ABSTRACT

SUTPHIN, LAURA L. Determining Critical Competencies and Behaviors of 4-H Camp Staff Indicating High Performance: A Delphi Study. (Under the direction of Dr. K.S.U. Jayaratne).

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. This Delphi study was conducted to expand the research base for 4-H camping programs and the findings provide relevant information to states as they develop hiring, training, and professional development programs for their camp staff.

The researcher conducted a broad national solicitation for nominations to the Delphi panel. An initial list was compiled from recommendations from state camping faculty. These experts were then contacted, asked to verify their biographical information, and asked to nominate additional experts in 4-H camping. This process expanded and validated the selection of individuals for the panel list. This process resulted in a list of 34 potential experts. From that group, 23 were determined to be experts in camping and agreed to participate in the study. The selection of the expert panel was based on experience in 4-H camping, educational background, geographic location, experience in camp research, and experience related to staff selection, development, and training. An informed consent letter was sent to each participant via electronic mail, after each individual agreed, the first iteration survey was sent. Experts were asked to identify the competencies they thought were most critical to the success of 4-H camp staff, descriptions, and the behaviors that are related to those competencies.

The first round of this study identified 23 categorized competencies, competency descriptions, and related behaviors. The data collected in the first round were used to create the second-round survey instrument. This iteration asked respondents to rank the competencies from 1 to 23 based on importance to the success of a 4-H camp staff member. In addition, participants
provided feedback to refine each of the competencies. These competencies were analyzed to exclude those competencies that were not rated in the top 2/3 by more than 50% of the respondents. The 3rd round survey asked respondents to individually rate each competency on a five-point Likert-scale. These two ratings allowed the researcher to carefully analyze and validate the final priority list of competencies based on ratings and percentages.

The final list of critical competencies included those rated highest in both the 2nd and 3rd rounds: responsibility; work ethic, initiative, and independence; relationship building and compassion; teamwork; communication; judgement and maturity; leadership and role modeling; risk management and safety; respect and cultural competence; problem solving and creativity; engaged and camper centered; adaptability; willingness to learn and accept supervision; trustworthiness; and organization and time management. The findings lead to conclude that there is much agreement nationally regarding these 15 most critical competencies for 4-H camp staff to be effective. Current 4-H camp staffing programs should be evaluated to determine if their hiring, staff development, and evaluation take these critical competencies into consideration. These competencies should be used to better choose, prepare, and evaluate camp staff for achieving desired outcomes. Further, the related behaviors give this research a very practical and applicable use in current 4-H programming allowing managers to directly evaluate success in each competency by directly observing and interpreting related behaviors.
Determining Critical Competencies and Behaviors of 4-H Camp Staff Indicating High Performance: A Delphi Study.

by
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved Granny, Myrtle Sutphin who passed away before I completed my doctoral studies. She once told me that she “often thought of how life might have been different.” This simple statement set me on a course of change that has echoed through my life in recent years, and renewed my motivation for this project. This dissertation is just another step in my pursuit of knowledge, love, peace, and living a grateful life. My life is so different now Granny.
**BIOGRAPHY**

On December 20th, 1987 Laura Leigh Sutphin was born to Timothy and Cathy Sutphin of Dublin, VA. Throughout her youth Laura lived with her family on their beef cattle farm and attended 4-H programs with her mother who was a 4-H Agent. These experiences exposed Laura to a diversity of people and experiences from an early age. As she grew and matured she carried the knowledge and values gained in these experiences into her life both personally and professionally. Laura is the eldest of four Sutphin children including; sister Alison Jones, sister Caroline Sutphin, and brother Heath Sutphin.

Laura attended Pulaski County High School graduating in 2006. An active member of FFA in high school Laura served as a state officer during her freshman year at Virginia Tech University, where she later graduated in May, 2010 with a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Sciences. During her undergraduate years Laura worked as a 4-H Camp Staff member at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Center. In the spring of 2011 Laura began her master’s studies on a part-time basis at North Carolina State University. She completed her master’s in Agriculture and Extension Education in December, 2015. She started her doctoral studies in the same program at North Carolina State University in 2016.

Laura began her professional career in Extension programming in 2010 as the 4-H & Youth Development Agent in Washington County, NC. She was later promoted to County Extension Director, and Livestock & Horticulture Agent in Martin County, NC where she served from 2018 until 2020. In 2020, Laura made the decision to leave eastern North Carolina and return home to southwest Virginia, where she accepted the position of 4-H & Youth Development agent in Floyd County where she continues to serve.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all the people who helped and supported me in writing my dissertation.

Firstly, I would like to thank my family for their support through this process, and for their encouragement to continue when the task seemed insurmountable. I would like to especially thank my mother, Cathy Sutphin, who helped me with many of the details throughout this study, and was my biggest cheer leader, and my fiancé Evan Jeuck who regularly encouraged me to make the final push and complete this project.

Secondly, I would like to thank the participants of this study who dedicated themselves to its mission, and faithfully completed each iteration.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. K.S.U. “Jay” Jayaratne. Without his encouragement, editing, and friendship I surely would not have been successful in this endeavor. I am so grateful for his dedication to me, and my efforts to complete this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Harriett Edwards, Dr. Mitzi Downing, and Dr. Katie McKee. Their support and kindnesses have been invaluable in this endeavor.
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Camping programs in the United States employ more than 1.5 million paid camp staff, serving more than 14 million total children and adults annually (American Camp Association, 2016) at the nearly 14,000 day and residential camping facilities in the United States (American Camp Association, 2017). A variety of research on programming, taking place out-of-school, like camping and day-camping programs, show a significant potential to positively influence the development of youth allowing youth to build a variety of social, academic, and emotional skills (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Durlak & Weissburg, 2007; Grossman, Price, Fellerath, Jucovy, Kotloff, & Raley, 2002; Little & Harris, 2003; Miller, 2003; NIOST, 2003; Vandel, Reisner, Brown, Dadisman, Pierce, & Lee, 2005, 2006). “Research has demonstrated that well-functioning groups do not just happen. Rather, they result from consistent efforts to create, maintain, and (occasionally) restore conditions that foster effective learning” (Astroth, 1996, p. 4). Camp staff members are critical to the success of camping programs, and can through their purposeful development, improve camp outcomes and impacts, and create competitive advantage for camps.

4-H is a youth development program housed within the national Cooperative Extension system. It is one of the largest national agency providers of youth camping. 4-H today is the largest youth development organization in the United States, and is responsible for helping generations of young people become productive, service oriented, self-directed, and motivated citizen leaders (Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

4-H camping programs have had a long-standing presence in the overall 4-H program nationwide and were some of the first programs to come on to the 4-H scene after the
development of 4-H clubs in the early 1900’s. 4-H camping can be traced back as far as a 1907 camp for boys in Missouri. The first formal camp was established in West Virginia in 1921. Camp provided an informal learning environment and opportunities for friendship that continue to fuel its popularity today. In addition, camp allowed youth to interact with other youth from different backgrounds and work to build a variety of life skills like teamwork, independence, and motivation (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1998). 4-H camping has continued to evolve over the course of 4-H history, and the camp concept has been interpreted in many ways across state and sometimes even county lines. States are known to have a wide variety of 4-H programming across the United States, and 4-H camping is not immune to this variation.

4-H camping in the United States is a critical element of 4-H as a whole. Research has shown that 4-H camping has the significant opportunity for positive youth development, and directly links program quality to increased impacts. There are a variety of factors that contribute to the quality of a camping experience. The National 4-H Camping Research Consortium developed a Best Practices for Camp list that includes a variety of concrete measures for identifying quality using an interpretation of the eight essential parts of 4-H youth development programs: positive relationships with caring adults, an inclusive environment, a safe environment, opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, opportunity for self-determination, engagement in learning, opportunity for mastery, and opportunity to value and practice service. Each of these essential elements are heavily influenced by paid 4-H camp staff and volunteer counselors that facilitate the 4-H camping program (Garst et al., 2011).

There are many reported benefits of camp to campers including making new friends, learning new skills, and becoming more independent and responsible (American Camp Association, 2005). 4-H camping has impacts of its own however, showing in addition to the
benefits noted by the American Camp Association, that 4-H campers showed improvements in “the areas of independent living skills, self-esteem, leadership, social skills, character development, decision-making, and citizenship as a result of attending 4-H camp” (Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009, p. 6). Camp counselors have similar benefits as well as the additional benefits of promoting teamwork, social skills, initiative, identity development, and leadership (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007).

**Conceptual Framework**

**Need for Training**

Most of the research to date, surrounding 4-H camping programs have focused on benefits to campers. There are many reported benefits of camp to youth participants including making new friends, learning new skills, and becoming more independent and responsible (American Camp Association, 2005). Camp counselors have similar benefits as well as additional benefits of promoting teamwork, social skills, initiative, identity development, and leadership (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007). 4-H camping has additional impacts on campers. For instance, Hedrick, Homan, and Dick, (2009) reported that 4-H campers showed improvements in “the areas of independent living skills, self-esteem, leadership, social skills, character development, decision-making, and citizenship as a result of attending 4-H camp” (p. 1).

Current research shows a trend to examine not only the outcomes of camping programs, but also the processes that lead to those outcomes (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003). There is a need to study the specific factors that lead to camper outcomes. This research should hinge on a point of service (such as the performance of camp staff) that can be controlled or influenced by the camp’s leadership team (Garst, 2010).
The “atmosphere” of positive youth development is an essential component of high-quality youth development programs (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Eight “essential” parts of youth development programs were identified by USDA (2001). These elements are:

1. A positive relationship with a caring adult
2. A safe emotional and physical environment
3. An inclusive environment
4. Engagement in learning
5. Opportunities for mastery
6. Opportunities to see oneself as an active participant in the future
7. Opportunities for self-determination
8. Opportunities to value and practice service to others

The success of the camping program therefore, can be defined in its ability to provide these eight elements. In 2005, The National Camping Research Consortium (NCRC) was organized to determine if these eight elements were present in 4-H camping programs by creating a set of evaluation tools that could be used in multi-state or national settings (Garst, et al., 2011). These tools were disseminated through the National 4-H Camp Tool Kit for Program Planning and Evaluation. In addition to logic models and questionnaires, the tool kit also includes a series of suggested best practices for camp programs intended to help guide program and camp directors towards creating camp environments that lead to positive youth development. These practices are organized according to the eight essential elements. Several of these practices specifically mention staff or volunteer training and provide recommendations; however, all the listed best practices are influenced by staff training and development (Garst, et al., 2007).
The quality of out-of-school programming is typically defined in terms of structural and process features. Structural quality provides a setting and context for the program model, whereas process quality refers to the features that influence the youth experience (Vandell et al., 2004). Structural quality includes staff training and experience, resources, child-staff ratios, and partnerships, among other indicators. Process quality includes things like relationships between the staff and youth, peer relationships, and the opportunities available to build skills. These definitions show the variety of factors that influence the quality of a camping program, however well-trained staff is most often reported as a key to successful programming. A variety of quality assessment tools have been developed over the years in the out-of-school field for the purpose of self-improvement. These tools help groups to identify the specific components of a strong program, consistently listing skilled staff as a key to the implementation of high-quality programming (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Tolman, Pittman, Yohalem, Thomases, & Trammel, 2002).

**Competency-Based Training Model**

Many scholars in the field agree that in order to achieve a well-trained workforce you first need to identify the core competencies that those workers will need to deliver quality programs (Stone, Garza, & Borden, 2004). Competencies refer to the “characteristics of an individual performer that lead to acceptable or outstanding performance” (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p. 7). Alternatively, a competency can be defined as “a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as, collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage” (Athey & Orth, 1999, p. 216). Competency
can refer to a variety of elements that help to produce desired results (Rothwell & Graber, 2010). These competencies include the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities used to provide youth with the best programming possible, and can serve as standards to guide professional development and evaluate staff (Starr, Yohalem, & Gannett, 2009; Stone, Garza, & Borden, 2004).

Competency modeling, based on behaviors and characteristics of those who are successful, can therefore often be a better model for training and staff development than Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSA) based training, which is related to job tasks. According to research, there are many advantages to using a competency based approach including: relying on the observations of what people do to be successful instead of assumptions about intangible traits, it uses performance of aspects of a competency to measure and predict performance instead of using testing to measure intangible traits, competencies can be developed and improved, competencies can be made known and available so that they can be practiced, developed, and improved, they are associated with life outcomes and real world application (Athey & Orth, 1999; McClelland, 1973).

These competency models consist of a set of, usually 10-30, competencies “that describe the capabilities of successful performers (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p. 2).” These models can be further narrowed to sets of core competencies that are universally critical throughout an organization.

After identification of essential competencies and creation of a competency model, competency-based training can be developed to help staff improve performance and gain the skills and behaviors to enable them to be exceptional. Creating a competency model will help make training programs more efficient and focus staff and trainers on the behaviors related to
exceptional performance (Epley, 2014). In addition, research shows that those organizations who have a great understanding of staff characteristics that lead to success can create competitive advantage, and are then able to better “recruit, select, develop, reward, and promote successful people” (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p. 16). Using competencies can help target and pinpoint what is most important to success, can help to tie training to performance, and can allow for more efficient and improved communication with staff about qualifications (Rothwell & Graber, 2010).

**ACA training requirements.** A variety of camp staff training competencies can be found across the nation. Although there are some similarities between models can be found, there are few research-based rubrics are available specifically defining camp staff competencies. The American Camp Association (n.d.) provides the following competencies for staff training.

1. Camp purpose/focus/mission/intended outcomes and how these are implemented in camp structure and program activities;
2. Developmental needs of campers to be served and the resulting differences necessary for program and structure;
3. Objectives, safety considerations, skills progression, operating procedures, and competencies required for program activities;
4. Age-appropriate behavior management and camper supervision techniques that can help to create a physically and emotionally safe environment;
5. Clear expectations for staff performance and conduct, including sexual harassment policies;
6. Recognition, prevention, and reporting of child abuse;
7. Emergency procedures and the role of staff in implementation;

8. Camp staff trained in areas relevant to creating a safe environment, including:

   8.1 Focusing attention primarily on campers’ needs and interests rather than on other staff and themselves;
   
   8.2 Speaking with and listening to campers in a manner that reflects respect for each individual, including those of different backgrounds and abilities;
   
   8.3 Creating and supporting an environment that provides emotional safety; and
   
   8.4 Guiding group behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner (Topics to Be Covered During Pre-Camp Staff Training section).

These competencies are used as minimum requirements for all camping programs (4-H and otherwise) that seek ACA accreditation. Each of these competencies focuses on minimum required knowledge and skills to facilitate risk management at any youth camp, but does not cover specific competencies relating to program activities of the camp.

Training rubrics of other camping programs. Many national organizations with camping programs have camp program manuals with sections delineating the specific training requirements of those programs. These training requirements tend to be task-based, as opposed to competency-based training approaches. Although few of these manuals and standards are based on research backed components, they do demonstrate a need for unified standards across national organizations and show some commonalities among camp staff training standards.

The Boy Scouts of America created its national camp standards in an effort to ensure health, safety, and well-being of campers, visitors, and staff at their camps, as well as to ensure that campers and leaders are the recipients of quality programming that is reflective of the Boy
Scout Brand. These standards serve as a guide and rubric for evaluating camps for their own accreditation. The Boy Scouts require that each camp must have a written training plan, and have specific minimum hours required for camp staff training. These hours vary according to the risk and responsibilities associated with each camp staff role. The Boy Scouts have a set of risk management standards including, first aid training, weather hazard training and procedures, and harassment prevention. In addition, their standards list specific training requirements for high risk programming including archery range instructors, aquatics instructors, firearms staff, EMS staff, climbing staff, and other “adventure and trek” staff. Other standards include standards for “counselor in training” programming and minimum age and skill requirements for each type of staff person. The Boy Scout standards also include specific parameters for resident and “trek” camps requiring staff to complete training for “outdoor skills, leadership, teaching, and other position-related skills” to be included in the written staff training plan. Sample training agendas and guides are included in the standards (Boy Scouts of America, 2017, p. 402).

The Peace Corp conducts a variety of youth camps all over the world. These camps focus on a variety of topics, the most popular of which is leadership. Specific learning objectives and themes are based on the place, context, and need of the specific audience. The Peace Corp Camp manual defines five components of “high quality, effective youth camps,” including: planning with a purpose, building strong local partnerships, ensuring a process involving planning, and considering camp logistics, health and safety, and caring and competent staff. In addition, they give eight suggested training sessions with learning objectives, lesson plans, and expected time required. These Peace Corp Camp training sessions include: introductions and expectations, team building, rules, roles, and responsibilities (policies and procedures), learning at camp (teaching
model), teaching and presentation methods, health and safety (risk management), working with campers, positive behavior and managing behavior, and mentoring (Peace Corps, 2013).

**Current 4-H Training**

Current 4-H camping programs vary widely across the nation, reaching youth of a variety of ages with a variety of programming and educational objectives. While there is no national standard for 4-H camping programs or staff training, most state programs do have some level of written camping standards, manuals, and/or training procedures. Washington State University identifies that staff (counselors) must complete a minimum of thirty-two hours of training that includes youth protection, behavior management, developmentally appropriate practices, risk management, organizational structure, emergency response, staff roles and responsibilities, camp policies and procedures. In addition, adult and volunteer staff must also complete training on these same topics for a minimum of eight hours (“Resident Camp Standards,” 2013). The University of Tennessee has an extensive manual for staff and volunteers at their 4-H centers. This guide includes four priorities for staff and volunteers such as safety, health, education, and fun. Specific expectations, activities, and training components are outlined in great detail with lesson plans. However, no minimum training requirements are listed. Camp training components include both those related to ACA standards and those related to creating the unique experience and culture of 4-H camp. Training related to activities that enforce the culture of 4-H camps include flag ceremonies, vespers, campfire, and leading songs (“Success Guide for 4-H Camps,” 2017). While ACA standards are mentioned in the University of Tennessee guide, no related research is cited as the basis for any of the training requirements in either example discussed here.
Need for Study

Camps provide a substantial opportunity for youth to develop relationships with caring adults who offer guidance, as well as, emotional and practical support (American Camp Association, 2006a). This relationship with a caring adult can be credited as being the most important aspect of a quality camping experience (American Camp Association, 2006b). Therefore, staff training is a key component in creating a quality camp environment where all youth are accepted and have the opportunity to thrive (Garst et al., 2011). In addition, research says that staff training is critical to achieving desired youth outcomes (Larson, Rickman, Gibbons, & Walker, 2009).

Youth development and experiential education programming is also experiencing a movement towards the examination of program characteristics leading to outcomes as opposed to evaluating only the outcomes and impacts themselves. This focus on the “how” of programming demonstrates a critical need to standardize program planning and training so that the behaviors leading to the most significant impact might be isolated and practiced more often. Camp research has a direct need to focus on the “antecedents of change;” exploring the cause and effect relationships between practices, program components, and staff behaviors which lead to the most impact in youth (Garst, 2010). “Considering the amount of resources invested, significance of the counselor’s role, and concerns for accountability, further study of the 4-H camp counseling program is warranted” (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007, p. 1).

Statement of the Problem

Determining critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance should be a prerequisite for planning effective
camp staff selection, training, and evaluation. This knowledge about staff competencies serves as a basis on which appropriate decision making regarding the content of 4-H camp staff training and development can be made; pinpointing what qualities are most important to staff success, connecting training to behaviors and performance, and improving communication with staff regarding qualifications (Rothwell & Graber, 2010). These competencies will streamline the program nationally allowing for more concrete measurement of training standards against the identified competencies and observable related behaviors. Furthermore, this will allow camp leadership to identify and target the specific training components that are most likely to lead to positive youth outcomes and create competitive advantage for 4-H camping programs.

Identifying and training staff on skills and behaviors are important to achieving the desired camping outcomes for program participants. In addition, the time that is invested in training programs will continue to reap benefits into the future, as staff develop their skill set through practice and additional training opportunities during their employment (Galloway, Bourdeau, Arnold, & Nott, 2013). Competency modeling is crucial to the development of appropriate training strategies. This ensures a basic level of training across the board, allows leadership to make better hiring decisions, develop to best training activities, and properly evaluate the successes and failures of staff (Epley, 2014).

Despite the significance of determining the competencies critical for camping staff to deliver effective camping programs for 4-H youth, there is not adequate research conducted for the identification of these competencies.
**Purpose and Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. The study aimed to accomplish the following specific objectives:

1. Determine the most critical competencies for 4-H camp staff.
2. Identify staff behaviors which are related to exceptional performance, and display competency.

**Definition of Terms**

*Camp staff:* 4-H center paid summer or short-term staff members. These paid staff typically have more responsibility than volunteers and may perform a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, teaching high and low risk classes, staying in cabins with youth participants, cleaning, facilitating group camp activities, etc.

*Camp counselor:* Adolescents, ages 14-19, who serve as volunteers at camps. These volunteers may take on a variety of roles including staying in cabins with youth participants and teaching low risk sessions.

*Competency:* “a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as, collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage” (Athey & Orth, 1999, p. 216).

*Competency model:* A set of competencies (10-30) that describe all of the critical observable performance dimensions and how those dimensions are used for effective staff performance.
Critical Competencies: A core set of competencies (7-15) that describe the most essential observable performance dimensions of an individual staff person to be effective.

High staff performance: Performance of staff that is closely aligned to competencies. Staff who are highly performing will demonstrate positive behaviors related to each competency and contribute to the positive youth development environment and increased youth outcomes and impacts.

Chapter Summary

Camp is a main delivery mode in 4-H with a long history nationwide (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Most of the available research on 4-H camp programs has focused on the impact camp has on campers (Mulkeen, Garst, & Bourdeau, 2003), and more recently the impact of camp on counselors. Camp staff and camp counselling are financially and programmatically critical to the success of camp, and for many reasons should be researched more. (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007). Specifically, it is crucial to the success of the camping program that staff is trained and appropriately prepared for their roles. Camp staff members are critical to the success of camping programs, and can through their purposeful development, improve camp impacts and outcomes, and create competitive advantage for 4-H camp. This can be accomplished through the development of core staff competencies and related behaviors and characteristics indicating high performance, being applied to staff selection, staff training initiatives, staff feedback and evaluation, and used to facilitate communication about high performance (Rothwell & Graber, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance.
CHAPTER 2 – REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. Although the literature on youth development and camping programs is broad, this review focused on the topics most relevant to camping, impacts of camping on youth, and competency development of camp staff and volunteers. The specific topics of the literature review include the history of 4-H, youth camping programs, and 4-H camp; the critical elements of quality camping programs; the current status of 4-H camp staff training and how those staff roles impact camp; and the theories of competency-based modeling.

History of 4-H

4-H began at the beginning of the 1900’s in several different areas of the United States. Public universities began conducting agricultural research; however, farmers and communities were reluctant to adopt the new farming technologies and practices found to be more efficient on campuses. In contrast, young people were very likely to experiment with these new practices. In this way, youth programs became a path to introduce new technologies to agricultural communities. Over the years, 4-H has evolved from primarily focused on rural youth, agriculture, and home economics to a more general focus on life-skill development as 4-H expanded into urban and suburban communities. The 4-H youth development program operates under the idea of “hands-on” learning through a variety of delivery modes including clubs, special interest programs and projects, residential and day camping programs, and school-based programming. 4-H today is the largest youth development organization in the United States, and
is responsible for helping generations of young people become productive, service oriented, self-directed, and motivated citizen leaders (Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

4-H camping can be traced back as far as a 1907 camp for boys in Missouri. The first formal camp was established in West Virginia in 1921. Camp provided an informal learning environment and opportunities for friendship that continue to fuel its popularity today. In addition, camp allowed youth to interact with youth from different backgrounds and work to build a variety of life skills like teamwork, independence, and motivation (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1998).

**History of Camping**

As the population in the United States moved from being primarily rural to focused in cities and urban areas, families looked to schools and other municipalities to help socialize their children. Henry David Thoreau can be credited with leveraging much of the enthusiasm for camping in his memoir on the three years of his life spent in a rustic cabin. His writing capitalized on the nostalgia felt among city dwellers who missed rural farm life (Thoreau, 1854). The first organized summer camp was held in 1861, when Frederick William Gunn, set out with a group of boys to establish Gunnery Camp in the wilderness. The modern idea of camp was developed along with the months of the year that children were not in school. First, in rural areas, time was needed out of school for kids to help on the family farms. However, as people moved to more urban areas, the school calendar had become part of the tradition and schools continued to close during summer months, creating unstructured time for youth and opportunities for camp educators to create and offer learning opportunities not available in school-based programs. By
the early 1900’s, organized camping programs were established and favored part of the United States culture (Ozier, 2018).

Now camping programs in the United States employ more than 1.5 million paid camp staff, serving more than 14 million total children and adults annually (American Camp Association, 2016) at the nearly 14,000 day and residential camping facilities in the United States. Campers participate in a variety of hands-on teachable moments during their camp experience, creating numerous outcomes and impacts for campers (American Camp Association, 2017). While camping programs in general serve a variety of purposes, 4-H camping programs are generally aimed at development of life skills such as resilience, independence, and responsibility among others.

A variety of research on programming that takes place out-of-school, like camping and day-camping programs, show a significant potential to positively influence the development of youth allowing youth to build a variety of social, academic, and emotional skills (Bodilly & Beckett, 2005; Durlak & Weissburg, 2007; Grossman, et al., 2002; Little & Harris, 2003; Miller, 2003; NIOST, 2003; Vandell, Reisner, Brown, Dadisman, Pierce, Lee, 2006a, 2006b)

**Current Status of 4-H Camping**

4-H Camping in the United States is a critical element of 4-H as a whole. Research has shown that 4-H Camping has a significant opportunity for positive youth development, and directly links program quality to increased impacts. There are a variety of factors that contribute to the quality of a camping experience. The National 4-H Camping Research Consortium (Garst, et al., 2011) developed a list of Best Practices for Camps that includes a variety of concrete measures for identifying quality using an interpretation of the eight essential parts of 4-H youth
development programs: “positive relationships with caring adults, an inclusive environment, a safe environment, opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, opportunity for self-determination, engagement in learning, opportunity for mastery, and opportunity to value and practice service” (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011, p.3). Paid 4-H camp staff and volunteer counselors who conduct the 4-H camping program heavily influence each of these essential elements. Because of this reason, staff training is a key component in creating a quality camp environment where all youth are accepted and have the opportunity to thrive (Garst, et al., 2011).

Most of the research to date, surrounding 4-H camping programs have focused on benefits to campers. There are many reported benefits of camp to campers including making new friends, learning new skills, and becoming more independent and responsible (American Camp Association, 2005). Camp counselors have similar benefits as well as additional benefits of promoting teamwork, social skills, initiative, identity development, and leadership (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007). In addition to the benefits noted by the American Camp Association, that 4-H campers showed improvements in “the areas of independent living skills, self-esteem, leadership, social skills, character development, decision-making, and citizenship as a result of attending 4-H camp” (Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009, p. 6).

**Critical Elements of a Quality Camp Program**

There are a variety of elements that help to provide a quality camp experience for youth participants. Eccles and Gootman (2002) point to the following common features of a positive youth development setting: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure including rules and boundaries, supportive relationships with adults, opportunities to belong, positive
social norms, support for efficacy and youth empowerment, opportunities to build skills, and the integration of family, school, and community efforts. Epley (2014) identified quality camping programs in their ability to provide the following additional components: “the expectations from parents and campers, camping standards and accreditations, overarching goals of camp, age and development of campers, roles and duties of counselors, camp curriculum, and the camping context (p. 42).”

Camp staff members are largely viewed as the most critical element of a quality camping program, and can impact, positively or negatively, on all of the elements discussed above. The American Camp Association provides a Camp Program Quality Assessment Short Form Checklist (C-PQA) for best practices for camp. All of the recognized practices that improve quality of camp programs are related to staff skills, training, and development. These practices include the following categories of behaviors:

- **Friendliness:** staff is warm and respectful, smile, make eye contact, attentive and responsive, staff interact actively with kids.

- **Emotional safety:** respect for campers and others, bullying is addressed, campers can be themselves, staff acknowledges feelings of campers, help campers respond appropriately to conflict.

- **Create belonging:** staff participates in activities to help campers feel as though they belong.

- **High expectations:** campers try new things, staff provide opportunities to develop skills, campers are challenged, activities are appropriate, staff members ask questions to reflect.
- Cooperative learning: campers are given both hands-on and physical opportunities to keep their brains active, campers experience working with others.
- Voice for campers: campers have choice, staff encourages campers to participate more, staff shares control.
- Reflection: campers help make plans, there is time for planning, they have time to reflect and make connections, staff engages campers in reflection.
- Nature: campers experience the outdoors, staff is happy to be outdoors, and discuss nature with campers (American Camp Association, 2020, p.1-2.).

**Roles and Impact of Camp Staff**

Camp staff members share one of the most memorable experiences of their lives by taking on the role of staff members (Browne, 2018). Nationally, youth camps hire around 240,000 seasonal staff members each year. These staff members are largely camp counselors or program staff (American Camp Association, 2016). In addition to their initial interest in camp, around 60% of camp staff at American camps return for an additional season (American Camp Association, 2017b). There are a variety of reasons for this devotion to camp, including the benefits of camp to the camp staff person that translate to their life, college, and future careers. The skills that are developed by camp staff are numerous and include social emotional learning skills, like self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making as defined in research by Owens and Wahle (2018). Martin and Strom (2017) further researched impacts to camp staff and found that problem solving, teamwork, applied knowledge, and critical thinking were improved through their work. These impacts were especially strong with regards to innovation skills, and tended to become stronger.
the more time/seasons staff spent working at camp. Ferrari and Risch (2013) looked specifically at the skill of responsibility for camp counselors. They found that the best way to develop this skill was to give counselors responsibility. This skill was enhanced when counselors were properly screened and trained, at appropriately balanced “program control and youth ownership” (Ferrari & Risch, 2013, p. 23). Additional research relates employment at camp to the workforce development of the staff, improving skills like responsibility, communication, and leadership among others. This research cites a properly structured camp environment as a “prime context for the development of essential workplace skills” (Duerden, Witt, Garst, Bialeshcki, Schwarzlose, & Norton, 2014, p. 1). These benefits can potentially be enhanced through more structured and intentional staff training, development, and evaluation (Duerden, et al., 2014; Martin & Strom, 2017).

Camp staff is also directly responsible for producing positive outcomes for youth participants. Camp staff helps prepare youth to “thrive in college, in their careers, and beyond” (Browne, 2018, p.1). This is done through the structure of camp supporting youth in gaining relationship skills, respecting others, and becoming more independent. Camp staff is responsible in many cases for designing activities that support these outcomes, and for serving as a mentor for youth. Camp staff members are also responsible for maintaining camp schedules and routines. They also facilitate activities with youth that promote independence and responsibility to their peers and community at camp. Campers learn some of these skills through cleaning up by themselves after events, taking care of their own things, and taking turns with duties at camp like setting the table and cleaning shared spaces. When they grow, these skills will serve to help kids transition into the workforce, be prepared to pull their weight, and take responsibility for their own things. Research shows that when campers are asked what happened at camp to
produce their learning, they mention camp staff. These meaningful relationships with caring adults are fundamental to the camp experience and are the most powerful vehicle to creating impacts and outcomes with youth. This is because staff members are seen as relatable to youth participants, and they aspire to be like the camp staff they admire. Camp staff is directly responsible for the impacts that camp has on youth, as such, development of camp staff is critically important to the success of camp (Browne, 2018).

4-H Camp Staff Training

A variety of 4-H camp staff training competencies can be found across the nation, with some similarities however, few overarching, research based, rubrics are available specifically defining 4-H Camp Staff competencies. The American Camp Association (n.d.) provides the following core competencies for staff training.

1. Camp purpose/focus/mission/intended outcomes and how these are implemented in camp structure and program activities;
2. Developmental needs of campers to be served and the resulting differences necessary for program and structure;
3. Objectives, safety considerations, skills progression, operating procedures, and competencies required for program activities;
4. Age-appropriate behavior management and camper supervision techniques that can help to create a physically and emotionally safe environment;
5. Clear expectations for staff performance and conduct, including sexual harassment policies;
6. Recognition, prevention, and reporting of child abuse;
7. Emergency procedures and the role of staff in implementation;

8. Camp staff trained in areas relevant to creating a safe environment, including:
   a. Focusing attention primarily on campers’ needs and interests rather than on other staff and themselves;
   b. Speaking with and listening to campers in a manner that reflects respect for each individual, including those of different backgrounds and abilities;
   c. Creating and supporting an environment that provides emotional safety; and
   d. Guiding group behavior in a developmentally appropriate manner (Topics to Be Covered During Pre-Camp Staff Training section).

Further research by Epley, (2014) developed core competencies for camp counselors (youth volunteers, ages 14-19) in the Ohio 4-H Camping program. While these competencies were developed for volunteer counselors they may have some implications to paid staff as well. These competencies included:

1. Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge
2. Communication
3. Cultural Awareness
4. Health, Wellness, and Risk Management
5. Personal Commitment
6. Professional Development
7. Professionalism
8. Program Planning
9. Role Model
10. Self-Direction
11. Supportive Relationships

12. Teaching and Facilitating

13. Teamwork and Leadership

14. Thinking and Problem Solving

15. Understands Organizational and Camp Environment (Epley, 2014, p. 181)

High quality staff development at camp relies on motivating staff to produce the best results and improve program quality. This can be done through facilitating intrinsic motivation through autonomy, relatedness, and competency. These three factors can be supported by specific staff training and support activities. Relatedness can be facilitated by including camp staff in team building, strategic planning, and goal setting, and by creating opportunities for staff to share their contributions. These activities connect staff to the overall camp mission (Bennett, 2012). Staff autonomy can be addressed by listening to staff, asking them what they want to do, allowing time for staff to talk and discuss, as well as, providing encouragement and recognition (Roark, Ellis, Wells, & Gilliard, 2010). Competency is built through staff training and development (Bennett, 2012). These competencies should focus on creating “practitioner expertise” amongst staff to produce the highest quality youth programming. Training should prepare trainees for the variety of situations they will face in their job as a camp staff person, taking special attention to the staff members’ ability to appraise situations and formulate the response appropriate for a given situation. In order to do this effectively, staff members need to understand all of the diverse systems and influences that affect the situation they are faced with, and develop appropriate action skills (Larson, Rickman, Gibbons, & Walker, 2009).

Arnold, Bourdeau, Galloway, and Nott (2013), studied their 4-H staff training model using a pre-post questionnaire design to evaluate their staff training based on the eight essential
elements identified by USDA. These elements are: 1) a positive relationship with a caring adult; 2) a safe emotional and physical environment; 3) an inclusive environment; 4) engagement in learning; 5) opportunities for mastery; 6) opportunities to see oneself as an active participant in the future; 7) opportunities for self-determination; and 8) opportunities to value and practice service to others (United States Department of Agriculture, 2011, p.3). Their questionnaires measured self-reported knowledge, attitude, skills, and abilities of staff related to achieving goals on a Likert-type scale. In addition, campers were also surveyed to gauge their outcomes from this staff training. This study recognized the need for staff to learn not only what they are expected to do, but also how they wanted them to do it. They developed a 25-hour staff training package and evaluated its ability to provide staff with skills in the experiential education model. Results from that study indicated that the time invested in development of a comprehensive staff training package focused on camper outcomes reaps benefits. In addition, staff continued to gain skills through practice and additional training during camp. Identifying and training staff on skills and behaviors were important to achieving the desired youth development outcomes (Arnold, Bourdeau, Galloway, & Nott 2013).

**Linking Staff Characteristics and Development to Positive Environments and Youth Outcomes**

Hall and Cassidy (2002), looked at participation in the North Carolina Quality Enhancement Initiative (NC QEI) to determine if the quality of the child care programs in three North Carolina communities were improved by staff training. This study measured teacher/child interactions in 28 different programs, using a pre-post design study, over a nine-month period. The researchers observed a positive and significant increase in the quality of programming
offered by participants. In addition, the education level of the program director, teacher salary, state license, and program size were the factors related to the most improvement of programming. This study demonstrated a link between high quality staff training and subsequent improvements of youth programming. Furthermore, the study linked accreditation with the improved quality of programming. Similarly, Rosenthal and Vandell, 1996, looked at 30 school-age child-care programs collecting data on enrollment, child-staff ratios, and staff education, and linking those to observations of staff-child interactions, as well as, parent and child reports of the “psychosocial” climate. This study found that negative interactions were more frequent when the child-staff ratio was higher and when the staff education level was lower. Furthermore, more frequent negative interactions were linked with child and parent reports of poor program climate.

Howes (1997) examined teacher background and the number of children per staff ratios. This study looked at two samples (N=655 classrooms and 760 children, N=410 classrooms and 820 children). The classrooms in these samples were scrutinized for the number of children per staff ratios and the amount of education (both formal and nonformal) the teacher had received. In both samples, this study found teachers with the most education were the most effective in promoting positive youth outcomes.

In one of the most comprehensive national studies of child-care, family, and early childhood development, the National Institute for Child Health and Development and Early Child Care Research Network (NICHD ECCRN, 2001), studied 1100 children from birth to age 7. This study looked at the family and child-care of each participant and looked at the relationships between these factors and developmental outcomes. Findings of the study linked education levels of “nonmaternal” care providers with quality of programming, and consistent
reduction in problem behaviors, and improvement in cognitive development, school readiness, and language development in high quality programming.

Norris, 2001, examined the differences in quality of care offered by child care providers based on their levels of in-service training. This study examined 70, randomly selected child care providers in California, and used the Family Day Care Environment Rating Scale (FDCERS) to measure program quality. This study indicated that professionals who participated in training throughout their career had significantly higher FDCERS scores than those who never participated or participated intermittently. In addition, youth participating under well-trained child-care professionals in this group rated higher in language and resounding, learning activities, and basic care.

Another study assessed four YMCA summer day camp programs using a pre/multiple-posttest design. In this study, staff participated in professional development training, workshops, and received on-going technical support using competency-based professional development strategies. Training was used to create positive change in staff behaviors and align those behaviors with the identified standards and competencies. Changes were observed both in staff behavior and child physical activity, which was the desired youth outcome of the program, using the System for Observing Play and Leisure Time in Youth (SOPLAY), and the System for Observing Staff Promotion of Activity and Nutrition (SOSPAN). Both of these systems used momentary time sampling to record instances of positive staff behaviors consistent with standards, and activity levels of youth. SOSPAN evaluates thirteen physical activity promotion behaviors in staff. Nine of the thirteen targeted staff behaviors showed significant positive change over the course of the study, increasing physical activity, and decreasing the number of sedentary youths in the program. This study showed significant implications for using
competency-based training and development to support improved staff behavior and youth
program outcomes (Weaver, Beets, Turner-Mcgrievy, Webster, & Moore, 2014).

Ohio 4-H professionals used their previously discussed competencies for volunteer camp
staff to develop a training program called “Making eXtreme Counselors.” These volunteers have
many of the same responsibilities as paid camp staff including planning, leading, and conducting
the majority of camp programming through the Ohio 4-H Camp model. This program uses an
annual statewide training workshop aimed at the development of individual competencies.
Training for these volunteer staff is based on the fifteen camp counselor competencies developed
by Epley (2014). These competencies include: child and adolescent development knowledge,
communication, cultural awareness, health, wellness and risk management, personal
commitment, professional development, professionalism, program planning, role modeling, self-
direction, supportive relationships, teaching and facilitating, teamwork and leadership, thinking
and problem solving, and understanding of organizational and camp environment. This training
is evaluated in two ways, both with a post-test survey directly after the training, and an additional
survey given after the end of the camping season. Volunteer staff members were asked to gauge
their skills gained, and 4-H professionals were asked to share their perceptions of the training
success as well. According to these evaluation data, both participants and the 4-H professionals
working with them reported that they were able to transfer skills learned at the training to their
county camping programs. 4-H professionals also reported that trained volunteer staff was more
likely to step into leadership roles and camp operations. This format using a research-based
competency model in 4-H camping directly showed success in improving skills and encouraging
behaviors of high-quality staff (Epley, Williams, Feldhues, & Hall, 2018).
A 2017 study conducted by researchers from Northern Illinois University and the University of Alabama used Kirkpatrick’s Four-Level Approach of Training Evaluation to assess the influence of a competency-based training program on paid camp staff members’ perceived competency using a pre-post survey design. This study also accounted for the staff’s prior camp experience when assessing the results. The participants in the study included 101 camp counselor staff who were employed at the camp. Competency was measured against seven categories which included: typical day routine, conflict management, counselor expectations, safe camp environment, relationships, development of camper skills, and behavior management. Results from this study indicated significant increases across all of the measured competencies, with typical day routine, counselor expectations, and developing camper skills having the largest increases. This study also suggests that prior to the competency-based training, staff members that demonstrated the lowest level of competency were those staff without prior camp experience. This study supports the idea that training based on competency development improves camp staff skills and behaviors, leading to better camp outcomes (Howell, Richards, & Wahl-Alexander, 2017).

The 4-H Professional, Research, Knowledge and Competencies (PRKC) identifies many different components and associated competencies for 4-H professionals (full-time 4-H employees) related to youth development, youth program development, volunteerism, access, equity and opportunity, partnerships and organizational systems. This research is used by 4-H professionals to determine professional competence, write job descriptions, plan and develop training, and provides a self-assessment tool (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017). This research was further used to develop the Volunteer, Research, Knowledge and Competency (VRKC) taxonomy. This taxonomy identified the skills and knowledge volunteers identified they
need to be competent. This taxonomy has influenced a variety of volunteer training, curriculum, and research centered around the identified competency domains of communications, organization, 4-H program management, educational design & delivery, positive youth development, and interpersonal characteristics. This taxonomy defines each domain specifically (Culp, McKee, & Nester, 2008).

Competency Based Modeling

Many scholars in the field agree that in order to achieve a well-trained workforce you first need to identify the core competencies that those workers will need to deliver quality programs (Stone, Garza, & Borden, 2004). A competency can be defined as “a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as, collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage” (Athey & Orth, 1999, p. 216). Alternatively, competencies can refer to the “characteristics of an individual performer that lead to acceptable or outstanding performance” (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p. 7). Competency can refer to a variety of elements that help to produce results (Rothwell & Graber, 2010). These competencies include the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and abilities used to provide youth with the best programming possible, and can serve as standards to guide professional development and evaluate staff (Starr, Yohalem, & Gannett, 2009; Stone, Garza, & Borden, 2004).

Competency modeling, based on behaviors and performance of those who are successful, can therefore often be a better model for training and staff development than Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (KSA) based training, which is related to job tasks. According to research there are many advantages to using a competency based approach including: relying on the observations
of what people do to be successful instead of assumptions about intangible traits, it uses performance of aspects of a competency to measure and predict performance instead of using testing to measure intangible traits, competencies can be developed, competencies can be made available so that they can be developed and improved, they are associated with life outcomes and real world application (Athey & Orth, 1999; McClelland, 1973).

These competency models consist of a set of, usually 10-30, competencies “that describe the capabilities of successful performers” (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p.2). These models can be further narrowed to sets of core competencies that are universally critical throughout an organization for achieving the desired level of performance.

After identification of essential competencies and creation of a competency model, competency-based training can be developed to help staff improve performance and gain the skills and behaviors to enable them to be exceptional. Creating a competency model will help make training programs more efficient and focus staff and trainers on the behaviors related to exceptional performance (Epley, 2014). In addition, research shows that those organizations who have a great understanding of staff performance characteristics that lead to success can create competitive advantage, and are then able to better “recruit, select, develop, reward, and promote successful people” (Rothwell & Graber, 2010, p. 16.). Those organizations that are most successful have been able to improve staff performance, positively differentiating them from their competitors. These organizations can use these attributes of high staff performance to help leverage strengths and close performance gaps amongst lower performing staff. Using competencies can help target and pinpoint what is most important to success, can help to tie training to performance, and can allow for more efficient and improved communication with staff about qualifications (Rothwell & Graber, 2010).
Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. Although the literature on youth development and camping programs is broad, this review focused on the topics most relevant to camping, youth impacts, and competency development. 4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States with a long, well-documented, and well-researched history of positive outcomes and impacts for youth participants through hands-on learning (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). 4-H camping has long been one of the major delivery modes for 4-H programming. 4-H camping programs, like other 4-H programming are aimed at life skill development (Van Horn, et.al., 1998). Youth camping programs in the United States employ over 1.5 million staff and serve more than 14 total children and adults each year (American Camp Association, 2016). 4-H youth development programs are evaluated for quality using the eight essential elements: positive relationships with caring adults, an inclusive environment, a safe environment, opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future, opportunity for self-determination, engagement in learning, opportunity for mastery, and the opportunity to value and practice service. All of these elements are influenced directly and indirectly by paid 4-H camp staff and volunteer counselors. Therefore, staff training and development are key components in creating a quality camp environment (Garst, et al., 2011). Camp staff members are directly responsible for producing the positive outcomes and impacts for youth camp participants (Browne, 2018).

Current camp staff training in the United States focuses primarily on American Camp Association Standards, which are largely related to safety, (American Camp Association, n.d.), and the eight essential elements of 4-H youth development programs (Arnold, et al., 2013).
Effective staff training can be directly linked to positive youth development environments, and youth outcomes and impacts (Epley, et al., 2018; Hall & Cassidy, 2002; Howell, et al., 2017; Howes, 1997; NICHD ECCRN, 2001; Norris, 2001; Rosenthal & Vandell, 1996; Weaver, et al., 2014). Research agrees that identifying core competencies is a critical first step in developing a well-trained workforce and delivering quality youth development programs (Stone, et al., 2004). Competencies can be defined as “a set of observable performance dimensions, including individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as, collective team, process, and organizational capabilities, that are linked to high performance, and provide the organization with sustainable competitive advantage” (Athey & Orth, 1999, p. 216). Competency modeling and development can be a better model for staff development since it focuses on tangible and measurable behaviors, skills, and performance of staff. These competencies can then be developed and improved, communicated, and are associated with real world outcomes and application (Athey & Orth, 1999; McClelland, 1973).

Competency based staff selection, training and development can help staff to improve performance, and gain desirable skills and behaviors (Epley, 2014). Competencies can be used to develop systems aimed at appropriately selecting, recruiting, developing, rewarding, and promoting staff (Rothwell & Graber, 2010; United States Department of Agriculture, 2017). Professional development, training, and communication of standards are effective strategies to align behaviors of staff with identified competencies (Weaver, et al., 2014).
CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. The development of this knowledge serves as a basis on which appropriate decision making regarding the content of 4-H camp staff training and development can be made, pinpointing what qualities are most important to staff success, connecting training to behaviors and performance, and improving communication with staff regarding qualifications (Rothwell & Graber, 2010). This chapter describes the methodology used to implement this study including; research design, panel selection, instrumentation, data collection and the analysis of data.

Research Design

The Delphi technique was used to conduct the study because the Delphi technique is effective in building the consensus among the selected panel of experts. This technique was developed by Dalkey and Helmer at the Rand Corporation in the 1950’s, and is used for the purpose of “achieving convergence of opinion concerning real-world knowledge solicited from experts” (Hsu & Sanford, 2007, p. 2). This method is effective in answering a specific question or problem (Gunaydin, n.d.), through structured communication. This process uses several iterations to come to a group consensus, using feedback at each iteration. Additional characteristics of this technique include anonymity of subjects, and a geographic dispersion of subjects, through the use of internet or mail-based communication. Geographic dispersion of experts has benefits for minimizing the various downsides that are associated with group
dynamics including, manipulation, or pressure from other group members to conform or adopt a certain viewpoint (Hsu & Sanford, 2007).

Within this framework, specific steps can be identified for the Delphi Technique, as described by Fowles (1978).

1. The formation of a team to undertake and monitor the Delphi
2. Selection of the panel of experts in the area to be investigated
3. Development of the round one questionnaire
4. Testing the questionnaire for proper wording and structure
5. First round questionnaire sent to panelists
6. Analysis of data from the first round
7. Development of the round two questionnaire
8. Second round questionnaire sent to panelists
9. Analysis of data from the second round (Steps 7-9 are repeated as long as necessary)
10. Reporting of data and presentation of conclusions by the analysis team

For this study, one panel of experts was selected to determine the most critical competencies and the related behaviors of high performance for 4-H camp staff. This design allowed the researcher to reach a consensus without having face-to-face meetings with the identified panel of experts (Helmer-Hirschberg, 1966).

Panel Selection

The selection of subjects in a Delphi study is dependent upon the area of expertise required to answer the target issues (Hsu & Sanford, 2007). This step is often the most overlooked of the Delphi method (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Delbecq, Van de Ven, and
Gustafson (1975) give three specific groups of people who are qualified subjects for a Delphi study. These groups include:

1. “the top management decision makers who will utilize the outcomes of the Delphi study;
2. the professional staff members together with their support team; and
3. the respondents to the Delphi questionnaire whose judgments are being sought” (p. 85).

When addressing the issue of the appropriate size of the panel, Delbecq, Van de Ven, and Gustafson (1975) suggest that a minimally sufficient number of subjects should be used. Other sources describe panel size as “generally determined by the number required to constitute a representative pooling of judgements and the information processing capability of the research team” (Ludwig, 1994, p. 52). Okoli and Pawlowski (2004) point to a panel of 10-18 experts as the consensus in literature regarding sample size.

The first step in identifying experts is to prepare a knowledge resource nomination worksheet (KRNW). By creating and using this type of tool, the researcher can ensure that no class of expert has been excluded from the panel. The researchers, who are familiar with 4-H camping, determine the most important organizations, positions, and classes that should be represented in the final panel of experts. This stage focuses on identifying the different “classes of experts” (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004).

The second step is filling in the KRNW with names of experts. First, going through the personal contacts of the researcher and filling in as many names as possible into their respective categories. However, since those contacts are limited and biased to the researcher’s networks, additional experts must be identified. This initial list of experts is contacted in the third step and
asked to nominate additional experts. This step did not ask those experts to participate, instead it explained that they have been identified as experts, and that the researchers were compiling biographical data. This step is used to gather as many experts as possible. Biographical data collected included relevant information that would qualify each person as an expert (Okolo & Pawlowski, 2004) including: number of papers published, presentations made, number of years in 4-H camping, positions, etc.

Ranking the experts by their qualifications is the fourth step in the process, creating sub-lists of camping practitioners (center directors, program directors, etc.), state level camping staff, and academics. Then the research team ranked each sub-list according to qualifications, and reconciled each individual list to create one ranking for each sub-list. Concluding in the invitation of the most qualified experts to participate in the study (step five), with the required sample size of 10-18, representative of all of the sub-lists. The maximum sample size was chosen to allow for any attrition. Each panelist was asked to commit to completing three 15-minute questionnaires and returning them within three days of receipt, for a total of 45 minutes over the course of a month and a half. In addition, the experts were required to have email and internet access for receiving and returning the questionnaires (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Since each expert identified is associated with a university and uses university email this is not seen as a biasing factor. After each expert committed to participate, they were sent the informed consent letter followed by the first questionnaire (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975).

The panel for this study consisted of 4-H camping experts from across the United States including: 4-H camp researchers and academics, camping program directors, camp center directors and program directors, etc. The selection process resulted in a list of 34 potential experts. From that group, 23 were determined to be experts in camping and agreed to participate
in the study. The selection of the expert panel was based on experience in 4-H camping, educational background, geographic location, experience in camp research, and experience related to staff selection, development, and training. An informed consent letter was sent to each participant via electronic mail. The first iteration survey was sent after each participant agreed to the informed consent.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The Delphi questionnaires were administered using email and the online survey tool Qualtrics. Web-based media hold an advantage over traditional mail-based questionnaires in this type of study since they are able to speed up the turn-around time between iterations. This is important as time is often considered one of the major disadvantages to this survey approach. Using the web can speed up the study considerably (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Schmidt, 1997, defines three steps for “ranking-type” Delphi studies. First, brainstorming to identify answers, narrowing the original list, and third, ranking the answers.

After agreeing to participate, an initial letter from the researcher defining the objective for the study and formally asking them to participate in the study was sent, along with the first-round questionnaire (Stewart, 2003). The first round of questionnaire asked participants to identify competencies that are critical to the success of residential camp staff members and related behaviors. Experts were also asked to offer explanations for each response to help define the importance of each of their identified competencies. These explanations were used to help the researcher categorize and consolidate the various competencies that will be used in the next iterations of the study. Finally, the experts were asked to list behaviors that would demonstrate proficiency under each of the competencies they listed, addressing the second research objective.
Follow-up emails were sent to increase response rate (Stewart, 2003). The analysis of data from the first questionnaire removed duplicate responses, recorded the number of experts that suggested each competency, and then grouped the suggested competencies into logical categories (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004).

The second round of questionnaires focused on validating the consolidated list of competencies. This was necessary as the consolidation and categorization was completed by the researchers and not the experts. This iteration contains the consolidated and categorized list from the first iteration and asks experts to both check that the competencies and behaviors were correctly interpreted and categorized appropriately and allows the experts to refine and provide feedback about the categorizations (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004; Schmidt, 1997). In addition, the experts are offered an opportunity to list additional competencies and behaviors that many have been left off the initial list. This step is necessary in order to ensure the validity of the study. Finally, experts were asked to rank the competencies by importance. The competencies were included in the survey randomly in order to cancel out bias in the order of the list. The competencies that were ranked highly by over 50% of the panelists were retained for the final list, with a target of no more than 20-23 items (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Follow up emails were used to increase the response rate (Stewart, 2003).

The third round of questionnaire was developed by the researcher based upon the responses gathered in the first and second round. Each competency was listed in order of importance along with a brief explanation, and associated behaviors compiled and refined from previous responses. A five-point Likert-type scale, one being very important and five being not at all important, was used to facilitate the prioritization of the importance of each of the competencies and paired behaviors. These ranked lists are intended to reflect the priority order of
their responses. Respondents also had the opportunity to comment explaining and justifying their rankings, as well as comment on any thoughts or ideas that they felt may have been left out or needed modification. Follow-up emails were again used to increase response rate (Stewart, 2003).

**Analysis of Data**

The first round of data collection was expected to have many duplications and overlap amongst responses. The researcher sorted, categorized, and interpreted these competencies resulting in a competencies, descriptions, and related behaviors. Experts were given the opportunity to provide feedback and comments regarding their responses. These comments were used to clarify and inform the interpretation of the competencies. The list of competencies and related behaviors was reviewed for accuracy by a 4-H expert who was not a participant in the study.

Data from the second and third iteration of this study were analyzed using mode and percentages from the ranking and rating of the competencies respectively. This allowed for the researcher to identify priority competencies. Judgments on the data set were made by including only competencies ranked highly by over 50% of the panelists (Stewart, 2003). Again, the experts were asked to provide explanations for the competency items and for any revisions. A 4-H expert who was not a participant in the study reviewed the list at each iteration for accuracy, and to ensure that the list reflected the intent of the study participants.

The final list of competencies was prioritized using the majority rank from the second and third iteration lists.
Chapter Summary

The Delphi technique was used for the purpose of this study. This technique uses a small panel of experts in the field to be studied to develop consensus around a specific question through several iterations of questioning. This study used a panel of experts in 4-H Camping to address the study questions of: What are the most critical competencies for 4-H camp staff? And, what staff behaviors are related to exceptional performance within each critical competency?

Three iterations of surveys were used for this purpose. The first iteration collected a large number of responses and each successive iteration validated, narrowed, and ranked those responses to reach a consensus on the most critical competencies for camp staff success, and the paired behaviors related to these competencies. Resulting in a final list of critical competencies for 4-H camp staff, and the related behaviors that indicate high performance in those competencies.
CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. This study began in the summer of 2020 and was completed in the fall of 2020. The Delphi technique was used in this study, utilizing a panel of 23 4-H camping experts to identify critical competencies and related behaviors through a series of surveys. This study used three rounds of online surveys to collect data.

Findings Related to Research Questions

The study aimed to accomplish the following specific objectives: to determine the most critical competencies for 4-H camp staff and to identify staff behaviors which are related to exceptional performance, and display competency. The study used the online survey software “Qualtrics” to collect data, and electronic mail to send out surveys and study communications.

The first round of the study asked participants to list the most critical 4-H camp staff competencies and related behaviors, and resulted in responses from 22 expert panel members out of 23 contributing to 96% response rate. The survey also asked for any additional comments. Two reminders were sent out ahead of the response deadline via electronic mail. These experts shared 155 competencies and related behaviors. This extensive list had many duplications and overlaps amongst responses. The researcher sorted, categorized, and interpreted these competencies resulting in a list of 23 competencies, descriptions, and related behaviors. The list was reviewed for accuracy by a 4-H expert who was not a participant in the study. The
interpreted and categorized competencies included the following 23 in alphabetical order (See the Appendix J for descriptions and related behaviors of these competencies identified by the expert panel):

- Adaptability
- Communication
- Engaged and Camper Centered
- Enthusiasm and Humor
- Judgement and Maturity
- Knowledge of Youth Development Pedagogy
- Leadership and Role-Modeling
- Organization and Time Management
- Passion for 4-H and 4-H Culture
- Physical Health
- Positivity
- Problem Solving and Creativity
- Program Planning
- Relationship Building and Compassion
- Respect and Cultural Competence
- Responsibility
- Risk Management and Safety
- Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills
- Teaching Ability
- Teamwork
- Trustworthiness and Independence
- Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision
- Work Ethic and Initiative

This list was then used to develop the second iteration survey instrument. This survey asked respondents to rank the competencies, from 1 to 23 (1 being the most important and 23 being the least important) based on their importance to the success of 4-H camp staff, and then to provide feedback on each competency to verify that they were correctly interpreted and categorized appropriately after the first round. Respondents also were given an opportunity to list any additional competencies that may have been left off the list. Nineteen expert panel members out of 23 responded to the second iteration survey comprising 83% response rate. Two reminders were sent to participants ahead of the response deadline via electronic mail to increase response
rate. Responses were analyzed by using the percentage of respondents that ranked each competency in the top 2/3. The analysis of overall results from the second iteration have been summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Rating of the Competencies by Delphi Panel Members at the End of the Second Round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Ranking in the Top 2/3</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Ranking in the Top 2/3</th>
<th>Ranking Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1 (Most important)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethics, Initiative, and Independence</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building and Compassion</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving and Creativity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Role Modelling</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Maturity</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Cultural Competence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management and Safety</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Time Management</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Youth Dev. Pedagogy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged and Camper Centered</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Matter Knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for 4-H</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10 (Least important)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The feedback from the second iteration survey was used to further refine the consensus and identify the competencies and related behaviors. These changes included some wording
changes to the descriptions and related behaviors to better reflect the intent of the study participants. For example, the name of one competency “Physical Health” was changed to “Health and Wellness” as a result of comments and feedback received from the second-round survey. This change was made in order to better reflect the intent of the study participants. These changes were reviewed by a 4-H expert who was not a participant in the study. All 23 competencies with revised wording were included for the final iteration.

In round three, participants were asked to individually rate each competency and related behavior on a five-point Likert-scale, 1=extremely important, 2=very important, 3=moderately important, 4=slightly important, and 5=not at all important. This additional rating was used to validate, build the consensus, and further narrow the list of competencies. Again, respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments. Two reminders were sent to participants ahead of the response deadline via electronic mail to increase response rate. Twenty-two expert panel members out of 23 responded to the third iteration survey leading to 96% response rate. Responses were analyzed by using the percentage of participants who rated each competency as extremely important or very important. Table 2 summarizes the results from the third round.
Table 2. Rating of the Competencies by Delphi Panel Members at the End of the Third Round.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as 1(Extremely Important)</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as 2(Very Important)</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as 3(Moderately Important)</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as 4(Slightly Important)</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as 5(Not at all Important)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Rated as Extremely Important (1) or Very Important (2)</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents Rated as Extremely Important (1) or Very Important (2)</th>
<th>Rating Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1 (Most important)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged and Camper Centered</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethics, Initiative, and Independence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management and Safety</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building and Compassion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Role Modelling</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 (continued).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Maturity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Cultural Competence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving and Creativity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Time Management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Positive Youth Development Practices</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Ability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Matter Knowledge</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for 4H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many comments in the third iteration pointed to an interconnectedness of the competencies, and overlap in the behaviors that reflect success in those competencies. The analysis of the ranking of the competencies at the second round (Table 1) and the ratings of competencies at the third round (Table 2) were used to determine the critical competencies as summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. The Highest Rated Competencies in Both Second and Third Rounds of Delphi Process.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Rated Competency List at Both 2nd and 3rd Round</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Ranking in the Top 2/3 at the 2nd Round (N=19)</th>
<th>Number of Respondents Rated as Extremely Important or Very Important in the 3rd Round (N=22)</th>
<th>Combined number of respondents rated as important both at the 2nd and 3rd rounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethics, Initiative, and Independence</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building and Compassion</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Maturity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Role Modelling</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management and Safety</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Cultural Competence</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving and Creativity</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged and Camper Centered</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The final list of critical competencies are responsibility; work ethic, initiative, and independence; relationship building and compassion; teamwork; communication; judgement and maturity; leadership and role modeling; risk management and safety; respect and cultural competence; problem solving and creativity; engaged and camper centered; adaptability; willingness to learn and accept supervision; trustworthiness; and organization and time management.

The critical competencies, descriptions, and related behaviors of these competencies are presented in Table 4.
Table 4. *The Critical Competencies, Descriptions, and Related Behaviors.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Related Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with integrity. Ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. Ability to take accountability for actions.</td>
<td>Acts appropriately around campers, follows through with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where he/she is supposed to be when he/she is supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands and follows policies and procedures, puts camper needs first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic, Initiative, and Independence</td>
<td>Commitment to goals. Self-motivated and ability to identify and complete tasks without being told. Ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. Ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Voluntarily and consistently goes above and beyond what is required and expected. Displays confidence, and takes appropriate action without being told. Takes appropriate risks.</td>
<td>Doesn’t complain, follows through with commitment, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't his/her job, makes decisions independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building and Compassion</td>
<td>Ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. Ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. Ability to demonstrate understanding without judgement. Ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. Ability to create a welcoming environment.</td>
<td>Engages with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully, acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience. Works with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. Can follow and lead as needed. Can identify shared goals.</td>
<td>Contributes ideas and acts to accomplish shared goals, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments, get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth. Gives information in a clear, professional, and kind way. Ability to face and address conflicts. Ability to listen and understand others. Relatable to camp audience and able to adapt communication to camp audience, or the situation. Ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc.</td>
<td>Uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express themselves in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Maturity</td>
<td>Ability to make reasonable decisions and think critically. Ability to apply fairness and equity to decisions. Knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their application. Ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. Ability to be patient and level headed.</td>
<td>Follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate, only discusses sensitive situations when appropriate, when quickly address situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to understand issues, calm under stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued).

| Leadership and Role Modeling | Professional. Ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, his/her fellow staff members. Ability to teach and lead by example. Helps group to meet goals. Ability to provide positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Steps up when necessary to ensure success. Displays integrity, honesty, and caring. | Well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, serves as a positive example for other staff, offers advice when needed, helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, models appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted into progressive camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes, does the right thing when no one is looking. |
| Risk Management and Safety | Knowledge of and ability to interpret procedures and policies. Situational and environmental awareness. Ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. Ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. Ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation. Ability to hold peers and others accountable to procedures. | Completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses above suspicion and “rule of 3”, communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions and communicates with camp director/supervisor. |
| Table 4 (continued). | Respect and Cultural Competence | Ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. Ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Doesn't jump to conclusions. Fosters an appreciation of differences. Ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. Ability to intervene in bullying situations. Ability to increase empathy among peers and campers. | Kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities, treats all campers equally, doesn't have “favorite” campers. |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Problem Solving and Creativity | Ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. Ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Willing to seek additional information from others. Ability to assess situations. Ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done. | Stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates back up plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for help, addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities. |
| Engaged and Camper Centered | Demonstrates a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Focused on camper experience. Demonstrates engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities. | Smiling, getting down on camper's level to speak, use words campers can understand, provides simple instructions, spends time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with campers, actively communicates, is engaged in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff. |
Table 4 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Ability to make changes as needed and be flexible.</td>
<td>Remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, ensures camper experience is positively affected by change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes. Ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes. Receptive to new ways of doing things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision</td>
<td>Ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better himself/herself. Demonstrates interest in new subjects and trying new things. Ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism.</td>
<td>Responds to leadership, isn't defensive or argumentative, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new skills, likes to meet new people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Ability to be relied on as honest and truthful.</td>
<td>Keeps campers’ medical information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when he/she is not supervised, understands his/her role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to complete tasks without supervision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization and Time Management</td>
<td>Ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently.</td>
<td>Gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities, arrives to work rested and prepared for work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. Ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely. Preparedness for work. Ability to balance work and personal life.</td>
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**Summary of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. This study began in the
summer of 2020 and was completed in the fall of 2020. The Delphi technique was used in this study, utilizing a panel of 23 4-H camping experts to identify critical competencies and related behaviors through a series of surveys. This study used three rounds of online surveys to collect data.

The specific objectives of the study were to determine the most critical competencies for 4-H camp staff and to identify staff behaviors which are related to exceptional performance, and display competency. The first round of the study asked participants to list the most critical 4-H camp staff competencies and related behaviors, and resulted in responses from 22 expert panel members out of 23 contributing to 96% response rate. The survey also asked for any additional comments. This survey resulted in 155 competencies with much overlap. This list was closely analyzed and condensed to 23 unique competencies, descriptions, and related behaviors (Appendix J).

This list was then used to develop the second iteration survey instrument. This survey asked respondents to rank the competencies, from 1 to 23 based on their importance to the success of 4-H camp staff, and then to provide feedback on each competency to verify that they were correctly interpreted and categorized appropriately after the first round. Nineteen expert panel members out of 23 responded to the second iteration survey comprising 83% response rate. Responses were analyzed by using the percentage of respondents that ranked each competency in the top 2/3.

The feedback from the second iteration survey was used to further refine the consensus and identify the competencies and related behaviors. In round three, participants were asked to individually rate each competency and related behavior on a five-point Likert-scale, 1=extremely
important, 2=very important, 3=moderately important, 4=slightly important, and 5=not at all important. This additional rating was used to validate, build the consensus, and further narrow the list of competencies. Twenty-two expert panel members out of 23 responded to the third iteration survey leading to 96% response rate. Responses were analyzed by using the percentage of participants who rated each competency as extremely important or very important.

The final list of critical competencies include responsibility; work ethic, initiative, and independence; relationship building and compassion; teamwork; communication; judgement and maturity; leadership and role modeling; risk management and safety; respect and cultural competence; problem solving and creativity; engaged and camper centered; adaptability; willingness to learn and accept supervision; trustworthiness; and organization and time management.
CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff and the related behaviors associated with high staff performance. The findings of this study could be used to help provide direction for 4-H camp staff selection, training, and development, and help to improve the research foundation for the 4-H camping program nationwide. The researcher selected this topic because of the lack of research base related to competencies required for camp staff.

This study used the Delphi technique to collect and analyze data. This technique uses a series of survey rounds to collect, build the consensus, and refine a data set. An expert panel with extensive knowledge and understanding of the study issue is used to collect and refine the data for building the consensus. The selection of this panel of experts is very important to the validity of a Delphi study. The goal of a Delphi study is to create consensus among the expert panel.

The researcher conducted a broad national solicitation for nominations. An initial list was compiled from recommendations from state camping faculty. These experts were then contacted, asked to verify their biographical information, and asked to nominate additional experts in 4-H camping. This process expanded and validated this list. This process resulted in a list of 34 potential experts. From that group, 23 were determined to be experts in camping and agreed to participate in the study. The selection of the expert panel was based on experience in 4-H camping, educational background, geographic location, experience in camp research, and
experience related to staff selection, development, and training. An informed consent letter was sent to each participant via electronic mail, after each individual agreed, the first iteration survey was sent.

Experts were asked to identify the competencies they thought were most critical to the success of 4-H camp staff, and the behaviors that are related to those competencies. The first survey resulted in a categorized list of 23 competencies and related behaviors. These 23 competencies were used to create the second iteration survey which asked experts to rank these competencies from 1 to 23 based on their importance to the success of 4-H camp staff. Then they were asked to provide individual feedback on each competency to refine and validate the interpretations and categorizations from the first round. This round resulted in panel members ranked for each competency and comments to clarify the wording and categorizations. The third round used these data to create another survey which asked respondents to rate each competency on a Likert scale ranging from one being extremely important to five being not at all important. The third-round data were analyzed using the items rated as extremely important or very important by 2/3 of panel members. The items ranked in the top 2/3 by over 50% of the respondents at the second round and the items rated as extremely important or very important by 2/3 of the respondents at the third round were selected as the critical competencies of camp staff. Fifteen competencies out of 23 competencies were identified by using the second round ranking and third round rating data.

The final list of 15 core competencies included those rated highest in both the 2nd and 3rd rounds. These 15 critical competencies are responsibility; work ethic, initiative, and independence; relationship building and compassion; teamwork; communication; judgement and
maturity; leadership and role modeling; risk management and safety; respect and cultural competence; problem solving and creativity; engaged and camper centered; adaptability; willingness to learn and accept supervision; trustworthiness; and organization and time management. The descriptions and related behaviors of these competencies have been summarized in Table 4.

Conclusions

There is much agreement nationwide on the competencies that are most important for 4-H camp staff. This lends credence to the competencies on this list and their applicability to any 4-H program in any state (Epley, 2014; American Camp Association, n.d.; Arnold, et.al., 2013). Competencies for 4-H camp staff are very interconnected and overlapped. This means that the demonstration of one behavior could be linked to success in more than one competency. In addition, improvement in one competency could be related to improvement in another competency because of the interconnectedness. The findings of this study led to conclude the following 15 competencies are critical for 4-H camp staff to be effective.

1. Responsibility is a critical staff competency as defined by the consensus in this study. Responsibility was described by the participants of this study as the ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with integrity. The ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. And the ability to take accountability for actions. Responsibility is found throughout the literature as a competency that is critical to the success of staff in 4-H camp, other camping programs, and more broadly in youth development programming (Peace Corps, 2013). In addition,
research has shown this competency is improved in staff through their participation at camp (Ferrari & Risch, 2013; Martin & Strom, 2017; Owens & Wahle, 2018). The behaviors indicative of success in this competency include acting appropriately around campers, follows through with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where he/she is supposed to be when he/she is supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands and follows policies and procedures, puts camper needs first.

2. Work ethic, initiative, and independence is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Similar competencies can be found in related research under the competency names professionalism and self-direction (Epley, 2014). In addition, this competency was found to be developed in camp staff (Martin & Strom, 2017; Owens & Wahle, 2018). This competency is described in this study as commitment to goals. Self-motivation and the ability to identify and complete tasks without being told. The ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. The ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Staff members voluntarily and consistently go above and beyond what is required and expected. They display confidence, and take appropriate action without being told. They take appropriate risks. The following behaviors indicate success in this competency: doesn't complain, follows through with commitments, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't his/her job, makes decisions independently.

3. Relationship building and compassion is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency overlaps with the ACA competency of creating a safe environment.
Which describes creating an environment that provides emotional safety (American Camp Association, n.d.). In addition, similar competencies can be found in many competency models and related research (American Camp Association, 2020; Browne, 2018; Epley, 2014; Howell, et al., 2017; Peace Corps, 2013; United States Department of Agriculture, 2001). The Delphi panel members described this competency as the ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. The ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. The ability to demonstrate understanding without judgement. The ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. The ability to create a welcoming environment. The following behaviors display this competency: engages with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully, acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.

4. Teamwork is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Teamwork can be found mentioned in a variety of literature and competency models and is often described as cooperative learning (American Camp Association, 2020; Epley, 2014; Peace Corps, 2013). Teamwork is described in this study as the ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience. Staff members work with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. They can follow and lead as needed. They can identify shared goals. The behaviors that display this
competency include: contributes ideas and acts to accomplish shared goals, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments, get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates.

5. Communication is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Communication is another competency that is nearly universal in youth development competency models (American Camp Association, 2020; Epley, 2014; Howell, et al., 2017). This competency is described by the participants in this study as the ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth. Staff members give information in a clear, professional, and kind way. The ability to face and address conflicts. The ability to listen and understand others. The individuals with this competency are relatable to their audience and able to adapt communication to their audience, or the situation. The ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc. This competency can be displayed by the following behaviors: uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express himself/herself in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.

6. Judgement and maturity is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency is described in this study as the ability to make reasonable decisions and
think critically. The ability to apply fairness and equity to decisions. Staff members with this competency have knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their application. The ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. The ability to be patient and level headed. The following behaviors display this competency: follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate, only discusses sensitive situations when appropriate, when quickly address situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to understand issues, calm under stress.

7. Leadership and role-modeling is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Leadership is noted as a critical competency in many of the discussed competency models and related literature (American Camp Association, 2020; Boy Scouts of America, 2017; Epley, 2014). This competency is described by the participants in this study as being professional. The ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, their fellow staff members. The ability to teach and lead by example. Staff members help the group to meet goals. The ability to provide positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Staff members step up when necessary to ensure success. They display integrity, honesty, and caring. The following behaviors display this competency: well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, serves as a positive example for other staff, offers advice when needed, helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, models appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted
into progressive camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes, does the right thing when no one is looking.

8. Risk management and safety is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency of risk management and safety can be found in each of the competency models and related research (Boy Scouts of America, 2017; Epley, 2014; Howell, et al., 2017; Peace Corps, 2013; United States Department of Agriculture, 2001). This competency is described in the ACA training requirements as safety, emergency preparedness, and other safety and wellness competencies (American Camp Association, n.d.). The findings of this study describe this competency as the knowledge of and ability to interpret procedures and policies. Having situational and environmental awareness. The ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. The ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. The ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation. And the ability to hold peers and others accountable to procedures. The behaviors that display this competency include: completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses above suspicion and “rule of 3”, communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions and communicates with camp director/supervisor.

9. Respect and cultural competence is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency is further validated by its presence in the ACA competencies for camp
staff under creating a safe environment. This describes speaking and listening to campers in a manner that reflects respect for each individual, including those with different backgrounds and abilities (American Camp Association, n.d.). Many competency models discussed in this paper also point to caring adults as a critical element of competent staff. These models discuss emotional safety and respect for others (American Camp Association, 2020; Epley, 2014; Howell, et al., 2017; Peace Corps, 2013; United States Department of Agriculture, 2001). This competency is described in this study as the ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. The ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Staff members with this competency appreciate differences and don’t jump to conclusions. The ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. The ability to intervene in bullying situations. And the ability to increase empathy among peers and campers. The behaviors that display this competency include: kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities, treats all campers equally, doesn’t have “favorite” campers.

10. Problem solving and creativity is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Elements of this competency can be found in other competency models and related research (Epley, 2014). This competency is described in this study as the ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. The ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Individuals with competency are willing to
seek additional information from others. The ability to assess situations. And the ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done. The behaviors that display this competency include: stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates back up plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for help, addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities.

11. Engaged and camper centered is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency can also be found in the ACA competencies for staff under creating a safe environment. The relevant competency discusses focusing attention on campers’ needs and interests rather than other staff and themselves (American Camp Association, n.d.). This competency can be found in many camp competency models and related research (American Camp Association, 2020; Browne, 2018). The American Camp Association (2020) points to staff being a voice for campers, and creating belonging as critical to the success of camp. This competency is described in this study as demonstrating a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Staff have a knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Staff are focused on camper experience. And staff demonstrate engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities. The following behaviors display this competency: smiling, getting down on camper's level to speak, use words campers can understand, provide simple instructions, spend time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with campers, actively communicates, is engaged
in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff.

12. Adaptability is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency is described in this study as the ability to make changes as needed and be flexible. The ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes. The ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes. And the staff with this competency are receptive to new ways of doing things. The following behaviors display this competency: remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, ensures camper experience is positively affected by change.

13. Willingness to learn and accept supervision is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. Variations of this competency can often be found in other competency models and related research, often described as the professional development competency (Epley, 2014). This competency is described in this study as the ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better themselves. Staff having this competency demonstrate interest in new subjects and trying new things. They have the ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism. The following behaviors display this competency: responds to leadership, isn't defensive or argumentative, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new skills, likes to meet new people.
14. Trustworthiness is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This competency is described in this study as the ability to be relied on as honest and truthful and the ability to complete tasks without supervision. The following behaviors display this competency: keeps campers’ medical information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when they are not supervised, understands their role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.

15. Organization and time management is a critical competency for 4-H camp staff. This is important as camp staff are responsible for maintaining camp schedules and routines (Browne, 2018; Howell, et al. 2017). This competency is described in this study as the ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently. The ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. The ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely. They exhibit a preparedness for work. And the ability to balance work and personal life. The following behaviors display this competency: gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities, arrives to work rested and prepared for work.

Implications

The results of this study show that there are 15 competencies that are critically important for the success of 4-H camp staff. 4-H camping programs vary greatly from state to state, in both their structure and staffing, however 4-H camping experts largely agree on the competencies that are important to the success of the staff in their programs. Since the skills and competency of 4-H camp staff are directly related to the quality of the camping program and the impacts and
results camp participants have (Garst et al., 2011), it is practically important that staff hiring, development, and evaluation be related to these critical competencies.

In addition, the research base has been expanded by this study. Specifically, this study analyzed a specific program characteristic (staff competency) that leads to positive outcomes and impacts. This will allow program planning and training to be standardized with regards to 4-H camp staff. This standardization will allow camp leaders to prioritize training on competencies that will lead to the most significant impact for camp participants. Further research should be done to link these competencies to positive impacts and outcomes among 4-H camp participants. Further, the related behaviors give this research a very practical and applicable use in current 4-H programming allowing managers to directly evaluate success in each competency by observing and evaluating related behaviors.

First, hiring practices should be adjusted to account for these competencies, especially those that are difficult to train within a short period of time. Such as work ethic and initiative and responsibility. Interview questions and applicant screening should be related to these critical competencies. Related behaviors of critical competencies can be used to identify potential camping staff. Additional research should be done to determine which competencies are most important for hiring versus which are the most important for staff development. This research can be further used to determine competence of 4-H camp staff, write job descriptions, plan and develop training (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017).

The identification of these critical competencies has pinpointed what capabilities are most important to camp staff success, will help leaders connect training to behaviors and performance, while allowing for improved communication with staff regarding qualifications
(Rothwell & Graber, 2010). This competency set provides a start for more concrete measurement of training standards against the identified competencies. By comparing these competencies to the topics and aims of current staff training rubrics, state programs can improve 4-H camp staff training so that it might be most effective.

The competencies, and the related behaviors can also be used to create evaluation rubrics that are related both to the training staff receive and the topics that experts have identified as most important to their success as a camp staff person. This will allow camp leadership to actively monitor the success of staff and provide on-going training and development where needed. This ability will improve the quality of camp, and the camp’s ability to produce positive outcomes and impacts for participants. In addition, using these competencies to guide evaluation will also help the individual staff members better understand the areas in which they are having success, and in which they are not and be better prepared to address those. Using the behaviors related to each competency, camp leadership can easily observe and measure staff that are successful in each competency.

Using competency-based training will ensure a basic level of training across the board, allow leadership to make better hiring decisions, develop best training activities, and properly evaluate the successes and failures of staff (Epley, 2014). Having competencies to base staff hiring, job descriptions, development, and evaluation will improve the overall quality of 4-H camping programs nationwide, and allow for consistency across camping programs.

Further study into the competencies that are most important to hiring, those that would be the most important for training and development, and those that are important for evaluation should be determined to create a more complete model for these applications. In addition, this
research could be used to develop a self-assessment tool for staff to determine their own competency (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017).

**Recommendations**

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made for 4-H camp staff hiring, training, and evaluation as well as for future research related to 4-H camp staff competency.

1. Camp staff hiring practices, including job descriptions, interview questions and applicant screening, should be adjusted to look for these competencies and behaviors in applicants for selecting individuals to be successful as 4-H camp staff (Athey & Orth, 1999; Epley, 2014; McClelland, 1973; Rothwell & Graber, 2010, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017).

2. These critical competencies and related behaviors should be used to determine the contents for training modules to optimize 4-H camp staff success, and to improve impacts and outcomes of camping programs (Athey & Orth, 1999; Epley, 2014; McClelland, 1973; Rothwell & Graber, 2010, United States Department of Agriculture, 2017).

3. Evaluation rubrics should be developed and validated based on these competencies and related behaviors, for on-going staff evaluation during the camp season, self-evaluation, and for final end-of-season staff evaluations (United States Department of Agriculture, 2017).
4. Core competencies and related behaviors should be posted and regularly communicated with staff to increase behavior alignment to competencies.

5. Training should be conducted to include both paid staff and volunteers for the competencies that overlap between these roles.

6. Research should be conducted by the 4-H profession on the critical competencies identified in this study to further refine and expand upon this study.

7. Additional research should be done using an alternative method to further validate and refine the findings of this study.

8. Comments from experts pointed to some competencies being more or less important depending on the application. Further research should be done to prioritize these competencies for hiring, training and development, and evaluation of staff respectively.

9. Further research should be done to directly link these competencies to positive impacts and outcomes among 4-H camp participants.

10. A national 4-H organization should look further into the program characteristics, like staff competency, that lead to success and impact in 4-H camping programs. These characteristics should be established through further research, and programming should be adjusted and optimized to produce desired outcomes of 4-H camps.
REFERENCES


American Camp Association (2006b). *Innovations: Improving Youth Experiences in Summer Programs*


Appendix A

Knowledge Resource Nomination Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Name</th>
<th>University or Organization</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Other Reason for Selection</th>
<th>Confirmed?</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
<th>Referred By:</th>
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Appendix B

First Iteration Survey

Defining 4-H Camp Staff Competencies and Related Staff Behaviors: 1st Iteration

Start of Block: SURVEY INSTRUCTION

Start of Block: Informed Consent

Welcome to the Camp Staff Competency Delphi Study!
Thank you for agreeing to serve on our 4-H Camp Staff Expert panel for a national study to identify critical competencies for 4-H residential camp staff, and the related behaviors indicating excellence in staff performance. My hope is that this study will help to provide direction for the future of camp staff training and development, and will help to improve and streamline camping impacts nationwide. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

When you respond to the following questionnaire, please list the most critical 4-H camp staff competencies, and related behaviors. Your response is appreciated and critical to the success of this study.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

Please complete and return your responses by August 31.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

Thank you again for your input, and I look forward to hearing from you!
Please list and briefly describe the competencies and related behaviors that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

Competencies are defined as characteristics of individual staff members that lead to acceptable or exceptional performance. Competencies may refer to abilities, skills, behaviors, knowledge, or behaviors that lead to acceptable or exceptional staff performance.

Q36  1.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

   o Competency ________________________________________________
   o Description of Competency ________________________________________________
   o Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ________________________________________________

Q37  2.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

   o Competency ________________________________________________
   o Description of Competency ________________________________________________
   o Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ________________________________________________
Q38 3.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________

Q39 4.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________

Q40 5.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________
Q41 6.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

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<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description of Competency</th>
<th>Behavior(s) of staff that display competency</th>
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Q42 7.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

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Q43 8.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

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Q44 9.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________

Q45 10.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________

Q46 11.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency ____________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________
Q47 12.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency __________________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________________

Q48 13.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency __________________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________________

Q49 14.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

- Competency ________________________________________________
- Description of Competency __________________________________________
- Behavior(s) of staff that display competency ____________________________
Q50 15.) Please list and briefly describe a competency and related behavior(s) that are most critical to the success of residential 4-H camp staff members.

☐ Competency __________________________________________________________

☐ Description of Competency _____________________________________________

☐ Behavior(s) of staff that display competency

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Q21 What other competencies or comments would you like to share?

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_____________________________________________________________________
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Q34 Thank you for completing the first iteration of this survey. You should receive the second iteration by September 7.

End of Block: Informed Consent
Appendix C

Second Iteration Survey

Defining Camp Staff Competencies and Related Behaviors: 2nd Iteration

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Thank you for your inputs for the first round of this Delphi study. This second online survey includes all unique responses provided by the Delphi panel members in the first round. They have been categorized and interpreted to remove duplicate responses.

First, please rank the competencies based on importance.

You will then be directed to check that the competencies and behaviors were correctly interpreted and categorized appropriately. Please refine and provide feedback about the categorized competencies.

Finally, please list any additional competencies and behaviors that many have been left off the initial list.

Q1 Please rank the competencies below based on importance

Teamwork
Description: Ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience. Works with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. Can follow and lead as needed. Can identify shared goals.

Behaviors that display competency: Contributes ideas, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments, get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates

Leadership and Role-Modeling
Description: Professional. Ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, their fellow staff members. Ability to teach and lead by example. Helps group to meet goals. Ability to provide
positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Steps up when necessary to ensure success. Displays integrity, honesty, and caring.

Behaviors that display competency: Well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, stands up to other staff, offers advice when needed, helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, models appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted into camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes.

Work Ethic and Initiative
Description: Commitment to goals. Self-motivated and ability to identify and completes tasks without being told. Ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. Ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Goes above and beyond what is required and expected. Displays confidence.

Behaviors that display competency: Doesn't complain, follows through with commitments, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't their job.

Communication
Description: Ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth. Gives information in a clear, professional, and kind way. Ability to face and address conflicts. Ability to listen and understand others. Relatable to their audience and able to adapt communication to their audience. Ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc.

Behaviors that display competency: Uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express themselves in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.

Respect and Cultural Competence
Description: Ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. Ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Doesn't jump to conclusions. Fosters an appreciation of differences. Ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. Ability to intervene in bullying situations. Ability to increase empathy among peers and campers.

Behaviors that display competency: Kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities.

Relationship Building and Compassion
Description: Ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. Ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. Ability to demonstrate understanding
without judgement. Ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. Ability create a welcoming environment.

Behaviors that display competency: Sits with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully, acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.

Risk Management and Safety
Description: Knowledge of procedures and policies. Situational and environmental awareness. Ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. Ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. Ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation.

Behaviors that display competency: Completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses above suspicion "rule of 3," communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions of camp director/supervisor.

Organization and Time Management
Description: Ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently. Ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. Ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely. Preparedness for work.

Behaviors that display competency: Gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities.

Program Planning
Description: Ability to create and plan activities that are appropriate, engage campers, and follow the ages and stages of youth development.

Behaviors that display competency: Can communicate steps, timing, and supplies needed for activities, tailors’ activities to interests and abilities of campers, measures learning through feedback and evaluation.

Knowledge of Youth Development Pedagogy
Description: Knowledge of Positive Youth Development model and best practices for providing a positive experience for youth. Understanding of "normal” camper behaviors based on ages and stages of development. Ability to use age appropriate communication with youth. Ability to adjust programs and activities to fit needs of campers. Knowledge of essential elements, Thrive, ages and stages, life skills, or other models used at their camp.

Behaviors that display competency: Can describe youth development pedagogy, provide a positive experience for youth, acts as a role model, gives attention to campers, plans appropriate
activities, has realistic expectations, set age appropriate limits for campers, seek to understand motivators of camper behavior.

Problem Solving and Creativity
Description: Ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. Ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Ability to assess situations. Ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done.
Behaviors that display competency: stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates back up plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for help, addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities.

Judgement and Maturity
Description: Ability to make reasonable decisions and think critically. Ability to apply fairness and equity to decisions. Knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their application. Ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. Ability to be patient and level headed. Ability to manage camper behavior.
Behaviors that display competency: Follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate, quickly address situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to understand issues, calm under stress.

Responsibility
Description: Ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with integrity. Ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. Ability to take accountability for actions.
Behaviors that display competency: Acts appropriately around campers, follows through with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where they are supposed to be
when they are supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands and follows policies and procedures, puts camper needs first.

**Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision**
Description: Ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better themselves. Demonstrates interest in new subjects and try new things. Ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism.
Behaviors that display competency: Responds to leadership, isn't defensive or arguing, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new skills, likes to meet new people.

**Adaptability**
Description: Ability to make changes as needed and be flexible. Ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes. Ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes. Receptive to new ways of doing things.
Behaviors that display competency: Remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, camper experience is not affected by change.

**Physical Health**
Description: Ability to work long days, walk long distances, deal with heat, rain, etc. and still react appropriately to campers. Demonstrates and models wellness to campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Takes appropriate breaks, gets rest, eats properly, has routines, has energy when completing tasks, eager to be involved in activities.

**Teaching Ability**
Description: Ability to teach and lead activities to facilitate learning. Knowledge of techniques to engage campers. Ability to adjust activities to campers’ abilities.
Behaviors that display competency: Can prepare and follow lesson plans, clearly explains directions, demonstrates steps, shows enthusiasm for subject, teaches by example, uses knowledge of campers to help convey new message, can assess successful gain of knowledge, demonstrates patience with campers.

**Trustworthiness and Independence**
Description: Ability to be relied on as honest and truthful. Ability to complete tasks without supervision. Demonstrates confidence and takes risks.
Behaviors that display competency: Keeps campers’ information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when they are not
supervised, makes decisions independently, understands their role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.

Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills
Description: Knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate for the subjects they will focus on. Ability to demonstrate and teach technical skills and safety in their subject area (swimming, archery, climbing, etc.)
Behaviors that display competency: Practice skills, look for opportunities to develop skills, excited about their subject area, effectively teach skills to others, demonstrate knowledge of equipment and safety, properly cares for equipment and facilities.

Engaged and Camper Centered
Description: Demonstrates a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Focused on camper experience. Demonstrates engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities.
Behaviors that display competency: Smiling, getting down on camper's level to speak, use words campers can understand, provide simple instructions, spend time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with campers, actively communicates, is engaged in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff.

Enthusiasm and Humor
Description: Ability to create energy, passion, and excitement for activities and programs. Ability to have fun and enjoy time at camp. Ability to laugh, be laughed at, be silly. Ability to encourage, support and bring people together through fun. Ability to create happy and joyous experiences for campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Laughs quickly and often, smiles, uses silliness to engage campers, friendly and engages with others, effectively leads camp songs and activities,
participates with kids, positive energy, tries new things, looks for opportunities for spontaneous fun, infectious happiness, demonstrates a can-do attitude.

Passion for 4-H and 4-H Culture
Description: Ability to build connection between camper and the broader 4-H program. Knowledge of 4-H and camp traditions and culture. Passionate about 4-H and camp experience. Knowledge of the impact of camp for campers. Ability to identify mission and purpose of camp.
Behaviors that display competency: Can tell the 4-H story, has prior 4-H experience, promotes 4-H to campers, prioritizes camper needs, participates in camp traditions.

Positivity
Description: Ability to create positive climate and culture at camp. Ability to interact positively with campers, staff, and supervisors. Ability to celebrate accomplishments of others and encourage. Demonstrates an attitude of optimism and care for the community of camp.
Behaviors that display competency: Celebrates others, shares optimistic works and thoughts, seeks solutions to issues, innovative and creative, smiling, participating in camp traditions and songs.

Q5 Please check that the competencies and behaviors were correctly interpreted and categorized appropriately. Please refine and provide feedback about the categorized competencies.

Q2 Teamwork
Description: Ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience. Works with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. Can follow and lead as needed. Can identify shared goals.
Behaviors that display competency: Contributes ideas, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments, get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates
Q7 Leadership and Role-Modeling

Description: Professional. Ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, their fellow staff members. Ability to teach and lead by example. Helps group to meet goals. Ability to provide positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Steps up when necessary to ensure success. Displays integrity, honesty, and caring.

Behaviors that display competency: Well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, stands up to other staff, offers advice when needed, helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, models appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted into camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes.

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Q8 Work Ethic and Initiative

Description: Commitment to goals. Self-motivated and ability to identify and completes tasks without being told. Ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. Ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Goes above and beyond what is required and expected. Displays confidence.

Behaviors that display competency: Doesn't complain, follows through with commitments, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't their job.

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Q9 Communication
Description: Ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth. Gives information in a clear, professional, and kind way. Ability to face and address conflicts. Ability to listen and understand others. Relatable to their audience and able to adapt communication to their audience. Ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc.

Behaviors that display competency: Uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express themselves in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.

Q10 Respect and Cultural Competence
Description: Ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. Ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Doesn't jump to conclusions. Fosters an appreciation of differences. Ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. Ability to intervene in bullying situations. Ability to increase empathy among peers and campers.

Behaviors that display competency: Kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities.
Q11 Relationship Building and Compassion

Description: Ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. Ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. Ability to demonstrate understanding without judgement. Ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. Ability create a welcoming environment.

Behaviors that display competency: Sits with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully, acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.

Q12 Risk Management and Safety

Description: Knowledge of procedures and policies. Situational and environmental awareness. Ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. Ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. Ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation.

Behaviors that display competency: Completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses above suspicion "rule of 3," communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions of camp director/supervisor.
Q13 Organization and Time Management
Description: Ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently. Ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. Ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely. Preparedness for work.
Behaviors that display competency: Gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities.

Q14 Program Planning
Description: Ability to create and plan activities that are appropriate, engage campers, and follow the ages and stages of youth development.
Behaviors that display competency: Can communicate steps, timing, and supplies needed for activities, tailors’ activities to interests and abilities of campers, measures learning through feedback and evaluation.
Q15 Knowledge of Youth Development Pedagogy
   Description: Knowledge of Positive Youth Development model and best practices for providing a positive experience for youth. Understanding of "normal" camper behaviors based on ages and stages of development. Ability to use age appropriate communication with youth. Ability to adjust programs and activities to fit needs of campers. Knowledge of essential elements, Thrive, ages and stages, life skills, or other models used at their camp.
   Behaviors that display competency: Can describe youth development pedagogy, provide a positive experience for youth, acts as a role model, gives attention to campers, plans appropriate activities, has realistic expectations, set age appropriate limits for campers, seek to understand motivators of camper behavior.

Q16 Problem Solving and Creativity
   Description: Ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. Ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Ability to assess situations. Ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done.
   Behaviors that display competency: stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates back up plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for help, addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities.
Q17 Judgement and Maturity
   Description: Ability to make reasonable decisions and think critically. Ability to apply
   fairness and equity to decisions. Knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their
   application. Ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. Ability to be
   patient and level headed. Ability to manage camper behavior.
   Behaviors that display competency: Follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate,
   quickly address situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not
   peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to
   understand issues, calm under stress.

Q18 Responsibility
   Description: Ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with
   integrity. Ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. Ability to take accountability
   for actions.
   Behaviors that display competency: Acts appropriately around campers, follows through
   with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where they are supposed to be
   when they are supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands
   and follows policies and procedures, puts camper needs first.
Q19 Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision
   Description: Ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better themselves. Demonstrates interest in new subjects and try new things. Ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism.
   Behaviors that display competency: Responds to leadership, isn't defensive or arguing, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new skills, likes to meet new people.

Q20 Adaptability
   Description: Ability to make changes as needed and be flexible. Ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes. Ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes. Receptive to new ways of doing things.
   Behaviors that display competency: Remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, camper experience is not affected by change.
Q21 Physical Health
Description: Ability to work long days, walk long distances, deal with heat, rain, etc. and still react appropriately to campers. Demonstrates and models wellness to campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Takes appropriate breaks, gets rest, eats properly, has routines, has energy when completing tasks, eager to be involved in activities.

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Q22 Teaching Ability
Description: Ability to teach and lead activities to facilitate learning. Knowledge of techniques to engage campers. Ability to adjust activities to campers’ abilities.
Behaviors that display competency: Can prepare and follow lesson plans, clearly explains directions, demonstrates steps, shows enthusiasm for subject, teaches by example, uses knowledge of campers to help convey new message, can assess successful gain of knowledge, demonstrates patience with campers.

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Q23 Trustworthiness and Independence
   Description: Ability to be relied on as honest and truthful. Ability to complete tasks without supervision. Demonstrates confidence and takes risks.
   Behaviors that display competency: Keeps campers’ information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when they are not supervised, makes decisions independently, understands their role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.

Q24 Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills
   Description: Knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate for the subjects they will focus on. Ability to demonstrate and teach technical skills and safety in their subject area (swimming, archery, climbing, etc.)
   Behaviors that display competency: Practice skills, look for opportunities to develop skills, excited about their subject area, effectively teach skills to others, demonstrate knowledge of equipment and safety, properly cares for equipment and facilities.
Q25 Engaged and Camper Centered
Description: Demonstrates a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Focused on camper experience. Demonstrates engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities.
Behaviors that display competency: Smiling, getting down on camper's level to speak, use words campers can understand, provide simple instructions, spend time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with campers, actively communicates, is engaged in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff.

________________________________________________________________________________

Q26 Enthusiasm and Humor
Description: Ability to create energy, passion, and excitement for activities and programs. Ability to have fun and enjoy time at camp. Ability to laugh, be laughed at, be silly. Ability to encourage, support and bring people together through fun. Ability to create happy and joyous experiences for campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Laughs quickly and often, smiles, uses silliness to engage campers, friendly and engages with others, effectively leads camp songs and activities, participates with kids, positive energy, tries new things, looks for opportunities for spontaneous fun, infectious happiness, demonstrates a can-do attitude.

________________________________________________________________________________
Q27 Passion for 4-H and 4-H Culture
Description: Ability to build connection between camper and the broader 4-H program. Knowledge of 4-H and camp traditions and culture. Passionate about 4-H and camp experience. Knowledge of the impact of camp for campers. Ability to identify mission and purpose of camp. Behaviors that display competency: Can tell the 4-H story, has prior 4-H experience, promotes 4-H to campers, prioritizes camper needs, participates in camp traditions.

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Q28 Positivity
Description: Ability to create positive climate and culture at camp. Ability to interact positively with campers, staff, and supervisors. Ability to celebrate accomplishments of others and encourage. Demonstrates an attitude of optimism and care for the community of camp. Behaviors that display competency: Celebrates others, share optimistic works and thoughts, seek solutions to issues, innovative and creative, smiling, participating in camp traditions and songs.

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____________________________________________________________________________

Q3 Please list additional competencies and behaviors that many have been left off the initial list.

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Appendix D

Third Iteration Survey

Defining Camp Staff Competencies and Related Behaviors: Final Iteration

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q5  
Thank you for your participation in this study. Below you will find the 3rd and final iteration of this study. Please look at each competency individually and rate it's importance for the performance of 4-H camp staff. Competencies are listed in random order. Then please provide comments to clarify or explain your ratings, and share any thoughts or ideas that you feel may have been left out or need modification.

This survey is best viewed on a computer. If you are viewing this survey on a mobile device you may need to use the down arrows to view and select the Likert scale ratings.
Q18 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
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</table>
**Competency:**
**Adaptability**

**Description:**
Ability to make changes as needed and be flexible. Ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes.
Ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes.
Receptive to new ways of doing things.

**Behaviors that display competency:**
Remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, ensures camper experience is positively
affected by change.
Q7 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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<tr>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Competency: Work Ethic, Initiative, and Independence

Description: Commitment to goals. Self-motivated and ability to identify and completes tasks without being told. Ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. Ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Voluntarily and consistently goes above and beyond what is required and expected. Displays confidence, and takes appropriate action without being told. Takes appropriate risks.

Behaviors that display competency:
- Doesn't complain, follows through with
commitments, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't their job, makes decisions independently.
Q9 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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<tr>
<th>Extremely important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
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**Competency: Risk Management and Safety**

*Description:* Knowledge of and ability to interpret procedures and policies. Situational and environmental awareness. Ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. Ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. Ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation. Ability to hold peers and others accountable to procedures.

**Behaviors that display competency:** Completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses...
above suspicion and “rule of 3”, communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions and communicates with camp director/supervisor.
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<tr>
<th>Q10 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.</th>
<th>Extremely important</th>
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Competency: Relationship Building and Compassion
Description:
Ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. Ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. Ability to demonstrate understanding without judgement. Ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. Ability to create a welcoming environment.
Behaviors that display competency:
Engages with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully,
acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.
Q27 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: 
Leadership and Role-Modelling 
Description: Professional. Ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, their fellow staff members. Ability to teach and lead by example. Helps group to meet goals. Ability to provide positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Steps up when necessary to ensure success. Displays integrity, honesty, and caring. 
Behaviors that display competency: Well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, serves as a positive example for other staff, offers advice when needed,
helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, model’s appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted into progressive camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes, does the right thing when no one is looking.
Q1 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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**Competency:**

**Teamwork**

**Description:**
Ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience.
Works with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. Can follow and lead as needed. Can identify shared goals.

**Behaviors that display competency:**
Contributes ideas and acts to accomplish shared goals, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments,
get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates.
Q11 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Respect and Cultural Competence
Description: Ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. Ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Doesn't jump to conclusions. Fosters an appreciation of differences. Ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. Ability to intervene in bullying situations. Ability to increase empathy among peers and campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and...
supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities, treats all campers equally, doesn’t have “favorite” campers.
Q12 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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**Competency:**
**Responsibility**
**Description:**
Ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with integrity. Ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. Ability to take accountability for actions.

**Behaviors that display competency:**
Acts appropriately around campers, follows through with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands and follows policies and
procedures, puts camper needs first.
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<th>Q13 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.</th>
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**Competency:** Problem Solving and Creativity

**Description:** Ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. Ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Willing to seek additional information from others. Ability to assess situations. Ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done.

**Behaviors that display competency:** Stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates backup plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for
help, addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities.
Q15 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Engaged and Camper Centered

Description:
Demonstrates a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Focused on camper experience. Demonstrates engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities.

Behaviors that display competency:
Smiling, getting down on camper’s level to speak, use words campers can understand, provide simple instructions, spend time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with
campers, actively communicates, is engaged in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff.
| Q14 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff. |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                 | Extremely important | Very important | Moderately important | Slightly important | Not at all important |
**Competency:**
Judgement and Maturity

**Description:**
Ability to make reasonable decisions and think critically. Ability to apply fairness and equity to decisions. Knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their application. Ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. Ability to be patient and level headed.

**Behaviors that display competency:**
Follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate, only discusses sensitive situations when appropriate, when quickly address...
situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to understand issues, calm under stress.
Q17 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Knowledge of Positive Youth Development Practices

Description: Knowledge of Positive Youth Development model and best practices for providing a positive experience for youth. Understanding of camper behaviors based on ages and stages of development. Ability to use age appropriate communication with youth. Ability to adjust programs and activities to fit needs of campers. Knowledge of essential elements, Thrive Model, ages and stages, life skills, or other models used at their camp. Ability to manage camper
behavior effectively.

**Behaviors that display competency:**
Can describe youth development pedagogy, provide a positive experience for youth, acts as a role model, gives attention to campers, plans appropriate activities, has realistic expectations, sets age appropriate limits for campers, seek to understand motivators of camper behavior, can identify the essential elements of PYD and understand how to apply those to a youth program, provide a physically and emotionally safe environment, demonstrate care and
provide access to caring adults, give youth choices and opportunities for meaningful involvement in activities.
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<th>Q23 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.</th>
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Competency: Teaching Ability
Description: Ability to teach and lead activities to facilitate learning. Knowledge of techniques to engage campers. Ability to adjust activities to campers’ abilities.
Behaviors that display competency: Can prepare and follow lesson plans, clearly explains directions, demonstrates steps, shows enthusiasm for subject, teaches by example, uses knowledge of campers to help convey new message, can assess successful gain of knowledge, demonstrates patience with campers.
Q16 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Organization and Time Management
Description: Ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently. Ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. Ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely. Preparedness for work. Ability to balance work and personal life. Behaviors that display competency:
Gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities, arrives to work rested and prepared for work.
Q8 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency:
Communication
Description:
Ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth.
Gives information in a clear, professional, and kind way.
Ability to face and address conflicts. Ability to listen and understand others.
Relatable to their audience and able to adapt communication to their audience, or the situation.
Ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc.
Behaviors that display competency:
Uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules
and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express themselves in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.
Q28 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Passion for 4-H and 4-H Culture
Description: Ability to build connection between camper and the broader 4-H program. Knowledge of 4-H and camp traditions and culture. Passionate about 4-H and camp experience. Knowledge of the impact of camp for campers. Ability to identify mission and purpose of camp.
Behaviors that display competency: Can tell the 4-H story, has prior 4-H experience, promotes 4-H to campers, encourages future 4-H involvement, prioritizes camper needs, participates in
camp traditions.
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<th>Competency: Trustworthiness</th>
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<tr>
<td>Description: Ability to be relied on as honest and truthful. Ability to complete tasks without supervision. Behaviors that display competency: Keeps campers’ medical information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when they are not supervised, understands their role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.</td>
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Q21 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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<tr>
<th>Competency: Program Planning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description: Ability to create and plan activities that are appropriate, engage campers, and follow the ages and stages of youth development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviors that display competency: Can communicate steps, timing, and supplies needed for activities, tailors activities to interests and abilities of campers, measures learning through feedback and evaluation.</td>
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Q20 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision

Description: Ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better themselves. Demonstrates interest in new subjects and trying new things. Ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism.

Behaviors that display competency: Responds to leadership, isn't defensive or argumentative, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new
skills, likes to meet new people.
Q22 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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<th>Competency: Positivity</th>
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- **Description:** Ability to create positive climate and culture at camp. Ability to interact positively with campers, staff, and supervisors. Ability to celebrate accomplishments of others and encourage. Demonstrates an attitude of optimism and care for the community of camp.

- **Behaviors that display competency:** Celebrates others, share optimistic works and thoughts, seek solutions to issues, innovative and creative, smiling, participating in camp traditions and songs.

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Q25 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency:
Enthusiasm and Humor

Description:
Ability to create energy, passion, and excitement for activities and programs. Ability to have fun and enjoy time at camp. Ability to laugh, be laughed at, and be silly. Ability to encourage, support and bring people together through fun. Ability to create happy and joyous experiences for campers.

Behaviors that display competency:
- Laughs quickly and often, smiles, uses silliness to engage campers, friendly and engages with others, effectively leads camp songs and activities,
participates with kids, positive energy, tries new things, looks for opportunities for spontaneous fun, infectious happiness, demonstrates a can-do attitude.
Q26 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills
Description:
Knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate about the subjects they will focus on.
Ability to demonstrate and teach technical skills and safety in their subject area (swimming, archery, climbing, etc.)
Behaviors that display competency:
Practice skills, look for opportunities to develop skills, excited about their subject area, effectively teach skills to others, demonstrate knowledge of equipment and safety, properly cares for equipment and facilities.
Q24 Please rate the importance of this competency to the performance of 4-H camp staff.

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Competency: Health and Wellness
Description: Ability to work long days with prolonged physical activity, deal with heat, rain, etc. and still react appropriately to campers and others. Demonstrates and models proper physical, mental, emotional and social wellness to campers and staff.
Behaviors that display competency: Takes appropriate breaks, gets rest, eats properly, has routines, has energy when completing tasks, eager to be involved in activities, recognizes when they are sick and seeks rest or medical attention.
Q2 Please provide comments to clarify or explain your ratings.

________________________________________________________________
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Q4 Please share any thoughts or ideas that you feel may have been left out or need modification.

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End of Block: Default Question Block
Appendix E

Participant Invitation Electronic Letter

Hello (Camping Expert Name),

I hope you are doing well. My name is Laura Oliver, I am a Virginia 4-H Agent and doctoral candidate at NC State University. I am currently working on my dissertation and have chosen to focus on 4-H camping, specifically competencies and related behaviors for 4-H camp staff. I plan to conduct a Delphi study, and I am preparing to start data collection. I am currently working to identify experts in 4-H Camping from across the U.S. who may be interested in participating in the study, and your name was suggested by (Camping Expert who referred participant). The study will consist of 3 iterations aimed at narrowing down the collective ideas of the expert group to a set of competencies that are relevant nationwide. I was hoping that you would agree to participate, and that you may be able to suggest others who would be interested, and would also have relevant knowledge. I am hoping to have a wide variety of 4-H camping experience represented in the expert group; people from different parts of the U.S., those involved in camp research, administration, programming, and staff development.

Thank you for your time, and I am looking forward to your response.

- Laura Oliver
Laura Oliver (4-H & Youth Development Agent, and Doctoral Candidate at NCSU)
Floyd County Unit
Virginia Cooperative Extension
209 Fox Street, NW
Floyd, VA 24091
Telephone: 540-745-9307
Appendix F

Participant Consent Electronic Letter

**Research Topic: Determining Core Competencies and Behaviors of 4-H Camp Staff Indicating High Performance: A Delphi Study.**

Dear 4-H Camping Expert,

I would like to invite you to participate in this Delphi panel for determining competencies and related behaviors for 4-H camp staff. You have been selected for this study because of your knowledge/experience in 4-H camping programs. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. If you agree to participate, you will complete a short online survey. This Delphi study is a three-round process. In each round, you will be contacted for inputs. In round one, you will answer to the following questions:

1. Please list and briefly describe the competencies for 4-H camp staff members that are most critical to the success of residential camp staff members.
2. Please list behaviors that would indicate success in these competencies.

At the end of the first round, we will list all the unique responses received from the panel members for the survey question and send those in round two for panel members to add if there are any additional responses, clarify the related behaviors, and rank them in order of importance. In round three, you will be asked to review all significant responses and rate the importance of each response by using a five-point Likert-type scale (1=not important, 2=least important, 3=somewhat important, 4=important, 5=very important).

Data will be collected anonymously. No identifiable information will be collected during the study. The information you provide will be kept confidential. The findings of this study will be shared with the participants for mutual benefits in planning 4-H camping programs.

If you agree to participate in this study, please reply to this e-mail simply saying I agree to participate. I will consider it as your consent to participate in the study and send you the link to the survey.

If you have any question about the study, please contact me at laura_oliver@ncsu.edu

I greatly appreciate your participation. We would like to thank you in advance for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Laura Oliver (4-H & Youth Development Agent, and Doctoral Candidate at NCSU)

Floyd County Unit
Virginia Cooperative Extension
209 Fox Street, NW
Floyd, VA 24091
Telephone: 540-745-9307
Appendix G

First Iteration Survey Electronic Letter

Dear 4-H Camping Expert,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this Delphi study. As mentioned in my earlier communication, the purpose of this study is to determine competencies and related behaviors for 4-H camp staff. Please open the following link to an online survey and provide answers to the best of your ability. There are only a few questions in the survey. It will take less than 15 minutes to complete. Link to survey:

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cOv0gn493H9aj53

Please respond to this survey by August 31st. You can expect the second iteration of this study by September 7th.

Thank You

Laura Oliver (4-H & Youth Development Agent, and Doctoral Candidate)
Floyd County Unit
Virginia Cooperative Extension
209 Fox Street, NW
Floyd, VA 24091
Telephone: 540-745-9307
Appendix H

Second Iteration Survey Electronic Letter

Dear 4-H Camping Expert,

Thank you for your inputs for the first round of this Delphi study. This second round will solicit additional responses for the questions asked in the first round and rank the importance of the identified competencies. This online survey includes all unique responses provided by the Delphi panel members in the first round. Please open this link to the online survey, provide if you have any additional responses and rank the significance.

[https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3lyKgoNxQs2lb1j](https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3lyKgoNxQs2lb1j)

I would greatly appreciate it if you respond to this survey by September 14th. You can expect the third and final iteration of this study by September 21st.

Thank You

Laura Oliver (4-H & Youth Development Agent, and Doctoral Candidate)
Floyd County Unit
Virginia Cooperative Extension
209 Fox Street, NW
Floyd, VA 24091
Telephone: 540-745-9307
Appendix I

Third Iteration Survey Electronic Letter

Dear 4-H Camp Expert,

Thank you for your inputs for the last two rounds of this Delphi study. The third and final round, is used to determine the importance of identified responses for the research questions. This online survey includes all unique responses provided by the Delphi panel members in random order. Please open this link to the online survey, rate the importance of all listed responses, and provide your comments.

https://ncsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eYjqngM96EMr13f

I would greatly appreciate it if you respond to this survey by **September 28th**.

Thank You

Laura Oliver (4-H & Youth Development Agent, and Doctoral Candidate)
Floyd County Unit
Virginia Cooperative Extension
209 Fox Street, NW
Floyd, VA 24091
Telephone: 540-745-9307
Appendix J

Complete Competency List with Descriptions and Related Behaviors

Risk Management and Safety

Description: Knowledge of and ability to interpret procedures and policies. Situational and environmental awareness. Ability to make appropriate decisions that put the safety of campers first. Ability to prevent accidents and incidents by providing a safe environment. Ability to appropriately follow procedures in an emergency or high stress situation. Ability to hold peers and others accountable to procedures.

Behaviors that display competency: Completes all safety training, follows rules and safety guidelines, corrects camper behaviors, takes appropriate actions in risk situations, demonstrates understanding of youth protection policies and best practices, uses above suspicion and “rule of 3”, communicates quickly and effectively, able to identify risk, follows instructions and communicates with camp director/supervisor.

Teamwork

Description: Ability to work well with others collaboratively to provide positive camp experience. Works with teams (fellow staff, volunteers, adults, etc.) to accomplish goals. Can follow and lead as needed. Can identify shared goals.

Behaviors that display competency: Contributes ideas and acts to accomplish shared goals, respects others, doesn't dominate conversations, communicates effectively, able to give and take feedback, open to other's ideas, willingness to help, follow through on commitments, get along well with other staff, thoughtful, patient, empathetic, supports team mates.
Responsibility

Description: Ability to follow through with assigned roles and tasks competently and with integrity. Ability to make decisions and take ownership of work. Ability to take accountability for actions.

Behaviors that display competency: Acts appropriately around campers, follows through with commitments, helps without being asked, staff member is where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there, helps campers to follow rules and expectations, understands and follows policies and procedures, puts camper needs first.

Communication

Description: Ability to communicate effectively with peers, adults, and youth. Gives information in a clear, professional, and kind way. Ability to face and address conflicts. Ability to listen and understand others. Relatable to their audience and able to adapt communication to their audience, or the situation. Ability to communicate across different modes: orally, electronically, in writing, etc.

Behaviors that display competency: Uses active listening, uses tact, effectively teaches and leads camp songs and activities, able to explain rules and expectations, able to work through conflict, willing to have conversations, able to express themselves in a positive way, uses concise language, communicates frequently, adds to knowledge and understanding of others, asks for help, focuses on speaker, asks questions, offers advice.

Work Ethic, Initiative, and Independence
Description: Commitment to goals. Self-motivated and ability to identify and completes tasks without being told. Ability to work long hours and accomplish tasks. Ability to endure difficult situations and be resilient. Voluntarily and consistently goes above and beyond what is required and expected. Displays confidence, and takes appropriate action without being told. Takes appropriate risks.

Behaviors that display competency: Doesn't complain, follows through with commitments, attentive, enthusiastic, smiles through difficulty, does not skip tasks, shows up on time, tries to be helpful even if it isn't their job, makes decisions independently.

Leadership and Role-Modelling

Description: Professional. Ability to lead a group of campers, as well as, their fellow staff members. Ability to teach and lead by example. Helps group to meet goals. Ability to provide positive guidance and influence campers and other staff. Steps up when necessary to ensure success. Displays integrity, honesty, and caring.

Behaviors that display competency: Well spoken, demonstrates clear thinking, serves as a positive example for other staff, offers advice when needed, helps to motivate the group, uplifting and encouraging, allows others to contribute, engages actively with campers, follows camp policies and procedures, model’s appropriate behavior, able to manage camper behavior, promoted into progressive camp leadership roles, able to admit mistakes, does the right thing when no one is looking.

Relationship Building and Compassion
Description: Ability to quickly establish rapport with youth and peers. Ability to be kind, understand and have empathy for the feelings of others. Ability to demonstrate understanding without judgement. Ability to have patience and extend grace to campers and peers. Responsiveness to camper needs. Ability to create a welcoming environment. Behaviors that display competency: Engages with homesick campers, talks to nervous parents, helps campers who are struggling, listens carefully, acknowledges others feelings, prioritizes getting to know campers, consistently on the lookout for others, offers help, communicates effectively and frequently, calls campers by name, encourages campers to get to know each other.

Engaged and Camper Centered
Description: Demonstrates a genuine interest and excitement in working with youth. Knowledge of developmental needs of campers. Focused on camper experience. Demonstrates engagement in planning and active participation in camp activities. Behaviors that display competency: Smiling, getting down on camper's level to speak, use words campers can understand, provide simple instructions, spend time with campers (instead of peers), seeks out interaction with campers, connects with campers, actively communicates, is engaged in program delivery, training, and staff meetings, helps others, doesn't sit on the sidelines, sets the example for other staff.

Adaptability
Description: Ability to make changes as needed and be flexible. Ability to cope quickly with internal and external changes. Ability to remain open minded and maintain a positive attitude when faced with changes. Receptive to new ways of doing things.

Behaviors that display competency: Remains calm under stress, has a backup plan in case of rain or other circumstances, offers creative solutions, doesn't resist change, quickly modifies plans, listens to perspectives of others, ensures camper experience is positively affected by change.

Trustworthiness

Description: Ability to be relied on as honest and truthful. Ability to complete tasks without supervision.

Behaviors that display competency: Keeps campers’ medical information private, asks for help, is honest, can be trusted with important tasks, maintains high standards when they are not supervised, understands their role, follows instructions, policies and procedures.

Respect and Cultural Competence

Description: Ability to treat everyone and everything with respect. Ability to be open minded to differences in others, new ideas, and cultures. Doesn't jump to conclusions. Fosters an appreciation of differences. Ability to create safe and inclusive spaces for campers that allow them to be themselves. Ability to intervene in bullying situations. Ability to increase empathy among peers and campers.
Behaviors that display competency: Kind to others, put things away properly, take care of facilities and supplies, pick up trash around camp, talks to and supports campers that are having a hard time, listens carefully to campers, welcoming of all, interested in taking on new responsibilities, treats all campers equally, doesn’t have “favorite” campers.

Judgement and Maturity

Description: Ability to make reasonable decisions and think critically. Ability to apply fairness and equity to decisions. Knowledge of policies and procedures, and commitment to their application. Ability to handle situations without escalating or blaming others. Ability to be patient and level headed.

Behaviors that display competency: Follows rules, ask for guidance when appropriate, only discusses sensitive situations when appropriate, when quickly address situations, attentive to campers, participate in activities, focus on campers (not peers), speaks calmly to campers, takes campers aside if behavior needs to be corrected, seeks to understand issues, calm under stress.

Problem Solving and Creativity

Description: Ability to find appropriate and safe solutions to issues as they arise. Ability to see things differently and find creative solutions. Willing to seek additional information from others. Ability to assess situations. Ability to be flexible and do things differently from how they have always been done.

Behaviors that display competency: Stays calm in stressful situations, collects facts before jumping to conclusions, creates back up plans for activities in case of rain, etc., asks for help,
addresses minor issues without involving others, looks for and communicates alternative answers, creates new games and activities.

Willingness to Learn and Accept Supervision
Description: Ability to self-reflect and critically assess personal performance, and desire to better themselves. Demonstrates interest in new subjects and trying new things. Ability to accept supervision, guidance, and criticism.
Behaviors that display competency: Responds to leadership, isn't defensive or argumentative, applies feedback, participates in training, asks questions, asks for help, acknowledges when expectations aren't met, seeks out opportunities to gain new skills, likes to meet new people.

Positivity
Description: Ability to create positive climate and culture at camp. Ability to interact positively with campers, staff, and supervisors. Ability to celebrate accomplishments of others and encourage. Demonstrates an attitude of optimism and care for the community of camp.
Behaviors that display competency: Celebrates others, share optimistic works and thoughts, seek solutions to issues, innovative and creative, smiling, participating in camp traditions and songs.

Organization and Time Management
Description: Ability to plan ahead and execute tasks efficiently. Ability to forecast tasks that will need to be completed. Ability to be on time, follow a schedule, and use time wisely.
Preparedness for work. Ability to balance work and personal life.
Behaviors that display competency: Gathers materials ahead of time, budgets time to fulfill obligations, arrives early for activities, arrives to work rested and prepared for work.

Knowledge of Positive Youth Development Practices
Description: Knowledge of Positive Youth Development model and best practices for providing a positive experience for youth. Understanding of camper behaviors based on ages and stages of development. Ability to use age appropriate communication with youth. Ability to adjust programs and activities to fit needs of campers. Knowledge of essential elements, Thrive Model, ages and stages, life skills, or other models used at their camp. Ability to manage camper behavior effectively.
Behaviors that display competency: Can describe youth development pedagogy, provide a positive experience for youth, acts as a role model, gives attention to campers, plans appropriate activities, has realistic expectations, sets age appropriate limits for campers, seek to understand motivators of camper behavior, can identify the essential elements of PYD and understand how to apply those to a youth program, provide a physically and emotionally safe environment, demonstrate care and provide access to caring adults, give youth choices and opportunities for meaningful involvement in activities.

Health and Wellness
Description: Ability to work long days with prolonged physical activity, deal with heat, rain, etc. and still react appropriately to campers and others. Demonstrates and models proper physical, mental, emotional and social wellness to campers and staff.
Behaviors that display competency: Takes appropriate breaks, gets rest, eats properly, has routines, has energy when completing tasks, eager to be involved in activities, recognizes when they are sick and seeks rest or medical attention.

Enthusiasm and Humor

Description: Ability to create energy, passion, and excitement for activities and programs. Ability to have fun and enjoy time at camp. Ability to laugh, be laughed at, and be silly. Ability to encourage, support and bring people together through fun. Ability to create happy and joyous experiences for campers.

Behaviors that display competency: Laughs quickly and often, smiles, uses silliness to engage campers, friendly and engages with others, effectively leads camp songs and activities, participates with kids, positive energy, tries new things, looks for opportunities for spontaneous fun, infectious happiness, demonstrates a can-do attitude.

Program Planning

Description: Ability to create and plan activities that are appropriate, engage campers, and follow the ages and stages of youth development.

Behaviors that display competency: Can communicate steps, timing, and supplies needed for activities, tailors activities to interests and abilities of campers, measures learning through feedback and evaluation.

Teaching Ability
Description: Ability to teach and lead activities to facilitate learning. Knowledge of techniques to engage campers. Ability to adjust activities to campers’ abilities.

Behaviors that display competency: Can prepare and follow lesson plans, clearly explains directions, demonstrates steps, shows enthusiasm for subject, teaches by example, uses knowledge of campers to help convey new message, can assess successful gain of knowledge, demonstrates patience with campers.

Subject Matter Knowledge and Skills
Description: Knowledgeable, experienced, and passionate about the subjects they will focus on. Ability to demonstrate and teach technical skills and safety in their subject area (swimming, archery, climbing, etc.)

Behaviors that display competency: Practice skills, look for opportunities to develop skills, excited about their subject area, effectively teach skills to others, demonstrate knowledge of equipment and safety, properly cares for equipment and facilities.

Passion for 4-H and 4-H Culture
Description: Ability to build connection between camper and the broader 4-H program.

Knowledge of 4-H and camp traditions and culture. Passionate about 4-H and camp experience. Knowledge of the impact of camp for campers. Ability to identify mission and purpose of camp.

Behaviors that display competency: Can tell the 4-H story, has prior 4-H experience, promotes 4-H to campers, encourages future 4-H involvement, prioritizes camper needs, participates in camp traditions.