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Identifying Leadership Potential in High School Students

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IDENTIFYING LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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 Department of Educational Leadership, Research, and Counseling

by
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God has a reason for allowing things to happen. We may never understand His wisdom, but we simply have to trust His will. Psalm 37:5

I think God may sometimes laugh when I come up with my own plan, but if he has taught me nothing else, it is to look to Him for guidance to run the ultimate race. Obtaining a Ph.D. is much like training for a marathon. No matter how slow you run, there will eventually be a finish line.

I started this marathon with a goal of researching school finance. That topic changed as I went through my coursework and met students throughout my years of teaching. Youth leadership is a passion of mine and I hope that all students could have an opportunity to be in a leadership role having an impact on the world around them.

There have been many supporters along this journey.

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ABSTRACT

Leadership potential in regular students is not usually identified by organization advisors at the high school level. Teachers serving as advisors have academic workloads and they are trained to identify the gifted and honors students as leaders, but generally not those at the regular level. Although leadership potential exists in all students, organization advisors tend to seek out those at the top of the class.

This study explored how organization advisors, who are also high school teachers, identify student leadership. A group of Student Council and 4-H advisors were interviewed to discover characteristics valued by organization advisors. The advisors were also probed about the process of seeking out the leadership potential in students through recruitment and other methods.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Serving in leadership positions in high school clubs and organizations has ramifications for success in adulthood. For example, participation in high school extra-curricular activities was associated with an “increased likelihood of being enrolled full-time in college at age 21” (Eccles & Barber, 1999, p. 25; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005, p. 179-180) and with higher earnings in adulthood (Lleras, 2008). Overlooked in the research are regular high school students who have the disposition and skills for leadership roles, but do not seek those positions. For the purposes of this study, *regular* students are those who pursue a career and college-bound curriculum, make passing grades, are not disruptive in class, and do not participate in gifted, honors, or advanced placement courses.

Youth leaders need to be identified, but there is no available research to show methods or processes for completing the task. Unless sought out by organization advisors, these students’ leadership potential is unlikely to be actualized during their high school years. Busy teachers, who in addition to their teaching load serve as advisors of high school clubs and organizations, seldom take the time to identify such students. As a consequence, schools are deprived of these students’ talents and the students are deprived of opportunities to develop their leadership potential.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher advisors of some high school student organizations perceive gifted and honors students as having leadership ability and the capacity to contribute to the organization in meaningful ways (Karnes & Bean, 1996). Many advisors tend to overlook regular students (Manning, 2005) and do not recruit them to become members in organizations although they are

similar to gifted and honors students in leadership ability and their capacity to contribute. As a result, organizations are deprived of the talents regular students offer and regular students are deprived of the opportunity to gain leadership experience and the sense of accomplishment brought by contributing to a student organization during their high school years.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What leadership ability and capacity to contribute do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors value in students who are members of their respective organizations?
2. How often do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors recognize the leadership ability and capacity to contribute that they value in regular students?
3. What action do advisors who recognize leadership ability and capacity to contribute in regular students take to recruit these students to become members of their organization?
4. How do advisors who recruit regular students to become members of their organizations describe the leadership ability and contributions made by regular students in comparison to the gifted and honors students?

Purpose of the Study

Student leadership is not a major part of the leadership literature. The development of student leaders can begin as early as elementary school in sporting groups and later can be developed through high school student organizations (Eccles, 1999, p. 34). Regular students, those who are not involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular school activities, are seldom sought out to take on leadership roles or offices in school organizations. However, society depends on these potential leaders (Bisland, 2004). Schneider, Paul, White, and Holcombe (1999) wrote that the “individual’s developmental years can have an impact on the leadership

exhibited later in the workplace as an adult” (p. 610). The question is how are student leaders identified? The purpose of this study was to investigate how student council and 4-H advisors identified potential leadership in students and why not all students were recruited.

Significance of the Study

Much of the literature focuses on leadership theory, leadership development, or leadership practice; attention to youth leadership is noticeably sparse. For example, in a comprehensive review of more than 5000 leadership studies conducted by Bass (1990), there were no studies about youth as leaders or youth leadership development. In a review of articles published between 1978 and 2010, Murphy and Johnson (2011) found three articles, each more than ten years old, in their search of leadership in the *Journal of Adolescence* (p. 460).

“The leadership literature, both popular and scholarly, focuses heavily on adult leadership development and practice (MacNeil, 2006, p.29). The dearth of research involving youth as leaders is problematic in part because a component of making a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood is learning about leadership (Van Linden, 1998). Youth may grapple with questions such as, “Who are leaders? What is leadership? Could I be a leader?” Unfortunately, most adolescents answer the last question with “No, I am not a leader” (Linden & Fertman, 1998, p. 35). Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) found that years 14 through 25 “are a period of great flexibility and openness” (p. 448) and individuals in this age group question social structure. Importantly, events and experiences that occur during an individual’s developmental years can have an impact on leadership exhibited in the workplace as an adult (Schneider et al., 1999). Van Linden and Fertman (1998) asserted that “all teenagers have the potential to lead” (p. 8), however, many struggle to recognize, develop, and celebrate their leadership potential.

A number of youth remain untapped as leadership potential because they are not at the top of the class and thus live under connotations of not being top performers. As with other areas of education, the regular student is often neglected. Schneider et al. (1999) and Chan (2000b) agreed that there is focus on developing existing leaders rather than working with those who have the potential become leaders. “Failing to engage traditionally marginalized youth means we are missing out on the insights and expertise these youth have to contribute, and also suggests communities that would most benefit from capacity building and youth leadership development that are not being supported or included” (Libby, Sedonaen, & Bliss, 2006, pp. 22-23). Often, successful youth organizations are elite and driven by high-achieving academic students. They attract involved and achieving youth into leadership, youth who typically come from the more educated families, and include groups reflecting only a small segment of the total youth population (Kress, 2006).

Young people have often been targeted by oppressive rhetoric and policies and scapegoated for “social ills”. In spite of this reality, they often emerge as the crucial frontline leaders doing the work that reframes issues and forces change to occur (Libby et al., 2006). “As identified by society, adolescents are supposed to be rebellious, defiant of adult authority, moody, unmanageable, high risk-takers with no thought of the future, alienated, and so on” (Takanishi, 1993, p. 462). Adults have the power to continue this negative construct of youth while youth have no say so in this paradigm. The result of adultism is that youth, particularly adolescence, is seen as a problem time, to be suffered through, rather than as a positive stage of life development (MacNeil, 2006).

Given the importance of leadership and its emphasis from federal legislation and state and local school policy, we might expect a greater number of leadership measures (Oakland,

Falkenberg, & Oakland, 1996). A focus on the leadership philosophies held by adolescents adds considerable value to the overall field of leadership studies, while at the same time providing practical tools for those involved in developing student leaders (Chan, 2000; Schneider et al., 1999). Identification of leadership potential among youth is step toward meeting the needs of young leaders in productive ways. While students may gravitate toward leadership, there is no nurturing mechanism to help students pursue those desires (Kress, 2006).

Leadership development should be an important to academic administrators and educators because peer leaders can contribute to the affiliation levels of all students (Whitehead, 2009). Peers can provide an interesting perspective on leadership at any age, but perhaps most tellingly during adolescence (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Ehrhart, 2002). Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim, (2005) believed, “the connection between good leadership and positive social outcome is clear; it is therefore imperative to consider a vital aspect of becoming a good leader is a connection to social values” (as cited in Whitehead, 2009, p. 850). Educators need to remember good leaders have the potential to enhance the quality of life and increase affiliation for their social group as a whole, while bad leaders see their experience as a zero-sum game and are reluctant to share the benefits of achievement. Without question, the impact of leadership development on affiliation and the academic experience is significant for achieving optimal student performance (Whitehead, 2009).

“Research has shown that parents (Grolnick & Apostoleris, 2002), teachers (Reeve, Ryan, Deci, & Jang, 2007), health care providers (Williams, 2002), coaches (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2007), and others may be trained in ways that help them better support autonomy, competence, and relatedness of students, patients, and athletes” (Ward, Lundberg, Ellis, & Berrett, 2010, p. 31). For example, agricultural educators should stress the importance of

academic success and the value of becoming involved in a variety of intra- and extracurricular activities that promote youth leadership and life skills development. Future Farmers of America advisors and other youth organization advisors should place emphasis on working collaboratively to improve the total youth leadership program. Additional research is needed in determining which combination of agricultural and nonagricultural youth leadership activities would provide the most gain in youth leadership and life skills development (Wingenbach, 1997).

Definition of Terms

Regular student: Those who pursue a career and college-bound curriculum, making passing grades, are not disruptive in class, but do not participate in gifted, honors, or advanced placement courses.

Youth leadership: 1) “The ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance” (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998 as cited in Katzel, LaVant, & Richards, 2010, p. 3); and (2) “the ability to analyze one's own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out. It includes the ability to identify community resources and use them, not only to live independently, but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to effect positive social change” (Adolescent Employment Readiness Center, Children’s Hospital, n.d., as cited in Katzel, LaVant, & Richards, 2010, p. 3).

Public school: “An education institution is classified as public if it is:
1) controlled and managed directly by a public education authority or agency; or 2) is controlled and managed either by a government agency directly or by a governing body (council,

committee, etc.), most of whose members are appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise” (*Education at a glance*, 2001, p. 395)

Organization Advisor/Sponsor: A faculty member who supervises and maintains the organization.

Student Council: “A representative structure for students only, through which they can become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents for the benefit of the school and its students” (Ireland, 2002, p. 8).

4-H Club: “An organized group of at least five youth from three different families who meet regularly with adult volunteers or staff for a long-term, progressive series of educational experiences” (*4-H National Headquarters Fact Sheet*, 2008, p.1).

Individual Education Plan (IEP): The Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is a plan or program developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives specialized instruction and related services.

Locate Yourself in Study

I am a high school Social Studies teacher and Student Activities Coordinator and have been involved with a number of student organizations including Student Council. I have seen students become involved by simply asking them to attend an event and believe that combining school involvement with student achievements forms well-rounded students ready for future challenges. By discovering how teachers identify potential in regular students, more students can become involved in the school. As the school system in Louisiana changes, the demographic of regular, non-charter, non-magnet high schools have the potential to be altered as well.

Teachers need an avenue, a guide, to identify student leadership skills that not traditionally sought out for positions of leadership.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The findings of this study were limited as this study only sought responses from Student Council and 4-H advisors in the state of Louisiana public school system at the high school level and was highly reliant on self-reported data. Participants might not have remembered all of their experiences or observations. Secondly, because the individuals were interviewed in person, they may have limited their responses to only positive ones, thus creating bias. Third, the study was limited to advisors whose principals responded by giving consent and advisors who were willing to participate; for example, some advisors were unable to participate in interviews during summer vacation while others did not have time. Fourth, all advisors were not included due to the random selection. Finally, number of female and male participants was uneven because there was an uneven field from which to choose participants.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to Louisiana public high schools serving grades nine through twelve. Excluded from the study were advisors in private and parochial school systems. Organizations beyond Student Council and 4-H were not included in this study to focus on two organizations common at many high schools. This study might not apply to other states because only one state's advisors were used. The random nature of the study did not include all parishes.

Summary

In the chapter that follows, the researcher examines existing literature surrounding teachers and youth leadership. In chapter 3, the researcher explains the methodology used for

the study and in chapter 4 the results. The final chapter provides a summary and discussion of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter explores the literature related to advisors, current selected student leaders and potential student leaders. This investigation also includes information on different categories of leadership including teachers and students. The chapter concludes with a brief history of Student Council and 4-H Clubs.

Teachers

“Teachers are the main pillars of a sound and progressive society; they pass on knowledge, skills and values and prepare the youth for further education and their roles in society” (E. Fourie & U. Fourie, 2015, p. 248). They are part of a community of people who Kouzes and Posner (1987) identified as a venue for students to become aware of their potential. “Today’s teachers are not only responsible for educating students but are increasingly expected to serve as role models for their students” (Umpstead, Brady, Lugg, Klinker, & Thompson, 2013, p. 183). Counselors and other adults in students’ lives are important, but teachers take on an important role and their responsibilities have only increased over recent years. “In the present educational perception, teachers are expected to take upon themselves a variety of roles, such as becoming role models for students, guiding them, teaching them to learn, and instilling democratic attitudes and values upon them” (Yilmaz, Altinkurt, Guner, & Sen, 2015, p. 76). They must also assist in the process of creating an environment conducive to facilitate “a sense of belonging” (Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014, p. 475). In addition to the identified roles, teachers spend hours preparing to take on these roles and the voluminous paperwork needed to receive an effective evaluation and to continue in the profession as a teacher.

“Teaching is an educational profession with individual, social, cultural, scientific and technological aspects” (Yilmaz et al, 2015, p. 76). An individual working in the profession finds intrinsic rewards. Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2013) found that “working with children and adolescents is in the top three of most important motives to become a teacher, whereas social influence is one of the least important motives” (p. 72). Neves de Jesus & Lens (2005) believed that teacher motivation has a direct effect on student motivation. “In 1933, Dewey said that content knowledge and pedagogical expertise are not enough if a teacher does not have the attitude to work at becoming an effective teacher” (E. Fourie & U. Fourie, 2015, p. 249). This is a major problem as teachers have been identified as lacking more motivation than any other profession (Neves de Jesus & Lens, 2005). Teachers suffer from burnout, resulting in prolonged stress (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Jennett, Harris, & Mesibov, 2003). “Among all beginning teachers in 2007-08, 10 percent did not teach in 2008-09, 12 percent did not teach in 2009-10, 15 percent did not teach in 2010-11, and 17 percent did not teach in 2011-12” (Public School Teacher Attrition, 2015, p. 3). When teacher experience burnout and decline in motivation, how can society expect them to be effective teachers and invest time into identifying student leaders? “Conscientious leadership educators, increasingly sensitive to the immense diversity of characteristics and behavior of leaders, should be capable of identifying emerging leaders outside the traditional positions, and likewise, develop programs and opportunities that assist those youth in expressing their leadership potential” (MacGregor, 2001, p. 1).

“The term ‘an effective teacher’ refers to a teacher’s ability to foster student achievement” (E. Fourie & U. Fourie, 2015, p. 247). Within the domain of effective teacher is engagement. The act of participation is a starting point, but the end result is the dutiful obligation and dedication to the subject matter and teacher (Roybal, Thornton, & Usinger, 2014).

“Moreover, it is stated that although some people should not teach because they are weak academically, others should not teacher because they lack emotional stability. Effective teachers have intangible qualities or dispositions that are difficult to define and to assess” (E. Fourie & U. Fourie, 2015, p. 249).

Teaching goes beyond the classroom content area. Teachers should also devote a portion of the classroom to fostering and supporting the lives of their students (Klem & Connell, 2004). “Teachers who are considerate and caring are much more likely to ease the transition process for students while those who are inflexible and intimidating make it more challenging” (Roybal et al, 2014, p. 479). Failure to provide a caring environment leads to student dropout rates (Roybal et al, 2014). There is an emotional balance required to work daily with students in order to provide adequate care for the teacher and the student (Yilmaz et al, 2015). This emotional balance is not always priority.

Teachers as Leaders

“Research suggests that educators should develop proactive programs to promote connectedness to school and to appropriate student groups” (Roybal et al, 2014, p. 480). Plato and later Thomas Jefferson cited the need for educated leaders to run organizations with Jefferson contending “that a responsibility of education in a democratic society lay in identifying people of talent and preparing them to assume leadership roles” (Gutek, 1995, as cited by Jolly & Kettler, 2004, p. 32). The earliest forms of student leadership used faculty to identify school leaders (Rehm, 2014). Often teachers are required to take on new roles as advisors of organizations, however, some organizations do not address potential student leaders. These advisors are then left with an empty room or select students who are academically sound such as honors students.

In the National Association of Student Councils New NASC Member Packet for Student Council Advisors, there is no mention of seeking out potential leadership in students (National Association of Student Councils, 2015). The last book published for student council advisors was more than 50 years ago. In the book Keith (1972) wrote:

Your task as the Student Council advisor is to help the council supervise this program - to defend it, stimulate it, and help build it until it is a full partner with the academic curriculum. In this task, you face the challenge of reaching the entire student body. Your reward is knowing that you may have contributed more to the development of future lives of students than any other person in the school (p. 3-4).

Although a resource for new advisors, the book does not list ways of identifying students or the traits valued by advisors. Keith (1972) referred to a list of qualities needed as an advisor and highlighted three major ones: “A belief in the ability of students to be creative and responsible; A belief in the activities program as a complement to the academic curriculum; An understanding of the administrative process in your school” (p. 7).

Adolescence

Teenagers, tweens, youth, juveniles, minors, youngsters, and young adults are terms commonly used to describe individuals whom social scientists refer to as adolescents. “They are the largest age group in the world, making up close to 20% of the 6.5 billion world population estimated in 2005” (Richter, 2006, p. 1902). Social science researchers such as psychologists and sociologists prefer the term adolescence to refer to the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. These fields and others social science fields conducted few studies of adolescent leadership prior to the 1990s (Lerner et al., 2005). Since the end of the last century, however, a field of study known as youth leadership and youth development has emerged and has produced a growing body of research.

Generally, adolescence is thought to encompass the teenage years; however, Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger (2006) noted that adolescence is comprised of “three developmental periods, entailing early adolescence (typically ages 10–13), middle adolescence (ages 14–17), and late adolescence (18 until the early twenties)” (p. 258). According to Collins & Steinberg (2007), adolescence is a time in the lifecycle at which children are growing their relationships with others outside of the family while increasing their self-identity. The influence of peer relationships and societal norms allow the adolescent to form their own lifestyle (p. 561). Contending with the task of identity development involves forced responses to questions such as “‘Who am I?’, ‘Am I a leader or a follower?’, and ‘How do I fit in?’” (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008, p. 205). Simultaneously adolescents experiment with ways to discover how they can become their own person while overcoming the sources of idealism present in their daily lives (Hoyt & Kennedy, 2008). These idealistic views are constructed by the sources in their world including parents, peers, government, and school (Van Linden, 1998).

Middle adolescence is a period of “self-involvement, alternating between unrealistically high expectations and worries about failure” (Spano, 2004, p. 2). They are concerned with their parents’ restrictions on their independence (Damon & Lerner, 2008, p. 585). This concern causes them to separate themselves from their parents, later resulting in an empty loss from not having the parental contact. Middle adolescents struggle with body image and self-confidence. They also seek new friendships and make a concerted effort to make their new group of friends the center of life. “Intellectual interests” increase, but not without an anxiety that materializes due to the pressure put on themselves concerning academic performance and creating goals (Spano, 2004, p. 2-3).

Throughout childhood and early adolescence, youngsters encounter a variety of leaders such as other children who act as informal leaders of a group, principals, teachers, and scout leaders. Thus, by middle adolescence, teenagers have developed a conception of leadership (Rehm, 2014), a conception that is refined as the teen interacts. During the middle grades and high school grades, adolescents refine their conception of leadership not only by interacting with leaders in a broadening range of contexts (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003), but also through opportunities to participate as leaders in school organizations, sports teams, clubs, and so on to which they belong. They also begin “organizing complex projects, motivating team members, [developing] organizational skills required by after school or summer jobs, [and] working with others to complete a work product in after school or summer jobs” (Murphy & Johnson, 2011, p. 466).

Middle adolescence is a critical time for students to develop their organization expertise (Friedman & Scholnick, 1997). Huston and Ripke (2006) discovered that “although lasting patterns of ability and behavior are formed by the end of the preschool years, a child’s developmental path in middle childhood makes a significant contribution to the emerging adolescent and adult that child becomes” (p. 19). Damon and Lerner (2008) found that adolescents choose their friends based on similarities in areas such as race, interests, and social interests (p. 557). “Developing social competence with peers (e.g., making friends, interacting positively, resolving conflicts non-aggressively) is a particularly important “task” of middle childhood with long-term consequences for later occupational and social success” (Huston & Ripke, 2006, p. 19). These relationships can be improved or tarnished by changing schools or environments which would create a different group of peers (Damon & Lerner, 2008, p. 557). “The intellectual and emotional supports provided to children during middle childhood by

families, peer interactions, schools, out-of-school activities, and the broader social and economic context make a difference in the pathways they follow through adolescence and into adulthood.” (Huston & Ripke, 2006, p. 19).

Late adolescence is a stage of development encompassing a passage from the teenage years to adulthood. Adolescents form a more concrete identity and understand that immediate gratification is not always possible. During this time, there is a greater capacity to evaluate ideas, convey concepts, and have “emotional stability” (Spano, 2004, p. 3). Late adolescents “establish grassroots organizations, [develop] supervisory skills required during internships, and serve as a leader with multiple constituents” (Murphy & Johnson, 2011, p. 466). They also have the skills needed to make self-determining decisions and take ownership in one’s work (Spano, 2004, p. 3). Late adolescents have the brainpower to create goals and a plan to achieve them and develop an “acceptance of social institutions and cultural traditions” (Spano, 2004, p. 3). “However, it is possible that the pressing developmental tasks of late adolescence and young adulthood (e.g., establishing an occupational identity and developing intimate relationships) may temporarily mask the persisting influence of high school participation patterns” (Berk & Goebel, 1987, p. 482).

Defining Leadership

Kress (2006) wrote that “leadership consists of skills, experiences, needs, and motivations and is a long and cumulative effort, not the single act of one individual who fills the role” (p. 52). A different conceptualization of leadership was posited by Wheeler & Edlebeck (2006) who noted that “leadership is about learning, listening, dreaming, and working together to unleash the potential of people’s time, talent, and treasure for the common good” (p. 89). According to Albritton, Oswald, and Anderson (2008), people have a premeditated list of what

characteristics leaders should possess. Bowman (2014) added that leaders must be “in pursuit of common cause” (p. 60). Middlebrooks and Haberkorn (2009) believe leadership requires a leader and involves individuals and what they know, believe, and do.

The absence of a commonly accepted definition of leadership led Sisk (1985) to caution researchers to take care in defining the construct because of the effect the definition has on the results of a study. Researchers recognize that there are numerous definitions of leadership and even more people trying to define it (Bass, 1990; House & Podsakoff, 1994; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1998). Paglis (2010) acknowledged that although “three themes – social influence, voluntary followership, and objective/strategy setting – recur in many leadership definitions, a single, specific definition that allows consistent measurement of the construct continues to elude leadership scholars” (p. 772).

Leadership has evolved over time through trial and error. The great man theorists assumed leadership through genetics. A person is born as a leader and leadership is not learned (Carlyle, 1888). “Carlyle’s (1907) great man theory framed leadership as being primarily focused on specific traits that differentiate effective from ineffective leaders. The accumulated research now shows that there are some universal traits leaders possess that are repeatedly associated with effective leadership, including persistence, tolerance for ambiguity, self-confidence, drive, honesty, integrity, internal locus of control, achievement motivation, and cognitive ability” (Avolio, 2007, p. 28). When defining for youth leadership, the possibility for leadership would be non-existent.

The trait theories included specific characteristics that were common among leaders. “Trait theories did not make assumptions about whether leadership traits were inherited or acquired. They simply asserted that leaders' characteristics are different from non-leaders. Traits

such as height, weight, and physique are heavily dependent on heredity, whereas others such as knowledge of the industry are dependent on experience and learning” (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48). Stogdill (1948) concluded a “person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits” (p. 24). He believed situational factors were a part of the leadership puzzle (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, pp. 48-49). However, the trait theories still did not epitomize the entire definition of leadership.

Scientific management theory and the idea of management of friends came under Frederick Taylor. “Scientific management does not exist and cannot exist until there has been a complete mental revolution on the part of the workmen working under I, as to their duties toward themselves and toward their employers, and a complete mental revolution in the outlook for the employers, toward their duties, toward themselves, and toward their workmen” (Natemeyer & McMahon, 2001, p. 7). Students showing traits of leadership may continue to show them, but may need a nudge from fellow classmates to actually participate in organizations. How they are approached by fellow students or, more importantly how the advisors of the organization approach them, potentially changes their participation.

The Hawthorne experiments altered the way employees on an assembly produced products based on the lighting in the environment. However, the ultimate result of the experiments was the employees’ reactions being questioned about how they felt in an environment. By questioning the employees about their feelings, the overall morale of the environment improved. With students, asking them how they feel about organizations or why they are not involved can improve the possibility of them showing their leadership potential.

Types of Leaders

“Leadership is an inherently dynamic, evolving process, not an end point. The leader’s role as a sense maker is to give hope to aspiration by relentlessly searching for constellations where others see only stars” (Bowman, 2014, p. 60). Socialized, exemplary, personalized, creative, charismatic, and many other types of leaders exist. Socialized leaders act for the common good. They seek out problem solving with the goal of what is best for all. Socialized leaders base the identification and solution of problems on the good of others, or for the collective interests of their group (House & Howell, 1992). Exemplary leaders address the relationship aspect of leaders by constructing open trust and understanding to better others (Bowman, 2014). Personalized leaders have a self-loathing goal of supremacy with no regard for others and possible outcomes (McClelland, 1975). Creative leaders are servant leaders who try to unite diverse groups of people and concepts (Harris, 2009; Stoll, & Temperly, 2009). Charismatic leaders are those who create their leadership based on future visions of their goals (Bass, 1985).

The type of leadership each person practices can be different from the actual type of the leader. Strange and Mumford (2002) concluded that ideological leadership or belief-based leadership “employs personal values and beliefs in decision-making and motivating” (Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008, 312). Mumford, & Van Doorn (2001) surmised that pragmatic or problem-based leadership “focused on the careful analysis and solution of day-to-day issues in the immediate environment” (Ligon, Hunter, & Mumford, 2008, p. 312). Confidence, character, and caring are leadership characteristics (Kouzes & Posner, 1997).

Soft and hard leadership should also be considered. “Soft leadership touches on caring, connecting, and communicating with people to accomplish desired goals. Soft leaders are

basically people-oriented rather than task-oriented” (Rao, 2012, p. 28). Teachers who emphasize these skills in the classroom can connect on a different level with students than forcing students to become leaders. In identifying students as leaders, teachers have a people-oriented aura rather than that of a disciplinarian. “Soft leadership emphasizes character, charisma, compassion, communication, courage, empathy, persuasion, and setting a strong example. In contrast, “hard leadership focuses on fear, threats, and negative motivation” (Rao, 2012, p. 28). Instead of constantly harping on the problems of the classroom, a focus on the good can create a better environment to foster leadership identification.

Adult versus Youth Leadership

Youth Leadership is “the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance” (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998 as cited in Katzel, LaVant, & Richards, 2010, p. 3). This definition is yet another way scholars can define leadership. However, the failure to conceptualize youth leaders outside of an adult model of leadership is evident in our selection processes for youth leaders (Kress, 2006). Young people have perspectives and experiences that adults do not (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005). Therefore, youth have important insights that can benefit a group in developing solutions to problems in achieving its goals (Lakes as cited by MacNeil, 2006). Much of the literature that focuses on youth leadership uses an adult perspective (Whitehead, 2009). Unfortunately, many leadership studies focus primarily on adult interpersonal and organizational leadership development and pay little attention to developing the type of qualities of leadership needed by adolescents (Schneider et al., 1999).

Leadership and Performance

Organizations geared to recruit high school students show promising outcomes for those students as adults. “For high school students as developing leaders, leadership is an attitude, a disposition, a way of approaching how they create text messages, contribute in class, and complete collaborative class projects” (Bowman, 2014, p. 60). Although indicating what leadership is for a high school student, Bowman does not directly state how teachers can specifically identify students. “Student leaders have the potential to dramatically affect the school community during the tenure of the students and for years to come” (Rehm, 2014, p. 84). Teachers need a way to identify these student leaders for them to truly affect the community. Organizations are an avenue outside of sports to create a sense of connection to the school and improve academic performance (Darling, Caldwell, & Smith, 2005). “If students do not feel connected to their school, academic performance may suffer” (Roybal et al, 2014, p. 476). Pope (1983) concluded that “positive associations exist between leadership development and cumulative grades and Holland and Andre (1987) added the association of extracurricular school activities” (as cited in Wingenbach & Kahler, 1997, p. 20).

Programs such as 4-H are desired to recruit and retain students for organizations (Anderson-Butcher, Newsome, & Ferrari, 2003; Ferrari & Turner, 2006; Huebner & Mancini, 2003; Lauver, Little, & Weiss, 2004; Lock & Costello, 2001; Gill, Ewing, & Bruce, 2010). Student Council has been shown to have a profoundly encouraging foundation for civic participation later in life (Beck & Jennings, 1982). “Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) reported that former service on student councils in high school predicts adult civic engagement, and, prospectively, Hanks and Eckland (1978) showed that student council (and other) activities predict civic engagement 15 years into the future” (McFarland & Starmanns, 2009, p. 28). Cox

(1988) studied adult leaders' experiences as adolescents and found that experiences in extracurricular clubs was a substantial indicator for leadership at the adult stage of life.

Students occupying leading roles within an organization or sport activity "are likely to have greater immersion and investment in the implementation of program activities, and thus be more likely to learn from them" (Hansen & Larson, 2007, p. 372). Larson, Walker, & Pearce (2005) found that students participating in lead roles within extracurricular activities (i.e., captain, officer, editor, etc.) reported greater developmental personal and interpersonal growth.

Zoning in on One Category of Students

"In one sense, the honor students found in certain high schools might be compared with the prefects of an English school. They form a scholastic elite and usually occupy prominent places in extra-curricular activities and school" (Eckstein, 1966, p. 189). Honors and gifted students are recognized as top of the class, however, not all levels of students receive the same treatment as those who are gifted. "The 1972 publication of the Marland Report by the U.S. Commissioner of Education proposed a multifaceted definition of gifted and talented education, enhancing what traditionally had been a focus on academics" now including leadership as a component of the definition (Jolly & Kettler, 2004, p. 33). Students in regular classes do not receive special treatment for assessing leadership potential. "Federal definitions of gifted and talented have consistently made reference to the potential for leadership ability among the gifted student population" (Stephens & Karnes, 2000, as cited by Manning, 2005, p. 14). The federal definitions add to the problem because they do not include the regular students as potentially becoming leaders.

"Only a handful of gifted programs actually identify students with leadership potential or have leadership instruction integrated into the curriculum" (Jolly & Kettler, 2004, p. 34). The

issue at hand is whether all students who can be identified as gifted are actually labeled. Not all students receive fair treatment or are in areas where gifted programs are offered. If leadership is only offered to one group that is not all inclusive, then all students would not have access to leadership opportunities. “Since some gifted learners’ natural abilities appear to be conducive to leadership skill development, it makes sense to offer them leadership training opportunities beginning early in their school careers” (Manning, 2005, p. 15). While this may be true of gifted students, creating leadership programs for one group is isolating others with the same skills that may be present.

Potential Leadership for All Students

Studies confirm that “student leaders are appointed, selected or elected, but that again implies a specific designated group, rather than leadership for all” (Lilley, 2010, p. 16 as cited by Rehm, 2014, p. 85). Potential for all academic levels of students to be identified as leaders has been a problem throughout history. “Issues concerning the identification and training of leaders have roots in the earliest form of modern Western education” (Jolly & Kettler, 2004, p. 32).

“Leadership is learnable” (Bowman, 2014, p. 60). Give youth opportunity to be important (Zeldin, 2004) and experience different types of positions (MacNeil, 2006). “The simple act of inviting this student to participate in a formal leadership experience such as a workshop or class echoes the value of his or her skills if they have been exhibited in the school” (MacGregor, 2001, p. 3). An advisor should understand that the process of learning about leadership will not transform a student into a leader overnight. Additional steps must be taken to help this student understand the possibility of possessing leadership skills (Lerner et al., 2005).

“Informal leaders often have greater influence on peer behaviors than student leaders who are insensitive to the broader student population or remain in cliques comprised only of other

student leaders” (MacGregor, 2001, p. 2). Ice-breakers, courage, and character trait development, religious retreats, and participating in community service projects are used to bring out the leadership potential in youth (Burchard, 2009; Karnes, 2010; Mockaitis, 2006; Stewart, 1929).

In a word, the leadership lesson for secondary students is that the most powerful form of human influence is *inspiration*. Whereas coercion and extrinsic motivation happen *to* oneself, inspiration happens *within* oneself. The leadership lesson for students in the twenty-first century is that unlike inspiration, coercion and motivation are not self-sustaining leadership principles in a connected world (Bowman, 2014, p. 60).

Kress (2006) added youth leadership should include the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging actions that meet genuine needs with opportunities for planning and decision making.

Leadership programs have not been developed for students who do not occupy leadership roles in schools, community, or family activities. Although many students do not perceive themselves as having leadership skills and abilities, the need for adolescents to consider themselves as potential leaders has never been greater. The overwhelming nature of present-day challenges and the pace of change require that all adolescents possess a perception of leadership that encompasses their own abilities to influence and to lead people (Fertman & Long, 1990, p. 392).

Student Council and 4-H Clubs

Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) found levels of 4-H participation were a significant predictor of leadership life skills development scores among 4-H youth in Texas (as cited in Dormody & Seevers, 1994, p. 65). There are “significant relationships between these four factors—interpersonal relations, administration, self-management, and communications – and participation in athletics, National Honor Society, FFA, student council, language club, departmental clubs, social fraternity or sorority, intramurals, church groups, 4-H, and livestock association” (McKinley, Birkenholz & Stewart, 1993, p. 81). Both Student Council and 4-H have established histories of student participation and leadership.

Student Council is a part of over ninety percent of schools throughout the United States (Eckstein, 1966). Student Council has an extensive history as being a representative organization of a school while allowing students to have a voice in their own schooling system. Dating back to the days of Plato, the development of student participation was a factor and involved in the evolution of our current education system. Student participation in school structure was encouraged as a part of the monitorial school system of the late 1700s. Due to budgetary restrictions, students were selected to monitor the classrooms along with the teacher. Although not elected positions, they filled the need of the school. Dr. Bernard Cronson is credited with the first organization modeled similar to that of student councils of modern times (McKown, 1944). His councils were responsible for school decisions such as vacations and shortened school days. Richard Welling, an early 1900s advocate for student participation, spoke to the Boston division of the National Education Association to promote citizenship training (McKown, 1944). Welling's dedication to increasing student participation led to the formation of the Conference on Student Participation held in 1927. The organization was changed to National Association of Sponsors of Student Participation in School Administration in 1941. Dr. Willis A. Sutton created The National Association of Student Officers in Atlanta, Georgia. This organization was renamed the National Association of Student Councils and was officially voted as a constituent of the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1942 (McKown, 1944).

4-H Clubs were founded from a need to stimulate vocational agriculture. In 1902, A.B. Graham formed the first clubs in Ohio with the support of the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station and The Ohio State University (National 4-H History Preservation, 2016). Throughout the United States, girls' clubs were established for domestic activities and boys' clubs were

established for corn growing. 4-H Clubs made an effort to educate both Caucasian and African-American citizens. Soon after the establishment of the clubs, 4-H sought out clubs for young African-American boys and girls working on farms. African American communities saw “improvements in farms, livestock, buildings and homes of many negro families due to the efforts of the [4-H] agents” (*Report on experiment*, 1916, p.25).

Summary

Student Council and 4-H seek different types of students, but both attempt to recruit leaders. These leaders possess certain qualities, but what are they? Both organizations enhance leadership, but neither indicates how to identify it. With the variety of leadership styles and types, work must be done to determine who the potential leaders are at the regular level and what strategies are used to identify these students. If the focus is already on a certain group, what do advisors do to identify outside of the known leaders in a group/organization/system?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to discover how by Student Council and 4-H Club advisors in one state's public high schools identified leadership abilities of regular students, those who are not members of any school organizations. This chapter describes the research methodology, including setting, sample selection, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. As indicated in chapter 1, the research questions that guided this study were:

1. What leadership ability and capacity to contribute do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors value in students who are members of their respective organizations?
2. How often do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors recognize the leadership ability and capacity to contribute that they value in regular students?
3. What action do advisors who recognize leadership ability and capacity to contribute in regular students take to recruit these students to become members of their organization?
4. How do advisors who recruit regular students to become members of their organization describe the leadership ability and contributions made by regular student in comparison to the gifted and honors students?

A mixed methods design, sequential explanatory (Creswell, 2009) was chosen for this study. Sequential explanatory involves collecting quantitative data followed by qualitative data in a consecutive manner (Creswell, Plano Clark, Guttman, & Hanson, 2003; Creswell, 2009; Hanson, J. W. Creswell, Clark, Petska, & J.D. Creswell, 2005). The advantage of this design was that the qualitative and quantitative data could enhance each other by means they cannot do

alone (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). In the first, quantitative phase of the study, the research focused on advisors of Student Council and 4-H Clubs throughout the state.

Human Subjects Protection

The proposal for this study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University. The researcher submitted the proposal with all necessary documents including the description of the study, consent forms, and a copy of the questionnaire. LSU was considered the sponsoring university for this research, research that was necessary for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctor of philosophy in LSU's Department of Education.

Prior to the start of the study, the description of the study was sent to school administrators throughout the state. Participants were required to give consent. Included in the consent form were the purposes and procedures of the study (questionnaire, focus group, interview) and the possible risks and benefits involved in participating. Security measures that were taken to protect the identity of the participants were also included. Two of the most significant concerns are establishing trust and providing anonymity because participants are more likely to respond when their identity is protected (Dillman, 2007). Participants had minimal risks involved and the consent document provided trust. The researcher ensured anonymity for the questionnaires by not requiring names to be provided on the questionnaire. The focus group and interviewed participants were assigned pseudonyms and all data was kept in secure files. Participants were also given the opportunity to contact the researcher via email or phone if there were any questions about the study. In addition, participants were given the contact information for the LSU IRB in the event any issues arose.

Quantitative Component

The purpose of the quantitative component was to understand advisor beliefs concerning leadership abilities and potential of high school students in their respective organizations and the extent to which these leadership abilities are recognized in regular students. Creating a cross-sectional questionnaire and sending it electronically resulted in receiving results rapidly from respondents (Fowler, 2002). The questionnaire was designed with a combination of open and close ended items with the intent of understanding the beliefs of the Student Council and 4-H Club advisors (Creswell, 2009). The self-developed questionnaire was pilot tested on a small sample of advisors not included in the testing population (Given, 2008; Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley, & Graham, 2001). As a result, the order of the questions was revised and questions were added.

Sample Selection

4-H Club and Student Council advisors were the unit of analysis for the questionnaire. The sample included advisors in high schools serving grades 9-12 in the Louisiana public school system. There were approximately 278 public high schools in Louisiana serving 200,000 students (Louisiana Department of Education, 2015).

Data Collection

The quantitative component of the study was comprised of questionnaires distributed to advisors of all active Student Councils and 4-H Clubs throughout the state of Louisiana. The researcher contacted the state director of both 4-H Clubs and Student Councils in Louisiana to ask for permission to send the questionnaire to their advisors throughout the state. The directors were sent a link to the survey and asked to send it out to their members. The researcher also sent the questionnaire to the Student Council and 4-H Clubs not included as members of either

organization roster. This expanded the sample and produced a broader perspective from those who do not choose to participate in the state organizations. As per IRB protocol, advisors were required to sign a consent form prior to beginning the survey (Appendix A).

Data Analysis

The quantitative component of the study was analyzed using the method outlined by Creswell (2003). The questionnaire responses were assigned number such as male=1 and female=2. The information was analyzed using Excel software and the results from the 28-item questionnaire were used to form probes for the qualitative component of the study.

Qualitative Component

A qualitative design was used for this study. Qualitative research strives to view the environments from those who are part of it (Hatch, 2002; Mack & Woodsong, 2005). “It [qualitative research design] further allows for examining complex issues, is dynamic, and researchers can generate explanatory theory about a phenomenon” (E. Fourie & U. Fourie, 2015, p. 252). The study was divided into two parts: (a) focus group interviews derived by findings of the questionnaire and (b) individual interviews with Student Council and 4-H Club advisors. Each of these parts is discussed in detail below.

Prior to contacting the advisors, an electronic mail was sent to principals of schools with 4-H and/or Student Council organizations. It included the purpose of the study and asked for permission for the advisors to participate in the study. An electronic link to the consent was included.

Focus Group Component

A focus group interview allows the researcher to meet with a small group of people to learn more about their views on the topic being studied (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The

focus group allows the researcher to enhance the interview process by having advisors discuss probes similar to those used in the interview. The discussion generates a deeper conversation among advisors that may not be accessible in individual interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) and allows the researcher to “observe a large amount of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time” (Morgan, 1997, p. 8).

Setting

The state in which the study was conducted included over 100 Student Council advisors and over 100 4-H Club advisors. The focus group was conducted with a small group of advisors in a quiet university classroom setting. Advisors who participated in the focus group were asked to sign a consent form to participate and to be audio recorded.

Sample Selection

A stratified, random selection procedure (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007) was used to obtain a sample of advisors for the focus group. Advisors from the North, Central, Southwest, and Southeast (Figure 1) of the state were used to form the focus group.

Data Collection

The researcher asked a series of probes to solicit responses from the small group. The advisors detailed their experiences and added to other advisors’ responses in the small group. The focus group was audio recorded to analyze the data collected. The researcher also took notes throughout the focus group.

The advisors gave a brief description of their background as a teacher and advisor. They were then probed with open-ended questions concerning their perceptions of the leadership

qualities they sought for members of their organizations. The focus group concluded with a discussion of the students identified and those not identified by advisors and other teachers of the school.

Data Analysis

After each focus group, the researcher transcribed the session and field notes for analysis. “Documentation is critical to qualitative research for several reasons: It is essential for keeping track of what will be a rapidly growing volume of notes, tapes, and documents; it provides a way of developing and outlining the analytic process; and it encourages ongoing conceptualizing and strategizing about the text” (Schutt, 2011, p. 326). The transcribed interviews were stored electronically with password protected security. Thematic analysis (Braune & Clarke, 2006; Hatch, 2002) was used to analyze the focus group interview data. Vaismoradi et al. (2013) claimed thematic analysis “provides core skills to researchers for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis” (p. 400). The transcription process allowed the researcher to organize and become familiar with the data.

After transcription, the researcher used open coding to review all data using key words and phrases to develop themes. A second analysis was done to merge similar themes similar. The researcher then created a thematic map to again analyze the themes for additions or deletions.

Interview Component

The interview component of the study was used as a method to gather information from advisors without an audience. Individuality is a crucial component in the research process and interviews provide the opportunity to fulfill this element (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Interviews are used when thorough understanding is necessary from specific participants (Gill, Stewart,

Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). In this setting, the advisors could share more information without the fear of being shunned by other participants.

Setting

The state in which this study was conducted has over 60 parishes. Unlike other states, most school districts in this state include the entire parish. The state was divided into four regions: North, Central, Southwest, and Southeast (Figure 1). This figure illustrates the parishes included in each region. Due to proportionality, the researcher contacted principals in parishes in each region. Only schools in which the principal agreed to allow the study were included (Appendix B). If the principal consented to the study, the advisor was then contacted to

Louisiana Regions

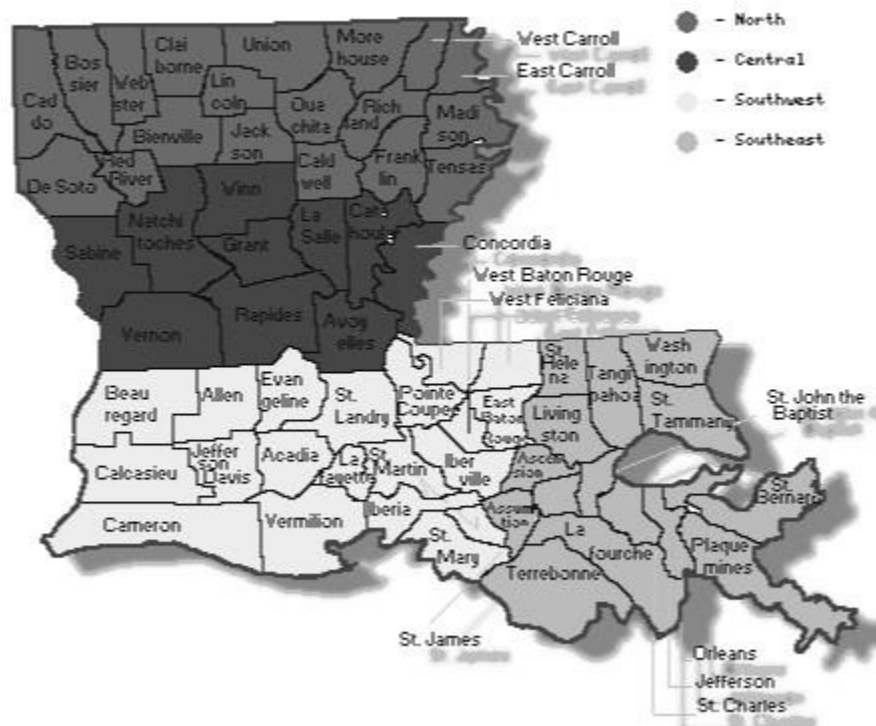


Figure 1. Louisiana regions.

participate. All participating advisors were also requested to give consent via electronic form prior to the interview (Appendix C). The interviews were conducted in person and recorded using audio recording software.

Sample Selection

The advisors were selected using a homogeneous sampling strategy (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Selection criteria was established to assure advisor participants shared the following characteristics: the teachers (a) were currently advisors of the Student Council or 4-H Club; (b) had been an advisor of their perspective organization for at least 1 year; and (c) were advisors in a public high school serving grades 9-12.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted semi-structured interview protocol. Advisors were required to electronically sign the consent form in order for the interview to be conducted and recorded. The researcher explained to each advisor that the interview could be stopped at any time if the advisor did not want to continue due to any reason.

The advisors first 4-5 questions were demographically related probes. The advisers were then probed about topics concerning the qualities valued by the advisors in their organizations as well as what capabilities were desired of members of their organizations.

Data Analysis

After each interview, the researcher transcribed interviews. The transcribed interviews created were stored electronically with password protected security. As with the focus group, thematic analysis (Braune & Clarke, 2006; Hatch, 2002) was used to analyze the interview data. Boyatzis (1998) described the process of thematic analysis as a way of taking everything in: "Observation precedes understanding. Recognizing is an important moment (seeing) precedes

encoding it (seeing it as something), which in turn precedes interpretation. Thematic analysis moves you through these three phases of thematic inquiry” (as cited in Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) suggested that “qualitative researchers should become more familiar with thematic analysis as an independent and a reliable qualitative approach to analysis” (p. 400). The transcription process allowed the researcher to organize and become familiar with the data collected. After transcription, the researcher used axial coding to combine the themes in the focus group thematic analysis. A second analysis was done to merge similar themes using axial coding. Axial coding is used to “serves to refine and differentiate concepts that are already available and lends them the status of categories” (Böhm, 2004, p. 271). The researcher then created a thematic map to again analyze the themes to see if any themes needed to be added or eliminated.

Summary

This study examined the values and abilities desired by advisors of 4-H Club and Student Council organizations. Advisors struggle with identifying students who do not fit the general idea of leaders. The first part of the study examined the beliefs and possible recruitment strategies used by Student Council and 4-H Club advisors. The questionnaire provided information to use in the focus group to probe advisors on more detailed accounts of identifying student leaders. Finally, the individual interviews provided data to enhance the topics discussed in the focus groups.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the outcomes of the study conducted on identifying student leadership potential. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative portions of the study are reported in this chapter. Tables throughout the chapter concisely report data. The quantitative results comprise descriptive statistics and the qualitative results comprise narrative descriptions personified in themes and quotes generated from the data. This chapter is organized using the four research questions and the responses that fell in each category.

Characteristics

Questionnaire Respondents

Student Council and 4-H club advisors were asked to participate in a questionnaire through the directors of the perspective state organizations. The Student Council state director was asked for permission to send out the questionnaires to the membership lists. Because not all Student Councils are members of the state organization, the researcher also went to school websites throughout the state to include Student Councils not on the membership list.

The 4-H Club state director was asked to send out the questionnaire to her membership list. The questionnaire was reviewed and sent out to the parish agents and any advisors on her list. Because not all 4-H Clubs associate with the state organization, the researcher also went to school websites throughout the state to include 4-H Clubs not included on the membership list. Questionnaire responses were collected for two months. Responses were reviewed and used to inform the questions used for the focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

A total of 15 participants completed the questionnaire. As show in Table 1, 85.71% of the respondents were female. Of the respondents, 86.67% of respondents identified as Caucasian and 13.33% identified as Hispanic. Over 50% of the respondents had 1 to 5 years of advising experience and 20% had more than 21 years of advising experience (Mean=8.26, Standard Deviation=7.18). Due to the distribution of years of advising experience, the variable was condensed into fewer categories resulting in 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, and 21 or more. Of the respondents who indicated their affiliation to an organization, 73.3% were Student Council, 20% were 4-H Club, and 6.67% were both.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire Respondents

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Missing
Gender			
			1
Female	12	85.71	
Male	2	14.29	
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	
Black or African American	0	0	
Hispanic	2	13.33	
White/Caucasian	13	86.67	
Multiple Ethnicity/Other	0	0	
Advising Organization			
4-H Club	3	20	
Student Council	11	73.33	
Both	1	6.67	

(Table 1 continued)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Missing
Years of Advising Experience			
1-5	8	53.33	
6-10	4	26.67	
11-15	0	0	
16-20	0	0	
21 or more	3	20.00	
School Classification			
			1
Public	12	85.71	
Charter	0	0	
Magnet	2	14.29	
Turnaround	0	0	
Other	0	0	
Region			
			1
North	0	0	
Central	0	0	
Southwest	8	57.14	
Southeast	6	42.86	
School Area			
			1
Rural	10	71.43	
Suburban	4	28.57	
Urban	1	7.14	
School Size			
			1
Under 100	0	0	
101-500	3	21.43	
501-1000	5	35.71	
1001-1500	5	35.71	
1501 or more	1	7.14	

The questionnaire responses came from the Southwest and Southeast. The majority or 71.43% of respondents classified their area as rural, 28.57% as suburban, and 7.14% as urban. More than 75% of the respondents were from schools of populations more than 500 with 7.14% from a school population larger than 1501.

As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to describe their school. In terms of individual school classifications, 85.71% identified as traditional public and 14.29% identified as magnet; magnet schools are classified as public schools by the Louisiana Department of Education.

Focus Group and Interview Participants

Student Council and 4-H Club advisors were asked to participate in this study after the researcher contacted the principal of the school to request permission. In order to include parishes from across the state, advisors were interviewed from the parishes in the four different regions of the state (see Figure 1). Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2016 in a quiet study room on a university campus.

Fifteen participants were contacted to participate in the focus group/interview portion of the study. Of those contacted, a total of eight participants voluntarily consented to participate in either the focus group or interview. As shown in Table 2, six of the participants were female and two were male. Of the respondents, seven identified as Caucasian and one identified as Hispanic. One of the respondents had 1 to 5 years of advising experience, one had 6-10 years of experience, one had 11-15 years of experience, one had 16-20 years of experience and four had 21 or more years of experience. Of the respondents who indicated their affiliation to an organization, seven were Student Council and one was 4-H Club.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Focus Group/Interview Respondents

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	6	75.00
Male	2	25.00
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0.00
Black or African American	0	0.00
Hispanic	1	12.50
White/Caucasian	7	87.50
Multiple Ethnicity/Other	0	0.00
Advising Organization		
4-H Club	1	12.50
Student Council	7	87.50
Both	0	0.00
Years of Advising Experience		
1-5	1	12.50
6-10	1	12.50
11-15	1	12.50
16-20	1	12.50
21 or more	4	50.00
School Classification		
Public	6	75.00
Charter	0	0.00
Magnet	2	25.00
Turnaround	0	0.00
Other	0	0.00

(Table 2 continued)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
North	1	12.50
Central	1	12.50
Southwest	2	25.00
Southeast	4	50.00
School Area		
Rural	3	37.50
Suburban	5	62.50
Urban	0	0.00
School Size		
Under 100	0	0.00
101-500	0	0.00
501-1000	5	62.50
1001-1500	3	37.50
1501 or more	0	0.00

As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to describe their school. In terms of individual school classifications, six identified as traditional public and two identified as magnet. The interview participants came from all four regions of the state: one from the North, one from Central, two from Southwest, and four from Southeast. Three of the respondents classified their area as rural and five of the respondents classified their area as suburban. Five respondents had school populations of 501-1000 and three respondents were 1001-1500. A more detailed description of each school can be found in Table 3.

Table 3 School
Statistics

School	Enrollment	Gender (%)		Race/Ethnicity							Economically Disadvantaged
		Female	Male	American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	White	Multiple Races	
A	702	50.57	49.43	<10	<10	≥220	<10	<10	≥450	≥10	65.95%
B	1368	51.32	48.68	<10	≥10	≥670	≥40	<10	≥590	≥20	47.66%
C	788	55.46	44.54	<10	≥130	≥50	≥90	<10	≥470	≥20	30.08%
D	989	50.35	49.65	<10	≥30	≥340	≥190	<10	≥380	≥20	66.94%
E	1361	51.51	48.49	<10	<10	≥520	≥20	<10	≥760	≥20	59.81%
F	757	48.08	51.92	≥10	<10	≥280	≥10	<10	≥440	<10	77.68%
G	1417	51.09	48.91	<10	≥60	≥150	≥10	<10	≥1180	<10	5.15%
H	985	50.35	49.65	<10	≥30	≥340	≥190	<10	≥380	≥20	66.94%

Note: Adapted from <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/enrollment-counts>. Copyright 2015 by Louisiana Department of Education.

Each participant in the focus group was in the interview portion and was probed using the semi-structure interview protocol defined in the previous chapter. The interviews were transcribed and coded with pre-determined coding and emerging coding informed by literature and data collected from the questionnaires.

The sample of advisors used for this study was homogeneous in nature. The eight participants were from suburban or rural schools with enrollments ranging from 500-1500 plus students. “Gladys” was a Caucasian woman with 20 years of experience as an advisor at both the middle and high school levels in a rural area. Gladys taught both honors and regular level students. “Veronica” was a Caucasian woman with 33 years of experience as an advisor at a suburban high school. She was nearing retirement and received a national Student Council advisor of the year award. “Tony” was a Hispanic man with 17 years as an advisor in both urban and suburban schools; Tony was at a magnet high school. “Mary Agnes” was a Caucasian woman with 12 years of experience as an advisor in the public school system and 19 years of teaching experience in both public and private schools; Mary Agnes was recognized as the State Student Council Advisor of the Year. “Kristy” was a Caucasian woman with 10 years of experience as an advisor and 15 years teaching. Kristy was at a suburban magnet school. “Patrice” was a Caucasian woman with 45 years of experience as an advisor and teacher in a rural high school; Patrice was at the same school for her entire career. “Debbie” was a Caucasian woman with 43 years of experience in rural schools; Debbie was at the smallest school of the interview participants. “Bob”, a Caucasian man with two years of advising experience, was at the beginning of both his teaching career and advising career.

Summary of Findings for Each Research Question

Valued Leadership Abilities in Students

Research Question 1: What leadership ability and capacity to contribute do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors value in students who are members of their respective organizations?

The questionnaire solicited responses on nine different leadership qualities valued by advisors as a common to descriptions of leaders. The questionnaire used a Likert scale (Uebersax, 2006) for advisors to rank each quality as very important, important, or not important. The questionnaire responses had significant value for each item and the qualities were discussed in the focus group and interviews.

Quality 1: Willing to Take on Responsibility

The questionnaire respondents weighed heavily on this quality as being very important (88.89%), while only 11.11% thought important. The interview/focus group respondents were split on whether or not it was very important for students to be willing to take on responsibility. Patrice exclaimed that it was “very important”, while others grouped it as being important, but also something that can be learned. Bob stated, “Students willing to do their schoolwork is something they are forced to do, but stepping up to a job in an organization is an important, but not essential quality.”

Quality 2: Being Trustworthy

One hundred percent of the questionnaire respondents agreed that students must be trustworthy. The interview/focus group respondents were also unanimous with this quality. Mary Agnes stated, “If I cannot trust a student, or have no possibility of trusting a student, he cannot be a member of the organization I advise.”

Quality 3: Being Ethical

Not all questionnaire respondents all agreed on being ethical as a leadership quality. While a majority of the respondents ranked it as very important, 22.22% ranked it as only important. The interview/focus group respondents answered very important to being ethical. Patrice stated, “Ethics is something we must teach as advisors if these students do not already know exactly what it is.”

Quality 4: Ability to Communicate Ideas Clearly

Questionnaire respondents ranked this as mostly just important (66.67%) where as 33.33% ranked it as very important. Interview/focus group respondents were also not in complete agreement. Mary Agnes believed it was not important because that is “not every student’s strength, but something that could be learned over time in the organization.” Tony believed it was very important for the students to “communicate with the student body in order to further the organization.”

Quality 5: Dominant – Always Taking Control

The questionnaire respondents overwhelmingly placed this quality in the not important category at 88.89%, while only 11.11% ranked it as important. All advisors proclaimed dominant leadership to not be important. Gladys explained that “dominance can ruin the organization.” Kristy added that “not all students need to be dominant but instead an active representative.”

Quality 6: Energetic

Only one-third of the questionnaire respondents ranked energetic as very important. The other 66.67% ranked it as just important. As a surprising result, energetic was not something valued by all advisors who viewed other abilities as more important.

Quality 7: Previous Experience with Other Organizations

Previous experience was not important to many because as Veronica stated, “It is not important because we [advisors] can develop that.” Debbie added that while the students may not have experience from other organizations, participation is imperative to become a “well-rounded student”.

Quality 8: Being Willing to Take a Risk

This quality is the only one to receive responses in the categories of very important, important, and not important. A majority (66.67%) selected important, while others responded very important and not important. Mary Agnes stated that “not all students need to be risk-takers. We need leaders not willing to take the risk too.”

Quality 9: Overall Maturity

Questionnaire respondents were evenly divided with overall maturity being very important or important; interview respondents were divided as well. Gladys and Veronica both stated overall maturity was “something we can help with as advisors.” Gladys added that, “Maturity develops over time from freshman to senior year.”

Additional Qualities

Questionnaire respondents were given the opportunity to list additional qualities they valued in potential members, however most respondents skipped this question. The interview/focus group respondents were also asked to provide additional abilities they valued in potential members of their organizations. Four specific abilities were repeated in separate interviews. The first was integrity. Veronica believed “integrity was a top quality” and Mary Agnes stated, “Integrity is essential.” The second was awareness. Kristy stated that a student who is aware is “someone who is aware of their environment and what's going on and who wants

to be a part of a solution or posing a solution or speaking, acting in you know towards the solution is just as aware...somebody who also wants to be a part.” Tony described awareness as the “connection to the school” and to be “in the know” of the issues. Gladys and Mary Agnes explained awareness as “commitment to the school”.

The third ability was honesty. Debbie described honesty as “better than very important.” Gladys and Patrice also valued honesty as a significant ability. The final common ability was good workers. As Kristy said, “Not everybody is a very talkative involved person but they're good workers.” Patrice described them as “willing to go the extra mile if I ask them to”, while Gladys stated the students who are the “work horses hold an organization together.”

There were several other abilities valued by advisors, but that only appeared in single interviews. These qualities can be viewed as possibilities, but may not be as significant as those found in multiple interview. Veronica pointed out the ability to accept others and Patrice sought out those who were able to relate well to others. Gladys wanted students who could think creatively and Mary Agnes wanted students who took initiative. Tony wanted students who always did the right thing, while Debbie was okay with students who needed to be steered back in the right direction.

Advisors may not want all of the same abilities, but it was clear that all advisors wanted what would be best for their school location and organization. A common theme was attracting those of all levels, but participants were unable to explain why these abilities were not present across the spectrum of different types of students. The advisors were positive in that not all students were born leaders, but very encouraging that students of all levels could be sought out if given the proper channels and training.

Gifted versus Regular...What is the Difference?

Research Question 2: How do advisors who recruit regular students to become members of their organization describe the leadership ability and contributions made by regular student in comparison to the gifted and honors students?

Define Gifted, Honors, and Regular Students

An item on the questionnaire allowed respondents to give their own definition of a gifted, an honors, and a regular student. The open ended item probed, “What is your definition of a gifted student?” One respondent answered “students who have an IEP to be enrolled in gifted classes”. Another respondent stated a gifted student is one “who is enrolled in courses not offered on our campus that are taught at an elevated level”.

For the next item, “What is your definition of an honors student,” questionnaire respondents gave similar answers to the definition of a gifted student. One respondent stated, “The student takes advanced classes”. Another respondent wrote “a student who takes honors classes”.

The final question of this section probed, “What is your definition of a regular student?” As with the other questions, generic answers were given. One respondent stated, “a student not in honors classes”. Another respondent wrote “a student working toward a regular diploma”. These are two different definitions to a question teachers should know.

Because there was no agreed upon answer from the questionnaire, the researcher chose to pose this question to the interview/focus group participants where further discussion could take place. The respondents were perplexed that they could not see a great deal of difference between the gifted and honors students. Tony stated, “Regular students are B or C students who really work for what they’re trying to learn.” Kristy added, “Regular students just are not involved and

not very vocal.” Kristy also said, “regular students go to school to get the job done.” Debbie said that “Some schools just don’t have the gifted program, but those that do just group together the gifted and honors students as one which is why I think people just define them together.” Veronica stated, “Honors and gifted just go together. I don’t know the difference unless I see the IEP.”

Regular versus Honors/Gifted

The comparison of regular, gifted, and honors students was discussed with the focus group and interview participants. Gladys stated that, “Honors or gifted students regardless are just the leaders. The regular students have to put extra effort into getting positions.” Mary Agnes said, “Because I teach honors students, it’s just easier to get them involved.” Bob thought it was the organization trying to recruit that makes the difference.

I believe that having a larger voluntary membership in 4-H will allow different types of students to interact with one another. Student organizations are mainly dominated by students that are designated honors or gifted and average students do not participate as readily in student organizations. Having all types of students in 4-H helps make 4-H better because it allows students to meet other students who may not be in their classes and learn how to interact and plan with one another.

Recognition of Leadership Ability in Regular Students

Research Question 3: How do high school Student Council and 4-H advisors recognize the leadership ability and capacity to contribute that they value in regular students?

Questionnaire respondents were given an opportunity to describe a recruiting experience and why they chose certain students to recruit. One respondent stated, “They seem to be an influence among peers.” Another wrote, “I thought they would be good.” A third respondent stated their answer in one word, “reputation”. The last respondent wrote, “We could definitely see leadership potential within in them. They just needed an opportunity to blossom.” These answers led the researcher to need more discussion on this question during the interview process.

Answers such as “I thought they would be good” did not help the researcher with the ultimate goal of teaching others how to identify leadership potential in regular students.

During the focus group/interviews, the researcher framed the probe differently. The researcher started this portion of the interview by asking the respondent to talk about a recruiting experience with a regular student. This allowed more freedom for the respondent to explain the process. The researcher also asked about this experience compared to those with honors and gifted students.

Kristy explained that identifying leadership potential students is “difficult”. Advisors try to get them involved, but they are there for just school; their leadership potential just does not come through. Patrice had a very different experience. Patrice noticed a regular student in the hallway drawing some phenomenal artwork. She began a conversation with him and because of that, Patrice was able to recruit him; more will be explained on the artist’s story in the next section.

Debbie stated, “I look for that shy kid and one that I felt needed to grow and that my organization would offer them the opportunity to better themselves.” Gladys was a bit torn on the situation of regular students. “I teach honors students. These students see what is going on and are able to ask me questions on the spot. I’m wondering what would be different if I taught regular students all day.” Veronica explained that the “regular students can be identified with the help of other teachers.” She went on to explain that “the younger, new teachers just don’t take the time to get to know the students and really show them they can be a leader.” The conversation changed from how leadership potential was recognized to who should be recognizing the potential.

Recruiting Regular Students

Research Question 4: What action do advisors who recognize leadership ability and capacity to contribute in regular students take to recruit these students to become members of their organization?

Transitioning from advisors identifying potential to what can actually be done was interesting because 33.33% of the questionnaire respondents had never recruited regular students to become part of their organization. One respondent wrote that their strategy was simple, “I just asked them. The organization’s reputation spoke for itself.”

The researcher posed this question with the focus group/interview participants to get a clearer explanation on the recruiting strategies.

Bob stated:

We first start by having an open membership drive the beginning of every school year. We plan flyers throughout the campus to reach the widest number of students. All students are invited to meetings to see how the meetings work and what goes on in 4-H before they join. This is important because it allows any student to see what being involved in 4-H entails and does not pressure students to join or to join and then dropout due to time constraints etc. The open meeting policy has been helpful in opening up the organization and allowing more students who would have not otherwise joined become members of 4-H.

Mary Agnes stated:

I do strive to reach out to regular students by asking teachers to recommend regular students whom they teach. I think regular students are extremely valuable to any Council. Regular students are, generally, more inclusive than Honors students; furthermore, regular students tend to know the voice of their class as well as the climate of the school.

Patrice stated:

I encourage them to go to LASC (Louisiana Association of Student Councils) summer workshop. Here they are able to see what else it out there. I also ask students to help out with smaller tasks. For example, when I saw the student in the hallway who could draw, I invited him to be a part of my art class first. Over time I was able to help him realize the leadership qualities he had. It’s not always the teacher that needs to identify and recruit, but also the student who needs to realize on his part as well.

Veronica stated:

I use my officers to recruit regular students. Sure they are honors students, but that doesn't mean that they can't talk to other students in the regular classes at lunch or whatnot. Using students to get others involved is a big thing.

Tony stated:

My officers try to recruit students from other areas. They look for athletes, theatre students, anyone who is not already represented on the council. As an advisor, I can help once they are there, but I need them there first.

Gladys stated:

I invite them. Hard right? A student wants to be invited and included. If you see that potential, whatever it might be, it's important to then include them. They see what I'm all about getting excited and that makes them excited too.

Debbie stated:

We look for that kid that hadn't been there and done nothing and try to encourage them. From experience, sometimes you can work through siblings. If you already taught brother or sister, those students may very well have the same leadership qualities. You just need to look for them.

As an extension to the question, the researcher probed the interview participants about teaching others who could recognize potential leadership and recruit regular students. Each participant had a different view as to whether or not others were capable. Mary Agnes believed it needed to start with a conversation.

I would have a conversation about expectations and the necessity of recruitment for the betterment of the program. Then, I would ask them to search for those students who may not be involved in school. I would also have them make a list of the qualities they are looking for in a leader and compare those to my qualities that I am looking for. I think those teachers would recruit because they have the necessary tools.

Gladys responded quickly with, "Wow! That's a loaded question!" She continued:

It depends on the teacher. Okay. It depends on the subject matter. And it, Lord knows, depends on their grade level. You see senior and well, a lot of junior and senior teachers don't believe that freshmen can lead. They're just those dumb

freshmen. As a freshmen teacher, you're wrong. I see a lot of juniors and seniors who try to get in the spotlight just to get their picture in the yearbook.

Debbie used her son as an example of teaching others about recruiting. Debbie's son "Bill" is the football coach at her school. She taught Bill to look for the players who need some extra help or the ones who could possibly step up. Debbie told him "Look for the kid in the back of the room. More often than not they just haven't been recognized as a leader." She added, "I think we [teachers] all have to go out and do some recruiting and listen to others for suggestions."

Veronica directed recruiting efforts to the coaches at her school.

In the past, I know that some of the coaches have been really supportive of getting some of their members to participate in leadership positions. And, of course, as you know, when they go to fill out those scholarship applications, they want leadership on there. The coaches recognize this and will help me recruit the kids who are playing sports and their initiative on the court leads to possibly leadership potential.

This topic was a sensitive one for Patrice. She stated, "I find that many teachers are only interested in their pay check. They could care less past the afternoon bell." The researcher asked Patrice to further explain her statements. She replied:

We need more teachers willing to stay after and show interest in the students beyond the day in the classroom. If I were a principal, I would arrange for 3-4 teachers every year to go to LASC summer workshop. They need to see what this stuff is all about. They need to be trained just like the students in order to recruit more students.

Summary

The five categories established for this study were: valued student leadership qualities and abilities, gifted/honors versus regular students, identifying leadership in regular students, recruiting regular students, and teaching others how to recruit regular students. The data collected for this study was not completely clear from first phase of the study which was the questionnaire. The focus group and interview phase of the study allowed the researcher to

further inquire on the subject matter, but it was evident that further research is needed in many areas before advisors can create an agreed upon strategy for identifying potential leadership in regular students. Chapter five completes this study with the researcher's discussion of and conclusions from the results.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore how 4-H Club and Student Council advisors identified potential leadership in students and to examine why not all students are recruited. The study aimed to (a) determine what qualities and abilities 4-H Club and Student Council advisors value in students who are members of their organization; (b) compare the leadership abilities of gifted/honors students to regular students; (c) determine how often 4-H Club and Student Council advisors recognize the abilities and capacity for regular students to contribute to their organization; and (d) what actions advisors take to recruit regular students.

What do advisors value?

First, this study showed that that what advisors valued depended upon their organization and personal opinions. At the onset of this study, the researcher assumed that advisors valued common abilities. When the data was collected, the assumption was proven incorrect. Advisors valued students who were trustworthy, ethical, willing to take on responsibility, honest, aware, good workers, and have integrity. The ability to communicate ideas clearly, be energetic, have previous experience with other organizations, and overall maturity were desired, but not overwhelmingly required and received mixed reviews. Dominance was the least valued of the given choices.

Being trustworthy and ethical were at the top of the list. “Trevino et al. (2000, 2003) argued that in order to be perceived as an ethical leader, a leader needs to be characterized as a moral person – as being honest, trustworthy, fair, principled in decision making, and ethical in one’s personal life” (Stouten et al., 2011, p. 19); Stouten (2011) believed that being ethical beings was one of the most important of the many other abilities that must be present. Advisors

later listed honesty as an important ability; in this respect, being ethical was one major ability and being trustworthy and honest were subheadings.

Participants appreciated students who were willing to take on responsibility. As current members of an organization, the question arose if they learned it from the organization or if they possessed this quality before joining. The advisors could not answer the question with clarity.

Advisors did not value dominant personalities. While some believed this quality to be a negative persona, Anderson and Kilduff (2009) explained the types of dominance; they argued that “dominant individuals achieve influence by exhibiting self-confidence and apparent competence rather than by behaving in bullying and intimidating ways” (p. 492). Even with a positive perspective, advisors did not agree that dominant personalities were a necessity.

It is important to know what advisors value so that these qualities can be looked for in other students. Throughout the interviews, advisors paused to think about what they valued. They reflected on what was most important to them in order to apply it to other students. While this list of qualities may be incomplete, it is a starting point for future research.

Gifted/Honors versus Regular Students

Advisors did not identify significant differences between a gifted and an honors student. They recognized that students must be in gifted classes or have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), but did the term gifted equate to the term leader? Neither these advisors nor scholars consistently have defined the term gifted. According to Ford (2003), there have been many changes to the definition, the latest in 1993, and yet scholars still argue whether giftedness is biological or behavioral. This does not indicate that advisors do not choose regular students because they cannot figure out a definition, but, rather points to biases that exist in the gifted identification that may also exist in the leadership identification.

The study was inconclusive on why advisors chose gifted, or honors, students over regular students. The researcher concluded that other biases might exist. Advisors were accused of profiling, but biases exist and are not always recognized by teachers. “Few school districts in the United States have successfully recruited and retained culturally diverse students in programs for gifted students. Black, Hispanic, and Native American students are underrepresented in gifted education programs nationally, with underrepresentation ranging from 50-70%” (Ford, 2003, p. 1). When students are not identified as gifted due to their race, but advisors reach for these gifted students, a foundational issue arises. In schools that do not have racially proportionate Student Councils and 4-H Club organizations relevant to total school population, is the answer race or misidentification of gifted students? Siegle (2001) found that “Culture, more than race, appears to be a factor in student selection. Students from different cultures will exhibit gifts and talents differently. Those who are being asked to nominate students should be aware how talent manifests itself in different cultures” (p. 4). According to Valencia (1997), advisors may suffer from deficit thinking; “Deficit thinking typically offers a description of behavior in pathological or dysfunctional ways – referring to deficits, deficiencies, limitations or shortcomings in individuals, families, or cultures” (p. 7). Can this be applied to advisors’ thoughts of regular students? It is possible that advisors look for what is not present rather than what is there.

Advisors Who Recognize Regular Students

It was evident that advisors could not explain why, or sometimes how, they selected regular students to be a part of their organization. From their recounted recruiting experiences, the researcher concluded that advisors who offer regular students opportunities in their organizations make many assumptions about regular students. In each situation, the recruited student was not the student who made A’s in the class or the student who was able to make good

decisions. Instead, it was the student who was shy or looking to find a place to belong. Such choices appear to support deficit thinking. If advisors try to fix the situation, are they doing a disservice to others who may need recognition in the same classroom?

Recruiting Regular Students

The advisors' recruitment strategies were much easier to explain than explaining how students fit the leadership potential mold. The advisors were more relaxed when speaking about their recruitment experiences; their attitude changed, their excitement for their perspective organizations came through and was evident through their stories. Advisors used different avenues of recruiting regular students, but all begin with a conversation. If the conversation did not happen, the recruitment did not happen. Advisors encouraged the use of current officers to reach out to regular students who are not involved. The specific strategies included inviting potential leaders to a meeting or event to learn about the organization, and finding a specific way that a student could contribute to the organization.

Advisors also discussed the practice of employing other teachers in their recruitment efforts. While not all advisors had a positive outlook on using other teachers, they all did agree that the teachers would need some type of training. This training could be from their state organizations or a school-wide effort and should happen in the classroom and in the athletic arenas.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

First, by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher was able to inquire more deeply into the subject matter. Without the focus group and interviews, the

researcher would not have been able to fully understand the experiences of the advisors. Using two types of research methods also allowed the researcher to check validity.

Second, providing a convenient venue for focus groups/interview participants allowed for a broader perspective and more coverage of the state as a whole. Had the researcher not traveled, part of the state would not have been represented in the research. The interviews from the northern and central regions of the state added great value to the study.

Third, the state directors of both Student Council and the 4-H were eager and willing to assist in distributing the questionnaire to their members. 4-H was particularly excited to be a part of study concerning leadership and possibly finding out new ways to identify and recruit a larger population.

Fourth, this study contributes to the literature on youth leadership and creates a dialogue of recognizing regular student leadership potential. Finally, the advisors can share the knowledge gained from this study as a foundation of awareness. They now realize that they may not always put forth the effort to identify the regular streamlined student.

Limitations

Regardless of the strengths of the study, limitations were found. First, the population consisted of only advisors who had a willing principal. Principals, or gatekeepers, kept some advisors from participating by not reading their emails or failing to consent to the study. This also kept some urban areas from being included in the study.

Second, the researcher's timing prevented some advisors from participating. The North and Central areas of the state were not well represented in the study; several factors could have affected those areas. Just two months before the questionnaire was made available, the areas experienced a catastrophic flood. Advisors of both organizations were focused on the relief

efforts and not filling out a questionnaire. In addition, the schools in the area were closed for days and weeks at a time and may have affected the response rate. The respondents could not devote time to participate when they were trying catch up on lost time.

For the interviews/focus groups, the researcher traveled to the central part of the state making it more convenient for advisors to participate. Other advisors expressed the timing of the questionnaire being at the end of the school year as a concern.

Third, the researcher was not given full access to the membership lists of the organizations. Privacy rights protected members from directly contacting them and did not allow for reminder e-mails or follow up.

Finally, the researcher should have used only one classification of school: rural, suburban, or urban. A more concentrated study would have allowed for a more targeted audience than one applied to those with different socioeconomic status.

Recommendations

There are several topics surfaced in this research that could be useful for further research. First, more organization advisors should be interviewed in a wider variety of areas. It is important to receive perspectives from organizations that might attract a different demographic. Replicating the study with advisors in other organizations has the potential to add credibility to the leadership abilities already identified. In addition, other advisors may have different ways of disseminating the deficit thinking.

Second, advisors need to be trained on leadership. Advisors need to understand what leadership is and ways to identify it in regular students. They must also be trained on how to convey this message to others. We learn through doing, but we also learn by observation.

Third, advisors need to accept that racism can exist even without intention. Further research could look into institutional racism and the avenues for dispelling it within organization advisors. Ignoring its existence only worsens the problem.

Fourth, further research should be done on student perspectives of leadership identification. By gathering data on the students' perspective, the advisors may be better informed; researchers may also determine whether the abilities valued by advisors correlate to those students think advisors should look for in a potential leader.

Finally, further research should be done to explore why few males are Student Council and 4-H advisors. The effect of male or female personality traits may be an influence on recruitment strategies.

Summary

It can be concluded that advisors seek particular qualities for their perspective organizations. Some qualities are identified as important ones and individual advisors prefer others. Gifted/honors students are selected by one group of teachers who pass on their opinions through educational level grouping concerning leadership. A student selected for gifted or honors is grouped in an elite category. The deficit thinking among advisors, or teachers in general, is then projected on leadership. The regular students often are not pursued for membership in an organization and are not always identified for leadership positions. Through training, other advisors and teachers may be able to change this system of neglect and create a welcoming experience for all students in organizations and for future generations.

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**APPENDIX A
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL**

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



TO: Melody Baham
Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: April 22, 2016

RE: IRB# E9913

TITLE: Identifying Leadership Potential in Regular High School Students

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8892
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 4/21/2016

Approved X **Disapproved**

Approval Date: 4/22/2016 **Approval Expiration Date:** 4/21/2019

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2b

Signed Consent Waived?: Yes for electronic survey and phone interviews? No for in-person.

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman 

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

APPENDIX B

PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

Principal Consent

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Information and Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways in which teachers identify leadership potential in students in the regular classroom who are not involved in an organization, club, or team at the school. The study may yield valuable information to both Student Council and 4-H Club advisors as well as other organization advisors pertaining to recruitment and leadership.

Teacher Participation:

Teacher participation in this study will consist of interview/focus group lasting approximately 60 minutes. Teachers will be asked a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions intended to provide answers about characteristics you value in student leaders and recruitment experiences. At any time the teacher may stop the interview/focus group and participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and Risks:

There are minimal risks associated with this study. A potential risk feeling a sense of anxiety about possibly expressing your opinions of experiences with recruiting students. The main benefit is that schools may use the results from this study as a way to improve the recruitment of students for organizations and leadership positions.

Confidentiality:

Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included for publication. Participants' identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Pseudonyms and numbers will replace names to protect identity. All documents will be password protected. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher, Melody Baham at mbaham2@lsu.edu or phone at 504-250-8801 OR her supervisor, Dr. Kenneth Varner at varner@lsu.edu. If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, you can contact Dennis Landin, Ph.D., Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue participation in the study at any time.

* 1. Please enter your school name.

2. I grant permission to the researcher to conduct the above named research in my school as described in the proposal. (Electronic Signature: Please type your name below)

3. I DO NOT grant permission to the researcher to conduct the above named research in my school as described in the proposal. (Electronic Signature: Please type your name below)

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE CONSENT FORM

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Subject Consent Form

Information and Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways in which teachers identify leadership potential in students in the regular classroom who are not involved in an organization, club, or team at the school. The study may yield valuable information to both Student Council and 4-H Club advisors as well as other organization advisors pertaining to recruitment and leadership.

Your Participation:

Your participation in this study will consist of questionnaire lasting approximately thirty minutes. You will be asked a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions intended to provide answers about characteristics you value in student leaders and recruitment experiences. At any time you may stop the questionnaire and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and Risks:

There are minimal risks associated with this study. A potential risk feeling a sense of anxiety about possibly expressing your opinions of experiences with recruiting students. The main benefit is that schools may use the results from this study as a way to improve the recruitment of students for organizations and leadership positions.

Confidentiality:

Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included for publication. Participants' identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Pseudonyms and numbers will replace names to protect identity. All documents will be password protected. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher, Melody Baham at mbaham2@lsu.edu or phone at 504-250-8801 OR her supervisor, Dr. Kenneth Varner at varner@lsu.edu. If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, you can contact Dennis Landin, Ph.D., Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue my participation in the study at any time.

1. I would like to participate in this study.

☐ Yes

☐ No

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Information and Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways in which teachers identify leadership potential in students in the regular classroom who are not involved in an organization, club, or team at the school. The study may yield valuable information to both Student Council and 4-H Club advisors as well as other organization advisors pertaining to recruitment and leadership.

Teacher Participation:

Teacher participation in this study will consist of interview/focus group lasting approximately 60 minutes. Teachers will be asked a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions intended to provide answers about characteristics you value in student leaders and recruitment experiences. At any time the teacher may stop the interview/focus group and participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and Risks:

There are minimal risks associated with this study. A potential risk feeling a sense of anxiety about possibly expressing your opinions of experiences with recruiting students. The main benefit is that schools may use the results from this study as a way to improve the recruitment of students for organizations and leadership positions.

Confidentiality:

Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included for publication. Participants' identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Pseudonyms and numbers will replace names to protect identity. All documents will be password protected. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher, Melody Baham at mbaham2@lsu.edu or phone at 504-250-8801 OR her supervisor, Dr. Kenneth Varner at varner@lsu.edu. If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, you can contact Dennis Landin, Ph.D., Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue participation in the study at any time.

1. I would like to participate in this study.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

* 2. Electronic Signature: Please type your name below.

3. Please enter your email address.

* 4. Please enter your school name.

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Subject Consent Form

Information and Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to discover the ways in which teachers identify leadership potential in students in the regular classroom who are not involved in an organization, club, or team at the school. The study may yield valuable information to both Student Council and 4-H Club advisors as well as other organization advisors pertaining to recruitment and leadership.

Your Participation:

Your participation in this study will consist of questionnaire lasting approximately thirty minutes. You will be asked a series of multiple choice and open-ended questions intended to provide answers about characteristics you value in student leaders and recruitment experiences. At any time you may stop the questionnaire and your participation in the study. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Benefits and Risks:

There are minimal risks associated with this study. A potential risk feeling a sense of anxiety about possibly expressing your opinions of experiences with recruiting students. The main benefit is that schools may use the results from this study as a way to improve the recruitment of students for organizations and leadership positions.

Confidentiality:

Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included for publication. Participants' identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Pseudonyms and numbers will replace names to protect identity. All documents will be password protected. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher, Melody Baham at mbaham2@lsu.edu or phone at 504-250-8801 OR her supervisor, Dr. Kenneth Varner at varner@lsu.edu. If you have questions about subjects' rights or other concerns, you can contact Dennis Landin, Ph.D., Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above information. I am aware that I can discontinue my participation in the study at any time.

1. I would like to participate in this study.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Advisor Demographic Information

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. Which race/ethnicity best describes you? (Please choose only one.)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)

4. Which of the following organizations do your sponsor?

- ☐ Student Council Advisor
- ☐ 4-H Advisor
- ☐ Student Council and 4-H Advisor
- ☐ Neither

5. How many years have you been an advisor of one or both of these organizations?

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

School Demographic Information

6. How is your school classified?

- ☐ Traditional Public School
- ☐ Charter School
- ☐ Magnet School
- ☐ Turnaround School
- ☐ Other (please specify)

7. In which parish is your school located?

8. Would you consider your school to be rural, suburban, urban? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Urban

9. What is the size of your student body?

- ☐ Under 100
- ☐ 101-500
- ☐ 501-1000
- ☐ 1001-1500
- ☐ 1501 or more

10. What is the racial make up of your school?

American Indian or
Alaskan Native

Asian/Pacific Islander

Black or African American

Hispanic

White / Caucasian

Multiple ethnicity / Other
(please specify)

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Organization Demographic Information

11. What is the earliest grade level at which your students are eligible to join your organization at your school?

- ☐ Grade 9
- ☐ Grade 10
- ☐ Grade 11
- ☐ Grade 12

12. What type of students make up of your organization? (Please use numerical values)

Gifted	<input type="text"/>
Honors	<input type="text"/>
Regular	<input type="text"/>

13. What is the racial make up of your organization?

American Indian or Alaskan Native	<input type="text"/>
Asian/Pacific Islander	<input type="text"/>
Black or African American	<input type="text"/>
Hispanic	<input type="text"/>
White / Caucasian	<input type="text"/>
Multiple ethnicity / Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>

14. What is the gender make up of your organization?

Male	<input type="text"/>
Female	<input type="text"/>

15. Select a method by which your students become members of your organization. (Check all that apply)

☐ Elected

☐ Appointed

☐ Join Voluntarily

Identifying Student Leadership Potential

Student Leadership

16. What is your definition of a regular student?

17. What is your definition of a gifted student?

18. What is your definition of an honors student?

19. Have you ever recruited students to join the organization you sponsor?

☐ Yes. (Please proceed to # 20)

☐ No. (Please proceed to #22)

20. Why did you recruit these students?

21. Explain how you recruited these students.

22. Please indicate how important each of the following characteristics is to you in recruiting members to join your organization.

	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Willing to take on responsibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being ethical	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to communicate ideas clearly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dominant (always taking control)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having some experience from other organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being willing to take a risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall maturity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. What characteristics, other than those listed in item 20 above, about these students leads you to identify them as potential members?

24. In the last five years, how many regular students (those not identified gifted or honors) have you encouraged to join your organization?

25. If your answer was 1 or more for item 20, please describe how you recruited the regular student to your organization.

26. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Thank you for your time! Your assistance is greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Mr. Orange,

My name is Melody Baham. I am a Doctoral Candidate of Educational Leadership and Research in the College of Education at Louisiana State University conducting a study on identifying student leadership potential in high school students.

I am interviewing Student Council and 4-H Advisors across the state about their own organizations. Would you be willing to allow your 4-H and/or Student Council Advisors participate in an interview lasting 30-60 minutes? I am high school teacher as well and would greatly appreciate their insight.

More information about the study as well as a consent form can be found at this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6C5RSCP>

All the best,

Melody Baham, M.S.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
teacher@gmail.com
000-000-0000

School of Education - College of Human Sciences and Education
Louisiana State University
223 Peabody Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
225-578-3202

APPENDIX G
SAMPLE LETTER TO ADVISORS

Dear Ms. Red,

My name is Melody Baham. I am a Doctoral Candidate of Educational Leadership and Research in the College of Education at Louisiana State University conducting a study on identifying student leadership potential in high school students.

I am interviewing Student Council and 4-H Advisors across the state about their own organizations. Would you be willing to participate in an interview lasting 30-60 minutes? I am high school teacher as well and would greatly appreciate their insight.

Your principal has given me permission to ask you to participate. More information about the study as well as a consent form can be found at this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K5RFTQX>.

All the best,

Melody Baham, M.S.Ed.

Doctoral Candidate

teacher@gmail.com

000-000-0000

School of Education - College of Human Sciences and Education

Louisiana State University

223 Peabody Hall

Baton Rouge, LA 70803

225-578-3202

APPENDIX H

SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Today we will discuss your life as an advisor.

1. Please tell me about yourself:
 - What part of the state are you from?
 - What type of school do you teach at?
 - How large is your school?
 - What organization(s) do you advise?
 - How long have you advised those organizations?
2. How would you describe your organization in terms of gender and race? Academic levels?
3. How would you define the following types of students: gifted, honors, regular?
4. Describe your experience recognizing leadership abilities in students.
5. How do you recruit students for your organization?

VITA

Melody Lynn Baham was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She graduated from Alfred Bonnabel High School in Kenner, Louisiana. In high school, Melody held a variety of leadership positions including Student Council President, Varsity Cheerleading Captain, and Louisiana Association of Student Councils State President. Melody continued her passion for student government in college by serving on the Newcomb College Senate and Tulane University Undergraduate Student Government Senate, and as the Tulane University Associated Student Body President. Melody graduated from Newcomb College of Tulane University in 2005 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication and Political Science and a minor in Business.

After Katrina touched down in New Orleans, Melody spent the first semester of graduate school at the University of Dayton before returning to Loyola University of New Orleans in January of 2006. During her time in Dayton, Melody interned at MeadWestvaco in the Marketing department working with Mead for Teachers. Once returning home, Melody began substituting in the Jefferson Parish Public School System. Through her experience, Melody obtained a full-time position as a high school Social Studies teacher, Student Activity Coordinator and Student Council Advisor. Melody graduated from Loyola University of New Orleans in 2007 with a Master of Science in Secondary Education. She was selected Teacher of the Year for the 2008-09 school year. Melody was appointed Co-District Student Council Advisor in 2012 and received the Louisiana Association of Student Councils Advisor of the Year award in 2016.

Melody entered the doctoral program of the Department of Educational Theory, Policy, and Practice to pursue a doctor of philosophy degree in Educational Leadership and Research in

2009. Her research interests include youth leadership and community service in secondary education.

Melody anticipates graduating with her doctor of philosophy degree in December 2016.