942, email (irb@purdue.edu)or write to:

      Human Research Protection Program - Purdue University
      Ernest C. Young Hall, Room 1032
      155 S. Grant St.
      West Lafayette, IN 47907-2114

Documentation of Informed Consent

I have had the opportunity to read this consent form and have the research study explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research study, and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research study described above. I will be offered a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____   _____
      Participant's Signature   Date

_____
      Participant's Name

_____   _____
      Researcher's Signature   Date

Appendix F: Demographic Guide

Demographic Guide   IRB Protocol #1505016095

Name:

Highest Level of Education: (Circle One)

High School   Associates Degree   Bachelor's Degree

Higher Degree (MS, MBA, PhD)

Concentration/Major (If Applicable):

Current Occupation:

Past Jobs:

In Grades 3-12…

What Indiana County did you reside in?

Type of residence: (Circle One)

Central City more than 50,000   Suburb of City more than 50,000

Town/City 10,000-50,000   Town under 10,000 rural non-farm   Farm

What projects/clubs/programs did you participant in as a 4-H member?

In what other extracurricular activities/club/programs did you participate outside of 4-H?

Appendix G: In Vivo Coding Codebook

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
goal	planning to go into	grew up on a farm	education	wanted to be	trek
like my mom	interested in animal science	changed my mind	education & high ability	needed to get away	always interested
teacher	extension or research	didn't have any interest in teaching	busy	farm	legos
lawyer	fun	switched	literacy	in your blood	really interested
friends of the family	not my passion	connecting people to the farm	specials	freedom	art classes
really respected them	ag extension	lead me to extension	always wanted to	space	math
good exposure to them	odd jobs	people connect extension with agriculture	loved it	to do what you want	purdue
respect	helping parents	really good support for extension	like working with younger kids	enjoyed	ag engineering
in awe	awesome	plan and do programming	babysitter	raised beef cows	economy
boring	incorporate animal science	mold the future	somebody need me	spent a lot of time	whatever was available
working on anything related to finance	work with kids	nutrition based	help out when i can	my first one	back to indiana
do what i'm told	fun	incorporating physical activity	i don't know	cried	family

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
drafting documents	passionate about agriculture	kinship parenting	always wanted to be a teacher	not to get to close	8-10 hour days
mentors are awesome	experience every facet of the farm	not really in my comfort zone	5th grade	phone calls from the office	communication
paper, computer work and editing	share the passion with kids	local bank that likes to partner up and do things	loved my 5th grade teacher	customers	coordinate
interesting	no two days are alike	wanted to	i don't know	truck	specific customer requests
highlight student	program planning	mother wouldn't let me	management is important	drive around with	emails
singer or dancer	typical 4-h things	being in ffa	being in the classroom	great	coordinate
environmentalist	girls empowerment program	wasn't too sure	looking back	nice	requirements are met
every little kid	juggling ten different things at once	wasn't appealing	routine	your own boss	special requests
the next mia hamm	fun	this is not for me	being in the classroom	never the same place	forefront
wasn't realistic	large animal vet	don't like to do the planning	learning everyday	being outside	organizing design requirements
2nd grade	realized that probably wasn't the right path	different in extension	different kids	freedom	emailing

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
i don't know if those are life skills	purdue university	there's not a typical day in extension	high poverty area	be outside	phone calls
talk with documents	animal science program	internship	don't get as much help at home	engineer	evaluating
civility	really liked it	i loved it up there so i stayed	the need love at school	didn't want to sit in an office	definitely
outcome okay for client	friends showed me around	missed my family	love	agriculture	working with a lot of people
constantly learning	so many things going on at once	chose to come home	encourage	pretty good	working with the customer
let's try again	working with different groups of people	nutrition exhibit	little bits of encouragement	work you way up	forefront
getting clients to	leader of the 4-h program	farm to you	depending on the kid	pretty good to me	troubleshooting
2nd grade	reaching the needs of people	my passion	stay positive	mechanical knowledge	plenty of responsibility
effective person in society	experiences	it was fun	mean voice	customer service	same end goal
interact with people	things in 4-h helped	a lot of travel	being encouraging	solving and fixing issues	always
successful	part-time jobs	filling in	5th grade teacher	make them feel important	engineer
drilled into you	extra-curricular activities	a lot of work	loud	needs are most important	architect

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
busy	undergrad research	known for talking	could snap her fingers and everyone across the hall could hear	good	wasn't artsy enough
not a good 4her	experiences contributed to skills	family	tight ship	home schooled	purdue
i don't know	Awesome	likes to talk	we learned all kinds of cool things	get out among other people	big state school
learned it since	really liked it	every day is different in extension	a lot of fun	closer friends	within state
mistakes	showed dairy cows	for me	parents	pretty active	well touted engineering programs
fun	easy fit	i have a hard time telling people no	really good mentors to me	health and safety leader	didn't feel like there was a great fit
great community	big role in life skill development	its important	everyone comes together if you need help	good	purdue
met a lot of people	a lot of projects	that was me	family	up and talking	great opportunities
a great thing	tenure award	right thing to do	great grandparents farm	interested	cost
got to meet people	wide variety	its polite	here all the time	time of year	deciding factor
mistakes	tried them	people are angry at you	loved 4-h	long time ago	ag engineers
experimented	Livestock	important	recommend any kid to do it	best friends	rural farm

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
tried and did not go so well	Dairy	its hard for many people to understand	so much fun	friends parents	4-h
mom	passion of mine	developed these skills in my youth	from a different county	can't remember	undefined
tried	get to know other kids	farm	show animals and livestock	friends	specialization
kind of learn how	hard to connect	had to take care of ourselves	spend time	same group	a lot of kids just like me
i can...if i wanted to	didn't understand	forced into learning	the barn	nursing home	big draw to ag engineering
my cousin	club meetings	very involved	loved it	food booth	appealed to me
sheep	all year round	learn how to juggle	hated doing 4-h books	boy scouts	really really tough time
they were awful	demonstrations, programs, community service	i don't know	grandma	a lot of trips	downturn of the economy
dislocated knee	friends in the club	valuable	a lot of fun	fun	automotive industry
understand a skill	enjoyed meetings	siblings	jr. leaders	never been	full time position
parents were happy	community service	right there with them	learn life lessons	interesting	taking a hit
no pressure	helping other people	4h clan	friendships	never went to state fair	survival mode
grandmother	wasn't head role	interested	meet a lot of other kids	fun	we'd love to offer
creative	Officer	do some projects differently	big family	didn't take any projects	survival mode
only one year	absolutely beneficial	required to show pigs	good time	alright	broaden my search

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
involved	where learning occurs	do something different	good memories	from the farm	involved with ag eng. at purdue
didn't have time	learn new things	good experience	still help judge	building fences	didn't really find a lot of opportunities
difficult	Demonstrations	realized how different	community service projects	calves	texas
preparing kids to be engaged in community	learn from your peers	very involved	i don't remember	calf	18 hrs. of driving to get back home to in
not a good fit for me	community service	treasurer	they cheat	safety	iowa
conflicted	a lot of fun	didn't want the responsibility	uncle always helped	dangerous	6.5-7 hr. drive
siblings	Bonding	meetings	helped each other out	dad and grandpa	feasible to make it home
family	getting to know other 4-h members	jr. leaders	grand champion	got to be careful	could've probably stayed at home
so many memories	big club	treasurer	last year	safety is important	put your degree to the test
bonding with club and friends	Cousin	enjoyed	fun	friendships	midwest states are similar
amazing	pushed me to do	participated in other parts of 4-h	it was awful	one of the best things	liberal
extremely helpful	in 4-h at the same time	livestock kids don't	i just cried	involved	organized
family	whole family	scholarships	a lot of good memories	eagle scout	stay on task

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
family	helped each other	say what i had learned and done	dad helped out	more so than 4-h	multi-tasking is big
teachers	full circle	doesn't really matter	taught us everything	more active	communication-communicating efficiently
pair new teachers with a mentor	do things i wouldn't have	realized what i had done and what i had learned	love	in 4-h and boy scouts	hard work
amazing	Shy	don't really know	neighbors	sister and mom	problem solving
formal mentorship program	Glad	hang out with friends	no idea where to start	4-h trunk	learned to persevere
assigned mentor	helped a lot	can't tell you	such good friends	cousins	ask for help
informal mentors	saw what they did	helped write the grant	loved	some day	rejection
super supportive	community of family	really put the project together	tried so many different things	get it back	nothing
big move	state fair achievement trip	grant writing experience	always in the garden	make them try it	rural community
london	once in a lifetime	remember that project vividly	had to	climb the ladder	just grew up
difficult decision	encourage 4-h members	mentoring younger members	worst experience ever	out doors	helping/helped
awesome	talked about my experience	community service	big farming community	different everyday	summers
helping me	made friends	helping to further develop younger members	didn't have desire to do anything else	wasn't working out	dominated by our 4-h animal
family tradition	great experience	surprised about now	the barns	enjoy working for them	a lot of work

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
enjoyed sports	Mom	volunteers	different point of view	did business with them	getting serious
teammates	butted heads	very much a part of my 4-h experience	wish i would have	community	wash them
great community	not very rural	remember her vividly	jr leaders	good and bad	definitely loved 4-h
grew up together	hardly any dairies left	did her job and did it well	didn't know about it	difficult	great program
fellowship	become very urban	volunteers	talk to my kids	talked to them	had no idea
most memorable thing	more rural	i don't know	send home papers	volunteer fire dept.	learn
took most of my time	pull from experience	mom	help with their 4-h projects	jr fireman	amazing
awful	see opportunities	impressed with my mother	would live to help more	fun	always a highlight
friendships	moving away from farm lifestyle	respected her	cheerleader	nice to help people	loved bringing animals to the fair
church	different audiences and needs	spent a lot of time together	loved being involved	makes you feel good	big social gathering
youth group	reach the needs of the people	change	busy	make a difference	opportunities
do service	familiar with 4-h	seeing his experiences	great teachers	tractor fire	becoming a leader
you should give back	things are done differently	encouraging	projects with you	six years ago	involved in the community
awful	help others	loved his class	enjoyed school	thankful	jr. leaders
big theme	life skills	didn't like food science	liked to be involved	remembers	early exposure

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
service is important	Fair	not really me	priorities	thank you	function as a citizen
decision to teach easier	look forward to	nutrition	family	makes you feel good	wouldn't trade any of the days i had in 4-h
chance to give back	nervous/excited	interest of mine	manage my time	small town	family
parents	seeing the success	i knew i was in the right place	taught me a lot about time management	know pretty much everybody	take care of one another
do you best	Proud	family struggled	influencing their lives	camping trip	community members
drilled	so much fun	help myself and help others	someone cares and loves them	neat	not necessarily family
set out to do	great team	devastating moment	it makes a difference	mission trip	where are you penning
awesome	new experiences	i want to do this		friends	optimize your show box area
excelling wasn't hard	travel to place i've never been before	win		basic stuff	pranks
rigorous academic school	build up skills	i made a goal		handy	meet a lot of people
struggle	always struggles	didn't care		things you learned	fun
rough transition	Practiced	make myself get better		being involved	similar backgrounds
learning how to study and prepare	well enough	i won		community	bonding of similar attributes
maybe math	Unpredictable	this really paid off		ag business management	adult interaction

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
placed where they needed me	mistakes happened	nervous		ivy tech	worked with adults
spanish background	learning process	calm an confident		wasn't what i wanted to do	early exposure
simple/ easy	natural farm life	how to and achieve set goals		welding work	demand to stay around
something i enjoyed	in charge	individual		main person	shows
crash course	help vets	control over my outcome		pleased with me	way to do things better
difficult	see which emerged as the best	responsibility		recommended me	improving
a lot of fun	all year round	learned responsibility through 4-h because we did our projects		plant manager	efficiently
wasn't strict	Training	overall experience		manage farm better	using time wisely
having fun while learning	most intense part	4-h led me into some of those activities			biggest thing
so much fun	artificial insemination	people realize what the means			showmanship
a lot easier	animal science	embarrassing moments			keep your cool and be calm
long hours	dairy cattle reproduction	so involved			control your emotions
demanding	Intense	i had nothing			stressful situation

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
last minute	worked in a lab	i didn't have anything			value of competition
have to get them done	wasn't fulfilling	i have this degree that i can't do anything with			all of your pride and effort
thankful	learned a ton	realized what i had done			worked so hard this year
well-rounded	good practice	volunteering			easier to participate in more clubs
appreciate more	learned a lot (x4)	don't make that mistake			interested
thankful	real world experience	very involved			opportunity
thankful	continually learning	i don't know			leadership roles
give kids our upbringing	on the job training	the long way			exposed
goals	come up with your own thing	learn from challenges and mistakes			takes the fear out
make own decision	new ideas	i don't do a good job at setting goals			questionnaire
give them the option	reach people in different ways	use 4-h experiences			wanted to know why
hard work	make quick decisions	better			they always tried
wouldn't know by looking at you	have reasons why	importance			curiosity

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
effect you everyday	in charge	non-livestock			figuring out how things worked
don't stop working until the work is done	no two days the same	4-h in oklahoma, so much different			decompensate and evaluate
practice	part time job	so proud			better
doesn't feel good	real world experience	public speaking			never shoot down my ideas
	Communication	valuable to reflect			try
	research assistant	makes you appreciate what you have			make yourself
	teaching assistant	aware of what extension was			never held me back
	Networking	gained skills i needed			being there
	creative outlet	ten years of practice			try, fail, and succeed
					i really wish i would've done more
	Practical	now they know			similar in boy scouts
	inspired me				
	encouraged me to go to grad school				great program
	excited about dairy				skill sets
	work with him a lot				experience in the field

Charlie	Heather	Wilma	Harper	Mark	Oliver
	helping me see opportunities				technology
	let me explore my own options				greatly benefit
	Encouraging				
	hold me back				
	take advantage of opportunity				
	More				
	trying new programs				
	reaching new people				
	more open minded				
	just try it				
	make an impact				
	positive influence in lives of children				
	inspire volunteers				
	being a mentor				
	Reinforces				

Appendix H: Provisional Coding Codebook

	Life Skill	Charlie 4H	Charlie Career	Heather 4H	Heather Career	Wilma 4H	Wilma Career	Harper 4H	Harper Career	Mark 4H	Mark Career	Oliver 4H	Oliver Career
Head	Learning to Learn	X	X (orange)	X (yellow)		X (yellow)			X			X	X
	Decision Making	X (yellow)	X	X (orange)		X (yellow)			X				
	Problem Solving		X (green)	X (yellow)	X			X	X			X (yellow)	X
	Critical Thinking	X	X (orange)		X							X	
	Service Learning					X				X			
	Goal Setting			X	X	X					X		X
	Planning/Organizing	X (orange)		X	X		X (green)	X	X				X
	Wise Use of Resources	X (yellow)	X	X (green)			X	X (orange)	X			X (orange)	X (orange)
	Keeping Records			X (yellow)			X						X
	Resiliency		X (yellow)										X (orange)
Heart	Communication		X (yellow)	X	X (orange)		X (orange)		X	X	X		X (yellow)
	Cooperation					X						X	X
	Social Skills	X (orange)	X	X (orange)		X		X (yellow)		X (green)	X (orange)	X (orange)	
	Conflict Resolution								X		X (orange)		
	Accepting Differences	X					X						
	Concern for Others		X		X	X			X (orange)		X		
	Empathy					X							
	Sharing	X		X (orange)		X	X	X			X	X	
	Nurturing Relationships	X (yellow)	X	X (orange)		X (yellow)		X (green)	X (yellow)	X (yellow)			X

KEY			
1	2 (orange)	3 (yellow)	4+ (green)

	Life Skill	Charlie		Heather		Wilma		Harper		Mark		Oliver	
		4H	Career	4H	Career	4H	Career	4H	Career	4H	Career	4H	Career
Hands	Community Service Volunteering			X		X		X		X		X	
	Leadership			X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Responsible Citizenship									X			
	Contributions to Group Effort			X			X						X
	Marketable Skills	X	X							X	X	X	
	Teamwork			X		X						X	X
	Self-Motivation	X	X			X		X		X	X	X	X
Health	Self-Esteem							X			X	X	
	Self-Responsibility	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	
	Character		X										
	Managing Feelings			X	X			X	X			X	
	Self- Discipline		X	X		X	X				X	X	X
	Healthy Lifestyle Choices						X			X			
	Stress Management											X	
	Disease Prevention												
	Personal Safety									X	X		

	KEY			
1	2	3	4+	