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# A Descriptive Study of Teens' Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF TEENS' CAREER DECISION-MAKING  
SELF-EFFICACY

A Thesis

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  
Masters of Science

in

The School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development

by  
Cherie S. Roger  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to determine if differences exist between 4-H members and non 4-H members in a south Louisiana parish on career decision making self-efficacy. This study may help youth recognize experiences that help them make career decisions. This was a cross-sectional study designed to describe 4-H and non-4-H members on career decision making self-efficacy. This study describes the information obtained from a one-time pencil/paper survey. All participants will remain anonymous. There was a statistically significant positive association between career decision making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and years in 4-H as well as total club membership. As youths' years in 4-H increased, so did their career decision making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals scores. Additionally, as youths' total membership in clubs increased so did their career decision making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals scores.

## **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

For more than 100 years, Louisiana 4-H has provided research-based, hands-on experience to youth ages nine to e. Youth select a project focus and work on that project throughout the year or for several years. They gain knowledge about that specific project area as well as develop other life skills such as leadership, organization, responsibility, and record keeping. The 4-H program has evolved from a strong focus on agriculture to a broader focus on citizenship, healthy living, and science, engineering and technology (National 4-H Council, 2015).

The leaders of 4-H believe that every young person should have a relationship with a caring adult, feel included, have a safe place to interact with others, have a healthy lifestyles, learn skills to help with future goals, and have a chance to give back to their community by volunteering (National 4-H Council, 2015). The goal of 4-H is to develop citizenship, leadership, and life skills of youth through mostly hands-on learning (National 4-H Council, 2015).

Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood when youth must acquire the attitudes, competencies, values, and social skills that will carry them forward to successful adulthood (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). Adolescence has become a more prolonged, less clear process, often lasting into the mid-twenties. As times change, so have families and communities as well as the expectations for young people. Families move more often than they did in the past and neighborhoods have changed. Parents are working and away from the home which leaves youth home alone, allowing them more unsupervised and unguided freedom. Media exposure has influenced the majority of youth today with the increase in technology. Young people are immersed in an environment that has become complicated because of the technological advances and cultural influences. These changes have increased the

need for youth to be better educated and more able to leverage social and emotional skills for success.

Youth organizations today are striving to bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood, providing youth with positive and interactive experiences that will help them become successful adults. Both grassroots programs as well as programs with strong national ties are used to serve the needs of youth (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002). Programs may target youth broadly or focus on a specific group such as a neighborhood, ethnic group, special need, or project interest. Even with the best resources, no single program will meet the needs of all young people in an area. This is a continuing challenge of youth organizations as well as the complex characteristics of adolescence and the multifaceted society in which we live. Because of these challenges, it is vital that youth organizations remain flexible to adapt to the needs of the youth they serve.

The 4-H Youth Development program strives to meet the needs of the youth that they serve. Youth development is not a highly sophisticated prescription for “fixing troubled kids.” It is about people, programs, institutions and systems that provide all youth with the support and opportunities to empower themselves (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Youth development strategies allow youth to develop relationships with caring adults, build skills, exercise leadership, and help their communities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The 4-H provides these experiences to youth because they have put into motion “positive youth development.” Psychologist Eric Erickson developed a stage model of human development that are important to adult success (Erikson, 1994). The stages are:

- Trust, which he linked to positive emotional relationships with caring adults
- A strong sense of self-sufficiency

- Ability to exercise initiative
- Confidence in one's ability to master skills and navigate one's world
- A well-formed sense of personal identity
- A desire to be productive and contributing for future generations
- The ability to experience true intimacy
- A strong sense of personal integrity (Kress, 2014; p.7)

With Erikson's eight stages in mind, 4-H practices the four essential elements of positive youth development: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Each of the essential elements is important to the growth and development of youth. It is the grouping of these elements that produces a positive environment for youth development. When leaders purposely focus on these elements, youth will gain benefit from participating in hands-on, experiential activities and events, feeling supported in a safe environment, gaining new skills and abilities, and knowing that they are giving back to their environment and communities in a positive way (Kress, 2014). The 4-H program continually strives to meet the needs of the youth they serve by forming networks among youth, youth and adults, and among adults through participation in 4-H meetings, activities, and events. Through project based programs, 4-H introduces a variety of career topics for diverse interests.

For over 100 years, Louisiana 4-H has delivered diverse hands-on learning experiences in a group setting to encourage leadership, independence, generous spirits, and mastery of life skills. Louisiana 4-H reaches more than 240,000 youth from across Louisiana (Louisiana 4-H, 2014). These youth are engaged in 4-H activities through school club meetings, project clubs, and numerous camps. Louisiana 4-H has managed to keep its co-curricular status, allowing 4-H club

meetings to be held within the school day. Louisiana 4-H programming includes the following three mission mandates of citizenship, healthy living and science, engineering and technology.

### **Purpose and Objective of This Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine if differences exist between 4-H members and non 4-H members in a south Louisiana parish on career decision-making self-efficacy. This study can provide data to help the Louisiana 4-H program determine future programming for 4-H members. Louisiana 4-H also delivers many programs to non 4-H members. The results of this study can be used to develop curriculum to assist in career development programs for both 4-H and non 4-H members. Findings from this study can be used to better understand the 4-H experience as well as inform future programing efforts. This study seeks to explore the following research objectives:

1. To describe 4-H and non 4-H members on the following demographic variables:  
(a) race, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) grade, (e) 4-H membership, (f) years in 4-H, (g) membership in other clubs besides 4-H, (h) 4-H Junior Leader Club membership, and (i) past 4-H membership.
2. To describe 4-H and non 4-H members on career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals.
3. To determine if a difference in career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals existed between 4-H members and non 4-H members.
4. To determine if a relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and selected demographic

variables: gender, age, grade, years in 4-H, 4-H membership, junior leader club membership, past 4-H membership, and total other club membership.

### **Significance of This Study**

Youth development organizations are constantly conducting surveys and evaluations to report to state and national authorities. Studies like this may help secure funding for the organization because it demonstrates the program impact 4-H has on the development of career decision-making skills. The 4-H agents will gain valuable information to develop programs that will better target impact. Finally, this study will may help youth recognize experiences that help them make career decisions.

### **Limitations**

1. The study is confined to the schools included in the study.
2. The study is only a snap shot of youth perceptions.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher developed a list of acronyms and definitions to be utilized:

- 4-H: 4-H is a youth organization that promotes hands on learning through research based lessons for ages 9-19. In Louisiana, 4-H is part of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service which is part of Louisiana State University.
- Life Skills: The necessary skills needed to be a successful in adulthood. Skills such as leadership, citizenship, public speaking, respect, and organizational skills (Dictionary.com, 2015).
- 4-H Project Club – a group of 4-H members who meet to learn about a specific project area, example- robotics, health and fitness.

- 4-H Junior Leaders – a group of 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade 4-H members who take an active role in planning and implanting Parish 4-H events, activities, and community service projects.
- Positive youth development can be defined as “understanding, educating, and engaging children to be productive activities rather than at correcting, curing or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so called disabilities” (Damon, 2004,p.15).

## **CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **History of Youth Development**

In the twentieth century, the American people believed that children should be supported in their quest to learn and develop. At this time, adults increased the sense of responsibility for young people. Due to increasing juvenile crime and troubled youth, in the 1950's federal funding was established to address youth issues (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins 1998). As the 1960's approached, these issues of troubled youth and crime continued as well as the national rates of poverty, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, family mobility, and single parenthood (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins 1998).

Social changes, especially in the family, were at the forefront of the causes of these issues. Schools and community programs were targeted to support families in raising successful children. According to Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (1998), families were given aid to help with existing crises which was to reduce juvenile crime and to improve youth's character. As the youth issues continued, interventions were more focused on specific problems. Efforts to reduce problem behaviors have continued in the last three decades. Research studies have been used to judge the effectiveness of the approaches used to help youth in these crisis.

Prevention approaches began to support youth before behavior problems occurred through programs targeted at distinct problem behaviors. Prevention strategies evolved as they were evaluated. As professionals began using data from longitudinal studies, they were able to identify important predictors of youth problem behaviors (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins 1998).

By the 1980's single problem prevention efforts received increasing criticism. Leading prevention models suggested to examine co-occurrence and common predictors of multiple

problem behaviors. Researchers were encouraged to study environmental factors and interactions between youth and the environment. It was becoming more evident that the success of youth needed to focus more on a child's emotional, social, behavioral and cognitive development to prevent problem behaviors rather than specific problems like drug use, sexual activity, violence, or school failure.

By the 1990's similar conclusions about promoting better outcomes for youth were reached as the focus shifted to programs emphasizing both positive and problem behaviors, instead of single-problem-behaviors. Mounting evidence suggested that programs with a positive focus resulted in better outcomes, and both problem behaviors and positive outcomes can be identified by the same risk and protective factors (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins 1998).

### **Positive Youth Development – The Early Years**

Positive youth development can be defined as “understanding, educating, and engaging children in productive activities rather than at correcting, curing or treating them for maladaptive tendencies or so called disabilities” (Damon, 2004,p.15). A number of youth development programs were researched and evaluated. According to Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (1998), the youth development programs reviewed addressed five to eight constructs. Competence, Self-efficacy, and prosocial norms were addressed in all program studies. Research proved a need for both reduction in problem behaviors and the use of positive outcome measures when working with positive youth development programs. Structured curriculum also proved to be a positive effect on the program.

Promotion and prevention programs that address positive youth development constructs are receiving recognition in well-evaluated studies. Constructs in youth development programs

proven to be successful include those that aid youth in developing socially, emotionally, behaviorally, cognitively, and morally (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1998). According to Catalano and colleagues, positive youth development programming is instrumental in increasing youths' self-efficacy through programs with a social-ecological approach that emphasizes standards-based behavior, positive social interactions with peers and adults, and structured programs that occur over a period of time.

Positive youth development is the desired outcome for our Nation's youth (Murray & Foster, 1998). After over 200 research studies of youth, focusing on assets and risk taking behaviors, it was found that youth need to feel safe, continue to be engaged in learning and interact with caring people daily. Suggestions are made that Youth Development Programs utilize youth as resources to be developed rather than helping youth make positive choices. Murray and Foster (1998) state that to understand and research the effectiveness of youth development programs, evaluations and research must be done. The Carnegie Council task force identified two problems when discussing evaluation studies of youth development programs: lack of experience in program evaluation staff and there are few current approaches to program evaluation. There are some youth development program staff that view evaluations as threatening, avoiding participation. Murray and Foster (1998) state that one focus cannot determine a successful program. Successful programs view youth as resources to develop, not problems to be fixed (Murray & Foster (1998). According to Murray and Foster (1998), a successful youth development program is similar to a family environment where youth feel safe and are supported and encouraged by caring adults to develop their abilities.

## **Positive Youth Development - Today**

Positive Youth Development focuses on an individual and their interaction within their community such as schools, afterschool programs, and other organizations in the success of youth (Masten, 2014). Youth have certain developmental needs (social, emotional, intellectual, and physical) that they will meet. Youth development is a natural process and will happen whether it is planned or not. Adults and youth professionals must play an active role in the lives of youth to help guide youth to meet their needs in a positive way (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000). Positive Youth Development can take place in many settings, but most youth experience positive youth development through afterschool and community based programs. Positive youth development incorporates three basic models (a) preventative, (b) protective, and (c) Positive Youth Development: the balanced model of youth development. Positive youth development focuses on the positive effect on youth not just trying to prevent the negative outcomes (Pittman, Irby, & Ferber, 2000).

Positive Youth Development promotes the 6 C's as characteristics needed by youth as they transition into their next developmental stage (1) caring/compassion, (2) competent, (3) confidence, (4) connections to others, (5) character, and (6) contributions (Masten, 2014; Phelps et al., 2009). Instead of focusing on simply avoiding negative behaviors, today, positive youth development programs encourage communities to work with youth to implement the 6 C's to prepare youth to be healthy adults.

The adult role in positive youth development has evolved throughout the years. The adult is not only the mentor but a partner. Adults and youth have taken a partnership in youth programs where youth take an active role in planning and carrying out events. This allows the youth involved to take ownership and feel meaningful. This experience also prepares youth for

their adult life when planning and implementing programs. The adult role is to assist and guide the youth through the process. Youth who are part of positive youth development programs gain positive experiences through project based programs which in turn can be the foundation of career decision-making.

### **The 4-H Youth Development Program**

4-H prepares young people to make a positive impact in their communities and the world. More than 100 years ago, 4-H opened the door for young people to learn research based information using a hands –on learning approach. The 4-H program has become the nation’s largest youth development organization. The 4-H idea has always been to: help young people and their families gain the skills needed to be positive forces in their communities’ and develop ideas for a more innovative economy (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1999). The 4-H program is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) foremost youth development program. The program was initiated in the early 1900’s. The program’s signature focus, the 4-H’s (head-heart-hands-health), was used to help youth learn and develop in a positive manner while also being actively involved in their communities. The 4-H program has had a long-standing commitment to life skill development and goal setting (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1998). The 4-H program uses a positive youth development approach and experiential learning to improve youths’ life skills and to help them become more responsible citizens and leaders. The 4-H program was originally focused on agricultural programs, but changed its focus to citizenship, healthy living, and science, engineering, and technology programs. Today, 4-H is included in all fifty states and 80 countries. Recognized as one of the top three state 4-H programs in the nation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Louisiana 4-H reaches more than

240,000 youth. Louisiana 4-H programming focuses on the three mission mandates of citizenship, healthy living and science, engineering and technology.

### **Career Decision-Making**

Career-related decisions are complex. Difficulties in career decisions can prevent youth from making a decision or may lead them to a decision that is not the best for them. Career decisions involve more than just chance or salary. Career decisions involve more than just chance or salary incentives. Career choices are integral to long term happiness and should fit an individual's personal values, aptitudes, skills, interests, and career opportunities and limitations (Brown & Crace, 1996). Career decisions begin during adolescence when selecting courses for high school by selecting college preparatory courses or work-force related courses. Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) explain important decisional tasks in relation to the career decision-making process: orientation, career exploration, and commitment. Orientation is making one aware of the need to make a decision and to encourage to participate in a career decision process (Germeijs & Verschueren 2006). Career exploration is assessing one's interest and environment and seeking activities that will allow the youth to learn more about individual careers (Germeijs & Verschueren 2006). Commitment is confidence with the decision of a career choice. Career decision-making is a flexible process (Germeijs & Verschueren 2006). The processes do not have to follow a specific sequence. These three processes combined lead to implementation, what is done after the decision is made, which is an important task that takes place once a decision is made (Germeijs & Verschueren 2006).

Career decision-making is not a single decision, it begins in early childhood and continues throughout life. Career exploration and career plans are important when helping youth make a career choice. Career development should take place throughout different stages of a

child's life. In elementary grades, children are taught self-understanding to help develop a healthy self-esteem. In upper elementary grades, children are introduced to jobs related to school subjects (McIntosh, 2000). As children move on to middle school, children are introduced to different careers by inviting employers in the community to visit the school or have students visit job sites within the community. In high school, life career programs are available for students to participate in simulated situations about job choice, college, and adulthood (McIntosh, 2000). Students who participate in these career events throughout their school years will be better prepared to make career decisions (Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002).

Although youth have many opportunities to become better prepared to make career decisions, potential barriers develop for some youth such as poverty, difficult home life, school problems, and negative community environments. These factors may interfere with what youth have learned in order to make a positive career choice. Career decisions are influenced by the resources available as well as family, friends, teachers, coaches (Mortimer, Zimmer-Gembeck, Holmes, & Shanahan, 2002). It is important that the adults increase awareness of a variety of careers so that youth are aware of as many career choices. It is also important that these adults help youth to develop self-worth and confidence in relation to careers and skills needed for specific careers. Adults can introduce youth to new career choices by having the youth job shadow. Adults can also serve as role-models in specific careers. Self-efficacy is an important factor in career decision-making. Career decision-making self-efficacy indicates that an individual can become successful in the career that is selected and commit to that career (Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, Clarke, 2006). Betz and Vuyten (1997) describe career decision outcome expectations as the belief that career exploratory behavior will lead to useful career development.

## **Historical “Roots” of Career Decision-Making**

Career development is a lifelong process. There are a variety of theories and studies about career development and career decision-making. Gies (1990) discuss two career theorist David Tiedman and Donald Super who have similarities and differences in their theories. Gies (1990) describes that Super defines vocational development as a compromise between personal and social factors and self-concepts and reality. Super’s theory explains that a more meaningful career is chosen when the career choice is closer to self-concept (perception or image of an individual’s abilities and our uniqueness) (Gies, 1990). When an individual has a true understanding of one’s self, then the right decisions about a career can be made. Gies (1990) outlines Super’s main points that provide a basis for his theory. First, it is important to take uniqueness into consideration in career development; people have different capabilities, interest, and traits (Gies, 1990). Super’s second point is that each person has a wide range of abilities, personality characteristics, and traits. These traits will help individuals become successful in a number of careers (Gies, 1990). Super continues to share that each occupation requires different experiences that will allow some variation for each individual (Gies, 1990). Significant to Super’s Theory is that career likes, desires, and abilities are not permanent. The developmental process can be separated into life stages recognized as growth (self-concept is formed when experiences provide knowledge of the work world), exploration (unrealistic desired occupation), establishment (deciding if career choice made in exploration stage is realistic), maintenance (adjustments and improvements to career), and decline (focus is on retaining the job, not enhancing) (Gies, 1990). Super’s theory continues to describe that a career pattern is set out by the individual’s parents socioeconomic level, mental ability, and personality characteristics and by the opportunities the individual is given. An individual can be encouraged to develop interests

and abilities and recognize their strengths and weaknesses so that they can make successful career choices. Finally, Super identifies that work and life approval are related to a person's ability to share their interests, skills, personal traits and beliefs (Gies, 1990).

Tiedman's Theory of Career Development states that career development is the process of organizing and identifying with work through interaction of one's personality with society (Gies, 1990). Similar to Super, Tiedman believes that career continues through a person's lifetime. Individual decisions such as decisions about school, work, and daily activities are important to career development (Gies, 1990). Tiedman describes two main decision-making periods: period of anticipation and period of implementation and adjustment (Gies, 1990). Period of anticipation identifies the exploration, crystallization, choice, and specification. Individuals explore a number of alternatives and goals. Individuals then come to a place where choices become clearer and better to understand (i.e. the crystallization stage). The choices an individual makes will influence the way they behave. When an individual is confident in a decision, then they can further define the results of the choice and specification occurs (Gies, 1990). Tiedman describes the period of Implementation and adjustment within three sub-stages: induction, transition, and maintenance. Induction is started when a person fits their goals into a group or society (Gies, 1990). The individual begins to put their goals into action. Group goals become part of personal goals as interaction between the individual and group grows (Gies, 1990). This represents a transition for an individual focus to a group, or team focus. The individual will then attempt to maintain sufficient balance.

### **Early Career Decision-Making Frameworks**

Career awareness is important in helping to choose a career path. Earlier career awareness frameworks highlighted four components: concept of career awareness, influences on

career awareness and career choices, skills, and making decisions (Wise, Charner, Randour, 1976). The first step in the framework is developing career awareness which serves as an inventory of data, morals, preference and self-concept all helped to youth to make a career choice (Wise, Charner, Randour, 1976). Influences, as described by Wise, Charner, and Randour (1976), included family, school, mass media, and community groups. An individual could use their own skills to identify self-understanding of careers to help determine career goals.

This earlier framework is similar to the more recently used social cognitive theory in that the social cognitive theory is condensed to three factors. The earlier framework components of career awareness can be linked to the social cognitive factor of self-efficacy. Influence on career awareness and career choice can be matched with outcome expectations within the social cognitive theory. The components of skills and making decisions from the earlier career decision-making framework can relate to goal representation within the social cognitive theory.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social Cognitive Theory is a theory that uses a triadic reciprocal approach to explain human behavior (Bandura, 1977). The Social Cognitive Theory believes that people develop behaviors based on their own experiences. Significant to career development, the three social cognitive factors that are highlighted are (a) self-efficacy, (b) outcome expectations, and (c) goal representations (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). The Social Cognitive factor that has been most talked about in literature is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy helps a person judge their own actions and outcomes. It allows a person to choose activities, environments, thought patterns, and emotions when faced with problems. For youth to make career decisions, they should have an understanding of where that decision came from. The Social Cognitive Factor can help youth

better understand career decision-making which will help them to feel confident in their career choice.

### **Social Cognitive Career Theory**

People help to create their own career path. (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). There are some are some external factors such as social and economic conditions that foster career path. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002) take a look at the social cognitive career theory which builds a connection with other theories of career development. Bandura's triadic-reciprocal model helps the social cognitive career theory relate career development to (1) Personal attributes, (2) External environmental factors, and (3) Overt Behaviors. The social cognitive career theory consist of three variables (1) self-efficacy, (2) outcome expectations, and (3) personal goals. Among the three "building blocks" of career development, self-efficacy has received the most attention in career studies. Self-efficacy is attained through four types of experiences: (1) personal performance accomplishments, (2) vicarious learning, (3) social persuasion, and (4) physiological and affective state (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Although these four sources of self-efficacy depend on many factors, personal achievement is viewed as the most important value of self-efficacy. Success raises self-efficacy whereas failure lowers it (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). When evaluating the career decision-making process in relation to self- efficacy, methods must assess specific situations rather than general behaviors (Fouad & Smith, 1997).

Outcome expectations describe how one perceives what will happen because of an action while self-efficacy is the belief in one's self (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 2002). According to Lent, Brown, and Hackett, (2002), goals are the purpose to engage in an activity with an expected outcome. When people set personal goals, it helps them to become organized, serves as a guide, and helps people exercise self-empowerment. As people have positive experiences during an

activity, they form goals for continuing their involvement and success in the activity. This process helps to redefine self-efficacy and outcome expectations, creating interests.

Other variations to take into consideration when studying social cognitive variables related to career development are gender, race-ethnicity, physical health or disability, genetic endowment and socioeconomic conditions (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). Further gender studies focus on psychological, social, and cultural implications of gender. Boys and girls are treated differently by most adults because traditionally boys and girls develop and mature at different ages. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002) state that there is a connection between gender and culture when discussing career development. Certain personality traits have genetic links to career development. Career choice is a combination of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy is the result of past experiences that in turn predict future behaviors and outcome expectations are anticipated results of a behavior or previews life experiences that predict future behaviors (Fouad & Smith, 1997). People will pursue career interest they can do well in and that will help them attain their goals. Furthermore, people who are not exposed to opportunities or experiences are less likely to develop interest in a particular career field. As Lent, Brown, & Hackett (2002) hypothesized, self-efficacy and outcome expectations together impact career related interest. Interest help to develop goals, goals inspire actions, actions lead to experiences which lead to outcomes that help form self-efficacy (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002). In short, people will choose careers in which they are interested.

Career maturity refers to an individual's readiness to make informed, age-appropriate career decisions and deal with the career development tasks (Patton & Creed, 2001). Age appropriate career choices and development task are defined as an individual's ability to make realistic and consistent career choices as well as being aware of what is required to make a career

choice. Career development begins during childhood and continues throughout life (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). Children begin learning about careers through work experiences of others, establishing a sense of self, and finding a match in the work world to establish a potential worker identity (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). This learning is extended through exposure to school texts, adults, and news outlets and other information seeking activities (Porfeli & Lee, 2012). Career development continues as a person's vocational identity develops through work (Porfeli & Lee, 2012).

### **Barriers to Career Decision-Making**

“According to the normative theory of decision making, the best decision is the one that best helps to achieve the decision maker's goal” (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996, p. 511). Career decisions have three main features: “1) an individual who has to make a decision, 2) a number of alternatives to select from, and 3) many attributes to select from” (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996, p. 511). Additional attributes an individual must take into consideration when making a career choice is the length of training and the type of interaction with people within that career. Uncertainty is also a factor in relation to an individual's characteristics and future career goals (Gati, Krausz & Osipow, 1996). There are many factors that affect the decision-making skills of youth. Adolescents' future career decisions are influenced by their own attitudes and beliefs that are developed during socialization and in school as well as additional factors such as family members, members of their social group, adults with whom they interact at school, and mass media sources (Julien, 1999). The career decision-making process is difficult and involves planning because some youth do not recognize what decisions have to be made about their future, they are uncertain about the career decision-making process, and many youth feel overwhelmed by the decisions that need to be made (Julien, 1999). A critical step in the career

decision-making process is acquiring and structuring information (Julien, 1999). “Youth need to be given the opportunity to explore possible occupations, their values, strength and goals; their educational and career opportunities, and their role models and influences” (Julien, 1999, p.38).

When youth try to make a career decision, it can be viewed as problem solving. As with any type of problem, there must be a process used to solve the problem. Julien (1999) considered information barriers like a lack of awareness of information needed to make a decision , availability of educational opportunities, introductory course needs, types of financial aid, systems of personal support, job acquisition skill needs, and job search skills. He also noted that youth often do not know how to find career-specific information and are particularly hampered when needed information simply does not exist. Additional barriers to the process include a lack of good communication skills, lowered confidence in their career decision-making ability, and inaccurate information retrieval (Julien, 1999). These barriers leave adolescents feeling lost and uncertain about career choices and possibilities.

### **Career Exploration**

Career exploration is where an individual seeks out information about themselves and the education and career options in order to continue the career decision-making process (Guay, 2008). To help understand what motivates career decision-making, Guay, 2008 references Self-Determination Theory. This theory explains human motivation by highlighting three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Guay, 2009). These three needs must be met for motivation to occur. Autonomy focuses on having a choice in career decision-making activities and feeling satisfied with that choice (Guay, 2009). Individuals need to feel effective in their environment and activities to gain a sense of competence (Guay, 2009).

Relatedness is when an individual seeks positive relationships with others. When students feel connected to others during career activities, they get a sense of relatedness (Guay, 2009).

Career exploration is a problem solving process used to gain information about an individual and an individual's environment in order to select, prepare for, begin, adjust, and improve in an occupation (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Grotevant and Cooper, 1986 suggest that youth are better equipped to make career choices that are consistent with their own personalities, interest, and abilities if they are given a broader knowledge about the content of occupations.

Career development is a team effort between school, parents, and community organizations to assist with an individual's economic, social, and personal development (Izzo and Lamb, 2003).

Most career development models have five common stages: career awareness, career exploration, career decision-making, career preparation, and career placement (Izzo and Lamb, 2003). When individuals are given the opportunity and instruction to attain skills and knowledge, they become more self-determined and career focused (Izzo and Lamb, 2003). Successful career programs take place within school and community organizations to include assessment and planning with both school and work based instructions (Izzo and Lamb, 2003).

### **Role of Youth Programs in Career Decision-Making**

Adolescent's experience a major turning point during their high school years in relation to career decision-making (Ferry, 2006). During this turning point, they explore career choices through interactions with family, school, and community. The interdependence of the three assist youth to make a career choice (Ferry, 2006). Ferry found that developing programs and strategies to help youth make career choices helped them to expand their occupation choices to non-traditional careers. Youth organizations such as 4-H can provide the programs and assist in teaching strategies that help youth with career decision-making. Youth organizations provide

many opportunities for career exploration by allowing youth a hands-on approach that exposes them to different occupations (Turan, Celik, Turan, 2014). Social support, as described by Turan, Celik, and Turan is the social environment, social networks, and benefits they provide to youth. Social support is an important factor in career exploration. Social support helps an individual believe that they are cared for, valued, and loved.

Youth organizations such as 4-H offer career exploration by providing youth with opportunities such as career fairs, job shadowing, and project based clubs (Williams, Thompson, Taylor, Sanders, 2010). The 4-H youth development program is conducted in a non-formal educational context that emphasizes hands-on learning (Williams, Thompson, Taylor & Sanders, 2010). Williams, Thompson, Taylor, and Sanders (2010) found that in some, but not all, cases 4-H experiences influence youth career decisions. The study showed that youth who were in 4-H two years and six year as well as 4-H youth who were in the outdoor education and animal science projects found that 4-H helped them make a career decision. Williams, Thompson, Taylor, and Sanders (2010) concluded that some 14-19 year olds may not be ready to make a career decision therefore it is important for youth organizations like 4-H to increase exposure to various careers through project participation. Long-term participation in 4-H project clubs was found to have a positive impact on career choice because they provide opportunities to experience belonging, mastery, generosity, and independence (Williams, Thompson, Taylor, Sanders, 2010).

For many youth career decision-making is a difficult task. In order for a youth to make a career choice, they must gain knowledge of the career choice and be prepared for the outcome of that choice (Levinson, Ohler, Caswell, & Kiewra, 1998). Youth encounter barriers which makes their difficult decision even harder. The 4-H program provides an environment for youth to

participate in numerous project-based programs in which they gain knowledge about different careers. Developing research confirms the importance of this knowledge gain in which youth and adults interact and are involved in projects which allows them to learn information about careers (Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003). These experiences not only help in career choice but also keep youth involved in programs like 4-H.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODS

### Study Design

This was a cross-sectional study designed to explore 4-H and non-4-H members on career decision-making self-efficacy. This study describes the information obtained from a one-time survey.

### Population and Sample

Terrebonne parish is located in southeast Louisiana. According to the census of 2010, the population of Terrebonne parish was 111,860. According to the Census Bureau (2014), the racial makeup of the parish in 2008 was 74.07% White, 17.79% Black or African American, 5.29% Native American, 0.81% Asian, 0.02% Pacific Islander, 0.54% from other races, and 1.48% from two or more races. Of the population, 1.56% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race. According to US Census, 10.66% reported speaking French or Louisiana French at home, while 1.5% speak Spanish (US Census, 2014). The median income for a household in the parish was \$35,235, and the median income for a family was \$39,912. About 15.80% of families and 19.10% of the population were below the poverty line, including 25.90% of those under age 18 and 17.60% of those age 65 or over (US Census, 2014). . In 2009, Terrebonne Parish had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. There are both public and private schools within the parish. The Terrebonne Parish public school system is ranked 24<sup>th</sup> among 78 school districts in Louisiana (US Census, 2014).

The target population was 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grade Terrebonne Parish youth. The accessible population was 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade 4-H members and non 4-H members from public schools. The researcher used a convenience sample of both 4-H and non 4-H members at selected Terrebonne Parish schools. Schools with 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grades were selected by the researcher contacting 4-H

leaders to participate in the study. Three high school teachers (who were also 4-H leaders) volunteered their class time. The classes were math, science, and social studies. Both 4-H members and non 4-H members were given the survey during class time. To assure that all 4-H members participated in the study, surveys were also given during 4-H meetings and Junior Leader meetings. The surveys were distributed to both 4-H and non 4-H members in the months of March and April. To guarantee that duplicate surveys were not completed by 4-H members, they were asked not to complete the survey if completed before. Power analysis was conducted using an effect size of .5. A power of .80 and  $\alpha = .05$  were selected. G-Power 3.1.9.2 was used to compute the sample size needed to detect a difference in 4-H and non 4-H members on career decision-making self-efficacy, outcome expectancy/intentions and goals. It was estimated that about 64 participants would be needed in each group. There was a total of 174 participants in this study.

Data were collected anonymously from the youth. Written parental consent and youth assent were obtained from 4-H members on the club enrollment card. Parents of non 4-H members provided written consent (see Appendix A). Non 4-H members were asked to sign a assent form before completing the survey (see Appendix B). Only non 4-H members with both signed consent and assent forms completed the survey. All 4-H members in the selected classes completed the survey.

### **Instrumentation**

Three sub-scales from the Middle School Self-efficacy Scale by Fouad and Smith (1997) were chosen for this study. Career decision self-efficacy was measured with a one-time survey (see Appendix C) using statements that required participants to determine how much they agree

or disagree with the statement. The survey was administered during one class period. The researcher administered the survey.

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy sub-scale had twelve items. The reliability for the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy sub-scale was  $\alpha = 0.79$ . The Career Decision-Making Outcome Expectancy/Intentions and Goals subscale had 10 items with a reliability of  $\alpha = 0.74$ .

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected using a paper/pencil survey was distributed in March and April of 2015. The researcher distributed the survey to students within selected classrooms during the regular school day.

### **Data Analysis**

The purpose of objectives one and two was to describe 4-H and non 4-H members on the following selected demographic variables (a) race, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) grade, (e) 4-H membership, (f) years in 4-H, (g) membership in other clubs besides 4-H, (h) members of the 4-H Junior Leader Club, and (i) past 4-H membership and on the career decision-making constructs of (a) self-efficacy, (b) outcome expectancy/intentions and goals. Gender, 4-H members and non 4-H members, members of the Junior Leader Club, past 4-H members and other club membership were nominal variables that were described using frequencies and percentages. Grade, years in 4-H, self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, and intentions and goals were interval and were described using means and standard deviations.

The purpose of objective three was to determine if a difference in career development self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals existed between 4-H members and non 4-H members. Construct mean scores were computed for individuals. Scores for career development self-efficacy were computed by averaging items 1 through 12. Scores for career

development outcome expectancy/intentions and goals were computed by averaging items 13 through 22. An independent sample t-test was used to determine if differences existed between 4-H members and non 4-H members for each construct. Objective four sought to determine if a relationship existed between self-efficacy, outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and selected demographics. Demographics included were (a) gender, (b) grade, (c) years in 4-H, (d) total club membership, (e) 4-H Junior Leader club membership, and (f) past 4-H membership. The variables gender, 4-H membership, junior leader club members, and past 4-H membership were nominal. Relationships with the self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals variables were computed using point-biserial. The variable other club membership was used along with 4-H membership and 4-H Junior Leader club membership to create a summated score for total club membership. Pearson  $r$  was used to compute the association between the interval level variables age, grade, years in 4-H, and total club membership and the variables self-efficacy, outcome expectancy/intentions and goals.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

### Objective One

The purpose of objective one was to describe 4-H and non 4-H members on the following demographic variables: race, gender, age, grade, 4-H membership, years in 4-H, membership in other clubs besides 4-H, membership in the 4-H Junior Leader Club, and past 4-H membership. Gender, 4-H membership, members of Junior Leader Club, past 4-H members and other club membership were nominal variables. Age, grade and years in 4-H were collected as interval data. Variables identified as nominal were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Interval variables were summarized using means and standard deviations.

The sample was predominantly white ( $n = 131, 77.1\%$ ), followed by African American ( $n = 24, 14.1\%$ ). There were the same number of Hispanics and American Indian ( $n = 6, 3.5\%$ ). There were 2 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander ( $1.2\%$ ). There was one Asian ( $0.6\%$ ). There were 4 respondents that did not specify race. The largest percentage of the respondents were female ( $n = 110, 63.7\%$ ). There were 64 male respondents ( $36.8\%$ ) (see Table 1). The mean age of the respondents was 16.3 years ( $SD = 1.10$ ) with a range of 13 to 18. The mean grade of the respondents was 10.75 ( $SD = 0.94$ ) indicating that most respondents were on grade level. One person did not provide information about grade.

The sample was split almost equally between 4-H and non 4-H members. There were 88 non-4-H members ( $50.6\%$ ), and there were 86 4-H members ( $49.4\%$ ) (see Table 1). The mean years in 4-H for the entire group was 3.59 years ( $SD = 3.24$ ) with a range of 0 to 9 years in 4-H. When looking at years in 4-H with the non 4-H respondents, the mean years was 0.99 years ( $SD = 1.20$ ) with a range of 0 to 5 years in 4-H. The mean years in 4-H for 4-H members was 6.26 year ( $SD = 2.38$ ) with a range of 0 to 9 years in 4-H. Of the 86 4-H members, 58 respondents

were members of the Junior Leader Club (67.4%). The number of respondents that were past members of 4-H were 128 (73.6%), and 46 respondents were not past members of 4-H (26.4%) (see Table 1). This result indicated that a majority of survey respondents who were not currently members of 4-H had been a member of the 4-H program at some time in the past.

Table 1. A Summation of Selected Demographic and Membership Characteristics of 4-H and Non 4-H Members in a Southeastern Louisiana Parish.

| Characteristic               | <i>n</i>             | Percentage |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Race                         | <i>n<sup>a</sup></i> | Percentage |
| White                        | 131                  | 77.1       |
| Black/African American       | 24                   | 14.1       |
| Hispanic                     | 6                    | 3.5        |
| American Indian              | 6                    | 3.5        |
| Hawaiian/Pacific Islander    | 2                    | 1.2        |
| Asian                        | 1                    | 0.6        |
| Total                        | 174                  | 100.0      |
| Gender                       | <i>n</i>             | Percentage |
| Female                       | 110                  | 63.2       |
| Male                         | 64                   | 36.8       |
| Total                        | 174                  | 100.0      |
| 4-H Membership               | <i>n</i>             | Percentage |
| Non-4-H Member               | 88                   | 50.6       |
| 4-H Member                   | 86                   | 49.4       |
| Total                        | 174                  | 100.0      |
| 4-H Junior Leader Membership | <i>n</i>             | Percentage |
| Yes                          | 58                   | 67.4       |
| No                           | 28                   | 32.6       |
| Total                        | 86                   | 100.0      |
| Past 4-H Membership          | <i>n</i>             | Percentage |
| Yes                          | 128                  | 73.6       |
| No                           | 46                   | 26.4       |
| Total                        | 174                  | 100.0      |

<sup>a</sup>A total of 4 did not respond to the survey.

Youth were asked to list their membership in other clubs or extra-curricular programs.

Youth could name as many clubs or programs as they wanted (see Appendix D). Responses were

counted for each youth. The number of clubs or extra-curricular programs named ranged from 0 to 8 with the largest group of youth reporting membership in two clubs ( $n = 50$ ; 28.7%) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Total Number of Club Memberships Reported by Youth.

| Number of Club Memberships Reported | All Respondents |            | 4-H Members |            | Non-4-H Members |            |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------------|------------|
|                                     | $n^a$           | Percentage | $n^b$       | Percentage | $n^c$           | Percentage |
| 0                                   | 20              | 11.5       | 0           | 0.0        | 20              | 22.7       |
| 1                                   | 31              | 17.8       | 9           | 10.5       | 22              | 25.0       |
| 2                                   | 50              | 28.7       | 29          | 33.7       | 21              | 23.9       |
| 3                                   | 33              | 19.0       | 15          | 17.4       | 18              | 20.5       |
| 4                                   | 22              | 12.6       | 17          | 19.8       | 5               | 5.7        |
| 5                                   | 9               | 5.2        | 9           | 10.5       | 0               | 0.0        |
| 6                                   | 7               | 4.0        | 6           | 7.0        | 1               | 1.1        |
| 7                                   | 1               | 0.6        | 0           | 0.0        | 1               | 1.1        |
| 8                                   | 1               | 0.6        | 1           | 1.2        | 0               | 0.0        |
| Total                               | 174             | 100.0      | 86          | 100.0      | 88              | 100.0      |

<sup>a</sup> $M = 2.41$ ;  $SD = 1.62$ ;  $Range = 0 - 8$

<sup>b</sup> $M = 3.13$ ;  $SD = 1.52$ ;  $Range = 1 - 8$

<sup>c</sup> $M = 1.72$ ;  $SD = 1.41$ ;  $Range = 0 - 7$

## Objective Two

The purpose of objective two was to describe 4-H and non 4-H members on career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals. On career decision-making self-efficacy, there was no significant difference between 4-H members ( $M = 4.25$ ;  $SD = 0.44$ ) and non-4-H members ( $M = 4.17$ ;  $SD = 0.54$ ) (see Table 3). There was also no significant difference between 4-H members ( $M = 4.15$ ;  $SD = 0.60$ ) in career decision-making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals compared to non 4-H members ( $M = 4.06$ ;  $SD = 0.56$ ) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of Scores for Youth Perceptions of Career Decision-Making Self-efficacy and Outcomes, Expectation/Intentions and Goals.

| Variable      | 4-H Members |      | Non-4-H Members |      |
|---------------|-------------|------|-----------------|------|
|               | $M$         | $SD$ | $M$             | $SD$ |
| Self-Efficacy | 4.25        | 0.44 | 4.17            | 0.54 |

Table 3 (continued).

| Variable                                 | 4-H Members |           | Non-4-H Members |           |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
|  | <i>M</i>    | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i>        | <i>SD</i> |
| Outcome Expectancy/ Intentions and Goals | 4.15        | 0.60      | 4.06            | 0.56      |

### Objective Three

The purpose of objective three was to determine if a difference in career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals existed between 4-H members and non 4-H members. There was no significant difference between 4-H members and non-4-H members in relation to career decision-making self-efficacy or outcome expectancy/intentions and goals (see Table 4).

Table 4. Independent t-test Results for Youth by 4-H Membership.

| Factor             | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Self-Efficacy      | 1.00     | 172       | 0.32     |
| Outcome Expectancy | 1.12     | 172       | 0.26     |

### Objective Four

The purpose of objective four was to determine if a relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and selected demographic variables: gender, age, junior leader club membership, past 4-H members, other club members, grade, and years in 4-H. A significant positive relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy and past 4-H membership (see Table 5). As the number of years in 4-H increases so does the score on career decision-making self-efficacy increase.

Table 5. Relationship between Selected Demographic Variables for Self-efficacy.

| Variable                          | <i>r<sub>pb</sub></i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Past 4-H Membership               | 0.210                 | 0.006    |
| Gender                            | 0.090                 | 0.237    |
| 4-H Membership                    | 0.076                 | 0.318    |
| 4-H Junior Leader Club Membership | 0.018                 | 0.811    |

There were no significant relationships between career decision-making expectancy/intentions, and goals and the variables (see Table 6).

Table 6. Relationship between Selected Demographic Variables for Outcome Expectancy/Intentions and Goals.

| Variable                          | <i>r<sub>pb</sub></i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Past 4-H Membership               | 0.140                 | 0.066    |
| Gender                            | 0.089                 | 0.242    |
| 4-H Membership                    | 0.085                 | 0.263    |
| 4-H Junior Leader Club Membership | 0.038                 | 0.615    |

Both age and total club membership had statistically significant associations with career decision-making self-efficacy (see Table 7). As age and total club membership increases, so does the score.

Table 7. Relationship between Career Decision-Making Self-efficacy and Selected Demographic Variables.

| Variable              | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Total Club Membership | 0.247    | 0.001    |
| Years in 4-H          | 0.138    | 0.069    |
| Grade                 | 0.127    | 0.097    |
| Age                   | 0.121    | 0.024    |

A statistically significant association existed between career decision-making expectancy/intentions and goals and years in 4-H as well as total club membership (see Table 8). As years in 4-H and total club membership increases the score increases.

Table 8. Relationship Correlations between Career Decision-Making, Expectancy/Intention and Goals and Selected Demographic Variables.

| Variable              | <i>r</i> | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|
| Total Club Membership | 0.180    | 0.018    |
| Years in 4-H          | 0.152    | 0.046    |
| Age                   | 0.123    | 0.107    |
| Grade                 | 0.075    | 0.330    |

## **CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to determine if differences exist between 4-H members and non 4-H members in a south Louisiana parish on career decision-making self-efficacy. This study can provide data to help the Louisiana 4-H program determine future programming for 4-H members. Louisiana 4-H also delivers many programs to non 4-H members, the results can help develop curriculum to assist in career development programs for both 4-H and non 4-H members. Findings from this study can be used to better understand the 4-H experience as well as inform future programing efforts. This study seeks to accomplish the following research objectives:

1. To describe 4-H and non 4-H members on the following demographic variables:  
(a) race, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) grade, (e) 4-H membership, (f) years in 4-H, (g) membership in other clubs besides 4-H, (h) 4-H Junior Leader Club membership, and (i) past 4-H membership.
2. To describe 4-H and non 4-H members on career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals.
3. To determine if a difference in career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals existed between 4-H members and non 4-H members.
4. To determine if a relationship existed between career decision-making self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and selected demographic

variables: gender, age, grade, years in 4-H, 4-H membership, junior leader club membership, past 4-H membership, and total other club membership.

### **Summary of Findings**

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents were female. Over 75 % of respondents were white. These demographics are representative of the overall 2014-2015 4-H enrollment for Louisiana (Louisiana 4-H Dynamics). Nearly 75% of the survey respondents were either current 4-H members or past 4-H members. The 4-H members had higher scores than non 4-H members on both self-efficacy and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals. However, the difference in scores was not statistically significant.

There were statistically significant positive correlations between career decision-making self-efficacy and past 4-H membership. Youth who had been members of 4-H had higher scores than those who had not been 4-H members. As youth get older, their career decision-making self-efficacy scores increase. Also, career decision-making self-efficacy scores increase as youth involvement in clubs increases.

There was a statistically significant positive association between career decision-making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals and years in 4-H as well as total club membership. As youths' years in 4-H increased, so did their career decision-making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals scores. Additionally, as youths' total membership in clubs increased so did their career decision-making outcome expectancy/intentions and goals scores.

## **Conclusions**

While there was little difference between 4-H and non 4-H members in relation to career decision-making self-efficacy, it is possible that the slight difference was masked by more than 75% of the non 4-H members reporting having been 4-H members in the past.

Self-efficacy in youth become greater as they get older. The earlier and more often youth are introduced to career development tools the better equip they will be to make a career decision.

The more involved youth are in clubs and organization, the better their future direction. This study tells us to keep our youth involved in as many positive youth organizations as possible and for as long as we can.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

Youth organizations need to create opportunities to build career decision-making self-efficacy by designing intentional programming that focuses on career development for youth at different ages. Coleman (1990) explains the social capital theory as any social structure providing value to an individual. The wider social networks youth have (particularly with adults) the more potential they have to develop greater social capital. The 4-H program and other youth organizations provide great social interactions (both with peers and adults) for youth. The 4-H program and other clubs should collaborate to promote career development. The two groups can pool resources to develop on site job interactions using the 4-H mission mandate areas of healthy living, citizenship, and science. Incorporating the 4-H mission mandates would guarantee a diverse array of careers for the different interest of youth.

The results of this study show that as the number of club memberships increase for youth so do career decision-making self-efficacy and expectancy/intentions and goals scores. These

results should encourage youth organizations to design programs that support career decision-making. Youth organizations can develop career programs that fit in to their current programs and project clubs.

Youth development organizations like 4-H do a great job of introducing a variety of project topics to youth. This study shows that the longer youth spend in 4-H the greater their career outcome expectancy/intentions and goals. Linking career opportunities and community partners to these project clubs can offer youth more information about different career opportunities. Programs can also be developed to teach youth how to go about researching career choices, help them identify what type of education is needed and what will be expected of them within that career.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There is much more that can be explored within this study and much more to research. It was satisfying to see that 4-H membership does have a positive correlation with career decision-making self-efficacy. This study does not tell us why 4-H has a positive connection to career decision-making self-efficacy. Future studies should explore the relationship between years in 4-H and outcome expectancy/intentions and goals possibly through mixed methods sequential exploratory design. Studies can further research is there is a difference in the type of 4-H membership: in school club setting verses project membership.

This would help to understand what attribute of 4-H is effective in helping youth make career decisions. This would also help youth development agents develop career decision-making programs.

This study was conduct within one area of Louisiana. Additional research should be conducted statewide to confirm or disconfirm the study.

There was a positive correlation between the number of club memberships and career decision-making self-efficacy. Future studies can be done to determine if there is a difference between types of clubs youth belong to and career decision-making self-efficacy, outcome expectancy/ intentions and goals. Questions such as what types of activities did you participate in within the club can be asked.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**PARENTAL CONSENT FOR NON 4-H MEMBERS**

- Project Title: To determine if differences exist between 4-H members and non 4-H member in a south Louisiana parish on career decision-making self-efficacy
- Purpose of Study: To determine if differences exist between 4-H members and non 4-H members in a south Louisiana parish on career decision-making self-efficacy.
- Inclusion Criteria: Youth in grades 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> whose school has agreed to participate in the study.
- Exclusion Criteria: Youth whose grade is not selected by the school to participate in the study.
- Description of the Study: Youth will complete a one-time survey about career decision-making self-efficacy.
- Benefits: A benefit of this study may be that youth will recognize experiences that help them make career decisions.
- Risks: There are no known risks.
- Right to Refuse: Participation is voluntary, and a child will become part of the study only if both child and parent agree to the child’s participation.
- Privacy: Participants will respond anonymously to the survey. Survey results will be kept confidential. Results of the study may be published, but no identifying information will be included for publications.
- Financial Information: There is no cost for participation in the study, nor is there any compensations to the child for participation.
- If you have any questions or would like additional information about this research, please contact Cherie Roger at (985) 873-6495 or [croger@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:croger@agcenter.lsu.edu) or Dr. Melissa Cater at (225) 578-2903 or [mcater@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:mcater@agcenter.lsu.edu). This study has been approved by the LSU AgCenter IRB. If you have questions about subjects’ rights or other concerns, you can contact Phil Elzer, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-4182, [Pelzer@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:Pelzer@agcenter.lsu.edu).

I will allow my child to participate in this study described above.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX B  
YOUTH ASSENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in this evaluation to help better understand how youth make career decisions by answering the 22 questions on the following two pages. Answering the questions is voluntary. I understand that I can stop at any time without getting into trouble.

Youth Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**  
**CAREER DECISION-MAKING EVALUATION**

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree that you could do each statement below by darkening the appropriate circle.

|   | Strongly Disagree     | Disagree              | Uncertain             | Agree                 | Strongly Agree        |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Find information in the library about five occupations I am interested in.                                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Make a plan of my educational goals for the next three years.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Select one occupation from a list of possible occupations I am considering.                                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Determine what occupation would be best for me.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Decide what I value most in an occupation.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Resist attempts of parents or friends to push me into a career I believe is beyond my abilities or not for me. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Describe the job skills of a career I might like to enter.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Choose a career in which most workers are the opposite sex.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Choose a career that will fit my interest.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. Decide what kind of schooling I will need to achieve my career goal.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Find out the average salary of people in an occupation.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Talk with a person already employed in a field I am interested in.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. If I learn more about different careers, I will make a better career decision.                                | <input type="radio"/> |

|   |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 14. If I know my interest and abilities, then I will be able to choose a good career for me.                            | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. If I make a good career decision, then my parents will approve of me.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. If I know about the education I need for different careers, I will make a better career decision.                   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. If I spend enough time gathering information about careers, I can learn what I need to know when I make a decision. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. I intend to spend more time learning about careers than I have been.  | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. I plan to talk to lots of people about careers.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. I am determined to talk to my teacher about career opportunities.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. I am committed to learning more about my abilities and interests.   | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. I intend to get all the education I need for my career choice.  | <input type="radio"/> |

Tell us a little about you:

1. Gender (darken the circle)

- Male
- Female

2. Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_

3. Age \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you a member of 4-H? (darken the circle)

- Yes
- No

5. How many years counting this year have you been a member of 4-H? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you a member of the 4-H Junior Leader Club? (darken the circle)

- Yes
- No

7. Have you been a member of 4-H in the past? (darken the circle)

- Yes
- No

If yes, in what grade(s) were you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

8. What other clubs are you a member of?

---

9. Race/Ethnicity (darken the circle)

- Black or African American
- White
- Hispanic
- American Indian
- Asian
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Other

**APPENDIX D**  
**LIST OF YOUTH CLUBS REPORTED**

4-H Club  
4-H Junior Leader Club  
Art  
Athletics  
Band  
Belles  
Beta  
Book Club  
Campus Ministry  
Catching the cure  
Cheer  
Chess Club  
Choir  
Class Officer  
Drama  
Future Leaders of America's Gulf  
Gatorettes  
Girl Scout  
Green Team  
Insight for Christ  
Interact  
Junior Council  
Junior National Honor Society  
Just Say No  
Key Club  
National Honor Society  
PBIS  
Photography  
Publications  
Quiz Bowl  
Relay for Life  
Science Club  
Sisters in Christ  
Spirit Club  
Student Advisory  
Student Council  
Terrebonne Parish Youth Advisory Council  
Tigerettes  
Yearbook

APPENDIX E  
IRB

1



LSU AgCenter Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
Dr. Michael J. Keenan, Chair  
School of Human Ecology  
209 Knapp Hall  
225-578-1708

mkeen@agctr.lsu.edu

Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

All research projects using living humans as subjects, or samples or data obtained from humans must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU AgCenter IRB. This form helps the principal investigator determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

- Applicant, please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-E, listed below, when submitting to the LSU AgCenter IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit the original and one copy to the chair, Dr. Michael J. Keenan, in 209 Knapp Hall.
- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
  - (A) The original and a copy of this completed form and a copy of parts B through E.
  - (B) A brief project description (adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1 & 2)
  - (C) Copies of all instruments and all recruitment material to be used.
    - If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal.
  - (D) The consent form you will use in the study [see part 3 for more information]
  - (E) Beginning January 1, 2009: Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing and handling data, unless already on file with the LSU AgCenter IRB.  
Training link: (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/training.htm>)

1) Principal Investigator: Cherie Roger Rank: Associate Extension Agent Student? Y/N\_Y  
Dept: AEEE Ph: 985-873-6495 E-mail: croger@agcenter.lsu.edu

2) Co-Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each

- If student as principal or co-investigator(s), please identify and name supervising professor in this space

Supervising professor: Melissa Cater, Assistant Professor, AEEE, 225-578-2903, mcater@agcenter.lsu.edu

3) Project Title: A Descriptive Study of Teens Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

4) Grant Proposal? (yes or no) No If Yes, Proposal Number and funding Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Also, if Yes, either: this application completely matches the scope of work in the grant Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

OR

more IRB applications will be filed later Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

5) Subject pool (e.g. Nutrition Students) 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade 4-H and non-4-H Students

- Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children, the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the aged, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.

6) PI signature Cherie Roger \*\*Date 02/06/2015 (no per signatures)

\*\*I certify that my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changed I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU AgCenter Institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at the LSU AgCenter for three years after completion of the study. If I leave the LSU AgCenter before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.

Committee Action: Exempted  Not Exempted \_\_\_\_\_ IRB# HE155

Reviewer Michael Keenan Signature Michael Keenan Date 2-16-2015

**Part 1: Determination of "Research" and Potential for Risk**

- This section determines whether the project meets the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) definition of research involving human subjects, and if not, whether it nevertheless presents more than "minimal risk" to human subjects that makes IRB review prudent and necessary.

**1. Is the project involving human subjects a systematic investigation, including research, development, testing, or evaluation, designed to develop and contribute to generalizable knowledge?**

(Note some instructional development and service programs will include a "research" component that may fall within HHS' definition of human subject research.)

**Yes**

**No**

**2. Does the project present physical, psychological, social or legal risks to the participants reasonably expected to exceed those risks normally experienced in daily life or in routine physical or psychological examination or testing? You must consider the consequences if individual data inadvertently become public.**

**Yes Stop.** This research cannot be exempted—submit application for full IRB review.

**No Continue** to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

**3. Are any of your subjects incarcerated?**

**Yes Stop.** This research cannot be exempted—submit application for full IRB review.

**No Continue** to see if research can be exempted from IRB oversight.

**4. Are you obtaining any health information from a health care provider that contains any of the identifiers listed below?**

A. Names

B. Address: street address, city, county, precinct, ZIP code, and their equivalent geocodes.

Exception for ZIP codes: the initial three digits of the ZIP code may be used, if according to current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census: (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all ZIP codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and (2) the initial three digits of a ZIP code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to '000.' (Note: The 17 currently restricted 3-

## VITA

Cherie Aucoin Roger was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and is the daughter of Jeffrey and Carol Aucoin. She graduated from Assumption High school in Napoleonville, LA. Cherie received a Bachelor of Science degree from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana, in 1999. In August, 2015, she is a candidate to graduate from Louisiana State University with a Master of Science degree from the School of Human Resource Education and Workforce Development.

After graduating in 1999, Cherie began her teaching career in Terrebonne Parish. She continued in this field for 7 years. In 2007, Cherie was hired as an Extension Agent in Terrebonne Parish by the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center in Youth Development. She was promoted to Associate Extension agent in July 2011.

Cherie is a member of the St. Bernadette Catholic School Advisory Council and a member of the St. Bernadette Catholic Church parish.

Cherie is a member of the National Association of Extension Agents (NAE4-HA) and the Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents (LAE4-HA). Cherie currently serves as president of LAE4-HA and has held the office of LAE4-HA treasurer in 2008-20010. Cherie is also member of the State 4-H Volunteer Development Committee. Cherie has been recognized by her peers as a 2010 Achievement in Service Award winner. Cherie also co-presented a session at the 2010 LAE4-HA Convention in August of 2010.