

ABSTRACT

LONG, JR., JOSEPH BUXTON. Parental Perceptions and Expectations of the North Carolina State 4-H Summer Camping Program Regarding the Development of Targeted Life Skills. (Under the direction of Dr. Mark Kistler and Dr. Barry Croom.)

Camping has been established as one of the primary delivery modes for 4-H and is recognized as a strong way to promote youth development and build life skills needed for youth to be positively contributing members as adults to society. However, there is a question as to whether parents and guardians of 4-H youth perceive the real value of camping. The purpose of this study was to determine how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps in building targeted life skills of the participants and parents' expectations of the experience for their children while there.

This study used descriptive survey research to accomplish this purpose utilizing a census from the target population of parents of youth that attended 4-H camp during the summer of 2013. The design for the questions in the instrument was based on Dr. Patricia Hendricks' (1996) Targeting Life Skills Model, which included 35 life skills. After the questionnaire was designed, data were collected using the Internet survey process outlined by Dillman (2000). This data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program 21 and utilized descriptive statistics to compute the results.

Findings from this study revealed that positive life skill development can be achieved from the camping experience and that parents recognize and expect this. Using the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, growth was shown in all four of the basic categories, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.

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Parental Perceptions and Expectations of the North Carolina
State 4-H Summer Camping Program Regarding
the Development of Targeted Life Skills

by
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DEDICATION

This study and the complete process is dedicated to my wife and children who have supported these efforts for so many years. It is also dedicated to all the young people who have come through the summer camp program and whose lives have been affected in so many positive ways. It is for them that this process is so important and hopefully some good will come from what has been learned that will continue to enhance the process of positive youth development for many years to come. And lastly, this process would never have been possible without the support of my parents and most especially my Mother who has always instilled upon me the value of an education and how important knowledge is to success.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

North Carolina has a strong tradition of providing camping opportunities for youth through the Cooperative Extension's Youth Development program, 4-H. North Carolina opened its first 4-H Camp, Swannanoa, in 1929. As a result of tremendous growth and interest in the 4-H camping program, North Carolina has opened several other facilities. At present, three summer camps are operating within the state 4-H program, which are geared towards building life skills, such as leadership, communication, and self-esteem, necessary for positive youth development. These three camps and the ones that will be the focus of this study are Betsy-Jeff Penn, Millstone, and the Eastern Center. 4-H has recognized the value of the camping experience in developing youth capable of making positive contributions to society by building the life skills necessary for them to be successful. This is consistent with the culture of parenting in the United States. In order to see if the parents share this view, assuming they want to see their children live successful and productive lives, an assessment of the value of the 4-H camping program as perceived by the parents is necessary. This matters when designing summer camp programs trying to maximize efforts in positive youth development.

Conceptual Framework

There are two general types of camping, recreational camping and organized camping. Recreational camping generally implies a way of life more simple than that to which the camper will return...This concept of camping occurs in small or large groups, often unsponsored by any organization; it is usually carried out for pure leisure or recreational purposes

by groups of friends or relatives, with the leaders designated from within the group (Eells, 1986, p.3).

The American Camp Association defines organized camping as

a sustained experience, which provides a creative, recreational, and educational opportunity in group living in the outdoors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper's mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 285).

Why is this important to 4-H and why is it important to parents?

4-H leaders and volunteers have understood why camping is important and how youth build life skills and gain from this experience, but do parents see it the same way? To begin this quest, we need to learn something about the history of the 4-H program. 4-H is one of the largest youth development organizations in the country. According to the North Carolina 4-H Youth Development website

the North Carolina 4-H Program focuses on utilization of experiential, non-formal, community based youth development practices which recognize the worth and dignity of every individual, and the belief that the development of life skills enables young people to become caring, coping, competent, and contributing citizen leaders who will build strong foundations for our future (North Carolina 4-H, n.d.).

How was this mission developed? It all began around 1898 when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) hired Seaman Knapp, now known as the Father of Cooperative Extension, who promoted better farming practices using the demonstration method. Up until this point in history, it was very difficult to get the adult agricultural

community to adopt newer production methods developed by the Land Grant Universities and the Experimental Research Stations. Then in 1902 A.B. Graham of Ohio formed the Tomato Club for girls and the Corn Growing Club for boys using this demonstration method and hands-on approach to programming. These early 4-H pioneers quickly recognized the importance of youth in bringing about change due to these young people's open-mindedness and willingness to try new things (National 4-H, n.d.). It was the demonstration method and the idea of experiential learning by doing that formed the foundation for 4-H and youth development, which has lasted and been successful for over a century. Camping, along with 4-H Clubs, Special Interest, and School Enrichment, are the four primary delivery modes that 4-H uses to foster positive youth development. Camping is the only delivery mode focused on in this study. As noted earlier, there is a difference in recreational camping and organized camping as defined by the American Camp Association.

Why is camping important to youth development and how did this become the case? Many leading educationalists of the early twentieth century, including John Dewey, stressed creative learning and process and encouraged the experiential hands-on learning opportunities found in summer camps (Dewey, 1934; Elwell, 1925; Mason, 1930; Ward, 1935). In 1910, Alan Williams founded the Camp Directors Association of America (CDAA), which authorized "a model and standardizing influence for the organized camp experience for the young" (American Camp Association Anniversary Timeline, 2010, p. 10). In 1924, the CDAA and the National Association of Directors of Girls' Camps merged and the name was changed to the Camp Director Association (CDA). The name was changed again in 1935 to the American Camping Association. In 2004, one last name change was

made to alleviate any confusion with recreational camping to the American Camp Association (ACA). The history of camping goes back much further than 1910. Frederick Gunn has been credited as the father of organized camping. He was the headmaster of the Gunnery School for boys in Connecticut and in 1861, in the midst of the United States Civil War, he took a group of boys on a two-week trip to Welch's Point on Long Island Sound. Most of the boys hiked the 40 miles, but there were a couple of mules for those unable to make the complete trip on foot. A market wagon carried the supplies and tents and Mr. Gunn's wife went along in a carriage. They did their own cooking and enjoyed swimming, songs, games, and campfires. Although Gunn is credited with the first camp, others had similar experiences around the same time period, however what is most important is the impact of this new experiential learning approach. (Eells, 1986) The only organization that accredits all types of camps is the ACA.

The main purpose of the ACA accreditation program is to educate camp owners and directors in the administration of key aspects of camp operation, particularly those related to program quality and the health and safety of campers and staff. The standards establish guidelines for implementing policies, procedures, and practices. The camp, then, is responsible for implementing and ensuring policies are followed. Another purpose of the ACA accreditation is to assist the public in selecting camps that meet industry-accepted and government recognized standards (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 12).

Over 11,000,000 youth attend the more than 12,000 camps each summer across the United States, however, only around 2400 of these camps chooses to be accredited. (American

Camp Association, n.d.) From a parental standpoint, accreditation is something that should be of value and importance because it means that a camp has made a commitment to the safety and welfare of the youth they serve. Various reasons could exist as to why more camps are not accredited. Some could include, the time it takes to go through the more than three hundred standards required to be accredited, or the total cost of such an endeavor. It is also possible for camps not to meet enough of the standards required for accreditation and to fail to become accredited. Regardless of the reason, all camps benefit from the existence of the American Camp Association (ACA) if for no other reason than their lobbying efforts in Congress helping to make sure that positive youth development is at the forefront of legislation whenever possible. (American Camp Association, n.d.) All three of the 4-H camps in this study are accredited through ACA. Having such a long history of promoting positive youth development has established the American Camp Association (ACA) as an important asset to the camping movement. The camping movement has an even longer history of promoting positive youth development through the experiential learning approach in developing life skills necessary to be successful and contributing adults.

Purpose of the Study

Camping has been established as one of the primary delivery modes for 4-H and is recognized as a strong way to promote youth development and build life skills needed for youth to be positively contributing members as adults to society. However, there is a question as to whether parents and guardians of 4-H youth perceive the real value of camping. The purpose of this study was to determine how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps in building targeted life skills of the participants and

parents' expectations of the experience for their children while there. The Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1996) was the model chosen where 16 of her 35 life skills were evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the 4-H camping program. Hendricks (1996) chose the 35 life skills in her model by reviewing numerous other models and choosing those that consistently emerged as the ones that were necessary for a person to attain success in life. This study examined 16 of the 35 life skills that the North Carolina State 4-H camping leadership deemed appropriate in a summer camp and should be recognized by parents as measurable.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the effect of the camp experience in the life skills development of the campers as perceived by the parents.
2. To determine if parents value the impact the 4-H camps had on building life skills of their children.
3. To ascertain why parents send their children to 4-H camps.
4. To determine needed improvements for camps to meet the expectations of parents.

Definition of Terms

4-H: Cooperative Extension's youth development program (North Carolina 4-H, n.d.).

Accreditation: The act of granting credit or recognition, especially with respect to an educational institution that maintains suitable standards (Webster's Online, 2012).

Day Camp: Camp sessions are operated and staffed by the camp. The camper goes home to parent or guardian each night, except for an occasional overnight (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 23).

Life Skill: The way one applies learned skills to real life situations (Oklahoma 4-H, n.d.).

Organized Camping: A sustained experience, which provides a creative, recreational, and educational opportunity in group living in the outdoors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper's mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 285).

Recreational Camping: Generally implies a way of life more simple than that to which the camper will return... This concept of camping occurs in small or large groups, often unsponsored by any organization; it is usually carried out for pure leisure or recreational purpose by groups of friends or relatives, with the leaders designated from within the group" (Eells, 1986, p.3).

Resident Camp: Camp sessions are generally at least five days and may be multiple weeks in length. Program is operated and staffed by the camp and supervision of individual campers is a camp responsibility (American Camp Association, 2012, p. 25).

Skill: A learned ability to do something well (Oklahoma 4-H, n.d.).

Youth Development: Helping youth become competent in the life skills that will prepare them for transition to adulthood (Norman & Jordan, 2006).

Assumptions

1. Parents will answer the questions honestly and truthfully.
2. The perceptions of the parents will be good indicators of the objectives being measured.
3. Parents responding are capable of giving accurate responses.

Limitations of the Study

1. Only parents of children from the North Carolina State 4-H Camps were included in this study, therefore, the results can only be applied to this population and not all camps.
2. With the survey instrument used in this study, the responses of the parents are self-reporting; therefore, there is no way to verify the accuracy and truthfulness of the responses.
3. Only the perceptions of parents are being used, no formal evaluation is being conducted.
4. Camp staff at each of the three North Carolina State 4-H camps provided email addresses. These email addresses were derived from the online registration process done by the parents as they registered their youth for camp.
5. As the parents provided only one email address during the registration process, only one parent's perspective was gathered.

Summary

North Carolina has a strong tradition of providing camping opportunities for youth through the Cooperative Extension's Youth Development program, 4-H. The United States

and North Carolina State governments along with some local county governments have recognized the value of the camping experience in positive youth development through the building of life skills necessary for success as adults. 4-H and organized camping both have long traditions of building life skills in youth necessary to be competent and contributing members of society. 4-H recognizes camping as one of its four primary delivery modes for youth development. The camping industry has positioned itself as a worthy opportunity to build positive life skills in youth and has a body in the American Camp Association (ACA) capable of ensuring the needs of the youth are met in a safe and competent manner. With the pairing of 4-H and camping, youth have an opportunity to experience many things that are not learned in the traditional classroom setting but are just as necessary for positive growth. With all of these things noted and realizing that the North Carolina State 4-H Camps are taxpayer funded, it is necessary to see how the parents, taxpayers, perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps regarding building targeted life skills and their expectations of the experience while there.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Review of Related Research

There are many models utilized in the pursuit of positive youth development, however the one that seems to be very appropriate for many 4-H programs and certainly for the North Carolina State 4-H Camps is Dr. Patricia Hendricks' (1996) Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model. Dr. Hendricks developed this program through her work with Iowa State University Extension.

Theoretical Rationale

The Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model cleverly divides life skills into the four categories of the 4-H program, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, and then divides them again into eight subcategories. Each subcategory then lists out specific life skills that help build that particular competency. Oklahoma State Extension defines a skill “as a learned ability to do something well” and a life skill as “the way one applies learned skills to real life situations” (Oklahoma 4-H, n.d.). Dr. Hendricks (1996) says life skills are “those skills that help an individual to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life.” The North Carolina State 4-H Camps, through experiential learning, strive to build life skills in the youth attending as they develop their curriculum. As discussed earlier, experiential learning has a long history of success in camping and through the use of the Targeting Life Skills Model sets up a great framework for the North Carolina State 4-H Camps as they strive to meet their goals and objectives in youth development.

Paralleling the mission of 4-H, the goal of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps is to help youth develop essential life skills necessary for success as both youth and adults through planned experiential learning activities. This is intended to meet important societal needs in

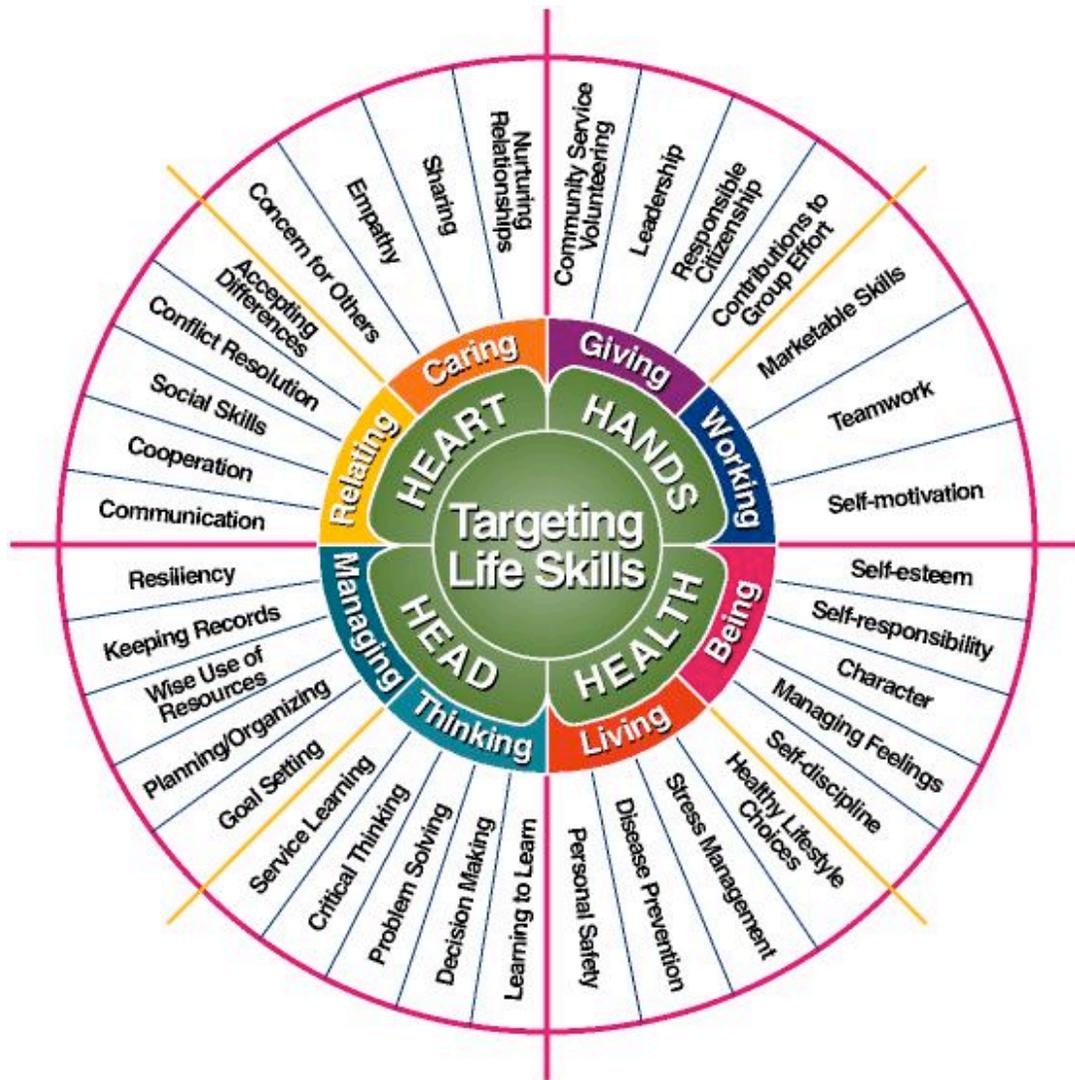
youth development. According to Pittman (1991) positive youth development programs focus on five basic competency areas:

1. Health and Physical Competence – Good current health status plus evidence of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that will ensure future good health.
2. Personal and Social Competence – Skills for understanding self and having self-discipline; working with others, communicating, cooperating, negotiating, and building relationships; coping, adapting, and being responsible; and finally, making good judgments, evaluating, making decisions, and problem-solving.
3. Cognitive and Creative Competence – Useful knowledge and abilities to appreciate and participate in areas of creative expression for thinking, seeing, feeling, tasting, and hearing.
4. Vocational Competence – Understanding and awareness of life planning and career choices, leisure and work options, and steps to act on those choices.
5. Citizenship Competence – Understanding of personal values, moral and ethical decision-making, and participation in public efforts of citizenship that contribute to the community and the nation.

Hendricks (1996) combines two of Pittman's competencies to form the four categories of her Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model and subsequent eight subcategories as follows:

1. Head: Cognitive and Creative Competency becomes Thinking and Managing.
2. Heart: Personal and Social Competency becomes Relating and Caring.
3. Hands: Vocational and Citizenship Competency becomes Giving and Working.
4. Health: Health and Physical Competency becomes Living and Being.

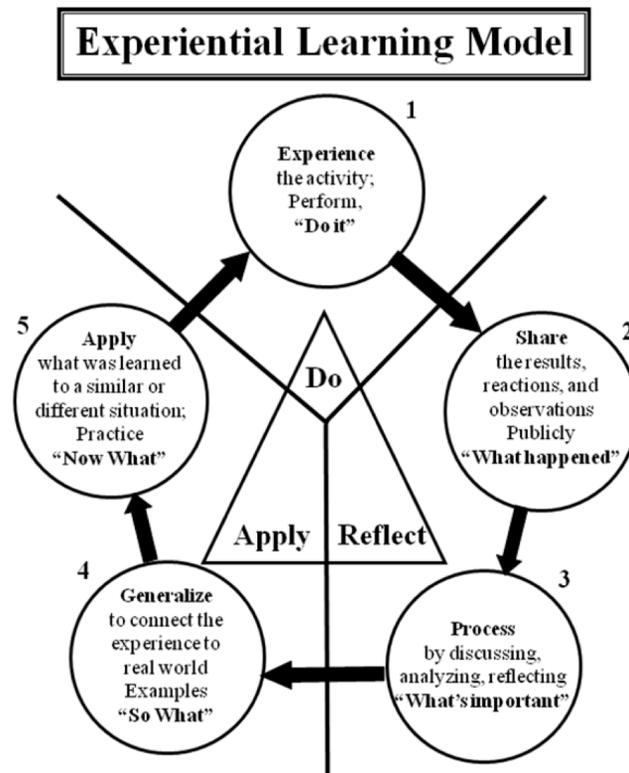
The following graphic shows the specific skills that lead to mastery in each of these areas according to the Targeting Life Skills Model and that help form the framework for youth development at the North Carolina State 4-H Camps.



(Reprinted with permission. Hendricks, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension, 1996)

Figure 1: Targeting Life Skills Model

In order to grasp the complete picture, a discussion of experiential learning is necessary and how it ties into life skill development. John Dewey (1938), said learning experientially occurs when a person is part of an activity, looks back and evaluates it, decides what was useful or important to remember and uses this information to perform another task. 4-H promotes the five steps of the experiential learning theory, which are: 1.) Experience 2.) Share 3.) Process 4.) Generalize 5.) Apply. The following graphic shows how 4-H teaches the experiential learning theory.



(Reprinted with permission. Pfeiffer, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1983)

Figure 2: Experiential Learning Model

According to the 4-H program, the first step involves the experience which encourages the learner to learn by doing without being shown or told how by the instructor. This focuses the attention on the learner and not the instructor. The next step, share, encourages the learner to reflect on what they did and gets them talking, leading to the third step, process. During this step, thought-provoking questioning is used to generate discussion on the most important aspects of the project skill and the life skill. The next step, generalize, gets deeper and more personal by asking questions about what the activity means to the youth themselves. The last step is apply, where youth can tell about what they learned and how they can apply this to other situations they will face in life. Each of these steps combined help to build subject matter competency as well as developing essential life skills necessary for positive youth development (National 4-H, n.d.). When teaching life skill development experientially using the framework set forth by the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model in a camp setting, positive youth development has potential to occur creating youth who are contributing members of our society.

Literature Review

History of 4-H. According to Borden, Perkins, and Hawkey (2014) the 4-H program within the Cooperative Extension Service is more than 100 years old. It was created in the late 1890's and early 1900's because of a need for better agricultural education. With a far-reaching impact, it boasts of more than 60 million alumni serving rural/urban/suburban areas throughout America (National 4-H, n.d.). Throughout the years it has adapted to necessary changes to meet the challenges of a changing diversity in a different environment, but still maintains its primary focus as a youth serving organization.

The 4-H motto, “To Make the Best Better,” emphasizes the approach of hands-on experiences, always evolving and changing to meet the needs of the youth being served. One of the first key ideas was to transfer learning from young participants to adults. This began what was referred to originally as Corn Clubs and evolving today in different projects to meet the needs of youth and families living in the 21st Century (Borden et al., 2014).

Over the years there have been many changes to the 4-H program. Horn, Flanagan, and Thomson (1998) said studying the past can help provide important insights that can be used in developing future programs. In the early 1900’s, Corn Clubs were formed to offer new corn planting techniques, discovering that youth were more likely to adopt new ideas than their parents. With parental involvement in club work, it was easier to convince the parents to try new practices. Therefore, club work became the foundation of the 4-H program with school programs as a fundamental model to provide many opportunities and activities for 4-H’ers to apply newly acquired skills.

The 4-H mission and purpose became more clearly defined with the 4-H emblem, pledge, and motto focused then as today on individual growth and development of skills acquired through 4-H participation in project clubs. Through the offer of various projects, club members can develop life skills to prepare them as adults (National 4-H, n.d.).

Many of the early clubs were co-ed unless separated by the club member’s selection of projects. For example, Corn Clubs were more popular with boys and Tomato Canning projects with girls. The practice of having volunteers lead 4-H clubs continues today with leaders providing a mentoring role. Today many leaders were former 4-H members.

Horn et al. (1998) go on to say that since the beginning, camping has also been an integral part of the 4-H program. As early as 1907, records indicate a camp for boys in Missouri with other states soon holding camp also.

Funds to support the 4-H program have come from both government and private sources. Although a part of the Cooperative Extension system from its inception, a 1928 law formally recognized the 4-H program enhancing its funding. Funding support is continuously explored to provide for scholarships and awards programs.

One of the most dramatic changes to 4-H came in its response to world wars to meet the challenge of social and historical events. Club work was partially abandoned to permit its members to devote their time to raising food as part of the war effort in both World Wars. More county agents were hired with a rapid increase in the number of 4-H clubs. Younger 4-H members assumed additional responsibilities, assisting in increasing agricultural production. Proudly, 4-H members claimed the production of enough food to feed a million men serving in the armed forces. The past history of the 4-H show it is an important resource especially during times of great need. Still true to its original mission, it shows the ability to make necessary changes to meet new challenges that arise (Horn et al., 1998).

In the second of their two-part series on the history of 4-H, Horn, Flanagan, and Thomson (1999) said today there are probably few 4-H Corn Clubs with the many changes experienced in the past by the 4-H program. The challenge for the future is to adapt to the changing needs of youth while maintaining the 4-H mission and tradition.

4-H membership peaked in 1974 with 7.5 million. At that time almost two-thirds of the members came from farm or rural areas. By 1994, membership dropped by almost 2

million with about one-half of its members from farm or rural areas. This occurred during a period when the number of family farms declined, changing the prime potential of traditional membership (National 4-H, n.d.).

Horn et al. (1999) go on to say the shift to an urban population needs to be reflected in the activities offered for urban youth whose roots are not in agriculture or rural areas. This provides a major challenge to ways to adapt to a changing population with different experiences and expectations. Another change is the integration of clubs. Creative ways to be inclusive and encouraging to all youth, even those with physical and learning disabilities, needs to be a priority in the 4-H program.

Developing Life Skills. In their study of the Texas 4-H program, Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) found that today's teenagers are at high-risk of participation in many unfavorable activities such as drug use and delinquency that might make them a burden to society instead of contributors. With almost one-third failing to graduate from high school, they lack the necessary skills to lead productive lives. Therefore, it is imperative that programs such as 4-H provide youth programming to develop skills for making more responsible decisions. It has been shown that skills and attitudes developed during youth affect adulthood positively. This study of the 4-H programming in Texas shows that the goal of youth preparation for adulthood is possible. Parent-child interactions offer great opportunities to achieve goals set by 4-H participation and guidance (Boyd et al., 1992).

Programs such as 4-H continue to focus on the effectiveness of leadership life skill training. It is generally viewed that the participation in a variety of activities in youth programs such as public speaking enhances later adult skills. A study by Seevers and

Dormody (1995) in the three states of Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico sought to determine the extent to which the senior 4-H members participate in the leadership life skill training involving the planning, implementation, and evaluation of leadership activities. Results indicate the greatest involvement was in implementation, followed by evaluation activities. A smaller percentage were involved in the actual planning leadership activities. The study suggests that 4-H members are “doers” rather than planners or evaluators of the leadership activities and that adult leaders of 4-H programs are perhaps not providing youth with enough opportunities in the total leadership process. Shared authority needs to be a future step to insure more effectiveness of the leadership training (Seevers and Dormody, 1995).

Traditional 4-H programs in Idaho include development of animal industry knowledge as a means of recognition of beneficial life skills toward job preparedness. Nash and Sant (2005) found in their study of Idaho 4-H alumni that their 4-H judging experiences positively affected their personal success by having development of life skills in areas such as communication, decision-making, problem solving, self-discipline, self-motivation, teamwork, and organization. Having to orally defend their decisions strengthened their thought processes and critical thinking skills and reinforced public speaking skills. Alumni reported the program helped them to be successful in life and that big dreams lead to big achievement. The 4-H program showed it contains important factors for the alumni in career preparation.

Studies indicate that developing life skills is essential to positive youth development and a successful future. Research has also established that positive life skill development can

be achieved through experiential learning in a camping program. The National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (2011) is a collaborative of researchers, specialists, and Extension educators from many states across the country whose purpose is to study and disseminate the impact of the 4-H camping experience by developing and implementing evaluation and program planning strategies. The Consortium has developed a tool kit to assist in planning and evaluating the 4-H camping program and provide a resource for Extension faculty, camp directors, and volunteers. One of its components includes a questionnaire that measures youth life skills outcomes of 4-H participation. They have suggested three logic models, which provide a common approach for integrating planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting so that assessments of current programs can lead to desired outcomes resulting from the camping experience. The three logic models are independent of each other, allowing focus on what corresponds to one's program. The common long-term outcome between all three models is that parents recognize camp as an environment for positive youth development.

Duerden and Witt (2011) noted that there is a need for more standardized measures of youth development programs. Studies of life skills in particular are lacking. Life skills and related sub-domains such as leadership or communication are loosely defined making it difficult to compare findings across studies. With such a large area of domains that could be included under the category of life skills, studies are needed to prioritize life skills domains. An online survey was sent to Program Directors of Children, Youth and Families At-Risk (CYFAR) to identify their program's targeted outcomes and the instruments used to measure the outcomes. The Targeting Life Skills Model was used from which the thirty-five life

skills were trimmed to ten life skills. These were the ones which respondents would like to see more valid and reliable measurements developed. Among the top life skills for which measurement was desired were leadership, communication, self-esteem, and responsible citizenship. Results did not mean that the respondents believed these are the most important life skills, but that these life skills needed more measurement refinement. Duerden et al. (2011) decided future research is needed before making this conclusion.

From the Developing Responsible Youth Program Guide (2010) in North Carolina 4-H we learn that developing lasting life skills becomes more important because changing patterns of parental involvement have weakened the availability of former supports previously available to children. There is more family mobility, social networking, larger heterogeneous schools, changing neighborhoods, and media themes focused on violence and promiscuity. 4-H life skills can help youth reach their full potential as the world changes with globalization and the persistent inequality between the rich and the poor. The ability to survive in this new world requires learning and adaptation to recent sophisticated technologies. It is imperative for parents to be aware of these changes and to seek ways from schools and other routes, such as 4-H, to assist in the mastery of the necessary skills.

In a 4-H beef project in Texas, parents were asked to assess the perceived life skill development of their children ages 8 – 19 and who were in grades 3 – 12. Some of the life skills addressed were: decision making, ability to relate to others, develop and maintain records, accepting responsibility, build positive self-esteem, self-motivation, develop organizational skills, problem solve, develop oral communication skills, setting goals, develop self-discipline, and teamwork. Parents did suggest that life skills were improved and

that there is a positive relationship between years of participation and life skill development. The results indicated that the following life skills were being enhanced: accepting responsibility, setting goals, develop self-discipline, self-motivation, build positive self-esteem, and decision-making (Boleman, Cummings, & Briers, 2004).

Garton, Miltenberger, and Pruett (2007) said the Targeting Life Skills Model has provided an important guide to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating 4-H youth development programs. However, few have studied the leadership and life skills taught through 4-H camps. Using this model, West Virginia Extension educators conducted an extensive study of the West Virginia 4-H camp program, testing whether 4-H youth gained positive life skills and leadership skills from their camp experiences. Their surveys measured four areas involving the camp learning environment including overall camp experience, targeted life skills, retrospective pre-testing of leadership skills, and camper demographics. The questions were organized around nine life skills categories. The conclusion was that 4-H camp activities appear to affect the life skills of campers positively. Two of the main results showed that campers developed more social skills to help them make friends and they became more independent with greater leadership qualities. Some of the implications for Extension are that there is a need for camp curriculums focused on specific life skills and that in a comprehensive 4-H program, camp supports the development of life skills in a positive way. Understanding what life skills are being developed could lead to stronger programs and better utilization of Extension resources.

According to Fox, Schroeder, and Lodl (2003) studies indicate that activities young people have in their early adolescence often provide experiences that influence their

personalities and life skills, thus providing many opportunities for a positive impact on attitudes that lead into adulthood. Such a foundation often helps create a successful, productive life, if they have developed skills of leadership and interaction with others. Fox et al. (2003) go on to say that to evaluate the benefits of these activities is a primary aim of funders of 4-H programs who want to ensure that programs have a positive impact on development. Therefore, it is important to be able to measure and document the activities and the results on development. Their study of 4-H alumni was designed to evaluate the value or degree of perceived life skills gained through 4-H club participation. Over 58% of the participants stated that the development of responsibility was a primary influence of 4-H club involvement. In addition, the study reported 4-H club involvement was a primary influence on technical life skill development useful in future occupations. The study reinforced the need for a positive impact of 4-H participation and the outcome documented with the results reported to decision-makers, parents, funders, and future 4-H members.

Camping Programs. According to Baughman, Garst, and Fuhrman (2009) a camp program evaluation is essential to the accomplishment of desired outcomes and improvement of the quality of camp experiences. The involvement of parents is a critical component of the evaluation process. Some primary research questions include whether campers gain life skills across multiple camps/years and whether parents attribute the youth life skill behavior changes to their 4-H camping experiences. Studies from parent surveys of Virginia 4-H education centers in 2001, 2004, and 2007 were done to determine if life skills learned at camp affected behavior changes following their child's camp experience over a period of time. Results of the parental data provide evidence of consistency in the child's life skills

attainment overall with the greatest life skills growth in shares work responsibilities and takes care of his/her own things.

Camping experiences have long been recognized as promoting many forms of growth and developing multiple life skills. Bruce and Garst (2003) studied the Virginia 4-H camping program where they conducted a standardized camping outcome evaluation in 1995 and 1998 using perceptions of parents/guardians to identify life skills benefits as a result of 4-H camp participation. Parents/guardians were asked to rate their child both before and after camp. The results show Virginia 4-H camping participation positively affects the development of immediate and short-term life skill behavior with the greatest benefits in accepting personal responsibility, sharing work responsibility, and taking initiative on their own.

From a parent/guardian's perspective, Hedrick, Homan, and Dick (2009) said the results of their research project of Ohio 4-H camps showed youth gained multiple benefits from 4-H camp experiences, specifically in areas of leadership, character development, self-esteem, decision-making skills, independent living skills, and citizenship. The study also reflected the degree to which improvements were determined on a camper's gender, years of camp experience, and age. While campers indicated their involvement helped with life skills in making new friends, parents/guardians identified greater gains in their children in the areas of assuming responsibility for actions, work responsibility, and greater initiative as a self-starter (Bruce & Garst, 2003). According to Hedrick et al. (2009), of the results, almost all, 88%, of the surveys, were completed by the child's mother. Also, 64% of the respondents sent a female camper and 44% had attended camp for three years or more. Also,

parents/guardians of female campers reported their children developed higher levels of independent living skills through 4-H camping than did parents/guardians of male campers. 70% indicated their children increased self-esteem in a high to very high degree, with female campers developing higher levels than male campers. According to the perceptions of parents/guardians, the 4-H camping experience also contributed more to social skills development in female campers than in male campers, with 75 % of parents/guardians indicating social skills development to a high or very high degree. These parents/guardians also said girls had higher levels of positive character development, with 65% of them reporting their children improved to a high or very high degree (Hedrick et al., 2009).

Studies were presented at the 2005 Camp Research Symposium held at the American Camp Association National Conference to assess factors that motivate parents to allow their children's participation in summer camp programs. They focused on the reason why a campsite was selected as well as the camper benefits that were the most important to parents. With increased competition for the camp industry, camp administrators need to ascertain what factors motivate parents into sending their children to summer camp as well as what are the benefits and future priorities of summer camp. Such studies attempt to create a shared vision to camp administrators, parents, and campers, shape marketing and recruitment efforts, and increase a positive parental perception of the effectiveness of the 4-H program in teaching life skills (Powell, 2006).

In a study of Missouri 4-H camps, Klem and Nicholson (2008) found that both parents and youth agreed strongly that 4-H experiences played a major role in the development of life skills. Parents perceived the domain of social skills was the most

improved area whereas the campers reported the area of teamwork skills most improved. Parents also agreed that self-confidence was a strongly improved area. Approximately 94% of parents agreed they were glad their child had attended the 4-H camp. This study again reinforces the opinion of parents that the 4-H camp experience increases life skills and that camp is more than just fun and games around campfires.

A survey of 3395 families whose child participated in summer camp for at least a week indicated significant positive gains, which maintained or showed more growth six months later (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). This study confirms the need for future research into evidence that confirms the potential power of camp experiences that enhance positive youth development. It also adds credibility to the need for national discussions on the value of camp experiences that increase positive youth development. Parent reports rated overall positive growth in behavior changes including a better development of social skills, independence, and a willingness to try new things. Some 70% of parents reported that after camp their child was more confident and showed greater self-esteem. The results of this study indicate that camps can foster a range of positive outcomes. This study also reinforces the strengths of camp as an educational experience that leads to greater personal development (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007).

Offering supports and opportunities for camp participants is an effective way to target positive youth development according to Garst, Browne, and Bialeschki (2011). Supports involve the people and programs that create an inclusive atmosphere while giving the youth experiences that test new knowledge and skills. Results of questionnaires indicate that the greatest strength of organized camp experiences was a supportive relationship between youth

and adult staff. Group living with peers and caring adults creates a sense of belonging and connectedness and appears to have a positive impact on transition into adulthood.

Parental Perceptions of Youth Programs. Maass, Wilken, Jordan, Culen, and Place (2006) said that long-term effects of 4-H participation can be seen by 4-H alumni who later become adults/parents and who attribute 4-H life skill achievement as having a positive impact on their own lives. Self-responsibility, self-discipline, teamwork, and cooperation were among the highest ranked life skills with public speaking ranking as the number one most desirable life skill developed. According to Pennington and Edwards (2006) life skills acquired from 4-H participation enable youth to prepare for later adult roles needed in leadership and decision-making. Participation and involvement as youth have long term impact on communities and the nation resulting in more community service and volunteering as adults.

The focus of a study by Ferrari, Hogue, and Scheer (2004) was to determine parents' perceptions of 4-H involvement in the development of their child's life skills. The areas of social skills, learning to learn, and personal development were viewed by parents as particularly important. Primary questions were how successful are 4-H programs in developing these life skills. Identifying parents' definition and perception of life skills was the first objective. Surprisingly, only half had any concept of life skills or understood the role life skills played in a child's development. After discussion, parents addressed the particular benefits they saw with a need for enhancing life skills of independence and interaction with others as especially important in their child's development. Parents described their perception of activities that facilitated personal growth, questioning the value

of some activities such as craft projects, while favoring projects in self-direction and self-care.

A study by Ramey and Krasnor (2012) focusing on the relationship between structured youth activities and positive youth development pointed out the need of youth to be internally motivated and to feel ownership of their lives and activities. Adults can support the youth's potential by giving the youth opportunities to develop real-world goals and projects to learn skills that will sustain their energy and attention. Structured activities that involve supportive relationships lead to expansive development of talents and a sense of purpose in life. Opportunities for planning and leadership, more parental support, and positive peer and adult role models appear to foster greater positive youth development. However, occasionally organized activity participation leads to stress and parental pressure. It is important to note that even negative experiences can sometimes have positive developmental effects by strengthening the youth's internal motivation and helping prepare for future challenges.

Summary

Studies show that developing life skills are important to positive youth development and a successful future. Research has also shown that positive life skill development can be achieved through experiential learning in a camping program such as the North Carolina State 4-H Camps. Having a goal in camp programs is important. The goal of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps is to help youth develop essential life skills necessary for success as adults through planned experiential learning activities. Through the use of the Targeting

Life Skills Model in a camp setting, positive youth development has potential to occur creating youth who are contributing members of our society.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Purpose of the Study

Camping has been established as one of the primary delivery modes for 4-H and is recognized as a strong way to promote youth development and build life skills needed for youth to be positively contributing members as adults to society. However, there is a question as to whether parents and guardians of 4-H youth perceive the real value of camping. The purpose of this study was to determine how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps in building targeted life skills of the participants and parents' expectations of the experience for their children while there.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the effect of the camp experience in the life skills development of the campers as perceived by the parents.
2. To determine if parents value the impact the 4-H camps had on building life skills of their children.
3. To ascertain why parents send their children to 4-H camps.
4. To determine needed improvements for camps to meet the expectations of parents.

Type of Research

This was a descriptive survey research study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) descriptive research can be defined as research used “to describe existing conditions without analyzing relationships among variables” (p. G-2). They define survey research as

“an attempt to obtain data from members of a population to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables” (p. G-8). This study used descriptive statistics for summarizing data, which enables the ability to report many types of measurements in simple and understandable formats. Descriptive statistics are “statistics such as averages and measures of spread, used to suppress the detail in data files and to condense and summarize the data to make facts more visible” (Alreck & Settle, 2004, p. 440).

Population

This was a census study conducted with the target population of parents of youth that attended North Carolina State 4-H camps during the summer of 2013. Some of the campers may have attended more than one camp during this summer. However, duplications have been avoided and each parent received only one survey for each child attending regardless of how many times the child attended 4-H camps in 2013. The study population included a total of 675 parents of the children camping in the summer of 2013.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was designed by the researcher using some of the instruments developed by the American Camp Association (2013) as well as from Baughman, Garst, and Fuhrman (2009). The instrument contained some dichotomous questions, some open-ended questions, and some Likert-scaled questions. The design for the questions in the instrument was based on Hendricks (1996) Targeting Life Skills Model, which included 35 life skills. A meeting was held with the North Carolina State leadership of the 4-H camping program and with the North Carolina State 4-H Camp Directors where it

was determined that there were 16 of the 35 life skills that should be learned at camp that could be used to determine the overall effectiveness of the 4-H Camping program using the Targeting Life Skills Model. The following diagram shows the thirty-two constructs used to determine the basic competency in each of the four major categories of the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Eight questions were used for each category.

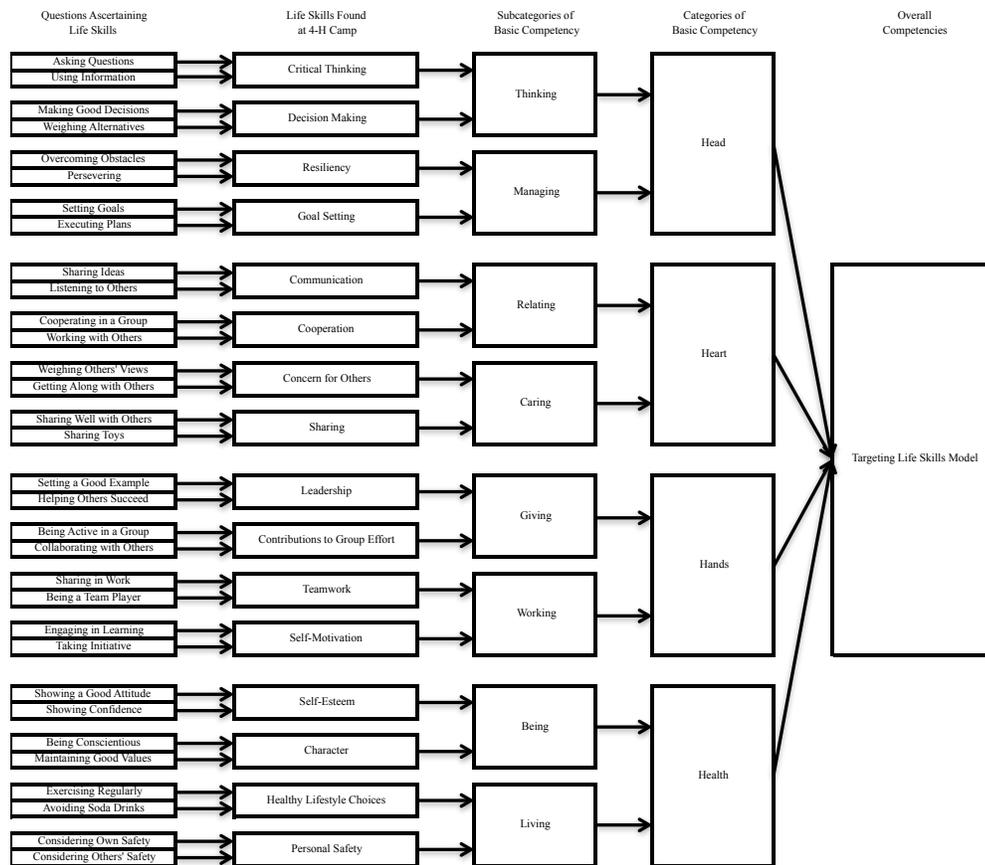


Figure 3: Summary of Questions 12 and 13

Content validity is to what degree an instrument logically seems to measure an intended variable. (Fraenkel & Walden, 2009) The researcher used a panel of experts consisting of faculty at North Carolina State University along with camping experts from the American Camp Association to review the instrument.

Reliability is the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures whatever the instrument measures over time. (Fraenkel & Walden, 2009) To establish reliability, the instrument was pilot tested with 40 parents of campers from 2012 that attended the 4-H & Youth Day Camp in Halifax, NC. These were chosen so as not to duplicate any parents in the actual survey. 40 questionnaires were sent out with 25 being completed for a 62% response rate.

A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to test for internal consistency of the instrument. This statistic is an indication of the extent to which respondents to the instrument who answer a question one way will respond to another related question the same way. (Fraenkel & Walden, 2009) The overall scale for assessing the youth's life skill development was determined to be reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this instrument of .97.

Data Collection

Data were collected using the Internet survey process outlined by Dillman (2000). An email was sent to the parents prior to the actual questionnaire giving them notice that it would be coming. Next, the survey web link was emailed to the participants with a cover letter explaining the study. This study used the Survey Monkey online survey service for collecting data. In addition to explaining the importance of the study, the cover letter also addressed the length of time it should take to complete the questionnaire, why the study was

being conducted, and closed with an appreciation for participation. The email addresses for each participant was tracked so that follow-ups could be made with non-respondents. Non-respondents were contacted by email two weeks after the original email encouraging participation in the study. Another copy of the questionnaire link was emailed to these non-respondents. Three more follow-up emails with links to the study were sent after this to any remaining non-respondents.

Out of the 675 parents who received the online survey through Survey Monkey, 385 responded to the survey for a 57% response rate. According to Linder, Murphy, Briers (2001) when less than an 85% response rate is attained, it is recommended that procedures for handling non-response error be utilized. In this study, early and late respondents were compared to control for non-response error and no difference was found between the two groups. Early respondents were those who responded prior to the last two reminders, which were sent out to non-respondents. Late respondents were all those who responded after the last two reminders were sent. Since there was not any significant difference between the early and late respondents, the findings of this research can be generalizable to the entire population of this study.

Data Analysis

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program 21. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Even though this study was conducted with the target population, this study received only a 57% response rate. Therefore, the respondents were considered as a sample for analysis and the paired sample t-

test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean values of parental perceptions of camping children's life skills before and after camp.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps in building targeted life skills of the participants and parents' expectations of the experience for their children while there. This was a descriptive survey research study conducted with the target population of parents of youth that attended 4-H camp during the summer of 2013. After the questionnaire was designed, data were collected using the Internet survey process outlined by Dillman (2000). These data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program 21 and utilized descriptive statistics to summarize findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

The instrument used in this study contained some dichotomous questions, some open-ended questions, and some Likert-scaled questions. Participants were also asked a series of Likert-scaled questions used to determine the camper's behavior before and after camp. This section of the survey included thirty-two constructs with two different constructs each pertaining to sixteen of the thirty-five different life skills that could be learned at camp using the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model. This meant that two life skills were studied for each of the eight different subcategories of the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model and four life skills were studied for each of the four basic competency areas Hendricks (1996) used in this model equating to eight questions for each of the four basic categories of the Targeting Life Skills Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Participants' responses to each of these eight questions were aggregated to get the value for the considering basic category of the Targeting Life Skills Model. The aggregated value on this scale ranged from 8 being very low life skills to 40 being very high life skills as it related to the measuring basic categories, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Open-ended questions were also analyzed to look for any emerging themes, most especially any related to life skills. The demographic information provided by the respondents is shown in the following tables.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants' Children by Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Male	50.2	160
Female	49.8	159

From Table 1, it is shown that the campers were about evenly split between male and female with 50.20% male campers and 49.80% female campers.

Table 2 shows that most of the camper population was white with a frequency of 225 yielding 70.50% of the camper population. The next highest frequency was 60 with 18.80% of the population being black. American Indian had a frequency of 10 campers making up 3.10% of the camper population. Asian and Hispanic both had 5 campers making up 1.60% each in the camper population.

Table 2

Distribution of Participants' Children by Race

<i>Race</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
White	70.5	225
Black	18.8	60
American Indian	3.1	10
Asian	1.6	5
Hispanic	1.6	5
Other	4.4	14

With a mean of 11.3 and a standard deviation of 1.85, Table 3 shows the ages of the campers. Ages 8 – 14 are the most common ages for campers to attend 4-H Camp. Age 11 has the highest frequency with 69 campers making up 17.90% of the total population. Age 12 is the second highest frequency with 62 campers making up 16.10% of the population. And age 10 had another significant number with a frequency of 51 campers making up 13.20% of the total population.

Table 3

Participants' Children's Age

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
5	.3	1
6	.3	1
8	4.7	18
9	8.5	33
10	13.2	51
11	17.9	69
12	16.1	62
13	11.1	43
14	4.4	17
15	1.8	7
16	1.3	5
17	.3	1

Table 4

Distribution of Respondents by their Relationship to the Child who Participated in the Summer Camp

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Mother	86.8	277
Father	8.5	27
Grandmother	2.2	7
Legal Guardian	.6	2
Aunt	.3	1
Other	1.6	5

Table 4 shows the relationship of the respondent to the campers that attended the North Carolina State 4-H summer camps. Of the total respondents, Mothers made up the majority of the population of respondents with a frequency of 277 totaling 86.80%. Fathers came in next with a frequency of 27 yielding 8.50% of the respondent population.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To determine the effect of the camp experience in the life skills development of the campers as perceived by the parents.
2. To determine if parents value the impact the 4-H camps had on building life skills of their children.
3. To ascertain why parents send their children to 4-H camps.
4. To determine needed improvements for camps to meet the expectations of parents.

The rest of this chapter presents all the other findings from this study. The findings are organized according to the objectives of this study listed above.

Objective 1: To determine the effect of the camp experience in the life skills development of the campers as perceived by the parents.

Figure 3 in Chapter 3 is an illustration of the layout of the 32 items used to make this determination. Participants were asked to rate 32 behaviors they observed in their child before attending camp and then asked to rate those same behaviors after their child completed the camp. Eight items with a 5-point Likert-scale were used to determine perceived life skills for each of the four basic categories of the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Responses to each of the eight items were aggregated to calculate the perceived life skills as it related to the measuring four basic categories, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. The aggregated value on this scale ranged from 8 being very low life skills to 40 being very high life skills.

Table 5 compares the respondent's perceived life skills of participating campers before and after completing the camp program.

Table 5

Comparison of the Four Basic Categories of the TLS Model Before and After Camp

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>		
Head	325	28.24	31.40	17.22	.001
Heart	325	30.47	32.70	13.57	.001
Hands	325	29.38	32.13	15.19	.001
Health	325	29.98	32.36	14.96	.001

Note. Scale ranges from 8= very low level of skills to 40=very high level of skills.

From Table 5, one can see the mean values of children's life skills related to the four basic categories of the Targeting Life Skills Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, are significantly improved after their participation in the camp program as perceived by their parents. The greatest improvement was in the Head category followed by Hands and then Health. The lowest improvement was observed in the Heart category.

Table 6 depicts the overall results for all four categories combined again using the paired samples t-test comparing the overall results before attending camp and after attending camp.

Table 6

Overall Values for the Four Basic Categories of the TLS Model

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>		
Overall	325	118.03	128.59	17.33	.001

Note. Scale ranges from 32= very low level of skills to 160=very high level of skills.

Table 6 shows responses to 32 items on the 5-point Likert scale were aggregated to calculate the score for the overall life skill development. The value on the aggregated scale can range from 32=very low life skills to 160=very high life skills. Findings confirm that the children’s overall life skills significantly improved after participating in the camp program as perceived by their parents.

Objective 2: To determine if parents value the impact the 4-H camps had on building life skills of their children.

Table 7 shows that 99% of the respondents indicated that the child they sent to camp did share his/her experiences with them when their child returned home. Only 1% of the campers failed to do this.

Table 7

Distribution of Campers Sharing their Experience with Parents

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Yes	99.0	381
No	1.0	4

From Table 8 it can be seen that 73.30% of the respondents rated the experience that their camper had as very good for a frequency of 283 and 21.60% rated their experience as good with a frequency of 83. Sixteen respondents totaling 4.20% rated their camper's overall camp experience as fair and 2 respondents totaling 0.50% rated their experience as poor.

Table 8

Distribution of Respondents by their Rating of Children's Overall Camping Experience

<i>Rating</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Very Good	73.7	283
Good	21.6	83
Fair	4.2	16
Poor	.5	2

As shown in Table 9, 82.10% of the respondents said they would send their child to camp again. Of the respondents, 14.50% said maybe and 3.40% said they would not send their child to camp again.

Table 9

Distribution of Respondents by their Response to Sending Child to Camp Again Next Year

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Yes	82.1	316
Maybe	14.5	56
No	3.4	13

In response to would the survey participants recommend summer camp to others, Table 10 shows that 95.10% of the respondents said they would. Sixteen respondents indicated they might do. Three of the survey participants said they would not recommend summer camp to others.

Table 10

Response to Recommending Camp to Others

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Yes	95.1	366
Maybe	4.2	16
No	.8	3

When the survey respondents were asked how much value they put on the impact summer camp had on building life skills, Table 11 shows 42.30% of the respondents said they valued it very much. 34.00% said they put much value on it while 13.50% said they were neutral. Only 9.10% of the respondents said they valued the impact camp had on building life skills as somewhat while 1.00% said none.

Table 11

Value Respondents put on the Impact Camp had on Building Life Skills

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Very Much	42.3	163
Much	34.0	131
Neutral	13.5	52
Somewhat	9.1	35
None	1.0	4

From the open-ended question asking respondents about what changes they saw in their child as a result of their summer camp experience, Table 12 shows eight themes that emerged from this query from the 385 respondents. Eighty-two survey respondents, or 21%, said that going to camp helped their child to build confidence. One parent said “my child came back with more confidence and had a new found level of responsibility.” Another said “she is more confident to do new things away from the family.” Sixty-six respondents, or 17%, said their camper was more independent. A parent commented about her child saying “she has become more independent in every aspect from self care to taking initiative.” Another response was that their child made new friends with 40 respondents stating this totaling 10.00% of the survey participants. Other responses included increased social skills with 21 respondents totaling 5.00% of those surveyed. Enjoyed the outdoors more garnered 10 respondents for 2.00% of the total and tied at that same rate was higher self-esteem. An increase in team building and more outgoing was reported by 7 respondents.

Table 12

Respondent’s Response to Observed Changes in Campers

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Built Confidence	21.0	82
More Independent	17.0	66
Made New Friends	10.0	40
Increased Social Skills	5.0	21
Enjoyed the Outdoors More	2.0	10
Higher Self-Esteem	2.0	10
Increased Team Building	1.0	7
More Outgoing	1.0	7

When given the open-ended opportunity to respond to what would the respondent say to other parents or family members about how camp influenced their child, five definitive themes found in Table 13 came out of the 385 responses. Comments describing camp as a wonderful experience was expressed by 112 respondents totaling 29.00% of the responses. Nineteen percent of the respondents said camp helped teach their child about independence. Seventeen percent of the respondents said camp helped their child build confidence. Twelve percent of the respondents commented that going to camp helped their child make new friends. Only 5.00% of the respondents said that camp helped their child build their social skills.

Table 13

Response to How Would You Describe the Influence of Camp on Your Child

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Wonderful Experience	29.0	112
Independence	19.0	75
Confidence	17.0	67
Made New Friends	12.0	49
Social Skills	5.0	21

Objective 3: To ascertain why parents send their children to 4-H camps.

Table 14 summarizes the responses to why was the child sent to camp. Survey participants were asked to choose their top three choices. Three hundred nineteen responded to this question. Of them, 60.80% chose life skill development as the primary reason they sent their child to summer camp. The next highest response at 58.30% of the respondents

mentioned that they sent their child to camp to try new things. With a frequency of 43.60%, to meet new people garnered the third most chosen response. Being outdoors came in fourth with 34.50% of the respondents. At 33.20%, to have fun was the fifth most chosen response. Table 14 continues with the remaining choices showing both percentages and frequencies.

Table 14

Distribution of Respondents by their Reasons for Sending Children to 4-H Camps

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Life Skill Development	60.8	194
Try New Things	58.3	186
Meet New People	43.6	139
Being Outdoors	34.5	110
Fun	33.2	106
Recreation	26.0	83
Socialize with Friends	13.5	43
Learn about Environment	12.2	39
Learn new Subjects	9.4	30
Field Trips	1.6	5
Babysitter	.9	3

Objective 4: To determine needed improvements for camps to meet the expectations of parents.

To meet this objective, parents were asked three different questions relating to areas that could be improved at camp. One question asked the respondents specifically to tell any changes or improvements they would suggest. The majority of the respondents said nothing to suggest for improvement. This implies that the majority of the respondents are pleased with camps. For instance, a respondent said, “I honestly cannot think of anything that needed

improvement.” Another respondent said, “I cannot think of any, my children enjoyed their experience tremendously.” Still one other said, “The way she described that the program worked was great, I’m not sure I would suggest any changes.”

The only other item that had any consistency in responses was about the food. Five percent of the 385 respondents said that they would like to see better food. Several parents just said “better food.” A few more suggested a “better variety of food.” One said “my daughter complained about the food being awful, especially breakfast.” Beyond these two themes, there was no consistency to the other responses. Most were positive suggestions that encouraged the camp to keep up the good work.

A second question asked respondents to tell what they would like to see their child taught next year. Two hundred fifty-seven responded to this question where the responses fell into seven different identifiable themes. Table 15 shows these identified response themes.

Table 15

Response to What Would You Like your Child Taught next Year

<i>Response</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Do Not Change Anything	64.0	165
Teamwork	9.0	25
Leadership	7.0	20
Outdoor Skills	7.0	20
Archery	3.0	9
Social Skills	3.0	9
Canoeing	3.0	9

Sixty-four percent of the respondents indicated nothing new or not to change anything and that they liked the curriculum as it is already being taught. Twenty-five respondents for 9.00% of the total mentioned teamwork as something they would like for their children to be taught next year. One parent said to “continue to work on socialization and teamwork.” Another said “teamwork, unfortunately it is an important skill with limited opportunities in school” to learn. Twenty respondents for 7.00% of the total responded saying leadership and outdoor skills need to continue to be taught. For example, a respondent said, “continue to teach and expose them to outdoor activities.” Another said “more outdoorsman skills.” One respondent said to “teach leadership and responsibility skills, wildlife skills, safety, and outdoor skills.” The other identified response categories with a frequency of 9 totaling 3.00% of the responses for each theme were canoeing, archery, and social skills.

The third question aimed at addressing this objective asked survey participants if there was anything else they would like to share about their child’s camp experience. One hundred forty-five individuals responded to this open-ended question and most of the responses were positive compliments about the program and how wonderful it was. For instance a parent said, “she loved it.” Several others said it was a positive experience. A major response that came from this question beyond the admiration of the overall program was compliments for the counselors. Fifteen respondents for 10.00% of the responses gave positive remarks for the counselors. For example one parent said, “the counselors were great, it was nice to have diversity and students from other countries and states.” Another said her camper “absolutely adores her counselor every year.” One said “she loved her counselor and hopes to go back to be one some day.”

Summary

The purpose of this study was to see how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps regarding building targeted life skills and their expectations of the experience while there. Findings from this study revealed that positive life skill development can be achieved from the camping experience and that parents recognize and expect this. Using the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, growth was shown in all four of the basic categories, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. These results were further supported by various open-ended questions garnering additional confirmation that the 4-H summer camping experience does provide opportunities for positive youth development.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Camping has been established as one of the primary delivery modes for 4-H and is recognized as a strong way to promote youth development and build life skills needed for youth to be positively contributing members as adults to society. However, there is a question as to whether parents and guardians of 4-H youth perceive the real value of camping. The purpose of this study was to determine how the parents perceive the value of the North Carolina State 4-H Camps in building targeted life skills of the participants and parents' expectations of the experience for their children while there.

Summary of Procedures

This descriptive survey research study was conducted with the target population of parents of youth that attended North Carolina State 4-H camps during the summer of 2013. Some of the campers may have attended more than one camp during this summer, however, duplications have been avoided, therefore the parent received one emailed questionnaire for this study for each child attending regardless of how many times the child attended in 2013. This census study included a total of 675 parents for that summer.

Data were collected using the Internet survey process outlined by Dillman (2000). An email was sent to the parents prior to the actual questionnaire giving them notice that it would be coming. Next, the actual questionnaire link was emailed to the participants along with a cover letter explaining the study. The study was conducted using the online service provider Survey Monkey. In addition to explaining the importance of the study, the cover letter also addressed the length of time it should take to complete the questionnaire, why the study was being conducted, and closed with an appreciation for participation. The email

addresses for each participant was tracked so that follow-ups could be made with non-respondents. Non-respondents were contacted by email two weeks after the original email encouraging participation in the study. Another copy of the questionnaire link was emailed to these non-respondents. Three more follow-up emails with links to the study were sent after this to any remaining non-respondents.

Out of the 675 parents who received the online survey through Survey Monkey, 385 responded to the survey for a 57% response rate. According to Linder, Murphy, Briers (2001) when less than an 85% response rate is attained, it is recommended that procedures for handling non-response error be utilized. In this study, early and late responses were compared to control for non-response error and no difference was found between the two groups. Early responses were those received prior to the last two reminders, which were sent out to non-respondents. Late responses were all those received after the last two reminders were sent. The results of this research are generalizable to the entire population of this study since late respondents are assumed to be typical of non-respondents.

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program 21. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data collected from the parents. Even though this study was conducted with the target population, this study received only a 57% response rate. Therefore, the respondents were considered as a sample for analysis and the paired sample t-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean values of parental perceptions of camping children's life skills before and after camp.

Summary of Findings

Findings from this study revealed that positive life skill development could be achieved from the camping experience. According to parents, their children, whom attended 4-H camp, were able to develop life skills related to the basic categories of the Targeting Life Skills Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. These results were further supported by the responses received for various open-ended questions garnering additional confirmation that the 4-H summer camping experience does provide opportunities for positive youth development.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study have been presented under each of the research objectives.

Objective 1: To determine the effect of the camp experience in the life skills development of the campers as perceived by the parents.

Findings of this study confirmed that parents perceived the North Carolina 4-H summer camp program contributed to improve their camping children's life skills in all four competency areas; Head, Heart, Hands, and Health as described by the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996). The amount of growth in each competency area was similar to each other. The responses went from a little more than about half the time to often over the course of a week, showing positive growth. This was also the case for the overall values when the four competency areas were totaled for an aggregated value. Summer camp, it can be concluded from parent's perceptions, is a great place to advance life skill development in children. According to the literature, a camp program evaluation is essential to the

accomplishment of desired outcomes and improvement of the quality of camp experiences and the involvement of parents is a critical component of the evaluation process (Baughman et al., 2009). Hedrick et al. (2009) said youth at 4-H camps gained multiple benefits from 4-H camp experiences, specifically in areas of leadership, character development, self-esteem, decision-making skills, independent living skills, and citizenship.

Objective 2: To determine if parents value the impact the 4-H camps had on building life skills of their children.

In this study, 99% of the parents said their child shared their camp experience with them. Over 95% of the survey participants rated the overall camp experience as good or very good and over 82% would send their child to camp again next year. When asked specifically about how much value the respondents put on the impact camp had on building life skills, over 76% said much or very much, the top two ratings. Also, nearly 30% of the respondents said camp was a wonderful experience when asked to describe the influence camp had on their child. These findings lead to conclude that the parents do value the impact the camp had on building life skills in their child.

According to Powell (2006) studies were presented at a Camp Research Symposium held in 2005 at the American Camp Association National Conference to assess factors that motivate parents to allow their children's participation in summer camp programs. Such studies attempt to create a shared vision to camp administrators, parents, and campers, shape marketing and recruitment efforts, and increase a positive parental perception of the effectiveness of the 4-H program in teaching life skills. Bruce and Garst (2003), using perceptions of parents/guardians to identify life skills benefits, found that parents in rating

their child both before and after camp felt 4-H camping positively affects the development of immediate and short-term life skills with the greatest benefits in accepting personal responsibility, sharing work responsibility, and taking initiative.

Objective 3: To ascertain why parents send their children to 4-H camps.

As a part of this study, parents were asked specifically why they sent their child to camp and over 60% said for life skill development. Just less than 60% said to try new things. It can be concluded from these responses that parents include their children in activities, such as summer camp, because they know it develops skills that may not be taught as subject matter in school to also be successful and contributing members of adult society. Social skills, learning about the outdoors, meeting new people, and just trying new things are all important competencies necessary for positive youth development. According to Baughman et al. (2009) results of the parental data from their study of parent surveys from Virginia 4-H provide evidence of consistency in the child's life skills attainment overall with the greatest life skills growth in shares work responsibilities and takes care of his/her own things. Maass et al. (2006) said that long-term effects of 4-H participation could be seen by 4-H alumni who later became adults/parents and who attribute 4-H life skill achievement as having a positive impact on their own lives.

Objective 4: To determine needed improvements for camps to meet the expectations of parents.

In this study, three open-ended questions were asked trying to garner responses for camp improvement. Most of the responses indicated that respondents like summer camp just as it is without making any changes. They described camp as wonderful and a positive

experience for their camper. Many complemented the staff as well as the camp itself. As a result of these answers, it can be concluded that parents like the summer camp program and that they see good things happening with their child as a result of attending camp. They would not suggest changing the program and they value the positive life skill development that occurs with their child as a result of camp attendance. According to Garton et al. (2007) the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model provides an important guide to assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating 4-H youth development programs. In their study, they concluded that 4-H camp activities appear to have a positive affect on the life skills of campers. They also feel Cooperative Extension needs camp curriculums focused on specific life skills. One way to do this is to find out from parents if there are any improvements that can be made at camp.

Recommendations for Practice

1. Include in staff training the reason for summer camp.

Many of the survey respondents commented positively on the counselors and staff and how they made a positive impact on their camper. Summer camps should capitalize on this and ensure that the staff understands the importance of their role and the effect they have on the life of children while in their care. They have the opportunity to help shape a life in a positive direction and make great contributions to the life skill development of campers.

2. The summer camp program can be recommended as a strong educational program for those seeking opportunities to build their children's life skills in the four basic competency areas of the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Explore the Targeting Life Skills (TLS)

Model with the staff and how using the life skills as a guide can keep programming efforts at their best.

This study shows that developing life skills is the main reason parents send their child to camp. Using the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, staff should be trained on the different areas of this model focused on at camp and why they are important to the campers and their parents.

3. Plan a comprehensive evaluation program for parents to seek their input and suggestions for planning a successful camp experience.

Campers are often the targets of evaluations because they are easy to access since they are right there at the camp. Parents, however, sometimes have a different view on what is important in the life of their child and therefore they are an excellent source of information to tap into when doing program planning. This study shows that parents are willing to share their thoughts and take the time to give valuable input to this process. Including the parents in the process will help provide a much more complete picture of what is valued at summer camp and also why it has value.

4. Communicate with staff, campers, and parents the value of the camp experience in building life skills for building strong camping programs.

Research shows that life skills are enhanced at summer camp. Let all the stakeholders know about the value of camp. Doing so will help strengthen the program and give those involved a better sense of the importance of what they do. Counselors often times do not understand how much of an impact their actions make when dealing with youth. By

working together with everyone involved in camp and communicating the importance of the camp experience, life skill development can be achieved at its highest level.

5. Implement a program plan that takes into account all of the input from the data gathered from campers, parents, and staff.

Many camps do evaluations, but is the information used to really effect program change that reflects the needs of the campers. Create an action plan using the gathered information from campers, parents, and staff. As all of the information in this study has been gathered, it is clear that summer camp has a positive effect on life skills, but with an action plan in place, camps could do a great job with programming and meeting the needs of their constituents. Using research-based information, summer camps could easily show why their efforts are important and with today's tight budgets, this information is critical to their overall success.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Each of the four competency areas of the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model, Head, Heart, Hands, and Health, should be looked at separately and in detail so that each of these life skill areas could be studied in greater depth.
2. Additional studies should be done with parents and campers to see if the impact they noticed in their children lasted over time beyond the period analyzed in this study, about two weeks after leaving camp. Do the campers retain the same level of competency in life skill development well beyond the camp experience and can the camp experience be given any credit for this impact.

3. Research should be done to develop a standardized instrument that the camping industry could use to assess life skill development and try to define exactly which life skills are being developed as a result of summer camp.
4. As this study focused on 4-H summer camps, it would be advisable to study other camps besides those operated by 4-H to see if similar impacts in positive life skill development occur or are they a result of using research-based information found in tax payer funded 4-H camps.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Instrument

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University. For my Doctoral research I am assessing the impact of the 4-H Camp Program on the development of your child. Specifically, I am looking for growth in targeted areas of life skill development.

You are one of a random group of parents who have been selected to participate in this study. Although your participation is strictly voluntary, I would appreciate it if you completed the questionnaire. There are no risks to your participation. The results of this study will benefit NC Cooperative Extension and their 4-H Camping Program. We will use the information to improve our 4-H Camp Program and to better meet your child's needs in the future.

Your answers to the questionnaire are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. When you complete the questionnaire, your name will be deleted from the email list and never connected to your answers in any way. If you choose to participate in this study, please follow the directions for each question and answer them to the best of your knowledge. Your completion of the questionnaire will indicate your willingness to participate in this study. If for some reason you prefer not to participate, please let me know by sending me an email.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals along with helping the NC 4-H Program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Joe Long, Director

4-H Rural Life Center
P.O. Box 37
Halifax, NC 27839

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INSTRUCTIONS: The views of the parent are an important way to measure the impact of camp programs. In the following survey, we have asked questions to help us determine parental perceptions and expectations of summer camp. This is very important information in camping and your help is greatly appreciated. This survey should take approximately 15 minutes.

1. Where did your child attend 4-H summer camp?

- Betsey Jeff Penn 4-H Camp
- The Eastern Center 4-H Camp
- Millstone 4-H Camp

2. Has your child attended 4-H summer camp before?

- Yes
- No

3. Did your child share his/her camp experience with you?

- Yes
- No

4. If yes, how do you rate his/her overall camp experience?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good

5. Would you plan to send your child to 4-H summer camp next year?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

6. If yes, what would you like us to teach your child in next year's summer camp? (Please explain your expectations)

7. Would you recommend this camp program to others?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

8. What changes or improvements do you suggest to make this program better serve your child's needs?

9. What changes did you see in your child as a result of his/her summer camp experience?

10. How much do you value the impact the camp had on building life skills with your child? (i.e. decision making, problem solving, sharing, social skills, etc.)

- None
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Much
- Very Much

11. If you had to describe to other parents or family members how camp influenced your child, what would you say?

Adapted from American Camp Association Parent Survey (2013)

12. How often did you see the following behaviors in your child BEFORE attending camp?

	Never	Seldom	Half of the Time	Often	Always
...conscientious of own behavior and actions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...overcomes obstacles to achieve success.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares work responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...has a good attitude.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares ideas when working with groups.	<input type="radio"/>				
...spends time doing exercises/sports regularly.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares own thoughts and ideas verbally.	<input type="radio"/>				
...asks questions to learn about new things.	<input type="radio"/>				
...confident in his/her own abilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...participates in learning activities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...makes good decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...considers others before making a decision.	<input type="radio"/>				
...sets goals for himself/herself.	<input type="radio"/>				
...takes initiative/is a self-starter.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares well with others.	<input type="radio"/>				
...sets good examples	<input type="radio"/>				

for others to follow.					
...cooperates and works in a group.	<input type="radio"/>				
...gets along with people around him/her.	<input type="radio"/>				
...is a team player.	<input type="radio"/>				
...takes personal safety into consideration.	<input type="radio"/>				
...helps others reach their goals.	<input type="radio"/>				
...collaborates with others for achieving a common goal.	<input type="radio"/>				
...maintains good personal values.	<input type="radio"/>				
...drinks water, juice, or milk instead of soda.	<input type="radio"/>				
...pays attention to safety of self and others.	<input type="radio"/>				
...considers alternatives before making decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...gathers and considers relevant information.	<input type="radio"/>				
...creates plans and follows through with them.	<input type="radio"/>				
...tries something multiple times before giving up.	<input type="radio"/>				
...listens to what others say.	<input type="radio"/>				
...works with others towards a common purpose.	<input type="radio"/>				
...allows others to play with their toys.	<input type="radio"/>				

Adapted from American Camp Association Parent Survey (2013)

13. How often did you see the following behaviors in your child AFTER attending camp?

	Never	Seldom	Half of the Time	Often	Always
...conscientious of own behavior and actions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...overcomes obstacles to achieve success.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares work responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...has a good attitude.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares ideas when working with groups.	<input type="radio"/>				
...spends time doing exercises/sports regularly.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares own thoughts and ideas verbally.	<input type="radio"/>				
...asks questions to learn about new things.	<input type="radio"/>				
...confident in his/her own abilities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...participates in learning activities.	<input type="radio"/>				
...makes good decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...considers others before making a decision.	<input type="radio"/>				
...sets goals for himself/herself.	<input type="radio"/>				
...takes initiative/is a self-starter.	<input type="radio"/>				
...shares well with others.	<input type="radio"/>				
...sets good examples	<input type="radio"/>				

for others to follow.					
...cooperates and works in a group.	<input type="radio"/>				
...gets along with people around him/her.	<input type="radio"/>				
...is a team player.	<input type="radio"/>				
...takes personal safety into consideration.	<input type="radio"/>				
...helps others reach their goals.	<input type="radio"/>				
...collaborates with others for achieving a common goal.	<input type="radio"/>				
...maintains good personal values.	<input type="radio"/>				
...drinks water, juice, or milk instead of soda.	<input type="radio"/>				
...pays attention to safety of self and others.	<input type="radio"/>				
...considers alternatives before making decisions.	<input type="radio"/>				
...gathers and considers relevant information.	<input type="radio"/>				
...creates plans and follows through with them.	<input type="radio"/>				
...tries something multiple times before giving up.	<input type="radio"/>				
...listens to what others say.	<input type="radio"/>				
...works with others towards a common purpose.	<input type="radio"/>				
...allows others to play with their toys.	<input type="radio"/>				

14. Why did you send your child to camp? (Please select your top 3 choices)

<input type="checkbox"/> Babysitter	<input type="checkbox"/> Field Trips	<input type="checkbox"/> Socialize with Friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Being Outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn About the Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Skills Development	<input type="checkbox"/> Try New Things	<input type="checkbox"/> Fun
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet New People	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn About New Subjects	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)		

15. Your child's age?

16. Your child's gender?

Male Female

17. Your child's race?

White, not of Hispanic Origin American Indian/Alaskan Native Black, not of Hispanic Origin

Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander

Other (please specify)

18. If there is anything else that you would like to share about your child's camp experience, please tell us.

19. What is your relationship to the child who participated in the summer camp?

Mother Grandfather Legal Guardian

Father Aunt

Grandmother Uncle

Other (please specify)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. We appreciate your input as we make every effort to improve our 4-H Camp program.

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

<small>North Carolina State University is a land-grant university and a constituent institution of the University of North Carolina</small>	<small>Office of Research and Innovation Division of Research Administration</small>
<hr/>	
NC STATE UNIVERSITY	<small>Campus Box 7514 Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514 919.515.8754 (phone) 919.515.7721 (fax)</small>
From:	Jennifer Ofstein, IRB Coordinator North Carolina State University Institutional Review Board
Date:	June 27, 2013
Title:	Parental Perceptions and Expectations of the North Carolina State 4-H Camping Program Regarding the Development of Targeted Life Skills
IRB#:	3350
Dear Joe,	
The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.	
NOTE:	
1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.	
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.	
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.	
Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable. Thank you.	
Sincerely,	
	
Jennifer Ofstein NC State IRB	

Appendix C: Preliminary Contact with Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu"
Subject: Pre-Notice E-mail
Body: Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and I am a graduate student at North Carolina State University. For my Doctoral research I am trying to determine the impact that the 4-H Camp Program has on the development of your child. Specifically, I am looking for growth in targeted areas of life skill development.

A few days from now you will receive an email request to complete a brief online questionnaire from Survey Monkey regarding this research project. This survey concerns your perceptions regarding building life skills in your child at 4-H Camp and your expectations of their experience while there. I am writing in advance because I feel like many people like to know ahead of time that they will be contacted. This study is an important one that will not only help with the completion of my coursework, but could also provide valuable information about the impact that attending 4-H Camp has on the development of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed in the signature of this letter.

Joe Long, Director

4-H Rural Life Center
P.O. Box 37
Halifax, NC 27839

252-583-1821 (Camp)
252-583-5161 (Office)
252-583-1683 (Fax)
joe_long@ncsu.edu

Appendix D: Initial Survey Link Sent to Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: 4-H Summer Camp Survey
Body: My name is Joe Long and a couple of days ago you received a message from me regarding a 4-H Summer Camp questionnaire. You will find the link to the questionnaire in this e-mail and your response would be greatly appreciated.

Here is a link to the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this questionnaire and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Joe Long

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix E: First Follow-up E-Mail Sent to Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: 4-H Summer Camp Survey Reminder
Body: Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and a few days ago you received an email request to complete a brief online questionnaire from Survey Monkey regarding my research project. This survey concerned your perceptions regarding building life skills in your child at 4-H Camp and your expectations of your child's experience while they were at 4-H Camp.

I am emailing you now because I do not think you have completed this questionnaire. If you have, please accept my sincere thanks. If you did not receive the email from Survey Monkey with the questionnaire or you deleted the email, please let me know. This study is an important one that will not only help with the completion of my coursework, but will provide valuable information to the NC 4-H Program about the impact of 4-H Camp has had on the development of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals along with helping the NC 4-H Program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Here is a link to the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Joe Long, Director

4-H Rural Life Center
P.O. Box 37
Halifax, NC 27839

252-583-1821 (Camp)
252-583-5161 (Office)
252-583-1683 (Fax)
joe_long@ncsu.edu

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix F: Second Follow-up E-Mail Sent to Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: 4-H Summer Camp Survey Reminder
Body: Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and several weeks ago you received an email request to complete a brief online questionnaire from Survey Monkey regarding my research project. This survey concerned your perceptions regarding building life skills in your child at 4-H Camp and your expectations of your child's experience while they were at 4-H Camp.

I am emailing you now because I do not think you have completed this questionnaire. If you have, please accept my sincere thanks. If you did not receive the email from Survey Monkey with the questionnaire or you deleted the email, please let me know. Just to reassure you, the questionnaire will be completely confidential and your name will never be connected to the results in any way. This type of confidentiality is important to me, as well as to North Carolina State University. This study is important and will not only help with the completion of my coursework, but will provide valuable information to the NC 4-H Program about the impact of 4-H Camp has had on the development of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals along with helping the NC 4-H Program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Here is a link to the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Joe Long, Director
4-H Rural Life Center
P.O. Box 37
Halifax, NC 27839

252-583-1821 (Camp)
252-583-5161 (Office)
252-583-1683 (Fax)
joe_long@ncsu.edu

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix G: Third Follow-up E-Mail Sent to Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: 4-H Summer Camp Survey Reminder/Thank You
Body: Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and several weeks ago you received an email request to complete a brief online questionnaire from Survey Monkey regarding my research project. This survey concerned your perceptions regarding building life skills in your child at 4-H Camp and your expectations of your child's experience while they were at 4-H Camp.

The study is coming to an end and this will be the last contact I will make. Your help is very important to us and will certainly help make a difference in how we approach our programming. I am emailing you now because I do not think you have completed this questionnaire. If you have, please accept my sincere thanks. If you did not receive the email from Survey Monkey with the questionnaire or you deleted the email, please let me know. Just to reassure you, the questionnaire will be completely confidential and your name will never be connected to the results in any way. This type of confidentiality is important to me, as well as to North Carolina State University. This study is important and will not only help with the completion of my coursework, but will provide valuable information to the NC 4-H Program about the impact of 4-H Camp has had on the development of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals along with helping the NC 4-H Program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Here is a link to the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Joe Long, Director

4-H Rural Life Center
P.O. Box 37
Halifax, NC 27839

252-583-1821 (Camp)
252-583-5161 (Office)
252-583-1683 (Fax)
joe_long@ncsu.edu

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix H: Final Contact with Participants

To: [Email]
From: "joe_long@ncsu.edu via surveymonkey.com" <member@surveymonkey.com>
Subject: The Final Reminder/Thank You
Body: Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Joe Long and several weeks ago you received an email request to complete a brief online questionnaire from Survey Monkey regarding my research project. I had not planned on any further contact with you, but I have had several people email stating they had already filled out this survey. This survey is specific to your email address, which you are reading this from right now. I know there have been others doing surveys as well as mine, so I do not think if you are receiving this that you have completed this particular survey. Your input is extremely important and although you get contacted constantly with requests, I would really appreciate your time to complete this if you are willing. This survey concerned your perceptions regarding building life skills in your child at 4-H Camp and your expectations of your child's experience while they were at 4-H Camp.

The study is coming to an end and this will be the last contact I will make. Your help is very important to us and will certainly help make a difference in how we approach our programming. Just to reassure you, the questionnaire will be completely confidential and your name will never be connected to the results in any way. This type of confidentiality is important to me, as well as to North Carolina State University. This study is important and will not only help with the completion of my coursework, but will provide valuable information to the NC 4-H Program about the impact of 4-H Camp has had on the development of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me in accomplishing my educational goals along with helping the NC 4-H Program. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number listed below.

Here is a link to the survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Joe Long, Director

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>