

Abstract

Shaw, Franklin Daniel (Danny). Decision-Makers' Perception of Quality Indicators for the Total County Extension Program. (under the direction of Dr. R. David Mustian). The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between decision-makers' perception of quality indicators and the socio-demographic factors, organizational factors and spatial factors. Fourteen randomly selected counties participated in the study. Local Extension decision-makers (county funding partners, Extension staff, and advisory members) were targeted in each county along with Extension administrators. Five hundred thirteen (513) survey instruments were distributed with two hundred fifty nine usable instruments returned (259) for a response rate of 50%.

Three focus groups were used to validate and select quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program. The independent variables were socio-demographic factors (age, gender, ethnic background, and educational level), organizational factors (relational and primary role, length of association, intensity of interaction) and spatial factors (accessibility, size of staff, resident status).

The research found that decision-makers' perception of quality indicators varied by organizational, spatial and socio-demographic factors. Organizational factors such as role (relational, primary) of the decision-maker had an influence on perception of quality. Intensity of interaction and accessibility (spatial) also has an influence of the decision-makers' perception of quality. Extension administrators were most often the decision-maker group that was significantly different from the

county partners, advisory members and local Extension staff. Other socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity had little influence on quality indicators. Decision-makers' educational level had significant influence on quality indicators. Spatial factors of resident status and size of Extension staff had marginal influence on some indicators of quality.

Decision-Makers' Perception of Quality Indicators for the Total County
Extension Program

By

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Biography

Franklin Daniel (Danny) Shaw was born in Kinston, North Carolina on September 19, 1953. He was raised on a small family farm in Onslow County near the town of Richlands, North Carolina. Danny graduated from Richlands High School in 1971 and entered North Carolina State University in the fall of the same year. He graduated in 1974 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Education with a specialty in animal science.

In July of 1975 he began his professional career as the coordinator of the vocational handicap program for the Onslow County Board of Education. The following year he was employed as the vocational agriculture teacher at Jacksonville Senior High School. In November of 1979 he accepted the Extension agent position with the North Carolina Agriculture Extension Service at the Onslow Center. Shaw received his master degree in crop science from North Carolina State University in 1988. In 1989 Shaw was appointed as County Extension Director in Onslow. Shaw accepted the interim Southeast District Extension Director role in 1996 where he remained for a year and a half before returning to Onslow County. In 2001 Shaw was selected to serve as South Central District Extension Director.

Danny is the son of Starkey Shaw and Arlene Barbee. Danny has one brother Jerome, and one sister, Melanie. Danny is married to Mary Jarman Shaw. They have two sons, Stephen and Jonathan, and one granddaughter, Megan.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative “Extensionis recognized throughout the world as the most effective informal adult education effort in history” (Patton, 1985, p. 4). Cooperative Extension in America is the largest interactive and problem-solving educational organization in the world (Blackburn, 1984). Cooperative Extension’s purpose has deep roots in the American educational philosophy to provide practical education available for the masses (North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, 1998). The evolution of the entire land grant complex with the segments of teaching, research, and extension was built upon this premise (Hightower, 1970). The first and second Morrill Act established land grant institutions from federally appropriated funds to states in 1862 and 1890 respectively. Cooperative Extension’s origin was well conceived long before that time by a genuine thirst for knowledge by rural America. Early efforts to gain and disseminate knowledge through experimental farms, model farms, agriculture societies, traveling agricultural trains, and others set the stage for Cooperative Extension. The conceptual framework took on a uniquely effective shape and became the premiere non-formal education institution for the masses (Seevars, Graham, Gamon and Condlin, 1997).

The purpose of the land grant institutions was to provide education for the working class in technical education (Reagan, 1987). The second component of the land grant complex was the establishment of the agricultural experiment stations.

The Hatch Act of 1887 provided federal funds to each state intended to promote agricultural research and provide a knowledge base for students (NCCES, 1998). After that time, many research stations provided an educational component in an effort to share research findings with innovators and early adopters. This educational plan met with some early successes but was not effective in obtaining far-reaching impact through society. An early sentiment by discontented farmers was “We don’t want science floating in the skies; we want to bring it down and hook it to our plows” (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, Conklin, 1997, p. 21). These farmers were among the first to identify factors that were inherent for quality Extension programs to exist and become effective. Many informal educational models were tested to fulfill the true mission of the land grant system. Among those pioneering leaders were Seaman Knapp and James Wilson. Wilson and Knapp believed that research and knowledge should be delivered to every farm and every home. Knapp saw first hand the value of positioning non-formal educational programs in individual communities. Knapp’s vision for a highly effective quality educational program was centered on taking the university researched-based knowledge to the people. Knapp and Wilson further believed that through educating the rural masses, the nation was best served. Their vision was the foundational component of the Agricultural Extension Service, which was fundamental to the democratic stability of this nation (Seevers et al, 1997).

Many factors played an important role in the development of the Extension philosophy. “University extension” actually began in England in the form of off campus non-credit courses and was later introduced to America through the

libraries. Western civilization held an intrinsic belief that education should be available to the masses. The majority of rural society was poor and far removed from university research and knowledge. Cooperative Extension was born to take university resources to where the people lived, positively engaging educational programs to improve the quality of life for the entire nation.

Within this conceptual and philosophical framework, the passage of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act formally established the third leg and final component of the land grant framework (Schaub, 1953). This provided federal funds to support non-formal education led by local farm and home demonstration agents (Reagan, 1987). The Smith-Lever Act was designed to eliminate much of the pre-existing duplicated and unorganized extension work. Since agriculture was the primary thrust of early American culture and the nation's future, much of the early legislation centered on technology-transfer in a rural setting.

Many other federal legislative actions have been directed toward funding and specific program guidelines for Cooperative Extension since 1914. "The Smith-Lever Act extended the benefits of federal aid to those colleges established under the acts of 1862 and 1890. Its purpose was "to: ...inaugurate, in connection with these colleges, Agriculture Extension work which shall be carried on in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture... in order to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects related to Agriculture and Home Economics, and to encourage the application of the same", (Schaub, 1953, p. 36). One of the later federal legislative actions added the words, "the giving of instructions and practical demonstration in agriculture and home

economics and subjects related hereto” (Seevars et al., 1997, p. 36) which authorized Extension activities in other non-traditional program areas. This small change in wording was significant in Extension’s future and provided the flexibility needed to move into a community based, problem-solving programming model.

The Cooperative Extension Mission

The Cooperative Extension mission was based on founding legislation. The Cooperative Extension mission has evolved over the ninety years since the inception of the Smith-Lever legislation. Societal factors forced Cooperative Extension to adjust to serve a broader based programming focus and audience. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension mission was to help put knowledge to work so people could improve their lives (NCCES, 1998).

The land grant complex of teaching, research, and extension provides the framework for this knowledge to be developed, tested, applied and delivered to the masses. Early successes by agents in agriculture and home demonstration work lead to the widespread adoption of this concept. The rapid development of Extension as a non-formal education system provided strong support for Cooperative Extension’s mission. Cooperative Extension continues to be a vehicle for human development through non-formal, off campus education. This mission has remained constant and unshaken even under scrutiny of frequent studies and critiques (Seevers et al., 1997).

Though the Cooperative Extension mission has remained relatively constant in principle, there has been considerable evolutionary change for the land grant

complex. The Cooperative Extension System is a large and complex organization (Hightower, 1973). Hightower questioned in his book, Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times, if Cooperative Extension, due to this complexity was remaining true to its mission and original purpose. Periodic national and state reviews and studies of the Extension System have suggested and often mandated Cooperative Extension's continued adaptation to current issues (Kellogg, 2001). Several studies have found that legislators and the general public lack a clear understanding of Extension's mission (Adkins, 1981) and funding (Blalock, 1964). The understanding and support of Cooperative Extension's mission by decision-makers at each level of the funding partnership has always been critical.

The Cooperative Partnerships

The word "Cooperative" in Cooperative Extension purports the unprecedented partnership that existed in the establishment of this organization (NCCES, 1998). Federal funding administered through the United States Department of Agriculture was appropriated to the Land Grant Institutions for Extension work. These federal funds were administered as formula funds for certain expenses. Funds contributed would vary and were predetermined for each funding level. Thus the percentage of funds for each level of the partnership (federal, state, county) was not predetermined. State funds were also legislatively appropriated to the land grant institutions for use in Extension education. These funds were subsequently joined with county funds to provide a local Extension presence (Davis, 1998). A national study in 1992 found that typical level of funding sources for Extension County

Offices was 47.5% state funds, 30.4% federal funds, 17.4% county funds and 4.7% non-tax funds (Seevers et al., 1997). Generally non-tax funds were predominately grant funds. Cooperative Extension's use of these grant funds have increased significantly as governmental budgets continued to shrink (Payne, 2004).

Cooperative Extension's unique three-way partnership between federal, state, and county government provided a non-formal education system to deliver research-based programs focused on local needs. Extension's tri-level partnership determined program direction through funding accountability (Davis, 1998). The concept of local non-formal educational programs promoted the idea that each county Extension program was developed independently to address specific needs within the local population. To this end, the cooperative partnerships must remain flexible (Sykes, 1995) and the cooperative partnerships must match and align the combined resources with the expressed needs (Boone, 1995). I. O. Schaub stated "if the results (of Extension work) did not meet with the general approval on the part of the public, it would soon reflect itself in the withdrawal of county financial support" (Schaub, 1953, p. 39). "General approval on the part of the public" pointed out the ever-increasing accountability demands from Cooperative Extension's partners to assure deliverance of quality Extension programs that make a difference locally.

Accountability, a Sense of Urgency

"The process of forming partnerships requires each partner to come to the table with resources and frank discussion of outcomes and clearly recognized expectations" (Laughlin & Schmidt, 1995, p. 3). In the "good old days" of the 50s

and 60s, non-defensible funds such as those that built Cooperative Extension were easily obtained. Cooperative Extension did very little to assess needs, plan programs, expand clientele, and evaluate programs. Dynamic demographic and cultural shifts required Cooperative Extension to transform along with society. Today, Cooperative Extension faces escalating pressure from funding all partners to enhance productivity, increase efficiency, expand clientele base, and eliminate duplication (Bolt, 1988).

Funding partners within the Cooperative Extension System are accountable to their publics for the resources expended in non-formal education programs (Boone et al., 1970). With the increased emphasis on cost-benefit ratios, the demand for high impact programs and continuous budgetary restraints; Cooperative Extension struggles with effective ways to keep all partners informed on significant program impacts. County Extension Programs are accountable to all funding partners simultaneously. These partners often require different indicators of quality programming (Taylor-Powell, Douglass, and Stanek, 1995). Effectively communicating results and impacts to all levels of funding can be a challenge (Nall, 2000). Accountability becomes more complex when grant funds are also added to support programming efforts. There are often differing expectations among funding levels/partners when considering grant audits. For example, accountability for grant programs is usually targeted toward specific achievement and progress toward specific goals (Stevens, 1994). These differences in accountability caused by budget constraints, downsizing, and changing demographics have forced Cooperative Extension to redirect resources and question the community-

programming model (Seevers et al., 1997). Seaman Knapp recognized early in his development of the Extension model that the regional approach was not effective. He concluded that to have an effective (quality) Extension program “requires at least an agent in every county” (Schaub, 1953, p.17).

Need for the Study

Total County Extension Programs are designed, implemented, and evaluated within each county by county agents (Davis, 1998). Extension specialists provide program support, agent training and technical expertise for the county agents. The County Extension Director is responsible for the leadership, direction, and supervision for each agent and the coordinated work of the local support staff. The success of a total county Extension program is based on a multidisciplinary team approach to solve local problems (Merriam, 1989).

County Extension Directors are accountable to all funding partners for resources expended in delivering a high impact, quality Extension program. In recent years, as funding has diminished or shifted, county Extension programs have secured outside funding sources (grants, private funds, and fees for service), (Payne, 2004). Thus, these new funding sources have become a larger player in Extension programming, amounting to 16% of the total budget for North Carolina Cooperative Extension Services (NCCES) in 2003. To date, and in the context of compounded budget crises with local partners, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service has maintained a local presence in each county. Under the pressure of continuous budget cuts, the ability to maintain a local presence in every

county for non-mandated programs will be attributed to the quality of local Extension programs, the continued strong partnership with county government and recent success in securing outside resources (NCCES, 1998).

Moreover, North Carolina's local Extension staff size varies from two (2) to twenty-three (23) employees depending on the county needs (NCCES, 1998). This variance is based upon county support, local needs, farm diversification, farm income, population and other factors (NCCES, 1993). Extension employees' salary sources vary depending on the funding partner's involvement in that particular program. Subsequently, County Extension Directors are charged to develop a staff equipped to meet local needs and provide the local staff with administrative and programming leadership. County Extension Directors also are responsible for securing adequate resources based on these numerous mandates and expectations from funding partners. Thus, every county Extension staff and total Extension educational program is unique (Merriam, 1989). Decision-makers' performance expectations for Extension faculty are directly linked to the quality of programs delivered. National, state, and county decision-makers need quantifiable program impact data (Fetsch, 1997). These impact indicators are not the same for all funding levels (Stevens, 1994). Mallilo and Millar (1992) reported that Extension administration expectations were different from clientele expectations. Bennett (1996) reported inconsistency across stakeholders and called for uniform program performance indicators for reporting quality-controlled data. The constraints of programming for national initiatives while meeting local needs without doubt affect local program focus and ultimately local program success. The county Extension

staff and specifically the County Extension Director are accountable for the quality of the programs produced and impacts reported for all decision-makers at all levels (Bennett, 1996). This study explored the relationships between decision-makers' perception of quality indicators for Cooperative Extension programs. Many of these characteristics or indicators were documented in the literature. Additional descriptive research of the perceptions of decision-makers about quality indicators was warranted.

Quality Extension Program Indicators

What constitutes a quality Extension program? Patton (1985) stated that quality programs of the future would have the same characteristics as those of the past. These Extension programs would be people-oriented, knowledge-based, problem-oriented, and cost-effective. Patton added that quality programs came from quality people. Considerable peer reviewed literature described these components of successful non-formal Cooperative Extension education programs (Mustian, 1998). Mustian described successful Extension Program indicators as:

- Community-based.
- Customer focused.
- Delivered by professional creditable staff.
- Exhibiting a quality programming process.
- Promoting a team approach.
- Relevant and timely.
- Accountable to publics.

The elements of a quality program found in much of the literature are focused on the individual program conducted by each Extension agent and not the Total County Extension program. The literature does not adequately address the likelihood that the individual program quality indicators and characteristics are either cumulative or directly correlated to the composite of all county Extension program activities and programming efforts for a particular unit. Bennett (1993) stated that traditional research-transfer models do not adequately capture the roles, expectations, and environment that Cooperative Extension currently operates. Extension goes beyond the role of transferring information to helping clients make informed decisions applicable to their situation. Bennett suggested that the traditional models, while still part of the story, do not capture the modern, more complex Cooperative Extension programming model. Even adult education models do not describe all of the components and functions needed by Extension professionals to be successful and deliver the level of quality expected and often required by stakeholders. Bennett (1993) claimed that interdependent models could help build a better understanding of Cooperative Extension's processes and roles and ultimately build stronger support for Extension with the differing expectation levels of stakeholders groups.

The Total County Extension Program, as defined by the author, is a composite of individual coordinated efforts from the local staff, Extension specialists, various stakeholders, and volunteers. In North Carolina, the County Extension Director represents the cohesive force providing oversight and leadership to combine administrative functions, performance appraisals, program leadership,

programming responsibilities, available resources, and the coordinated efforts of a diverse professional staff to meet the various stakeholders' needs and expectations. The County Extension Director assures that these decision-makers are engaged in the entire programming process either in an advisory role or as active participants and play an active role in determining quality program indicators and impacts. The ability to determine the utility of Extension was often based on summative evaluation of the Total County Extension program during the traditional county program reviews.

Program Evaluation

Adult education programming models from the earliest conception had a major evaluative component. The "basics" as described by Tyler (1949) provide a sequential framework for designing an educational model that places emphasis on evaluation being continuous and applied to both for the individual's assessment and the program's assessment. Evaluation, from Malcolm Knowles (1975) perspective, was humanistic and should never be quantitative in nature. Complex economic, political, and social factors affect development activities and evaluations (International Program for Development Evaluation Training [IPDET], 2002). Boone's programming model relied on the educator to facilitate formative evaluation throughout the programming process (Boone, Dolan and Shearon, 1975). A key component of Boone's model was the involvement of stakeholders, leaders, and decision-makers early and continuously in the programming process. This early decision-maker involvement created an environment of mutual trust for the agent

and client. Furthermore, early engagement directly corresponded the clientele's ability to understand and support the organizational mission. Early clientele involvement also provided the client with opportunities for input, evaluative feedback, and positive advocacy with local decision-makers. When multiple stakeholders are involved in program evaluations, more time must be invested in meaningful, clear, abundant communication (IPDET, 2002). Participatory program evaluations add to the complexity simply due to the number of people involved and the time commitment by the educator/evaluator. Historically, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service had conducted participatory county program reviews to evaluate the total county program, which included two types of reviews. The comprehensive program review allowed for the review team to interact and gain insight from the stakeholders over several days and was more thorough, while the regular program reviews were limited to one day with little stakeholder involvement. Program reviews specifically searched for quality indicators in the Total County Extension Program.

Recent efforts to conduct county program reviews had not been successful. North Carolina's last attempt to organize county Extension program reviews in the year 2000 was initiated under the title of "Program Quality Enhancement". This effort met with overwhelming budgetary constraints and never got off the ground. One of the fundamental goals of the County Program review was to "enhance the quality of County Extension programs" (NCCES, 1988). In reference to the Quality Enhancement Process, Dr. Jon Ort, Associate Dean and Director, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service (2000) identified the Program Quality Indicators that would be included in the program review process.

The Program Quality Indicators listed by Dr. Ort were:

1. Mission/ Vision

- Program is consistent with the mission, philosophy, values, and capacity of North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Programs are research-based.

2. Program Process

A. Program Planning

- Program focuses on specifically identified needs for target audience in county/state.
- Program effectively involves the advisory leadership system.
- Program addresses the county plan of work and the county unit's strategic plan.
- People involvement in developing, delivering, and evaluating programs.
- Programs target and reach diverse audiences (both new and traditional) in ways that are appropriate to the audiences

B. Program Design

- People involvement in developing, delivering, and evaluating programs.
- Programs are flexibly adapted and practical to audiences and situations
- Programs are available and accessible throughout county indicating balance in service delivery.
- Collaboration with external agencies and community groups in the county/state.
- Programs target and reach diverse audiences (both new and traditional) in ways that are appropriate to the audiences.

C. Program Implementation

- Programs are timely and responsive to current needs.
- People involvement in developing, delivering, and evaluating programs.
- Programs target and reach diverse audiences (both new and traditional) in ways that are appropriate to the audiences.
- Programs are available and accessible throughout county indicating balance in service delivery.
- Programs use appropriate and innovative delivery methods related to audience learning style by utilizing a variety of teaching strategies.

D. Program Process and Product Evaluation and Feedback

- Program has measurable objectives and impacts and incorporates evaluation.
- People involvement in developing, delivering, and evaluating programs.
- Accountable for program impacts, staff, and resources, and an acceptable use of resources.
- Extension professionals have reputation for quality programs and are sought after for expertise and collaboration.

3. Program Resource Development

- Accountable for program impacts, staff, and resources, and an acceptable use of resources.
- Programs use appropriate university/county/area interdisciplinary team efforts.
- Available, appropriate, and sufficient resources are obtained to support program.
- Volunteer leadership is highly developed and effective in teaching, program delivery, and support.

4. Program Marketing/Reporting

- Programs are timely and responsive to current needs.
- Program is visible and identifiable – marketed and marketable for its outstanding feature, program impact, staff, and resource utilization.
- Program results are communicated to decision-makers, supporters, general public, and peers.

5. Diversity

- Programs target and reach diverse audiences (both new and traditional) in ways that are appropriate to the audiences (Ort, 2000, p. 6-7).

These county program reviews provided an opportunity for decision-maker input concerning the impact and direction of the Total County Extension Program. Program evaluators used program reviews to assess the process, client benefit, and consequence to society. Program performance indicators were both qualitative and quantitative. From this perspective, quality impact indicators should align with the program's objective or goal (Taylor, 2001). Evaluators need a battery of indicators such as the ones included in the Ort letter to evaluate program quality.

Statement of the Problem

Stakeholders' expectations for the Total Cooperative Extension Program are not consistent across funding levels (Taylor-Powell et al., 1995). Multiple stakeholders eventually have difficulty agreeing on the criteria for evaluation, support for controversial findings, and how to communicate the results (Rossi, 1979).

Decision-makers are faced with increasingly tougher budget constraints resulting in public outcry for continuous accountability at all levels (Bolt, 1988; Patton, 1986). What specific factors may influence decision-makers' expectations, measures of accountability and decision making process for funding continuance?

This study identified and described the indicators of a quality total county Extension program as perceived by the various decision-maker groups. A comprehensive review of the literature in Chapter II addressed the major characteristics of a quality program. The perceived indicators of quality for a Total County Extension Program were described in their relationship with organizational, socio-demographic, and spatial factors for decision-makers.

Organizational related factors such as the decision-makers' primary role with Cooperative Extension were examined by this study to determine their relationship with key quality indicators. Other organizational factors included the decision-makers' length and intensity of the association with Cooperative Extension. These factors were examined to describe their relationship with key indicators of quality programs. The research findings surrounding these organizational factors were explored in greater detail in the literature review.

Socio-demographic factors for decision-makers were also identified in this study to explore their relationship with key indicators of quality. A review of the literature found that often decision-makers' differences in age, ethnicity, gender, and education level might influence their perception of quality programs. This study found significant research to warrant further study of these variables as they relate to indicators of quality programs.

Spatial factors as related to the decision-makers were also part of this study. Independent variables such as size of the Extension staff, accessibility to Extension office, urban setting compared to rural setting, were explored for possible relationship to the dependent variable of quality indicators by decision-makers.

The author's research attempted to describe possible independent variables that needed further study for linkages to indicators of quality Extension programs. Each group of decision-makers as defined in this study, play a critical role in shaping the future of Cooperative Extension. Decision-makers determine program direction, scope, focus, staffing patterns and funding. The uniqueness of Cooperative Extension's funding partnership calls for innovative accountability to all partners (NCCES, 1998).

The research questions included in the study were:

1. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by the socio-demographic factors of age, gender, ethnicity, and educational level?
2. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by the organizational factors of role, length and intensity of association?
3. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by spatial factors of size of staff, accessibility to center and residential setting?
4. To what extent do decision-makers' awareness and perception of program quality vary by organizational, socio-demographic and spatial factors?

Major Decision-Makers

Decision-makers are fundamental to the purpose of Cooperative Extension.

Major decision-makers surveyed in this study included the following groups:

1. Advisory leadership members
2. Cooperative Extension administrators
3. Cooperative Extension field faculty and staff
4. County funding partners (County Commissioners and County Manager).

These decision-makers craft the major framework by which Extension programs are planned, designed, implemented, funded, evaluated, and held accountable on the local, state, and federal level. Each group has specific roles and responsibilities that lead to the development of a quality Extension program. Each group has specific interests in developing strong relationships, partnerships, and dependencies on the other groups to facilitate a highly efficient and effective Extension program. For the purpose of this study, external roles are advisory leadership members and county funding partners. Internal roles are local Extension staff and Extension administration. Below is a brief description of each of these decision maker groups.

Advisory Leadership Volunteers

The North Carolina Extension Advisory Leadership System engaged over 25,000 volunteers (NCCES, 1998) who assisted county agents with identifying and prioritizing needs in each county. All counties have a county Extension advisory council, which monitors and supports local programming to meet the identified needs (Groff, 1997). These advisory councils are composed of a cross section of citizens

with various backgrounds and interests. A subset of the advisory council is the program and specialized committees. These specialized committees often times focus on specific commodities or program areas. Through the specialized committees, targeted clients, external collaborators and local leaders assist in identifying and prioritizing local needs, designing programs and appropriate delivery methods and evaluating and supporting program efforts. The Advisory Leadership System plays a vital role in advocacy for continued funding of Extension programs. Many Advisory Councils conduct an annual Report to the Commissioners to highlight Extension accomplishments and impacts (Groff, 1997). The Advisory members play a vital role in telling the story of Cooperative Extension.

Cooperative Extension Administration

Extension administrators, for the purpose of this study, were the extended administrative council, which included, seven County Extension Directors representing each district, the District Extension Directors, Director of County Operations and State Program Leaders, and Director of Cooperative Extension, and representatives from North Carolina A and T Cooperative Extension Program (NCA&T). Extension Administration is responsible for setting policy, allocation of resources and program leadership. Extension administration promotes linkages with university administration, department Extension leaders, and Extension partners from the North Carolina A and T University Cooperative Extension Program.

Extension administration was also responsible for maintaining compliance partnerships with the federal, state, and county. Enhancing funding arrangements, building partnerships, assuring accountability, reporting major program impacts,

leading organizational strategic planning, and supporting county operations are major functions for this team.

County Funding Partners

County funding partners include the County Manager, Assistant County Manager, and the County Commissioners. The County Manager and in some cases, the Assistant or Deputy County Manager play an increasingly important role in the decision making of county government. Often times the County Manager is authorized by the Board of County Commissioners to act on their behalf. The County Manager reviews and recommends to the commissioner the annual budget, which includes Cooperative Extension. The County Commissioners are elected officials that serve the publics' interests. County Commissioners are increasingly accountable for public funds and particularly sponsored non-mandated programs like Cooperative Extension (Stienbarger, 2005). In North Carolina, county governments invested in Cooperative Extension programs by providing local offices, infrastructure needs, supplies, equipment, and a significant percentage of local staff salaries. This partnership has remained strong in North Carolina by evidence of the continued voluntary support to maintain a local staff in every North Carolina county and the Cherokee Reservation (NCCES, 1998).

County Extension Staff

The county Extension staff includes the County Extension Director, county Extension agents, program assistants, program associates, technicians, and support staff. Extension staffs are diverse in educational background, experience, training and interests. Agents are viewed as educators and generally address program

subjects in agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth, and community development. The support staffs, including secretaries are the front line and most visible component of an Extension center for that initial contact with clients (Martin-Milius, 1994). The County Extension Director is responsible for program leadership, professional development, and personnel evaluations for the staff. The County Extension Director is also the primary liaison with the County Commissioners, the County Manager, and the Advisory Council.

Definition of Terms

County Extension Program - a group of planned, sequenced educational activities focused on meeting a predetermined goal. A County Extension Program is often centered on single disciplinary areas but may be multidisciplinary and is often under the direction of a county agent. For the purpose of this study, a county program was identified as organized individual county educational efforts in a non-formal setting within specific local outcomes. Programs at this level are the responsibility of the county agent (NCCES, 1998). Delivery modes may vary with the target audience and program discipline. Essential programming components include planning, design, implementation, marketing, evaluation, and accountability (Boone, 1985).

County Extension Agent - a professional educator; a change agent that plans, implements and evaluates non-formal educational programs within the mission and philosophy of Cooperative Extension. County Extension agents are considered field faculty of North Carolina State University. In many cases, the local funding partners also consider county Extension personnel county employees. The

County agent is the heart and soul of the Cooperative Extension Service (Seevers, Graham, Gamon, Conklin, 1997).

County Extension Director - local administrator of the Total County Extension Program and staff. Responsible for securing needed resources for operation of the program. The County Director is also responsible for enhancing local partnerships with county government to strengthen the local partnership. The CED provides leadership and direction for the staff and evaluates staff performance. In addition, the County Extension Director in most counties has programming responsibilities in specific disciplines. The County Director is often times considered a department head by county government.

District Extension Director - one of seven administrators in the North Carolina Cooperative Extension System that provide administrative and program leadership. District Directors support to County Extension Directors and the county Extension agents across the state. Each DED is responsible for a district with 13 to 16 counties in a specific geographical region of the state. The DED is also responsible for building, monitoring and strengthening relationships with campus and county partners.

Program Assistant/Program Associate/ Technician - Program assistants/associates/technicians are under the direction of a county Extension agent and assist in coordinating and delivering focused educational activities in a well-defined area. Generally program assistants/associates have very defined duties in program delivery and are not responsible for development of the total programming effort.

Support Staff - Administrative Secretaries and Extension secretaries that provide assistance in initial contact with the public. Often, support staffs provide assistance in development and delivery of educational materials to clientele. The support staffs are also responsible for clerical duties, handling funds, public relations, and office management.

Total County Extension Program - For the purpose of this study, the author used the Total County Extension Program to describe all functions of the county program and all duties of the entire staff. The Total County Extension Program was described as an aggregation of the individual programs, programming components, functions, and administrative duties associated with the daily operations of an Extension center.

The County Extension Director leads the Total County Extension Program in the traditional disciplines, which include agriculture, family and consumer education (formerly home economics), 4-H and youth, and community development. The County Extension Director seeks to develop an interdisciplinary team to address local problems through a systems approach using available resources and expertise. Patton stated that the systems approach makes all programs interdependent, thus the whole is greater than the sum of its' parts (Patton, 1987).

Programming - the conceptual schema using non-formal educational techniques to deliver planned educational activities to a target audience. These activities are sequenced in a manner to reach a specific goal. Most programming models agree that the core of any non-formal program include three phases; planning, design and implementation, and evaluation.

Assumptions

The writer assumed that the participants (decision-makers) in this study were honest in their responses. The author also assumed that participants responded of their own free will without fear of reprisal. Considerable effort was taken to ensure participants of the confidentiality of the individual respondent and also the identity of specific county information. The study operated under the assumption that the decision-makers were knowledgeable about the items contained in the instrument. This assumption required that the instrument contained clear and well-understood terms for the participants regardless of their level of association with Cooperative Extension. The next assumption was that the timing and handling in administering the instrument was not threatening or uncomfortable for the participants.

Limitations

This study was limited to the population of decision-makers within the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. The population was limited to County Commissioners, County Managers, Extension Administrators, Extension advisors, and Extension staff at the County Centers. Further limitations resulted from the variance of non-response rate among the various decision-maker groups within each cluster. The two external decision-maker groups had the lowest response rate and proved the most difficult to reach. These decision-makers were the advisory leaders and the county commissioners. The highest response rate was from the county managers and Cooperative Extension personnel (county staffs or administrators).

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the reader to the foundational characteristics of Cooperative Extension. The uniqueness of the funding partnership has created special challenges and opportunities for Extension program accountability. Various decision-maker groups' perception of quality was based on many independent variables. For the purpose of this study, the decision-makers are categorized into Extension advisory council members, county government officials, County Extension faculty and staff, and Extension administrators. Quality Extension Programs are community-based, customer focused, relevant, timely and accountable to the public. Successful county programs also exhibit a dynamic programming process under the direction of a competent, creditable staff using a team approach for effective local programming. The purpose of this research was to examine the decision-makers' perceived characteristics of a Total County Extension Program and document observed degree of variance of these characteristics. The next chapter will review previous research findings in the literature surrounding the definition of quality Extension programs and factors associated with quality indicators.

CHAPTER II

Conceptual Schema and Review of the Literature

This chapter presented the conceptual and theoretical framework for quality Total County Extension Programs and the conceptual framework developed for the focus of this study. The conceptual schema was a tool used to describe possible contributing factors associated with decision-makers' perception quality of Extension programs. This conceptual model was developed as a result of an extensive review of related studies found at the conclusion of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter reviewed the evolution and development of the widely accepted programming model. Within the review, many indicators of quality were identified. The chapter also explored the literature on quality movement and how that has influenced Cooperative Extension programs.

Conceptual Framework

The main objective of this study was to describe decision-makers' perception of quality indicators related to the Total County Extension program. Literature and research findings surrounding decision-makers' characteristics, decision-makers' perception, and criteria of quality Extension programs were reviewed to build the conceptual schema. Significant independent variables that may contribute to the perception of quality were identified specifically for Extension programs. For the purpose of this study, independent variables described below were measured to

determine their possible relationship with the dependent variable. The dependent variable was the perception of indicators for quality Total County Extension program.

The literature suggested that perceptions are based on the individuals' experiences, roles, background, beliefs, attitudes and values (Solvin, Berko, and Wolvin, 1993). Substantial research supported the findings concerning the variations within decision-makers' perspectives. Research found the dependent variable was related to stakeholders' background, roles, and experiences (Pettit, 1993; Pearson, 1998; Osborne, 1991; Carberry, 2000; Baldwin, 2002). Therefore, similar independent variables were measured in this study to explore their relationship to the dependent variable. The independent variables measured by this study were categorized as socio-demographic factors, organizational factors and spatial factors.

The socio-demographic factors (independent variables) included in this study were age, ethnicity, gender, and education level. Age, gender, and level of education were determined to have an influence on decision-makers' perception in the Pearson (1998) and Pettit (1993) studies. Osborne (1991) identified age as an independent variable that influenced perception of decision-makers. Pearson (1998) found significant variation of images of decision-makers by ethnicity. Carberry (2000) also identified age, ethnicity, and level of education as contributors to the dependent variable. These socio-demographic factors identified some measurable indicators of the decision-makers' experiences that were foundational in shaping the decision-makers' perception of quality programs. Pearson reported that ethnicity was often related to targeted, limited audience programs and subsequently the level

of service received by different ethnic groups. This independent variable could interact with decision-makers' level of contact and consequently, the perception of Cooperative Extension.

The spatial category relates to the stakeholders' environment at the time of the study. Independent variables found in the research by Carberry (2000) included size of staff, location of center, and urban/ rural community setting. Baldwin (2002) and Shonkwiler (1995) reported in their research that location of Extension centers was a key factor in decision-makers perception of Cooperative Extension. Pearson (1998) also reported geographical variations for stakeholders' perception included accessibility to center, length of residence in the community, and the rural community versus the urban settings. Taylor-Powell et al. (1995) found that community background and local presence were factors in decision-makers' perception of quality criteria. Baldwin (2002), Pettit (1993), Carberry (2000), Shonkwiler (1995), found that size of staff, and the proximity of the office was associated with the perception of the stakeholder. Shonkwiler (1995) and Osborne (1991) reported that favorable external decision-makers' perception were "at risk" when the structure of the organization changed the staffing patterns and center locations. The findings in the literature concluded that as size of staff increased the perception was that quality increased. Also, as locations were more accessible to the clientele the quality was perceived to increase.

Organizational factors were the third category of independent variables. Factors such as stakeholders' role, length of association, intensity of association, were supported by the research in contributing to stakeholders' perspectives. Balwin

(2002), Osborne (1995), Pettit (1993), Taylor-Powell et al. (1995) found that the role of stakeholders could be subdivided into internal and external roles. Perceptions and expectations within these two sub-groups were found to often be at different ends of the spectrum. Baldwin (2002) found influence on stakeholders' perception by the length (time) of association with the organization, frequency or intensity of the association (level of interaction) and role of the stakeholder (position). Of special interest in this study, Baldwin examined the effect of length of relationship with perception of quality. Baldwin's findings indicated that organizational image was higher for internal stakeholders over time, while external stakeholders perception of organizational image decreased over time. Subsequently the literature supported the concept that the role of the stakeholder influenced their perception (Shonkwiler, 1995; Baldwin, 2002). Pearson (1998) reported that perception of external stakeholders was associated to the level of contact with Cooperative Extension. A favorable perception from stakeholders was related to a moderate to high level of contact with the organization. The stakeholders' primary role was predicted to have a major influence on the perception of quality in the total Extension program. This certainly is supported by the research of Taylor-Powell et al. (1995). Other research that supported the contribution of to the role/association of the stakeholders included; Shonkwiler, (1995); Baldwin, (2002); Pettit, (1993); Osborne, (1991); and Carberry, (2000).

Within the three categories of socio-demographic factors, spatial factors and organizational factors there were a total of eleven independent variables to examine. Their relationship to the dependent variable should explain some of the variability in

decision-makers' perception of quality within the Total County Extension Program. All of the references in this conceptual framework are reviewed in greater detail at the end of the literature review. A conceptual schema of all the factors that influence the perception of quality were presented in Figure 1 as a visual aid to better comprehend the model.

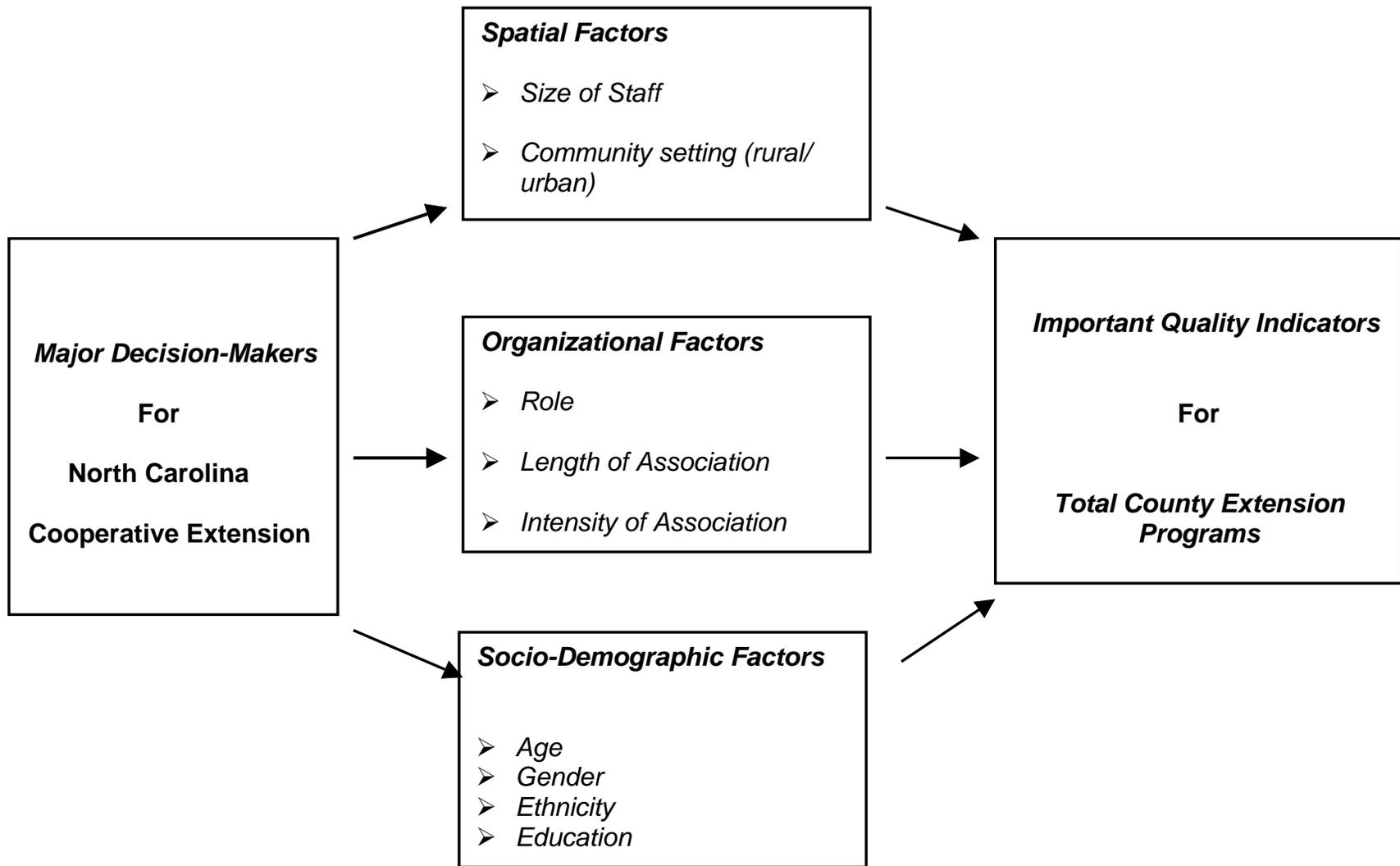


Figure 1. Conceptual Schema: Factors associated with Cooperative Extension’s Decision–Makers in determining indicators for Quality Total County Programs.

Quality in Adult Education

The Ralph Tyler conceptual model for educational curriculum gave educators a guide for planned instruction. “Education is a process of changing the behavior patterns of people” (Tyler, 1949, p. 5). Tyler’s basic model asked four questions about the educational activity. First, “what educational purpose should the school seek to attain?” Tyler stated that the needs of the learner should be considered. Need was defined as “the gap between what is and what should be”. Educational purposes may be identified through contemporary life from outside the school setting. Subject specialists or students themselves may also assign purposes. This definition of need and purpose was the first step of educational program design. A significant part of this step was setting educational objectives described by Tyler as specific behavior changes by the student. These objectives were not directed toward or centered on the teachers’ activities. The second question was “what educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?” Learning experiences were selected to facilitate the purpose and objectives. Tyler (1949) defined the learning experience as the interaction between the learner and the external conditions of the environment. The third question was “how could learning experiences be organized for effective instruction?” These learner-based experiences should relate to one another so they can reinforce one another. Experiences must be continuous, sequential and integrated. “Good teaching always involves a synthesis of several elements.” The final question that Tyler asked was “how could the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated?” Evaluation was focused on the learner objective of behavioral change. This degree of behavioral

change was based on the overt observations for evaluation. Tyler stated that evaluation should be for the individual learner as well as program assessment. Educational program assessment should be a continuous process to allow for redirection and redevelopment. Tyler has had significant impact on “quality” in adult education and has provided a model that is still intact and often built upon (Elias and Merriam, 1980). Many of the principles outlined by Tyler’s model served as foundational elements of future adult and Cooperative Extension models (Knowles, 1970; Houle, 1972).

Humanistic Adult Education theorists have played a significant role in establishing foundational elements for quality Extension programs. Carl Rogers articulated the practical approach to education. Rogers promoted self-initiated learning that was real and relevant to the learner. Rogers advocated student participation in educational design and evaluation, the teacher as facilitator, and effective group methods. Rogers supported the integration of academics and vocational curriculum. This pragmatic view of education is still being contested today. Rogers’ student-centered approach was based on five hypotheses.

1. We cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate his learning.
2. A person learns significantly only those things, which he perceives as being involved in the maintenance of, or enhancement of, the structure itself.

3. Experience, which, if assimilated, would involve a change in the organization of self, tends to be resisted through denial or distortion of symbolization.
4. The structure and organization of self appears to become more rigid under threat; to relax its boundaries when completely free from threat. Experience, which is perceived as inconsistent with the self, can only be assimilated if the current organization of self is relaxed and expanded to include it.
5. The educational situation, which most effectively promotes learning, is one which (1) threat to the self of the learner is reduced to a minimum, and (2) differentiated perception of the field is facilitated (Rogers, 1951; Elias and Merriam, 1980, p. 124-125).

Rogers' conceptual framework set the stage for the work of others to follow. Key concepts attributed to the humanistic approach are freedom and autonomy, trust, active cooperation and participation, and self-directed learning (Elias and Merriam, 1980). Cooperative Extension through informal grass-roots educational approach has many parallels with Roger's concept for quality self-actualization education methods.

The conceptualization of andragogy is deeply rooted in the learning principles of adults identified by Malcolm Knowles. In his early years as an instructor with the YMCA, Knowles realized that adult learners must bring valuable experiences and immediate needs to the learning environment. These adult learners are committed

to the life-long journey of self-direction. These principles for adult education identified by Knowles separated pedagogy from the newly created conceptual framework of andragogy. Andragogy was defined by Knowles as the art and science associated with the education of adults. Knowles believed that adults learn differently than children. Education and subsequent learning must be centered on an objective that is purposeful and meaningful. The learner must be able to make a connection to the real life problems and experiences. He stated that for adults, the first step to adult learning is the creation of individual desire. The second step is in the learning process in putting forth the effort. Meaningful education for adults usually involves combining problem solving with the experiences of the learner. The closer this problem situation is to the experiences of the adult learner, the more the adult will learn. This step of the learning process also implies that for learning to take place there must be involvement and action by the learner. It is not a passive process. The third step in the learning process is the experiencing of satisfaction by the learner. Learning generally brings about a change in the learners, transforming the learning experience into a positive feeling of accomplishment, which leads to other rewards (Knowles, 1953). Knowles steps could be directly applied educational foundation principles for Cooperative Extension. Of special interest to the author was the connection of the learner objectives to the learners' experiences and problems.

In his book, *Self-Directed Learning* (1975), Knowles' adult learning model began with a comprehensive needs assessment by canvassing the learners, the communities, and the organizations. These needs become objectives once they are

filtered through the organizations mission, philosophy and purpose (Elias and Merriam, 1980). These objectives are then organized for best learning by the group with significant input from the learners. The final step in Knowles self-directed learning approach was an evaluation of the learning outcomes. Knowles believed that adult learners could perform a more accurate self-evaluation of their progress. The learner could also share experiences, knowledge and challenges within the adult learner group. Key concepts of this approach was the motivation of the adult learner, the need to build trust between the learner and the facilitator, creating a learning environment, and the matching of the learner goals with the goals of the class (Knowles, 1975). Knowles established the following assumptions for andragogy.

First, adults possess a self-concept. That is to say adults know who they are and exhibit a self-directed autonomous adult nature. Second, Knowles assumes that each adult learner brings a unique set of experiences that are integrated into the learner's personality. The teacher/facilitator following the student-centered approach would use these experiences to facilitate participatory learning. The third assumption is the adult learner's readiness to learn is motivated by the present developmental stage of the learner's life. The final assumption is that the adult learner would be able to make immediate application of the knowledge learned as compared to postponed application.

Thus, for Knowles the problem-solving group technique is more appropriate than curriculum based (Elias and Merriam, 1980). Knowles believed in education of the whole person. His Adult Learner model gave precedence to people over things,

learner over the teacher, experiences over set curriculum, climate over structure, immediate needs over scheduled outcomes, and flexible objectives over rigid objectives.

Interestingly enough, Knowles (1970) characterized the teacher by defining specific responsibilities for “good teaching” to occur as a result of:

1. His ability to understand the goals of the course and whenever possible, to see that the student shares in shaping the goals.
2. His attitude, acceptance and respect for personality.
3. His planning of the environment.
4. His facility in encouraging full participation by all learners.
5. His versatility in choosing methods and media.
6. His awareness that learning should be satisfying and free of compulsion.

Therefore, to assure that a quality education experience was to occur, key factors had to be recognized by the instructor and applied to the context, content, learner and teacher environment. The passive rote-learning models of the past were not the accepted models for quality educational experiences. Adult education instructors must change their role to that of a facilitator that listens to and encourages individualism with the framework of the curriculum. These early conceptual models in adult education established the groundwork for more specific Cooperative Extension programming models to follow that would focus on quality adult education. These early pioneers also outlined the basic premise for indicators of quality programs in Cooperative Extension.

Quality In Cooperative Extension Programming Models

In addition to Tyler and Knowles, there are a total of seven more programming models that are presented in *Developing Programs in Adult Education* (Boone, 1992). Most of the models that Boone compared in his book had similar macro processes and conceptual framework. Boone's evaluation of programming models prescribed functional and pragmatic programming steps that included:

1. Problem/need identification.
2. Setting of objectives, goals, and means.
3. Some formal and informal learning activities.
4. Either an explicit or implicit evaluation.

Most programming models include the major components of planning, design and implementation, and evaluation. This author focused on the works of Dr. Edgar Boone and his associates as the most widely accepted model of non-formal education and designed to assist Cooperative Extension professionals conceptualize essential steps for a quality Extension program. The Boone-Dolan-Shearon model built upon and refined the earlier programming models of Tyler and Beal, Blount, Powers and Johnson. The author conducted a thorough review of the Boone model to identify major elements and indicators of a quality Extension program.

Boone (1992) described programming as efforts within an adult education organization in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for informal education programs. Adult educators such as the Cooperative Extension agents, used planned educational activities and strategies to produce behavior

change for the individual learners or groups. Within the sub-processes of planning, designing and implementation, and evaluation and accountability are many micro-processes.

The Boone, Dolan and Shearon (1970) “Conceptual Schema” of programming in the Cooperative Extension Service was written and developed in the context to focus primarily for an Extension audience (Boone, 1992). The first stage of the conceptual framework as described by Boone was the **planning process** with sub-processes of “the organizational and its renewal processes” and “linking the organization to its publics”. This stage was more detailed than other models in defining particular roles of the organization and the change agent. Boyle (1981) also included many of the sub-processes listed by Boone. Both Boone and Boyle placed an emphasis on the importance of the educator to understand and work within the organizational culture. Boone’s model was built upon the principle that change agents must be committed to the organization. Successful agents have a thorough understanding of the organization and the organization’s scope, and mission. Following the Boone conceptual programming model, change agents must also maintain a commitment to organization renewal and to a well-tested conceptual framework for programming. Four basic assumptions are described in the model concerning the competencies change agent. Boone (1985) stated the extent in which positive program outcomes (quality) or outputs are attained through planning efforts and the total programming effort of the adult education organization are contingent upon several organizational concepts. These assumptions described by Boone are:

1. The adult educator must understand and be committed to the philosophy, mission, and roles of the organization.
2. The educator has skills in staffing, supervision, evaluation and accountability.
3. The educator must be committed to the conceptual framework of programming.
4. The educator understands organizational renewal.

These qualities and traits of the change agent/educators are essential to the success of the programming effort and serve as elemental indicators of program quality. This fundamental yet critical sub-process outlined by Boone emphasized the necessary competencies, professional commitment, and organizational understanding that a change agent must possess to plan a quality Extension program. The second sub-process described by Boone involved “Linking the organization to its’ publics”. As part of the planning process the change agent must possess skills that include connecting with the publics and identifying targeted audiences. Critical to the philosophy of adult education and embodied in the foundational premise of Extension is the change agent’s ability to identify and analyze the needs of the local target group. Boone also pointed out that Extension agents should understand the differences between felt needs and unfelt needs. Change agents should develop skills to identify local needs based upon research and build support with the target group. The target audiences are not always aware of the most important needs. This dichotomy of needs was described by Boone as

an essential part of the needs assessment that once fully understood and defined, provided the agent an opportunity to educate leaders and build support for prioritization the most important needs to be addressed by educational programs. The Boone model-planning phase leads to the sequential steps of identification, assessment and analysis of clientele needs. Boone stated that the need assessment process was critical to the future success and development of quality programs with significant impacts. Adequate needs assessment does not occur until the agent has identified, mapped and established linkages with various stakeholders, leaders and decision makers (Boone, 1985).

Needs Assessment

Needs assessment is the major function of identifying areas for program development. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy created a theoretical framework for the categorization of needs. The main premise of the hierarchy was that one level of need must be met before the individual aspires to move to the next level. The hierarchy started with the individual's basic need for (1) survival, and then the progression to higher needs when that need is met to (2) safety, (3) belonging, (4) recognition, (5) achievement, and finally (6) self-actualization. Until the basic needs are met, the individual does not seek to meet the higher level needs. This is of particular importance in assessing clientele needs and developing educational programs. Extension educators must understand local culture, clientele experiences, educational level, and other contextual factors in order to develop well-received and high impact quality programs.

A need as defined by Tyler (1971) is the gap or distance between “what is and what ought to be”. Tyler further stated that the learner’s needs are constantly evolving as the individual matures. Secondly, adults demand that education be applicable to their current needs. This point is critical for the educational activities to provide a lasting, meaningful experience for the learner. Educators should assist learners/clients to decide what ought to be. To completely analyze the need for developing a program, the educator must understand that the objectives should be constructed to reach what could be or what ought to be. Knowles (1973) stated that the definition of need for the adult learner is the assessment of where the learner is now and where the learner wants to be.

Boone (1992) emphasizes that the early identification, involvement, and interfacing with community leaders and targeted clientele groups will sharpen the educators focus in proper identification and validation of needs. This early leader (decision-maker) involvement in the programming process builds support for the program (Seevers et al., 1997). It is the educator’s responsibility to lead the inclusive process to accurately identify and prioritize the local needs. Boone (1992) developed a model that outlines the major steps in needs identification and prioritization. Most of these steps require constant linkages with the publics, targeted clientele, community leaders, decision-makers, and learner groups. The needs assessment is a basic function of the programming process and is essential in determining program scope, potential resources, and assuring that programs are locally relevant.

In addition to the above educator characteristics, Seevers, Graham, Gamon, and Conklin, (1997) identified two key groups of people involved by the educator in the program-planning process. First, stakeholders were described as people who have a vested interest in the educational program. This stakeholder group could include program participants, funding partners, extension personnel, community leaders, community professionals, potential participants, volunteers, and advisors. The second key group was the guidance teams who managed the various stages of the planning process (Seevers, et al., 1997). Members of the guidance team may have included Cooperative Extension personnel, volunteers, coordinators, issue teams, advisory groups, and community leaders.

Local Extension educators, stakeholders, and the guidance team must be keenly aware of the societal, organizational, or local community perspective and their impact on program planning (Mustian, Liles, and Pettit, 1988). Since Extension programs existed in local counties, the social, historical, economic, educational, emotional, political, and personal factors could strongly influence program direction, program impact and quality.

Program Design and Implementation

The adult educator is also charged with the responsibility of designing and implementing an effective education program to address the identified local needs. Basic assumptions in the Boone model (1985) that apply to quality programming include:

1. The planned program in adult education is the organization's principal means of responding to the needs of the target audience.

2. The planned program is a blueprint of major behavioral changes to be effected by the adult education organization over a relatively long period of time, if improvements are to be noted in these publics.
3. The planned program provides the adult education organization with a rationale for the allocation, deployment, and use of its resources.
4. The planned program serves as a guide and provides direction for decisions on strategies for coping with the educational needs of learners.
5. The planned program provides the adult education organization with an excellent public relations tool.
6. The design of plans of action guides the systematic development of change strategies to deal with the needs and objectives enumerated in the planned program, within a relatively short period of time.
7. The planned program and plans of action provide the adult educator with the means needed to market them to the intended publics.
8. The planned program and plans of action provide a base for the adult educator in identifying, recruiting, and developing resource persons to assist with the actual implementation of the planned program and its accompanying plans of action.

Each assumption is based on the educator designing a local program within the available resources and within the community environment. Furthermore, the educator must translate local needs into measurable, attainable, teaching objectives. As in the earlier models of Tyler and Knowles, these objectives are essential for the

educator to design a sequential plan development of learning experiences. Additional steps added by Boone included continuous marketing of the plans of action to build support and to assist in recruiting volunteers and other leader-learner resources. Quality assurance in programming can only be obtained through constant feedback from all stakeholders. Boone stated that the key for programming improvement is continuous formative evaluation and program refinements throughout the programming process.

Program Evaluation and Accountability

The evaluation of the adult education program is an area of great controversy and weakest technology in all of education (Knowles, 1973). Throughout the conceptual programming model, program evaluation and accountability provide an opportunity for feedback from and to the stakeholders and guidance team. Boone (1992) suggested that evaluation of a program should ask some fundamental questions. Extension educators and stakeholders can measure the quality of the programming efforts by the response to these questions.

1. To what extent did the planned program and plans of action result in individual behavioral change, intended or unintended, manifest or latent, among learners?
2. To what extent did the planned program and plans of action result in aggregate behavioral change in the target public?
3. To what extent were planned program and plans of action inputs and program activities associated with such change?

4. To what extent were organizational mission, philosophy, structure, functions, and processes effective and efficient in producing outcomes intended in the planned program and plans of action?

Boone characterized evaluation of quality programs as both formative and summative. Boone also suggested that evaluation by stakeholders should occur at all levels in well-designed non-formal educational programs. In all of the programming models, evaluation is key to quality enhancement of the educational effort. Boone (1992) identified five processual tasks to be completed in the final phase of the programming model.

Task 1. The adult educator must describe the outcomes of the planned program, intended or objective based, unintended, manifest, or latent. Evidence must be collected in line with the professional standards to document outcomes.

Task 2. The adult educator must examine associations between input and output variable with the intent to inferring causal relationships.

Task 3. The adult educator should review the implementation of objectives in their hierarchies with regard to intended output specifications as compared to input/output associations.

Task 4. The adult educator must carefully check the translation of objectives, within their hierarchies, from needs, within their hierarchies.

Task 5. The adequacy of needs identification, assessment, and analysis must be examined as associated with the degree of learner participation and observed out-comes/outputs at individual and aggregate learner levels.

Boone (1992) stated that the key factors in successful programming starts with identifying the target publics, mapping the community, and interfacing with leaders (lay and official decision-makers) in order to provide strong linkages. These linkages will build local support for quality programs with significant impact. Adults measure quality of the learning experience by their ability to apply what they learn (Kidd, 1973). Feedback at any time, in any learning process is stated in the learner's perception. Boone (1992) further stated that by using evaluation findings to strengthen programs, Extension provides accountability to our public, parent organization(s), funding partners and the profession. Boone (1992) stated that evaluation "closes the loop" for the organization and the stakeholders by providing feedback on expected and achieved outcomes.

Donald Kirkpatrick's (1971) conceptual framework for evaluation of adult education programs supported the Boone programming model. Kirkpatrick depicted evaluation as having four basic steps. **Reaction evaluation** is the first step and requires collecting data from participants as the program takes place. This step requires feedback for the participant as to the positive and negative aspects of the learning process. The second step was the **learning evaluation** in which the participants acquire principles, techniques and facts about a subject so that learning experiences can be measured. Simple pretests and posttests can measure the amount of knowledge gained by participants. The third evaluation is **behavior evaluation**. Usually this evaluation requires some level of observation of the participants after the completion of the training to ensure that the practices were adopted. This data is then compared to data collected at the beginning of the

educational program to evaluate program effectiveness. This type of evaluation would fall somewhere around level six for practices adopted on Bennett's hierarchy. The fourth step is the **results evaluation** where the entire program data is contained in routine records for the organization. Results evaluations are useful in determining program and organizational efficiency and accountability.

Perception

What is the definition of perception as it relates to internal and external stakeholders? An individual's perception is based on experience (O'Hair, Friedrich, & Shave, 1995). Solvin, Berko, and Wolvin (1993), stated that perception filters the message based on the listener's background, experiences, roles, mental and physical state, beliefs, attitudes, and values. Koonz et al., (1982) described perception as being dependent on the perceiver's senses, experiences, values, interests and attitudes. These variables tend to change the focus of the characteristic being perceived and in some cases, the perceiver may even ignore other characteristics altogether. The perceiver attempts to organize and integrate experiences and information he perceives into shapes or "Gestalt" based upon his own environment (Lovell, 1989).

Knowles (1973) stated that perception is highly selective (not random), and within the selective field there is selective exposure and selective awareness. Perception tends to be organized into some conceptual framework meaningful to that person. Perception is clearly influenced by the needs, disposition and experiences of the individual.

Gestalts school of psychology, and particularly Max Wertheimer, (1912) denoted four laws of perception. These laws contribute to the perceiver's felt degree of meaningfulness through proximity, similarity, closure, and good continuation. The perceiver tends to group similar items into patterns (similarity). The perceiver will tend to close the gaps on the information received (closure). The perceiver, upon seeing items in a close arrangement will tend to make a complete or separate unit (proximity). The perceiver will tend to continue information/points beyond the information observed or drawn (continuation). The perceiver will use all available senses and these four laws of perception to organize the information gathered. Thus, the Gestalt school theorized that the whole is often times greater than the sum of its parts.

The purpose of this study was to describe the decision-makers' perceptions of quality for the Total County Extension Program. The author realized that perceptions would vary based upon the principles described in the literature. Some of the above mentioned factors were isolated in the research to measure their relationship with the dependent variable (decision-makers' perception of quality).

Quality

What is the definition of quality? The Baldrige National Quality Programs core values supported the concept that the customer ultimately is responsible in defining quality. Quality is a function of learner expectations (Mustian, 1998). Client driven quality is a strategic concept that must be constantly measured and evaluated (National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), 2003).

We may all agree on the need for quality. Can we adequately identify the criteria for quality Extension programs? Each one of us has a different perception of quality programs. Kidd (1973, p. 196) stated, "Agencies like Cooperative Extension have difficulty in judging quality because there have been so few attempts to apply rigorous evaluation". Cooperative Extension clientele tend to define quality by perceptions of importance for themselves and their learner groups (Mustian, 1998). So the real issue becomes not what is quality, but how can we reach consensus on the parameters of quality (Barbe, 1983). Senge (1990) defined quality as all the things that matter to a customer. Senge said that the things that matter are product quality, service quality, and delivery reliability.

Quality may be illusive or not quantifiable. Quality indicators may be qualitative or quantitative. Taylor (1994) placed Extension program indicators into three categories: process, client benefit, and consequence. Qualitative indicators such as those in human sciences are usually more difficult to assess behavioral impacts (Taylor, 1994). Many instruments that claim to measure quality are really focused on customer satisfaction surveys (Israel, 2004). This fact has not stopped education and business segments of our society from striving for high quality standards. The successful engagements of "Quality Circles" and "Total Quality Management" on the American industrial scene resurfaced only after these practices were proven effective in other countries. Quality issues surrounding the globalization of products created an essential environment for change. American industries were challenged to address the serious problems associated with poor

quality products in an international market. The education sector has subsequently followed in the search for quality.

Total Quality Management

The primary concept behind making the Total Quality Management (TQM) movement successful has been the involvement of people from all disciplines in the planning and execution of the plan (Brassard, 1989). The exclusion of some stakeholders in the early years leads to the initial failure of Deming's work in the United States. He realized that all stakeholders must be involved in the TQM process for the quality revolution in the work place to occur. Thus, TQM is a quest for quality that exceeds the customer's expectations (Seevers et al., 1997).

The TQM process has broken down barriers enabling different organizational divisions to work together to solve organization-wide problems or just to improve quality for a simple deliverable product. The TQM concept has made some inroads in Cooperative Extension with the utilization of the TQM tools for focusing on county strategic plans, prioritizing programs or identifying local needs. These local strategic plans have fostered an environment for Extension staffs to create a unified vision, to develop a clear mission statement, to identify strengths and opportunities for growth, to identify primary and secondary customers, to set goals, and develop action steps to achieve these goals. Through TQM, Cooperative Extension programs regained a customer focus, which directly influenced program quality. The TQM philosophy has allowed the county staffs to prepare for their own future and foster a team approach toward reaching their goals (Scholtes, 1993).

The concepts and principles of TQM are assisting to identify and to quantifying quality for all the stakeholders (Martin-Milius, 1994). The strategic planning process has provided the infrastructure and support for this transformation of quality in terms of the stakeholders to occur. Along with the Total Quality Management concept, corporate organizations have utilized similar models to address quality.

Quality Systems such as ISO 9000, Lean, Deming/Systems Thinking, Six Sigma, Baldrige Foundation, or a combination of all the above are wide spread throughout modern industry (Phillips-Donaldson, 2003). Most of these quality systems focused on customer satisfaction (Keller, 2003). A key second component was the involvement of all stakeholders in the refinement of the process.

While corporate America had embraced variations of the Deming model, the systems approach had a lasting influence on quality criteria and how that multiple criteria were implemented (Oakes, 2003). The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program embodied the systems/TQM approach and was centered on key core values embracing continuous improvement and life-long learning. The Baldrige conceptual framework has been widely adopted by organizations around the world (Crownover, 2003). The basic criteria for quality assurance were as with other models, focused on customer expectations, stakeholder feedback and systems/strategic approach toward problem solving.

The Baldrige National Quality Program

The Foundation for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award was created to enhance quality in the areas of education, health care, manufacturing, services, and small business. The Baldrige Awards Program and the Baldrige Foundation were named for Malcolm Baldrige, former Secretary of Commerce (1981-1987), who through his leadership positively contributed to the long-term improvement of government focusing on greater efficiency and effectiveness. The Baldrige National Quality Program was established as a partnership of public and private funds to enhance quality through established quality criteria. These criteria established quality as a national priority and are attributed to assisting in the revitalization of the U. S. economy. The Baldrige Program was partnered with existing efforts from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the American Society for Quality (ASA).

The Baldrige Program promotes continuous quality improvement through the development, advancement, and promotion of quality concepts, principles, and indicators. Subsequently, this program supports economic growth through the sharing of ideas, and the promotion of risks to explore innovative tools, creative processes, and higher levels of services. Recipients of the awards have generously shared their information on successful performance and quality strategies with other organizations throughout the world. The ultimate goal of the Baldrige Award process was to improve the United States competitiveness and to seek excellence in performance (National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2004).

The educational award criteria were established to measure quality and provide participants with quality indicators. These criteria were based on the following fundamental core values:

- Visionary leadership
- Learner-centered education
- Organizational and personal learning
- Valuing faculty, staff, and partners
- Agility
- Focus on the future
- Managing for innovation
- Management by fact
- Social responsibility
- Focus on results and creating value
- Systems perspective

The Baldrige Program identified these essential core values of high-performing organizations. These core values are key to the organization's ability to become successful and maintain sustainability. The direction of a successful organization along with the values and expectations should balance the needs of all stakeholders. Through visionary and strong leadership, primary emphasis should be placed on client-centered objectives while enhancing partnerships and valuing staff. The Baldrige Program also called for ethical leadership to step beyond compliance to encompass a commitment toward systems approach to achieve performance excellence (NIST, 2004).

The building blocks that embody the core values and concepts in the educational criteria were:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Student, stakeholder, and market focus
- Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management
- Faculty and staff focus
- Process management
- Organizational performance results

These criteria were established as the primary indicators of quality exhibited by a highly effective and successful educational organization. So, the recognized award recipients would model the way for others to follow. The Baldrige Awards Program was not designed to provide a recipe for success. No one process or pattern can guarantee performance excellence. Educational criteria for performance excellence established a process to measure indicators of quality programs and organizations. The Baldrige Awards Program was designed to enhance the existing tools and concepts available in an organized effort to define and highlight quality educational programs (NIST, 2004). Many of the Baldrige quality indicators are remarkably similar to the Cooperative Extension indicators described by Bennett, Mustian, Taylor-Powell, and Patton.

Quality Program Impacts

A widely accepted conceptual framework used by Cooperative Extension professionals for evaluation of educational programs is Bennett's hierarchy. The Bennett model for program evaluation and impact is based on seven progressive levels of program accomplishments and outcomes. Each level builds upon the past level's accomplishments. The higher the level of program involvement, the higher the level of program impacts for the target audience. The first two levels are more activity and program input related. The remaining five steps intensify in customer involvement, customer commitment, practice adoption, customer focus, targeted change, and program impact to society. Bennett's (1975) model assists educational programmers in clarifying objectives with intended outcomes. These outcomes clearly focus on the degree of involvement and change by the audience. As the hierarchy progresses upwards, the evidence of program impact as it relates to changes in the behavior of people becomes stronger. Level three would target the number of audience contacts achieved. Level four would record reaction from program involvement by participants. Level five would document changes in learner knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirations. Level six would show adoption and/or application of new information/education through clientele practice change perhaps over some period of time. Level seven measured the beneficial impact to society through economic, environmental or social change. This level targets long-range outcomes over a considerable period of time. Bennett's hierarchy has provided agents with a valuable tool for writing measurable, obtainable, objectives and determining specific, outcomes.

Stakeholders may perceive that program outcomes differ without regard to the hierarchical measurement. Educational programs may be perceived to have different levels of quality by individuals or by the same individual at different times depending on the set of expectations. These program expectations vary due to complex combination of information, relationships, experiences, values, and current reality (Mustian, 1998).

Patton (1987) suggested that paradoxes occur in Extension when administrators focus more on quantities of outcomes over quality of life outcomes. Organizational values in the informational age must be centered on quality methods instead of paying attention to quantitative differences. Patton stated that in the information age, Extension would achieve excellence by under-girding and upholding these values. Productivity of knowledge workers (Extension agents) should be related more to quality than quantity of work. The critical factors related to agents' productivity were attitudes, relationships, and job enrichment (Buford, 1990).

Related Studies

An exhaustive review of the literature by the author found limited information on quality criteria for Cooperative Extension programs. The author described related research in an attempt to define decision-makers' perceptions of quality indicators. Several descriptive studies dealt with decision-makers and their perception of some other topic than quality programs. Other comparative studies examined the variances of stakeholder expectations and/or perception on some topic. Most of the research was qualitative and limited in scope. The research that most closely

aligned with the quality indicators of Extension programs was the published qualitative study conducted in Wisconsin conducted by Taylor-Powell, Douglass, and Stanek in 1995.

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Mohammad Douglass and Kay Stanek Study

Taylor-Powell, Douglass, and Stanek presented the findings of this qualitative study at the 1995 American Evaluation Association Annual meeting. A thorough review of this study revealed similar quality indicators among the three focus groups interviewed. All focus groups were comprised of external stakeholders (local influentials) in three Wisconsin counties. All focus groups were asked similar questions. Findings presented by this study identified major categorical indicators of quality Extension programs as perceived by stakeholders. Wisconsin relies on county government to fund 40% of local Extension salaries; therefore local perspectives and measures of performance are particularly critical (Taylor-Powell et al, 1995). The focus groups were asked what critical factors make a high quality Extension program? Their response was that quality Extension programs:

- Are led by a **good staff**.
- Are **relevant** to the county situation and concerns are useful to a wide number of residents.
- Serve a **broad based clientele**.
- Provide **unbiased** and up to date information.
- Are **responsive** to local needs and emergencies.
- Are **focused** with well-defined areas of responsibility.

- Are supported by a **long-term plan**, which provides the basis for program prioritizing, direction, and continuity.
- Utilize resources **efficiently**.
- Do not **duplicate** other programs.

In addition to the descriptors identified by the focus groups, “it was quite clear local decision-makers had their own measure of program performance which were not the same as Cooperative Extension’s (administration)”. Taylor-Powell, Douglass, and Stanek (1995) found that most participants did not view Extension as an educational agency, but more a public service organization. Different stakeholders have different perceptions of what constitutes a quality program. This study concluded with a look at the local budgetary process as it related to continued Extension funding. The findings suggested that most decision-makers made budget decisions for Extension programs based more on clientele feedback, intuition, and local relationships than from formal evaluations and impact numbers. The Taylor-Powell study also identified the opportunity for Extension professionals to promote a better understanding by decision-makers of the Cooperative Extension’s mission and the unique local contribution that Extension can make in addressing complex social, economic, and environmental issues.

Lawrence Osborne Study

A descriptive-correlational study by Lawrence Osborne in 1991 of the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service reported some interesting findings. Osborne initially

identified the problem centering on the reduction in force of Extension field faculty due to financial constraints. In response to the downsizing, multi-county staffing and or clustering were being pilot tested. Osborne's study was designed to investigate the perceptions of Extension workers and county Extension advisory committee members toward two potential staffing alternatives for the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service.

Osborne identified the quality indicators for several Cooperative Extension State programs. The Ohio Cooperative Extension Service administrative cabinet adopted the following indicators for quality in Extension programs.

1. Program is based on needs assessment, which reflects current and future trends.
2. Program is planned in conjunction with District Specialists.
3. Program content is technically accurate, current and research based.
4. Program is developed from broad base of community networks and linkages.
5. Program utilizes multiple delivery methods.
6. Program is innovative and/or involves risks.
7. Program is cost effective.
8. Program reaches a wide variety of clientele.
9. Program targets multiple audiences.
10. Program has a strong support base of users and key community leaders/decision makers.
11. Program shows documented accomplishment of objectives.

These indicators are closely aligned with the Taylor-Powell findings but certainly are written from the internal perspective of administration. Osborne also included the program quality indicators from Cornell Cooperative Extension, Maryland Cooperative Extension Service and Minnesota Extension Service for comparison. According to Osborne in 1990, Cornell Cooperative Extension Service listed the following as indicators of quality Extension programs. The Cooperative Extension program:

1. Is consistent with the mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension Service.
2. Reflects content central to the research and knowledge base.
3. Reflects the educational needs of the community residents.
4. Represents a commitment of college and association/area resources to the issue and program.
5. Includes a significant volunteer development effort.
6. Includes effective definition and delivery of program.
7. Makes a unique educational contribution.
8. Reaches a substantial number of clientele.
9. Includes a commitment to continued program efforts.
10. Reflects political considerations.
11. Provides a basis for evaluation.

While the Cornell indicators differed from the Ohio indicators and Taylor-Powell findings, there were several similarities. Of particular interest were the inclusions within the Cornell indicators to identify volunteer involvement and political environment as determining factors for determining quality Extension programs. The

Cornell indicators also openly addressed the need for all programs to fall under the mission. While the mission was not necessarily expressed by other quality listings it was certainly considered as implied.

Both the Maryland and the Minnesota indicators were smaller in number and more encompassing in scope. Maryland Cooperative Extension Service (Smith, 1991) identified the following components of quality programs.

1. **Relevance:** Addresses identified need, situation, or concern in timely manner. Addresses need that is amenable to change with education.
2. **Quality Process:** Professional credibility. Plausible program plan. Evaluate program outcomes.
3. **Utility:** Provides useful and used results, which contributes to knowledge, solves a problem, or helps clients improve their quality of or situation of life. Contributes to improvement and/or maintenance of expertise of staff (Smith, 1991, p.3-4).

Minnesota Extension Service identified the following components to a quality Extension program (Mueller, 1991).

1. **Problem selection:** Important, Focused and Grounded.
2. **Commitment:** Timely/Time limited, Credible and Capacity.
3. **Strategy implementation:** Results Oriented, Responsive, Feasible, Flexible/Adaptive, Systemic.
4. **Review/Sunset:** Utility, Evidence, Follow Through (Mueller, 1991, p. 2-5).

The Minnesota model really had fourteen components under four major categories. The outline by four major categories aligns with several programming models and identifies key components for quality in Extension programming.

Again, while each lists of indicators from Ohio, Maryland, Cornell, and Minnesota had many similarities, each one used a different approach to categorize indicators of quality Extension programs. Often, the source of the indicators on these lists suggested that they are administratively or organizationally grounded and not customer grounded. Osborne's findings showed evidence that there was a difference of opinion between agents and advisory committee members of what constitutes a quality program. Osborne (1991) suggested that other decision-makers outside his study focus help determine what constituted a quality county program. Other groups to include would be funding bodies, clientele, and administration. As Osborne called for a need for the current study, he also challenged Extension administration to solicit input on the components of quality programs from other groups outside Extension.

Although Osborne's study was focused on staffing pattern and feedback from the major stakeholders of Extension advisory committee and staff, he explored the components of quality and the quality perspective taken by these two groups. Osborne also called for a review of the dynamics of the county partnerships and funding arrangements, which had a major bearing on the need for alternative staffing in the first place and was a driving force in the need for the Taylor-Powell study.

Linda M. Baldwin Study

Linda Baldwin conducted a qualitative study in 2002 that examined internal and external stakeholders' perception as it related to total quality management in higher education. Though the focus of this study was on colleges and universities, several interesting findings related to this study. First, in the pursuit of "quality", stakeholder involvement was imperative for successful educational programs. Much like Cooperative Extension, higher education had felt increasing social and fiscal pressure to reform and document impacts of educational efforts. The implementation of total quality management in colleges and universities without the involvement of stakeholders had led to failure and limited progress. Baldwin stated that a total quality management process must focus on the systems approach and include all stakeholders. For higher education, the stakeholder groups involved would be suppliers, staff, students, faculty, stockholders, alumni, local communities, local leaders, administrators and many more. Failure to be inclusive was identified by Baldwin as a major factor for not reaching objectives or gaining buy in for the TQM process. Baldwin found that stakeholder isolation lead to an "Ivory Tower" reputation contributing to higher education's inability to relate to real world truths that businesses must face on a daily basis. The results from the Baldwin study supported the literature by finding it necessary to incorporate all stakeholders in the TQM process in order to achieve a high level of successful implementation.

Baldwin also found that stakeholders' awareness or knowledge of activities, goals, plans, and processes for TQM implementation was needed for successful establishment of the program. Length of association by a stakeholder may result in

increased organizational commitment. Other findings from this study included no significant difference in commitment toward the total quality management process for internal and external stakeholders.

Another interesting independent variable explored in this study was the length in time of the relationship between the external stakeholder and the organization. Length of association for the external stakeholder was negatively related to the satisfaction of the stakeholder. That is to say, that the longer an external stakeholder was associated with the organization the less satisfied the stakeholder was in the organization. Thus the external stakeholders' satisfaction with the university decreased over time. The association time for internal stakeholders and their satisfaction with the organization was found to be the opposite from external stakeholders. This finding implied that better communication and involvement of external stakeholders might be the key to building community support for a particular program effort. The author's present study duplicated this correlation between length of service/association for external stakeholders and level of satisfaction with the organization.

Finally, Baldwin called for future studies to compare different stakeholders' perceptions of quality, commitment to the TQM process and overall satisfaction with the organization. Stakeholders such as faculty, staff, administrators, and students may have different perceptions about implementation of total quality management process. The results of the Baldwin study suggested that perception of internal and external stakeholders had a major influence on program success. These findings

from Baldwin's study certainly aligned with the purpose of this author's quantitative study.

Jimmy Lynn Shonkwiler Study

Jimmy Lynn Shonkwiler conducted a qualitative study in 1995 evaluating stakeholders' perception of downsizing by the Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. Shonkwiler was interested in measuring the level of clientele satisfaction with Extension programming after downsizing. Case studies involved gathering stakeholder perceptions of clientele satisfaction. The descriptive part of the study included survey and interview techniques. Two of the stakeholder groups from this study were members of the local volunteer unit council and county governing boards. These groups were chosen by Shonkwiler as the two most influential stakeholder groups for Cooperative Extension. A third stakeholder group was the local Extension staff. These three stakeholder groups follow the same categories identified by the author for the current study with the addition of Extension Administration. Results of the study showed that generally stakeholders believed that clients were dissatisfied with the downsizing of the Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. There were indications of widespread concern about:

1. Reduction in quantity of programs.
2. Increased cost to local programming units and constituents.
3. Loss of personal touch in dealing with clients.
4. Lack of coordination in linking Units, Centers, and Campus together in a new organization.

5. Lack of adequate communication between leadership and clientele groups.

From a positive perspective, the study found that Cooperative Extension enjoyed a “reservoir of goodwill” in the local communities allowing Extension a little time to address some solutions to the concerns mentioned above. The study found that 68% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of Extension programs. Downsizing had a negative impact on the perception of program quality according to one respondent. The client’s description of Cooperative Extension programs was characterized as being a mile wide and only an inch deep. Remaining Extension faculty was changing delivery methods resulting in the loss of one-on-one contact with clients. Respondents viewed the lack of personal contact as possibly more efficient but not necessarily more effective. Loss of local support, credibility, quick response to needs, and personal touch were cited by the stakeholders as the primary concerns for future quality Extension programs as a result of downsizing. One unit leader described Extension as an organization in search of a mission.

A common response from county governing boards also was found in the Shonkwiler study. Members of the County Governing Boards frequently indicated that they had received “no complaints” and assumed that the clients were satisfied with the Extension program. One County Board member responded that this change in delivery of Extension programs was long overdue. The day of the one-on-one approach to delivery can no longer be funded. Developing opportunities to deliver programs in a larger broader-based community approach are the future for Extension program delivery.

Extension council volunteers expressed much concern with the downsizing plan. One of the concerns centered on quality programs from the grass-roots advisors leading a need assessment. Shonkwiler found that some programs originated from the state/specialist level without regard to local input from Advisory Councils resulting in a confused delivery system. Other Extension Council volunteers expressed the increased need for Extension to market the contribution and impact of programs to the local community. Many clientele and decision-makers did not know which agency to credit for providing the highly valued information or education.

All stakeholders and clients viewed Extension offices and staffs as belonging to their community. This sense of locality, belonging, being one of the locals has long been considered in the literature as a comparative advantage for quality Extension programming. Equally important was the sense of loyalty to the local Extension Center. Seevers et al. (1997) stated that the very foundation of the Cooperative Extension Service has its roots in each local community. Extension happens where people live. Local people develop deep-rooted pride and boastful ownership in their local Cooperative Extension Service and their local Cooperative Extension staff.

Many stakeholders and clients believed that they should have been consulted before the downsizing was implemented. They were disappointed with the lack of involvement in the decision-making and the lack of communication from Extension administration. Stakeholders responded their dissatisfaction with the staffing and center reductions by sending grass clippings to the Extension Director. The

downsizing of the Illinois Cooperative Extension Service compromised certain indicators of quality Extension programs. The exclusion of stakeholders in the programming process violated elemental principles of quality Extension programming. Inclusion of stakeholders in all levels of decision-making was cited as the key recommendation for assuring that the Cooperative Extension Service addressed local needs, delivered local programs and was accountable for local resources.

Belinda Maria Wallace Carberry Study

Belinda Carberry conducted a study on the impact of multiple stakeholders on the Comer School development program. This was a qualitative study assessing the role of various stakeholders and how these stakeholders affect change in the school program. Stakeholders for this study included staff, students, parents, and community members. Although the study was not centered on Extension, it was noteworthy that the stakeholders had multiple objectives to be implemented. The Carberry study identified many of the contextual forces that the educator must acknowledge and understand before progress can be realized within the community. This study examined the complexity of bringing together multiple stakeholders to reach a common goal. Much like the Baldwin, Shonkwiler, Osborne studies, Carberry found that external stakeholders were usually not included in the initial training, planning, or communication until considerably later and after the decision was made. At this point, buy-in from the external stakeholders would not take place. Efforts to provide some catch-up training on the particular issue usually resulted in

failure. Carberry found that educators who did not include external stakeholders early in the process faced disappointments, confrontations, political battles, and paradoxes that the conceptual educational template was not prepared to address.

Carberry described the community behaviors discovered in the study with the sociological theories of Ferdinand Tonnies and Emile Durkhiem. Tonnies (Carberry, 2000) studied the people in rural areas and defined rural behaviors or agrarianism as “Gemeinschaft”. In the Gemeinschaft or agrarian communities, people’s characteristics related to land, kinfolk, remembrances, nostalgia, and obligation. Membership supported in the Gemeinschaft community was usually due to kinship or lifelong bonds. The Gemeinschaft community had little need for economic constraints and institutional controls. Stakeholders from these communities bonded together to face common struggles and problems.

Tonnies (Carberry, 2000) urbanized community was named “Gesellschaft. The Gesellschaft communities fostered a certain level of expertise and educational competence. These individuals functioned together only to complete common tasks, make money, support political interests, and meet moral obligations. Gesellschaft communities appeared publicly to be in disarray, fragmented, and entwined in bureaucracy. Carberry described the mixture of the Gemeinschaft and the Gesellschaft behaviors in communities as basically unsettled and depicted as not a peaceful situation. Often times the external professional community worked independent of each other even though they shared common goals and objectives. Conflict and confusion were inevitable in communities that had different perspectives and backgrounds. Carberry found in the study that programmatic ties to the external

stakeholders were driven by emotion, nostalgic behavior, and beliefs. All stakeholders never came to the table to support educational reform. The external stakeholders never developed the trust factor needed to implement community change. Therefore Carberry called for future studies of stakeholder groups and early involvement in planning, training, and communication. Also, Carberry recognized the need for educators to understand the communal forces that exist within the environment and how these forces interact with educational reform.

Karin Kauffman Pettit Study

Karin Pettit (1993) conducted a descriptive quantitative study of the perceptions of community college administrators and governance officials of community-based programs. Pettit examined the two key stakeholder groups' perception of community based programming. Stakeholders' perceptions were compared against independent variable of formal education level, ethnicity, gender, years at present position, years at the institution, and other institutional factors. Again the findings from this study concluded that personal factors affected the perception of the stakeholders. Pettit found that the stakeholders' position, level of formal education, readiness for change, and size of service area, influenced their perception of the importance of community-based programming. Furthermore, stakeholders' position, level of formal education, age, gender, years at present position, readiness for change, and size of service area influenced the perception of involvement in community-based programming.

Top administrators, as compared to governance officials perceived more involvement by community colleges in all levels of community based programming. The difference in perception by stakeholder groups varied by position. Therefore, community college leaders and governing officials perceived community-based programming at different levels of involvement. Pettit called for additional collaboration and training of the community-based programming model for both stakeholder groups. Again, the literature suggested that perception of stakeholders was influenced by many factors. The author duplicated several of the independent variables cited in the Pettit study.

Carmen Leon Guerrero Pearson Study

Carmen Pearson conducted a descriptive study in 1998 on the public's perception of the Guam Extension Service. Pearson examined thirteen independent variables. Awareness of the Guam Cooperative Extension Service programs was influenced by the age of respondents, respondents' level of education, occupation, and extent of previous contact with Extension. The respondents' age, gender, length of residence on Guam, and their previous level of contact with the organization influenced the favorable image of Guam Extension and its programs. Pearson found that Guam residents characterized Cooperative Extension as a truthful and safe organization with a positive image. Pearson called for continued marketing of Extension programs and involvement of stakeholders in planning educational programs. Since lower income residents had limited knowledge and interaction with Extension programs, Pearson called for Extension to target these

limited resource audiences to deliver needed educational programs. In Pearson's conclusion statement, Extension was charged to make its offices more accessible to the public. Specifically, the public's perception suggested an improvement in the image of the Extension centers.

Fletcher Barber, Jr. Study

Fletcher Barber, Jr. conducted a qualitative study in 1998 to explore the roles of area agents in programming. Major stakeholders identified were farmers, agribusiness representatives, commodity organization leaders, Extension administration, county funding partners, and Extension staff. These major stakeholders represented the same categorical parameters as the present study. Although Barber made no formal comparison of the differences in perceptions by these major stakeholders, the study did identify interesting concepts concerning program delivery and administrative functions. Much of the study focused on the perceived role of the area agent within the present organizational culture.

Barber concluded that the area agent needed a stronger link to the university specialists. Area specialized agents should be allowed to focus on area needs and their efforts should not be diluted by peripheral assignments or individual county needs. Finally, Barber's study called for a completely separate area agent program review that was not held in conjunction with the regular county program review. The separate program reviews would allow the area specialized agent the opportunity to involve a more representative stakeholder group to participate in the

process, thus sharpening the focus of the review, improving program quality indicators, and providing specific program feedback.

The Barber study identified several indicators of quality Extension programs such as the defining of major stakeholders, the involvement of stakeholders throughout the process, the need for program reviews, stronger linkage, and partnership with the university, and the difference in expectations and assignment for area agents.

Indicators of a quality program

The author grouped similar characteristics by the sub-headings of community based, customer focused, professional and creditable staff, team approach, quality process, and accountable to public (Mustian, 1998). Some literature suggested that the jury is still out as to what criteria constitute a Quality Extension Program (Smith, 1991). Smith explained that the very nature of Extension work makes identifying criteria or agreed upon outcomes next to impossible. Smith (1991) concluded that quality criteria identification was nearly impossible for Cooperative Extension due to:

1. The length of time between programming efforts and results,
2. The reality that Extension contributes only a portion of the totality of knowledge to the clientele,
3. The fact that social science methodology for demonstrating change is not as exact as the physical sciences,

The following is a literature review focusing on each characteristic identified in an effort to bridge this knowledge gap. The author included findings among peer-reviewed articles concerning the quality indicators for Extension programs.

Community-based

Patton (1995) stated that the strength of local Extension programs to solve local problems must be framed in the context of the larger world. This is essential for agents to consider when developing a program with the new technology and existing resources (Boone et al., 1970). Ownership of Extension programs at the county level is critical to securing and maintaining a broad base of support and essential local funding (Taylor-Powell and Richardson, 1991). The grass roots function (Boone et al., 1970) and the sense of community (Barbe, 1983) assist in developing a local identity for a national organization. This single characteristic makes Extension the strongest non-formal educational organization in the world.

Through community-based education, programs are grounded in real world problems, with real people, finding real solutions (Mueller, 1991). In the early years at the infancy of Cooperative Extension, the Seaman Knapp approach was to devise effective methods of teaching that addressed real problems and not imagined problems from some long distant expert (Boone, 1992). Community-based speaks to the founding principle of Cooperative Extension and the land grant system.

Cooperative Extension's premise is to educate the people where they are, and apply that researched based information to best fit in that particular environment (Seevers et al., 1997). The original mission of the land grant was to engage fully

with communities (ECOP, 2002). The presence of North Carolina Cooperative Extension in every county and the Cherokee Reservation is evidence of the continued commitment to a community-based nature of Extension programming effort.

Extension presence in local communities across America provides convenient accessibility to the knowledge that resides in our land grant universities (ECOP, 2002). This accessibility does not guarantee quality programs but certainly gives Extension the comparative advantage to deliver quality that is grounded in community-focused needs.

Customer-focused

Quality programs in Cooperative Extension are responsive to the customer (Merriam, 1989; Kellogg Commission, 2003; ECOP, 2002). Successful Extension staffs listen to the customers (Martin-Millis, 1994) and focus on customer satisfaction (Barbe, 1990). High quality programs build relationships with people (De Young, 1988). Both the Kellogg Report (2001) and the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Report (2002) described the strength of Cooperative Extension and the entire land-grant system in terms of the responsiveness to our customers.

The Taylor-Powell study (1995) suggested that responsiveness goes well beyond the planned program to meet prescribed needs to the unplanned response during times of disaster or local emergencies. Another characteristic of a quality Extension program that is customer focused is the program's ability to reach large

audiences with a broad-based approach. Merriam (1989) reported that quality programs serve all people. That is to say that quality Extension programs appeal to an ever changing, broad-based constituency (Taylor-Powell et al., 1995). Within this realm of program quality is the concept of program relevancy. Relevancy in Extension programs is resolved at the local grass-roots level by involved stakeholders (Boone, 1992). Perceptions of program performance and quality certainly are directly linked to relevancy when local Extension programs seek to address local concerns. Stakeholders view this relevance as essential to the future of Extension with the changing traditional clientele base and the traditional image surrounding Extension (Taylor-Powell et al., 1995). Relevance of Cooperative Extension programs is critical to reach expected returns for program inputs (Smith, 1991). Public officials also want to see programs that are customer-focused. Local officials want to know the programs they support are meeting needs of their constituents (Smith, 1991).

Professional, Creditable Staff

The Taylor-Powell Study (1995) referred to “a good staff” as a prerequisite characteristic needed to ensure quality Extension programs. The definition of a good staff was defined by the varied characteristics including the level of maturity, experience, professionalism, availability, attentiveness to customers, responsiveness in a timely manner, public relations skills, problem solving skills, motivational skills, ability to access people and information and the ability to get things done. The interesting characteristic was the need for Extension staff to have

a local identity. “Local folks want to talk with locals”. Generally the Taylor-Powell focus groups did not identify technical competence but focused on the value of linking new knowledge to the county with existing knowledge of the county. Again the underlying theme is the local ownership of the Extension program and in this case a staff that is locally oriented.

Technical competence ensures that county agents have the necessary tools to be active partners in relevant and emerging issues. Intensive agent training had an impact on issues-based programs (Richardson & Mustian, 1993). In research conducted in Texas (Taylor-Powell & Richardson, 1991), agents identified the need for professional training in specific competencies to facilitate developing programs to address issues, enhance innovative program delivery methods, facilitate team building and promote stronger program evaluation and impacts.

Dr. Edgar Boone’s estimation of the value of a good staff: the “Extension staff is the most potent weapon we have in our arsenal...staff development is one of Extension’s most powerful and effective management tools” (Boone, 1990, p. 3).

Merriam (1989) said the trust value of Extension professionals by local clientele was a key component of quality programming. Merriam (1989) further stated that the unbiased source of information is highly valued by clients. The Cooperative Extension staff brings the research-based knowledge and educational legitimacy to the counties and to the partnerships (Laughlin and Schmidt, 1995).

Strong communication skills (Seevers et al., 1997) are an important characteristic of an Extension educator. Cooperative Extension professionals are committed to the organization and the community they serve (Boone, 1985; Mueller,

1991). Taylor-Powell (1995) stated that a good staff equates to good program evaluations. Furthermore personnel evaluations are synonymous with good program evaluation from the local stakeholders' perspective.

Team Approach

Local Cooperative Extension staffs are more effective when the total staff functions as a team. Work groups that perceive a strong organizational culture have been proven to be more effective in Cooperative Extension setting (White, 2000). The County Extension Director is recognized as the formal leader of the team. All members of the staff are charged to contribute to the local team concept. With limited resources and shrinking staffs, the team has become a vital component to deliver quality Extension programs. Cooperative Extension teams are more effective in developing quality programs when Extension professionals design an interdisciplinary approach that allows for solving complex problems for local clientele (Laughlin & Schmidt, 1995). Team programming has a positive multi-disciplinary (Martin-Millis, 1994) approach to solving local needs.

Extension professionals have engaged Total Quality Management processes and tools (Seevers et al., 1997) to refocus the "quest for quality". TQM used a total team approach involving work teams. These teams are comprised of personnel from all levels and functions of the organizations to investigate innovative solutions to existing problems. This team approach includes the involvement of external stakeholders. Involvement of all the stakeholders is necessary for total

organizational, system wide effectiveness. This would warrant a systems approach for all levels of the programming process.

Effective, high quality Extension teams have a clear understanding and commitment to the organization and team goals. Extension teams are more effective when a clear image and mission are communicated (Hogan, 1994).

Collaborative work for Cooperative Extension is an effective way to bring multi-levels of expertise to address local needs (Loughram & Reed, 1980).

Extension working in a collaborative spirit with other agencies may be the best and wisest use of limited resources. This will be the axiom for the next decade to form new working partnerships (Laughlin, 95).

The Quality Process

Cooperative Extension has at its core the ability to identify local problems and solve those problems (Merriam, 1989). Extension must focus on important problems and questions (Patton, 1991). Extension's federal and statewide network combined with a strong local presence creates credibility with stakeholders and decision-makers allowing the local Extension staff to focus on the real issues. The issues are excellence, not innovativeness. The challenge is effectiveness. Extension has traditionally been people-oriented, knowledge-based, and problem-focused (Patton, 1985).

Cooperative Extension has a unique advantage over other agencies. Extension combines the essential connection of available resources with applied research, subsequently creating valuable linkages to address local issues (Merriam,

1989). Also, quality is often exhibited through effective and innovative program delivery modes (Hogan, 94). Emerging methods for program delivery need to be matched with the realities of the locale. Delivery modes are often selected to do more with fewer resources. Examples of these new delivery modes are innovative partnerships, master volunteer programs, information centers, and regional offices (Laughlin & Schmidt, 1995).

One of the key elements to a successful program is involvement of lay leaders throughout the process (Hogan, 1994). Boone (1985) stated that lay leader and clientele involvement was key to an effective Extension program. National trends reported in 1996 that 67% of all institutions are involving lay leaders in advisory roles (Seevers et al., 1997). Attainable goals must be tempered in the context of the local environment and attainable resources (Wirchnitsch, 1980). The Quality Process means a creditable procedure or process is followed involving local clientele in all facets of the programming process (Smith, 1991). Cooperative Extension remains as the foremost non-formal education organization with the ability to deliver this high quality process to local communities.

Accountable to Publics

Impacts and benefits to people (Merriam, 1989) are measures of accountability to the funding partners and the publics. Efficient cost/benefit ratios also are used to report successful Extension programs. One of the tangible positive results of communicating Quality Extension Programs to decision-makers has been increased county funding (Hogan, 1994). National, state and county stakeholders

need quantifiable program impact data, especially in these budget-cutting times. Consequently the public and elected officials scrutinize dollars invested even more closely (Fetsch, 1997).

Marketing Extension has been a major challenge with the shifting demographic and decreasing traditional clientele base (Hogan, 1994). Marketing Extension has been a long-term strategy to provide result-oriented information to clientele and decision-makers. The most effective marketing strategy is building and maintaining Extension's local relationship with local clientele and decision-makers (Taylor-Powell et al., 1995). The backbone of Extension's success will center on these relationships and the long-term commitments of volunteers, legislators, lay leaders, and the local staff. "The greatest challenge confronting Cooperative Extension during the next twenty years is persuading county, state, and federal legislators to continue to financially support this non-mandated program. Marketing quality educational programs that meet critical community needs are a prerequisite for funding" (DeYoung, 1988).

In conclusion, this chapter has described a conceptual framework for possible factors associated with decision-makers' perception of quality Cooperative Extension programs. A conceptual schema was presented by the author for the current study of factors related to decision-makers perception of quality Extension programs. A review of adult education and Extension programming models for quality indicators was described in the literature and included the foundational principles and values of Tyler, Rogers, Knowles and Boone. Each educational founder identified effective education as being learner-centered, customer-focused, community-based, involving

a quality process, securing adequate stakeholder involvement, providing an evaluative component, and led by a professional credible educator. A review of the literature identified commonly accepted criteria for quality as it related to Cooperative Extension programs and the critical components of successful programming. Evidence reviewed in the studies of Taylor-Powell, Gough, and Stanek; Osborne; Baldwin; Shonkwiler; Carberry; Pettit; Pearson; and Barber; found that organizational, spatial and socio-demographic factors were associated with decision-makers' perception of quality. These studies also triangulated the indicators of quality for Extension programs. Little research existed on quality indicators as it related to the Total County Extension Program. Furthermore, variances of perceived quality indicators for Extension programs by decision-makers' were not documented in the literature. This study was designed to explore this knowledge gap. This scientific inquiry assessed the relationship of these factors (independent variables) upon the decision-makers' perception of quality within the Total County Extension program (dependent variable).

Chapter III

Methodology

Chapter III described the methodology used in conducting the study including the research design, population and sample. The review of the literature identified the decision-makers' perceived characteristics of quality for County Extension Programs and established data for the perceptions from each of these groups. This chapter addresses the methodology enlisted to obtain reliable and valid results from the sample population. The criterion identified for quality county Extension programs:

1. Are community-based.
2. Are customer-focused.
3. Have a competent, credible staff.
4. Have a quality programming process.
5. Promote a team approach.
6. Are accountable to publics.

To verify the finding from the literature review and research finding, the author conducted a limited qualitative study comprised of three focus groups to identify quality indicators of a Total County Extension Program. The three focus groups were:

- a. County funding partners for Onslow County including three County Commissioners, the Associate County Manager, and the County Manager.
- b. Extension administrators from the County Operations Team composed of six district Extension directors and the associate director of Cooperative Extension.
- c. The Montgomery County advisory council members.

The findings from these three focus groups supported the literature and research findings. Over seventy indicators and characteristics were categorized and condensed to align with the subheadings identified by the Taylor-Powell study.

Decision-makers surveyed by this author included Extension advisory council members, county Extension personnel, county officials and Extension administrators. Respondents' socio-demographic, spatial and organizational factors were compared to the degree of perceived quality indicators.

Research Design

This study used descriptive design and quantitative methodology. A mailed questionnaire was sent to each potential participant. The Administrative Council of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service granted approval for this study and the administering of the instrument. The instrument was approved for use by the NCSU institutional review board.

Extraneous variables such as the misconception by the respondents that this instrument measured the quality of one particular program or a particular county

were minimized by the brief purpose of the study in the cover letter. External extraneous variables were factors that influenced the quality of a program, included current vacancies on staff, budgetary restrictions, and poor individual staff performance. Other internal extraneous variables such as respondents' particular program areas association were monitored for effect on the dependent variable. These extraneous variables were monitored where possible, to lessen or eliminate interaction on this research project.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was the four decision-maker groups of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. A random cluster sample of two counties from each of the seven administrative districts was selected and sampled. This sample included the subset within each county of the advisory council members, county Extension staff, and county officials. The local advisory council was designed to represent a cross-section of the population, which Extension serves. The county officials included all current county commissioners, the county manager and the assistant county manager where applicable. The county Extension staff that was surveyed included the county Extension director, county Extension agents, paraprofessionals, and secretaries. The fourth group was a composite group of Extension administrators from North Carolina State University and North Carolina State A and T University known as the extended administrative council.

Sample size was determined by the number of counties feasible to obtain information based on the timeliness of the study and the cost incurred. The total

population for this study was the four decision-maker groups in all 100 counties in North Carolina and the Cherokee Reservation. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table and given a total population of 3600, the sample size should be no less than 347. Using the two counties per district and a subset from each county the actual sample size for this study was 445.

Instrumentation

The instrument was designed to compare significant indicators of quality county Extension programs by the different decision-maker groups previously identified by the author. Items were screened and modified by an expert panel to assure face validity. The author had obtained the indicators and characteristics from the literature review and focus groups. The expert panel consisted of two Advisory leadership members, two Extension administrators, three county Extension staff members, and two county officials for a total of nine experts. The quality items numbered 53, which fell into the categories of community based, customer focused, competent, credible staff, quality programming, team approach, and accountable to publics. Each item requested a response using a semantic differential scale with a range of 1-7. Program areas were also rated by participants on a Likert scale of 1 to 7 for awareness and perception of quality. A copy of the instrument was included in the appendix (appendix A) for reference and review. Respondents reported completing the instrument in about 25 minutes or less.

Data Collection

The instrument was numbered and color-coded for identification of respondents by districts. The author contacted the randomly selected county directors to explain the purpose of the study and to solicit their cooperation and support in administering the instrument. Alternate counties were drawn in the case of a county director's inability or unwillingness to participate. All first selected county directors agreed to participate voluntarily so the alternate counties were not enlisted. The instruments for each subset (county) were mailed to each participating county Extension director with an enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope for each instrument. A cover letter was attached to explain the importance of their participation in the study and the confidentiality of the information obtained was emphasized (appendix B). A third page was attached after the test item to establish demographic, organizational, and sociological factors. A follow-up phone call to each county director was made two weeks after the initial mailing to monitor progress and resolve any issues with administering the instrument. One month after the initial mailings the author contacted each county director to remind participants by card or letter. The response rate was just over 50% from the initial mailings after the seventh week. The author completed the data collection and compilation of results.

Data Analysis

A profile of the respondents was collected to give the group means, standard deviation, and number of respondents for each variable examined (Tables 1-9). The data from the semantic differentials were used as interval data. Group means,

standard deviation and *t values* were included in tables for each dependent variable by each independent factor (Tables 10-86). The alpha level for all tests was set at .05. The independent variables were compared using the two tailed t-tests to measure differences for group means for each quality indicator and each program area. Tables for each program characteristic were developed to include quality indicators by the decision-makers' factors. Table 87 provided the program characteristics ranked by respondents and analyzed for differences.

Chapter Summary

The methodology of this study was described in great detail to ensure the subsequent studies can follow the appropriate steps toward replication if desired. The findings discussed in the next chapter were based upon the appropriate collection procedures, accurate compilation, and unbiased analysis of the data described in this chapter.

The research questions that the study addressed were:

1. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by the socio-demographic factors of age, gender, ethnicity, and educational level?
2. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by the organizational factors of role, length and intensity of association?

3. To what extent do decision-makers' perceived indicators for a Quality Total County Extension program vary by spatial factors of size of staff, accessibility to center and residential setting?
4. To what extent do decision-makers' program awareness and perception of program quality vary by organizational, socio-demographic and spatial factors?

Chapter IV

Results

A profile of the respondents was shown first, followed by mean scores and standard deviation for each quality indicator and program area. The final section discussed the research questions related to quality indicators with respect to all independent variables.

Profile of Respondents

There were a total of five hundred and thirteen (513) survey instruments mailed to County Extension Directors in 14 counties and to Extension administration at N. C. State and N. C. A and T Universities. Two counties were randomly selected from each Cooperative Extension District to assure geographical representation. Two hundred fifty-nine surveys were returned for a response rate of fifty percent (50%). The respondents' complete profile was included in Table 1. The respondents by districts were thirty-seven (14.3%) from district one, fifty-four (20.8%) from district two, thirty-six (13.9%) from district three, twenty (7.7%) from district five, twenty-two (8.5%) from district six, twenty-eight (10.8%) from district seven and twenty-five (9.7%) from administration.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n=259)

Characteristic	N	%
District:		
One	37	14.3
Two	54	20.8
Three	36	13.9
Four	20	7.7
Five	37	14.3
Six	22	8.5
Seven	28	10.8
Administration	25	09.7
Role:		
County Commissioner	27	10.9
County Manager or Assistant Manager	12	4.8
County Extension Director	21	8.5
County Extension Agent	40	16.1
Local Support Staff	28	11.3
Program Associate or Assistant	21	8.5
County Advisory Council	73	29.4
Cooperative Extension Administration	25	10.1
Years of Association with Extension:		
1-5	74	31.8
6-10	45	19.2
11-15	16	6.9
16-20	14	5.9
21-25	25	10.7
26-30	36	15.4
31-35	7	3.0
36+	16	6.9
Education Level:		
Less than High School Diploma	3	1.2
High School/GED	51	20.2
Associate Degree	36	14.2
Bachelors Degree	64	25.3
Masters Degree	79	31.2
Doctorate Degree	20	7.9
Gender:		
Female	138	54.8
Male	114	45.2

Table 1 Continued

Age:		
18-25	10	4.2
26-35	19	8.0
36-45	45	18.9
46-55	77	32.0
56-65	57	23.9
66-75	23	9.6
76+	8	3.3
Ethnicity:		
African American	27	10.8
Asian	0	0
Hispanic	0	0
Native American	4	1.6
White	215	86.3
Other	3	1.2
Residential Status:		
Rural	145	57.5
Rural/Urban Mixed	61	24.2
Urban	46	18.3
Number on Local Staff:		
4-10	76	44.4
11-15	42	24.5
15-20	42	24.5
21+	10	6.0
Interaction with Extension:		
1-low	2	0.8
2	10	3.9
3	10	3.9
4	22	8.6
5	42	16.5
6	61	23.9
7-high	108	42.4
Accessibility to an Extension Center:		
1-poor	5	2.6
2	2	0.8
3	0	0
4	10	3.9
5	23	9.0
6	61	23.9
7-excellent	154	60.4

The targeted population for this study was major decision-makers including county commissioners, county managers, advisory council members, Extension staff and Extension administration. The respondents' major affiliation with North Carolina Cooperative Extension was identified as twenty-seven (10.9%) county commissioners, twelve (4.8%) county managers or assistant county managers, twenty-one (8.5%) county directors, forty (16.1%) county agents, twenty-eight (11.3%) support staff, twenty-one (8.5%) program assistants or associates, seventy three (29.4%) county advisory council members, and twenty-five (10.1%) Extension administrators.

The respondents' years of association with North Carolina Cooperative Extension ranged from one (1) year to sixty (60) years with an average length of almost sixteen (16) years and a median of ten (10) years. The age of the respondents ranged from eighteen (18) to eighty-six (86) with an average age of fifty-one and a half (51.5) and a median age of fifty-one (51).

The gender breakdown by respondents was one hundred and thirty-eight (54.8%) females and one hundred and fourteen (45.2%) males. Of the two hundred and fifty-nine respondents, the ethnicity was eighty-six point three percent (86.3%) white for a total of two hundred fifteen (215). Twenty-seven (10.8%) respondents were African-American, four (1.6%) were Native American and three (1.2%) were identified as other. The respondents reported their highest educational level achieved. Three (1.2%) respondents had less than a high school education, fifty-one (20.2%) reported a GED or high school education, thirty-six (14.2%) with an

associate degree, sixty-four (25.3%) held a bachelors degree, seventy-nine (31.2%) with a masters degree, and twenty (7.9%) with a doctorate degree.

Regarding residential status, there were one hundred forty-five (57.5%) respondents that reported living in a rural setting, sixty-one (24.2%) living in a rural/urban mixed setting and forty-six (18.3%) residing in an urban setting.

The respondents were asked to give the number of Extension staff for their local Extension center. The response ranged from four (4) to seventy-four (74) with a mean score of thirteen (13) on staff. Eighty-eight (34%) respondents did not know the number of the local Extension staff.

For the two hundred fifty-five (255) respondents' interaction with North Carolina Cooperative Extension was rated on a scale of one (1) to seven (7) with one being low and seven being high. The mean score was 5.7 with a standard deviation of 1.437. When ask about the accessibility to their local North Carolina Cooperative Extension center with one (1) being poor and seven (7) being excellent the mean score was 6.3 with a standard deviation of 1.174.

Table 2. Respondents' perception of quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program.

<u>Quality Indicators</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Local / state-wide presence	256	2.7	1.3
Accesses targeted clients / accesses general population	253	3.5	1.5
Programs based on regional needs / local needs	258	4.8	1.7
High / limited assistance in local emergencies	253	2.9	1.6
Develops external / follow traditional resources	251	3.2	1.3
Independent agency / integral part of the county gov.	254	4.5	1.7
Locally / regionally directed programs	253	2.7	1.2
Little / high support by decision-makers	253	5.4	1.4
Collaborative / non-collaborative program delivery	254	2.4	1.2
Extensive / little volunteer involvement	256	2.3	1.2

Total respondents' mean scores and standard deviations for quality indicators of a Total County Extension Program were presented in Table 2. Mean scores range from 2.3 for volunteer involvement to 5.4 for decision-maker support. Standard deviations range from 1.2 for collaborative program delivery and volunteer involvement to 1.7 for programs based in regional/local needs and independent agency/integral part of local government.

Table 3. Respondents' perception of quality indicators to ensure customer-focus.

<u>Quality Indicators</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Impersonal / personal relationships	254	5.2	1.4
High / low number of impacts	255	2.6	1.3
Low / high technical competence	253	5.6	1.3
Outcomes for customers /organization	255	2.9	1.3
Diverse / traditional audiences	256	3.0	1.4
High / low customer participation	255	2.4	1.2
Low / high volunteer involvement	255	5.5	1.4
Participant expectations far exceeded / not met	256	2.4	1.1
Decision-makers knowledgeable /not familiar with programs	257	2.0	1.2
Decision-makers regularly involved / limited involvement	256	2.6	1.3
Low / High quality impacts	253	5.7	1.1
High / limited advisory group input	255	2.8	1.3

Respondents' mean scores for quality indicators associated with customer-focus ranged from 2.0 for decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs to 5.7 for low/high impacts (Table 3). Standard deviation for the quality indicators ranged from 1.1 for participant expectations far exceeded/ not met and low/high impacts to 1.4 for impersonal/personal relationships, diverse/traditional audiences, and low/high volunteer involvement.

Table 4. Respondents' perception of quality indicators for the local staff.

<u>Quality Indicators</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Highly / limited skilled educator	256	2.1	1.0
High / limited clientele contact	256	2.2	1.0
Limited / high university specialists support	254	5.3	1.4
High / limited concern for clientele	256	1.9	1.0
Identify with few / many clientele groups	256	5.4	1.4
Programs developed from local / state issues	253	2.7	1.2
Responsiveness to individual needs / broad-based issues	255	3.5	1.4
Staff oriented to today / future	254	4.3	1.3
Optimistic / pessimistic approach	257	1.9	1.0
Strives to make a difference / maintain programs	257	2.4	1.2
Individual / team player	255	5.5	1.4

Total respondents' mean scores for quality indicator associated with the staff ranged from 1.9 for high/limited clientele contact and optimistic/pessimistic approach to 5.5 for individual/team player (Table 4). Standard deviations ranged from 1.0 to 1.4 for staff quality indicators.

Table 5. Respondents' perception of quality indicators for a viable educational process.

<u>Quality Indicators</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Cutting-edge / traditional program	257	3.0	1.2
Mission-based / duplicated program	257	2.5	1.1
Traditional / innovative program delivery	257	5.1	1.3
Stays within / reaches outside Extension's mission	255	3.5	1.5
Goals that are learner-centered / county-centered	255	3.6	1.4
Uses limited research-based information /uses research-based information	256	5.8	1.2
Traditional / customer-based programming	256	5.1	1.3
Reactive to immediate needs /proactive to future needs	255	4.4	1.2
Low / high visibility	253	5.8	1.2

Total respondents' mean scores for quality indicators associated with a viable education process ranged from 2.5 to 5.8 (Table 5). The quality indicator mission based/duplicated program had a group mean of 2.5 while uses limited research-based information/uses research-based information and low/high visibility had group means of 5.8. The range for standard deviation was 1.1 to 1.5. The quality indicator mission-based/duplicated program was 1.1 while stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission was 1.5.

Table 6. Respondents' perception of quality indicators in fulfilling the mission.

<u>Quality Indicators</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Accountable to state partners / local partners	256	4.6	1.1
Accountable to local partners / federal partners	253	3.2	1.1
Accountable to federal partners / state partners	252	4.9	1.1
High / Low efficiency	255	2.1	1.0
Show a limited / good return on investment	256	5.7	1.2
High / Limited quality of life impacts	257	2.2	1.0
Program makes a unique contribution / meets traditional audience expectations	256	2.9	1.2
Significant / little societal impact	256	2.4	1.1
Little / significant economic impact	256	5.5	1.3
Significant / little environmental impact	255	2.6	1.3
Effective / ineffective programs	257	1.8	0.9

Total respondents' mean scores for quality indicators needed in fulfilling Extension's mission ranged from 1.8 for effective/ineffective programs to 5.7 for show a limited/good return on investment (Table 6). Standard deviations for the quality indicators ranged from 0.9 for effective/ineffective programs to 1.3 for little/significant economic impact and significant/little environmental impact.

Table 7. Respondents' perception of the three most important characteristics of a quality Total County Extension Program.

<i>Characteristics</i>	<u>N</u>	<u>Missing</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Be community-based	146	113	4
Be customer-focused	173	86	2
Be delivered by a professional, credible staff	193	66	1
Provide a relevant educational process	91	168	5
Deliver effective and efficient results	171	88	3

Total respondents' selection for the most important characteristics of a quality Total County Extension Program was ranked based on response (Table 7).

Respondents selected the characteristic be delivered by a professional, credible staff most often (n=193). Respondents selected least often the characteristic provide a relevant educational process (n=91).

Table 8. Respondents' level of awareness (Low=1 to High=7) Extension programs.

<u>Program</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Agriculture and Natural Resources	255	4.9	1.7
Community Development	256	4.5	1.6
Family and Consumer Sciences	256	5.1	1.6
4-H and Youth	256	5.5	1.5
Total County Extension	255	5.4	1.4

Respondents' mean scores for awareness of Extension program are presented in Table 8. The range of mean score was 4.5 for Community Development to 5.5 for 4-H and Youth. Standard deviation ranged from 1.4 for the Total County Extension Program to 1.7 for the agriculture and Natural Resources Program.

Table 9. Respondents' perception of quality (Poor=1 to Excellent=7) for Extension programs.

<u>Program</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>
Agriculture and Natural Resources	253	5.4	1.3
Community Development	250	4.8	1.4
Family and Consumer Sciences	253	5.3	1.4
4-H and Youth	257	5.6	1.3
Total County Extension	256	5.6	1.2

Respondents' perception of quality for the program areas ranged from 4.8 to 5.6 (Table 9). Community Development had a mean score (4.8) while 4-H and

Youth and Total County Extension had a mean score (5.6). Standard deviation ranged from 1.2 to 1.4 for the program areas.

Respondents' Relationship to Cooperative Extension

Relationships of respondents were categorized as either internal or external. External decision-makers included County Commissioners, County Managers, and local advisory council members. Internal decision makers included all county Extension staff and Cooperative Extension administration. Respondents were further categorized by specific roles within the Cooperative Extension. Roles included for comparison were county partners (county managers and commissioners), local Extension staff, local advisory council and Extension administration. A total of fifty-three semantic differential indicators of quality were included. Respondents marked these quality indicators between one and seven. Respondents were also asked to rate their awareness and perceived quality of existing Extension program areas.

Table 10. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	External	2.5	1.4	-3.05*
	Internal	3.0	1.2	
Accesses targeted/general population	External	3.6	1.7	0.61
	Internal	3.5	1.3	
Programs based on regional/local needs	External	4.6	1.9	-1.52
	Internal	5.0	1.4	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	External	2.9	1.6	0.22
	Internal	2.9	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	External	3.3	1.3	1.32
	Internal	3.1	1.2	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	External	4.2	1.8	-2.83*
	Internal	4.8	1.5	
Locally/regionally directed programs	External	2.7	1.3	-0.46
	Internal	2.8	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	External	5.4	1.4	0.10
	Internal	5.4	1.3	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	External	2.4	1.1	0.57
	Internal	2.3	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	External	2.2	1.1	-0.46
	Internal	2.3	1.2	

For the ten quality comparisons in Table 10 of a Total County Extension Program by roles of External and Internal relationships, only two descriptors had significant differences in the mean score. External respondents placed a higher value on a local presence than did the internal respondents. Both mean scores favored a local presence for Extension programs over a statewide presence. The internal respondents when compared to external respondents viewed Cooperative Extension as more an integral part of county government than an independent agency. All other descriptors of the Total County Extension Program did not vary significantly by respondents' relationship.

Table 11. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	External	5.4	1.3	1.35
	Internal	5.2	1.4	
High/low number of impacts	External	2.9	1.4	2.57*
	Internal	2.4	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	External	5.7	1.2	1.23
	Internal	5.6	1.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	External	3.1	1.4	1.20
	Internal	2.9	1.2	
Diverse/traditional audiences	External	3.1	1.4	0.74
	Internal	2.9	1.3	
High/low customer participation	External	2.5	1.2	1.39
	Internal	2.3	1.0	
Low/high volunteer involvement	External	5.5	1.4	0.41
	Internal	5.4	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	External	2.6	1.2	2.28*
	Internal	2.2	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	External	2.1	1.2	0.94
	Internal	2.0	1.2	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	External	2.7	1.4	0.35
	Internal	2.6	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	External	5.5	1.2	-2.92*
	Internal	5.9	1.0	
High/limited advisory group input	External	2.7	1.3	-1.68
	Internal	2.9	1.3	

A comparison of the means for twelve quality indicators of a customer-focused program by respondents' relationships was presented in Table 11. Three quality indicators had significant differences by relationship. The internal respondents had higher mean scores for high number of impacts as opposed to low number of impacts. Internal respondents also had significantly higher mean scores for participant expectations far exceeded and higher quality impacts for customer-focused programs than did the external respondents.

Table 12. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	External	2.1	1.0	0.74
	Internal	2.0	0.9	
High/limited clientele contact	External	2.2	1.0	0.16
	Internal	2.2	0.9	
Limited/high university specialists support	External	5.4	1.4	1.85
	Internal	5.1	1.4	
High/limited concern for clientele	External	2.0	1.0	1.40
	Internal	1.8	1.0	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	External	5.5	1.4	0.28
	Internal	5.4	1.4	
Programs developed from local/state issues	External	2.7	1.2	-0.50
	Internal	2.7	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	External	3.2	1.4	-3.40*
	Internal	3.8	1.3	
Staff oriented to today/future	External	4.3	1.3	-1.00
	Internal	4.4	1.2	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	External	1.9	1.0	-0.97
	Internal	1.9	1.1	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	External	2.5	1.3	0.91
	Internal	2.3	1.2	
Individual/team player	External	5.4	1.4	-1.05
	Internal	5.6	1.3	

Of the eleven quality indicators for a County Extension staff in Table 12, only the comparison of responsiveness to individual needs to broad-based issues had a significant difference in mean score by respondents' relationship with Cooperative Extension. The internal respondents' mean score (3.8) was significantly higher than the external respondents (3.2).

Table 13. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	External	3.2	1.2	1.89
	Internal	2.9	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	External	2.6	1.1	0.67
	Internal	2.5	1.1	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	External	5.2	1.2	0.54
	Internal	5.1	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	External	3.8	1.5	2.23*
	Internal	3.4	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	External	3.7	1.5	1.46
	Internal	3.4	1.3	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	External	5.7	1.2	-1.27
	Internal	5.9	1.2	
Traditional/customer-based programming	External	5.2	1.2	0.70
	Internal	5.1	1.2	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	External	4.4	1.3	-0.56
	Internal	4.4	1.2	
Low/high visibility	External	5.7	1.2	-1.72
	Internal	5.9	1.2	

Nine quality indicators of a viable educational process are presented in Table 13. Only one of the nine quality indicators had a significant mean difference by respondents' relationship with Extension. The internal respondents' mean score was significantly higher (3.4) than the external respondents' (3.8) in supporting programs that stay within Extension's mission.

Table 14. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	External	4.6	1.2	1.05
	Internal	4.5	0.9	
Accountable to local/federal partners	External	3.2	1.1	0.02
	Internal	3.2	1.0	
Accountable to federal/state partners	External	4.9	1.2	-0.28
	Internal	4.9	1.0	
High/low efficiency	External	2.1	1.0	1.35
	Internal	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	External	5.7	1.2	-0.71
	Internal	5.8	1.2	
High/limited quality of life impacts	External	2.2	1.0	-0.02
	Internal	2.2	1.0	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	External	2.7	1.2	-1.48
	Internal	3.0	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	External	2.5	1.2	0.46
	Internal	2.4	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	External	5.4	1.5	-1.05
	Internal	5.6	1.2	
Significant/little environmental impact	External	2.7	1.4	0.91
	Internal	2.6	1.3	
Effective/ineffective programs	External	1.9	1.0	2.22*
	Internal	1.7	0.8	

Eleven semantic differential quality indicators related to fulfilling the mission by a Total County Extension Program by respondents' relationship with Extension are presented in Table 14. Only one quality indicator had a significant difference in mean scores for the two groups. With effective programs versus ineffective programs, respondents favored effective programs. Internal respondents' mean score was significantly higher (1.7) than external respondents' mean score (1.9).

Table 15. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	External	4.9	1.7	0.00
	Internal	4.9	1.7	
The Community Development Program	External	4.5	1.5	0.04
	Internal	4.5	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	External	4.8	1.5	-3.04*
	Internal	5.4	1.6	
The 4-H and Youth Program	External	5.5	1.4	0.62
	Internal	5.6	1.5	
The Total County Extension Program	External	5.4	1.4	-0.57
	Internal	5.5	1.4	

The mean awareness levels by respondents' relationship with Extension were significantly different only for Family and Consumer Science Programs. In Table 15, external respondents were significantly less aware of the Family and Consumer Science Program than were internal respondents. All other program areas had no significant differences in program awareness by relationship of respondents.

Table 16. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' relationship (External/Internal).

	Relation	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	External	5.6	1.2	2.37*
	Internal	5.2	1.4	
The Community Development Program	External	5.2	1.3	4.08*
	Internal	4.5	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	External	5.4	1.2	1.60
	Internal	5.2	1.5	
The 4-H and Youth Program	External	5.8	1.3	1.94
	Internal	5.5	1.4	
The Total County Extension Program	External	5.8	1.2	2.51*
	Internal	5.4	1.2	

The mean scores for the quality of program areas by roles by respondents' relationship with Extension were significant for The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program, The Community Development Program and The Total County Extension Program (Table 16). In all cases the external respondents rated the quality of Extension Programs higher than the internal respondent.

Role of Respondents

Respondents were asked to identify their primary role with Cooperative Extension. These roles have been grouped by major decision-maker categories. County partners (CP) include both county commissioners and county managers. Local Extension staff (LES) consisted of County Directors, agents, program assistants and support staff. The advisory leadership system (ALS) consisted of active members of the local Extension advisory council. Extension Administration (ADM) included current members of the Cooperative Extension statewide administrative council. Group means were presented for each quality descriptor by respondents' primary role with Cooperative Extension.

Table 17. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t
Local/state-wide presence	CP	5.5	2.03*	CP	5.5	0.16	CP	5.5	1.62
	LES	5.0		ALS	5.5		ADM	5.0	
	LES	5.0	-2.55*	LES	5.0	-0.04	ALS	5.5	1.77
	ALS	5.5		ADM	5.0		ADM	5.0	
Accesses targeted/general population	CP	3.8	0.71	CP	3.8	0.64	CP	3.8	1.11
	LES	3.6		ALS	3.6		ADM	3.3	
	LES	3.6	0.02	LES	3.6	0.74	ALS	3.6	0.66
	ALS	3.6		ADM	3.3		ADM	3.3	
Programs based on regional/local needs	CP	4.6	-1.20	CP	4.6	-0.27	CP	4.6	-0.80
	LES	5.0		ALS	4.7		ADM	4.9	
	LES	5.0	1.20	LES	5.0	0.37	ALS	4.7	-0.66
	ALS	4.7		ADM	4.9		ADM	4.9	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	CP	5.0	0.09	CP	5.0	-0.49	CP	5.0	-2.41*
	LES	5.0		ALS	5.1		ADM	5.9	
	LES	4.9	-0.89	LES	4.9	-3.39*	ALS	5.1	-2.65*
	ALS	5.1		ADM	5.9		ADM	5.9	
Develops external/traditional resources	CP	3.0	-0.79	CP	3.0	-1.84	CP	3.0	1.31
	LES	3.1		ALS	3.4		ADM	2.6	
	LES	3.1	-1.42	LES	3.1	2.29*	ALS	3.4	3.15*
	ALS	3.4		ADM	2.6		ADM	2.6	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	CP	3.3	-0.70	CP	3.3	-2.30*	CP	3.3	0.58
	LES	3.3		ALS	4.1		ADM	3.0	
	LES	3.3	-3.09*	LES	3.3	0.75	ALS	4.1	2.65*
	ALS	4.1		ADM	3.0		ADM	3.0	
Locally/regionally directed programs	CP	2.3	-1.83	CP	2.3	-2.25*	CP	2.3	-1.95
	LES	2.7		ALS	2.9		ADM	2.9	
	LES	2.7	-0.77	LES	2.7	-0.62	ALS	2.9	0.02
	ALS	2.9		ADM	2.9		ADM	2.9	
Little/high support by decision-makers	CP	5.2	-0.23	CP	5.2	-0.97	CP	5.2	-1.62
	LES	5.3		ALS	5.5		ADM	5.8	
	LES	5.3	-1.12	LES	5.3	-1.78	ALS	5.5	-1.02
	ALS	5.5		ADM	5.8		ADM	5.8	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	CP	2.1	-1.54	CP	2.1	-2.29*	CP	2.1	0.44
	LES	2.4		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.0	
	LES	2.4	-0.97	LES	2.4	-1.55	ALS	2.6	2.12*
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.0		ADM	2.0	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	CP	2.1	-0.89	CP	2.1	-0.98	CP	2.1	0.94
	LES	2.3		ALS	2.3		ADM	2.4	
	LES	2.3	-0.20	LES	2.2	-0.48	ALS	2.3	-0.37
	ALS	2.3		ADM	2.4		ADM	2.4	

The quality indicators mean differences for a Total County Extension Program are presented in Table 17. County partners (5.5) and advisory council respondents' mean scores were significantly different from the Local staff respondents' (5.0)

concerning the local versus statewide presence. For the quality indicator high versus limited assistance during local emergencies, Extension administration (5.9) had a significantly different mean score from local staff (4.9) and the advisory council (5.1). Extension administration respondents' mean score (2.6) was also significantly different from the local staff (3.1) and advisory council (3.4) for developing external versus traditional resources. Respondents' mean scores for independent agency versus integral part of local government were significantly different for the advisory council (4.1) as related to local staff (3.3) county partners (3.3) and administration (3.0). The advisory council respondents' mean score (2.9) was significantly different from county partners (3.3) for locally versus regionally directed programs. For collaborative versus non-collaborative programs the advisory council mean score (2.6) was significantly different from the county partner (2.1) and the administration (2.0) respondents' mean score.

Table 18. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	CP	5.4	0.68	CP	5.4	-0.13	CP	5.4	0.83
	LES	5.2		ALS	5.4		ADM	5.0	
	LES	5.2	-1.13	LES	5.2	0.44	ALS	5.4	1.03
	ALS	5.4		ADM	5.0		ADM	5.0	
High/low number of impacts	CP	3.1	2.15*	CP	3.1	1.26	CP	3.1	3.48*
	LES	2.5		ALS	2.8		ADM	2.0	
	LES	2.5	-1.05	LES	2.5	2.20*	ALS	2.8	2.82*
	ALS	2.8		ADM	2.0		ADM	2.0	
Low/high technical competence	CP	5.9	1.91	CP	5.9	0.74	CP	5.9	-1.33
	LES	5.4		ALS	5.7		ADM	6.2	
	LES	5.4	-1.60	LES	5.4	-3.83*	ALS	5.7	-2.47*
	ALS	5.7		ADM	6.2		ADM	6.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	CP	3.2	0.94	CP	3.2	0.74	CP	3.2	2.18*
	LES	3.0		ALS	3.0		ADM	2.5	
	LES	3.0	-0.17	LES	3.0	1.86	ALS	3.0	1.81
	ALS	3.0		ADM	2.5		ADM	2.5	
Diverse/traditional audiences	CP	3.3	0.85	CP	3.3	1.27	CP	3.3	2.44*
	LES	3.1		ALS	2.9		ADM	2.4	
	LES	3.1	0.77	LES	3.1	2.32*	ALS	2.9	1.80
	ALS	2.9		ADM	2.4		ADM	2.4	
High/low customer participation	CP	2.5	0.61	CP	2.5	-0.04	CP	2.5	1.53
	LES	2.3		ALS	2.5		ADM	2.0	
	LES	2.3	-0.86	LES	2.3	1.36	ALS	2.5	1.81
	ALS	2.5		ADM	2.0		ADM	2.0	
Low/high volunteer involvement	CP	5.4	-0.06	CP	5.4	-0.67	CP	5.4	-0.61
	LES	5.4		ALS	5.6		ADM	5.6	
	LES	5.4	-0.88	LES	5.4	-0.69	ALS	5.6	-0.07
	ALS	5.6		ADM	5.6		ADM	5.6	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	CP	2.6	1.05	CP	2.6	-0.03	CP	2.6	3.02*
	LES	2.3		ALS	2.6		ADM	1.8	
	LES	2.3	-1.28	LES	2.3	2.68*	ALS	2.6	3.35*
	ALS	2.6		ADM	1.8		ADM	1.8	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	CP	2.2	0.63	CP	2.2	0.64	CP	2.2	2.22*
	LES	2.1		ALS	2.0		ADM	1.5	
	LES	2.1	0.07	LES	2.1	2.14*	ALS	2.0	1.98
	ALS	2.0		ADM	1.5		ADM	1.5	
Decision-makers regularly/limited involvement	CP	2.8	0.52	CP	2.8	0.53	CP	2.8	0.67
	LES	2.8		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.6	
	LES	2.8	0.07	LES	2.8	0.35	ALS	2.6	0.29
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.6		ADM	2.6	
Low/high quality impacts	CP	5.5	-1.30	CP	5.5	0.13	CP	5.5	-2.95*
	LES	5.8		ALS	5.5		ADM	6.4	
	LES	5.8	1.99*	LES	5.8	-2.50*	ALS	5.5	-3.70*
	ALS	5.5		ADM	6.4		ADM	6.4	
High/limited advisory group input	CP	2.9	-0.50	CP	2.9	1.38	CP	2.9	0.55
	LES	3.0		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.8	
	LES	3.0	2.22*	LES	3.0	1.06	ALS	2.6	-0.63
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.8		ADM	2.8	

Respondents' mean differences by roles for quality indicators related to customer service are presented in Table 18. County partners' mean score (3.1) was significantly different from the local staff (2.5) for high versus low impacts. Extension administration respondents' mean score (2.0) was also significantly different from the staff, county partner and the advisory council. For the quality indicator low versus high technical competence, administration respondents' mean score (2.0) was significantly different from the staff (2.5) and the advisory council (2.8). The county partner respondents' mean score (3.2) was significantly different from administration's (2.5) for outcomes for customers versus the organization. Administration respondents' mean score (2.4) was also significantly different from the local staff (3.1) and county partners (3.3) for diverse versus traditional audiences. Extension administrations' mean score (1.8) was significantly different from county partners (2.6), local staff (2.3) and advisory council (2.6) for participants expectations far exceeded versus not met. For the quality indicator decision-makers knowledgeable versus not familiar with programs administration respondents' mean score (1.5) was significantly different from the local staff (2.1) and the county partner (2.2). For low versus high quality impacts the local staff mean score (5.8) was significantly higher than the advisory council mean score (5.5) Extension administration respondents' mean score was significantly higher (6.4) than all other groups (staff, advisory council and county partners) for quality impacts. For the indicator high versus limited advisory input, the mean score for the local staff (3.0) was significantly different from the advisory council (2.6).

Table 19. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' primary role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t
Highly/limited skilled educator	CP	1.9	-0.47	CP	1.9	-1.03	CP	1.9	0.66
	LES	2.0		ALS	2.1		ADM	1.8	
	LES	2.0	-0.79	LES	2.0	1.18	ALS	2.1	1.64
	ALS	2.1		ADM	1.8		ADM	1.8	
High/limited clientele contact	CP	2.2	-0.38	CP	2.2	-0.44	CP	2.2	0.40
	LES	2.2		ALS	2.3		ADM	2.1	
	LES	2.2	-0.13	LES	2.2	0.80	ALS	2.3	0.82
	ALS	2.3		ADM	2.1		ADM	2.1	
Limited/high university specialists support	CP	5.3	0.90	CP	5.3	-0.85	CP	5.3	-0.26
	LES	5.1		ALS	5.6		ADM	5.4	
	LES	5.1	-2.29*	LES	5.1	-1.02	ALS	5.6	0.40
	ALS	5.6		ADM	5.4		ADM	5.4	
High/limited concern for clientele	CP	2.0	0.44	CP	2.0	-0.44	CP	2.0	1.60
	LES	1.9		ALS	2.1		ADM	1.6	
	LES	1.9	-1.00	LES	1.9	1.40	ALS	2.1	2.07*
	ALS	2.1		ADM	1.6		ADM	1.6	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	CP	5.7	1.43	CP	5.7	1.40	CP	5.7	0.15
	LES	5.4		ALS	5.3		ADM	5.7	
	LES	5.4	0.13	LES	5.4	-0.96	ALS	5.3	-0.99
	ALS	5.3		ADM	5.7		ADM	5.7	
Programs developed from local/state issues	CP	2.4	-0.99	CP	2.4	-1.34	CP	2.4	-2.12*
	LES	2.7		ALS	2.8		ADM	3.0	
	LES	2.7	-0.53	LES	2.7	-1.56	ALS	2.8	-1.07
	ALS	2.8		ADM	3.0		ADM	3.0	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	CP	3.4	-1.56	CP	3.4	0.78	CP	3.4	-2.18*
	LES	3.8		ALS	3.2		ADM	4.2	
	LES	3.8	2.86*	LES	3.8	-1.27	ALS	3.2	-2.99*
	ALS	3.2		ADM	4.2		ADM	4.2	
Staff oriented to today/future	CP	4.6	1.26	CP	4.6	2.04*	CP	4.6	-1.26
	LES	4.3		ALS	4.1		ADM	5.0	
	LES	4.3	1.17	LES	4.3	-2.52*	ALS	4.1	-3.13*
	ALS	4.1		ADM	5.0		ADM	5.0	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	CP	1.8	-1.31	CP	1.8	-1.33	CP	1.8	0.36
	LES	2.0		ALS	2.0		ADM	1.7	
	LES	2.0	-0.09	LES	2.0	1.44	ALS	2.0	1.46
	ALS	2.0		ADM	1.7		ADM	1.7	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	CP	2.3	-0.54	CP	2.3	-1.52	CP	2.3	0.05
	LES	2.4		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.2	
	LES	2.4	-1.26	LES	2.4	0.46	ALS	2.6	1.24
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.2		ADM	2.2	
Individual/team player	CP	5.7	0.70	CP	5.7	1.83	CP	5.7	-0.25
	LES	5.6		ALS	5.3		ADM	5.8	
	LES	5.6	1.40	LES	5.6	-0.87	ALS	5.3	-1.85
	ALS	5.3		ADM	5.8		ADM	5.8	

Respondents' mean differences for quality indicators associated with the Extension staff are presented in Table 19. Advisory council respondents' mean score was significantly higher than the Extension staff for limited versus high university specialists support. The advisory council respondents' mean score was significantly different from administration for high versus limited clientele concern. The Extension administration mean was significantly different from the county partners for programs developed from state versus local issues. For the quality indicator responsiveness to individual needs versus broad-based issues, the local Extension staff mean (3.8) was significantly different from the advisory council mean (3.2). Also, for this indicator administration respondents' mean (4.2) was significantly different from county partners (3.4) and advisory council (3.2). There are significant differences in respondents' group means for the quality indicator staff oriented to today versus future. County partners' mean (4.6) was significantly different from the advisory council (4.1) while Extension administration's group mean (5.0) was significantly different from the advisory council (4.1) and the staff (4.3).

Table 20. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' primary role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	CP	3.3	1.40	CP	3.3	0.78	CP	3.3	2.58*
	LES	3.0		ALS	3.1		ADM	2.5	
	LES	3.0	-0.78	LES	3.0	1.83	ALS	3.1	2.33*
	ALS	3.1		ADM	2.5		ADM	2.5	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	CP	2.5	-0.52	CP	2.5	-0.33	CP	2.5	1.75
	LES	2.6		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.0	
	LES	2.6	0.19	LES	2.6	2.44*	ALS	2.6	2.18*
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.0		ADM	2.0	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	CP	5.4	1.67	CP	5.4	1.28	CP	5.4	-0.42
	LES	5.0		ALS	5.1		ADM	5.5	
	LES	5.0	-0.38	LES	5.0	-1.98	ALS	5.1	-1.62
	ALS	5.1		ADM	5.5		ADM	5.5	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	CP	4.1	2.19*	CP	4.1	1.58	CP	4.1	2.86*
	LES	3.4		ALS	3.6		ADM	3.0	
	LES	3.4	-0.74	LES	3.4	1.48	ALS	3.6	1.89
	ALS	3.6		ADM	3.0		ADM	3.0	
Goals that are learner- centered/county centered	CP	3.5	0.25	CP	3.5	-0.81	CP	3.5	0.77
	LES	3.5		ALS	3.8		ADM	3.3	
	LES	3.5	-1.48	LES	3.5	0.74	ALS	3.8	1.80
	ALS	3.8		ADM	3.3		ADM	3.3	
Uses limited research- based/researched- based information	CP	5.8	-0.25	CP	5.8	0.32	CP	5.8	-2.16*
	LES	5.9		ALS	5.7		ADM	6.3	
	LES	5.9	0.69	LES	5.9	-2.24*	ALS	5.7	-2.69*
	ALS	5.7		ADM	6.3		ADM	6.3	
Traditional/customer- based programming	CP	5.5	1.85	CP	5.5	1.87	CP	5.5	1.09
	LES	5.1		ALS	5.0		ADM	5.1	
	LES	5.1	0.18	LES	5.1	-0.16	ALS	5.0	-0.27
	ALS	5.0		ADM	5.1		ADM	5.1	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	CP	4.7	1.29	CP	4.7	1.97	CP	4.7	-0.13
	LES	4.4		ALS	4.2		ADM	4.7	
	LES	4.4	1.03	LES	4.4	-1.42	ALS	4.2	-2.08*
	ALS	4.2		ADM	4.7		ADM	4.7	
Low/high visibility	CP	5.6	-1.00	CP	5.6	-0.17	CP	5.6	-2.37*
	LES	5.8		ALS	5.7		ADM	6.2	
	LES	5.8	1.03	LES	5.9	-1.78	ALS	5.7	-2.68*
	ALS	5.7		ADM	6.2		ADM	6.2	

Respondents' group means for indicators related to the educational process were presented in Table 20. In all but one instance, the significant different group means involved the administrative respondents. For the indicator stays within

versus reaches outside Extension's mission the county partner group mean (4.1) was significantly higher than the advisory council (3.4) and administration (3.0). In the quality indicators cutting edge versus traditional program and low versus high visibility the administration respondents' mean was significantly different from the county partners and the advisory council. Extension administration respondents' mean (4.7) was significantly different from the advisory council (4.2) for reactive to immediate versus proactive to future needs. The local advisory council group mean (2.6) and the staff mean (2.6) were significantly different from administration respondents' mean (2.0) for mission-based versus duplicated program. Extension administration group mean (6.3) for uses limited research-based versus research-based information was significantly different with relation to all group (advisory council, staff and county partners).

Table 21. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' primary role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	CP	4.7	0.40	CP	4.7	0.74	CP	4.7	1.35
	LES	4.6		ALS	4.5		ADM	4.3	
	LES	4.6	0.48	LES	4.6	1.35	ALS	4.5	1.09
	ALS	4.5		ADM	4.3		ADM	4.3	
Accountable to local/federal partners	CP	3.2	0.29	CP	3.2	0.29	CP	3.2	-0.13
	LES	3.2		ALS	3.2		ADM	3.3	
	LES	3.2	-0.02	LES	3.2	-0.47	ALS	3.2	-0.48
	ALS	3.2		ADM	3.3		ADM	3.3	
Accountable to federal/state partners	CP	5.0	0.80	CP	5.0	0.43	CP	5.0	0.14
	LES	4.8		ALS	4.9		ADM	5.0	
	LES	4.8	-0.60	LES	4.8	-0.67	ALS	4.9	-0.27
	ALS	4.9		ADM	5.0		ADM	5.0	
High/low efficiency	CP	2.0	-0.87	CP	2.0	0.10	CP	2.0	0.92
	LES	2.2		ALS	2.0		ADM	1.8	
	LES	2.2	1.25	LES	2.2	1.74	ALS	2.0	1.00
	ALS	2.0		ADM	1.8		ADM	1.8	
Show limited/good return on investment	CP	5.9	1.70	CP	5.9	1.21	CP	5.9	-1.63
	LES	5.5		ALS	5.7		ADM	6.3	
	LES	5.5	-0.69	LES	5.5	-3.76*	ALS	5.7	-3.41*
	ALS	5.7		ADM	6.3		ADM	6.3	
High/limited quality of life impacts	CP	2.1	-0.65	CP	2.1	-1.10	CP	2.1	1.80
	LES	2.2		ALS	2.3		ADM	1.7	
	LES	2.2	-0.44	LES	2.2	2.60*	ALS	2.3	3.16*
	ALS	2.3		ADM	1.7		ADM	1.7	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	CP	3.0	1.46	CP	3.0	-0.20	CP	3.0	0.70
	LES	2.6		ALS	3.0		ADM	2.8	
	LES	2.6	-2.26*	LES	2.6	-0.54	ALS	3.0	1.01
	ALS	3.0		ADM	2.8		ADM	2.8	
Significant/little societal impact	CP	2.6	0.53	CP	2.6	0.51	CP	2.6	0.88
	LES	2.4		ALS	2.4		ADM	2.2	
	LES	2.4	-0.09	LES	2.4	0.57	ALS	2.4	0.65
	ALS	2.4		ADM	2.2		ADM	2.2	
Little/significant economic impact	CP	5.5	0.40	CP	5.5	-0.22	CP	5.5	-0.82
	LES	5.4		ALS	5.5		ADM	5.8	
	LES	5.4	-0.91	LES	5.4	-1.40	ALS	5.5	-0.84
	ALS	5.5		ADM	5.8		ADM	5.8	
Significant/little environmental impact	CP	2.8	0.52	CP	2.8	0.67	CP	2.8	1.42
	LES	2.7		ALS	2.6		ADM	2.3	
	LES	2.7	0.20	LES	2.7	1.23	ALS	2.6	1.15
	ALS	2.6		ADM	2.3		ADM	2.3	
Effective/ineffective programs	CP	1.9	-0.18	CP	1.9	1.17	CP	1.9	1.16
	LES	2.0		ALS	1.7		ADM	1.6	
	LES	2.0	1.92	LES	2.0	1.47	ALS	1.7	0.44
	ALS	1.7		ADM	1.6		ADM	1.6	

Mean differences by respondents' role for quality indicators associated with fulfilling Extension's mission are presented in Table 21. For the quality indicators show limited versus good return on investment and high versus limited quality of life impacts Extension administration respondents' group means were significantly different from the local Extension staff and the local advisory council. The local Extension staff group mean (2.6) was significantly different from the advisory council (3.0) for program makes a unique contribution versus meets traditional audience expectations. No other differences were observed in Table 21.

Table 22. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' primary role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>	Role	Mean	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	CP	4.8	-0.17	CP	4.8	-0.51	CP	4.8	-0.85
	LES	4.8		ALS	4.9		ADM	5.1	
	LES	4.8	-0.42	LES	4.8	-0.79	ALS	4.9	-0.46
	ALS	4.9		ADM	5.1		ADM	5.1	
The Community Development Program	CP	4.3	-0.73	CP	4.3	-1.14	CP	4.3	-0.68
	LES	4.5		ALS	4.7		ADM	4.6	
	LES	4.5	-0.54	LES	4.5	-0.21	ALS	4.7	0.15
	ALS	4.7		ADM	4.6		ADM	4.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	CP	4.4	-3.23*	CP	4.4	-1.92	CP	4.4	-4.47*
	LES	5.3		ALS	5.0		ADM	5.7	
	LES	5.3	1.37	LES	5.3	-1.61	ALS	5.0	-2.28*
	ALS	5.0		ADM	5.7		ADM	5.7	
The 4-H and Youth Program	CP	5.8	0.94	CP	5.8	1.79	CP	5.8	0.08
	LES	5.6		ALS	5.3		ADM	5.8	
	LES	5.6	1.03	LES	5.6	-0.88	ALS	5.3	-1.75
	ALS	5.3		ADM	5.8		ADM	5.8	
The Total County Extension Program	CP	5.2	-1.39	CP	5.2	-1.57	CP	5.2	-1.71
	LES	5.5		ALS	5.5		ADM	5.7	
	LES	5.5	-0.35	LES	5.5	-0.82	ALS	5.5	-0.54
	ALS	5.5		ADM	5.7		ADM	5.7	

Respondents' group means of program awareness by roles were presented in Table 22. The Family and Consumer Sciences Program was significantly different in

awareness for some roles. County partners' group mean (4.4) was significantly lower than the Extension staff mean (5.3). Administration respondents' group mean (5.7) was significantly higher than county partners (4.4) and advisory council (5.0).

Table 23. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' primary role (County Partner/Local Extension Staff/Advisory Leadership System/Extension Administration).

	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t	Role	Mean	t
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	CP	5.5	1.51	CP	5.5	-0.57	CP	5.5	0.44
	LES	5.2		ALS	5.6		ADM	5.4	
	LES	5.2	-2.38*	LES	5.2	-1.08	ALS	5.6	1.09
	ALS	5.6		ADM	5.4		ADM	5.4	
The Community Development Program	CP	5.2	2.49*	CP	5.2	-0.13	CP	5.2	3.33*
	LES	4.6		ALS	5.2		ADM	4.1	
	LES	4.6	-2.97*	LES	4.6	1.68	ALS	5.2	3.63*
	ALS	5.2		ADM	4.1		ADM	4.1	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	CP	5.4	0.98	CP	5.4	-0.36	CP	5.4	0.66
	LES	5.1		ALS	5.5		ADM	5.2	
	LES	5.1	-1.49	LES	5.1	-0.20	ALS	5.5	1.06
	ALS	5.5		ADM	5.2		ADM	5.2	
The 4-H and Youth Program	CP	6.1	2.66*	CP	6.1	1.90	CP	6.1	2.77*
	LES	5.5		ALS	5.7		ADM	5.3	
	LES	5.5	-0.62	LES	5.5	0.90	ALS	5.7	1.30
	ALS	5.7		ADM	5.3		ADM	5.3	
The Total County Extension Program	CP	5.8	1.75	CP	5.8	0.08	CP	5.8	2.07*
	LES	5.4		ALS	5.8		ADM	5.3	
	LES	5.4	-1.85	LES	5.4	0.65	ALS	5.8	2.16*
	ALS	5.8		ADM	5.3		ADM	5.3	

Group means of respondents' perception of program quality by roles were presented in Table 23. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program has a significantly lower group mean for the Extension staff (5.2) than the advisory council (5.6). The Community Development Program has significantly higher group mean for county partners (5.2) than administration (4.1) and staff (4.6). Also, the advisory council had significantly higher group mean (5.2) than administration or staff. The 4-H and Youth Program had a significantly higher group mean for county partners

(6.1) than for local Extension staff (5.5) or administration (5.3). The Total County Extension Program had significantly lower group means for administration respondents (5.3) than county partners (5.8) or advisory council (5.8).

Respondents by Gender

Respondents' mean scores were compared by gender for all quality indicators, program awareness, and perception of program quality. The results are presented in Tables 24 through 30.

Table 24. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	Female	2.9	1.4	2.09*
	Male	2.6	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	Female	3.7	1.5	1.81
	Male	3.3	1.4	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Female	4.8	1.7	0.01
	Male	4.8	1.7	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Female	2.9	1.6	1.04
	Male	2.8	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	Female	3.2	1.3	0.22
	Male	3.1	1.3	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Female	4.5	1.7	-0.31
	Male	4.6	1.7	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Female	2.7	1.2	0.13
	Male	2.7	1.3	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Female	5.4	1.3	-0.62
	Male	5.5	1.4	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Female	2.3	1.2	-1.20
	Male	2.5	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Female	2.2	1.2	-1.54
	Male	2.4	1.2	

In Table 24, there was a significant difference in mean scores for local presence versus statewide presence. Male respondents had a lower mean score (2.6) supporting local program presence while female respondents had a higher mean score (2.9). All other quality indicators did not show significant differences by gender for the Total County Extension Program.

Table 25. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Female	5.1	1.4	-1.63
	Male	5.4	1.3	
High/low number of impacts	Female	2.7	1.4	0.50
	Male	2.6	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	Female	5.4	1.2	-2.87*
	Male	5.9	1.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Female	3.0	1.3	0.55
	Male	2.9	1.4	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Female	2.9	1.3	-1.35
	Male	3.1	1.5	
High/low customer participation	Female	2.2	1.0	-1.33
	Male	2.4	1.2	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Female	5.5	1.3	0.76
	Male	5.4	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Female	2.3	1.2	-0.53
	Male	2.4	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Female	1.9	1.1	-1.06
	Male	2.1	1.2	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Female	2.7	1.3	1.17
	Male	2.5	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	Female	5.8	1.1	0.32
	Male	5.7	1.2	
High/limited advisory group input	Female	2.9	1.4	1.70
	Male	2.7	1.1	

Male respondents' mean score (5.9) supported high competence as a quality indicator for customer-focused Total County Extension Program while female

respondents' mean score was lower (5.4) in Table 25. All other quality indicators had no significant differences in the mean scores.

Table 26. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	Female	2.1	1.0	2.28*
	Male	1.9	0.8	
High/limited clientele contact	Female	2.3	1.0	0.88
	Male	2.2	1.0	
Limited/high university specialists support	Female	5.3	1.3	-0.49
	Male	5.4	1.5	
High/limited concern for clientele	Female	1.9	1.1	-0.14
	Male	1.9	0.9	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Female	5.5	1.2	0.83
	Male	5.4	1.5	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Female	2.8	1.3	1.48
	Male	2.5	1.1	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Female	3.7	1.3	2.06*
	Male	3.4	1.5	
Staff oriented to today/future	Female	4.3	1.3	-0.61
	Male	4.4	1.3	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Female	2.0	1.1	1.77
	Male	1.8	0.8	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Female	2.5	1.3	1.07
	Male	2.3	1.1	
Individual/team player	Female	5.4	1.4	-1.33
	Male	5.7	1.3	

Two differences in mean scores of the characteristics of an Extension staff for respondents by gender were significant in Table 26. Male respondents' mean score for highly skilled educator was stronger (1.9) while the female mean score was (2.1). Male respondents' mean scores for responsiveness to individual needs (3.4) was different from female mean score (3.7). The male respondents supported a higher

skilled educator and also a Cooperative Extension staff that addresses individual needs over broad-based issues.

Table 27. Mean differences of quality indicators concerning a viable educational process for a Total County Extension Program by gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Female	3.0	1.2	-0.39
	Male	3.1	1.3	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Female	2.5	1.1	-0.85
	Male	2.6	1.1	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Female	5.1	1.2	0.28
	Male	5.1	1.4	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Female	3.6	1.5	0.15
	Male	3.6	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Female	3.7	1.4	1.20
	Male	3.4	1.4	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Female	5.9	1.1	1.0
	Male	5.8	1.2	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Female	5.2	1.1	0.95
	Male	5.0	1.3	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Female	4.4	1.3	0.65
	Male	4.3	1.2	
Low/high visibility	Female	5.8	1.2	0.62
	Male	5.8	1.3	

There were no significant differences in the quality indicators for the viable educational process of a Total County Extension Program by gender of the respondents in Table 27.

Table 28. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Female	4.4	1.0	-2.58*
	Male	4.8	1.2	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Female	3.3	1.0	2.20*
	Male	3.0	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Female	4.8	1.0	-1.53
	Male	5.0	1.2	
High/low efficiency	Female	2.0	1.0	0.02
	Male	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	Female	5.7	1.2	-0.67
	Male	5.8	1.2	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Female	2.2	1.1	1.30
	Male	2.1	0.9	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Female	2.9	1.2	-0.11
	Male	2.9	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	Female	2.4	1.1	-0.30
	Male	2.4	1.2	
Little/significant economic impact	Female	5.5	1.3	-0.04
	Male	5.5	1.4	
Significant/little environmental impact	Female	2.7	1.4	0.80
	Male	2.5	1.2	
Effective/ineffective programs	Female	1.8	1.0	-0.12
	Male	1.8	0.9	

In Table 28, the respondents' mean scores by gender related to quality indicators perceived in fulfilling the mission of North Carolina Cooperative Extension for a Total County Extension Program were presented. When asked to respond about accountability to local partners versus state or federal partners, male respondents' mean scores were different from female respondents in supporting local accountability. Male respondents' mean scores (4.8, 3.0) both supported programs being more accountable to local partners than female mean scores (4.4, 3.3).

Table 29. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Female	4.8	1.6	-1.27
	Male	5.0	1.8	
The Community Development Program	Female	4.6	1.7	0.33
	Male	4.5	1.5	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Female	5.4	1.6	3.72*
	Male	4.7	1.5	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Female	5.6	1.5	1.02
	Male	5.4	1.5	
The Total County Extension Program	Female	5.5	1.4	0.62
	Male	5.4	1.4	

Female respondents had a significantly higher awareness level (5.4) for Family and Consumer Science Program than did the male respondents (4.7) in Table 29. For all other program areas the awareness levels were not significantly different by gender.

Table 30. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' gender (Female/Male).

	Gender	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Female	5.4	1.4	-0.60
	Male	5.4	1.3	
The Community Development Program	Female	4.9	1.4	1.33
	Male	4.7	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Female	5.5	1.4	2.95*
	Male	5.0	1.3	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Female	5.7	1.4	0.65
	Male	5.6	1.3	
The Total County Extension Program	Female	5.6	1.2	0.68
	Male	5.5	1.3	

In Table 30, the respondents' perception of the quality of program areas observed no significant differences by gender except for the Family and Consumer

Sciences Program. The mean score for females (5.5) was significantly higher than males (5.0) for The Family and Consumer Sciences Program.

Race/ Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the respondents was categorized into Non-white and White. The survey instrument gathered ethnicity for African-American, Asian, Native American, Hispanic, White and other. Due to limited numbers in most of the Non-white ethnic groups, all Non-white groups were combined and compared with White respondents.

Table 31. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	NW	2.6	1.4	-0.42
	W	2.8	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	NW	3.8	1.6	0.87
	W	3.5	1.5	
Programs based on regional/local needs	NW	4.7	1.9	-0.54
	W	4.9	1.7	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	NW	2.9	1.7	0.04
	W	2.9	1.5	
Develops external/traditional resources	NW	3.0	1.4	-0.54
	W	3.1	1.3	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	NW	4.3	1.8	-0.73
	W	4.6	1.7	
Locally/regionally directed programs	NW	2.4	1.3	-1.36
	W	2.7	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	NW	5.3	1.4	-0.67
	W	5.4	1.3	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	NW	2.3	1.2	-0.24
	W	2.4	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	NW	2.1	1.2	-0.91
	W	2.3	1.2	

No significant differences were observed in the mean scores by ethnicity for the quality indicators of the Total County Extension Program in Table 31.

Table 32. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	NW	4.5	1.8	-2.92*
	W	5.4	1.3	
High/low number of impacts	NW	2.7	1.6	0.09
	W	2.6	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	NW	5.1	1.6	-2.19*
	W	5.7	1.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	NW	2.9	1.3	-0.46
	W	3.0	1.3	
Diverse/traditional audiences	NW	2.6	1.3	-2.11*
	W	3.0	1.4	
High/low customer participation	NW	2.2	1.1	-1.00
	W	2.4	1.1	
Low/high volunteer involvement	NW	5.3	1.6	-0.61
	W	5.5	1.3	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	NW	2.6	1.3	1.01
	W	2.3	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	NW	2.1	1.3	0.50
	W	2.0	1.2	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	NW	2.9	1.5	0.92
	W	2.6	1.3	
Low/high quality impacts	NW	5.5	1.4	-1.17
	W	5.8	1.1	
High/limited advisory group input	NW	2.8	1.5	0.10
	W	2.8	1.3	

Respondents by ethnicity had significantly different group means in Table 32 for the indicators of relationships, competence level and audience type. Non-white respondents had a lower score (4.5) for personal relationships than did white respondents (5.4). White respondents perceived that personal relationships were

more an indicator of quality to ensure customer-focused programs than non-white respondents.

Non-white respondents also had significantly lower group mean (5.1) for high technical competence than White respondents (5.7). White respondents placed a higher value on high technical competence as an indicator of quality within the customer-focused program. Non-white respondents' group mean (2.6) was significantly different from White respondents' group mean (3.0) for diverse audiences versus traditional audiences.

Table 33. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	NW	2.3	1.1	1.43
	W	2.0	0.9	
High/limited clientele contact	NW	2.3	1.0	0.28
	W	2.2	1.0	
Limited/high university specialists support	NW	5.2	1.3	-0.43
	W	5.3	1.4	
High/limited concern for clientele	NW	2.1	1.4	0.74
	W	1.9	0.9	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	NW	5.3	1.3	-0.71
	W	5.5	1.4	
Programs developed from local/state issues	NW	2.5	1.4	-0.78
	W	2.7	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	NW	3.2	1.6	-1.55
	W	3.6	1.3	
Staff oriented to today/future	NW	4.1	1.6	-1.00
	W	4.4	1.2	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	NW	2.3	1.4	1.76
	W	1.9	0.9	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	NW	2.3	1.1	-0.50
	W	2.4	1.2	
Individual/team player	NW	5.2	1.9	-1.21
	W	5.6	1.2	

No significant differences in mean scores were observed by ethnicity of respondents for quality indicators of the County Extension Staff (Table 33).

Table 34. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	NW	2.8	1.4	-1.00
	W	3.1	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	NW	2.3	1.2	-1.30
	W	2.6	1.1	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	NW	5.5	1.4	1.80
	W	5.0	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	NW	3.0	1.6	-2.25*
	W	3.6	1.4	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	NW	3.6	1.9	0.13
	W	3.6	1.3	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	NW	5.7	1.4	-0.85
	W	5.9	1.1	
Traditional/customer-based programming	NW	5.1	1.3	-0.22
	W	5.1	1.2	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	NW	4.2	1.6	-0.84
	W	4.4	1.2	
Low/high visibility	NW	5.8	1.3	-0.15
	W	5.8	1.2	

In Table 34, means for ethnic groups were different for one of the quality indicators of a viable education process. Non-white respondents had a higher score than White respondents that quality Extension programs should stay within the mission as opposed to reaching outside Extension's mission. Non-white respondents' group mean score (3.0) was significantly different from the White respondents' group mean (3.6).

Table 35. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	NW	4.4	1.3	-0.82
	W	4.6	1.0	
Accountable to local/federal partners	NW	3.3	1.1	0.99
	W	3.1	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	NW	4.5	1.2	-2.30*
	W	5.0	1.1	
High/low efficiency	NW	2.2	1.1	1.04
	W	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	NW	5.5	1.4	-1.18
	W	5.8	1.2	
High/limited quality of life impacts	NW	2.1	1.2	-0.08
	W	2.1	1.0	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	NW	2.3	1.1	-2.96*
	W	2.9	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	NW	2.0	1.0	-2.60*
	W	2.5	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	NW	5.6	1.3	0.55
	W	5.5	1.3	
Significant/little environmental impact	NW	2.3	1.1	-1.95
	W	2.7	1.4	
Effective/ineffective programs	NW	1.8	1.1	0.10
	W	1.8	0.9	

There were significant differences in group means of three quality indicators by respondents' ethnicity in order for Extension programs to fulfill its mission (Table 35). These quality indicators were accountability to state partners versus federal partners, uniqueness of the program and significant impact to society. White respondents' group mean (5.0) indicated being more accountable to state partners over federal partners than did Non-white group mean (4.5). While all respondents supported programs that make a unique contribution over meeting traditional audience expectations, White respondents' group mean (2.3) was significantly

different from Non-white respondents' group mean (2.9). Non-white respondents' group mean for significant impact to society (2.0) was significantly higher than the White respondents' group mean (2.5).

Table 36. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	NW	4.5	1.8	-1.13
	W	4.9	1.7	
The Community Development Program	NW	5.0	1.9	1.63
	W	4.4	1.5	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	NW	5.1	1.7	0.28
	W	5.0	1.6	
The 4-H and Youth Program	NW	5.3	1.8	-0.82
	W	5.5	1.5	
The Total County Extension Program	NW	5.1	1.9	-1.08
	W	5.5	1.4	

There were no significant differences by ethnic group observed for the awareness of program areas (Table 36).

Table 37. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' race (Non-white/White).

	Race	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	NW	5.3	1.4	-0.59
	W	5.4	1.3	
The Community Development Program	NW	5.2	1.5	1.57
	W	4.8	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	NW	5.3	1.4	-0.06
	W	5.3	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	NW	5.5	1.5	-0.42
	W	5.6	1.3	
The Total County Extension Program	NW	5.4	1.3	-0.86
	W	5.6	1.2	

There were no significant differences by ethnicity for the perceived quality of program areas (Table 37).

Education

The education level of the respondents was categorized into two groups. The survey instrument grouped respondents' answers into: less than high school education, high school education/GED, Associate degree, Bachelor degree, Master degree, and Doctorate degree. The respondents were divided into those with a college degree (B.S.) or less and those with a graduate degree (M.S.) or more.

Table 38. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	Col or <	2.4	1.3	-1.56
	Grad	2.8	1.1	
Accesses targeted/general population	Col or <	3.6	1.6	2.37*
	Grad	3.0	1.1	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Col or <	4.8	1.8	-0.20
	Grad	4.8	1.6	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Col or <	2.7	1.5	-0.46
	Grad	2.8	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	Col or <	3.3	1.4	1.90
	Grad	2.9	1.0	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Col or <	4.2	1.8	-2.43*
	Grad	4.9	1.4	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Col or <	2.8	1.3	0.67
	Grad	2.6	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Col or <	5.2	1.6	-2.74*
	Grad	5.8	1.1	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Col or <	2.7	1.2	2.27*
	Grad	2.2	1.1	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Col or <	2.4	1.2	-0.41
	Grad	2.5	1.2	

Of the ten quality indicators in defining quality indicators of the Total County Extension Program, four were found to have significantly different group means by educational level of respondents (Table 38). Respondents with a graduate degree had a lower group mean (3.0) supporting programs that accesses targeted population as opposed to accesses general population while college degree or less respondents had a higher mean score (3.6). College degree or less respondents had a lower mean score (4.2) for county programs being an integral part of county government as compared to respondents with graduate degree or more group means (4.9). In other words, when the education level was at graduate level, respondents perceived more strongly that a quality indicator for Extension programs was to be an integral part of county government than did respondents with an education level of college or lower. The graduate respondents' group mean (5.8) was also significantly different from college or less respondents' group mean (5.2) for level of support from decision-makers. Graduate respondents preferred higher support from decision-makers than did college or less respondents. Graduate level respondents (2.2) also had a higher mean for collaborative program delivery than did college level or less respondents (2.7). So in summary, education level of respondents was significantly different in group means for targeted population, integral part of county government, level of support by decision makers, and collaborative program delivery.

Table 39. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Col or <	5.4	1.3	-0.03
	Grad	5.4	1.3	
High/low number of impacts	Col or <	2.8	1.4	1.86
	Grad	2.3	1.2	
Low/high technical competence	Col or <	5.5	1.5	-3.56*
	Grad	6.3	0.7	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Col or <	3.1	1.4	1.47
	Grad	2.7	1.2	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Col or <	3.1	1.5	0.00
	Grad	3.1	1.5	
High/low customer participation	Col or <	2.6	1.3	1.24
	Grad	2.3	1.1	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Col or <	5.4	1.5	0.25
	Grad	5.4	1.3	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Col or <	2.4	1.1	-0.07
	Grad	2.4	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Col or <	2.2	1.3	0.71
	Grad	2.0	1.2	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Col or <	2.6	1.4	0.25
	Grad	2.5	1.1	
Low/high quality impacts	Col or <	5.4	1.2	-3.34*
	Grad	6.1	1.0	
High/limited advisory group input	Col or <	2.3	1.0	-3.43*
	Grad	3.1	1.1	

In Table 39, three quality indicators of a customer-focused program had significantly different group means by education level of respondents. Graduate level respondents (6.3) more strongly preferred high level technical competence when compared to college level or less respondents (5.5). Graduate level respondents also more highly perceived that high quality impacts indicated quality programs (6.1) than did college or less respondents (5.4). College or less

respondents more strongly perceived high advisory group involvement (2.3) than did the graduate level respondents (3.1).

Table 40. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	t
Highly/limited skilled educator	Col or <	2.0	0.8	1.91
	Grad	1.7	0.7	
High/limited clientele contact	Col or <	2.2	1.1	-0.05
	Grad	2.2	0.9	
Limited/high university specialists support	Col or <	5.3	1.8	-0.94
	Grad	5.5	1.1	
High/limited concern for clientele	Col or <	2.1	1.0	1.86
	Grad	1.8	0.7	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Col or <	5.3	1.7	-0.65
	Grad	5.5	1.3	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Col or <	2.6	1.2	0.18
	Grad	2.5	1.0	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Col or <	3.3	1.4	-0.33
	Grad	3.4	1.5	
Staff oriented to today/future	Col or <	4.2	1.4	-2.13*
	Grad	4.7	1.1	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Col or <	1.8	0.6	0.71
	Grad	1.9	1.0	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Col or <	2.3	1.2	0.19
	Grad	2.3	1.0	
Individual/team player	Col or <	5.6	1.4	-1.00
	Grad	5.8	1.1	

Only one indicator of quality group mean was significantly different by respondents' education level within the framework of the Extension staff (Table 40). Graduate level respondents' mean score (4.7) for a staff more oriented to the future while college or less respondents had a lower mean score (4.2).

Table 41. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Col or <	3.4	1.4	3.04*
	Grad	2.7	1.0	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Col or <	2.9	1.2	2.86*
	Grad	2.3	0.9	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Col or <	4.8	1.6	-2.17*
	Grad	5.4	1.1	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Col or <	3.6	1.4	0.51
	Grad	3.5	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Col or <	3.7	1.5	2.09*
	Grad	3.2	1.2	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Col or <	5.7	1.4	-1.19
	Grad	5.9	1.0	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Col or <	4.9	1.5	-1.03
	Grad	5.2	1.1	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Col or <	4.2	1.3	-1.70
	Grad	4.5	1.1	
Low/high visibility	Col or <	5.5	1.5	-2.22*
	Grad	6.0	0.8	

In Table 41, five of the nine indicators of quality for a viable educational process differed by educational level of the respondents. Graduate level respondents indicated that the Total County Extension Program perceived program quality indicators as cutting-edge (2.7), mission-based (2.3), innovative program delivery (5.4), learner centered goals (3.2), and high visibility (6.0). While college or less level respondents' mean score also indicated a preference for these characteristics the mean score were significantly different for the two groups among these five quality indicators.

Table 42. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Col or <	4.8	1.3	0.49
	Grad	4.7	1.0	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Col or <	3.0	1.2	-0.09
	Grad	3.0	1.0	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Col or <	5.1	1.3	0.30
	Grad	5.0	1.0	
High/low efficiency	Col or <	2.1	0.9	1.39
	Grad	1.9	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	Col or <	5.6	1.4	-2.00*
	Grad	6.0	0.8	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Col or <	2.1	0.8	0.58
	Grad	2.0	0.9	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Col or <	2.8	1.3	-1.14
	Grad	3.0	1.0	
Significant/little societal impact	Col or <	2.5	1.3	0.28
	Grad	2.4	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	Col or <	5.1	1.7	-3.52*
	Grad	6.0	0.9	
Significant/little environmental impact	Col or <	2.7	1.2	1.17
	Grad	2.4	1.2	
Effective/ineffective programs	Col or <	1.9	0.9	1.55
	Grad	1.7	0.8	

Group means for return on investment and economic impact of programs by educational level of respondents were significantly different (Table 42). Graduate level respondents' group mean (6.0) for a good return on investment in a Total County Extension Program was significantly different from college level or less respondents' group mean (5.6). Also graduate level respondents' mean score (6.0) was significantly different from college level or less mean score (5.1) for significant economic impact as a quality program indicator. All other quality indicator means were not significantly different.

Table 43. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Col or <	4.9	1.8	-0.86
	Grad	5.2	1.7	
The Community Development Program	Col or <	4.6	1.5	0.42
	Grad	4.4	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Col or <	4.7	1.5	-0.04
	Grad	4.7	1.5	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Col or <	5.2	1.8	-1.80
	Grad	5.7	1.1	
The Total County Extension Program	Col or <	5.4	1.5	0.24
	Grad	5.4	1.4	

There were no significant mean score differences in Table 43 for respondents' awareness level of the program areas by educational level.

Table 44. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' education level (College Graduate or less/ Graduate Degree).

	ED	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Col or <	5.5	1.5	0.07
	Grad	5.4	1.1	
The Community Development Program	Col or <	4.9	1.6	1.88
	Grad	4.4	1.3	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Col or <	5.2	1.5	1.43
	Grad	4.8	1.2	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Col or <	5.5	1.5	-1.19
	Grad	5.6	1.0	
The Total County Extension Program	Col or <	5.7	1.5	1.41
	Grad	5.3	1.0	

There were no significant differences in means by educational level of respondents for the perceived levels of quality by program areas (Table 44).

Age of Respondents

Respondents were asked to give their date of birth in order to calculate age for each respondent. Age was categorized for group comparisons by those respondents less than fifty (<50) and those fifty or greater (50+). For all the quality indicators under each major heading, only two indicators had significant group mean differences. In Table 47, the group mean for respondents with less than fifty years in age (5.8) was significantly higher than the respondents with fifty plus years of age (5.3). There are significantly different group mean by age for mission-based programs in a viable education process (Table 48). Respondents with an age of fifty and over group mean (2.4) for mission-based programs as opposed to duplicated programs was significantly different from respondents with age of under fifty (2.7). All other quality indicators, program area awareness and perception of program area quality comparisons were not significantly different by age groups.

Table 45. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	AGE	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	<50	5.1	1.3	-1.44
	50+	5.3	1.4	
Accesses targeted/general population	<50	3.6	1.4	0.41
	50+	3.5	1.6	
Programs based on regional/local needs	<50	4.8	1.6	-0.21
	50+	4.8	1.7	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	<50	5.0	1.4	-0.43
	50+	5.1	1.7	
Develops external/traditional resources	<50	3.3	1.2	0.72
	50+	3.1	1.4	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	<50	3.4	1.6	-0.88
	50+	3.6	1.8	
Locally/regionally directed programs	<50	2.8	1.3	1.16
	50+	2.6	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	<50	5.3	1.2	-1.04
	50+	5.5	1.4	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	<50	2.4	1.2	0.39
	50+	2.4	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	<50	2.3	1.2	0.35
	50+	2.3	1.2	

Table 46. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	<50	5.3	1.4	0.25
	50+	5.2	1.4	
High/low number of impacts	<50	2.7	1.3	0.37
	50+	2.6	1.4	
Low/high technical competence	<50	5.7	1.2	0.76
	50+	5.6	1.3	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	<50	3.1	1.1	1.83
	50+	2.8	1.4	
Diverse/traditional audiences	<50	3.1	1.2	1.11
	50+	2.9	1.5	
High/low customer participation	<50	2.4	1.1	0.22
	50+	2.3	1.2	
Low/high volunteer involvement	<50	5.4	1.4	-0.84
	50+	5.5	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	<50	2.4	1.1	0.75
	50+	2.3	1.2	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	<50	2.1	1.2	0.80
	50+	2.0	1.1	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	<50	2.7	1.2	0.48
	50+	2.6	1.3	
Low/high quality impacts	<50	5.8	1.0	1.13
	50+	5.7	1.2	
High/limited advisory group input	<50	2.9	1.3	1.11
	50+	2.8	1.3	

Table 47. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	<50	2.1	1.0	0.80
	50+	2.0	1.0	
High/limited clientele contact	<50	2.3	1.0	1.53
	50+	2.2	1.0	
Limited/high university specialists support	<50	5.4	1.4	1.06
	50+	5.2	1.5	
High/limited concern for clientele	<50	2.0	1.0	1.15
	50+	1.9	0.9	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	<50	5.4	1.3	-0.31
	50+	5.4	1.4	
Programs developed from local/state issues	<50	2.6	1.2	-0.23
	50+	2.7	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	<50	3.5	1.2	-0.52
	50+	3.6	1.5	
Staff oriented to today/future	<50	4.5	1.3	1.41
	50+	4.2	1.3	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	<50	2.0	1.1	0.83
	50+	1.9	1.0	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	<50	2.5	1.3	1.04
	50+	2.3	1.2	
Individual/team player	<50	5.8	1.2	3.12*
	50+	5.3	1.5	

Table 48. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	<50	3.0	1.3	-0.59
	50+	3.1	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	<50	2.7	1.1	2.29*
	50+	2.4	1.1	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	<50	5.1	1.3	0.34
	50+	5.0	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	<50	3.6	1.4	0.90
	50+	3.5	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	<50	3.5	1.4	-0.47
	50+	3.6	1.4	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	<50	5.8	1.2	-0.29
	50+	5.8	1.2	
Traditional/customer-based programming	<50	4.9	1.2	-1.19
	50+	5.2	1.3	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	<50	4.4	1.2	0.66
	50+	4.3	1.3	
Low/high visibility	<50	5.8	1.2	0.38
	50+	5.8	1.2	

Table 49. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	<50	4.6	0.9	0.39
	50+	4.5	1.2	
Accountable to local/federal partners	<50	3.2	1.0	-0.11
	50+	3.2	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	<50	5.0	1.0	0.43
	50+	4.9	1.2	
High/low efficiency	<50	2.1	1.0	0.41
	50+	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	<50	5.7	1.2	-0.28
	50+	5.7	1.2	
High/limited quality of life impacts	<50	2.1	1.1	-0.54
	50+	2.2	1.0	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	<50	2.8	1.1	-0.68
	50+	2.9	1.3	
Significant/little societal impact	<50	2.4	1.0	-0.44
	50+	2.4	1.2	
Little/significant economic impact	<50	5.4	1.3	-0.35
	50+	5.5	1.4	
Significant/little environmental impact	<50	2.7	1.3	1.14
	50+	2.5	1.3	
Effective/ineffective programs	<50	1.7	0.9	-1.46
	50+	1.9	0.9	

Table 50. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	<50	4.8	1.6	-0.76
	50+	4.9	1.8	
The Community Development Program	<50	4.4	1.5	-1.34
	50+	4.6	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	<50	5.0	1.4	-0.52
	50+	5.1	1.7	
The 4-H and Youth Program	<50	5.7	1.4	1.59
	50+	5.4	1.6	
The Total County Extension Program	<50	5.3	1.4	-1.15
	50+	5.5	1.4	

Table 51. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' age (less than fifty/fifty or greater).

	Age	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	<50	5.3	1.2	-0.83
	50+	5.4	1.4	
The Community Development Program	<50	4.7	1.3	-0.91
	50+	4.9	1.5	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	<50	5.3	1.3	0.33
	50+	5.3	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	<50	5.6	1.3	-0.52
	50+	5.7	1.4	
The Total County Extension Program	<50	5.6	1.0	-0.12
	50+	5.6	1.3	

Resident Status

Respondents were asked in the survey instrument to identify their resident status as rural, mixed rural/urban or urban. For the comparison of major groups, respondents were categorized into rural resident status and mixed rural/urban.

Table 52. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	t
Local/state-wide presence	Rural	5.3	1.4	0.41
	Mixed	5.2	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	Rural	3.6	1.5	0.47
	Mixed	3.5	1.5	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Rural	4.9	1.6	0.86
	Mixed	4.7	1.8	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Rural	5.0	1.6	-0.66
	Mixed	5.2	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	Rural	3.4	1.3	3.45*
	Mixed	2.8	1.3	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Rural	3.6	1.8	1.05
	Mixed	3.4	1.5	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Rural	2.7	1.2	-0.57
	Mixed	2.8	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Rural	5.4	1.4	0.22
	Mixed	5.4	1.2	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Rural	2.5	1.2	1.09
	Mixed	2.3	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Rural	2.3	1.1	0.60
	Mixed	2.2	1.3	

In Table 52, respondents were compared for ten quality indicators of a Total County Extension Program by residence. Rural respondents' group mean (3.4) was significantly different than mixed respondents group mean (2.8) for develops external resources versus develops traditional resources. All other quality indicators in Table 45 were not significantly different between the two residential groups.

Table 53. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Rural	5.4	1.4	1.18
	Mixed	5.1	1.4	
High/low number of impacts	Rural	2.7	1.4	0.42
	Mixed	2.6	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	Rural	5.6	1.3	-1.01
	Mixed	5.7	1.1	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Rural	3.0	1.4	1.20
	Mixed	2.8	1.2	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Rural	3.1	1.3	0.55
	Mixed	3.0	1.5	
High/low customer participation	Rural	2.4	1.2	0.76
	Mixed	2.3	1.1	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Rural	5.4	1.5	-0.72
	Mixed	5.5	1.2	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Rural	2.5	1.2	1.47
	Mixed	2.2	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Rural	2.1	1.3	1.31
	Mixed	1.9	1.0	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Rural	2.6	1.3	-0.69
	Mixed	2.7	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	Rural	5.6	1.2	-1.76
	Mixed	5.9	1.0	
High/limited advisory group input	Rural	2.8	1.3	-0.65
	Mixed	2.9	1.3	

There were no significant differences among group means by residence for quality indicators of a customer-focused county Extension program (Table 53).

Table 54. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	Rural	2.1	1.0	1.15
	Mixed	2.0	0.9	
High/limited clientele contact	Rural	2.3	1.0	0.66
	Mixed	2.2	0.9	
Limited/high university specialists support	Rural	5.3	1.5	-0.40
	Mixed	5.4	1.3	
High/limited concern for clientele	Rural	2.0	1.1	1.08
	Mixed	1.9	0.8	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Rural	5.4	1.4	-0.67
	Mixed	5.5	1.3	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Rural	2.6	1.2	-0.65
	Mixed	2.7	1.1	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Rural	3.5	1.4	-1.23
	Mixed	3.7	1.3	
Staff oriented to today/future	Rural	4.3	1.2	-1.06
	Mixed	4.5	1.4	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Rural	1.9	1.0	0.16
	Mixed	1.9	1.0	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Rural	2.5	1.3	1.77
	Mixed	2.2	1.1	
Individual/team player	Rural	5.4	1.4	-2.47*
	Mixed	5.8	1.2	

Only one quality indicator had a significantly different group means of respondents by residence (Table 54). Mixed residence respondents indicated that they preferred team player as opposed to individual player as a quality indicator of a County Extension staff. The rural respondents' mean score for team player (5.4) was significantly lower than the mixed residence respondents' mean score (5.8). All other quality indicators for the Extension staff did not significantly differ by residential status.

Table 55. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Rural	3.1	1.2	2.09*
	Mixed	2.8	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Rural	2.7	1.1	2.73*
	Mixed	2.3	1.0	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Rural	4.9	1.3	-2.84*
	Mixed	5.4	1.2	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Rural	3.6	1.4	0.92
	Mixed	3.5	1.6	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Rural	3.6	1.4	0.03
	Mixed	3.6	1.4	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Rural	5.9	1.3	-0.21
	Mixed	5.9	1.1	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Rural	5.0	1.3	-2.13*
	Mixed	5.3	1.1	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Rural	4.4	1.2	-0.40
	Mixed	4.4	1.3	
Low/high visibility	Rural	5.7	1.3	-0.96
	Mixed	5.9	1.1	

Group means or quality indicators of a viable education process for a Total County Extension Program were presented in Table 55. Four of the nine indicators had a significant different group mean by residence. Mixed residential respondents had higher mean scores than rural respondents for cutting-edge programs over traditional programs, mission-based programs over duplicated programs, innovative program delivery over traditional program delivery, and customer-based programming over traditional programming.

Table 56. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Rural	4.6	1.1	1.34
	Mixed	4.5	1.0	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Rural	3.2	1.1	-0.01
	Mixed	3.2	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Rural	4.9	1.1	0.11
	Mixed	4.9	1.1	
High/low efficiency	Rural	2.1	1.0	0.86
	Mixed	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	Rural	5.7	1.3	-0.66
	Mixed	5.8	1.1	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Rural	2.2	1.0	0.37
	Mixed	2.1	1.1	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Rural	2.9	1.2	0.24
	Mixed	2.8	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	Rural	2.4	1.1	-0.64
	Mixed	2.5	1.2	
Little/significant economic impact	Rural	5.4	1.4	-1.28
	Mixed	5.6	1.2	
Significant/little environmental impact	Rural	2.7	1.3	1.04
	Mixed	2.5	1.4	
Effective/ineffective programs	Rural	1.8	0.9	0.66
	Mixed	1.8	0.9	

There were no significant different group means in Table 56 by residential status of respondents within the quality indicators to fulfill the mission of Cooperative Extension.

Table 57. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Rural	5.0	1.7	1.68
	Mixed	4.7	1.7	
The Community Development Program	Rural	4.9	1.5	3.92*
	Mixed	4.1	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Rural	5.2	1.5	1.83
	Mixed	4.8	1.7	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Rural	5.6	1.6	0.56
	Mixed	5.4	1.5	
The Total County Extension Program	Rural	5.6	1.4	2.09*
	Mixed	5.2	1.4	

In Table 57, respondents had a significantly different group mean for The Community Development Program and The Total County Extension Program by residence. In both of these programs, the rural respondents' group mean of program awareness was significantly higher from the mixed respondents' group mean.

Table 58. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' resident status (Rural/Urban-mixed).

	RES	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Rural	5.5	1.4	1.97
	Mixed	5.2	1.2	
The Community Development Program	Rural	4.9	1.5	1.41
	Mixed	4.7	1.3	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Rural	5.4	1.4	1.91
	Mixed	5.1	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Rural	5.6	1.4	-0.47
	Mixed	5.7	1.3	
The Total County Extension Program	Rural	5.7	1.3	1.39
		5.4	1.2	

The perceived qualities for program areas were not significantly different by respondents' residence status (Table 58).

Size of Local Extension Staff

The respondents' perception of the quality indicators of a Total County Extension Program was examined as it related to the existing size of the local Extension staff. Group means of respondents with an Extension staff of less than ten were compared with group means of respondents from counties with ten or greater on the local Extension staff.

Table 59. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	t
Local/state-wide presence	<10	5.4	1.4	0.98
	10+	5.2	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	<10	3.7	1.6	1.13
	10+	3.5	1.4	
Programs based on regional/local needs	<10	4.9	1.8	0.32
	10+	4.8	1.6	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	<10	4.9	1.6	-0.57
	10+	5.1	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	<10	3.5	1.1	2.67*
	10+	3.1	1.4	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	<10	3.7	1.8	0.82
	10+	3.5	1.7	
Locally/regionally directed programs	<10	2.7	1.3	0.18
	10+	2.7	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	<10	5.4	1.3	-0.36
	10+	5.4	1.4	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	<10	2.4	1.3	0.47
	10+	2.4	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	<10	2.3	1.2	-0.30
	10+	2.3	1.2	

In Table 59, when comparing develops external resources as opposed to follows traditional resources, the respondents with a staff size of ten or more had a significantly lower group mean (3.1) than did the respondents with a staff size of less than ten (3.5).

Table 60. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	<10	5.7	1.1	4.01*
	10+	5.1	1.5	
High/low number of impacts	<10	2.7	1.2	0.27
	10+	2.6	1.4	
Low/high technical competence	<10	5.6	1.2	-0.25
	10+	5.6	1.3	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	<10	3.0	1.3	0.07
	10+	2.9	1.3	
Diverse/traditional audiences	<10	3.1	1.5	0.42
	10+	3.0	1.4	
High/low customer participation	<10	2.6	1.2	1.93
	10+	2.3	1.1	
Low/high volunteer involvement	<10	5.6	1.2	0.70
	10+	5.4	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	<10	2.5	1.1	1.26
	10+	2.3	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	<10	2.2	1.3	1.47
	10+	1.9	1.1	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	<10	2.9	1.5	1.78
	10+	2.5	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	<10	5.6	1.1	-1.17
	10+	5.8	1.1	
High/limited advisory group input	<10	2.8	1.3	-0.22
	10+	2.8	1.3	

For the quality indicators ensuring customer-focused programs, the only indicator that respondents perceived as significantly different in Table 60 was the

impersonal relationships as opposed to the personal relationships. Although both groups of respondents favored personal relationships over impersonal relationships, respondents associated with a staff size of less than ten had a significantly higher group mean (5.7) when compared with respondents associated with a staff size of ten or more (5.1).

Table 61. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	<10	2.1	0.9	0.70
	10+	2.0	1.0	
High/limited clientele contact	<10	2.4	1.2	1.68
	10+	2.2	0.9	
Limited/high university specialists support	<10	5.4	1.4	0.63
	10+	5.3	1.4	
High/limited concern for clientele	<10	2.1	1.1	1.55
	10+	1.9	0.9	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	<10	5.6	1.4	0.87
	10+	5.4	1.4	
Programs developed from local/state issues	<10	2.7	1.3	0.19
	10+	2.7	1.1	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	<10	3.4	1.2	-0.66
	10+	3.6	1.4	
Staff oriented to today/future	<10	4.3	1.3	-0.38
	10+	4.3	1.3	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	<10	2.0	1.0	0.90
	10+	1.9	1.0	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	<10	2.8	1.3	2.84*
	10+	2.2	1.1	
Individual/team player	<10	5.7	1.1	1.28
	10+	5.5	1.5	

In Table 61, the respondents' association with staff size was found to have a significantly different group mean for only one quality indicator of the local Extension staff. Both groups of respondents perceived that the local Extension staff should

strive to make a difference when compared to striving to maintain programs.

However respondents associated with larger Extension staffs (ten or more) had a significantly lower group mean (2.2) than did respondents associated with smaller Extension staffs (less than ten).

Table 62. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	t
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	<10	3.2	1.3	1.37
	10+	3.0	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	<10	2.8	1.1	2.83*
	10+	2.4	1.1	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	<10	5.1	1.3	0.17
	10+	5.1	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	<10	3.8	1.2	1.99*
	10+	3.4	1.6	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	<10	3.5	1.4	-0.50
	10+	3.6	1.4	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	<10	6.0	1.3	1.18
	10+	5.8	1.2	
Traditional/customer-based programming	<10	5.1	1.3	0.10
	10+	5.1	1.2	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	<10	4.3	1.1	-0.50
	10+	4.4	1.3	
Low/high visibility	<10	5.8	1.2	0.23
	10+	5.8	1.2	

Respondents' perceptions of quality indicators for a viable educational process by their association to staff size were presented in Table 62. Two indicators were significantly different. While both groups supported mission-based programs over duplicated programs, the group mean for respondents associated with a larger Extension staff was significantly lower (2.4) than respondents associated with a smaller Extension staff (2.8). Respondents association with staff size also was

significantly different for a viable education process that stays within Extension’s mission as opposed to reaching outside Extension’s mission. The group mean for respondents associated with the larger Extension staff was significantly lower (3.4) than the respondents associated with a smaller Extension staff (3.8).

Table 63. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents’ staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	t
Accountable to state/local partners	<10	4.6	1.2	-0.10
	10+	4.6	1.1	
Accountable to local/federal partners	<10	3.0	1.1	-1.33
	10+	3.2	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	<10	5.0	1.1	0.77
	10+	4.9	1.1	
High/low efficiency	<10	2.0	0.9	-0.82
	10+	2.1	1.0	
Show limited/good return on investment	<10	5.7	1.1	-0.48
	10+	5.7	1.3	
High/limited quality of life impacts	<10	2.3	0.9	0.84
	10+	2.1	1.1	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	<10	3.1	1.2	1.57
	10+	2.8	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	<10	2.5	1.1	1.05
	10+	2.4	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	<10	5.3	1.4	-1.49
	10+	5.6	1.3	
Significant/little environmental impact	<10	2.8	1.3	1.21
	10+	2.6	1.3	
Effective/ineffective programs	<10	2.0	1.1	2.18*
	10+	1.7	0.8	

Respondents by staff size had a significantly different group mean for one quality indicator (Table 63). Both respondent groups perceived that effective programs were a quality indicator for a Total County Extension Program to ensure the fulfillment of the mission. Respondents associated with larger staff size had a

significantly higher group mean (1.7) than did respondents associated with the smaller staff size (2.0) supporting effective programs.

Table 64. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	<10	5.3	1.6	2.25*
	10+	4.7	1.7	
The Community Development Program	<10	4.8	1.5	1.66
	10+	4.4	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	<10	5.4	1.7	1.78
	10+	5.0	1.6	
The 4-H and Youth Program	<10	5.8	1.5	1.93
	10+	5.4	1.6	
The Total County Extension Program	<10	5.8	1.4	2.38*
	10+	5.3	1.4	

Group means for program awareness of respondents related to staff size association were presented in Table 64. Two program areas were found to have a significant awareness difference by respondents. Program awareness group means were significantly higher for The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program and The Total County Extension Program for the respondents associated with a smaller staff. Specifically, the respondents associated with the smaller staff group mean were significantly higher (5.3) for The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program than the respondents associated with the larger staff size (4.7). The respondents associated with the smaller staff size group mean were significantly higher (5.8) for the Total County Extension Program than the respondents associated with the larger staff size (5.3). In all program areas, the group means for respondents' awareness

of program was less when the respondents were associated with a staff size of ten or more.

Table 65. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' staff size (less than ten/ ten or greater).

	Size	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	<10	5.7	1.3	2.27*
	10+	5.3	1.3	
The Community Development Program	<10	5.1	1.3	1.80
	10+	4.7	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	<10	5.7	1.3	3.08*
	10+	5.1	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	<10	5.9	1.3	1.78
	10+	5.5	1.4	
The Total County Extension Program	<10	5.9	1.2	2.55*
	10+	5.5	1.2	

Respondents' association with the local Extension staff size and their perception of program quality were presented in Table 65. Three program areas were found to have significantly different group means for perceived program quality. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program group mean for respondents associated with smaller staff size was significantly higher (5.7) than respondents associated with larger staff size (5.3). The Family and Consumer Sciences Program group mean for respondents associated with smaller staff size was significantly higher (5.7) than the respondents associated with larger staff size (5.1). Likewise, the Total County Extension Program group mean for respondents associated with smaller staff size was significantly higher (5.9) than the respondents associated with the larger Extension staff size (5.5). In all program areas, the perceived quality was higher for the respondents associated with a staff size of ten or less.

Level of Interaction (intensity)

Respondents were asked to rate their level of interaction with Cooperative Extension on a scale of one (low) to seven (high). Respondents were divided into two groups. Respondents with a rating of one through four were classified as low interaction and those respondents who rated themselves between five and seven were considered to have high interaction. The two interaction groupings' mean scores were compared for significant differences among quality indicators and program areas.

Table 66. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	t
Local/state-wide presence	Low	5.2	1.6	-0.28
	High	5.3	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	Low	3.7	1.8	0.53
	High	3.5	1.4	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Low	4.6	1.9	-0.94
	High	4.9	1.6	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Low	4.8	1.8	-1.14
	High	5.1	1.5	
Develops external/traditional resources	Low	3.4	1.4	1.36
	High	3.1	1.3	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Low	4.1	1.7	2.40*
	High	3.4	1.7	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Low	2.8	1.4	0.30
	High	2.7	1.2	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Low	4.7	1.6	-3.08*
	High	5.5	1.2	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Low	2.6	1.3	1.31
	High	2.3	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Low	2.5	1.3	1.12
	High	2.2	1.2	

Group mean scores of respondents with high and low interaction with Cooperative Extension were presented in Table 66. There were significant differences in two quality indicators of the Total County Extension Program. Respondents with high interaction mean score (3.4) for the semantic differential of independent agency versus integral part of county government was significantly lower than low interaction respondents' mean score (4.1). High interaction respondents' mean score (5.5) was significantly different in high support by decision-makers than low interaction respondents (4.7).

Table 67. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Low	5.1	1.5	-0.75
	High	5.3	1.4	
High/low number of impacts	Low	3.1	1.6	2.29*
	High	2.5	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	Low	5.2	1.5	-2.10*
	High	5.7	1.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Low	3.2	1.5	1.33
	High	2.9	1.3	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Low	3.3	1.6	1.32
	High	3.0	1.4	
High/low customer participation	Low	2.8	1.3	2.42*
	High	2.2	1.1	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Low	5.0	1.7	-1.93
	High	5.6	1.3	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Low	2.8	1.5	2.35*
	High	2.3	1.0	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Low	2.4	1.4	2.18*
	High	1.9	1.1	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Low	3.1	1.6	2.13*
	High	2.6	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	Low	5.1	1.4	-3.51*
	High	5.9	1.0	
High/limited advisory group input	Low	3.1	1.5	1.39
	High	2.8	1.2	

Quality indicators to ensure customer-focused Total County Extension Program by respondents' interaction levels are shown in Table 67. Seven of the twelve quality indicators were found to be significantly different. Higher interaction by respondents perceived that quality programs should have a high number of impacts (2.5), high technical competence (5.7), high customer participation (2.2), participant expectations that are far exceeded (2.3), decision-makers knowledgeable of the programs (2.6) and high quality impacts (5.9). Each of these indicators was significantly different for the low interaction respondents.

Table 68. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	Low	2.4	1.1	2.44*
	High	2.0	0.9	
High/limited clientele contact	Low	2.5	1.1	1.93
	High	2.2	1.0	
Limited/high university specialists support	Low	5.0	1.8	-1.42
	High	5.4	1.3	
High/limited concern for clientele	Low	2.3	1.3	2.50*
	High	1.8	0.9	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Low	4.9	1.7	-2.28*
	High	5.6	1.2	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Low	2.6	1.1	-0.69
	High	2.7	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Low	3.6	1.6	0.24
	High	3.5	1.3	
Staff oriented to today/future	Low	4.0	1.3	-2.15*
	High	4.4	1.3	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Low	2.1	1.3	0.83
	High	1.9	0.9	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Low	2.6	1.3	0.99
	High	2.4	1.2	
Individual/team player	Low	5.1	1.6	-1.92
	High	5.6	1.3	

Group mean scores of respondents based on their level of interaction for quality indicators of the County Extension staff are presented in Table 68. Four of the means for quality indicators were found to be significantly different. High interaction respondents' mean scores were significantly different from low interaction respondents in regard to highly skilled educator (2.0), high concern for clientele (1.8), be able to identify with many clientele groups (5.6) and be oriented to the future (4.4). In the case of orientation to today versus the future, the low interaction respondents' mean score was significantly different (4.0) from the high interaction respondents' mean score (4.4).

Table 69. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Low	3.2	1.4	0.71
	High	3.0	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Low	2.8	1.4	1.63
	High	2.5	1.0	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Low	5.0	1.5	-0.55
	High	5.1	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Low	3.9	1.6	1.48
	High	3.5	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Low	3.9	1.6	1.33
	High	3.5	1.3	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Low	5.3	1.3	-3.19*
	High	6.0	1.1	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Low	4.9	1.2	-1.36
	High	5.1	1.2	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Low	4.2	1.2	-0.87
	High	4.4	1.2	
Low/high visibility	Low	5.2	1.6	-3.06*
	High	5.9	1.1	

Respondents' interaction levels for a viable education process had two quality indicators with significantly different group means (Table 69). High-level interaction

respondents' group means for researched-based information (6.0) and high visibility (5.9) to describe a viable education process were significantly different from low-level interaction respondents' mean scores for research-based information (5.3) and high visibility (5.2).

Table 70. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Low	4.6	1.0	0.43
	High	4.5	1.1	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Low	3.3	1.0	0.94
	High	3.1	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Low	4.8	0.9	-0.63
	High	4.9	1.1	
High/low efficiency	Low	2.4	1.1	2.08*
	High	2.0	0.9	
Show limited/good return on investment	Low	5.2	1.5	-2.86*
	High	5.8	1.1	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Low	2.5	1.1	2.20*
	High	2.1	1.0	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Low	3.2	1.2	2.06*
	High	2.8	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	Low	2.9	1.4	2.77*
	High	2.3	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	Low	5.0	1.7	-2.20*
	High	5.6	1.2	
Significant/little environmental impact	Low	3.0	1.6	1.69
	High	2.5	1.3	
Effective/ineffective programs	Low	2.3	1.3	2.85*
	High	1.7	0.8	

Seven of the eleven quality indicators for fulfilling the Extension mission were significantly different by level of interaction groups (Table 70). High-level interaction respondents placed a significantly higher value on high efficiency (2.0), good return on investment (5.8), high quality of life impacts (2.1), programs with a unique

contribution (2.8), significant societal impact (2.9), significant economic impact (5.6), and effective programs (1.7). Low-level interaction respondents supported each of these indicators but placed a significantly lower value than did the high-level interaction group.

Table 71. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	4.1	1.6	-3.53*
	High	5.0	1.7	
The Community Development Program	Low	3.9	1.6	-2.93*
	High	4.7	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	4.2	1.8	-3.76*
	High	5.3	1.5	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	4.9	1.8	-2.34*
	High	5.6	1.5	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	4.5	1.5	-4.43*
	High	5.6	1.3	

Mean scores for respondents' program awareness by interaction level are presented in Table 71. In all program areas, there was a significant difference in program awareness by interaction level of respondents. High-level respondents had a higher-level of awareness for Agriculture and Natural Resources (5.0), The Community Development Program (4.7), The Family and Consumer Sciences Program (5.3), The 4-H and Youth Program (5.6) and The Total County Extension Program (5.6). The low-level interaction respondents were all significantly lower in awareness level when group means were compared.

Table 72. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' level of interaction (Low/High).

	Inter.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	4.8	1.6	-3.01*
	High	5.5	1.2	
The Community Development Program	Low	4.6	1.6	-1.14
	High	4.9	1.3	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	4.8	1.6	-2.18*
	High	5.4	1.3	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	5.3	1.7	-1.27
	High	5.7	1.3	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	5.1	1.5	-2.43*
	High	5.7	1.1	

Group means for respondents' perception of program quality were presented by interaction level in Table 72. Three program areas were found to have significant different group means. High-level interaction respondents rated The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program significantly higher (5.5) than did the low-level interaction respondents (4.8). High-level interaction respondents perceived the quality of The Family and Consumer Sciences Program significantly higher (5.4) than did low-level interaction respondents (4.8). High-level interaction respondents also placed a significantly higher value on program quality for The Total County Extension Program (5.7) than did the low-level interaction respondents (5.1). All program areas were perceived to be higher in quality by high-level interaction than low-level interaction respondents.

Accessibility to the Extension Center

Respondents were asked to rate their accessibility to the local Cooperative Extension center on a scale of one (poor) to seven (excellent). The level of

accessibility for respondents was divided into two groups for the purpose of comparison against quality indicators and program areas. Respondents that rated their accessibility from one through six were classified as low accessibility and respondents that rated their accessibility to the Extension center a seven were classified as high accessibility.

Table 73. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Local/state-wide presence	Low	5.1	1.1	-1.51
	High	5.4	1.3	
Accesses targeted/general population	Low	3.5	1.4	-0.09
	High	3.5	1.4	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Low	4.5	1.7	-2.17*
	High	5.1	1.5	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Low	5.3	1.4	0.97
	High	5.1	1.6	
Develops external/traditional resources	Low	2.9	1.1	-1.50
	High	3.2	1.3	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Low	3.5	1.6	0.99
	High	3.3	1.7	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Low	2.9	1.1	1.55
	High	2.6	1.3	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Low	5.4	1.2	-0.87
	High	5.6	1.3	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Low	2.4	1.1	0.72
	High	2.3	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Low	2.3	1.3	0.64
	High	2.2	1.1	

There was only one quality indicator whose means were significantly different for the total County Extension Program (Table 73). Respondents with high accessibility had a significantly higher mean score for programs based on local needs (5.1) over regional needs than did respondents with low accessibility (4.5). All

other indicators were not significantly different for group means by level of accessibility.

Table 74. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Low	5.0	1.4	-2.62*
	High	5.5	1.3	
High/low number of impacts	Low	2.7	1.2	1.27
	High	2.4	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	Low	5.6	1.2	-1.11
	High	5.8	1.2	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Low	2.9	1.4	-0.13
	High	2.9	1.2	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Low	2.9	1.4	-0.31
	High	3.0	1.3	
High/low customer participation	Low	2.5	1.3	2.55*
	High	2.1	0.9	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Low	5.5	1.1	-0.84
	High	5.6	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Low	2.5	1.1	2.61*
	High	2.1	1.0	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Low	2.1	1.1	1.51
	High	1.8	1.1	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Low	2.7	1.1	1.71
	High	2.5	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	Low	5.8	1.0	-1.22
	High	5.9	1.0	
High/limited advisory group input	Low	2.8	1.1	-0.15
	High	2.8	1.3	

There were significant mean differences by respondents' level of accessibility for three quality indicators to ensure customer-focused programs (Table 74). Highly accessible respondents had a significantly higher mean score for quality indicators that valued personal relationships (5.5), high customer participation (2.1), and

participant expectation that are far exceeded (2.1) than did low accessible respondents.

Table 75. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	t
Highly/limited skilled educator	Low	2.1	0.9	1.76
	High	1.9	0.9	
High/limited clientele contact	Low	2.3	0.9	1.35
	High	2.1	1.0	
Limited/high university specialists support	Low	5.3	1.2	-0.50
	High	5.4	1.4	
High/limited concern for clientele	Low	2.1	1.0	2.42*
	High	1.7	0.8	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Low	5.3	1.3	-2.10*
	High	5.7	1.2	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Low	3.0	1.2	2.14*
	High	2.6	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Low	3.8	1.4	2.06*
	High	3.4	1.3	
Staff oriented to today/future	Low	4.6	1.3	1.09
	High	4.3	1.2	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Low	2.2	1.0	3.49*
	High	1.7	0.8	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Low	2.5	1.3	0.96
	High	2.3	1.1	
Individual/team player	Low	5.5	1.2	-0.90
	High	5.7	1.3	

Mean scores by accessibility of respondents to the Extension center for quality indicators of the local staff were presented in Table 75. Five quality indicators had significant group mean differences. Highly accessible respondents had significantly higher mean scores for quality indicators related to Extension staff should have high concern for clientele (1.7), identify many clientele groups (5.7), have programs developed from local issues (2.6), demonstrate responsiveness to

individual needs (3.4) and have an optimistic approach (1.7). While low accessible respondents also supported these indicators for the staff, the group mean scores were significantly weaker than the high accessible respondent group means.

Table 76. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	t
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Low	3.1	1.3	0.70
	High	3.0	1.2	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Low	2.5	1.0	0.07
	High	2.5	1.0	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Low	5.2	1.2	0.87
	High	5.1	1.3	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Low	3.5	1.5	0.34
	High	3.5	1.4	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Low	3.8	1.4	2.35*
	High	3.4	1.3	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Low	5.7	1.3	-2.84*
	High	6.2	1.0	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Low	4.8	1.3	-2.46*
	High	5.3	1.1	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Low	4.3	1.4	0.73
	High	4.5	1.2	
Low/high visibility	Low	5.7	1.0	-2.15*
	High	6.0	1.1	

Respondents' mean scores by accessibility level for quality indicators that support a viable educational process were presented in Table 76. Three quality indicators had significantly different group means. Highly accessible respondents had significantly higher group means for research-based information (6.2) than low accessible respondents (5.7). Highly accessible respondents also had higher group means for traditional programming versus customer-based programming (5.3) than did low accessible respondents (4.8). Finally, highly accessible respondents had

significantly higher group means for high visibility (6.0) than low accessible respondents (5.7).

Table 77. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Low	4.3	1.1	-2.01*
	High	4.7	1.1	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Low	3.3	1.1	1.75
	High	3.1	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Low	4.7	1.2	-2.36*
	High	5.1	1.1	
High/low efficiency	Low	2.2	1.0	2.55*
	High	1.9	0.8	
Show limited/good return on investment	Low	5.4	1.2	-3.68*
	High	6.1	0.9	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Low	2.4	1.2	2.96*
	High	1.9	0.9	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Low	2.8	1.3	-0.13
	High	2.8	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	Low	2.6	1.1	2.59*
	High	2.2	1.0	
Little/significant economic impact	Low	5.4	1.2	-2.11*
	High	5.7	1.2	
Significant/little environmental impact	Low	2.7	1.3	1.39
	High	2.5	1.2	
Effective/ineffective programs	Low	1.9	0.8	2.61*
	High	1.6	0.8	

Group means for the accessibility of respondents to the Extension Center by the quality indicators related to fulfilling Extension's mission were presented in Table 77. Eight of the eleven indicators differed significantly by group means for accessibility. Highly accessible respondents had significantly higher value on accountable to local partners (4.7) over accountable to state partners than did low accessible respondents (4.3). Highly accessible respondents also placed a higher

value on being accountable to state partners (5.1) over being accountable to federal partners than did low accessible respondents (4.7). Highly accessible respondents' group mean scores were significantly higher for high efficiency (1.9), good return on investment (6.1), high quality of life impacts (1.9), significant societal impact (2.2), significant economic impact (5.7), and effective programs (1.6).

Table 78. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	4.9	1.7	-1.12
	High	5.1	1.7	
The Community Development Program	Low	4.5	1.6	1.27
	High	4.8	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	5.1	1.3	-1.40
	High	5.4	1.6	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	5.4	1.4	-1.73
	High	5.8	1.4	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	5.2	1.4	-3.60*
	High	5.9	1.3	

In Table 78, only one program area had significantly different group means based on respondents' awareness by accessibility. Highly accessible respondents' group mean was significantly different, indicating more awareness (5.9) of The Total County Extension Program than did the low accessible respondents (5.2).

Table 79. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' degree of accessibility to the local Extension center (Low/High).

	Access.	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	5.3	1.2	-1.70
	High	5.6	1.2	
The Community Development Program	Low	4.8	1.4	-1.02
	High	5.0	1.3	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	5.1	1.1	-1.96
	High	5.5	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	5.4	1.2	-2.49*
	High	5.8	1.3	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	5.3	1.1	-3.12*
	High	5.8	1.1	

The respondents' group means for perceived quality by their accessibility to the Extension center were significant for two of the program areas (Table 79). The 4-H and Youth Program and the Total County Extension Program had significantly higher scores from respondents of highly accessibility to the Extension center. Highly accessible respondents perceived that the 4-H and Youth Program had higher quality (5.8) than did the low accessible respondents (5.4). Also, the highly accessible respondents perceived that The Total County Extension Program was higher quality (5.8) than did the low accessible respondents (5.3). In the other program areas, the same pattern of higher accessibility equated to higher quality perception but the differences were not significant.

Length of Association

Respondents were asked how long they had been associated with North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Respondents were then categorized as low years

of association if they had less than ten years and high years of association if they had ten years of more.

Table 80. Mean differences in Total County Extension Program indicators by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	t
Local/state-wide presence	Low	5.2	1.3	-0.40
	High	5.2	1.4	
Accesses targeted/general population	Low	3.7	1.4	1.72
	High	3.4	1.5	
Programs based on regional/local needs	Low	4.7	1.7	-0.86
	High	4.9	1.7	
High/limited assistance in local emergencies	Low	4.7	1.7	-2.65*
	High	5.3	1.5	
Develops external/traditional resources	Low	3.3	1.1	0.78
	High	3.1	1.4	
Independent agency/integral part of the county government	Low	3.4	1.6	-0.72
	High	3.6	1.8	
Locally/regionally directed programs	Low	2.9	1.2	1.73
	High	2.6	1.3	
Little/high support by decision-makers	Low	5.3	1.2	-1.30
	High	5.5	1.4	
Collaborative/non-collaborative program delivery	Low	2.2	1.1	-1.80
	High	2.5	1.2	
Extensive/Little volunteer involvement	Low	2.3	1.2	-0.15
	High	2.3	1.2	

The quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program were presented in Table 80. One of the indicators had a significantly different group mean by respondents' years of association. Respondents with high years of association with Extension had a higher group mean (5.3) for limited assistance in local emergencies than did respondents with low years of association (4.7).

Table 81. Mean differences in the customer-focused indicators by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Impersonal/personal relationships	Low	5.2	1.3	-0.44
	High	5.3	1.5	
High/low number of impacts	Low	2.6	1.4	0.08
	High	2.6	1.3	
Low/high technical competence	Low	5.6	1.2	-0.61
	High	5.6	1.3	
Outcomes for customers/organizations	Low	3.1	1.1	1.21
	High	2.9	1.4	
Diverse/traditional audiences	Low	3.0	1.3	-0.59
	High	3.1	1.5	
High/low customer participation	Low	2.3	1.0	-0.36
	High	2.4	1.2	
Low/high volunteer involvement	Low	5.5	1.4	-0.08
	High	5.5	1.4	
Participant expectation far exceeded/not met	Low	2.4	1.1	-0.03
	High	2.4	1.1	
Decision-makers knowledgeable/not familiar with programs	Low	2.2	1.2	2.09*
	High	1.9	1.2	
Decision-makers regularly/ limited involvement	Low	2.9	1.4	2.47*
	High	2.5	1.2	
Low/high quality impacts	Low	5.9	1.0	1.55
	High	5.6	1.2	
High/limited advisory group input	Low	3.1	1.4	3.11*
	High	2.6	1.2	

Three of the quality indicators in Table 81 had significantly different group means by years of association. Respondents with high years of association had higher group means for decision-makers knowledgeable about programs (1.9), decision-makers regularly involved (2.5), and high advisory group input (2.6) than did low years of association respondents.

Table 82. Mean differences in the staff indicators by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Highly/limited skilled educator	Low	2.2	0.9	1.91
	High	2.0	1.0	
High/limited clientele contact	Low	2.2	0.8	-0.36
	High	2.2	1.1	
Limited/high university specialists support	Low	5.3	1.4	0.64
	High	5.2	1.5	
High/limited concern for clientele	Low	2.0	0.9	0.55
	High	1.9	1.0	
Identify with few/many clientele groups	Low	5.6	1.2	1.32
	High	5.3	1.5	
Programs developed from local/state issues	Low	2.8	1.2	1.20
	High	2.6	1.2	
Responsiveness to individual needs/broad-based issues	Low	3.6	1.3	0.24
	High	3.5	1.4	
Staff oriented to today/future	Low	4.4	1.2	0.44
	High	4.3	1.4	
Optimistic/pessimistic approach	Low	2.0	1.1	1.35
	High	1.9	1.0	
Strives to make a difference/to maintain programs	Low	2.5	1.2	0.88
	High	2.3	1.3	
Individual/team player	Low	5.6	1.4	0.55
	High	5.5	1.4	

No significantly different group means are presented in Table 82 for quality indicators for staff by respondents' years of association with Extension.

Table 83. Mean differences in educational process indicators by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Cutting-edge/ traditional program	Low	3.0	1.0	-0.30
	High	3.0	1.3	
Mission-based/ duplicated program	Low	2.6	0.9	0.26
	High	2.5	1.2	
Traditional/innovative program delivery	Low	5.2	1.2	1.67
	High	5.0	1.4	
Stays within/reaches outside Extension's mission	Low	3.7	1.5	1.70
	High	3.4	1.5	
Goals that are learner-centered/county centered	Low	3.6	1.4	-0.20
	High	3.6	1.4	
Uses limited research-based/researched-based information	Low	6.0	1.1	1.27
	High	5.8	1.3	
Traditional/customer-based programming	Low	5.1	1.2	0.48
	High	5.0	1.3	
Reactive to immediate/proactive to future needs	Low	4.5	1.2	1.11
	High	4.3	1.3	
Low/high visibility	Low	5.9	1.1	0.88
	High	5.7	1.3	

No significantly different group means were found in Table 83 for quality indicators of a viable educational process by respondents' years of association with Extension.

Table 84. Mean differences in mission-based indicators by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
Accountable to state/local partners	Low	4.6	1.1	0.71
	High	4.5	1.1	
Accountable to local/federal partners	Low	3.3	1.0	1.14
	High	3.1	1.1	
Accountable to federal/state partners	Low	5.0	1.0	1.04
	High	4.9	1.2	
High/low efficiency	Low	2.1	0.9	0.69
	High	2.0	1.0	
Show limited/good return on investment	Low	5.7	1.1	0.33
	High	5.7	1.3	
High/limited quality of life impacts	Low	2.1	0.9	-0.86
	High	2.2	1.1	
Program makes unique contribution/meets traditional audience expectations	Low	3.0	1.2	0.97
	High	2.8	1.2	
Significant/little societal impact	Low	2.5	1.1	0.73
	High	2.4	1.1	
Little/significant economic impact	Low	5.5	1.2	0.04
	High	5.5	1.4	
Significant/little environmental impact	Low	2.7	1.5	0.98
	High	2.5	1.2	
Effective/ineffective programs	Low	1.9	0.9	0.74
	High	1.8	0.9	

No significantly different group means are presented in Table 84 for quality indicators related to fulfilling Extension mission by respondents' years of association.

Table 85. Mean differences in program awareness by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	4.5	1.6	-3.14*
	High	5.1	1.7	
The Community Development Program	Low	4.2	1.5	-2.42*
	High	4.8	1.6	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	5.0	1.6	-0.58
	High	5.1	1.6	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	5.4	1.5	-0.98
	High	5.6	1.6	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	5.2	1.4	-2.24*
	High	5.6	1.4	

The awareness levels of three program areas had significantly different group means by respondents' years of association with Cooperative Extension (Table 85). Respondents with high years of association were significantly more aware of The Agriculture and Natural Resource Program, The Community Development Program and The Total County Extension Program than were respondents with low years of association

Table 86. Mean differences in perception of program quality by respondents' years of association (Low/High).

	Years	Mean	S.D.	<i>t</i>
The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program	Low	5.3	1.3	-1.04
	High	5.5	1.4	
The Community Development Program	Low	4.9	1.3	0.63
	High	4.8	1.4	
The Family and Consumer Sciences Program	Low	5.4	1.4	1.21
	High	5.2	1.4	
The 4-H and Youth Program	Low	5.7	1.3	0.28
	High	5.6	1.4	
The Total County Extension Program	Low	5.5	1.2	-0.49
	High	5.6	1.3	

No significant different group means were found in respondents' perception of program quality by years of association with Cooperative Extension (Table 86).

Table 87. Ranked characteristics of a Total County Extension Program by respondents' factors.

	Factor	A Total County Extension Program should:	Be community based	Be customer focused	Be delivered by a professional competent staff	Provide a relevant educational process	Deliver effective and efficient results
Organizational	Relational Role	External	2.5	4	1	5	2.5
		Internal	4	1	2	5	3
	Primary Role	CP	2.5	4	1	5	2.5
		LES	4	1	2	5	3
		ALS	2	4	1	5	3
		Admin	4	1	3	5	2
	Length of Association	Low	4	2.5	1	5	2.5
		High	4	2	1	5	3
	Interaction	Low	1	4	3	5	2
		High	4	2	1	5	3
Socio-demographic	Gender	Female	4	2.5	1	5	2.5
		Male	4	2	1	5	3
	Ethnicity	NW	3	1.5	4	5	1.5
		W	4	2	1	5	3
	Education Level	Col<	4	2	1	5	3
		Grad	4	2	1	5	3
Age	<50	4	3	1	5	2	
	50+	4	2	1	5	3	
Spatial	Resident Status	Rural	4	2.5	1	5	2.5
		Mixed	4	2	1	5	3
	Staff Size	<10	4	2.5	1	5	2.5
		10+	4	2	1	5	3
	Accessibility	Low	4	2	1	5	3
		High	4	2	1	5	3
All Respondents			4	2	1	5	3

Respondents' groupings by factors and their ranked preferences for a quality Total County Extension Program are presented in Table 87. Each respondent was asked to select the three most important characteristics they preferred in a local Extension program. All respondents and most sub-groups preferred that a professional, competent staff deliver the local program. Only respondents with the role of Extension administration (3), nonwhite ethnicity (4), and low interaction (3)

had lower rankings for the Extension staff. All respondents preferred an Extension program to be customer focused as the second characteristic. Some of the groups that ranked customer focus more than one ranking different were respondents with the role of county partners (4), advisory members (4), and respondents with low interaction (4). The deliverance of effective and efficient results was ranked third by all respondents. Only nonwhite respondents (1.5) ranked this characteristic more than one place for all respondents. Being community based was ranked fourth by all respondents. Only county partners (2.5) and respondents with low interaction with Extension (1) had different rankings of more than one place. The unanimous ranking for fifth was an Extension program to provide a relevant educational process. All respondent groupings place the relevant educational process characteristic last.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings from the research for several factors possibly associated with the decision-makers' perception of quality indicators, program awareness and program quality. The quality indicators were categorized under program characteristic headings of the program-based, customer-focused, professional staff, educational process, and mission-based. A total of eleven factors were examined by group means for fifty-three (53) quality indicators to determine significant differences in relation to the research questions. The research questions identified the organizational, socio-demographic, and spatial factors examined. Some factors had many significant differences by group means while other did not.

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of awareness and perception of quality for five (5) program areas. Group means were examined by the eleven decision-maker factors to determine their influence on awareness and quality perception for each program area. Thus, each of the eleven factors has seven tables examining group means (Tables 10-86).

Organizational factors including the respondents' relationship (external/internal), primary role, association and interaction accounted for one hundred and four (104) significantly different group means for quality indicators/program areas. Relational role (external/internal) had twelve (12) significantly different group means. Primary role had fifty-six (56) significant differences. Level of interaction (intensity) had twenty-nine (29) while length of association had seven (7).

Socio-demographic factors including respondents' ethnicity, age, gender and education level accounted for thirty-two (32) significantly different group means by quality indicator/program areas. Significant group means for ethnicity were seven (7), age with two (2), gender with eight (8), and educational level with fifteen (15). Spatial factors including respondents' accessibility, resident status, and staff size accounted for forty-two (42) significantly different group means for quality indicators/programs. Accessibility of the respondents to the local center had twenty-three (23) significantly different group means. The respondents' resident status of rural or urban/mixed had eight (8) significantly different group means for indicators/programs. Respondents' number on the local Extension staff (staff size) accounted for eleven (11) significantly different group means.

The ranking of program characteristics in Table 87 by respondents' factors had much uniformity across grouping. Some of the variance was mostly attributed to respondents' roles. Chapter V will examine these findings in greater detail.

Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to describe Cooperative Extension decision-makers' perceptions of quality for a Total County Extension Program. The research questions examined to what extent respondents' perception of quality varied by independent variables. Respondents included North Carolina Cooperative Extension personnel from fourteen randomly selected counties and Cooperative Extension administration. Extension personnel included Extension field faculty and support staff. Local decision-maker groups were asked to rate their perception of quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program. These groups were county partners, which included County Commissioners and County Managers and the local county advisory council. The response rate for the instrument was 50%. These responses were examined by socio-demographic factors, organizational factors and spatial factors to determine significant different group means for individual quality indicators and program areas. Socio-demographic factors included and supported by previous research were age, ethnicity, gender and educational level. Organizational factors found in the literature and examined in this study were decision-makers' primary role including external and internal relationship, length of association and the intensity of association. Spatial factors examined in this study were size of staff, accessibility of center, and the urban/rural setting. Group mean scores were examined to determine significant differences by factors and quality indicators. The results from the study are found in Chapter IV. In Chapter V

conclusions from the findings along with implications and recommendations for future research will be presented.

Conclusions

The research findings addressing decision-makers' perception of quality indicators by the organizational factors, spatial factors and socio-demographic factors led to the following conclusions. Based on findings from responses and related to the research questions the following conclusions were developed.

Conclusion 1a:

Organizational factors including decision-makers' role and intensity of interaction influenced respondents' perceptions of quality in Extension programs.

Role of respondents through their relationship with Cooperative Extension influenced perception of quality. These roles were described as either external or internal and primary role of county partner, Extension staff, Extension advisor, or Extension administrator. External respondents in three cases gave a significantly higher rating for program area quality than internal respondents. Quality scores were rated by respondents on a scale of one (1) for low quality to seven (7) for high quality. The quality rating for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program, the Community Development Program and the Total County Extension Program was significantly higher for external decision-makers. Internal respondents range of scores for quality were from 5.5 for the 4-H and Youth Program and 5.4 for the Total

County Extension Program to a low rating of 4.5 for the Community Development Program. The external decision-makers perceived the quality of 4-H and Youth (5.8) and the Total County Extension Program (5.8) as the highest while giving the Community Development Program the lowest mean score (5.2).

External decision-makers placed higher value on individual needs and local program focus while internal decision-makers placed higher value on impacts, effectiveness, and mission focus. External decision-makers differed from internal decision-makers on a few of the quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program. External respondents placed a significantly higher value on local programs, responsiveness to individual needs than did internal respondents. External respondents placed a significantly lower value on Extension being an integral part of county government, the number of impacts, the quality of impacts, participant expectation far exceeded, programs that stay within Extension's mission, and the effectiveness of programs than did internal respondents. A majority of the quality indicators had no significantly different group means suggesting that the perceptions of quality for these indicators are similar. For all of the indicators that had a significant difference there was no reversal of polarity for the semantic differential.

Level of interaction (intensity) with Cooperative Extension impacted perception of quality indicators. Decision-makers' level of interaction was found to be significantly different for twenty-one quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program. Decision-makers with high-level interaction preferred Extension to be an independent agency (3.4), high support by decision-makers (5.5), high number of

impacts (2.5), high technical competence (5.7), high customer satisfaction (2.2), participant expectations far exceeded (2.3), decision-makers knowledgeable about programs (1.9), decision-makers regularly involved with programs (2.6) and high quality impacts (5.9). While all quality indicators for the lower-level interaction decision-makers were significantly less, they still valued these indicators. Decision-makers with high-level interaction gave significantly higher values to highly skilled educator (2.0), high concern for clientele (1.8), staff oriented toward the future (4.4), uses researched based information (6.0), high visibility (5.9), high efficiency (2.0), good return on investment (5.8), high quality of life impacts (2.1), programs that make a unique contribution (2.8), significant societal impact (2.3), significant economic impact (5.6), and effective programs (1.7). Decision makers' level of interaction was the single most influential factor over all quality indicators of the Total County Extension Program. Decision-makers' program awareness mean scores for all program areas were significantly different by decision-makers' level of interaction. In all cases the higher the decision-makers' interaction, the higher their awareness of Extension programs. Decision-makers' perceptions of quality by program areas were also affected by level of interaction. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program, The Family and Consumer Sciences Program and the Total County Extension Program were all significantly higher for high-level interaction than for low-level interaction. Community Development and 4-H and Youth followed the same trend but were not significantly different by level of interaction. Decision-makers with high-level interaction with Cooperative Extension have high program awareness and high perception of program quality.

Years of association by decision-makers with Cooperative Extension had minor influence on perception of quality indicators. Four quality indicators with significant different group means by years of association with North Carolina Cooperative Extension were found. Decision-makers with high years of association more strongly preferred Extension programs that gave high assistance during local emergencies (5.3) than did decision-makers with low years of association (4.7). Decision-makers with high years of association perceived that quality Extension program should have decision-makers that are regularly involved (2.5) and knowledgeable (1.9) about Extension programs. High years of association decision-makers also strongly preferred programs with high advisory group input (2.6) to decision-makers with low years of association (3.1). The longer decision-makers are associated with Cooperative Extension, the more program involvement with decision-makers and advisors is perceived important. Years of association for decision-makers were significant for program awareness. Decision-makers with high years of association were significantly more aware of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program (5.1 to 4.5), the Community Development Program (4.8 to 4.2), and the Total County Extension Program (5.6 to 5.2). However the decision-makers' perception of program quality was not significantly different by years of association.

Conclusion 1b:

The organizational factors related the decision-makers' primary role impacted perception of quality indicators.

County partners and the advisory council placed more value on a statewide presence for the Total County Extension program than did the local Extension staff. Extension administrators placed a higher value on limited assistance in local emergencies than did county partners, local staff or the advisory council. Extension administrators have a significantly limited view on Extension's role in emergencies while all other partners have a more inclusive view. Extension administrators had stronger values for Extension programs that developed external resources than did the local staff or advisory council. The advisory council had a lower perception of the need for Extension to be an integral part of county government than did the county partners, local staff or administration. County partners felt much more strongly (2.3) than the advisory council (2.9) that programs should be locally directed. County partners and Extension administration had significantly stronger preference for more collaborative program delivery than did the advisory council. Extension administrators have a significantly stronger preference for high number of impacts than all other decision-makers. Extension administrators placed a higher value on high technical competence than did the local staff or the advisory council. Extension administrators had a stronger value for customer outcomes than did the county partner. Extension administrators had a significantly stronger preference for diverse clientele than did county partners or local staff. Extension administrators differ significantly from all other decision-makers in placing a higher value on participant expectations being far exceeded. Extension administrators more highly value decision-makers knowledgeable with programs than did county partners and the local staff. Administrators placed a significantly higher value on high quality

impacts than did the county partners, the local staff or the advisory council. Interestingly enough, the local advisory council significantly differed from the Extension staff on high advisory group input. The local advisors placed a significantly higher value for their own input as an indicator of program quality than did the local staff. Local advisors placed less value on specialists' support and more value on responsiveness to individual needs than did the local Extension staff. Extension administrators placed a higher value on concern for clientele than did the advisory members. County partners placed a significantly higher value on programs developed from local issues than did Extension administrators. For the quality indicator responsiveness to individual versus broad-based needs, county partners preferred individual needs (3.2) and administrators slightly preferred broad-based issues (4.2). Extension administrators likewise differed from the local advisory council member on this indicator. Extension administrators differed from the county partners and local advisors on responsiveness to individual needs versus broad-based needs. For the quality indicator, staff oriented to today versus staff oriented to the future, administrators (5.0) differed from the local staff (4.3) and the advisory council members (4.1). Administrators placed a significantly higher value for the staff to be oriented to the future than did the local staff or the advisory council. Also the county partners had significantly stronger preference (4.6) than did the advisory council (4.1) for future orientation. Extension administration respondents had stronger preference for cutting-edge programs than did the county partners or the local advisors. Administration placed a higher value on mission-based programs over duplicated programs than did the local staff or the advisory members. County

partners (4.1) are more willing for Extension program to reach outside Extension's mission than are advisory council members (3.4) or Extension administration (3.0). Extension administrators placed a significantly higher value on researched-based information than did county partners, local Extension staff or local advisors.

Extension administrators gave significantly higher values for an educational process that was proactive to future needs and had high visibility than did the local advisors.

Extension administrators placed significantly higher values on the quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program to give good return on investment (6.3) and yield high quality of life impacts (1.7) than did the local staff or local advisors. The local Extension staff placed a higher value (2.6) on the quality indicator program makes a unique contribution than did the advisory council members (3.0).

Conclusion 1c:

Role of respondents influenced program awareness and perceptions of program quality.

While no other program area differed much on awareness between external and internal group means, the Family and Consumer Sciences Program was significantly different. External decision-makers' awareness mean score of 4.8 was much lower than the internal decision-makers' mean score of 5.4. The range in awareness was from a low mean score of 4.5 for the Community Development program to a high of 5.6 for the 4-H and Youth program. The Community Development Program awareness level was the lowest (4.5) for both internal and external decision-makers.

County partners had significantly lower awareness (4.4) of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program than did the local Extension staff (5.3) and the Extension administrators (5.7). The local advisory council had a significantly lower awareness score (5.0) for Family and Consumer Sciences than Extension administrator (5.7). The Community Development Program had the lowest awareness mean score of 4.3 for county partners while 4-H and Youth had the highest mean score for awareness by both the county partners and Extension administration with 5.8.

County Managers and County Commissioners perceived Cooperative Extension's program quality higher than did Extension administrators or the local Extension staff. In all program areas the county partners perceived the program quality higher than the local staff or Extension administrators. For Community Development, 4-H and Youth and the Total County Extension Programs, the differences in perception of quality are significant. The Community Development Program was significantly lower in perceived quality by the local staff (4.6) and Extension administration (4.1) than the county partners (5.2) and the advisory council members (5.2). The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program was perceived to have significantly higher quality by the advisory members (5.6) over the local staff members (5.2). The 4-H and Youth Program received the highest scores for quality from the county partners (6.1). The county partners rating differed significantly from the local staff score (5.5) and Extension administration score (5.3). The Total County Extension Program received significantly higher mean scores from

the county partners (5.8) and the local advisors (5.8) than from Extension administration (5.3).

Conclusion 2:

The socio-demographic factor of educational level influenced decision-makers' perception of quality indicators. Ethnicity had a minor influence while age and gender no influence on respondents' perception of quality indicators.

Gender did not impact differences in quality indicators. Male decision-makers placed a higher value on local program presence, high technical competence, highly skilled educator, responsiveness to individual needs, more accountable to local partners over state partners and more accountable to local partners over federal partners than did female decision-makers. Male decision-makers had significantly stronger mean scores than female decision-makers for quality indicators associated with technical competence and local/individual focus. All other quality indicator group means were not significantly different.

Female decision-makers had significantly higher awareness scores and quality perception scores for the Family and Consumer Sciences Program. Male decision-makers were not as aware of the Family and Consumer Sciences Program. The male decision-makers also perceived the program quality to be less (5.0) than the female decision-makers (5.5).

Ethnic background influenced differences in selected quality indicators. White decision-makers preferred Extension programs with more personal relationships

(5.4) than Non-white decision-makers (4.5). White decision-makers also placed a higher value (5.7) on high technical competence than did Non-white decision-makers (5.1). Non-white decision-makers more strongly preferred diverse audiences over traditional audiences than did White decision-makers (3.0). Non-white decision-makers placed a higher value (3.0) on programs that stay within Extension's mission than did White decision-makers (3.6). White decision-makers more highly preferred programs accountable to the state partners over the federal partners than did Non-white decision-makers. Non-white decision-makers placed higher value on programs that make a unique contribution (2.3) and programs with significant societal impact (2.0) than did White decision-makers. No program awareness differences or quality perception differences were found.

Decision-makers' perception of quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program varied significantly by educational level. Decision-makers with a graduate degree placed a higher value on programs that access targeted populations than did college degree or less decision-makers. Graduate degree decision-makers had a higher preference (4.9) than college degree or less (4.2) for the county Extension program being an integral part of county government. Graduate degree decision-makers placed a higher value on high support by decision-makers and collaborative program delivery than did college degree or less decision-makers. Graduate degree decision-makers had significantly higher mean scores than college degree or less decision-makers for technical competence (6.3), high quality impacts (6.1), high advisory group input (2.3), staff oriented to the future (4.7), cutting-edge programs (2.7), mission-based programs (2.3), innovative

program delivery (5.4), learner centered goals (3.2), high visibility (6.0), show good return on investment (6.0), and significant economic impact (6.0). No differences in program awareness or perception of program quality were found by education level. Decision-makers' perception of quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program had no significant differences by age. Only two indicators were significantly different by age of decision-makers. Less than fifty decision-makers placed significantly higher value on team player (5.8) than did the fifty plus decision-makers (5.3). The fifty plus decision-makers placed a higher value on mission-based programs over duplicated programs. All other indicators of quality were not found to be significantly different. Also, no significant differences were found by age of decision-makers for program awareness or program quality.

Conclusion 3:

Spatial factors including size of staff, accessibility to the center, and residential setting influenced respondent's perceptions of quality indicators.

Decision-makers with a rural/urban residential status are more likely to perceive quality indicators that are associated with less traditional, more innovative approaches to programming than are rural decision-makers. Decision-makers' mean scores by residential status were significantly different for six quality indicators. Mixed rural/urban decision-makers more strongly preferred programs that develop external resources to traditional resources. Mixed rural/urban decision-makers placed a higher value (5.8) on team player as a quality indicator for the Extension staff than did the rural decision-makers (5.4). Mixed rural/urban decision-

makers more strongly preferred cutting-edge programs (2.8) to traditional program, mission-based programs (2.3) to duplicated programs, innovative programs (5.4) to traditional programs, and customer-based programming (5.3) to traditional programming.

The resident status of decision-makers was significant for program awareness for the Community Development and the Total County Extension Programs. In both programs, the rural decision-makers were significantly more aware of the two programs. In all program areas, the rural decision-makers were more aware of the programs than were the rural/urban mixed decision-makers. Perception of program quality was not significant for any of the program areas by decision-makers' resident status. Awareness of programs was higher for rural decision-makers over urban/mixed decision-makers, but perception of quality was not significantly different for the two groups.

Staff size had minimal influence on quality indicators. Six indicators of program quality were significantly different for decision-makers by staff size. Decision-makers associated with a staff size of ten or more preferred programs developed from external resources to programs from traditional resources. Decision-makers associated with a staff size of less than ten more strongly favored personal relationships to impersonal relationships. Decision-makers associated with a staff size of ten or more had a higher mean score (2.2) than decision-makers associated with a staff of less than ten (2.8) for the quality indicator strives to make a difference to maintain programs. Decision-makers associated with a staff of ten or more placed a significantly higher value on mission-based programs (2.4), a program that stays

within Extension's mission (3.4), and effective programs (1.7). Decision-makers associated with a staff size of less than ten were significantly more aware of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program and the Total County Extension Program. The remaining programs although not significantly different follow the same trend. Decision-makers associated with a staff size of less than ten are more aware of all Extension programs than did decision-makers associated with larger staffs.

Decision-makers associated with a staff of less than ten gave a significantly higher score for perception of quality for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Program, The Family and Consumer Sciences Program and the Total County Extension Program. The Community Development Program and The 4-H and Youth Program had similar result but were not significantly different. Decision-makers associated with a staff size of ten or less have higher perception of program quality than do decision-makers associated with larger staffs.

High accessibility to the local Extension Center had a major influence on quality indicators. Decision-makers with high accessibility had significantly higher mean scores than low accessible decision-makers for twenty quality indicators for the Total County Extension Program. Highly accessible decision-makers placed a value on programs based on local needs (5.1), personal relationships (5.5), high customer participation (2.1), participant expectations far exceeded (2.1), high concern for clientele (1.7), identify many clientele groups (5.7), programs developed from local issues (2.6), and responsiveness to individual needs (3.4). Low accessible decision-makers more strongly preferred a staff that was oriented to the future (4.6)

than the high accessible decision-makers (4.3). High accessible decision-makers had significantly higher mean scores for goals that are learner centered (3.4), uses research-based information (6.2), customer-based programming (5.3), high visibility (6.0), accountable to local partners over state partners (4.7), accountable to state partners over federal partners (5.1), high efficiency (1.9), good return on investment (6.1), high quality of life impacts (1.9), significant societal impact (2.2), significant economic impact (5.7) and effective programs (1.6). Decision-makers with high accessibility to their local Cooperative Extension Center expect local programs to address local needs that are customer-based and highly effective.

Conclusion 4:

Role of decision-makers influenced selected characteristics of a quality Total County Extension Program.

Respondents were asked to select three of the five major characteristics of a Total County Extension Program. These characteristics of a Total County Extension Program included for the program to be community-based, be customer-focused, be delivered by a professional credible staff, provide a relevant educational process, and deliver effective and efficient results. External customers placed less emphasis on customer focus than did Extension staff and Extension administration. County partners, advisory members and external decision-makers all ranked customer focus fourth of five. External decision-makers, county partners, low interaction decision-makers and advisory council members placed more importance on an Extension program being community based than did Extension staff or administration.

Extension administration, low interaction decision-makers, and Non-white decision makers gave lower importance to a county program being delivered by a professional credible staff than did all other decision-maker groups. Non-white decision-makers placed a higher emphasis on an Extension program delivering effective and efficient results than did any other group of decision-makers. All decision-maker groups placed providing a relevant educational process as lowest priority to a total county Extension program.

The findings in this research supported the findings of the Taylor-Powell (1995), Osborne (1991), Shonkwiler (1995) and Carberry (2000). These studies identified decision-makers' level of involvement, a need for system wide clear communication and effective organizational marketing as major recommendations to improve decision-makers' perception of quality indicators. These studies also found organizational factors such as positional (role) variances in perception of quality indicators lead to poor decisions and weaker partnerships.

The findings did not support the Baldwin study finding concerning length of association of for external stakeholders. External stakeholders/decision-makers' perception of program quality was higher than internal decision-makers' perception. The findings of the present research did support Baldwin's conclusion that perception by internal and external decision-makers was influenced by role and level of involvement.

To a lesser degree the present research findings supported Pearson's study (1998) concerning the factors of education level, age, gender, and accessibility. Also the findings from this study supported the Pettit study (1993) in that

stakeholders/decision-makers level of education and ethnicity were factors influencing perception.

Implications

The research findings and conclusions have significant implications for Cooperative Extension. Differences in decision-makers' perception of quality program indicators suggested that considerable efforts might be warranted for indicator alignment through clearer administrative communications and dialogue, strategic planning, marketing efforts, and program training.

Implication 1: Decision-makers need a more comprehensive understanding of program quality indicators.

Extension administration differed from the other decision-maker groups on many quality indicators. Extension administration should be involved in opening clearer communications with all decision-makers, both internally and externally. Extension administration may need to evaluate existing opportunities for open discussion and dialogue among all decision-makers. One strategy may include the reinstatement of a comprehensive program review with involvement from all decision-makers.

Implication 2: External decision-makers need opportunities for program involvement and /or program training.

Knowledge of Extension program quality indicators varied across all decision-maker groups. An opportunity exists to educate internal and external decision-makers on what constitutes a quality program. Existing training opportunities focus

on Extension staff. Specific training and program involvement of county partners, and advisory council members would increase their interaction level and knowledge of Extension programs.

Implication 3: Extension Marketing efforts may need to focus internally as well as externally.

Internal decision-makers were more critical of Extension programs. Even though the scores for program areas were generally good, external decision-makers rated program quality higher. Program Quality among county partners and Advisory council members was not a major issue. The highest program area for awareness and program quality was 4-H and Youth and the lowest was Community Development as rated by both internal and external decision-makers. Cooperative Extension needs a comprehensive marketing program to close the gap between program areas. Marketing efforts to unify program visibility and impact would be productive. Specific marketing strategies for urban program may be needed.

Implication 4: The programming model needs to be revisited.

Based on the variance among decision-maker groups, Extension programming is often a misunderstood and distant concept. Programming relevance as it relates to the educational process did not rank high among internal or external respondents. On many of the indicators the Advisory respondents varied significantly from the local staff. Fundamental elements of program development may be excluded from the programming process. System-wide training to bring decision-makers back to a basic understanding and commitment of programming is needed.

Of particular concern would be the development of evaluative tools to measure program impact and program quality.

Implication 5: A professional, credible staff is needed to sustain quality programs.

The local Extension Staff is the single most important resource for quality programs. Although there was some variance among decision-makers on the level of technical competence needed, decision-makers wanted Extension personnel that were accessible, knowledgeable, and concerned for their situation. Effective recruitment, hiring, training, and retention of local staff are major factors possibly hindering program quality.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. This research should be replicated including the four primary decision-maker groups to determine if findings differ based on locations, time, or setting.
2. Future research should include a more comprehensive evaluation of Extension clients' perception of quality. The research study only included decision-makers (clients) that were in an advisory role (advisory council) and not other existing or potential clients. These clients' perception of quality maybe totally different from other decision-makers for many of the indicators.
3. Future research should be conducted to evaluate the decision-makers preferences for certain quality indicators. Prioritization of quality indicators

- would be a valuable addition to the knowledge base for quality Extension programs.
4. Explore state and federal funding partners perceptions of quality indicators. This research study was limited to local decision-makers and Extension administrators. Comparison of other funding partners at all three levels of government would be beneficial and enlightening.
 5. Future research should narrow the focus on quality perception by decision-makers' role, interaction, and accessibility. Future research could examine more closely isolated factors associated with decision-makers perception of quality.
 6. Explore research to describe factors influencing quality perception by Extension administrators. Extension administrators' perception of quality maybe influenced by extraneous variables related to their aspirations, educational level, and/or expectations.

Recommendations for Cooperative Extension

1. Extension administration should examine the findings in this study for application to current marketing strategies.
2. Extension administration should review Extension's vision, mission, and scope with all other decision-makers.
3. Extension personnel should place stronger emphasis on frequent interaction and involvement of decision-makers in the Total County Extension Program.

4. Extension advisors should be more involved in Extension programs and delivery.
5. Extension administration should communicate with all other decision-maker groups what are quality indicators of a Total County Extension Program.
6. Future market analysis should include both internal and external decision-makers.
7. Extension program leaders should review individual program areas for awareness and perception of quality by decision-makers.
8. Family and Consumer Sciences Program should increase awareness among male decision-makers.
9. The Community Development Program should increase awareness and perception of quality among all decision-maker groups.
10. Extension administration should align with other decision-makers in prioritizing a professional credible staff to conduct local programs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Box 7604
N. C. State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-7604

October 26, 2004

Martha Warner
County Extension Director
P.O. Box 109
Bolivia, NC 28422

Dear Martha,

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in and distribute this research study. This study has the full support of Dr. Ort, Dr. Zublena, and Extension Administrative Council. I know that with your encouragement and leadership within your county, the study will gain valuable feedback on quality indicators identified by your key decision-maker groups. Again, just for clarification, please distribute the survey to your County Advisory Council, County Commissioners and County Administration, and your entire County Extension Staff. You may distribute the survey as you deem most effective.

Since only two counties per district were selected, your county participation by each decision-maker group is critical to obtaining credible results. Please assure your decision-makers that this is not an evaluation of them, the county program or the County Director. There are no right or wrong answers. All responses will be kept confidential. If you find that you need additional resources for any follow-up request, please let me know.

I will be happy to share the findings from this study once my graduate committee has approved the research. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support and cooperation!

Sincerely,

F. Daniel Shaw
South Central District Extension Director

Appendix B

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a doctoral research study, developed by personnel of North Carolina Cooperative Extension and approved by the administrative body of NC Cooperative Extension. The purpose of the study is to examine key local Extension partners', including county commissioners and county managers, county Extension staffs', and state extension administrators' perceptions of quality indicators for a local county Extension program. Your cooperation is sought in responding to a 20-minute questionnaire. The survey is not intended to evaluate personnel or county programs. Information obtained in the survey will be analyzed for groups and no individual responses will be identified and each respondent is asked not to submit any data or material that might identify the individual through notes on the form itself.

Your participation in the study is voluntary, but you have been selected through a random sampling procedure and your responses are important in describing respondents' perceptions of quality Extension programs. If you agree to participate in the study, please respond to all the items in the questionnaire. You may submit your completed questionnaire in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by November 15, 2004. Questions regarding the study may be directed to the researcher at 919-515-8437. Questions regarding your participation in the study may be directed to university personnel at 919-513-1837.

Section I - Quality Program Indicators

Directions: Please answer all items in each category. Section I considers possible quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program. **Definition:** A Total County Extension Program was defined for this study as a composite of all programs and activities within the County Extension Center. Place **an "X" on the line** that best represents your opinion considering the comparison of the two indicators. Often, you may believe both indicators are either important or not important indicators of quality. In that case, you will need to decide what number on the continuum would best describe your preference of the two indicators for a Total County Extension Program. Please place only one "X" on the line.

*EXAMPLE: If you strongly believe that a quality indicator for a Total County Extension Program should be **Responsive** place an "X" near number 1 on the continuum. If you strongly believe that a quality indicator of a Total County Extension Program should be **non-responsive** place an "X" near number 7 on the continuum. When comparing responsive and non-responsive, and your preference is somewhere between, place an "X" nearest the number that best describes your opinion. For example, a rating of "4" would show you believe both compared indicators have equal merit. Below are only a few examples to demonstrate the various rating possibilities for the same quality indicators.*

a) Strong preference for responsive.

Responsive.....**Non-responsive**
1_X 2 3 4 5 6 7

b) Strong preference for non-responsive.

Responsive.....**Non-responsive**
1 2 3 4 5 6 X 7

c) Both indicators have equal merit.

Responsive.....**Non-responsive**
1 2 3 X4 5 6 7

Quality Indicators for Total County Cooperative Extension Programs

I. Rate the following quality indicators that you believe are most essential for a Total County Extension Program. Please place an "X" on the line that best represents your perception of quality indicators.

A. A Total County Extension Program should possess the following quality indicators.

1. Local presence..... State-wide presence
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
2. Accesses targeted clients.....Accesses general population
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
3. Programs based on regional needs.....Programs based on local needs
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
4. High assistance in local emergencies.....Limited assistance in local emergencies
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
5. Develops external resources.....Follow traditional resources
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
6. Independent agency.....Integral part of the county government
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
7. Locally directed programs.....Regionally directed programs
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
8. Little support by decision-makers..... High support by decision-makers
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
9. Collaborative program delivery.....Non-collaborative program delivery
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
10. Extensive volunteer involvement.....Little volunteer involvement
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

B. Please place an "X" by the number that describes your perception of the following quality indicators to ensure customer-focus for a Total County Extension Program.

1. Impersonal relationships.....Personal relationships
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
2. High number of impacts.....Low number of impacts
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
3. Low technical competence.....High technical competence
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
4. Outcomes for customers..... Outcomes for organization
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
5. Diverse audiences.....Traditional audiences
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
6. High customer participation.....Low customer participation
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
7. Low volunteer involvement.....High volunteer involvement
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
8. Participant expectations far exceeded..... Participant expectations not met
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
9. Decision-makers knowledgeable.....Decision-makers not familiar with programs
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
10. Decision-makers regularly involvedLimited decision-makers involvement
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
11. Low quality impacts.....High quality impacts
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

12. High advisory group input.....Limited advisory group input
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

C. Please place an “X” by the number closest to your preference of quality indicators for the staff of a Total County Extension program.

1. Highly skilled educator.....Limited skilled educator
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
2. High clientele contact.....Limited clientele contact
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
3. Limited university specialists support.....High university specialists support
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
4. High concern for clientele.....Limited concern for clientele
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
5. Identify with few clientele groups.....Identify with many clientele groups
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
6. Programs developed from local issues.....Programs developed from state issues
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
7. Responsiveness to individual needs.....Responsiveness to broad-based issues
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
8. Staff oriented to today.....Staff oriented to future
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
9. Optimistic approach.....Pessimistic approach
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
10. Strives to make a difference.....Strives to maintain programs
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
11. Individual player.....Team player
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

D. Please place an “X” closest to your perception of quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program that demonstrate a viable educational process.

1. Cutting-edge program.....Traditional program
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
2. Mission-based program.....Duplicated program
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
3. Traditional program delivery.....Innovative program delivery
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
4. Stays within Extension’s mission.....Reaches outside Extension’s mission
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
5. Goals that are learner-centered.....Goals that are county-centered
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
6. Uses limited research-based information.....Uses research-based information
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
7. Traditional programming.....Customer-based programming
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
8. Reactive to immediate needs.....Proactive to future needs
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
9. Low visibility.....High visibility
 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

E. Please place an "X" by each of the quality indicators for a Total County Extension Program that you believe make a positive difference in fulfilling the mission of North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

1. Accountable to state partners.....Accountable to local partners
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
2. Accountable to local partners.....Accountable to federal partners
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
3. Accountable to federal partners.....Accountable to state partners
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
4. High efficiencyLow efficiency
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
5. Show a limited return on investment.....Show good return on investment
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
6. High quality of life impacts.....Limited quality of life impacts
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
7. Program makes a unique contribution.....Program meets traditional audience expectations
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
8. Significant societal impact.....Little societal impact
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
9. Little economic impact..... Significant economic impact
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
10. Significant environmental impact.....Little environmental impact
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
11. Effective programs.....Ineffective programs
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7

II. Rate the following program dimensions based on your perception or awareness.

A. Please identify the three most important characteristics of a quality Total County Extension Program. From the categories below, place an "X" by the three characteristics that are most important to you.

- Be community-based
- Be customer-focused
- Be delivered by a professional, credible staff
- Provide a relevant educational process
- Deliver effective and efficient results

B. For the following Extension programs, please rate the level of your awareness by placing an "X" on the line.

1. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
Limited awareness-----High awareness
2. The Community Development Program
1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____6_____7
Limited awareness-----High awareness

3. The Family and Consumer Sciences Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Limited awareness-----High awareness
4. The 4-H and Youth Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Limited awareness-----High awareness
5. The Total County Extension Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Limited awareness-----High awareness

C. For the following Extension programs, please rate your perception of the level of quality by placing an "X" on the line.

1. The Agriculture and Natural Resources Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Low Quality-----High Quality
2. The Community Development Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Low Quality-----High Quality
3. The Family and Consumer Sciences Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Low Quality-----High Quality
4. The 4-H and Youth Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Low Quality-----High Quality
5. The Total County Extension Program
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7
 Low Quality-----High Quality

Section II - Your Information

Please give some information about you. Circle the letter or number that best describes you or your situation. Again, all individual information is vital to the study and will remain confidential.

1. What is your primary **role** with North Carolina Cooperative Extension? (Circle one)
 - a. County Commissioner
 - b. County Manager or Assistant
County Manager
 - c. County Extension Director
 - d. County Extension Agent
 - e. Local Extension Support Staff
 - f. Program associate or assistant
 - g. County Advisory Leadership
Council
 - h. Cooperative Extension
Administration
2. How long have you been associated with North Carolina Cooperative Extension?
_____ (Years)
3. What is the highest educational level that you have attained? (circle one)
 - a. Less than High School Diploma
 - b. High School/GED
 - c. Associate Degree
 - d. Bachelors Degree
 - e. Masters Degree
 - f. Doctorate Degree
4. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
5. Please give your year of birth.
19_____
6. Please circle the ethnicity that best represents you.
 - a. African-American
 - b. Asian
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Native American
 - e. White
 - f. Other _____
7. Please circle the resident status that best describes your home setting. (Circle one)
 - a. Rural
 - b. Mixed rural/urban
 - c. Urban
8. What is the **total number** on your local Extension staff including agents, secretaries, and program assistants
 - a. _____ (Number)
 - b. _____ Don't Know
9. Please circle the number that most closely describes your **interaction** with Cooperative Extension.
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
Low ----- High
10. Please circle the number that most closely describes your **accessibility** to your local Cooperative Extension Center.
1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____
Poor-----Excellent

Thank You