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The importance of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by local governing bodies in Louisiana

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE AS
PERCIEVED BY MEMBERS OF LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES IN LOUISIANA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by

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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the importance of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) as perceived by member of local governing bodies in Louisiana.

As society changes, so do the needs of the people. Non-formal education is important for anyone who holds a job because as job requirements change, as a person is promoted, as computer technology changes, these individuals will need training to remain competitive or often just gainfully employed. Non-formal education is imperative for children as well. As knowledge continues to expand, more learning will, by necessity move to the non-formal education environment.

The fundamental objective of the CES is the development of people by means of educational programs. Generally, this objective includes helping people acquire knowledge, solve problems, make sound economic decisions and plan for the future (Smith-Lever Act, 1914).

Few studies have been done concerning the perceptions of stakeholders or governmental bodies which are responsible for funding the Cooperative Extension Service. Local governing body members are an integral part of the success of the Cooperative Extension Service on the local level.

Local governing body members (defined as Police Jury/Council Members) throughout the state of Louisiana were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the importance of the Cooperative Extension Service. The survey was a researcher-developed instrument designed to measure their perceptions regarding importance, awareness, and information use of CES programs and services, and if the needs of local residents in each parish were being met by the

programs and services. Data were collected by the researcher electronically (Zoomerang), and by facsimile and U.S. mail.

Results of the study revealed that the local governing body members served in mostly rural districts, were more aware of 4-H than any other program or service offered by the LCES, and thought 4-H was very important to the development of young people in Louisiana and Higher levels of awareness and effectiveness of programs and services correlated with higher levels of perceived importance.

Local governing body members who perceive the importance of LCES programs and services also see the LCES as effectively meeting the needs of local residents. The perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the LCES was examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of the programs and services. The correlation between measures was ($r = .58$, $p < .001$). The nature of this association was such that local governing body members that reported higher levels of effectiveness of the programs in meeting the needs of parish residents tended to place higher levels of importance on the programs and services. According to Davis, (1971) this relationship is described as a substantial association.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Importance of Education (Formal and Non-Formal)

At no point in the history of this country has the importance of education been greater than it is today. In the nineteenth century, a high school diploma was the highest level of education completed by the majority of citizens. Throughout the twentieth century, the need for higher levels of education steadily increased until the point that today, most individuals need some post-secondary education to be successful in any chosen career field. In fact, the proportion of students planning to attend college has increased by more than 71% in the last 25 years according to The United States Department of Education (2005). Studies conducted by The United States Department of Education in 1980, 1990 and 2005 revealed that 72% of high school sophomores planned to attend at least some college in the 2005 study compared to 59% in the 1990 study and 42% in the 1980 study. This is evidence that more youth are realizing the general importance of post-secondary education. For some individuals, this additional education takes place immediately after high school. However, many individuals choose to postpone their acquisition of additional education until a later time. This is clearly seen at the Harvard University Extension School, or night school. The average age of the 150 students enrolled was just over 36 years . According to Harvard University (2006) these were working people with families and jobs and make up an ever-growing number of people in America who decide to wait until a later time in life to get a degree. In addition, with the rapid growth of knowledge in the world today, most, if not all, workers will at some time be required to participate in additional education/training.

There are several avenues through which education may be delivered. However, all forms of education can be generally classified into one of two broad categories: formal and non-formal education.

Formal education is defined as education that is conducted in a traditional classroom setting (SIL International, 1999). It is systematic by nature and organized, and generally follows curricula set forth by school districts and boards. This type of education, as most people know it, starts with pre-kindergarten and continues through high school and into college (SIL International, 1999).

Non-formal education is any organized systematic educational activity carried on outside of a classroom or outside of the formal system to provide many types of learning to particular populations and audiences. These audiences are usually very diverse demographically. Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. Non-formal education is about acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions. Fordham (1993) suggested that in the 1970s, four characteristics came to be associated with non-formal education: relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups, concern with specific categories of persons, a focus on clearly defined purposes, and flexibility in organization and methods (Smith, 2006).

Non-formal education is important in today's society. As society changes, so do the needs of the people. Non-formal education is important for anyone who holds a job because as job requirements change, as a person is promoted, as computer technology changes, these individuals will need training to remain competitive or often just gainfully

employed. Non-formal education is imperative for children as well. As knowledge continues to expand, more learning will, by necessity move to the non-formal education environment. For instance, a computer class at night for young people and adults is now commonplace in metropolitan areas. Not only is non-formal education a strong form of continuing education for millions of the workforce, but it also is probably the most reliable form of education for those citizens who, for a variety of reasons, cannot get to a school campus for formal education. The need for continual learning in a rapidly changing society makes non-formal education as important, if not more so, today as it ever was in the past (Cannizzaro, 1998).

Characteristics of Non-Formal Education (NFE)

The work of Coombs and Ahmed (1974) stated that NFE is “any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups of the population, adults as well as children” (1974, p. 8).

NFE takes place in a wide variety of formats and venues. However, as NFE has grown in importance and quantity, the common characteristics of NFE have begun to take shape.

According to Fordham (1993) the characteristics of NFE are as follows:

- *non-credential based
- *short or cyclic
- *more on a part-time basis than formal education
- *quite practical in nature
- *flexible and learner-centered

According to the Literacy Watch Bulletin (2001) the characteristics of NFE are:

- *goal and purpose oriented
- *hones in on tackling specific problems rather than learning abstract subject matter
- *flexible and learner-centered
- *practical rather than theoretical

According to the World Scout Organization (2006) some 25 million boy and girl scouts exist throughout the world today. The organization indicates the following characteristics for non-formal education:

- *is people-centered
- *reinforces individual motivation
- *uses volunteers to a great extent
- *uses the process of experiential learning
- *is progressive by nature
- *uses young people to teach other young people rather than adults a great deal of the time

Systems of NFE

Non-formal education takes place in many places in the modern world today. To name a few: most all schools, colleges and universities across the globe, churches, Christian groups, boy scouts, girl scouts and even towns and municipalities. Others include environmental groups and a vast array of associations, both for-profit and non-profit (Smith, 2006).

According to the Commonwealth of Learning (2006) radio has been used in many instances for non-formal education. The use of radio for non-formal education started with the advent of radio broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s. Together with

information and entertainment, education – both formal and non-formal – was regarded as one of the three main services that the new medium would, and should, offer its audience. Some examples include: The BBC has taught major European languages over public radio for over 30 years; in the early 1990s, the "Let's Speak English" project in Namibia produced a series of 32 radio programs, with two linked textbooks and school-based listening groups, to help 8,000 primary school teachers improve their spoken English.

Of the many systems mentioned, the largest non-formal education system in the world today is the United States Cooperative Extension System (CES).

The Cooperative Extension System

The Cooperative Extension System's mission statement is simple: "The Cooperative Extension System helps people improve their lives through an educational process which uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs" (Rasmussen, 1989 p. 4).

The underlying philosophy was and always has been to help people help themselves by taking the university to the people. In other words, the system evolved to be responsive to peoples' needs and to educate people in a variety of fields and interests. Providing quality information and education and problem solving on real concerns is the hallmark of Cooperative Extension (Rasmussen, 1989).

The fundamental objective of the CES is the development of people by means of educational programs. Generally, this objective includes helping people acquire knowledge, solve problems, make sound economic decisions, and plan for the future (Smith-Lever Act, 1914).

Therefore, extension work is an “out-of-school” system of educational responsibilities in the fields of agricultural production, marketing and distribution, all fields of home economics, leadership development, community service, public affairs, farm and home management, conservation of natural resources and 4-H youth development (Cannizzaro, 1998).

The continued success of CES is dependent on each partner – federal, state, and local - performing its assigned tasks in an efficient manner. The research-based information is disseminated through CES providing the critical link to the end user of this product (Seevers et al., 1997). Furthermore, CES is charged with improving the lives of citizens by serving as the critical link between research and the people so the need to continually evolve is critical (Seevers, Graham, Gamon & Conklin, 1997).

Every CES Organization is housed within their respective Land-Grant university. The land grant schools have as one of their primary missions to conduct research to generate new knowledge for developing peoples’ lives. The result of this research is then disseminated to the citizens of the state in two different ways. One way is through teaching in the formal classroom setting on university campuses. The other way is through the CES in an informal manner (The Land Grant Tradition, 1995).

Faculty of the CES gather the information that is generated by the researchers and disseminates it in a useable form through meetings with different groups, workshops, clinics and home and farm visits; in other words, non-formal education. This “teaching” is done by employees of the CES typically referred to as “county agents.” These agents are employees of the university just as are university faculty except for the difference that their teaching occurs outside of the formal classroom. The county agent may teach today

in a cotton field and tomorrow in a civic league building and the next day in his or her office. The CES system is one that is integral to improving the lives of local residents across each state with a variety of methods and a variety of information that has historically been largely in the area of agriculture. However, as the nation's population tended to move closer and closer to major cities the agricultural nature of the content has greatly declined as the CES has moved toward meeting the needs of the organization's clientele (all the citizens of the state). While agriculture is still a major topic taught by county agents, they also teach computer programming, disaster clean-up and even rocketry to 4-H youth (Cannizzaro, 1998).

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) is an educational organization and a cooperative arrangement between the Police Jury or Parish Council, parish School Boards, Louisiana State University and the United States Department of Agriculture. The legal basis for Cooperative Extension work is the Smith-Lever Act which was passed by the United States congress in 1914. As stated in the original act, the purpose of the Cooperative Extension Service is "to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics and to encourage the application of the same" (Smith-Lever Act, 1914). Extension work was to consist of giving instruction and practical demonstrations in agricultural and home economics to people who were not attending college (Rasmussen, 1989).

Factors Influencing Programs and Services of the CES

Several factors influence the programs and services provided by the CES. Good program planning, rather than luck, is assumed to be the bedrock of successful Extension

programs. Agents are introduced to, occasionally reminded of, and encouraged to use program planning for developing non-formal educational programs. (Casey and Krueger, 1991).

Casey and Krueger (1991) went on to say that agents who continually produce successful programs get ideas for programs from extended networks not limited to their county or Extension. They try to optimize their time by using it effectively and prioritizing activities. They try to keep their perspective anticipating what may be on the horizon and reflecting on the past. They ultimately define success as having a positive impact on people.

Diem (2003) conducted a study concerning successful programming related to funding agencies. His main points concerning successful programs are as follows:

- Justify the investment of time and effort, as well as the dedication of public and private funds.
- Earn and build professional, organizational, and political credibility and support.
- Satisfy the requirements of political bodies and funding agencies.
- Yield tangible results that serve as a basis for scholarly publications, as well as awards and recognition.
- Determine to what degree participants achieve intended results.

Perhaps the biggest factor influencing programs and services provided by the CES is funding. The current economic climate has placed significant pressure on the budgets of state and county governments. In turn, those governments have compelled state Cooperative Extension Services to defend their continued receipt of state and county funding. Even when policymakers are persuaded of the efficacy of an Extension program,

they have questioned whether the program should be supported with scarce public dollars rather than through user charges (Kalambokidis, 2004).

Funding Patterns of the CES

The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) is basically funded from a combination of three funding sources: the first source is the local or parish (county) level. The second source is the state which provides most of the funding and the third source is the federal government.

Nationally, CES programs receive an average of about 18.5% of their funding from the local or parish (county) level. However, in Louisiana, the local governments contribute only 6% (statewide mean) of the funding to local extension programs. The state provides about 86% for the LCES, and the federal government provides the other 8%. These state and federal level funds change somewhat from year to year due to grants or soft money (About the LSU AgCenter 2005).

If the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) is to continue with the current level of service to local communities, the declining state budget will require that local governments increase the level of funding they provide to the LCES to at least match or exceed the national average. Several factors that influence local funding are:

1. Accountability to the local officials
2. Number of staff members in a parish office
3. The local tax base (size) in a parish
4. Effectiveness of programs offered on a local or parish level
5. Perceived importance of CES work

These factors directly influence the amount of funding that may be available to the LCES local offices. Since local governing bodies have primary control over local funding, perceptions of local decision makers regarding the importance of CES work may be a major hindrance to increased funding. Moreover, more state and federal funding are highly unlikely in the near or foreseeable future due to:

1. Catastrophic events that take billions of dollars from state and federal governments such as:
 - a. September 11th, 2001
 - b. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita
 - c. War on terrorism over-seas
2. State budgets continually shrinking due to more agencies needing funding on the state level (more competition for state level funds)
 - a. shrinking petrochemical industry in Louisiana
 - b. billions of dollars of funds going to “new” state-level projects (re-building coastlines and levee systems

(About the LSU AgCenter, 2005).

Perceptions Regarding the CES

A study was done by Miller (1988) concerning the perceptions of legislators of the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service and how legislators perceived the Cooperative Extension Service to the future of the CES. Since legislators determine the major funds that support Extension programs, they need to know and understand the structure and operation of the agency as a basis for making decisions. The majority of the legislators (75%) viewed Extension as a public service agency rather than an educational

one. Surprisingly, only 11% indicated Extension's main function was an educational mission. A common thread among almost half of the legislators was that the urban areas need increased programming. A majority of the legislators perceived the effectiveness of programming by the CES to be average or excellent. Almost half or 48% of the legislators indicated that extension programming was important and effective to the residents in their district. Seventeen percent indicated they did not know what contributions or the extent of contributions Extension was making in their district.

Many reasons exist as to why CES is important to county-level leaders, residents and even states. Martin and others in a 2004 marketing study said that the Florida Extension Service is important because of the information the CES provides via publications, programs, and other individual consultations; the human resources that deliver the information; and the support of the community leaders and decision makers. The authors added that in many areas of study, Extension is seen as the sole information source or clear leader in areas like 4-H Youth Leadership program, Pesticide Applicator Certification program, and commercial producer education and landscape disciplines.

Extension agents strive to be viewed as the authorities in their fields by the community; the public's trust and reliance are very important to agents and the future of Extension. They work hard to develop programs that are informative and interesting, using resources provided by research faculty and Extension specialists (Alberts, Wirth, Gilmore, Jones, & McWaters, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the twentieth century, the need for higher levels of education steadily increased until the point that today, most individuals need some post-secondary education

to be successful in any chosen career field. As society changes, so do the needs of the people. Non-formal education is important for anyone who holds a job because as job requirements change, as a person is promoted, as computer technology changes, these individuals will need training to remain competitive or often just gainfully employed. The largest provider of non-formal education in the world is the United States Cooperative Extension System (CES). The CES helps people improve their lives through education using scientific knowledge focused on needs and issues.

Nationally, CES programs receive an average of about 18.5% of their funding from the local or parish (county) level. However, in Louisiana, the local governments contribute only 6% (statewide mean) of the funding to local extension programs. The state provides about 86% for the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service and the federal government provides the other 8%. (About the LSU AgCenter, 2005).

Continued local funding of LCES programs at current or higher levels is contingent on the value seen by members of local governing bodies in programs and services provided by the LCES. This study which seeks to determine perceptions of local governing bodies about the LCES is significant to ensure support and commitment from local governing bodies.

Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the influence of selected perceptual, experiential, and demographic characteristics on the importance of CES programs as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana.

The specific objectives formulated by the researcher to accomplish this purpose include:

1. To describe members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics:
 - a. age;
 - b. gender;
 - c. number of years served on a local governing body;
 - d. population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - e. primary occupation/profession;
 - f. highest level of education completed; and
 - g. race.
2. To determine the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police jury/parish council members) in Louisiana.
3. To determine the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.
4. To determine the effectiveness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service in meeting the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.
5. To determine the extent of utilization of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

6. To determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and each of the following measures:
 - a. perceived extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
 - b. perceived level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
and
 - c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale).

7. To determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and the following selected demographic characteristics:
 - a. gender;
 - b. population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - c. primary occupation/profession; and
 - d. highest level of education completed.

8. To determine if a model exists explaining a significant portion of the variance in the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana from the following perceptual and demographic characteristics:
 - a. perceived extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
 - b. perceived level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
 - c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived needs scale);
 - d. age;
 - e. gender;
 - f. number of years served on a local governing body;
 - g. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - h. primary occupation/profession; and
 - i. highest level of education completed.

Definition of Terms

The following terms used in the study are operationally defined as follows:

Local governing bodies- police jury/council members in Louisiana.

Dependent Variable- Importance of Cooperative Extension Service programs and services mean response score to the items in the scale.

Independent Variables- Awareness, Effectiveness, Utilization, and Attendance.

CES- Cooperative Extension Service.

LCES- Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

Extent of Utilization- Refers to how often study participants had used a program or service of the LCES within the past year.

Level of Awareness- Refers to how aware study participants were of the programs and services offered by the LCES.

Effectiveness- Refers to whether or not programs and services offered by the LCES effectively met the needs of residents in given parishes or communities.

Level of Attendance- Refers to how many times study participants had attended selected programs/events sponsored by the LCES.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Importance of Non-Formal Education (NFE)

According to Brennan (1997: 185) the term “NFE” is an expression in the negative. Defining concepts in a negative way may be illuminating but also confusing and limiting. In recent times in the Western world when Adult Education was defined as being “non-credit and non-vocational,” there were concerns that the positive aspects of the field were not stressed in the negative definition. For example, Johnson and Hinton’s (1986) review of adult and continuing education in Australia referred in its title to “non-award” adult and continuing education. Brennan (1997) said that in the current discussion of NFE, the negative aspects of the term are not avoided or considered as limiting but rather are used as a central feature in its explanation and exploration by contrasting NFE with formal education. The work of Coombs and Ahmed (1974) actually departed from the discussion of the definition of NFE in their advocacy of more integrated rural development. The two authors did an exemplary job in relating three terms: informal, formal, and non-formal and particularly formal and non-formal. Formal education is the “highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education system”- from the smallest of schools to universities (1974, p. 8). NFE is “any organized, systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups of the population, adults as well as children” (1974, p. 8).

Smith (2006) said that non-formal education is any organized educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important

feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clientele and learning objectives.

Simkins (1976) analyzed non-formal education programs in terms of purposes, timing, content, delivery system, and control, and contrasted these with formal educational programs. The resulting ideal-types listed in Table 1 (Adapted by Fordham 1993 and from Simkins, 1977, pp. 12-15) provide a useful framework.

Table 1.
Ideal-Type Models for Formal and Non-formal Education

	Formal	Non-Formal
Purposes	Long term and general	Short term and specific
Timing	Long cycle, preparatory, full time	Short cycle, recurrent, part time
Content	Standardized, input centered, academic, entry requirements, determinate clientele	Individualized, output centered, practical, clientele determine the requirements
Delivery System	Institution based, isolated, from environment, rigid structure, teacher centered, resource intensive	Environment based, flexible, learner centered, resource saving
Control	External	Self-governing

One of the enduring themes in the literature of non-formal education, according to Fordham (1993), has been that the education provided should be in the interests of the learners and that the organization and curriculum planning should preferably be undertaken by the learners themselves: that it should be “bottom up.” It is also often argued that this should empower learners to understand and, if necessary, change the social structure around them (Fordham, 1993).

NFE Sub-Types

Brennan (1997) identified three sub-types of non-formal education that are widely recognized today. They are: complement, alternative, and supplemental.

The first NFE sub-type is described as a complement of the formal system. This seems to be the first type of NFE to be recognized and is for those audiences that are not able to be exposed to formal education. These target groups include school drop-outs and adults that are illiterate.

The second sub-type is described as NFE as an alternative. This type of NFE seeks to recognize the area of indigenous or traditional education and learning. Indigenous education and learning refer to structures and practices that existed before colonization. An important feature of this type of NFE is that its strategies and techniques of teaching/learning may need to be rediscovered and revalued (Brennan, 1997).

The third sub-type is NFE as a supplement to formal education. This type of NFE is designed to represent the sorts of educational responses that are related to recent important stages in the development of the nation. The origins of this type are found in the changes following the collapse of the communist world. This type also is related to the economic take-off of countries or nations. This NFE type is known as a quick or short-cut response to peoples' needs for education (Brennan, 1997).

Non-formal education takes place in many places in the modern world today. To name a few: most all schools, colleges and universities across the globe, churches, Christian groups, boy scouts, girl scouts, and even towns and municipalities. Others include environmental groups and a vast array of associations, both for-profit and non-profit. (Smith, 2006).

Historical Overview of the Cooperative Extension Service (CES)

The Cooperative Extension Service creates and delivers educational programs in local communities throughout the country. It is a complex, nationwide, educational system that provides a structure for carrying out many of the practices of non-formal and continuing education for adults and youth in local communities. The Cooperative Extension System links the education and research resources and activities of 74 land-grant colleges and universities, 3,150 counties, and the United States Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative State Research Education Service (CSREES). Extension employs approximately 32,000 employees and 2.8 million volunteers in fulfilling its educational mission (Extension Committee on Policy, 1995). This complex system carries out its public education functions in every community in the country through local clientele-based planning and implementation processes.

The first organized activity in the United States relating to agricultural education was the development of an agricultural society at Philadelphia in 1785 (Sanders, Arbour, Bourg, Clark, Frutchey, & Jones, 1966). These types of organizations spread throughout the country with two main functions. The first function was to educate the people on the problems and concerns in agriculture. The second purpose was to actively promote agriculture in general. Subsequently the United States Department of Agriculture was created in 1790.

Another major occurrence in the field of agriculture was the establishment of the land-grant university with a bill sponsored by senator Justin Morrill of Vermont, which was eventually passed as an act of the federal government in 1862. The Morrill Act created the land-grant college system dedicated to general education and the

improvement of agricultural and mechanical arts (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Although education in agriculture was officially instituted into the university system in 1862, it took several years before the idea of the Cooperative Extension Service was widely practiced and accepted. Many consider Seaman A. Knapp the father of the Cooperative Extension Service (Sanders et al., 1966). Knapp was from New York and educated to be a teacher. He taught in Vermont and then changed careers to become a farmer in Iowa. While in Iowa he served as professor of agriculture at Iowa State College. It was not until Knapp moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana to establish a business of selling land in southwest Louisiana to Middle Western farmers did he begin the idea that later spawned the development of the Cooperative Extension Service. He established five demonstration farms in Louisiana and Texas to demonstrate the solutions of agricultural problems specific to each area. These farms led to improved practices and production that was one of the first steps of disseminating knowledge from the university level to the local level. Knapp did not stop with just the adult population. In 1909 he organized a formalized system known as the boys' corn club (Sanders et al., 1966). It is believed that the concept of the 4-H youth development program could be dated back to the development of the boys' corn club (Sanders et al., 1966).

In 1910, Knapp made a powerful statement that basically explained what the CES meant a hundred years ago and still stands as a basic philosophy today.

“We will increase the wealth and give the people greater earning power. But other things that we teach incidentally are that we must improve the moral tone, the moral condition, and the whole prosperity of the people, to try to turn all avenues of the wealth

that we create into the proper channels so as to create a better people”

(Knapp, 1910, p. 7).

The official establishment of agriculture Extension work was the legislation passed by the federal government called the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 (Sanders et al., 1966). The act stated that agricultural extension work would be conducted by the state extension organizations in cooperation with the United Department of Agriculture. It further stated that the work should be conducted in a mutually agreed upon manner between the secretary of agriculture and the state agriculture colleges. Federal funds were provided through this act. From the federal establishment of the Cooperative Extension Service in 1914 with the Smith-Lever Act the program has grown into a unique partnership involving federal, state, and local governing bodies, which has functioned effectively for nearly a century (Seevers, Graham, Gamon & Conklin, 1997). Each of the partners performs distinct functions that are vital to the success of the organization. The Cooperative Extension organization links the research efforts of USDA and land-grant institutions in order to provide scientific knowledge produced to the appropriate users of the information (Seevers et al., 1997). The authors characterized the organization as one that is ever changing and dynamic and is charged with meeting the country’s needs for research, knowledge, and educational programs to enable people to make practical decisions that can improve their lives.

Extension work was to consist of giving instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture and home economics to people who were not attending college. The underlying philosophy was and always has been to help people help themselves by taking the university to the people. The system evolved to be responsive to people’s real needs,

providing quality information and education and problem solving on real concerns. (Rasmussen, 1989).

Each state extension service is headquartered at a land-grant university and usually is closely associated with the agricultural experiment station; the tripartite arrangement; the land-grant University, agricultural experiment station and cooperative extension service. (Rasmussen, 1989).

“For what is the object of extension work? More bushels of corn? More bales of cotton? More pounds of butter fat in the dairy cow's annual record? More quarts of fruit and vegetables canned for winter use? No, these are but means to an end. The end, the object of extension work, is to aid the farmer and his family to improve living conditions on the farm, to provide a more satisfying rural life. . . . Better crops, better livestock, better food, better clothes, these are among the objects of extension work. But back of it all, the ultimate purpose is to create better homes, better citizens, better communities, better rural living”(Warburton, 1930, pp. 292-293).

The Cooperative Extension System's mission statement is simple: “The Cooperative Extension System helps people improve their lives through an educational process which uses scientific knowledge focused on issues and needs” (Rasmussen, 1989:4).

Fundamental Objective of CES

The fundamental objective of the CES is the development of people by means of educational programs. Generally, this objective includes helping people acquire knowledge, solve problems, make sound economic decisions and plan for the future (Smith-Lever Act, 1914).

CES is responsible for off-campus informal teaching of agricultural and natural resource technology and management techniques as well as other programs focused on family and consumer sciences, youth development, overall improvement of the state's economy and efficient use of community and personal resources. The CES helps the people of each state in the union and around the world - both rural and urban to improve their lives through an educational process that uses research-based knowledge focused on issues and needs (Abington-Cooper, 2005).

Programs and Services

The needs of local clientele drive the programs of the CES. Greene (1995) said that the purpose of the CES is to serve the customer whether that customer resides in a huge apartment building or in a small farm house 50 miles from the nearest neighbor. Greene (1995) also stated that CES professionals should listen to those they serve in order to find out what practical education needs exist.

The CES offers programs including: agriculture and natural resources, encompassing programming in areas like beef cattle management, equine management, forestry, apiculture and sustainable agriculture. Family and consumer sciences, formerly known as home economics includes areas of home safety, cooking, canning, dietetics, programs for young mothers and managing the home. Popular areas of concentration involving 4-H youth development are; livestock showing, good character, citizenship, community service, leadership and money management. Newer programs not as traditional include urban forestry, youth-at-risk, after school child care, disease control, bio-security related to food supplies and disaster management (Cannizzaro, 1998).

Among newer programs being offered around the country by the CES, the “master” programs are some of the most exciting. Fletcher (2006) said that the master gardener program has spawned many programs that use the master gardener model. To name a few: master horse, master cattleman, master farmer and several more. Fletcher (2006) said the basic premise is that the clientele are taught via the classroom and experiential learning in the field as well. The clientele are tested periodically during the eight week course to measure knowledge gained and follow up with a post test before graduation from the program. A major part is that the clientele are then used as trained volunteers for the CES in a variety of different ways such as answering phones at a local CES office, volunteering at youth events related to the subject learned, and actually teaching portions of the program to new master gardeners, master farmers, and master horsemen, at a later date. Moreover, when the client signs on, he or she is fully aware that hours of volunteerism are not only expected but are an integral part of the program.

Methods of Program Evaluation

Patton (1997) noted that program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming.

There are three major types of program evaluations according to McNamara (1999). The first is goals-based evaluation which asks the question: are your programs achieving their overall, predetermined objectives? Often, programs are established to meet one or more specific goals. These goals are often described in the original program plans. Goal-based evaluations are evaluating the extent to which programs are meeting

predetermined goals or objectives. The second type is process-based evaluations which means understanding how your program really works, and its strengths and weaknesses. Process-based evaluations are geared to fully understanding how a program works -how does it produce the results that it does. These evaluations are useful because they accurately portray to outside parties how a program truly operates. Outcomes-based evaluation (identifying benefits to clients); is becoming increasingly important for nonprofits and asked for by funders. An outcomes-based evaluation facilitates asking if the organization is really doing the right program activities to bring about the outcomes one believes that are needed by your clients rather than just engaging in busy activities which seem reasonable to do at the time. Outcomes are benefits to clients from participation in the program. Outcomes are usually in terms of enhanced learning such as knowledge, perceptions/attitudes or skills or conditions, e.g., increased literacy, self-reliance, etc. Outcomes are often confused with program outputs or units of services, e.g., the number of clients who went through a program (McNamara, 1999).

Outcome Evaluations

Outcome evaluation is often described first by looking at its basic components. Outcomes evaluation looks at programs as systems that have inputs, activities/processes, outputs and outcomes - this system's view is useful in examining any program. Inputs – these are materials and resources that the program uses in its activities, or processes, to serve clients. These are often easy to identify, and many of the inputs seem common to many organizations and programs.

Activities –these are the activities, or processes, that the program undertakes with/to the client in order to meet the clients' needs.

Outputs – these are the units of service regarding the program, the number of clients served, books published, and very often indicate nothing at all about the actual impacts/benefits/changes in clients who went through the program; the number of clients served merely indicates the numerical number of clients who went through the program.

Outcomes – these are actual impacts/benefits/changes for participants during or after the program. These changes, or outcomes, are usually expressed in terms of knowledge and skills (short-term outcomes), behaviors (intermediate-term outcomes), values, conditions and status (long-term outcomes).

Outcome targets – these are the number and percent of participants that are needed to achieve the outcome.

Outcome indicators- these are observable and measurable “milestones” toward an outcome target. These are what one would see, hear, read, etc., that would indicate whether progress is being made toward the outcome target (McNamara, 1999).

Another type of outcome evaluation is a perception evaluation. This type of evaluation simply evaluates (measures) the perceptions of the participants of the program or project.

Perception

Perception is the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting and organizing sensory information. Methods of studying perception range from essentially biological or physiological approaches, through psychological approaches, to the often abstract thought experiments of mental philosophy (Wikipedia, 2006).

Perception is one of the oldest fields within scientific psychology, and there are correspondingly many theories about its underlying processes. An old quantitative law in psychology is the Weber-Fechner law, which quantifies the relationship between the intensity of physical stimuli and their perceptual effects. It was the study of perception that gave rise to the Gestalt school of psychology, with its emphasis on holistic approaches (Wikipedia, 2006).

Perception has been defined in many ways by many authors, but the basic concept of all definitions has been similar. Matlin (1983) defined perception as the way information is gathered and interpreted. In fact, everything an individual knows about the world is based upon perceptual information. People are so accustomed to seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting that they tend to take perception for granted (Matlin, 1983).

Perception is a major and primary form of knowing the world in virtually all philosophical and psychological systems. To do this the perceiver must combine, perhaps through a process of unconscious inferential reasoning, raw data with the cognitive representation of the environment that has been built up from past learning (Friedman & Carterette, 1996).

Vandaveer (1979) said that perception is influenced by the perceiver, the target and the situation. The authors said that the factors in the perceiver are attitudes, motives, interest, experience and expectations. Factors in the target are motion, sounds, size, background and proximity. Factors in the situation are time, work setting and social setting. Vandaveer (1979) stated that there are several characteristics and beliefs of the perceivers affecting perception:

Projection- Attributing one's own characteristics to other people.

Selective perception- People selectively interpret what they see on the basis of their interest, background, experience, and attitudes.

Stereotyping- Judging someone on the basis of one's perception of the group to which that person belongs.

Halo Effect- Drawing a general positive impression about an individual on the basis of a single characteristic.

Contrast Effect- Evaluating a person's characteristics that are affected by comparisons with other people recently encountered who rank higher or lower on the same characteristics.

Horn Effect- Drawing a general negative impression about an individual on the basis of a single characteristic.

Perception can affect programs in many ways, for example: what the news media says is perceived by the general public as being fact more often than not (Dautrich and Hartley, 1999).

Funding

At present, a state mandate from the LCES is being handed down to all Local Governing Bodies (LGBs), asking for increased funding over the next five years. The mandate is designed to get the state up to the southern region average of 18% of funding coming from local levels in coming years. Prior to the mentioned mandate, LGBs were only asked to fund what they thought they could afford and/or refer to a memorandum of understanding that had been written as many as 30 years ago in most cases. Local governing bodies (police juries and/or parish councils) have been treated fairly leniently

if they did not fund the LCES with a substantial amount of money in the last 30 or so years. Historically, the state was able to absorb the short-comings of the smaller parishes with perhaps a low number of residents and/or a small tax base. The state does not have the ability to do this anymore as budgets shrink in all sectors of public funding on the state and federal levels.

The current funding trend is one that is heavily laden with grant or soft money along with an ever-shrinking state budget. The LCES will have to be more accountable to the local or parish level of government as it demands more real money to change current funding trends. Several factors that influence local funding are:

1. Accountability to the local officials
2. Number of staff members in a parish office
3. The local tax base (size) in a parish
4. Effectiveness of programs offered on a local or parish level
5. Perceived importance of CES work

These factors influence the amount of funding that may be available to the LCES local office. Since local governing bodies have primary control over local funding, perceived importance of CES work could play a major role related to increased funding. Moreover, more state and federal funding is highly unlikely in the near or foreseeable future due to:

1. Catastrophic events that take billions of dollars from state and federal governments:

- a, September 11, 2001

- b. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

- c. War on terrorism over-seas
2. State budgets continually shrinking due to more agencies needing funding on the state level (more competition for state level funds).
- a. shrinking petrochemical industry in Louisiana
 - b. billions of dollars of funds going to “new” state-level projects (re-building coastlines and levee systems).

As stated earlier, the clientele of the LCES is all residents of the state and consequently, all residents of each parish are the clientele for each parish level LCES office (About the LSU AgCenter, 2005).

Related Studies

In a recent study by Jackson and Johnson (1999), the authors stated that as traditional funding sources become stagnant or decline, many Extension organizations are looking for gifts or grants and even are considering charging fees for services to supplement or replace traditional funding sources.

The Futures Task Force for the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) (1987) recommended that both federal and state leaders examine alternative funding sources. They also cited the risks associated with each. Dependence on grants could result in the granting agency controlling programming. Subcontracting could result in Extension working for other agencies rather than the clientele it was meant to serve. Users' fees could limit participation of those who most desperately need Extension programs but who are unable to pay. Even after stating those concerns, the Task Force felt that alternative funding should be pursued.

Stienbarger (2005) said that Extension offices in Washington State receive varying funding amounts from counties, primarily from counties' discretionary general funds, as is the case in most states. Just like many states across the nation, Washington faces serious crises in funding from county partners due to increased budgetary pressures from other services, such as law and justice. Historically, Extension offices often received county funding with only modest scrutiny by county commissioners. In Washington, counties provide, at a minimum, office space and equipment in addition to contributions to faculty salaries. This is the case in most, if not all, states (Stienbarger, 2005).

Stienbarger (2005) suggested that it may be time to renegotiate Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) in Washington which may strengthen the relationship between governing bodies and Extension. The author also went on to say that Extension offices risk losing some autonomy, but they could gain increased budget certainty by renegotiating contracts that more explicitly align the work of local Extension offices to county priorities and build in accountability standards. In the long term, this could increase the perception of county partners that Extension constitutes an essential service to county residents.

In this environment, Extension is often viewed as the "first to go." At a minimum, Extension needs to stress how it leverages county funds in the form of grant and partnership funding. Clearly, Extension needs to better communicate with, and demonstrate to, commissioners that Extension addresses county priorities, but with a minimal demand on commissioners' time and county revenue.

It is also critical to ensure that programming meets the "attribution condition" whereby the benefits of programming are attributed to Extension (McDowell, 2004). Often, clientele associate programs with individual faculty members instead of Extension. This also happens with volunteer programs, such as 4-H, where participants and the public associate with the program, but do not relate the program to the institution. (Stienbarger, 2005).

Much has been said about CES accountability. Communicating the impacts and accomplishments of Extension programs is vital for the continued support of these programs by legislators, community leaders, and the general public. Simply doing good work and helping people to help themselves will not maintain or expand financial support and positive public opinion in a climate of scarce resources (Hogan, 1994). Many authors and scholarly figures agree that the public seems to be fading away from understanding what CES is for or how it can help them. At the same time, governmental officials also lack the understanding or appreciation of Extension.

Several studies have found that legislators and the general public lack a clear understanding of the mission (Adkins, 1981) and funding (Blalock, 1964) of Cooperative Extension. In fact, research in one state has indicated that a majority of state legislators view Cooperative Extension as a public service agency, rather than an educational institution (Miller, 1988).

Beginning in 1988, the Carroll County office of Ohio State University Extension began an organized, proactive public relations program. The overall objective of this program was to increase the effectiveness of the entire county Extension program by

increasing the understanding of and support for Extension by county residents and legislators. Specific goals included the following:

1. Make the general public more aware of Extension and the impacts of local Extension Programs.
2. Increase the public support and financial resources for the local Extension program.
3. Make legislators (county, state, and federal) more aware of the impacts of local Extension programs.
4. Increase the size and scope of the local Extension program.

To accomplish these goals, Extension staff members sometimes had to confront paradigms regarding how resources were allocated. Spending a few thousand dollars on public relations projects and toll-free telephone lines is not yet routine practice for Extension professionals, but was necessary to communicate the message to users and non-users of Extension programs, legislators, and other community leaders (Hogan, 1994).

In the mid-1980s marketing of Extension was popular; New York was at the top of the list to give it a try. They developed a new name, logo, outreach materials, and staff training programs to project a unified, consistent and cohesive image (Boldt, 1988).

Faculty of the LCES implemented scattered marketing efforts for local audiences in the late 1980s but there was no comprehensive statewide plan. Faculty were surveyed for their opinion regarding the relative importance of marketing tools in the use and their suggestions for strengthening existing marketing efforts (Coreil & Verma, 1992). In 1994, the "Marketing Extension to Louisiana" project was initiated. A faculty task force,

established to lead this project, identified an immediate need for a survey of the public's image of Extension. Warner and Christenson's (1984) national assessment of the Cooperative Extension Service had shown high levels of public awareness (87%) and satisfaction (95%), but low use (27% lifetime, 14% yearly). Their work was used to guide LCES' survey design and compare results. The survey was intended to determine public awareness, user satisfaction, and potential usefulness of Extension and Extension programs, and to compare rural and urban audiences on these factors. (Verma & Burns, 1995).

The rural sample comprised 343 respondents, and the urban sample 384 respondents. To adjust for response bias, race and education were weighted to reflect their distribution in the 1990 census. This procedure adjusted the rural sample downward from 343 to 201, and the urban upward from 384 to 532. Rural-urban comparisons are reported for these adjusted sample sizes (Verma & Burns, 1995).

Verma and Burns (1995) found that participants were most aware of 4-H (49.6%). Agriculture was next with 27.2% reporting awareness, community development (19.8%) ranked third and home economics followed close behind with just under 19%. Rural respondents were more significantly aware of all programs than were urban respondents.

It is noteworthy to say that 40.6% of all respondents knew there was an Extension office in their parish, but 51.8% were unsure, and 7.6% did not know. Twice as many rural as urban respondents knew there was a parish Extension office (Verma & Burns, 1995).

The survey results indicated that while the general public is somewhat aware of Extension, only a small percentage of Louisianians used LCES' programs in the study

year. However, it is important that a majority of the users were satisfied with these programs. An important finding of the survey was that practically all Extension programs were perceived by Louisianians as potentially useful in improving their family's lives (Verma & Burns, 1995).

Differences in awareness of Extension's programs are not surprising. These arise from differences in funding, resource allocation, program emphases, and past and present mandates. For example, the 4-H Youth program, which had the highest level of awareness, enjoys a substantial share of LCES faculty resources, is closely affiliated with Louisiana school systems, and receives considerable assistance from parents, volunteers, and leaders. From a marketing standpoint, the high visibility and goodwill associated with LCES' 4-H programs is a logical cornerstone of future efforts to increase awareness of other LCES programs and to promote their use by Louisiana residents. Such "shirttail" or "piggyback" strategies are often successful in private sector marketing (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 1992).

In 1991, Kabes, a Minnesota Extension agent, identified factors used by legislators when they voted on Extension funding requests. The findings showed that legislators were influenced by their perceptions of Extension's results and impacts. The most common criteria were: 1. Perception of Extension's effectiveness; 2. Quality of Extension work in the district or in the state; 3. Relevance of Extension work in the state; 4. Information provided by agents about Extension accomplishments; 5. Extension priorities for the coming year and Extension's adaptation to the changing demographics in the state; 6. The important goal for Extension is to accomplish all it proposes

efficiently, and then ensure that the legislators who allocate the funds are aware of the quantity and quality of the impact being made (Kabes, 1991).

John Paluszek, CEO of Ketcham Public Affairs in New York, was retained by the Cooperative Extension Service and Cooperative State Research Service to study the Extension Service and Experiment Stations. In his report, Paluszek stated, "the Cooperative Extension Service is swimming against some very strong currents. Federal funds are being redirected and state and local funds are under unprecedented pressure" (p. 96). According to Paluszek, the CES has performed well but needs to significantly communicate an awareness of the programs, how those programs can be accessed by customers, and the benefits those programs provide to individuals and to communities (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, 1995).

Hodson & Kotrlik (2002) completed a study concerning the perceptions held by Louisiana Legislators toward the CES. Since its beginning, the (LCES) has been oriented toward the agricultural sector of the state. Since its clientele have been largely concentrated on farms and in rural areas, the LCES is concerned about the support that a more urban legislature will give its requests for appropriations as it restructures its programs to meet the needs of citizens from both urban and rural areas of the state. (Hodson and Kotrlik, 2002).

The legislators who responded to the survey indicated that they were familiar with LCES (Table 2). Responses were recorded on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*unfamiliar*) to 5 (*very familiar*). The 4-H program received the highest familiarity score for a LCES program, agriculture programs ranked next, and home economics ranked third, followed by community and agricultural leadership development.

Table 2.
Legislators' Familiarity with LCES and LCES Programs

Program Area	Familiarity with LCES	
	Mean ^a	SD
Cooperative Extension Service	3.85	1.08
4- H Youth Programs	3.65	1.12
Agricultural Programs (county agents)	3.56	1.31
Home Economics Programs	3.22	1.22
Community and Agricultural Leadership Development	3.01	1.38
Fisheries Programs	2.88	1.34
Expanded Food and Nutrition Programs	2.65	1.28
Grand Mean	3.26	1.28

N=108. 1=Unfamiliar, 2=Slightly Familiar, 3=Somewhat Familiar, 4=Familiar, 5=Very Familiar.

Hemmingsen (1996) stated that in this era of increased accountability and limited resources, decision-makers are asking tougher questions about continued funding for public programs. At the same time, these decision-makers do not have the time nor resources to conduct an in depth study of every program they control. It is everyone's job within these organizations to clearly describe what they do. Staff must be able to articulate, in terms that matter to the public, what difference the organization makes, what are the outcomes and impacts. Planning and coordination of these educational and advocacy efforts must occur at the organizational level. As individuals and organizations build their relationship marketing capacity, and develop consistent contact with important decision makers, the ability to positively impact key policy and funding decisions will be enhanced (Hemmingsen, 1996). Kotler & Fox (1985), in their book on institutional

strategic marketing, pointed out that only by fulfilling the needs of customers can an institution or business effectively market itself. In developing, maintaining and enhancing relationships with elected officials, extension service staff must employ "high touch and personalized technology" communications strategies. By using imagination to portray the Extension Service's commitment and ability to address important community issues, the Extension Service's future will be secure (DeYoung, 1988).

Miller (1988) sought to determine the perceptions of the South Carolina Legislature with regard to the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service. Miller identified four areas where perception was to be determined: purpose and objectives, participation and involvement, basic program areas, and clientele of the CES. He attempted to associate these perceptions with selected factors: role in the legislature, years of legislative experience, political party affiliation, place of residence, character of district, age, and occupation. A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data from 65% of the 1985 South Carolina Legislature. Legislators perceived the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service as a rural, agriculturally-oriented organization. Each of the selected factors was associated significantly with at least one or more aspects of perception. Miller found that party affiliation, place of residence, and character of the district exerted the greatest influence on how the legislators perceived the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service (Miller, 1988).

Sixty-eight percent of the legislators indicated they knew their county Extension chairperson while 88% said they knew the location of the county Extension office. Sixty-four percent said they had participated in an Extension activity, but over half (59%)

indicated neither they nor any member of their family had ever participated in the 4-H program, the youth phase of Extension (Miller, 1988).

Only 22% of the legislators thought Extension was successful in keeping them informed about its activities. Twenty-three percent indicated they had never either received or read newsletters released by Extension specialists; 39% indicated they had never used any Extension publications; 46% had never visited their county Extension office; and 42% had never been visited by an extension agent. Legislators who lived in and represented rural areas indicated a greater participation and involvement in Extension programs and activities than did legislators who lived in and represented urban areas (Miller, 1988).

Warner may be considered the foremost expert on perception and awareness of the CES; both of his studies were national studies, one was done in 1982 and the other in 1995.

When asked how they would distribute \$100 of tax money among the teaching, research and Extension functions of land-grant universities, respondents of the 1995 survey said on average they would spend \$45 teaching students on-campus, \$30 on outreach, and \$25 on research. The distribution did not differ by respondent age, education, region of the country, income, or ethnicity (Warner, Christenson, Dillman & Salant, 1996).

Respondents were then asked whether less, the same or more funds should be spent on the seven base programs: (1) nutrition and health, (2) natural resources and environment, (3) leadership and volunteer development, (4) 4-H and youth, (5) family development and management, (6) community and economic development, and (7)

agricultural production and marketing. A similar question was used in the 1982 study, but the subject areas were different, so a direct comparison is not possible. See Table 3. (Warner et al., 1996).

Generally, there was support for the same or more funding in all seven areas. No more than 27% wanted to spend less in any area. However, there were some differences in where the public wanted to spend additional tax dollars. Those receiving the greatest support for more funds were in the areas of family and youth and natural resources. There was also strong support for increased spending on nutrition and health and economic development (jobs). These priorities are consistent with the public's perception of critical issues facing the nation (Warner et al., 1996).

Significantly greater support for programs in family development was found among women, youth, and African Americans. For youth programs, more spending support can be found among persons of low income and educational achievement levels. More young people wanted increased spending for programs on natural resources and the environment. There was greater funding support for community and economic development among young people, town and city residents, and African Americans, but not by the elderly and those with higher incomes. Increased spending support for nutrition and health is found among women and African-Americans. Support for increased spending on agriculture was greatest among persons with a high school education or less, those with low incomes, and persons residing in rural areas or living on farms. Additionally those wanting more spent on leadership and volunteerism were more likely to live in urban areas (Warner et al., 1996).

Table 3.
Spending Desired on Base Programs, 1995

	More (%)	Same (%)	Less (%)
4-H Youth Development	54	41	5
Family Development and Management	54	34	12
Natural Resources and Environment	51	35	14
Community Economic Development	43	46	11
Nutrition and Health	40	45	15
Agriculture Production and Marketing	34	51	15
Leadership and Volunteer Development	27	46	27

The high level of similarity of results of the two surveys conducted 13 years apart give credibility to the findings. The more recent results were not drastically different than those of over a decade ago. Some critics in the 1980s concluded that Extension had outlived its usefulness and would not be around in the 90s. So it is reassuring that Extension still exists and continues to serve the needs of clientele. However, the findings are also unsettling, since changes made in program directions and target audiences were not found to be reflected in the 1995 responses. Even though programs have targeted under-served audiences, youth, urban residents, people with low levels of income and education remain the least likely to be aware of Extension or use its services (Warner et al., 1996).

As in 1982, Extension continued in 1995 to have a tinged image. Three of the four program areas have greater visibility than does the organization itself. Warner concluded that in its marketing efforts, Extension must do a better job of building the linkages between the program identities and the overall organization (Warner et al., 1996).

Funding for the Cooperative Extension Service is in crisis according to McDowell (2004). The author says that the federal partner is almost not a partner anymore - the constant decline of formula funding and the loss of national Extension program leaders is just some of the evidence. State governments in fiscal crisis all across the nation are questioning their support to Extension. In November 2003 Michigan State University issued an e-mail appeal to alumni to make noise wherever they could--both Extension and the Experiment Station were on the chopping block--not just for cuts but for possible elimination. Identifying a state where there is not a state funding crisis for Extension is difficult (McDowell, 2004).

McDowell (2004) further claimed that the “cooperative” part of the CES has dropped off badly because many Americans are growing tired of paying taxes even for the things they are proud of most. The author also claims that a broadening of programs away from agriculture while still taking care of the traditional clientele is quite obvious. Extension must broaden its base of support. Almost everyone in the system agrees. Broadening the organizations’ support base means finding ways to serve and collect from new audiences. With agricultural audiences declining in numbers and power, the CES must find ways of serving agriculture well with fewer resources. If agricultural clients and agents insist on maintaining old ways of delivering programs and protect only the agricultural part of the budget, they put the system in a budget/political downward spiral towards its ultimate demise. When agricultural agents participate in trying to restrict spending in Extension to agricultural programs, their irrational, self-interested behavior costs Extension dearly. (McDowell, 2004).

McDowell (2004) further stated that one way to think about how CES must generate and garner support for programs is to consider that the following four conditions are necessary to that process:

1. Programs must generate a positive net-benefit to the client
2. Clients must attribute the benefits they gained to Extension
3. To solicit and collect support from clients who have benefited requires being able to identify and communicate with them
4. The costs to clients of acting politically for us must be less than the value placed on present and anticipated program benefits

Extension personnel must all be fiscal entrepreneurs. The system is still unduly dependent on appropriations...for the fiscal fuel to drive its programs. The continuing budget cuts the system is now facing at all levels aren't aberrations - they're trends of the future. Each and every Extension staff member...must be trained to acquire and administer private and new public resources. Otherwise, issues programming will end up as so many good ideas on bookshelves (Stiehl, Bessey & Schmall,1992).

At first, this idea is a frightening and potentially debilitating thought. Extension staffs have to develop and deliver quality educational programs to meet the changing needs of the communities they serve, but now they are sent into the woods to hunt for the "fiscal fuel" we need to keep our fires burning. When CES tells themselves it's just an aberration, leaders are quick to reaffirm the certainty of the trend in a system that depends greatly on public appropriations (Stiehl et al., 1992).

A recent article has been written on a very similar topic as this research. This article, written in 2005 by Steinbarger looks at the "view" that county commissioners

have of the southwest Washington (state) area. County Commissioners are the governing bodies of a county the same as are Police Jury or Council members in Louisiana.

Given increasing urbanization and economic transformation, how well does Extension serve its clientele? Using personal interviews, the study gauged the perceived accountability and relevance of Extension programs to county governments in southwest Washington State. The study has implications for other regions utilizing significant discretionary funding from county partners. County commissioners indicated that they like Extension programming but expressed little ownership in programming often seen as antiquated. Commissioners do not see Extension meeting community needs and invest little time in the partnership. While closer alignment with county priorities will help improve the relationship with Extension, institutional constraints may also play an important part (Stienbarger, 2005).

In this report, Stienbarger (2005) asked, in a climate of increasing urbanization and economic transformation, how do county commissioners perceive Extension? The study derived, in part, from a need to evaluate perceptions that local decision-makers often view Extension programs as traditional and relatively static.

Commissioners responded that they associated “Extension” most often with 4-H and agriculture. Nine commissioners of the 16 who participated used terms like “cursory,” “distant,” or “little engagement” when asked to describe their relationship with Extension. Two participants did mention providing advisory input, and another said the relationship was “good.” The participant that was elected to the same county in which the researcher worked stated that he did not know 4-H was an Extension program. (Stienbarger, 2005).

The data collected by Stienbarger (2005) suggested a fundamental disconnect with county partners and indicated that Extension offices need to better align their programming to county priorities. Most offices have not successfully made the connection in commissioners' minds, although several commissioners stated they did not want to be significantly involved in directing Extension due to already heavy workloads. One commissioner echoed by others, commented, "I don't hear any complaints, so I assume they are doing good work." None of the commissioners participated in faculty evaluations, although six thought this could be important.

Perhaps the most interesting findings of the Stienbarger (2005) study had to do with commissioners' perspectives of how well Extension programs address critical county issues. Important differences were also noted in the views of Extension county directors and commissioners. Commissioners listed the actual Extension programs they perceived as the most important for their county, but they did not perceive that these programs address what they saw as critical local issues. Some Extension work may mesh with critical county issues, but commissioners did not perceive it that way. For example, work done to increase small forestry landowner's profits may provide economic benefits to county residents in ways that do not clearly link program impact to economic development. Clearly, Extension is doing a better job of defining how their programs are linked to counties' issues would be a big help concerning critical issues.

Extension county directors' responses essentially matched commissioners' responses with respect to which Extension programs they considered important. However, the two groups matched much less closely on views of the critical issues facing

their counties. Commissioners viewed policy issues as top priorities while Extension county directors viewed program issues as top priorities (Stienbarger, 2005).

Even though Memoranda of Agreements (MOAs) outline the nature of the partnerships between Extension offices and county governments, none of the commissioners were familiar with this document. Six mistook annual budget amendments for the base MOA. This result stems partially from the age of many MOAs, most of which were written or last revised in the 1980s. Three of the four county directors interviewed did not know when their MOAs were last negotiated or signed (Stienbarger, 2005).

Summary

There has been considerable research on the importance, awareness and marketing of the Cooperative Extension Service (Hodson & Kotrlik, 2002; Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 1992; and Coreil & Verma, 1992; Cannizzaro, 1998). Issues related to funding along with awareness of the CES have been addressed (Warner, Christenson, Dillman & Salant, 1996; Warner & Christenson, 1984; Verma & Burns, 1995; Jackson & Johnson, 1999; Kabes, 1991; and Stienbarger, 2005). Most of this research concerned the perceptions of residents (private sector).

The only studies to date concerning public officials' perception of the CES are Hodson & Kotrlik, 2002; and Stienbarger, 2005. No research has been done to date concerning the importance of the CES as perceived by Local Governing Bodies (police jury/council members).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was defined as members of county/parish level local governing bodies in states geographically located in the southeastern portion of the United States. The accessible population was defined as members of parish level local governing bodies (typically referred to as police juries or parish councils) in Louisiana. The frame of the accessible population was identified through the Police Jury Association of Louisiana which maintains a directory of all individuals who currently (2006) hold one of the parish level local governing body positions. As identified by the Police Jury Association, there were 582 positions which met the stipulation of the defined accessible population. Individuals selected for participation in the study included a 100% sample (census) of the defined accessible population. Therefore, the sample in this study included 582 subjects.

Instrumentation

The initial form of the instrument was developed based on a review of related literature. The instrument used to collect data in this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire consisting of six parts. Portions of this instrument were adapted from two previous studies conducted by Cannizzaro (1998) and Hodson (1998) with similar research purposes. The researcher had written permission from the aforementioned two authors to adapt questions from their respective instruments (see appendix B).

Part one of the questionnaire was designed to determine the awareness among members of local governing bodies of the programs of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES). Each of the major programs of the LCES was listed and

respondents were asked to indicate their level of awareness using a five-point anchored scale with the following assigned values: 1 = “Unaware,” 2 = “Slightly Unaware,” 3 = “Somewhat Aware,” 4 = “Aware” and 5 = “Very Aware.”

Part two of the survey was designed to measure how effective the LCES programs were in meeting the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies. Again, each of the major programs of the LCES was listed, and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which each program met the needs of parish residents by marking their level of agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale. The response scales and corresponding values for this portion of the instrument included: 1 = “Strongly Disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Uncertain,” 4 = “Agree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree.”

The third part of the survey instrument was designed to measure how often the respondents had been exposed to LCES programming and materials (e.g. mail-outs, news articles, TV or radio stories, personal contact with an agent, etc.) within the past year. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they had heard/seen/received each of the services listed using a five-point anchored scale with the following assigned values: 1 = “None at all,” 2 = “Rarely” (1-2 times a year), 3 = “Occasionally” (3-5 times a year), 4 = “Moderately” (6-10 times a year), and 5 = “Monthly” (12 or more times a year).

Part four of the survey instrument was designed to measure whether the respondent had or had not attended major programs or events (within the last year) held by the LCES. The programs or events listed were those usually conducted at least annually at the parish level. Respondents were asked to check “Yes” or “No” to indicate their attendance or participation for each program or event listed.

Section five of the survey instrument was designed to measure the importance of the CES to the parish as perceived by the members of local governing bodies. The respondents were asked to indicate their perception by marking their level of agreement on a five-point Likert-type scale. The response scales and corresponding values for this portion of the instrument were: 1 = “Strongly Disagree,” 2 = “Disagree,” 3 = “Uncertain,” 4 = “Agree” and 5 = “Strongly Agree.”

The sixth section of the survey instrument included selected demographic questions including gender, age, and primary occupation.

Content validity of the instrument was established through a review by a panel of experts consisting of three university faculty with expertise in instrument design, two individuals who have completed research in this general area and three former police jury/council members from Louisiana. Appendix A contains the survey that was utilized in this study.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using the following steps:

1. Participants’ office email addresses were obtained from the Police Jury of Louisiana website; all 64 parish offices in the state had a public email address. A cover letter which accompanied the instructions explained to each participant that they had three options to complete the survey; the first option was a web link to fill out the survey using Zoomerang, a survey software package; option two was to return the completed survey via U.S. mail; and option three was to send the completed survey by facsimile.

- The respondents were sent the survey via email along with a cover letter (See Appendix D) on August 22, 2006 explaining the purpose of the study, and why it is important, etc. This cover letter also explained in detail how Zoomerang worked so as to not intimidate a potential respondent.
2. Two days after the initial email had been sent, a follow-up email was sent out to all participants. This email message asked each participant to respond at his or her earliest convenience if they had not done so already and that his or her anonymity would be protected. This email also included an expression from the researcher that their time and support were most appreciated (See Appendix E).
 3. Ten days after the cover letter and email had been sent, all non-respondents were sent a friendly reminder asking for their response, and stressing the importance of getting all surveys back. Along with this the Zoomerang link was mentioned again to ensure that respondents had all the information they needed to complete the survey (See Appendix F).
 4. Twenty days after the initial survey was sent out, the survey completion percentage was extremely low. The researcher contacted Mr. Roland Dartez (executive director of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana) and explained to him that some assistance was needed in an attempt to increase the number of completed surveys. Mr. Dartez sent a letter on September 19, 2006 to all 582 potential respondents asking them to complete the survey, explaining its importance and that a prompt response was appreciated (See Appendix G). The result of the letter was positive as several surveys were completed within the next week. Without a substantial number of total surveys completed, the researcher

sent four email messages (one message a week for four weeks) to potential respondents that basically repeated the message from Mr. Dartez (See Appendix H). One week after the last of the four email messages was sent out; a substantial number of surveys had been completed.

5. Since the response rate after six weeks was less than 70% (actual return rate was 18%) the researcher then contacted a random sample of 30 people of the remaining non-respondents and asked them a randomly selected sub-set of the items on the survey. A random sample of 17 questions was asked to the 30 individuals to determine if non-respondents were different from respondents. It was established a priori that if the respondents and non-respondents were different on more than two items that they would be considered different.

Phone numbers (work or cell numbers) for the randomly selected non-respondents were obtained from police jury/council offices. If a sample member could not be contacted after three attempts (phone calls) were made, an alternate sample member was contacted. Twelve alternates had to be contacted to reach the required number of 30 non-respondents. In total, the researcher completed the 30th non-response survey on the 42nd randomly selected name.

Statistics compared between respondents and non-respondents were found to be statistically different on eight of 17 items. Therefore, the researcher is limited to generalizing results to the respondent sample. The response rate and corresponding differences between respondents and non-respondents is a limitation of the current study.

Data Analysis

Each objective in the study was evaluated through the data analysis procedures outlined below:

1. To describe members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics:
 - a. age;
 - b. gender;
 - c. number of years served on a local governing body;
 - d. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - e. primary occupation/profession;
 - f. highest level of education completed; and
 - g. race.

The analysis used to accomplish this objective included the presentation of appropriate measures of central tendency and variability for each of the variables on which research subjects were described. For variables that were measured on a categorical scale (nominal and ordinal), this included frequencies and percentages in categories. These variables included: gender, age, primary occupation/profession, population density, and highest level of education completed. The variables measured on a continuous scale of measurement (number of years served on a local governing body) were summarized using the mean and standard deviation.

2. To determine the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service among members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

This objective was accomplished using the following analysis techniques:

- a. First, the mean and standard deviation for each of the items used in the awareness scale were presented to report the awareness of individual LCES programs among members of local governing bodies.
- b. The mean of all of the items in the scale was then computed to serve as a measure of the overall awareness of programs and services offered by the LCES. This mean was presented along with the standard deviation of the calculated score. An interpretive scale was then prepared by the researcher based on the response scale used in this portion of the survey to provide a substantive interpretation of the calculated mean values for both the individual items and the total scale score.

3. To determine the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

This objective was accomplished using the following analysis techniques:

- a. First, the mean and standard deviation for each of the items used in the importance scale was presented to report the importance of individual LCES programs among members of local governing bodies.
- b. The mean of all of the items in the scale was then computed to serve as a measure of the overall importance of programs and services offered by the LCES.

This mean was presented along with the standard deviation of the calculated score. An interpretive scale was then prepared by the researcher based on the response scale used in this portion of the survey to provide a substantive interpretation of the calculated mean values for both the individual items and the total scale score.

4. To determine the effectiveness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service in meeting the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

This objective was accomplished using the following analysis techniques:

- a. First, the mean and standard deviation for each of the items used in the effectiveness scale was presented to report the effectiveness of individual LCES programs among members of local governing bodies.
 - b. The mean of all of the items in the scale was then computed to serve as a measure of the overall effectiveness of programs and services offered by the LCES. This mean was presented along with the standard deviation of the calculated score. An interpretive scale was then prepared by the researcher based on the response scale used in this portion of the survey to provide a substantive interpretation of the calculated mean values for both the individual items and the total scale score.
5. To determine the extent of utilization of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

This objective was accomplished using the following analysis techniques:

- a. First, the mean and standard deviation for each of the items used in the extent of utilization scale was presented to report the extent of utilization of individual LCES programs among members of local governing bodies.
 - b. The mean of all of the items in the scale was then be computed to serve as a measure of the overall effectiveness of programs and services offered by the LCES. This mean was presented along with the standard deviation of the calculated score. An interpretive scale was then prepared by the researcher based on the response scale used in this portion of the survey to provide a substantive interpretation of the calculated mean values for both the individual items and the total scale score.
6. To determine if a relationship existed between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and each of the following measures:
- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
 - b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale); and
 - c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as

measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale).

This objective was accomplished using correlation coefficients. Since both the overall importance score and each of the other three scores specified in this objective (extent of utilization, awareness of programs and services, and perceived effectiveness) were measured on an interval scale of measurement, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients were the appropriate statistics to measure the relationships of interest.

7. To determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and the following selected demographic characteristics:
 - a. gender;
 - b. population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - c. primary occupation/profession; and
 - d. highest level of education completed.

Since the dependent variable in this objective (overall perceived importance of LCES programs and services) was measured on a continuous scale (interval) of measurement, the selection of the most appropriate measure to determine the relationship of interest was based primarily on the level of measurement of each specified demographic characteristic. Since the variable gender is a nominal dichotomous measure, for ease of interpretation, the researcher

used an independent t-test to determine if perceived importance is different by gender of the local governing board members. The relationship between overall perceived importance and both population density and highest level of education completed were measured using a Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient. For the variable, primary occupation/profession, the responses were categorized into groups based on the Department of Labor classifications, and the overall perceived importance was compared by the reported categories of occupations using one way analysis of variance.

8. To determine if a model existed explaining a significant portion of the variance in the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana from the following perceptual and demographic characteristics:
 - a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
 - b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
 - c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale);
 - d. age;

- e. gender;
- f. number of years served on a local governing body;
- g. population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they serve;
- h. primary occupation/profession; and
- i. highest level of education completed.

The statistical measure used to accomplish this objective was a multiple regression analysis with the overall scale score measuring the importance of the LCES as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana used as the dependent variable in the analysis. The other variables identified in the objective were entered into the regression model as independent variables and stepwise entry of the variables was used due to the exploratory nature of the study.

Other procedures that were included as part of the regression analysis conducted to accomplish this objective included the following:

1. All proposed independent variables were examined for multicollinearity prior to the actual calculation of the regression model. The procedure used to accomplish this was to regress each independent variable on all the other independent variables. In this procedure, if any independent variable was found to have more than 95% of its variance explained by one or a combination of the other independent variables, appropriate measures were taken to eliminate the excess multicollinearity.

2. All independent variables that added one percent or more of the explained variance to the regression model were retained in the model even if the individual variable was not statistically significant as long as the overall regression model remained significant.
3. Independent variables were entered into the model as either continuous variables or dichotomous variables. Any categorical variables that were not measured on a continuous scale of measurement were restructured into a series of dichotomous variables to accomplish this criterion of the regression analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Objective One

Findings presented in this chapter are organized by objectives of the study. The first objective was to describe members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana on selected demographic characteristics. Respondents were asked to provide personal background information in the following areas: 1) age; 2) gender; 3) the number of years they have served on a local governing body; 4) population density (defined as rural, suburban or urban) of the parish in which they serve; 5) primary occupation/profession and 6) highest level of education completed.

Respondents were asked to report their age by marking the most appropriate age category on the instrument. The age category which was reported by the largest number of participants was the “50-57 years old” category ($n=39$, 37.5%). The age category which was reported by the second largest number of participants was the “42-49 years old” category ($n=31$, 29.8%). All respondents who marked an age category were at least age 26 years or older as the “18-25 years old” category was not marked by any respondent (see Table 4).

Regarding gender of the respondents, 80.6% ($n=83$) were male and 19.4% ($n=20$) were female. Two study participants did not respond to this item.

Regarding ethnicity of respondents, 79.6% ($n=82$) reported being Caucasian. Eighteen or (17.7%) were African-American. Pacific Islander, Asian and “Other” were reported by one respondent in each category. Two respondents did not report on this item.

Participants were asked to indicate the number of years they had served on a local governing body. For the 101 study participants who responded to this item, years served

ranged from 1 to 34 years with a mean of 9.90 years (SD = 6.78). When this data was summarized in categories of number of years, 28 (27.7%) respondents reported that they had held their position for 5-9 years. Another 27 (26.7%) fell within the “10-14 years” category and 26 (25.7%) reported having been in their position for less than 5 years (see Table 5).

Table 4
Age Groups Reported by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Age Group	Frequency ^a	%
18-25	0	0
26-33	2	2.0
34-41	8	7.7
42-49	31	29.8
50-57	39	37.5
58-65	12	11.5
65 >	12	11.5
Total	104	100.0

^a One participant did not respond to this item.

Table 5
Years of Service as a Police Jury/Council Member Reported by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Years Served	Frequency ^a	%
< 5	26	25.7
5-9	28	27.7
10-14	27	26.7
15-19	12	11.9 (table cont.)

20-24	2	2.0
25-29	4	4.0
30 >	2	2.0
Total	101	100

Note. Mean years as a local governing body member was 9.90 (SD = 6.78). Years served ranged from 1.0 to 34.0.

^a Four participants did not respond to this item.

Participants were asked whether they considered their district (the physical area in which they served) to be rural, suburban or urban. Seventy respondents (68%) reported that their district was rural while 27 (26.2%) respondents reported that their district was suburban and six respondents (5.8%) reported serving in an urban district. Two study participants did not respond to this item.

Respondents were also asked to report their primary occupation/profession in addition to their role as a local governing body member. This question was asked as an open-ended response item to enable the study participants to provide the most accurate information. Due to the nature of the item, a large number of unique responses were provided by the 99 individuals who responded to the question. A complete listing of the unique responses that were reported by the participants is presented in Appendix C exactly as they were reported. However, for interpretation purposes, the researcher grouped the responses into occupational groups. In identifying the most appropriate procedure for grouping these reported occupations/professions, the researcher chose to utilize the nine major occupational groups (MOG's) which are recognized by the United States Department of Labor (2006). Each of the responses was classified into the most

appropriate MOG, and any occupation/profession that could not be classified into one of the nine primary MOGs was placed into an “Other” category.

The two MOGs within which the largest number of reported occupations/professions were classified were “Professional/technical/related occupations” (MOG – A) and “Executive/administrative/managerial occupations” (MOG – B) with 20 (20.2%) of the responses classified in each of these groups. All other MOGs were represented by less than 10% of the respondents, and two of the MOGs “Handlers/equipment cleaners/helpers/laborers” (MOG – H) and “Service occupations except private household” (MOG – K) were not represented by any of the participants in the study (see Table 6). The occupation/profession responses that were classified in the “Other” category included individuals who indicated that they were retired ($n = 13$), those who reported that they were self employed ($n = 11$), and those who reported their occupation/profession as a full time mother/housewife ($n = 2$).

Respondents were asked to report on the highest level of education that they had completed. The highest level of education completed that was reported by the largest number of participants ($n = 30$, 29.1%) was “High School Diploma.” Of the 105 study participants, 29 (28.2%) chose the category “College (undergraduate/4 year degree),” and the category “Some High School Classes” was chosen by 4 or 3.9% of the respondents (see Table 7).

Objective Two

The second objective was to determine the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service among members of local governing bodies (defined as police jury/council members) in Louisiana.

Information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to identify their level of awareness of the programs and services of the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

Table 6
Occupational Grouping of Primary Occupations/Professions Reported by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Major Occupational Grouping ^a	Frequency ^b	%
Professional/technical/related occupations (MOG-A)	20	20.2
Executive/administrative/ managerial occupations (MOG-B)	20	20.2
Farm/fishing/forest occupations (MOG-I)	9	9.1
Administrative support/clerical occupations (MOG-D)	9	9.1
Precision production/craft/repair occupations (MOG-E)	7	7.1
Sales occupations (MOG-C)	5	5.1
Transportation and material moving occupations (MOG-G)	2	2.0
Other ^c Not included in one of the MOG's	26	26.2
N/A ^d	1	1.0
Total	99	100

^a Major Occupational Groupings (MOGs) according to the United States Department of Labor (2006)

^b Six study participants did not respond to this item

^c Other responses included retired ($\underline{n} = 13$), self employed ($\underline{n} = 11$) and full time mother/housewife ($\underline{n} = 2$)

^d One respondent replied “n/a” when responding to this item with no additional explanation.

Respondents were asked to report their level of awareness of nine different organizations, programs or services including The LSU AgCenter, The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Agriculture Programs (county agents), 4-H Youth

Table 7

Highest Level of Education Completed by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Level of Education	Frequency^a	%
Middle School	0	0
Some High School	4	3.9
GED	0	0
High School Diploma	30	29.1
Some College	23	22.3
Associate Degree	7	6.8
College (4 year Degree)	29	28.2
Post Graduate Masters/PhD/M.D.)	10	9.7
Total	103	100.0

^aTwo participants did not respond to this item.

Programs, Family and Consumer Sciences (home economics), Mastery Programs (master gardener, master horseman, master farmer), Community Development Programs, Fisheries Programs, and Forestry and Wildlife Programs. Responses were reported on a five-point anchored scale ranging from “Not at all aware” to “Very aware.” The reliability of the awareness scale was estimated using the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient. The computed alpha was .91 indicating an acceptable reliability estimate. To aid in the interpretation of the mean responses to the scale items, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = “Not at all aware,” 1.51-2.50 = “Slightly aware,” 2.51-3.49 = “Somewhat aware,” 3.50-4.49 = “Aware” and 4.50-5.00 = “Very aware.”

Regarding the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the LCES, the item with which respondents indicated the highest level of awareness was the “4-H Youth Programs” with a mean rating of 4.30 (SD = 0.81). This rating was classified as “Aware” using the interpretive scale. Three other items that were rated in the “Aware” category were “The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service” (mean = 4.14, SD = 0.98), “The LSU AgCenter” (mean = 4.11, SD = 0.98), and “Agriculture Programs (county agents)” (mean = 4.03, SD = 1.27). The program/service with which respondents reported the lowest level of awareness was “Fisheries programs” with a mean rating of 3.07 (interpretive category - “Somewhat Aware”). Overall, four of the items in this scale were rated in the “Aware” interpretive category and five were rated in the “Somewhat Aware” category (see Table 8).

Table 8
Awareness of Programs and Services Offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as Perceived by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Item	Mean ^a	S.D.	Classification ^b
4-H Youth Programs	4.30	.81	Aware
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service	4.14	.98	Aware
The LSU AgCenter	4.11	.98	Aware
Agricultural Programs (County Agents)	4.03	.97	Aware
Forestry and Wildlife Programs	3.35	1.21	Somewhat Aware
Family and Consumer Science Programs	3.34	1.25	Somewhat Aware
Mastery Programs (master gardener, farmer)	3.18	1.25	Somewhat Aware
Community Development Programs	3.15	1.15	Somewhat Aware
Fisheries Programs	3.07	1.27	Somewhat Aware (table cont.)

Overall awareness score ^c	3.63	.84	
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^a Response scale: 1= not at all aware, 2 = slightly aware, 3 = somewhat aware, 4 = aware, 5 = very aware

^b Interpretive scale: 1-1.50 = not at all aware, 1.51-2.50 = slightly aware, 2.51-3.49 = somewhat aware, 3.50-4.49 = aware, 4.50-5.0 = very aware.

^c The overall awareness score refers to the mean level of awareness of all the programs and services combined. Scores ranged from 3.07 to 4.30.

To further summarize the data from these responses a factor analysis was conducted to determine if underlying constructs existed in the scale. The method used was the principal components analysis with a varimax rotation.

Prior to conducting the planned factor analysis, the researcher examined the cases-to-variable ratio (11.7:1) which met the cases-to-variable ratio recommended by Hair et al., (2006). A review of the anti-image correlation matrix revealed measures of sampling adequacy (MSA's) all above the 0.5 threshold. Furthermore, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was conducted and calculations revealed a KMO value of 0.873. KMO values above 0.5 determine sampling to be adequate (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was performed to test the hypothesis that the variables in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated. The strength of the relationships between variables was found to be strong and acceptable for factor analysis based on results of this test (X^2 (df =36, $n = 9$) = 583.59, $p < .001$), (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). All measures examined indicated that the data from this scale were adequate and appropriate for calculation of a factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006).

After determining that the data was adequate for completing an exploratory factor analysis, the next step in conducting the test was to determine the number of factors to be extracted from the awareness scale. The researcher used a combination of the latent root

criterion and the scree test criterion to make this decision. When the items in the scale were analyzed, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 5.27. This factor accounted for 58.60% of the variance in the scale (see Table 9).

The loadings for the single factor extracted ranged from .82 to .56, indicating that all loadings met the minimum acceptable level as specified by Hair et al. (2006).

Table 9
Factor Analysis of Awareness of Programs and Services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana

Item (58.60% of variance explained)	Factor 1
Family and Consumer Science Programs (home economics)	.82
Mastery Programs (master gardener, master farmer, master horseman, etc.)	.81
Agriculture Programs (county agents)	.81
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service	.80
Forestry and Wildlife Programs	.79
Fisheries Programs	.76
Community Development Programs	.76
The LSU Ag Center	.74
4-H Youth Programs	.56

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “Awareness” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the nine scale items. The computed “awareness” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 3.07 to a high of 4.30 with a mean of 3.63 (SD= .84). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Awareness” score was classified in the “Aware” category.

Objective Three

The third objective was to determine the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/councils) in Louisiana. Information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to identify their perceptions concerning the programs and services offered by the LSU AgCenter and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight items relating to their perceptions of the importance of the programs and services of the LCES.

Responses were reported on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.” The reliability of the awareness scale was estimated using the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient. The computed alpha was .90 indicating an acceptable reliability estimate.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50 = disagree, 2.51-3.49 = slightly disagree, 3.50-4.49 = slightly agree, 4.50-5.49 = agree and 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree.

The item with which respondents reported the highest level of agreement was “I think the Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) is very important for the development of school-age parish residents.” The mean rating of this item was 5.57 (SD = .82). Using the researcher established interpretive scale, the rating of this item was in the “Strongly Agree” category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “I feel that the Extension Service could be more effective as an important resource if they

received more local funding.” The mean rating for this item was 4.48 (SD = 1.32) which classified it in the “Slightly Agree” interpretive scale category. Overall, one of the items was classified in the “Strongly Agree” category, six of the items were classified in the “Agree” category, and one item was classified in the “Slightly Agree” category (see Table 10).

Table 10
Importance of Programs and Services Offered by the LCES as Perceived by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Item	Mean ^a	S. D.	Classification ^b
I think the Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) is very important for the development of our school age parish residents.	5.57	0.82	Strongly Agree
I consider the Cooperative Extension Service to be a valuable asset to our parish residents.	5.27	1.09	Agree
I see our local Extension Service Office as an important resource for our parish residents.	5.22	0.96	Agree
I think the local Extension Service plays an integral part in improving the lives of our parish residents.	5.20	0.95	Agree
I feel that the amount of money the parish government disseminates to the Cooperative Extension Service each year is justifiable.	4.84	1.13	Agree
I think the programs and services offered by the Cooperative Extension Service in my parish satisfy the needs of our residents.	4.80	1.18	Agree
I do not think that our parish residents could get the information they need elsewhere if the Cooperative Extension Service did not provide it.	4.53	1.22	Agree
I feel that the Extension Service could be more effective as an important resource if they received more local funding.	4.48	1.32	Slightly Agree
Overall Importance Score ^c	5.00	0.82	Agree (table cont.)

^a Response scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree.

^b Interpretive scale: 1.00-1.50 = strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50 = disagree, 2.51-3.49 = slightly disagree, 3.50-4.49 = slightly agree, 4.50-5.49 = agree, 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree. Scores ranged from 4.48 to 5.57.

^c The overall importance score refers to the mean level of importance of all the programs and services combined.

To further summarize the data, a factor analysis was conducted to determine if underlying constructs existed in the scale. The method used was the principal components analysis with a varimax rotation.

Prior to conducting the planned factor analysis, the researcher examined the cases-to-variable ratio (13.1:1) which met the cases-to-variable ratio recommended by Hair et al. (2006). A review of the anti-image correlation matrix revealed measures of sampling adequacy (MSA's) all above the 0.5 threshold. Furthermore, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was conducted and calculations revealed a KMO value of 0.838. KMO values above 0.5 determine sampling to be adequate (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was performed to test the hypothesis that the variables in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated. The strength of the relationships between variables was found to be strong and acceptable for factor analysis based on results of this test (X^2 (df = 28, $n = 8$) = 649.11, $p < .001$). (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). All measures examined indicated that the data from this research were adequate and appropriate for calculation of a factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006).

After determining that the data were adequate for completing an exploratory factor analysis, the next step in conducting the test was to determine the number of factors to be extracted from the scale. The researcher used a combination of the latent

root criterion and the scree test criterion to make this decision. When the items in the scale were analyzed, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 4.91. This factor accounted for 61.4% of the variance in the scale (see Table 11).

The loadings for the single factor extracted ranged from .92 to .60, indicating that all loadings met the minimum acceptable level as specified by Hair et al. (2006).

Table 11
Factor Analysis of Importance of Programs and Services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana

Item (61.40% of variance explained)	Factor 1
I think the local extension service plays an integral part in improving the lives of our parish residents.	.92
I see our local extension service office as an important resource for our parish residents.	.92
I consider the cooperative extension service to be a valuable asset to our parish residents.	.86
I think the programs and services offered by the cooperative extension service in my parish satisfy the needs of our residents.	.82
I feel that the amount of money the parish government disseminates to the cooperative extension service each year is justifiable.	.81
I do not think that our parish residents could get the information they need elsewhere if the cooperative extension service did not provide it.	.65
I think the cooperative extension service (4-H) is very important for the development of our school age parish residents.	.62
I feel that the extension service could be more effective as an important resource if they received more local funding.	.60

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “Importance” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the eight scale items. The overall “Importance” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 4.48 to a high

of 5.57 with a mean of 5.00 (SD= .82). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Importance” score was classified in the “Agree” category.

Objective Four

The fourth objective was to determine the extent to which programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service meet the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana. Information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement that nine selected organizations, programs and services of the LSU Ag Center and the Cooperative Extension Service meet the needs of the residents in their parish. Responses were reported on a six-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to Strongly Agree.” The reliability of this scale was estimated using the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient. The computed alpha was .93 indicating an acceptable reliability estimate.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50 = disagree, 2.51-3.49 = slightly disagree, 3.50-4.49 = slightly agree, 4.50-5.49 = agree and 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree. The item with which study participants reported the highest level of agreement was “4-H Youth Programs” with a mean rating of 5.46 (SD = 0.77). Using the researcher established interpretive scale, the rating of this item was in the “Agree” category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “Fisheries programs.” The mean rating for this item was 4.34 (SD = 1.36) which classified it in the “Slightly Agree” interpretive scale category. Overall, seven of the items were classified

in the “Agree” category, and two items were classified in the “Slightly Agree” category (see Table 12).

Table 12
The Extent to Which Programs and Services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Services Meet the Needs of Parish Residents as Perceived by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Item	Mean ^a	S.D.	Classification ^b
4-H Youth Programs	5.46	.77	Agree
Agriculture Programs (County Agents)	5.18	.95	Agree
The LSU AgCenter	5.07	.97	Agree
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service	5.02	1.05	Agree
Family and Consumer Science Programs	4.63	1.29	Agree
Community Development Programs	4.56	1.23	Agree
Mastery Programs (master gardener, master farmer)	4.55	1.19	Agree
Forestry and Wildlife Programs	4.48	1.30	Slightly Agree
Fisheries Programs	4.34	1.36	Slightly Agree
Overall Effectiveness Score ^c	4.81	.91	Agree

^a Response scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree.

^b Interpretive scale: 1-1.50 = strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50 = disagree, 2.51-3.49 = slightly disagree, 3.50-4.49 = slightly agree, 4.50-5.49 = agree, 5.50-6.0 = strongly agree. Scores ranged from 4.34 to 5.46.

^c The overall effectiveness score refers to the mean level of effectiveness of all the programs and services combined.

To further summarize these data a factor analysis was conducted to determine if underlying constructs existed in the scale. The method used was the principal components analysis with a varimax rotation.

Prior to conducting the planned factor analysis, the researcher examined the cases-to-variable ratio (11.7:1) which met the cases-to-variable ratio recommended by Hair et al., (2006). A review of the anti-image correlation matrix revealed measures of sampling adequacy (MSA's) all above the 0.5 threshold. Furthermore, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was conducted and calculations revealed a KMO value of 0.900. KMO values above 0.5 determine sampling to be adequate (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was performed to test the hypothesis that the variables in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated. The strength of the relationships between variables was found to be strong and acceptable for factor analysis based on results of this test (X^2 (df =36, $n = 9$) = 786.93, $p < .001$), (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). All measures examined indicated that the data from this research were adequate and appropriate for calculation of a factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006).

After determining that the data was adequate for completing an exploratory factor analysis, the next step in conducting the test was to determine the number of factors to be extracted from the scale. The researcher used a combination of the latent root criterion and the scree test criterion to make this decision. When the items in the scale were analyzed, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 5.83. This factor accounted for 64.8% of the variance in the scale (see Table 13).

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the "Needs" scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the nine scale items. The overall "Needs" scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 4.34 to a high of 5.46 with

a mean of 4.81 (SD= .91). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “needs” score was classified in the “Agree” category.

The loadings for the single factor extracted ranged from .86 to .69, indicating that all loadings met the minimum acceptable level as specified by (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 13
Factor Analysis of the Extent to Which Programs and Services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service Meet the Needs of Parish Residents as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana

Item (64.75% of variance explained)	Factor 1
Fisheries Programs	.86
Community Development Programs	.86
Forestry and Wildlife Programs	.84
Agriculture Programs (County Agents)	.84
Family and Consumer Science Programs (Home Economics)	.83
The LSU AgCenter	.83
Mastery Programs (Master Gardener, Master Farmer, Master Horse)	.79
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service	.70
4-H Youth Programs	.69

Objective Five

The fifth objective was to determine the extent of utilization of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana. Information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to report how often they had heard, seen or received information from or about the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service for

selected information sources. Additionally, information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to report whether or not they had attended or participated in any of the selected program areas or events held by the LSU AgCenter within the last year.

Respondents were asked to report how often they had heard, seen or received information from or about the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service concerning 12 different information sources including programs or news stories mentioning the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES) on the radio, programs or news stories mentioning LCES on TV, newspaper articles mentioning the LCES or written by extension agents, newsletters written by LCES agents, personal contacts from LCES agents, family members and acquaintances who had experiences with LCES programs, printed information provided by LCES agents, visit(s) to local LCES offices, LCES programs, phone calls to/from LCES agents, contacts regarding LCES program(s) by constituent groups and LSU Ag Center web site. Responses were reported on a five-point anchored scale ranging from “None at all” to “Frequently (12 or more times a year)” The reliability of this frequency of use score was estimated using the Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient. The computed alpha was .95 indicating an acceptable reliability estimate.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1-1.50 = none at all, 1.51-2.50 = rarely (1-2 times a year), 2.51-3.49 = occasionally (3-5 times a year), 3.50-4.49 = moderately (6-10 times a year) and 4.50-5.0 = frequently (12 or more times a year).

The item with which respondents reported the highest frequency of use score was “News articles mentioning the LCES or written by extension agents.” The mean rating of this item was 3.70 (SD = 1.26). Using the researcher established interpretive scale, the rating of this item was in the “Moderately (6-10 times a year)” Category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “LSU AgCenter Web Site” The mean rating for this item was 2.32 (SD = 1.27) which classified it in the “Rarely” interpretive scale category. Overall, four items were classified in the “Moderately” (6-10 times a year) category; seven items were classified in the “Occasionally” (3-5 times a year) category; and one item was classified in the “Rarely” (1-2 times a year) category. (see Table 14).

Table 14
Extent to Which Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana Report That They Had Used Selected Information Sources of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

Information Source	Mean^a	S.D.	Category^b
Newspaper articles mentioning the LCES or written by Extension agents	3.70	1.26	Moderately
Newsletters written by LCES agents	3.59	1.27	Moderately
Personal contacts from LCES agents	3.59	1.30	Moderately
Printed information provided by LCES agents	3.55	1.27	Moderately
Family members and acquaintances who had experiences with LCES programs	3.29	1.45	Occasionally
LCES programs	3.08	1.27	Occasionally
Phone calls to/from LCES agents	2.97	1.34	Occasionally
Contacts regarding LCES program(s) by constituents groups	2.89	1.27	Occasionally
			(table cont.)

Visit(s) to local LCES offices	2.85	1.25	Occasionally
Programs or news stories mentioning LCES on the radio	2.78	1.27	Occasionally
Programs or news stories mentioning the LCES on TV	2.62	1.30	Occasionally
LSU AgCenter web site	2.32	1.27	Rarely
Overall use score ^c	3.10	1.06	Occasionally

^a Response scale: 1= none at all, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = moderately, 5 = frequently.

^b Interpretive scale: 1-1.50 = none at all, 1.51-2.50 = rarely (1-2 times a year), 2.51-3.49 = occasionally (3-5 times a year), 3.50-4.49 = moderately (6-10 times a year), 4.50-5.0 = frequently (12 or more times a year). Scores ranged from 2.32. to 3.70.

^c The overall use score refers to the mean level of frequency of use of all the information sources combined.

To further summarize this data, a factor analysis was conducted to determine if underlying constructs existed in the scale. The method used was the principal components analysis with a varimax rotation.

Prior to conducting the planned factor analysis, the researcher examined the cases-to-variable ratio (8.75:1) which met the cases-to-variable ratio recommended by (Hair et al., 2006). A review of the anti-image correlation matrix revealed measures of sampling adequacy (MSA's) all above the 0.5 threshold. Furthermore, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was conducted and calculations revealed a KMO value of 0.934. KMO values above 0.5 determine sampling to be adequate (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was performed to test the hypothesis that the variables in the population correlation matrix are uncorrelated. The strength of the relationships between variables was found to be strong and acceptable for factor analysis based on results of this test (X^2 (df =66, $n = 9$) = 1143.61, $p < .001$) (University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 2006). All measures

examined indicated that the data from this research were adequate and appropriate for calculation of a factor analysis, (Hair et al. 2006).

After determining that the data were adequate for completing an exploratory factor analysis, the next step in conducting the test was to determine the number of factors to be extracted from the scale. The researcher used a combination of the latent root criterion and the scree test criterion to make this decision. When the items in the scale were analyzed, one factor was extracted with an eigenvalue of 8.03. This factor accounted for 66.9% of the variance in the scale (see Table 15). The loadings for the single factor extracted ranged from .92 to .74, indicating that all loadings met the minimum acceptable level as specified by (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 15
Factor Analysis of Extent of Use of Programs and Services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana

Item (66.9% of variance explained)	Factor 1
Phone calls to/from LCES agents	.92
LCES program(s)	.90
Family members and acquaintances who had experiences with LCES programs	.89
Printed information provided by LCES agents	.88
Visit(s) to local LCES offices	.87
Contacts regarding LCES program(s) by constituent groups	.87
Personal contacts from LCES agents	.83
LSU AgCenter web site	.75
Programs or news stories mentioning LCES on the radio	.74
	(table cont.)

Newspaper articles mentioning the LCES or written by extension agents	.73
Programs or news stories mentioning LCES on TV	.72
Newsletters written by LCES agents	.68

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “Frequency of Use” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the 12 scale items. The “Information Use” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 2.32 to a high of 3.70 with a mean of 3.10 (SD= 1.06). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Frequency of Use” score was classified in the “Occasionally” (3-5 times a year) category.

Respondents were asked if they had or had not attended or participated in selected programs/events within the last year. Respondents were given the choices of checking “Yes” they had attended or “NO” they had not attended a program/event within the last year.

The programs/events for which participants were asked to indicate their attendance/participation included: 4-H youth development activities, program advisory meetings, 4-H livestock shows, disaster/recovery meetings, experiment station field days, community development meetings, agriculture production meetings and leadership seminars. The program/event reported by the most respondents was “4-H youth Development Activities” with 65 (61.9%) respondents reporting “Yes” they had attended or participated in one or more of these within the last year. Family and consumer science workshops was the program/service that was reported to have been attended by the smallest number of study participants within the last year (n = 15, 14.3%).

An overall attendance score was calculated by using the sum of programs/events attended within the last year by a respondent. Scores ranged from 0 to 12.0 with a mean of 4.32 (SD = 3.38) (see Table 16).

Table 16
Program Areas Attended by Local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Program Area	Yes	%	No	%
4-H Youth Development Activities	65	61.9	40	38.1
Parish Advisory Meetings	64	61	41	39
4-H Livestock Shows	63	60	42	40
Disaster/Recovery Meetings	43	41	62	59
Experiment Station Field Days	38	36.2	67	63.8
Community Resource Development Meetings	35	33.3	70	66.7
Agricultural Production Meetings	32	30.5	73	69.5
Leadership Seminars	31	29.5	74	70.5
Agricultural Marketing Meetings	25	23.8	80	76.2
Master Gardener, Farmer, Horse, etc. Program Meetings	23	21.9	82	78.1
Fisheries Program Meetings	20	19.0	85	81
Family and Consumer Science Workshops	15	14.3	90	85.7

Note: Overall attendance score (the sum of the number of events identified) with a range of 0 to 12.0 (Mean = 4.32) S.D. = 3.38

Objective Six

The sixth objective was to determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension

Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and each of the following measures:

- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale); and
- c. perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs as services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale).

To accomplish this objective the researcher used Pearson's Product-Moment correlation coefficients between the overall importance score and each of the specified perceptual measures.

The perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs as services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service was examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of the programs and services. The correlation between these measures was ($r = .58, p < .001$). The nature of this association was such that police jury/parish council members that reported higher levels of effectiveness of the programs in meeting the needs of parish residents tended to place higher level of importance on the programs and services. Using descriptors established by Davis (1971) including .70 or higher = very strong association; .50 - .69 = substantial association; .30 - .49 = moderate association; .10 - .29 = low association; and .01 - .09 = negligible

association. According to Davis, (1971) this relationship is described as a substantial association.

For a complete listing of Pearson’s Product-Moment correlation coefficients between the overall importance score and each of the specified perceptual measures see Table 17.

Table 17
Relationship between Perceived Importance of Programs and Services of the Cooperative Extension Service and Selected Perceptual Measures among local Governing Body Members in Louisiana

Perceptual Measure	r ^a	n	p	Interpretation
Effectiveness	.58	105	<.001	Substantial Association
Extent of Utilization	.49	105	<.001	Moderate Association
Level of Awareness	.40	105	<.001	Moderate Association
Level of Attendance	.34	105	<.001	Moderate Association

^a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

Objective Seven

The seventh objective was to determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on items in the perceived importance scale) and the following selected demographic characteristics:

- a. gender,
- b. population density (defined as rural, suburban and urban) of the parish in which they serve,
- c. primary occupation/profession, and
- d. highest level of education completed.

In examining the relationship between perceived importance score and selected demographic characteristics, the statistical test used to measure the association was selected based on its appropriateness for the level of measurement of each variable as well as to maximize the interpretability of the results.

The relationship between perceived importance score and the dichotomous variable gender, was accomplished by using the independent t – test. This technique was chosen over the use of the Point-biserial correlation coefficient due to the increased clarity of findings from the comparative measures. Results of this analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between males and females on perceived importance of programs and services of the CES ($t_{.101} = -.179, p = .86$).

Examination of the relationship between perceived importance score and population density (defined as rural, suburban and urban) of the parish in which they serve was accomplished by using the Oneway ANOVA Test. Results of this analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in perceived importance by category of population density (defined as rural, suburban and urban) of the parish in which they served ($F(2,100) = 1.24, p = .29$).

Examination of the relationship between perceived importance score and primary occupation/profession was accomplished by using the Oneway ANOVA Test. In identifying the most appropriate procedure for grouping these reported occupations/professions, the researcher chose to utilize the nine major occupational groups (MOG's) which are recognized by the United States Department of Labor (2006). Each of the responses was classified into the most appropriate MOG, and any

occupation/profession that could not be classified into one of the nine primary MOG's was placed into an "Other" category.

Of the 99 study participants who reported on this item, the majority of the respondents were classified in one of three MOG's. It was decided by the researcher that only MOG's containing 10 or more reported occupations/professions would be used for the Oneway ANOVA Test. Three MOG's fit within the researcher's limitation. The three MOG's within which the largest number of reported occupations/professions classified were "Professional/technical/related occupations"(MOG – A) and, "Executive/administrative/managerial occupations" (MOG – B) with 20 (20.2%) of the responses classified in each of these groups. The occupation/profession responses that were classified in the "Other" category totaled 26.3% of the study participants who responded, including individuals who indicated that they were retired ($n = 13$), those who reported that they were self employed ($n = 11$), and those who reported their occupation/profession as a full time mother/housewife ($n = 2$).

Results of this analysis indicated that there were no significant differences in perceived importance score by primary occupation/profession. ($F(2,25) = .58, p = .56$).

In examining the relationship between perceived importance score and highest level of education completed, a Kendall's tau correlation coefficient was used because of the ordinal nature of the variables. No significant relationship was found between the variables ($r = -.11, p = .16$).

Objective Eight

The eighth objective was to determine if a model exists explaining a significant portion of the variance in the importance of programs and services offered by the

Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana from the following perceptual and demographic characteristics:

- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the over all mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
- c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale);
- d. age;
- e. gender;
- f. number of years served on a local governing body;
- g. population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they serve;
- h. primary occupation/profession; and
- i. highest level of education completed.

To accomplish this objective, a multiple regression analysis was performed with the overall scale score measuring the importance of the LCES as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana used as the dependent variable in the analysis.

The other variables identified in the objective were entered into the regression model as

independent variables and stepwise entry of the variables was used due to the exploratory nature of the study.

In conducting the multiple regression analysis, four of the variables to be treated as independent variables which were categorical in nature had to be prepared as dichotomous variables in preparation for entry into the analysis. These variables included age, population density, educational level completed, and occupation/profession. Gender was also a categorical variable, but since it is naturally a dichotomy, it did not need to be restructured. The first of these variables was age of the study participant. The variable included seven response categories on the survey instrument. However, due to low numbers of respondents in some of the categories the seven categories were collapsed into three groups which included 50 years old or less, 51-65 years old, and more than 65 years old. Each of these three categories was prepared for entry as a separate variable into the analysis.

For the categorical variable, Population density (defined as rural, suburban, urban) of the parish in which they served, each of the three provided response categories was established as a separate dichotomous variable. For example, each respondent was classified as serving in a rural district or not serving in a rural district, etc. Each of these three dichotomous variables was then entered into the regression analysis.

The variable, educational level completed, which included eight response categories on the instrument was the third categorical variable prepared for entry into the analysis. However, due to low numbers of respondents in some of the categories these eight categories were collapsed into three groups which included high school or less, some college, and college degree or more.

Finally, the variable, occupation/profession, having been an open-ended question to help ensure accuracy, in identifying the most appropriate procedure for grouping these reported occupations/professions, the researcher chose to utilize the nine major occupational groups (MOG's) which are recognized by the United States Department of Labor (2006). Each of the responses was classified into the most appropriate MOG, and any occupation/profession that could not be classified into one of the nine primary MOG's was placed into an "Other" category.

Of the 99 study participants who reported on this item, the majority of the respondents were classified in one of three MOG's. It was decided by the researcher that only MOG's containing 10 or more reported occupations/professions would be used for the analysis. Three MOG's fit the researcher's limitation. They were MOG -A, Mog- B and "Other" The occupation/profession responses that were classified in the "Other" category were retired, self-employed individuals or full time mother/housewife.

The researcher designed these occupation/profession groups specifically related to MOG-A, occupation "professional," MOG-B, occupation "business," and "Other" which included retired individuals, self employed individuals, and full time mothers/housewives. Each of these three dichotomous variables was then entered into the regression analysis.

For descriptive purposes, two-way correlations between factors used as independent variables in the regression are presented in Table 18. The variable that was found to have the highest bivariate relationship with the Importance Score was the Overall Needs Score ($r = .576, p < .001$). The second highest bivariate correlation was Overall

Information Use Score ($r = .498, p < .001$). Overall, of the 18 variables examined, 4 were found to have significant two-way associations with the Importance Score.

Table 18
Relationship Between the Importance of the LCES as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana and Selected Perceptual Measures and Demographic Characteristics

Variable	<i>r</i>	P
Overall Needs Score	.58	<.001
Overall Information Use Score	.50	<.001
Overall Awareness Score	.40	<.001
Overall Attendance Score	.34	<.001
College Degree	-.15	.073
Some College	.14	.089
Urban District	-.12	.128
Occupation "Business"	.11	.154
Less than 50 Years Old	.08	.222
Years Served as Local Governing Body Member	.08	.233
Over 65 Years Old	-.06	.270
Occupation "Other"	-.05	.299
Suburban	.04	.337
51-65 Years Old	-.03	.351
Rural	.02	.431
Gender	-.01	.453
High School or Less	.01	.480
Occupation "Professional"	-.01	.484

Note. $n = 97$

The variables were tested for multicollinearity and no incidences of excess collinearity were found in the data.

No collinearity issues were found based on variance inflation factors (VIF) for each variable < 10 and tolerances > .10 (Pedhazur, 1997). The variable “Whether or not the participant served in a rural area” had the lowest tolerance and the highest variance inflation factor.

Table 19 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis utilizing the importance of the LCES as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana as the dependent variable. The variable which entered the regression model first was the Needs Score. Considered alone, this variable explained 33.2% of the variance in perceived importance.

Three additional variables explained an additional 11.9% of the variance in perceived importance. Those variables were the following: Information Use Score, Attendance Score and whether or not the respondent served in a Suburban district. These four variables explained a total of 45.1% of the variance in importance of the cooperative extension service as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana (see Table 19). The nature of the influence of these variables that entered the model was such that individuals with a higher level of overall “Needs Score,” higher level of Overall “Information Use Score,” higher level of overall “Attendance Score,” and served in a “Suburban” district tended to have higher levels of perceived importance of the LCES.

Table 19
Multiple Regression Analysis of the Importance of the LCES as Perceived by Members of Local Governing Bodies in Louisiana and Selected Demographic Characteristics

ANOVA				
Source of Variation	Df	MS	F-ratio	P
Regression	4	7.702	18.918	<.000
Residual	92	.407		(table cont.)

Model Summary

Model	R² Cumulative	R² Change	F Change	Standardized	
				Sig. F Change	Coefficients Beta
Needs Score	.332	.332	47.258	.000	.441
Information Use Score	.402	.070	11.036	.001	.268
Attendance Score	.427	.025	4.020	.048	.167
Suburban	.451	.024	4.054	.047	.158

Variables not in the Equation

Variables	t	Sig. t
Over 65 Years Old	-1.449	.151
Gender	-1.254	.213
Occupation "Other"	-1.212	.228
Less than 50 Years Old	.948	.346
Occupation "Business"	.419	.676
Urban	-.416	.678
Rural	.416	.678
Years Served as Local Governing Body Member	-.315	.754
High School or Less	-.207	.836
College Degree	.173	.863
Occupation "Professional"	.138	.891
Some College	-.103	.918
51-65 Years Old	-.066	.948
Overall Awareness Score	-.041	.968

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A summary of the purpose and objectives of the study along with an overview of the methodology used to complete the study is presented in this chapter. In addition, a summary of the findings is presented along with conclusions and recommendations, for practice and for further research.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to determine the influence of selected perceptual, experiential, and demographic characteristics on the importance of CES programs as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana.

The specific objectives formulated by the researcher to accomplish this purpose included:

1. To describe members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics:
 - a. age;
 - b. gender;
 - c. number of years they have served on a local governing body;
 - d. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - e. primary occupation/profession;
 - f. highest level of education completed; and
 - g. race.

2. To determine the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service among members of local governing bodies (defined as police jury/parish council members) in Louisiana.
3. To determine the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.
4. To determine the effectiveness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service in meeting the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.
5. To determine the extent of utilization of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.
6. To determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and each of the following measures:
 - a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);

- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale); and
 - c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale).
7. To determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and the following selected demographic characteristics:
- a. gender;
 - b. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;
 - c. primary occupation/profession; and
 - d. highest level of education completed.
8. To determine if a model exists explaining a significant portion of the variance in the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish

councils) in Louisiana from the following perceptual and demographic characteristics:

- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
- c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale);
- d. age;
- e. gender;
- f. number of years served on a local governing body;
- g. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;
- h. primary occupation/profession; and
- i. highest level of education completed.

The target population for this study was defined as members of county/parish level local governing bodies in states geographically located in the southeastern portion of the United States. The accessible population was defined as members of parish level local governing bodies (typically referred to as police juries or parish councils) in

Louisiana. The frame of the accessible population was identified through the Police Jury Association of Louisiana which maintains a directory of all individuals who currently hold one of the parish level local governing body positions. As identified by the Police Jury Association, there were 582 positions which met the stipulations of the defined accessible population. Individuals selected for participation in the study included a 100% sample (census) of the defined accessible population. Therefore, the sample in this study included 582 subjects. Of the 582 subjects, 105 (18%) of the surveys were completed.

The initial form of the instrument was developed based on a review of related literature. The instrument used to collect data in this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire consisting of six parts. Portions of the instrument were adapted from two previous studies conducted by Cannizzaro (1998) and Hodson (1998) with similar research purposes.

In order to obtain the maximum instrument returns, the following follow-up techniques were used: Data for this study were collected using the following steps:

1. Participants' office email addresses were obtained from the Police Jury of Louisiana website; all 64 parish offices in the state had a public email address. A cover letter which accompanied the instructions that explained to each participant that they had three options to complete the survey; the first option was a web link to fill out the survey using Zoomerang, a survey software package; option two was to return the completed survey via U.S. mail; and option three, was to send the completed survey by facsimile.

The respondents were sent the survey via email along with a cover letter (See Appendix D) on August 22, 2006 explaining the purpose of the study, and why it

- is important, etc. This cover letter also explained in detail how Zoomerang worked as to not intimidate a potential respondent.
2. Two days after the initial email had been sent, a follow-up email was sent out to all participants. This email message asked each participant to respond at his or her earliest convenience if they had not done so already and that his or her anonymity would be protected. This email also included an expression from the researcher that their time and support were most appreciated (See Appendix E).
 3. Ten days after the cover letter and email had been sent, all non-respondents were sent a friendly reminder asking for their response, and stressing the importance of getting all surveys back. Along with this the Zoomerang link was mentioned again to ensure that respondents had all the information they needed to complete the survey (See Appendix F).
 4. Twenty days after the initial survey was sent out, the survey completion percentage was extremely low. The researcher contacted Mr. Roland Dartez (executive director of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana) and explained to him that some assistance was needed in an attempt to increase the number of completed surveys. Mr. Dartez sent a letter on September 19, 2006 to all 582 potential respondents asking them to complete the survey, explaining its importance and that a prompt response was appreciated (see Appendix G). The result of the letter was positive as several surveys were completed within the next week. Without a substantial number of total surveys completed, the researcher sent four email messages (one message a week for four weeks) to potential respondents that basically repeated the message from Mr. Dartez (See Appendix

- H). One week after the last of the four email messages was sent out; a substantial number of surveys had been completed.
5. Since the response rate after six weeks was less than 70%, the researcher then contacted a random sample of 30 people of the remaining non-respondents and asked them a randomly selected sub-set of the items on the survey. A random sample of 17 questions was asked to the 30 individuals to determine if non-respondents were different from respondents. It was established a priori that if the respondents and non-respondents were different on more than two items that they would be considered different.

Summary of Major Findings

The first objective of the study was to describe members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana on selected demographic characteristics. Respondents were asked to provide personal background information in the following areas: 1) age, 2) gender, 3) the number of years they have served on a local governing body, 4) population density (defined as rural, suburban or urban) of the parish in which they serve, 5) primary occupation/profession and 6) highest level of education completed.

The age category which was reported by the largest number of participants was the “50-57 years old” category ($\underline{n}=39$, 37.5%). The age category which was reported by the second largest number of participants was the “42-49 years old” category ($\underline{n}=31$, 29.8%). All respondents who marked an age category were at least age 26 years or older. The majority of participants (80.6%, $\underline{n}=83$) were male and the majority of participants was Caucasian (79.6%, $\underline{n}=82$). A majority ($\underline{n}=55$, 54.5%) of the study participants have

served on a local governing body between 5 and 14 years. A majority ($n=70$, 68.0%) of the respondents reported that their district in which they served was rural. Regarding level of education completed, the majority ($n=89$, 86.4%) had obtained at least a high school diploma.

The second objective was to determine the level of awareness of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service among members of local governing bodies (defined as police jury/council members) in Louisiana.

To aid in the interpretation of the mean responses to the scale items, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = "Not at all aware," 1.51-2.50 = "Slightly aware," 2.51-3.49 = "Somewhat aware," 3.50-4.49 = "Aware" and 4.50-5.00 = "Very aware."

The item with which respondents indicated the highest level of awareness was the "4-H youth program" with a mean rating of 4.30 ($SD = 0.81$). Using the researcher established interpretive scale; this rating was classified as "Aware." The program/service with which respondents reported the lowest level of awareness was "Fisheries programs" with a mean rating of 3.07 ($SD = 1.27$). Their level of awareness of this program/service was classified in the "Somewhat Aware" category. Overall, four of the items in this scale were rated in the "Aware" interpretive category, and five were rated in the "Somewhat aware" category. Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the "Awareness" scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the nine scale items. The computed "Awareness" scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 3.07 to a high of 4.30 with a mean of 3.63 ($SD = .84$). According to the interpretive scale

established by the researcher, this overall “Awareness” score was classified in the “Aware” category.

The third objective was to determine the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Service as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = Strongly Disagree, 1.51-2.50 = Disagree, 2.51-3.49 = Slightly Disagree, 3.50-4.49 = Slightly Agree, 4.50-5.49 = Agree and 5.50-6.00 = Strongly Agree.

The item with which respondents reported the highest level of agreement was “I think the Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) is very important for the development of school-age parish residents”. The mean rating of this item was 5.57 (SD = .82). Using the researcher established interpretive scale; the rating of this item was in the “Strongly Agree” category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “I feel that the Extension Service could be more effective as an important resource if they received more local funding.” The mean rating for this item was 4.48 (SD = 1.32) which classified it in the “Slightly Agree” interpretive scale category. Overall, one of the items was classified in the “Strongly Agree” category, six of the items were classified in the “Agree” category, and one item was classified in the “Slightly Agree” category. Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “importance” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the eight scale items. The overall “Importance” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 4.48 to a high of 5.57 with a mean

of 5.00 (SD= .82). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Importance” score was classified in the “Agree” category.

The fourth objective was to determine the extent to which programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service meet the needs of parish residents as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1.00-1.50 = strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50 = disagree, 2.51-3.49 = slightly disagree, 3.50-4.49 = slightly agree, 4.50-5.49 = agree and 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree.

The item with which study participants reported the highest level of agreement was “4- H youth programs” with a mean rating of 5.46. Using the researcher established interpretive scale; the rating of this item was in the “Agree” category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “Fisheries programs.” The mean rating for this item was 4.34 (SD = 1.36) which classified it in the “Slightly Agree” interpretive scale category. Overall seven of the items were classified in the “Agree” category, and two items were classified in the “Slightly Agree” category. Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “needs” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the nine scale items, the overall “Needs” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 4.34 to a high of 5.46 with a mean of 4.81 (SD= .91). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Needs” score was classified in the “Agree” category.

The fifth objective was to determine the extent of utilization of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana.

To aid in the interpretation of these responses, the researcher established a scale of interpretation as follows: 1-1.50 = none at all, 1.51-2.50 = rarely (1-2 times a year), 2.51-3.49 = occasionally (3-5 times a year), 3.50-4.49 = moderately (6-10 times a year) and 4.50-5.0 = frequently (12 or more times a year).

The item with which respondents reported the highest extent of use was “News articles mentioning the LCES or written by extension agents.” The mean rating of this item was 3.70 (SD = 1.26). Using the researcher established interpretive scale; the rating of this item was in the “Moderately” (6-10 times a year) Category. The item which received the lowest rating by the respondents was “LSU AgCenter web site” The mean rating for this item was 2.32 (SD = 1.27) which classified it in the “Rarely” interpretive scale category. Overall, seven items were classified in the “Occasionally” (3-5 times a year) category, four items were classified in the “Moderately” (6-10 times a year) category and one item was classified in the “Rarely” (1-2 times a year) category. Based on the results of the factor analysis, the items in the “Information Use” scale were combined into a single score defined as the mean of the 12 scale items. The “Use” scores for the study participants ranged from a low of 2.32 to a high of 3.70 with a mean of 3.10 (SD= 1.06). According to the interpretive scale established by the researcher, this overall “Information Use” score was classified in the “Occasionally” (3-5 times a year) category.

Additionally, information used to accomplish this objective was drawn from the section of the survey in which respondents were asked to report whether or not they had

attended or participated in any of the selected program areas or events held by the LSU AgCenter within the last year. These are common annual programs held by the LSU Ag Center, LCES. These programs include 4-H youth development activities, program advisory meetings, 4-H livestock shows, disaster/recovery meetings, experiment station field days, community development meetings, agriculture production meetings and leadership seminars. The program area selected by the most respondents was 4-H youth development activities with 65 (61.9%) respondents reporting “yes” and 40 (38.1%) reporting “no” or not having attended within the last year. Family and consumer science workshops was attended by the least number of respondents within the last year with 15 (14.3%) of the respondents reporting “yes” they have attended within the last year and 90 (85.7%) of the respondents reporting “no” to attending within the last year.

The sixth objective was to determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) and each of the following measures:

- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale); and
- c. perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs as services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension

Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale).

When the relationship between the extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES overall importance score was measured, the correlation coefficient was found to be statistically significant ($r = .49, p < .001$). The nature of the relationship between these variables was such that members of police juries/parish councils that reported higher utilization scores tended to report higher perceived importance scores. Using descriptors established by Davis (1971), this relationship was described as a moderate association.

The second perceptual measure examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the LCES was the level of attendance of programs and services of the LCES. The calculated association between these two measures was $r = .34$ ($p < .001$) which indicated that the police jury/parish council members who have higher levels of attendance of the programs and services tended to have higher levels of perceived importance of these programs and services. Using descriptors established by Davis (1971), this relationship was described as a moderate association.

The third perceptual measure examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the LCES was the level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES. The calculated association between these two measures was $r = .40$ ($p < .001$) which indicated that police jury/parish council members who have higher levels of awareness of the programs and services tended to have higher

levels of perceived importance of these programs and services. Using descriptors established by Davis (1971), this relationship was described as a moderate association.

Finally, the perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs as services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service was examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of the programs and services. The correlation between these measures was ($r = .58, p < .001$). The nature of this association was such that police jury/parish council members that reported higher levels of effectiveness of the programs in meeting the needs of parish residents tended to place higher level of importance on the programs and services. According to Davis, (1971) this relationship is described as a substantial association.

The seventh objective was to determine if a relationship exists between the perceived importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on items in the perceived importance scale) and the following selected demographic characteristics:

- a. gender;
- b. population density (defined as rural, suburban and urban) of the parish in which they serve;
- c. primary occupation/profession; and
- d. highest level of education completed.

Results of these analyses indicated that there were no significant differences between males and females on perceived importance ($t_{-179}, p = .86$), and no significant difference by population density (defined as rural, suburban or urban) of the parish in which they served ($F(2,100) = 1.24, p = .29$). No significant differences were found in

perceived importance score by primary occupation/profession. ($F(2,25) = .58, p = .56$). In examining the relationship between perceived importance score and highest level of education completed, a Kendall's tau correlation coefficient was used. No significant relationship was found between the variables ($r = -.11, p = .16$).

The eighth objective was to determine if a model exists explaining a significant portion of the variance in the importance of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived importance scale) as perceived by members of local governing bodies (defined as police juries/parish councils) in Louisiana from the following perceptual and demographic characteristics:

- a. extent of utilization of programs and services of the LCES (measured by the summated score on the extent of use of programs and services scale);
- b. level of awareness of programs and services of the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the awareness scale);
- c. perceived effectiveness in meeting needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the LCES (as measured by the overall mean score on the items in the perceived effectiveness scale);
- d. age;
- e. gender;
- f. number of years served on a local governing body;
- g. population density (defined as rural, suburban, or urban) of the parish in which they serve;

- h. primary occupation/profession; and
- i. highest level of education completed.

To accomplish this objective, a multiple regression analysis was performed with the overall scale score measuring the importance of the LCES as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana used as the dependent variable in the analysis.

For descriptive purposes, two-way correlations between factors used as independent variables in the regression were examined. The highest two-way correlation was Overall Needs Score ($r = .576$, $p < .001$). The second highest two-way correlation was Overall Information Use Score ($r = .498$, $p < .001$). Overall, of the 18 variables examined, four were found to have significant two-way associations with the Importance Score. The variable which entered the regression model first was the Needs Score. Considered alone, this variable explained 33.2% of the variance in perceived importance. Three additional variables explained an additional 11.9% of the variance in perceived importance. Those variables were the following: Information Use Score, Attendance Score and whether or not they served in a Suburban district. These four variables explained a total of 45.1% of the variance in perceived importance of the cooperative extension service as perceived by members of local governing bodies in Louisiana . The nature of the influence of these variables that entered the model was such that individuals with a higher level of overall “Needs Score,” higher level of Overall “Information Use Score,” higher level of overall “Attendance Score,” and served in a “Suburban” district tended to have higher levels of perceived importance of the LCES.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations were derived from the findings of the study:

1. Members of local governing bodies in Louisiana feel that the 4-H program is very important for the development of young people in Louisiana.

This conclusion is based on the following findings: (A) Study participants “Strongly Agree” with the statement: “I think the Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) is very important for the development of school-age parish residents.” The mean rating of this item was 5.57 (SD = .82). Using the researcher-established interpretive scale; the rating of this item was in the “Strongly Agree” category.

(B) A majority (n = 65, 61.9%) of the respondents reported participating in a 4-H youth development activity within the past year.

According to James Thompson, a local governing body member from Louisiana, local governing body members are quite busy and are asked to attend many more functions throughout the public sector than time may allow. Only events high on the priority list are attended by local governing body members. (J. Thompson, personal communication, December 21, 2006).

Keeping the local governing body members fully aware of the 4-H program as well as other LCES programs is imperative. The researcher recommends that the LCES take the necessary steps to increase the level of awareness among local governing body members concerning programs and services offered by the LCES. These steps would include compiling regular reports to be sent to local governing body members on a regular basis by each parish office around the state, and creating an email list of all local

governing body members in a parish or region of the state to ensure efficient dissemination of regular reports. Also, meeting with local governing body members on a regular (at least quarterly) basis to enhance and foster a strong relationship. It is imperative not only that the necessary steps be taken but that they be done by all 64 parish offices consistently.

Moreover, the researcher recommends that the LCES administration consider hiring additional personnel to take on the duties of keeping the local governing bodies more informed. These potential employees could be paraprofessionals or even part-time workers assigned to a certain parish or a region that are charged solely with keeping local governing body members more fully aware of 4-H programming and other LCES programs and to enhance and foster strong relationships with local governing body members.

The researcher recommends that further research be done related to hiring additional personnel. The researcher suggests that this research could be done by hiring at least one person temporarily in a given parish or region and to use this as a pilot program to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of new personnel hired solely to keep the local governing body members more fully aware of 4-H programming and other LCES programs.

The researcher recommends that the LSU AgCenter, LCES, Department of 4-H continue to make a strong effort to keep 4-H in schools. This effort should include re-visiting the present Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Louisiana Department of Education. At present, the MOU states that 4-H is considered co-curricular in public schools. However, the MOU also states that each district in the state may allow

or disallow 4-H in its schools. (M. Tassin, personal communication, January 9, 2007). Louisiana is one of only three states in the country where 4-H is completely co-curricular (available in all schools, be they public, parochial or private). The only other two states that enjoy the luxury of being completely co-curricular are Georgia and Tennessee (T.Faul, personal communication, December 19, 2006). The researcher further recommends that in re-visiting the MOU between the LSU AgCenter, LCES and the Louisiana Department of Education, a goal should be for LSU Ag Center administration to urge the Louisiana Department of Education to state that 4-H cannot be denied by local districts. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that the 4-H department spearhead a campaign to all public, private and parochial schools as well as home school organizations in the state aimed at getting all schools involved in the program, which may possibly evolve into more funds earmarked for the LCES by school boards and school districts. This campaign would include a marketing effort aimed at all schools and home school organizations that highlight how 4-H improves the lives of young people in Louisiana. Furthermore, the 4-H department in Louisiana could identify prominent citizens who were members of 4-H to help market the program in order to add credibility to the marketing campaign.

The researcher recommends that further research is necessary concerning re-visiting the MOU between the LSU AgCenter and the Louisiana Department of Education. A top priority would be to research what type of MOU Georgia and Tennessee has with their respective state educational organizations.

Finally, the researcher recommends that 4-H agents could invite local governing body members to 4-H events more often in order to increase the role of the local

governing body member concerning 4-H programming efforts. With more local governing body members having positive perception of the 4-H program, this may very well have a positive effect on how the local governing body member perceives the LCES as a whole.

2. The majority of the study participants serve in rural districts.

This conclusion is based on the finding that the majority ($n=70$, 68.0%) of the respondents reported serving in rural districts. The researcher concludes that this finding is consistent with the distribution of rural and urban areas in the state; the majority of parishes in Louisiana are rural parishes. Therefore, having more rural study participants is logistically and demographically consistent with the given population of Louisiana.

3. The members of local governing bodies in Louisiana are more aware of the 4-H program than other programs offered by the Cooperative Extension Service.

This outcome is based on the finding that the highest level of awareness of programs and services of the CES reported by respondents was the 4-H program with a mean rating of 4.30 ($SD=0.81$) which classified it in the “Aware” category.

This study outcome is consistent with the results of other studies that have examined awareness of cooperative extension programs. A study by Verma and Burns (1995) which had as its purpose to measure the awareness of CES programs as perceived by Louisiana residents found that the extension program with which the highest percentage (49.6%) of respondents reported awareness was 4-H. Another study examined the level of familiarity with extension programs among Louisiana legislators (Hodson and Kotrlik, 2002) and found again that the highest level was for the 4-H program ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.12$).

Additionally, a 1998 study by Cannizzaro (1998) which had as its purpose to measure the awareness, perception and utilization of the CES as perceived by residents of St Helena Parish, Louisiana, found that 90.4% of study participants in St Helena Parish, Louisiana reported being aware of the 4-H program, which was by a large margin the highest level of awareness of any CES program/service.

There are some characteristics of the 4-H program that make this outcome a natural and expected result. First, the 4-H programs have as their stated clientele, all of the residents of a parish between the ages of 9 and 19. Therefore, while most of the extension programs that are targeted to adult audiences have a relatively narrow target clientele (such as the forestry program) the 4-H program attempts to reach all youth.

Additionally, within the State of Louisiana, the 4-H programs are housed primarily in the schools. Therefore, since almost all students attend school (with the exception of those that are home-schooled) the 4-H program is available to almost all students in the state. While it is true that 4-H programs are not present in all schools, the programs are in most public schools and many private and parochial schools in the state. There are even community clubs that are designed to meet the needs of home-schooled students as well as those that attend schools that do not have a 4-H program. Children can enroll in the 4-H program as at-large members and receive most of the same opportunities and experiences as those who attend club meetings.

There are, however some characteristics that would seem to make the 4-H program less likely to have the highest level of awareness. Presently, 4-H agents in Louisiana are in general, the younger, more inexperienced agents compared to their counterparts working with adult program responsibilities.

The general notion is that a 4-H agent position is an entry-level position and a position that an agent should strive to “work out of” and “up to” an adult position. Adult agent positions, more often than not, come with more regular work hours and more opportunity for advancement. The 4-H program, many times is only used as a steppingstone for agents to leave the very program that instilled in them, the mechanics and techniques used to teach and improve the lives of local residents via non-formal education.

Even though it is evident that 4-H in Louisiana is the most popular, possibly the best organized program that the LCES has to offer, room for improvement exists. The level of awareness concerning this study was in the “Aware” category; while the 4-H program was the program of the highest awareness level, it was not classified in the “Very Aware” category, which shows that there is room for improvement.

The 4-H program is the program that people are aware of more so than any other program offered by the CES, therefore, the researcher recommends that the 4-H program be used as a public relations tool or marketing tool when contacts are made to local governing body members and other major stakeholders. Additionally, with 4-H at the forefront of programming efforts, importance of the CES is related to work being done by 4-H youth agents.

Additionally, recognizing 4-H members who excel in the program could possibly be done at parish jury/council meetings or in a setting that includes the presence of local governing body members. While it is evident that the LCES does exemplary work related to 4-H being the most popular program, there is room for improvement to ensure that all local governing body members be aware of the 4-H program.

Based on this conclusion, the researcher recommends that the LSU AgCenter highlight the 4-H program when marketing or public relations efforts take place. Moreover, the researcher recommends that the LSU AgCenter, LCES examine very carefully, the 4-H program and emulate the mechanics and philosophy of the 4-H program where and when possible in other programming efforts. Also, use 4-H at the forefront of more public programming efforts to gain confidence with a public audience that may have knowledge of the CES that does not extend beyond the 4-H program. The LSU AgCenter, LCES should make certain that local residents realize that 4-H and the LSU AgCenter are one and the same.

Finally, the researcher further recommends that the LSU AgCenter, LCES administration implement a standard list of procedures directly aimed at the ultimate goal of 100% of local governing body members being aware of the 4-H program. Possible procedures may include building an email and/or facsimile list of all local governing body members in the parishes to send them pertinent facts, news and upcoming event information on at least a quarterly basis. Other procedures may include ensuring that the local governing body members are aware of each parish website in which they can visit at any point and time during the year not only to learn about facts, news or upcoming events but to possibly share feedback (via email) with local 4-H agents concerning local programming.

4. The more aware the local governing body members are of the LCES, the more important they perceive the organization and its programs and services to be.

This conclusion is based on the following findings: The perceived importance of programs and services offered by the LCES was moderately related to the level of

awareness of LGB members ($r = .40, p < .001$) which indicated that police jury/parish council members who have higher levels of awareness of the programs and services tended to have higher levels of perceived importance of these programs and services. Using descriptors established by Davis (1971), this relationship was described as a moderate association.

This finding is similar to findings in a Minnesota study (Kabes, 1991) that identified six important factors that influence public officials concerning the CES. One of these factors emphasized that an important goal for Extension is to accomplish all it proposes efficiently, and then ensure that the legislators who allocate the funds are aware of the quantity and quality of the impact being made.

The researcher recommends that the LSU AgCenter, LCES offer training sessions for field level agents to help combat the lack of awareness of programs and services as perceived by local governing body members. The field level training sessions could take place on a quarterly basis via distance education. These trainings should include tips and practices on how and when to approach local governing body members, ideas on what to ask for (i.e. more funds, office equipment or teaching aides) and who to invite to a meeting with local governing body members.

Based on these findings and conclusions the researcher recommends that the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service initiate a standard policy and procedure concerning field level agents keeping local governing body members fully aware of what each local parish-level CES office is doing concerning programming and services that are targeted at local residents in a given parish or community. The researcher suggests that within the standard policy and procedure, members of local governing bodies should be

fully apprised of local events, plans, and programming efforts on a monthly basis by way of person-to-person visits, email, facsimile, or regular mailings. To accomplish this effort, the researcher suggests the following: (A) The hiring of a state-level coordinator with the sole charge of keeping local governing body members, parish officials and other parish level funding organizations more fully aware of programming efforts, marketing and public relations campaigns and in general, to keep the LSU AgCenter, LCES at the forefront of local government. (B) The hiring of additional personnel (possibly part-time and/or paraprofessionals) that are employed in a parish, region or area and charged only with collaborating with local governing body members or other parish level funding organizations to aid in keeping local governing body members more fully aware of programming efforts by the LCES. (C) This policy and procedure should be centered on the 4-H program as being the premier program since this is the CES program that has as its target audience, all youth, regardless of ethnic background, gender or religion, in a given parish. 4-H is a program that is most widely known, enjoyed and understood by people in a given community than any other program or service offered by the LCES.

5. The local funding that the LSU AgCenter, LCES receives from local governing body members is justifiable.

This conclusion is based on the following findings: (A) Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “I feel that the amount of money the parish government disseminates to the Cooperative Extension Service each year is justifiable.” This item had a mean rating of 4.84 (SD = 1.13). The item was classified in the “Agree” category. (B) Respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the statement: “I feel that the Extension Service could be more

effective as an important resource if they received more local funding.” The mean rating for this item was 4.48 (SD = 1.32) and was classified in the “Slightly Agree” interpretive scale category.

These findings are similar to findings by Stienbarger (2005) on how county commissioners perceive extension. Nine commissioners of the 16 who participated used terms like “cursory,” “distant,” or “little engagement” when asked to describe their relationship with Extension. The data collected by Steinberger (2005) suggested a fundamental disconnect with county partners and indicated that Extension offices need to better align their programming to county priorities.

In another study, McDowell (2004) stated that one way to think about how CES must generate and garner support for programs is to consider that the following four conditions are necessary to that process:

- * Programs must generate a positive net-benefit to the client
- * Clients must attribute the benefits they gained to Extension
- * To solicit and collect support from clients who have benefited requires being able to identify and communicate with them
- * The costs to clients of acting politically for us must be less than the value placed on present and anticipated program benefits

A Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) which among other things explains the monetary relationship between parish extension staffs and the local governing body members should be updated. While an MOU exists for all 64 parishes in the state, many of them are due to re-negotiate. The researcher recommends that the LSU AgCenter, LCES continue its efforts to get new Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) signed by

parish officials in all 64 parishes. A permanent, full time employee should be hired by the LSU Ag Center to not only obtain the 64 re-negotiated MOUs but to keep the LSU Ag Center, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service in the forefront of the minds of local governing body members as well as other local level stakeholders. This will ensure a clearer, more effective pathway when potentially obtaining more local funding.

The researcher recommends that further research be conducted concerning funding of the CES. Few studies have been conducted to date that address the perceptions of stakeholders (fund sources) of the CES. Further research is needed on all levels; parish/county, state, and federal.

Furthermore, the researcher recommends that further research be conducted on alternative funding sources such as sheriff departments, office of the district attorney, and other public organizations.

6. Local governing body members who perceive the importance of LCES programs and services also see the LCES as effectively meeting the needs of local residents.

The perceived effectiveness in meeting the needs of parish residents of programs and services offered by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service was examined for a relationship with the perceived importance of the programs and services. The correlation between these measures was ($r = .58, p < .001$). The nature of this association was such that local governing body members that reported higher levels of effectiveness of the programs in meeting the needs of parish residents tended to place higher levels of importance on the programs and services. According to Davis, (1971) this relationship is described as a substantial association.

The researcher recommends that a commitment from the parish CES offices should be made to keep local governing bodies more fully aware of programs and services being offered locally. Also, the local CES office may consider getting local governing body members' views as to which programs and services they see as important or pertinent to the local area. This effort will at least open a dialogue with the local governing body members in an effort to align each other more closely concerning goals, ideas and philosophies related to improving the lives of local residents.

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APPENDIX A: LSU AGRICULTURAL CENTER, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE SURVEY

This survey is designed to determine your awareness, perceptions, and utilization of programs and services of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service (LCES). It includes seven brief sections that are designed to help the LCES to develop a clear understanding of how we are viewed and used throughout the state. Please follow the instructions for each section in responding to the areas of inquiry. Your confidentiality is the top priority of the researcher.

Section One.

This section is designed to identify your **awareness** of the programs and services of the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. For each of the items listed, please mark the appropriate space to indicate your level of awareness with that organization, program/service. The scale used in this section includes the following values and descriptors:

- Scale: 1-Not at all Aware
- 2-Slightly Aware
- 3-Somewhat Aware
- 4-Aware
- 5-Very Aware

The LSU Ag Center, The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service & Program Areas	1 Not at all Aware	2 Slightly Aware	3 Somewhat Aware	4 Aware	5 Very Aware
The LSU Ag Center					
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service					
Agriculture Programs (County Agents)					
4-H Youth Programs					
Family and Consumer Science Programs (Home Economics)					
Mastery Programs (master gardener, master farmer, master horse, etc.)					
Community Development Programs					
Fisheries Programs					
Forestry and Wildlife Programs					

Section Two.

This section is designed to identify to what extent you agree or disagree that each of the organizations, programs and services of the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service meet the needs of the residents in your parish. For each of the items listed, please mark the appropriate space to indicate your level of agreement or disagreement that each organization, program/service meets the needs of parish residents. The scale used in this section includes the following values and descriptors:

- Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree
- 2-Disagree
- 3-Slightly Disagree
- 4-Slightly Agree
- 5-Agree
- 6-Strongly Agree

The LSU Ag Center, The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service & Program Areas	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
The LSU Ag Center						
The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service						
Agriculture Programs (County Agents)						
4-H Youth Programs						
Family and Consumer Science Programs (Home Economics)						
Mastery Programs (master gardener, master farmer, master horse, etc.)						
Community Development Programs						
Fisheries Programs						
Forestry and Wildlife Programs						

Section Three.

This section is designed to measure how often you have heard, seen, or received information from or about the LSU Agricultural Center and Louisiana Cooperative Service from the listed sources. For each of the information sources listed, please mark the appropriate space to indicate how often you have heard, seen or received the information. The scale used in this section includes the following values and descriptors:

- Scale: 1-None at all
 2-Rarely (1-2 times a year)
 3-Occasionally (3-5 times a year)
 4-Moderately (6-10 times a year)
 5-Frequently (12 or more times a year)

Information Source	None at all	Rarely (1-2 times a year)	Occasionally (3-5 times a year)	Moderately (6-10 times a year)	Frequently (12 or more times a year)
Programs or news stories mentioning LCES on the radio					
Programs or news stories mentioning LCES on TV					
Newspaper articles mentioning the LCES or written by Extension Agents					
Newsletters written by LCES Agents					
Personal contacts from LCES Agents					
Family members and acquaintances who had experiences with LCES Programs					
Printed information provided by LCES Agents					
Visit(s) to local LCES Offices					
LCES Program(s)					
Phone calls to/from LCES Agents					
Contacts regarding LCES program(s) by constituent groups					
LSU Ag Center Web Site					

Section Four.

This section is designed to indicate whether or not you have attended or participated in any of the following programs or events within the last year. The programs or events are normally offered at least annually in different regions of the state. For each of the items listed please check either “Yes” or “No” as to whether or not you have attended or participated in one or more of the programs or services within the last year.

Program Area	Yes	No
Experiment Station Field Days		
Agricultural Production Meetings		
Agricultural Marketing Meetings		
Family and Consumer Science Workshops		
4-H Youth Development Activities		
4-H Livestock Shows		
Leadership Seminars		
Community Resource Development Meetings		
Master Gardener, Farmer, Horse, etc. Program Meetings		
Fisheries Program Meetings		
Parish Advisory Meetings		
Disaster/Recovery Meetings		

Section Five.

This section is designed to measure your perceptions concerning the programs and services offered by the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. Additionally, this section is designed to measure your perception about local (parish level) funding of the LSU Agricultural Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service as well as measuring your perceptions about the effectiveness and importance of the programs and services offered to your constituency. For each of the statements listed, please mark the appropriate box. The scale used in this section includes the following values and descriptors:

- Scale: 1-Strongly Disagree
- 2-Disagree
- 3-Slightly Disagree
- 4-Slightly Agree
- 5-Agree
- 6-Strongly Agree

Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Slightly Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
I consider the Cooperative Extension Service to be a valuable asset to our parish residents.						
I feel that the amount of money the parish government disseminates to the Cooperative Extension Service each year is justifiable.						
I see our local Extension Service Office as an important resource for our parish residents.						
I think the local Extension Service plays an integral part in improving the lives of our parish residents.						
I feel that the Extension Service could be more effective as an important resource if they received more local funding.						
I think the programs and services offered by the Cooperative Extension Service in my parish satisfy the needs of our residents.						
I do not think that our parish residents could get the information they need elsewhere if the Cooperative Extension Service did not provide it.						
I think the Cooperative Extension Service (4-H) is very important for the development of our school age parish residents.						

Section Six.

In this final section of the survey, we are asking for some personal descriptive information. This information will be used for two purposes: First it will allow us to know some basic descriptive information about the individuals who participated in the study. This will be used solely for identifying any deficiencies in the diversity of our sample. Additionally, this information will enable us to determine if there are differences in how effectively we are reaching certain client groups. For example, are we reaching older clients more effectively than we are reaching younger clients? Please be assured that at no time will your individual responses be presented in any form. Your confidentiality will be protected at all times by the researcher. Also, should you feel uncomfortable answering any of the questions in this section, please feel free to leave that item(s) blank.

How many years of service do you have as a police jury/council member? _____.

What is your primary occupation/profession (e.g. attorney, farmer, etc.) in addition to your role as a police jury/council member? _____.

For the following questions, please check the one (1) option that best describes you or your community.

Which of the following best describes your place of residence?

- Rural, farm
- Rural, non-farm
- Town up to 9,999 in population
- City, 10,000-49,999 in population
- City, 50,000 and over in population

Do you consider your district (the physical area that you serve) to be primarily:

- Rural
- Suburban
- Urban

What is the highest level of education that you completed?

- Middle School
- Some High School Classes
- GED
- High School Diploma
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- College (undergraduate/4 year degree)
- Post graduate (masters/PhD/M.D.)

What is your race?

- Caucasian
- African American
- Pacific Islander
- American Indian
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other (please specify)_____

What is your gender ? (male___ female___)

What is your age?

- 18-25 years old___
- 26-33 years old___
- 34-41 years old___
- 42-49 years old___
- 50-57 years old___
- 58-65 years old___
- 65-or above_____

What is your email address?_____. The only reason this question is asked is to make sure the researcher does not get duplicate surveys from anyone. Your email address WILL NOT be used for any other purpose. Email addresses are destroyed when survey is faxed in to researcher.

Thank you in advance for your timely response to this survey. Please remember: your confidentiality and anonymity are the top priority of the researcher.

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF PERMISSION

April 20, 2006

Peter,

You have my permission to modify the survey instrument I used during my research into the Perceptions Louisiana Legislators have of the LSU AgCenter.

Pamela B. Hodson

Regional Director and Professor

LSU AgCenter

**APPENDIX C: PRIMARY OCCUPATIONS/PROFESSIONS HELD BY
RESPONDENTS**

Administrative coordinator
Administrator
Assistant/secretary (5)
Banker
Business developer
Company manager
Contractor (5)
Developer/planner
Educator (8)
Energy industry
Engineer/consultant
Factory worker (2)
Farm/agricultural consultant
Farmer (8)
Financial advisor
Financial services
Forester
Full-time juror (2)
Mother/housewife (2)
Industry supervisor
Lineman/field engineer
Maintenance supervisor
Manager (3)
Nurse (5)
Nurseryman
Parish employee (6)
Pastor
Real estate broker
Retail supervisor
Retired (13)
Sales (5)
School bus driver
Self-employed (11)
Supervisor
Truck driver
Wildlife agent
N/A^a

One respondent marked “N/A” when responding to this item while six participants did not respond to this item at all.

APPENDIX D: COVER LETTER

August 22, 2006

To: Members of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana

From: Peter Cannizzaro, LSU Ag Center

Re: LSU Ag Center Cooperative Extension Service Survey

CC: Roland Dartez, PJA Executive Director

ATTENTION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS: Please forward the below information with the web link for the survey to all police jury/council members in your parish office. Please note, should any jury/council member not have access to a computer, simply go to the web link below and print out a copy to be filled out by hand. Please have them fax it back to Peter Cannizzaro at 985.875.2639 Thanks in advance for your help.

I am writing to ask your help in a study concerning the Importance of the Cooperative Extension Service as Perceived by Police Jury/Council Members in Louisiana. **This study is being done in conjunction with the Police Jury Association of Louisiana office. Mr. Roland Dartez has suggested that I send this survey directly to each of you. Mr. Dartez has been briefed on the study and has given his full support.** This study is an effort to see how important the extension service is to you and your constituents and ultimately, to see if improvements are needed.

To accomplish this mission, the Extension Service in Louisiana needs feedback from all of our constituent groups to help us in our constant efforts to improve the quality of the service that we provide. Local governing bodies (police juries and parish councils) are clearly very important among these constituent groups.

Results of this survey will prove to be invaluable information as the LSU Ag Center, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service strives to continually provide essential programming for youth and adults through out Louisiana. The benefit to the Police Jury Association will take the form of enabling the Cooperative Extension Service to better meet the needs of the residents in our respective parishes.

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only in summaries in which no individual's answers can be identified. Whether you answer this survey via Zoomerang (electronically) or fax or regular mail, all identifying factors will be removed immediately. The only two people privy to your information is myself (the researcher) and my major professor. Zoomerang is a widely used data collection software package and full instructions will accompany my survey when it goes out to each participant.

The link below will lead you to the survey:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web2251mhbq487>

By completing and returning the attached survey, you are agreeing to participate in this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a study participant or other concerns, contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board Chairman, 203 B-1 Boyd Hall, 225-578-8692.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, please feel free to contact me by phone at 985.966.6489 or by email at pcannizzaro@agcenter.lsu.edu

Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Sincerely,

Peter Cannizzaro
LSU Ag Center

APPENDIX E: TWO DAY FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO POTENTIAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Two day follow-up letter (8/28/06)

Attn: Secretaries, Clerks, Administrative Assistants in all Parish Jury/Council Offices

Re: State-wide Survey Being Done in Conjunction with Roland DarteZ/Police Jury Association of Louisiana Office

Please pass this entire email on to your jury/council members via forwarding this email to their email addresses or print this off for them please.

Jury/Council members, you should have received a message from your secretary, clerk or assistant last week concerning the state-wide study mentioned above. For those of you who have completed the survey already, thank you very much for your help. This survey is time sensitive, in that the data needs to be collected in the next couple weeks if at all possible. In an effort to help you as much as possible, you have three options to get it back to me. First, you can go to the link below and fill it out on-line which is probably the fastest method (maybe 10 or 12 minutes) and simply submit it electronically.

The link below will lead you to the survey:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

The second method would be to fill it out by hand (a copy printed off the computer and simply fax me the completed copy). You can fax it to: Peter Cannizzaro at 985.875.2639. Additionally, you are welcome to mail it back to me at P.O. Box 5438 Covington, LA 70433

Thanks, Peter

APPENDIX F: TEN DAY FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO POTENTIAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Ten day follow-up letter (9/5/06)

Please do not delete this message

Attn: Secretaries, Clerks, Administrative Assistants in all Parish Jury/Council Offices

Re: State-wide Survey Being Done in Conjunction with Roland Dartez/Police Jury Association of Louisiana Office

To make it easier for you to get this to your jury/council members, either let them go to the link below to fill out on-line (which is the fastest) or please just copy this email message which contains a printable copy below. If you would just print one copy for each jury/council member in your office please.

This is the study being done by myself (Peter Cannizzaro and the Police Jury Assn. Office along with Mr. Roland Dartez)

Jury/Council members, you should have received a message from your secretary, clerk or assistant last week concerning the state-wide study mentioned above. For those who have completed the survey already, thank you very much for your help. This survey is **time sensitive**, in that the data needs to be collected in the next week if at all possible. In an effort to help you as much as possible, there are three options to get it back to me. First, you can go to the link below and fill it out on-line which is probably the fastest method (maybe 10 or 12 minutes) and simply submit it electronically. **If double-clicking on the link below does not work, simply right click on it and in the drop down box, select "open hyperlink" and that will bring you to the survey.** **Secondly, you can simply print this email which has a printed copy below. Simply print it, fill it out and fax back to: Peter Cannizzaro- 985.875.2639.** **Thirdly, you are welcome to send it back via regular mail**

The link below will lead you to the survey:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

APPENDIX G: LETTER TO RESPONDENTS FROM MR. DARTEZ

September 19, 2006

Fr: Roland Dartez, Executive Director

Re: LSU AgCenter survey link below

Please review and complete the below survey link for the LSU AgCenter. I appreciate your response. For faxing or hard mail it needs to come to fax 985.875.2639 or hard mail to Peter Cannizzaro, P.O. Box 5438 Covington, LA 70434 or e-mail to:

PCannizzaro@agcenter.lsu.edu

LINK: The quickest way to complete the survey and get it back is to use the electronic link below and fill it out on line:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

APPENDIX H: WEEKLY FOLLOW-UP EMAILS TO POTENTIAL STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Weekly follow-up (1 of 4) (9/26/06)

Please do not delete this message

Attn: Secretaries, Clerks, Administrative Assistants in all Parish Jury/Council Offices

Re: State-wide Survey Being Done in Conjunction with Roland Dartez/Police Jury Association of Louisiana Office

To make it easier for you to get this to your jury/council members, either let them go to the link below to fill out on-line (which is the fastest) or please just copy this email message which contains a printable copy below. If you would just print one copy for each jury/council member in your office please.

This is the study being done by myself (Peter Cannizzaro and the Police Jury Assn. Office along with Mr. Roland Dartez)

Jury/Council members, you should have received a message from your secretary, clerk or assistant last week concerning the state-wide study mentioned above. For those who have completed the survey already, thank you very much for your help. This survey is **time sensitive**, in that the data needs to be collected in the next week if at all possible. In an effort to help you as much as possible, there are three options to get it back to me. First, you can go to the link below and fill it out on-line which is probably the fastest method (maybe 10 or 12 minutes) and simply submit it electronically. **If double-clicking on the link below does not work, simply right click on it and in the drop down box, select "open hyperlink" and that will bring you to the survey. Secondly, you can simply print this email which has a printed copy below. Simply print it, fill it out and fax back to: Peter Cannizzaro- 985.875.2639. Lastly, you are welcome to mail it to: P.O. Box 5438 Covington, LA 70433.**

Thanks, Peter

The link below will lead you to the survey:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

Weekly follow-up (2 of 4) (10/3/06)

Please do not delete this message

Attn: Secretaries, Clerks, Administrative Assistants in all Parish Jury/Council Offices

Re: State-wide Survey Being Done in Conjunction with Roland Dartez/Police Jury Association of Louisiana Office

To make it easier for you to get this to your jury/council members, either let them go to the link below to fill out on-line (which is the fastest) or please just copy this email message which contains a printable copy below. If you would just print one copy for each jury/council member in your office please.

This is the study being done by myself (Peter Cannizzaro and the Police Jury Assn. Office along with Mr. Roland Dartez)

Jury/Council members, you should have received a message from your secretary, clerk or assistant last week concerning the state-wide study mentioned above. For those who have completed the survey already, thank you very much for your help. This survey is **time sensitive**, in that the data needs to be collected in the next week if at all possible. In an effort to help you as much as possible, there are three options to get it back to me. First, you can go to the link below and fill it out on-line which is probably the fastest method (maybe 10 or 12 minutes) and simply submit it electronically. **If double-clicking on the link below does not work, simply right click on it and in the drop down box, select "open hyperlink" and that will bring you to the survey.** **Secondly, you can simply print this email which has a printed copy below. Simply print it, fill it out and fax back to: Peter Cannizzaro- 985.875.2639. Lastly, you are welcome to mail it to: P.O. Box 5438 Covington, LA 70433.**

Thanks, Peter

The link below will lead you to the survey:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

Weekly follow-up (3 of 4) (10/10/06)

Hello all, THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE RESPONDED THUS FAR! WE STILL HOWEVER LACK SOME OF THE SURVEYS NEEDED TO COMPLETE THIS IMPORTANT STUDY. IF YOU WOULD, ASK YOUR COUNCIL/JURY MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED THUS FAR TO PLEASE TAKE 5 OR 6 MINUTES TO FILL OUT A SURVEY TO FINISH THIS DEAL UP; ANY COMPLETED SURVEYS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

FOLKS, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE HERE, IF I CAN GET A FEW MORE SURVEYS FILLED OUT IN THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS, WE WILL BE ALL DONE. PLEASE KEEP IN MIND, THIS COMPLETED STUDY WILL SERVE INVALUABLE FOR ALL PARTIES INCLUDING THE POLICE JURY ASSN. OF LOUISIANA.

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LOUISIANANS IS WHAT THIS STUDY IS ALL ABOUT.

THE EASIEST WAY TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY IS TO GO TO THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=web225lmhbq487>

AND FILL IT OUT ON-LINE (MORE THAN ONE PERSON CAN USE THE SAME COMPUTER TO FILL OUT THE SURVEY IF THE OFFICE ONLY HAS ONE COMPUTER). THE NEXT BEST WAY IS TO FAX TO 985.875.2635 OR SNAIL MAIL IT TO: LSU AG CENTER, PETER CANNIZZARO, P.O. BOX 5438, COVINGTON, LA 70434

THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING HOW IMPORTANT THIS STUDY IS AND BEING PROMPT IN GETTING THE SURVEY BACK TO ME.

Weekly follow-up (4 of 4) (10/17/06)

ONE MORE TIME FOLKS; PLEASE HELP ME TO GET JUST A FEW MORE! ANY AND ALL HELP IS APPRECIATED. IF THE COUNCIL OR JURY MEMBERS WANT TO, THEY CAN CALL ME AT 985.966.6489 AND THEY CAN FILL IT OUT WITH ME ON THE PHONE; TAKES 5 OR 6 MINUTES BY PHONE; I AM TRULY DESPARATE HERE. THANKS SO MUCH TO THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE RESPONDED!!!! IT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

If you have already filled out a survey, please tell your counter part to do the same, I look forward to getting this done so I can let you know what the final data says. Peter Cannizzaro, thanks again

VITA

The author was born December 15, 1966, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and is the son of Peter (deceased) and Shirley Cannizzaro. He graduated from Covington High School in 1984 and completed the requirements for a Bachelor of Science Degree in animal science from Southeastern Louisiana University in 1991 and a Master of Science from Louisiana State University in 1998.

He was self employed from August 1984 until June 1991. In June 1991, he took a position with the LSU AgCenter as assistant county agent in Plaquemines Parish until September 1992. He was employed by Alexandria Seed, Inc. from September until March of 1995 as a sales specialist. In March 1995 he took a position with the LSU Ag Center as assistant county agent in St Helena Parish until October 1999 when he was promoted as associate county agent, livestock show manager of the St Tammany Parish Fairgrounds in Covington, Louisiana. He was promoted to full county agent on July 1, 2002. His current work assignment covers equine education for youth and adults in St Tammany Parish.

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be conferred at the May 2007 Commencement ceremony.