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ABSTRACT
        This study was to determine the tasks 4-H project
leaders performed, to secure leaders' and agents' opinions concerning
the tasks that should be performed by 4-H project leaders, and to
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concerning the qualifications of 4-H project leaders to perform 55
selected tasks. Questionnaires were mailed to 463 project leaders and
27 agents in 14 Tennessee counties. Usable returns were received from
225 project leaders and 27 agents. The following were among the
findings: the location of leaders in counties with a large or small
number of project leaders did not significantly influence the number
of tasks performed by the leaders; an average of 40% of the leaders
were performing each of the 55 tasks; 71.6% of the leaders and 86.6%
of the agents thought leaders should perform each of the tasks; an
average of 57% of the leaders and 18.8% of the agents believed
leaders were qualified to perform the tasks; and the agents thought
leaders were best qualified to perform the planning tasks and least
qualified to perform the teaching tasks of 4-H project work.
(Author/NL)

RESEARCH SUMMARY SERIES IN AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

A Research Summary

of a

Graduate Study

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4-H PROJECT LEADER ROLES: PERCEPTION OF EXTENSION AGENTS
AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS IN FOURTEEN
TENNESSEE COUNTIES

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SUMMARY OF MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS IN

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by

Hubert E. Lambert

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Questionnaires were mailed to 460 4-H project leaders and 27 Extension agents in 14 Tennessee counties.

Useable returns were received from 225 project leaders and 27 Extension agents. Data were punched on processing cards and computations of frequencies, percents, and chi square values were made by the University of Tennessee Computing Center.

Analysis of the data revealed that: (1) generally, the location of leaders in counties with a large or small number of project leaders did not significantly influence the number of tasks performed by the leaders; (2) an average of 40 percent of the leaders were performing each of the 55 tasks; (3) 71.6 percent of the leaders and 86.6 percent of the agents felt leaders should perform each of the 55 tasks; (4) an average of 57 percent of the leaders and 18.8 percent of the agents felt leaders were qualified to perform the 55 selected tasks of 4-H project work; (5) leaders were primarily performing the teaching, organizational, and providing recognition roles (the roles of planning, evaluation and reporting were performed by few leaders); (6) leaders felt they should primarily perform the teaching, organizational and providing recognition roles; (7) the largest percent of leaders felt qualified to perform the roles of reporting, providing recognition and evaluating progress of 4-H members; (8) the planning tasks were ranked lowest by the agents in terms of the roles project leaders should perform; and (9) the agents felt leaders were best qualified to perform the planning tasks and least qualified to per form the teaching tasks of 4-H project work.

The following conclusions were made: (1) project leaders felt qualified to perform and felt that should perform more tasks than they actually performed; (2) project leaders and agents were generally not in agreement as to the tasks leaders should perform and as to the tasks leaders were qualified to perform; (3) project leaders' expectations concerning the tasks they should perform influenced the number of tasks actually performed (leaders sho felt they should perform more tasks generally did so); (4) project leaders had more confidence in their "preparedness" to perform the 55 selected tasks of 4-H project work than the Extension agents had in the leaders'; and (5) leaders in counties with a large number (70 or more) of leaders performed about the same number of tasks as leaders in counties with a small number (between 4 and 24) of project leaders.

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June 1969

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number of tasks as leaders in counties with a small number (between 4

and 24) of project leaders.

RESEARCH SUMMARY*

I. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The primary purposes of this study were to determine the tasks performed by 4-H project leaders in Tennessee and to secure and compare leaders' and agents' opinions concerning the tasks that 4-H project leaders should perform. A secondary purpose was to compare the opinions of 4-H project leaders and Extension agents concerning the qualifications of 4-H project leaders to perform specific tasks of 4-H project leaders.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

More specifically, answers to the following questions concerning fifty-five selected tasks of 4-H project work were sought:

1. What tasks were performed by 4-H project leaders in selected Tennessee counties?

2. What tasks did 4-H project leaders think they should perform?

3. What tasks did Extension agents think project leaders should perform?

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4. Which of the tasks which could be classified as planning, organizational, teaching, recognizing, evaluating and reporting were performed by the largest percent of leaders?

5. What tasks did project leaders feel best qualified to perform?

6. What tasks did agents feel leaders were best qualified to perform?

7. Were leaders who performed a large number of tasks located in counties having larger or smaller numbers of 4-H project leaders?

8. To what extent did project leaders and Extension agents agree concerning tasks project leaders should perform and tasks leaders were qualified to perform?

III. PROCEDURE FOR COLLECTING DATA

One hundred and twelve tasks of 4-H project leaders were identified from the literature and other sources. These tasks were rated by 16 Extension agents as to how critical they felt the tasks were to the success of 4-H project work. Fifty-five of the tasks considered by Extension agents to be most important to the role of a project leader were included in the final questionnaire.

IV. SOURCE OF DATA

Questionnaires were mailed to 463 4-H project leaders and 27 Extension agents working with youth in 14 selected Tennessee counties. Each of the 14 counties met the criterion of having at least 1.9 full-time Extension staff equivalent devoted to 4-H work. Five

counties had a relatively large number (at least 70) of 4-H project
leaders and nine counties had a relatively small number (from 4 to 25)
of project leaders. Two hundred and sixty-five questionnaires were
returned by the project leaders (57 percent) and 225 (48.6 percent) were
useable. All 27 Extension agents returned useable questionnaires.

V. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Information from completed questionnaires was transferred to data
cards and computations were made by the University of Tennessee's
Computing Center. The frequency and percent of responses to each of
three questions concerning each of 55 tasks of 4-H project work for
225 project leaders and 27 Extension agents were computed. The three
major questions dealt with whether project leaders performed each
task, felt each task should be performed by project leaders, and the
qualifications of project leaders to perform each task.

The 55 tasks were classified into six major groups of tasks,
each group constituting a role of 4-H project leaders, namely; planning,
organizational, teaching, giving recognition, evaluating, and reporting.
For each of the major questions, the tasks within each role were ranked
from high to low according to the percents of leaders and agents
responding to each question. Leaders' responses to each question were
compared to determine whether: (1) leaders tended to perform those tasks
which they felt they should perform; (2) leaders tended to perform those
tasks they felt qualified to perform; and (3) leaders tended to perform
certain groups of tasks and not perform others. Comparisons were of a
descriptive nature and reported in ranks, frequencies, and percents.

Leaders' and agents' responses to questions concerning task expectations and task qualifications were compared to determine the extent of agreement among agents and leaders. Frequencies, ranks and percents were used in the descriptive analysis.

The performance of leaders in counties having a large and a small number of leaders was compared. Chi square contingency table analysis was used to test the significance of observed differences in leader performance in the high and low counties.

VI. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Listed below are some of the major findings regarding the specific objectives of the study:

Tasks Performed by 4-H Project Leaders

An average of 40 percent of the leaders were performing each of the 55 tasks. Of the six groups of tasks, the highest percent of leaders were performing the recognition (48.7 percent), teaching (47.9 percent) and organizational tasks (45.5 percent). The smallest percent of leaders were performing the tasks classified as evaluation (20.5 percent), planning (29.3 percent) and reporting (33 percent). Therefore, leaders were primarily performing the roles of teaching, organizing and providing recognition. About one out of four of the leaders were performing the roles of planning, evaluating and reporting.

Tasks 4-H Project Leaders Felt They Should Perform

An average of 71.6 percent of the leaders and 86.6 percent of the agents felt leaders should perform each of the 55 tasks of 4-H project

work. Of the six groups of tasks, the highest percent of the leaders (80.3 percent) felt leaders should perform the recognition and teaching tasks. The planning tasks were ranked lowest in terms of the tasks leaders said they should perform. Project leaders felt they should perform more tasks than they were performing.

Leaders felt they should be performing the roles of teaching, organizing, and providing recognition. A smaller percent of the leaders felt leaders should perform the planning, evaluating and reporting roles. Thus, leaders were performing the roles they felt leaders should perform.

Leaders perceived their roles as that of assisting agents in giving recognition, teaching and organizing boys and girls for 4-H project work.

Leaders generally performed those tasks they felt leaders were expected to perform.

Tasks 4-H Project Leaders Felt Qualified to Perform

An average of 57 percent of the leaders felt qualified to perform the 55 tasks of 4-H project work. The largest percent of leaders felt they were qualified to perform the reporting (71 percent), evaluating (71 percent), and recognition tasks (68 percent). Similarily, 47.6 percent of the leaders felt qualified to perform the planning task, and 59.5 percent felt qualified to perform the teaching tasks.

Project leaders felt qualified to perform more tasks than they were performing.

Although leaders generally felt qualified to perform the evaluating and reporting tasks, few of them were actually performing these roles.

Project leaders felt they should perform more tasks than they felt qualified to perform.

Tasks Extension Agents Felt 4-H Project Leaders Should Perform

The highest percent of agents felt leaders should perform the reporting (96 percent), evaluating (96 percent), teaching (95.3 percent) and organizational tasks (91.8 percent). The planning tasks were ranked lowest by the agents in terms of the role project leaders should perform. Fifty percent of the leaders thought they should perform 47 or 75 percent of the 55 tasks of 4-H project leaders, whereas a majority of the agents said leaders should perform 50, or 91 percent, of the 55 tasks.

Agents felt the planning roles should receive a lower priority than either the reporting, evaluating, recognition, teaching or organizational roles. However, agents felt the planning tasks were more important to the role of leaders than did the leaders.

Agents felt leaders should perform more tasks than the leaders were performing. Also, agents felt leaders should perform more tasks than the leaders themselves felt they should perform.

Tasks Extension Agents Felt Leaders Were Qualified to Perform

On the average 18.8 percent of the agents said leaders did not need training to perform the 55 tasks. The area in which the highest percent of agents said leaders did not need training was in the planning

tasks (30.2 percent). Only 6 percent of the agents said leaders did not need training in the teaching tasks of 4-H project work.

Project leaders had more confidence in their "preparedness" to perform the tasks of 4-H project work than the agents had in the leaders.

Agents felt leaders were least qualified to perform the teaching tasks and best qualified to perform the planning tasks.

Number of Tasks Performed by Project Leaders Who Were Located in Counties Having a Large Versus a Small Number of Leaders

Generally, the total number of 4-H project leaders per county did not significantly influence the number of tasks performed by the project leaders. Leaders in counties having a small number of leaders tended to perform about the same number of tasks as leaders in counties having a large number of project leaders.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were based upon the findings of the study:

1. Adult 4-H project leaders felt qualified to perform and felt they should perform more tasks than they actually performed.

2. There was little agreement between agents and leaders concerning: (1) tasks project leaders should perform, and (2) tasks project leaders were qualified to perform.

3. Project leaders perceived the job of project leaders as one of assisting in the conduct of 4-H project work. Most of the leaders did not feel responsible for the local 4-H Club program.

4. Leaders' expectations or beliefs concerning the tasks they should perform influenced the number of tasks actually performed. Those who believed they should perform more tasks generally did so.

5. Agents might have been reluctant to involve leaders because of their (agents) strong feeling that leaders were not "adequately trained."

6. Neither Extension agents nor the 4-H project leaders felt the planning tasks which were studied were important to the role of 4-H project leaders.

7. The number of 4-H project leaders per county did not significantly influence the number of tasks performed by the project leaders.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the appropriate Extension supervisory staff members, Extension agents working with youth, and adult 4-H project leaders use the findings of this study and other related studies to improve the 4-H project group approach to teaching 4-H members in Tennessee.

2. Finally, additional research is needed to identify other factors which influence the number of tasks of 4-H project work performed by 4-H project leaders.

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