PERCEPTIONS OF SECONDARY PRINCIPALS IN TEXAS CONCERNING LEADERSHIP AND LIFE SKILLS ATTAINED THROUGH MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FFA PROGRAM

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Setting

The main goal of the National FFA Organization is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2002). The FFA consists of programs and activities that allow members to develop communication skills, conduct and participate in meetings, manage financial matters, strengthen problem-solving abilities and assume civic responsibility (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002). Activities of the FFA chapter are an integral part of the Agricultural Science and Technology education program (Texas Education Agency, 2002).

Currently, there are 90,000 students enrolled in Agricultural Science and Technology courses in the state of Texas (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002). Enrollment in these courses and participation in the FFA allows students to develop skills that are highly valued by employers such as leadership, teamwork, personal responsibility, problem solving, management, and analysis (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002). However, increased high school graduation requirements have put pressure on agriculture programs by limiting the opportunities for students to enroll in elective courses (Thompson, 2001).

The National Research Council concluded that increased requirements for high school graduation would reduce the time available for electives and extracurricular activities (National Research Council, 1988). A study in Idaho found that 65% of state supervisors and 88% of secondary agriculture teachers agreed that many students were unable to enroll in agricultural education because of high school graduation requirements (Connors, 1998). Teachers in Arkansas felt that offering a science credit for agricultural courses would increase enrollment, benefit students, and enhance the program image (Johnson, 1995).

Currently in the state of Texas, there are 40 different classes offered through Agricultural Science and Technology Education. Certified teachers, administrators, students, and advisory committees determine the courses that are offered to the students (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002). School principals are key decision-makers in the curriculum at their high school and influential in the continuation of the agricultural science program. Although they do not have full control over curriculum, their influence has great impact and their perceptions of agricultural education and technology courses determine its success (Johnson & Newman, 1993). Therefore, the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program are very important to the success of the FFA program.

Statement of the Problem

The secondary principals' perceptions of leadership and life skills attained from membership and participation in the FFA program may influence decisions about curriculum, graduation requirements and course offerings which in turn influence the high school's agricultural science program and the FFA chapter. Therefore, the major purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Texas secondary principals concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program.

Research Questions

To obtain information to support this study, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Texas principals at secondary schools that have an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter?
2. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?
3. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?

4. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of secondary principals in Texas and their perceptions of leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?

Definitions of Key Terms

The following are key terms that were used throughout the study.

Perception–An individual's current appraisal of an object or program (Luzar & Cosse, 1998).

Agricultural Science Program–A systematic instructional program in agriculture at the secondary level designed to develop competencies for the purpose of preparing persons for initial entry or reentry into occupations in agriculture or a closely related field (Phipps & Osborne, 1988).

Career Development Events–Events that test the skills and knowledge of individuals or teams in the major areas of agricultural instruction and leadership (National FFA Organization, 2002). (Example: livestock evaluation)

Leadership Development Events–Events that test the skills and knowledge of individuals or teams in the major areas of agricultural instruction and leadership (National FFA Organization, 2002). (Example: parliamentary procedure)

Leadership Skills–Skills such as organization and delegation, problem solving, shared leadership, communication, futuristic thinking, decision making, conflict resolution, goal setting, group dynamics, divergent thinking, and time management that

one can use to influence the activities of a group or individual toward the achievement of a goal (Addison, 1985).

Life Skills–Skills possessed by persons of a society that enable them to successfully participate in individual and group matters, including self-esteem, self-confidence, problem solving, reasoning and critical thinking skills (Pavelock, 2000).

Principal–The administrative head and professional leader of a school division or unit, such as a high school, junior high school, or elementary school (Good & Merkel, 1973).

Limitations

Some limitations of this study were:

1. The study was limited to Texas principals during the 2002-2003 school year in secondary schools that had a chartered FFA chapter of the agricultural science program.
2. The experience level of surveyed secondary principals varied. A secondary principal in their first year may have held previous positions that did not require them to have knowledge of the agricultural science program or the FFA.
3. A secondary principal's previous experiences with an agriculture science program, agricultural science teacher, or FFA chapter may influence their perceptions or attitudes, therefore not allowing unbiased participation in this study.

Basic Assumptions

The assumptions of the researcher pertaining to secondary principals taking part in this study included:

1. Participants in the study answered all questions honestly, professionally and to the best of their ability.
2. Participants who did not have knowledge of the agricultural science program or of the FFA may have based their responses on educated guesses.

Significance

There are major benefits related to the conduct of this study. It is important to determine perceptions of the secondary principal concerning leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program. Based on the findings of this study, it can be determined if secondary principals believe that the FFA program is a positive program for students to be involved. Secondary principals' perceptions identified in this study concerning the FFA program and leadership and life skills will be very beneficial information that may influence critical decisions concerning curriculum, course offerings and graduation requirements in schools today.

Identification of these perceptions will also allow for perhaps better relationships between agricultural science teachers and secondary principals. Based on findings of this study, it could be determined if there was a possible lack of communication between secondary principals and agricultural science teachers. Improving the relationships

between the two mentioned groups would benefit the students, the agricultural science program and FFA chapter. The agricultural science teacher can also utilize this information to reflect on their own agricultural science program and FFA chapter and determine if changes should be made in these programs.

Lastly, agricultural teacher educators can use the findings of this study to better prepare future agricultural science teachers. Being aware of the different perceptions that secondary principals have will allow the future agricultural science teacher to better understand the expectations of an agricultural science program and FFA chapter according to these perceptions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with beneficial information that pertains to the topics of focus or concern in this study. This study concerns the perceptions of Texas secondary principals concerning leadership and life skills attained by students from membership and participation in the FFA. The topics of concern discussed below include agricultural education, secondary principals, leadership skills, and life skills.

Agricultural Education

History of Agricultural Education in Texas

A Henderson school system teacher by the name of Mr. B. Youngblood began teaching the first elementary agriculture course in Texas in the year 1903 (Cepica, Dillingham, Eggenberger, & Stockton, 1988). Two years later, S.A. Minear developed a system of gardens for the city schools of San Antonio while teaching elementary agriculture courses there. In 1906, a resolution passed by the Texas Farmers' Congress requested that elementary agriculture courses be taught at all public schools in Texas. As a result of this request, Section 100, Chapter 124, Acts of the 29th Legislature was amended by the state legislature. This amendment required all public schools in Texas, with exception of independent school districts with a school population of 300 or more,

to teach elementary agriculture. Beginning in 1909, the state legislature required teacher training in elementary agriculture at certain Texas colleges and normal schools. The passing of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 provided funds to support vocational agriculture. Shortly after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, a plan for vocational agriculture in the state of Texas was approved. The first approved vocational agricultural departments in the state were Corsicana, Hillsboro, Penelope, Tuleta, and Yancy. The Smith-Hughes Act allowed Texas public schools to offer 32 vocational agriculture courses to enrolled students (Cepica, Dillingham, Eggenberger, & Stockton, 1988). In 1998, there were 49 vocational agriculture courses offered to Texas high school students (Hinkson, 1999). Currently, there are more than 90,000 students in the state of Texas enrolled in Agricultural Science and Technology classes (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002).

Components of Secondary Agricultural Education Programs in Texas

The secondary agricultural education program is designed to allow high school students to develop the competencies needed to enter agricultural science and technology occupations (Texas Education Agency, 2002). Students and teachers involved with the agricultural education program spend many hours in and out of the classroom following the curriculum and working on projects (National Research Council, 1988). A successful agricultural education program is dependent upon four components. Phipps and Osborne (1988) state these components of agricultural education as:

1. Classroom instruction,

2. Laboratory instruction,
3. Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs (SAEP),
4. Vocational student organization (also known as FFA).

Classroom Instruction

Classroom instruction provides students the opportunity to learn and discuss problems that affect agriculture. The past, present and future concerns of agriculture are addressed. Students also learn basics such as shop safety, breeds of cattle and home maintenance. This classroom instruction provides students with the knowledge to analyze and solve problems in the agricultural science laboratory and in other areas outside of the classroom (Phipps & Osborne, 1988). Students can apply classroom instruction to many other aspects of their lives as well. Classroom instruction is necessary for an agricultural science program to be effective and beneficial to the students enrolled.

Laboratory Instruction

Phipps and Osborne (1988) state that the connection between classroom instruction and skill development is laboratory instruction. Instruction in the laboratory allows students a "hands-on" opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom. The ability to apply what has been learned in the classroom allows the students an overall better understanding of the subject material. Examples of instruction in the agricultural laboratory include ear notching a litter of pigs, construction of farm

equipment, growing bedding plants in a greenhouse, and fitting a steer for show. Effective laboratory instruction includes demonstration and supervision by the agricultural science teacher (Pavelock, 2000).

Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs

Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) programs are used in agricultural education to provide the student an opportunity to "learn by doing" (Davis, 1998). Rufus Stimson is responsible for implementing the Supervised Agricultural Experience Program in 1908 but it was then known as The Home-School Cooperation Plan. Stimson based this program on the philosophy of pragmatism. Later, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 required students to have "directed or supervised practice in agriculture." Over the years, the SAE program has undergone many name changes but the underlying theory of "learning by doing" remains unchanged (North Carolina State University, 2002).

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 allowed the scope of the SAE program to be broadened beyond the farm. Activities are performed outside of the classroom and can include anything from working in a produce section of a grocery store to operating a lawn care business or raising show animals. The components of the SAE program include entrepreneurship, placement, research, exploratory, improvement and supplementary activities. SAE is a vital part of agricultural education that allows the student an opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real world situation (North Carolina State University, 2002).

The FFA Organization

As a national organization, the FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) has been part of vocational agriculture since 1928 (National Research Council, 1988). The FFA "is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of young people by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education" (National FFA Organization, 2002, p. 5). Membership in the FFA is an educational experience. The purpose of this membership is to develop agricultural leadership, citizenship and cooperation (Bender, Taylor, Hansen, & Newcomb, 1979).

The Texas FFA Association was chartered in 1929 (Texas FFA Association, 2002). Texas FFA membership represents approximately 14% of the national membership total. Texas is divided into 10 geographical areas (Areas I-X) which are split up into districts. There are 54 districts in Texas with six being in most areas. In 1998, there were 951 chartered chapters in the state of Texas (Hinkson, 1999). Each year at the state convention, 10 state officers are elected by the delegates to represent Texas and each of the 10 areas.

Factors influencing an agricultural education student's perception of the FFA organization were examined in a study by Croom and Flowers (2001). First year agricultural education students enrolled in the Agriscience Applications course in North Carolina schools were surveyed. The sample size was 404 students. The conclusions from this study indicated that a student's decision to join the FFA is in fact influenced by their perception of the image of the FFA organization at their school. The student's

gender, ethnicity, enrollment in agricultural classes, block scheduling, grade level and participation in other school clubs did not influence the students decision to join the FFA.

Enrollment in Agricultural Education

In Texas, there are approximately 90,000 students enrolled in agricultural and technology courses (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002). Numerous studies and research has been conducted on factors that influence enrollment in the agricultural education program. Riesenberg and Lierman (1990) studied the perceptions of administrators and instructors concerning factors influencing secondary agriculture enrollment were focused on in a study in Idaho. The purpose of the study was to determine the contribution of selected factors to the decline in enrollment in secondary agricultural programs in the state of Idaho. The population for the study included 75 administrators and 81 secondary agricultural teachers during the 1986-1987 school year. Due to the small number of agricultural education programs in Idaho, a census was conducted. The results from this study indicated that four factors had the most limiting effect on enrollment. These factors were scheduling conflicts, change in student's interests and attitudes toward agriculture, competition with other elective courses and academically oriented students guided away from secondary agriculture. The five least limiting factors to enrollment in the agricultural education program were requirement of Supervised Agricultural Experience Project, secondary agriculture used for a dumping ground for students, inadequacy of tools and equipment, limited facilities and living in an urban area.

Secondary Principals

The Role of Secondary Principals

The role of the principal is to exhibit characteristics of an educational leader and to promote the success of all students (Vornberg, 2002). Curriculum development and implementation, community outreach, and the campus budget are just a few of the responsibilities of a principal. Principals must also perform as instructional leaders. Principals that are considered instructional leaders are perceived by others as (a) providing resources necessary for the school to reach academic goals, (b) possessing skill and knowledge in curriculum and other matters that teachers are concerned with, (c) possessing good communication skills, and (d) representing the school, staff, students and parents in a visible, positive way (Smith & Andrews, 1989). The secondary principal should also be aware of all programs that students are involved in and how this effects their education.

Perceptions of Secondary Principals Toward Agricultural Education

There have been numerous studies on perceptions of secondary principals concerning different aspects of agricultural education. However, there has been no study conducted on the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning the leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program.

Dyer and Kalme (2000) conducted a study focusing on the perceptions of Iowa secondary principals toward vocational education. The sample size included 147 principals that were employed at high schools that had an agricultural education program.

The overall conclusion of this study was that high school principals generally supported agricultural education. This study also found that the perceptions the high school principal had about the agricultural science program had no effect on the enrollment in agricultural science courses. High school principals in Iowa were knowledgeable of the agricultural education program and believed that the program had a place in high school curriculum. The secondary principals also felt that students enjoyed the agricultural science courses and that the agricultural science teachers were high quality teachers. Secondary principals in Iowa were also found to believe that any high school student could benefit from the agricultural education program no matter what their academic ability.

Hinkson (1999) surveyed 102 high school administrators and 102 high school agricultural science teachers in the state of Texas to determine the perceptions of high school administrators toward agricultural science teachers. These administrators were found to have favorable attitudes and perceptions regarding the agricultural science teacher. Also, the administrators had high regard for the agricultural science program and felt that it was an important attribute to the school and community. Communications between the administrators and the agricultural science teachers by staff meetings, phone calls, and e-mails/memos were also addressed in this study. Both groups surveyed agreed that good communication between administrators and agricultural science teachers was very important.

A study focusing on the opinions of school administrators in North Carolina concerning the purpose, community acceptance, and occupational placement as a basis

for justification of vocational agriculture programs in 1985-1986 was conducted by Jewell (1989). One of the purposes of this study was to compare the opinions of participants to those of a similar study to determine if there had been a change in opinions of administrators. Jewell states that administrators (principals and vocational directors) determine the purpose of instruction in vocational agriculture programs. Comparing the two studies, Jewell found that there were no significant differences between the opinions of participants concerning the controlling purpose of the vocational agriculture program in North Carolina. The secondary principals and vocational directors believed that the controlling purpose of the agricultural education program was to train for employment in agricultural occupations. There was no significant change in opinions for the study conducted in 1978-1979 and the study conducted in 1985-1986. According to the study in 1985-1986, approximately one-third of the school administrators in North Carolina believed that a majority of their communities regarded agricultural education as an essential part of the high school curriculum. In over half of the surveyed administrator's communities, vocational agriculture was perceived to be essential to persons concerned with agriculture. Overall, Jewell concluded that administrative support for the agricultural education program had not declined in North Carolina.

Thompson (2001) researched the perceptions of Oregon secondary principals regarding integrating science into agricultural science and technology programs. Thompson states that in order for science to be integrated into the agricultural curriculum and for it to be successful at the secondary level, there must be support from the principal. The study also concluded that principals who oversaw agricultural science and

technology programs agreed that if science was integrated into the agricultural program, the students would be more aware and have a better understanding of science concepts. Overall, the secondary principals in Oregon responded positively to integrating science into the agricultural education curriculum.

A study in Nebraska by Foster, Bell, and Erskine (1995) focused on the importance of selected instructional areas in the present and future secondary agricultural education curriculum as perceived by teachers, principals, and superintendents. This study included all of the teachers, principals and superintendents of 40 secondary schools in Nebraska that had an agricultural education program during the 1989-1990 school year. According to the researchers, the development of curriculum must take a middle ground with teachers, principals and superintendents working in a partnership. Findings of this study indicate that the agricultural education curriculum in Nebraska is making a gradual shift to becoming more diverse. Respondents of this study also felt that there was definite correlations between the present curriculum and future curriculum. Of the three respondent groups in this study, principals seemed more inclined toward curriculum change. Agricultural education in Nebraska was found to be in a transition from the old standard curriculum to a more diverse curriculum.

Leadership Skills

"Leadership is the ability to influence the activities of an individual or group toward the achievement of a goal" (Addison, 1985, p. 1). Examples of leadership skills are organization and delegation, problem solving, shared leadership, communication,

futuristic thinking, decision making, conflict resolution, goal setting, group dynamics, divergent thinking and time management.

Development of leadership skills in youth has long been a goal of many organizations and clubs including FFA and 4-H. Public speaking, holding an office and participating in meetings are all ways that youth develop leadership skills (Dormody & Seevers, 1994).

Dormody and Seevers (1994) surveyed 370 students from Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico that were members of the FFA. The purpose of the survey was to determine if leadership life skills development of the FFA member was affected by participation in leadership activities. Independent variables in the study included participation in FFA leadership activities, achievement expectancy, self esteem, years in FFA, age, ethnicity, gender, and place of residence. The dependent variable was the development of leadership life skills. The conclusions from this survey indicated that there was a positive relationship between youth leadership life skills development and achievement expectancy (i.e. what the FFA members expected of themselves and of others during FFA activities and projects). Females also had higher youth leadership life skills development than males. However, there was no correlation between leadership life skill development and self-esteem, years in FFA, ethnicity, or place of residence.

Wingenbach and Kahler (1997) surveyed 371 FFA members from Iowa during the 1994-1995 school year. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a significant relationship between the member's self-perceived youth leadership and life skills development and their participation in youth leadership activities. The researchers

found that there was a positive relationship between FFA leadership activities such as chapter meetings and SAE projects and the member's scores on the survey. The researchers indicate that greater cooperation between agricultural educators, representatives of the industry, and leaders of other youth organizations is needed to help build leadership and life skill development in all youth.

Life Skills

Life skills are developed qualities gained throughout life that are influential to personal, educational, and career success (Davis, 1998). These skills are developed through the FFA in events such as livestock showing, leadership development events and career development events, and other SAE programs.

In 1998, Davis interviewed FFA members that exhibited livestock at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The purpose of this research was to validate the life skills gained through competitive livestock showing. These skills were determined by observing the students, parents and advisors, interviews, and a review of historical documents. The themes that emerged from this research were social relationships, character, family, exposure to competition, knowledge and care of animals, and exposure to cultures. Social relationships were found to be the most important life skill developed through exhibition of livestock. All interviews with members, parents and advisors echoed the importance of meeting people and having solid social relations with others. Character development also was indicated as an important benefit of livestock exhibition. Other characteristics of livestock exhibition that were considered important life skills by

the participants in the study were responsibility, family growth and development, competition, confidence, exposure to loss, feeling of success and exposure to large cities, and other ways of life.

Summary

Agricultural education in Texas has undergone many changes since it inception in 1903. Reform in curriculum and of programs such as SAE in the agricultural education program have all contributed to the success of agricultural education programs in the state. Enrollment in agricultural education programs in Texas is at an all time high of 90,000 (Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas, 2002).

The review of literature provided evidence to suggest that secondary principals are generally supportive of the agricultural education program. Research has shown that there is a definite correlation between the development of leadership skills and life skills through student's involvement in FFA and other FFA activities. However, there has not been a study on the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning the leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the following topics: research design, population and sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. Each of these topics were important stepping stones in the completion of this study regarding the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program.

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational design was used in this study. It was designed to assess the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program. Secondary principals in Texas high schools with agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters were targeted. A mail questionnaire was the method of data collection.

Population and Sample

The targeted population was secondary principals at Texas high schools that offer an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter to the student population. The total number of schools with agricultural education programs and chartered FFA chapters in Texas at the time of this study was 1018 (Instructional Materials Service,

2002). Due to such a large number, a stratified random sample of the population was selected. A sample size of 288 was selected based upon Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Stratified sampling involves selecting a sample so that certain subgroups in the population are adequately represented in the sample (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). The "subgroups" represented in this study were the 10 geographical "areas" of the Texas FFA Association. Figure 1 is an illustration of the ten areas in the Texas FFA Association.

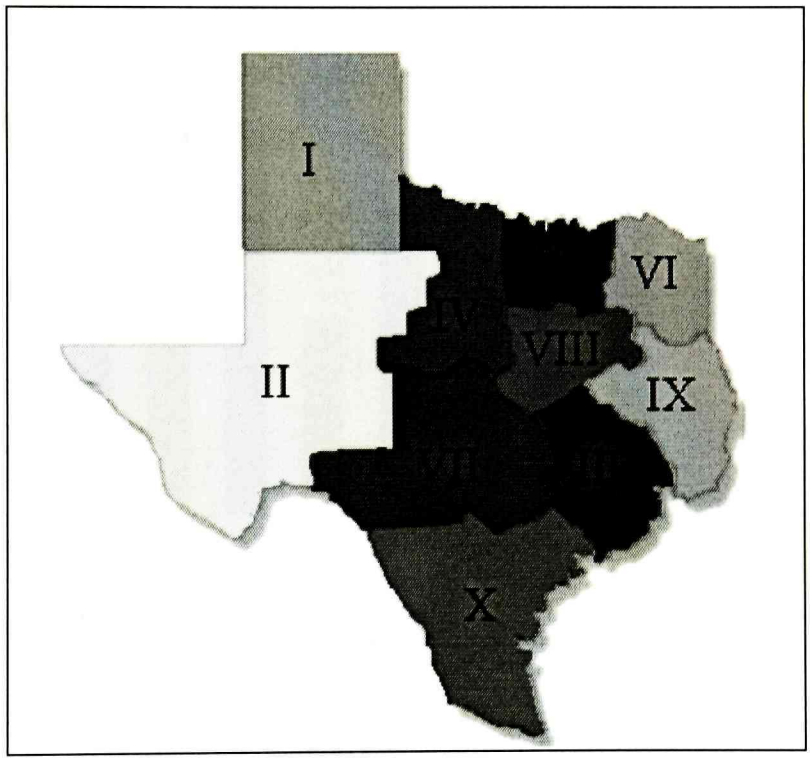
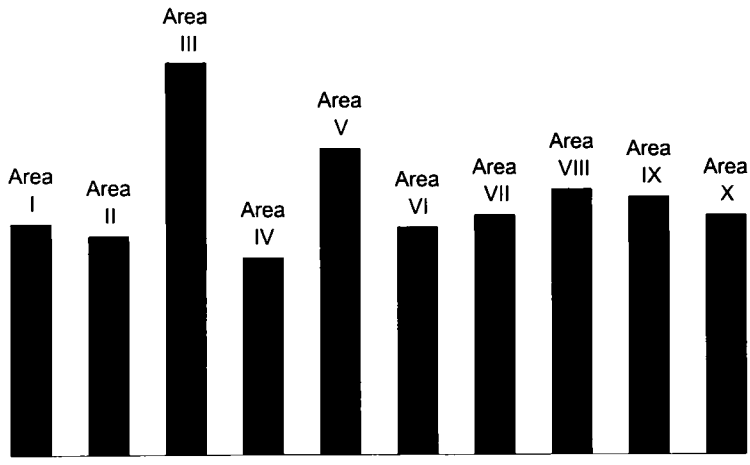


Figure 1

Areas of the Texas FFA Association

Figure 2 illustrates the stratification of the sample. In order to stratify the sample, the number of schools in each area with agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters were determined. Percentages were calculated to determine the representation of each area within the total number of schools having agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters. These percentages were then used to calculate how many schools from each area should be included in the stratified random sample.



											TOTALS
Schools per area	91	86	155	78	121	90	95	105	102	95	1018
Percentage	9.0	9.0	15.0	8.0	12.0	9.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	100.0
Schools per area in stratified sample	26	26	43	23	34	26	26	29	29	26	288

Figure 2

Stratification of sample

After determining how many schools were needed from each area for the stratified random sample, the 2002-2003 Directory of Texas Teachers of Agricultural Science and Technology (Instructional Materials Service, 2002) was used to help select these schools. The directory is split up by area, so each area's schools were numbered chronologically. Microsoft Excel was used to generate a random number list for each area. Each area's random number list was then used to select the appropriate number of schools needed from each area for the stratified sample.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument used was a researcher developed questionnaire, (Appendix A). The questionnaire was developed by using previous surveys used by researchers to analyze perceptions of high school administrators or superintendents regarding agricultural education teachers (Hinkson, 1999), the agricultural education program (Pavelock, 2000), and vocational education (Marrs, 1983). A questionnaire used by Wingenbach and Kahler (1997) in Iowa that measured self-perceived leadership and life skills in FFA members was also used to develop the questionnaire for this study.

There were three sections to the questionnaire. Section I was titled "Leadership Skills and the FFA Program." There were 20 statements that respondents agreed or disagreed with using a Likert-type scale of 4=*Strongly Agree*, 3=*Agree*, 2=*Disagree*, 1=*Strongly Disagree* and 0=*Don't Know/No Opinion*. Section II was titled "Life Skills and the FFA Program." There were 16 statements that respondents agreed or disagreed with using a Likert-type scale based on the code mentioned above. Section III was titled

"Demographic Information" and collected demographic variables such as: school location, classification of school, years as a secondary principal, years as a classroom teacher, primary teaching area, teaching experience in career and technology education, teaching experience in agricultural science, enrollment in agricultural education in high school or college, children's enrollment in agricultural education in high school or college, membership or volunteering for FFA or 4-H programs, children's membership or volunteering for FFA or 4-H programs, attendance of particular FFA activities, recognition by the local FFA chapter, work experience in agriculture, size of hometown, primary source of income for community, highest degree held, major area of study, age, and gender.

The instrument was reviewed by the faculty in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communications at Texas Tech University for face and content validity. After making necessary changes to the instrument, a pilot test involving 30 secondary principals from the target population that were not selected in the stratified random sample was conducted. The pilot test required the secondary principals chosen to complete the actual questionnaire. The participants were also asked for any comments or suggestions to help make the questionnaire better or cleaner. Pilot test data was analyzed for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. Leadership skills (Section I) had reliability of .85. Life skills (Section II) had reliability of .83. Slight modifications were made to the questionnaire before being mailed to the stratified random sample.

Data Collection

On April 2, 2003, a cover letter (Appendix B) and questionnaire were sent out to the stratified random sample of 288 secondary principals. The information was sent in a first-class envelope and included a self-addressed stamped envelope for the participant to mail the questionnaire back to the researcher upon completion. The cover letter explained the study to the participant and was signed by the researcher and committee chair. The questionnaire was coded in order to keep track of nonrespondents. On April 11, 2003, nine days later, a reminder/thank you postcard (Appendix C) was sent to all participants in the stratified random sample. On April 30, 2003, four weeks after the initial questionnaires were mailed, another questionnaire and second cover letter (Appendix D) were sent to nonrespondents. This second questionnaire used a different color of paper and also included a self-addressed stamped envelope for the participant to return the questionnaire. Data collection ended on May 30, 2003. There were 213 useable questionnaires returned hence a response rate of 74%.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic variables and responses of participants in the study. Responses were coded and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. SPSS 11.0 for Windows was used for data analysis. Frequencies and percentages along with means and standard deviations were used to describe the data. Correlations (Pearson product moment, Spearmen's rank order and point biserial) were run to determine if there were any significant relationships between

certain demographic variables and statements within the questionnaire. Nonresponse error was controlled by comparing the "waves" of early to late respondents (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). Early respondents were considered respondents that returned the questionnaire before May 1, 2003 (167). Late respondents were those that returned the questionnaire on May 1, 2003 or later (46). Comparisons between early and late respondents were made by using *t* tests on selected variables. None of these statistical tests showed any significant differences between the two groups. Because the data were similar, Miller and Smith (1983) state that data from early to late respondents could be pooled together, and results could be generalized to the population. Confidence intervals and tests for statistical significance were set apriori at the .05 level.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter includes a description of the findings of this study. These findings were based on the participant's responses to the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Texas principals at secondary schools that have an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter?
2. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?
3. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?
4. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of secondary principals in Texas and their perceptions of leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?

Respondent Characteristics

Personal Characteristics

Personal characteristics pertaining to the respondents in this study are illustrated in Table 1.

When respondents were asked to identify their gender, a majority (85.9%) of secondary principals indicated they were male with a minority of secondary principals (14.1%) indicating they were female.

Respondents were asked to indicate their age. A majority (82.5%) of respondents indicated they were 40-59 years of age. The remaining respondents were 20-29 years of age (.9%), 30-39 years of age (12.7%) or 60 years or over (3.8%).

Participants in the study were asked to identify the size of hometown in which they were raised. Choices given to respondents included: rural area, small town (population less than 2,500), town (population 2,500-10,000), city (population 10,000-50,000), metropolitan area (population 50,000-200,000) and major metropolitan area (population over 200,000). A majority (34.6%) of respondents indicated they were raised in a rural area. Small towns and cities were hometowns for 28.4% of the respondents. Towns and metropolitan areas made up one-fourth (25.2%) of the respondents' hometowns. Responses from 11.8% of the participants indicated they were from a major metropolitan area.

Secondary principals were asked to identify their major area of study in college. An overwhelming majority (70.0%) majored in education. Other majors included agriculture (6.6%), arts and sciences (12.7%), business administration (6.1%), engineering (1.9%) and other (2.8%). "Other" included majors in English or consumer and family education. No responses were received for human sciences.

Respondents were asked to identify the highest degree they had received. A majority (98.6%) had received a master's degree or higher. Principals with only a bachelor's degree made up 1.4% of the respondents.

Professional Characteristics

Professional characteristics pertaining to the respondents in this study are illustrated in Table 2.

Participants in the study were asked how many years they had been a secondary principal. A majority of the respondents had been secondary principals for nine years or less (69.8%). The minority (8.0%) had been secondary principals for 20 or more years. The remaining respondents had been secondary principals for 10-14 years (11.8%) or 15-19 years (10.4%).

Secondary principals participating in this study were asked how many years they had been a classroom teacher. A majority (80.6%) had been classroom teachers between 5 and 19 years. The largest group (32.5%) indicated they had been a classroom teacher for 10 to 14 years with the next largest group (27.8%) indicating they had been a classroom teacher for 5 to 9 years. Forty-three respondents (20.3%) indicated they had been a classroom teacher for 15-19 years. The minority (8.0%) of respondents indicated they had been a classroom teacher for 20 years or more. The remaining respondents (11.3%) had been classroom teachers for four years or less.

Table 1

Personal characteristics of secondary principals

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	183	85.9
Female	30	14.1
Total	213	100.0
Age		
20-29 years	2	.9
30-39 years	27	12.7
40-49 years	94	44.3
50-59 years	81	38.2
60 years or over	8	3.8
Total	212	100.0
Size of Hometown		
Rural area	73	34.6
Small town	30	14.2
Town	32	15.2
City	30	14.2
Metropolitan area	21	10.0
Major metropolitan area	25	11.8
Total	211	100.0
Major Area of Study		
Agriculture	14	6.6
Arts and Sciences	27	12.7
Business Administration	13	6.1
Education	149	70.0
Engineering	4	1.9
Human Sciences	0	0.0
Other	6	2.8
Total	213	100.0
Highest Degree Received		
Bachelor's	3	1.4
Master's	194	91.1
Doctorate	9	4.2
Educational Specialist Degree	7	3.3
Total	213	100.0

Respondents were asked to identify their primary teaching area. A majority (69.8%) indicated that their primary teaching area had been an academic area such as English, science or social studies. Nine percent indicated career and technology education had been their primary teaching area. Other responses were athletics/physical education (13.2%), fine arts (2.8%) and other (5.2%). The "other" category included responses of elementary education and special education.

Since it is possible that a respondent might have had teaching experience outside of their primary teaching area, respondents were asked if they had any experience teaching career and technology education. Only 19.3% indicated they had experience in this area.

As with career and technology education, agricultural science may not have been a respondent's primary teaching area, therefore the respondents were asked if they had any teaching experience in agricultural science. Only 9.0% of respondents indicated they had experience teaching agricultural science.

Participants were also asked to indicate if they had any work experience in agriculture. The majority (60.1%) of respondents indicated they had work experience in agriculture.

Table 2

Professional characteristics of secondary principals

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Years as a secondary principal		
0-4 years	71	33.5
5-9 years	77	36.3
10-14 years	25	11.8
15-19 years	22	10.4
20 years or over	17	8.0
Total	212	100.0
Years as a classroom teacher		
0-4 years	24	11.3
5-9 years	59	27.8
10-14 years	69	32.5
15-19 years	43	20.3
20 years or over	17	8.0
Total	212	100.0
Primary teaching area		
Academic	148	69.8
Athletics or Physical Education	28	13.2
Career and Technology Education	19	9.0
Fine Arts	6	2.8
Other	11	5.2
Total	212	100.0
Teaching experience in career and technology education		
Yes	41	19.3
No	171	80.7
Total	212	100.0
Teaching experience in agricultural science		
Yes	19	9.0
No	193	91.0
Total	212	100.0
Work experience in agriculture		
Yes	128	60.1
No	85	39.9
Total	213	100.0

School Characteristics

Demographic information pertaining to the schools at which the respondents were located is illustrated in Table 3. School location, school classification and the source of income for the school community were demographics that were assessed.

Respondents were asked to identify the location of the school where they are the principals. The majority of the respondents' schools (51.4%) were located in small towns with a population of less than 2,500. Principals at schools located in towns with a population of 2,500 to 10,000 made up 19.3% of the respondents. Principals at schools that were located in cities with populations of 10,000 to 50,000 represented 12.7% of the respondents. The remaining respondent's schools were located in metropolitan areas (7.1%) with populations of 50,000 to 200,000 and major metropolitan areas (9.4%) with a population of over 200,000.

Participants were asked the classification of the high school where they are principal. A majority of respondents (51.4%) were at schools classified as 1A or 2A high schools. Participants at high schools classified as 3A (17.0%) and 4A (13.2%) were least represented in the sample. The remaining principals (18.4%) were at high schools that were classified as 5A high schools.

Secondary principals were also asked to identify the primary source of income for the school community. A majority (50.0%) of respondents indicated agriculture services were the primary source of income for the school community. The next largest group of respondents (18.8%) indicated services such as education and health were the school community's primary source of income. Other sources of income for the school

community included wholesale trade/retail trade (6.7%), mining (5.8%), forestry (3.8%), finance, insurance and real estate (3.4%), construction (2.9%), government and government enterprises (1.9%), transportation/public utilities (1.0%) and fishing (.5).

Table 3

School and community characteristics

Item	Frequency	Percentage
School location		
Small town	109	51.4
Town	41	19.3
City	27	12.7
Metropolitan area	15	7.1
Major metropolitan area	20	9.4
Total	212	100.0
School classification		
1A	62	29.2
2A	47	22.2
3A	36	17.0
4A	28	13.2
5A	39	18.4
Total	212	100.0
Source of income for school community		
Agriculture services	104	50.0
Forestry	8	3.8
Fishing	1	.5
Mining	12	5.8
Construction	6	2.9
Manufacturing	11	5.3
Transportation/public utilities	2	1.0
Wholesale trade/retail trade	14	6.7
Finance/insurance/real estate	7	3.4
Services	39	18.8
Government and government enterprises	4	1.9
Total	208	100.0

Respondent's Involvement with Agriculturally Related Programs, FFA and 4-H

Table 4 illustrates secondary principals' responses when asked to indicate whether or not they had been enrolled in an agricultural science/vocational agriculture program in high school and/or college and if they had ever been a member or volunteer in FFA or 4-H. A majority of the respondents (61.8%) indicated they had not been enrolled in an agricultural science/vocational agriculture program in high school and/or college. The remaining respondents (38.2%) indicated they had in fact been enrolled in an agricultural science/vocational agriculture program in high school and/or college.

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had been a member or volunteer in FFA or 4-H. In regards to FFA, only a minority of respondents (30.2%) had been members. The remaining 69.8% of respondents had not been members of FFA. One-third (33.0%) of respondents were volunteers in FFA while the remaining 67.0% had not been volunteers in FFA. Considering 4-H membership, 19.3% of the respondents had been members while 80.7% had not. Only 17.9% of respondents had been volunteers in 4-H.

Table 4

Respondents' involvement with agriculturally related programs, FFA and 4-H

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Enrollment in an agricultural science/ vocational program in high school and/or college		
Yes	81	38.2
No	131	61.8
Total	212	100.0
Participation in FFA		
Member		
Yes	64	30.2
No	148	69.8
Total	212	100.0
Volunteer		
Yes	70	33.0
No	142	67.0
Total	212	100.0
Participation in 4-H		
Member		
Yes	41	19.3
No	171	80.7
Total	212	100.0
Volunteer		
Yes	38	17.9
No	174	82.1
Total	212	100.0

Respondents' Children's Involvement with Agriculturally Related Programs, FFA and 4-H

Participant's responses to questions concerning whether or not they have, or have had children involved with agriculturally-related programs, FFA and 4-H, are illustrated in Table 5. Respondents were asked to indicate if they have, or have had a child or children enrolled in a high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s). A majority (63.2%) of the secondary principals indicated they have not had a child or children enrolled in a high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s). More than one-third (36.8%) of the respondents have or have had a child or children enrolled in a high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s).

Participants in the study were asked to indicate if they have, or have had a child or children that were members or volunteers of FFA or 4-H. Sixty-four respondents (30.2%) have or have had a child or children who were members of FFA. The remaining 148 respondents (69.8%) have not had a child or children who were members of FFA. A minority of respondents (8.5%) have or have had a child or children who were volunteers of FFA. A majority (91.5%) of respondents indicated that they have not had a child or children who were volunteers of FFA. In regards to 4-H, 46 respondents (21.7%) have or have had a child or children who were members while the remaining 166 respondents (78.3%) did not. Ten respondents (4.7%) have or have had a child or children who were volunteers of 4-H. The remaining 202 respondents (95.3%) indicated that they did not have a child or children who were volunteers of 4-H.

Table 5

Respondents' children's involvement with agriculturally related programs, FFA and 4-H

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Enrollment in high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s)		
Yes	78	36.8
No	134	63.2
Total	212	100.0
Participation in FFA		
Member		
Yes	64	30.2
No	148	69.8
Total	212	100.0
Volunteer		
Yes	18	8.5
No	194	91.5
Total	212	100.0
Participation in 4-H		
Member		
Yes	46	21.7
No	166	78.3
Total	212	100.0
Volunteer		
Yes	10	4.7
No	202	95.3
Total	212	100.0

Respondents' Involvement with FFA as a Secondary Principal

Participants in the study were asked about their involvement with FFA as a secondary principal. Participants were asked to indicate if they had received recognition by the local FFA chapter and to indicate which of the following FFA activities they had attended as a secondary principal: (a) FFA chapter banquet, (b) FFA district banquet, (c) FFA area convention, (d) FFA state convention, (e) local livestock show, (f) county livestock show, (g) major livestock show, (h) FFA judging contest, and (i) FFA leadership contest. The participants' responses are illustrated in Table 6.

One hundred respondents (46.9%) indicated they had received recognition from the local FFA chapter. The remaining 113 respondents (53.1%) indicated they had not received recognition from the local FFA chapter.

A majority (85%) of respondents had attended a FFA chapter banquet as a secondary principal. The remaining 15% of respondents had not attended a FFA chapter banquet as a secondary principal.

Seventy-nine respondents (37.1%) indicated they had attended a FFA district banquet as a secondary principal. The majority of respondents (62.9%) indicated they had not attended a FFA district banquet as a secondary principal.

A majority of participants (82.2%) had not attended a FFA area convention as a secondary principal. The remaining 17.8% of participants indicated they had attended a FFA area convention as a secondary principal.

A majority of respondents (88.3%) had not attended a state FFA convention as a secondary principal. Twenty-five (11.7%) of the respondents had attended a state FFA convention as a secondary principal.

When asked to indicate attendance of a local livestock show, a majority (89.2%) of participants indicated that they had attended a local livestock show as a secondary principal. A minority of respondents (10.8%) indicated that they had not attended a local livestock show as a secondary principal. Thirty respondents (14.1%) had not attended a county livestock show as a secondary principal. The remaining 183 respondents (85.9%) had attended a county livestock show as a secondary principal. A majority (63.8%) of respondents had attended a major livestock show as a secondary principal. A little more than one-third (36.2%) of participants had not attended a major livestock show as a secondary principal.

Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated they had not attended a FFA judging contest as a secondary principal. The remaining 38% of respondents had attended a FFA judging contest as a secondary principal.

Lastly, participants were asked to indicate if they had attended a FFA leadership contest as a secondary principal. Only 27.2% of the respondents indicated they had attended a FFA leadership contest as a secondary principal. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents (72.8%) had not attended a FFA leadership contest as a secondary principal.

Table 6

Respondents' involvement with FFA as a secondary principal

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Recognition by local FFA chapter		
Yes	100	46.9
No	113	53.1
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at FFA chapter banquet		
Yes	181	85.0
No	32	15.0
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at FFA district banquet		
Yes	79	37.1
No	134	62.9
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at FFA area convention		
Yes	38	17.8
No	175	82.2
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at FFA state convention		
Yes	25	11.7
No	188	88.3
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at local livestock show		
Yes	190	89.2
No	23	10.8
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at county livestock show		
Yes	183	85.9
No	30	14.1
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at major livestock show		
Yes	136	63.8
No	77	36.2
Total	213	100.0

Table 6. Continued.

Respondents' involvement with FFA as a secondary principal

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Attendance at FFA judging contest		
Yes	81	38.0
No	132	62.0
Total	213	100.0
Attendance at FFA leadership contest		
Yes	58	27.2
No	155	72.8
Total	213	100.0

Perceptions of Secondary Principals in Texas Concerning Leadership Skills Attained Through Membership and Participation in the FFA Program

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements pertaining to leadership skills and the FFA (Table 7) on a Likert-type scale of 0=*Don't Know/No Opinion*, 1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Agree* and 4=*Strongly Agree*.

Respondents strongly agreed (M=3.96, SD=.205) at a high level that leadership skills are of importance. They also agreed leadership qualities are developed over time (M=3.71, SD=.473) and every student has leadership potential (M=2.92, SD=.790). Respondents disagreed (M=2.36, SD=.770) that individuals are "born leaders."

Secondary principals were in agreement (M=3.70, SD=.519) at a high level that the FFA program offers students an opportunity to develop leadership skills. Principals also agreed (M=3.62, SD=.553) that officer positions within the FFA chapter promote leadership.

Respondents agreed at a high level with numerous statements concerning participation in the FFA. Principals agreed (*M*=3.50, *SD*=.606) that participation in the FFA program helps students to generate goals. They also agreed (*M*=3.48, *SD*=.614) that participation in the FFA program helps students to establish priorities. At a higher level, principals agreed (*M*=3.64, *SD*=.539) that participation in the FFA program helped students to develop responsibility. Respondents were found to agree at high levels that participation in the FFA program helps students to enhance social skills (*M*=3.51, *SD*=.623) and improve their problem solving abilities (*M*=3.45, *SD*=.666). Principals also agreed that participation in the FFA program helped students to listen to others effectively (*M*=3.39, *SD*=.702) and develop honesty and integrity (*M*=3.44, *SD*=.714).

Respondents agreed (*M*=3.27, *SD*=.712) they were familiar with FFA career development events such as judging and leadership contests. They also agreed (*M*=3.15, *SD*=.845) that they were familiar with the roles and duties of the FFA chapter officers. At a lower level of agreement (*M*=3.13, *SD*=.966), respondents agreed they were familiar with the opening and closing ceremonies of an FFA meeting. Respondents also agreed (*M*=2.82, *SD*=1.034) that they were familiar with the degrees of membership in the FFA. They also slightly agreed (*M*=2.51, *SD*=1.172) that they were familiar with Area FFA leadership camps. Respondents disagreed (*M*=1.95, *SD*=1.225) that they were familiar with the Made for Excellence Conference (MFE). Respondents also disagreed (*M*=2.08, *SD*=1.256) that they were familiar with the Washington Leadership Conference (WLC).

Table 7

Respondents' agreement with statements regarding leadership skills and the FFA program

Statement	No.	Mean*	*SD*
I believe:			
Leadership characteristics are of importance.	206	3.96	.205
Leadership qualities are developed over time.	207	3.71	.473
Individuals are "born leaders".	205	2.36	.770
Every student has leadership potential.	202	2.92	.790
An officer position within the FFA Chapter promotes leadership.	206	3.62	.553
The FFA program offers students an opportunity to develop leadership skills.	205	3.70	.519
Participation in the FFA program helps students to:			
generate goals.	207	3.50	.606
establish priorities.	207	3.48	.614
develop responsibility.	207	3.64	.539
enhance social skills.	206	3.51	.623
improve problem solving abilities.	206	3.45	.666
listen to others effectively.	206	3.39	.702
develop honesty and integrity.	207	3.44	.714
I am familiar with:			
FFA Career Development Events (judging and leadership contests)	207	3.27	.712
The roles and duties of the FFA chapter officers.	206	3.15	.845
The opening and closing ceremonies of an FFA meeting.	206	3.13	.966
The degrees of membership in the FFA.	206	2.82	1.034
Area FFA Leadership Camps.	206	2.51	1.172
Made for Excellence Conference (MFE).	206	1.95	1.225
Washington Leadership Conference (WLC).	206	2.08	1.256

* Scale: 0 through 4 where 0=*Don't Know/No Opinion*, 1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Agree*, 4=*Strongly Agree*

Perceptions of Secondary Principals in Texas Concerning Life Skills Attained Through Membership and Participation in the FFA Program

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements pertaining to life skills and the FFA (Table 8) on a Likert-type scale of 0=*Don't Know/No Opinion*, 1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Agree* and 4=*Strongly Agree*.

Respondents were found to strongly agree that life skills are essential for success (M=3.88, SD=.327) and life skills can be improved upon throughout life (M=3.87, SD=.332). Secondary principals also highly agreed (M=3.65, SD=.527) that students are given opportunities in school to develop life skills. It was also highly agreed (M=3.61, SD=.644) by secondary principals that a Supervised Agricultural Experience project allows students an opportunity to develop life skills. Respondents agreed (M=3.65, SD=.596) at a high level that the FFA program, overall, allows students an opportunity to develop life skills.

Respondents agreed at high levels that participation in the FFA program allows students to develop a sense of responsibility (M=3.65, SD=.544), experience the pros and cons of competition (M=3.59, SD=.558), and build character within themselves (M=3.58, SD=.559). Respondents also agreed students were allowed to increase social skills and relationships (M=3.57, SD=.626) through participation in the FFA program. Additionally, respondents agreed participation in the FFA program allows students to make decisions (M=3.56, SD=.611), improve self-esteem (M=3.54, SD=.637), and spend time with family (M=3.24, SD=.998).

Secondary principals agreed at a low level (*M*=2.75, *SD*=1.176) that they were familiar with FFA career development events, the levels of Star Award winners (*M*=2.67, *SD*=1.233), and proficiency award areas of the FFA (*M*=2.52, *SD*=1.225). Lastly, respondents disagreed (*M*=2.00, *SD*=1.236) that they were familiar with the Food for America program.

Relationships Between Characteristics and Perceptions of Secondary Principals in Texas Concerning Leadership and Life Skills Attained Through Membership and Participation in the FFA Program

One of the objectives of this study was to determine if any relationships existed between demographic variables and the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program. Correlation analyses were conducted between chosen independent demographic variables and constructs of the dependent variables, the dependent variables being perceptions of secondary principals concerning statements regarding leadership skills and life skills.

Table 8

Respondent's agreement with statements regarding life skills and the FFA program

Statement	No.	Mean*	*SD*
I believe:			
Life skills are essential for success.	207	3.88	.327
Life skills can be improved upon throughout life.	207	3.87	.332
Students are given opportunities in school to develop life skills.	207	3.65	.527
A Supervised Agriculture Experience project allows students an opportunity to develop life skills.	207	3.61	.644
The FFA program, overall, allows students an opportunity to develop life skills.	207	3.65	.596
Participation in the FFA program allows students to:			
develop a sense of responsibility.	207	3.65	.544
increase social skills and relationships.	207	3.57	.626
build character within themselves.	207	3.58	.559
spend time with family.	205	3.24	.998
improve self-esteem.	207	3.54	.637
experience the pros and cons of competition.	207	3.59	.558
make decisions.	207	3.56	.611
I am familiar with:			
FFA Career Development Events.	207	2.75	1.176
Levels of Star Award winners.	206	2.67	1.233
The Food for America program.	206	2.00	1.236
Proficiency Award areas of the FFA.	206	2.52	1.225

* Scale: 0 through 4 where 0=*Don't Know/No Opinion*, 1=*Strongly Disagree*, 2=*Disagree*, 3=*Agree*, 4=*Strongly Agree*

Constructs of the study were determined by factor analysis. Factor analysis is a data-reduction technique that reduces a large number of overlapping measured variables to a much smaller set of factors (Green, Salkind, & Akey, 2000). This smaller set of factors represents a set of measures that are dimensions or constructs of the measured variables. In this study, the measured variables were the perceptions of secondary principals regarding leadership and life skills. After conducting a factor analysis of the responses to the measured variables, five constructs were identified. These were leadership skills and the FFA, leadership development events (LDE's), general life skills, life skills and the FFA, and career development events (CDE's).

After determining the constructs of the study, correlation analyses were conducted between these constructs and chosen respondent characteristics. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r), Spearman rank order and point biserial coeffiecient (r_{pb}) were used to report findings. According to Davis (1971), adjectives used to define the magnitude of correlations are: negligible (r = .01 to .09), low (r = .10 to .29), moderate (r = .30 to .49), substantial (r = .50 to .69), very high (r = .70 to .99) and perfect (r = 1.0). Correlations between chosen personal characteristics and the constructs are illustrated in Table 9.

There was a moderate positive relationship between the respondents having been enrolled in agricultural science/vocational agriculture programs in high school and/or college and their familiarity with leadership development events (r = .328) and a low positive relationship with their familiarity of career development events (r = .241).

There was a low positive relationship between the respondents' major area of study being agriculture and their familiarity of leadership development events (r = .270) and career development events (r = .263).

There was a low negative relationship between the respondent's major area of study being business and leadership skills and the FFA (r = -.139), familiarity with leadership development events (r = -.139), life skills and the FFA (r = -.156) and career development events (r = .222).

There was a moderate positive relationship between the respondents having been a FFA member and their familiarity with leadership development events (r = .385) and career development events (r = .307). There were also low positive relationships between the respondents being or having been a FFA volunteer and their familiarity with leadership development events (r = .151) and career development events (r = .169).

There was a low positive relationship between the respondents' having children that were FFA members and familiarity with leadership development events (r = .215) and career development events (r = .207).

Table 9

Relationships between Texas secondary principals' personal characteristics and perceptions concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA

Demographic	Leadership Skills and the FFA	LDE's	General Life Skills	Life Skills and the FFA	CDE's
Enrollment in agricultural science/vocational program in high school and/or college	-.044	.328**	-.107	-.037	.241**
Major area of study					
Agriculture	-.008	.270**	-.033	.099	.263**
Arts and Sciences	-.050	-.099	.024	-.124	-.098
Business	-.139*	-.139*	-.110	-.156*	-.222**
Education	.106	-.006	.025	.079	.029
Engineering	-.085	.022	.015	.023	.097
Other	.092	-.010	.079	.086	-.038
Participation in FFA as:					
Member	.067	.385**	-.034	.084	.307**
Volunteer	.013	.151*	-.103	-.037	.169*
Participation in 4-H as:					
Member	-.028	.104	-.030	.002	.063
Volunteer	.015	.119	-.028	-.012	.082
Child's participation in FFA as:					
Member	.022	.215**	-.083	.058	.207**
Volunteer	.004	.098	-.021	.026	.115
Child's participation in 4-H as:					
Member	-.020	.091	.033	.034	.062
Volunteer	-.029	.077	-.071	-.025	.081

** Significant at the .01 level
* Significant at the .05 level

Correlations between chosen professional characteristics of secondary principals and the five constructs present in this study are illustrated in Table 10. There was a low positive relationship between respondents' primary teaching area having been career and technology education and their familiarity of leadership development events (r = .213) and familiarity of career development events (r = .222). Both of these are significant at the .01 level.

Also a low negative relationship existed between the indication of the respondents' primary teaching area having been Fine Arts and life skills and the FFA (r = -.216) and their familiarity of leadership development events (r = -.205), career development events (r = .242), and the general life skills construct (r = -.167).

There was a low positive relationship between respondents having teaching experience in agricultural science and their familiarity of leadership development events (r = .284) and career development events (r = .275).

There was a low positive relationship between respondents having experience teaching career and technology education and their familiarity of leadership development events (r = .208) and career development events (r = .196).

Table 10

Relationships between Texas secondary principals' professional characteristics and perceptions of concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA

Demographic	Leadership Skills and the FFA	LDE's	General Life Skills	Life Skills and the FFA	CDE's
Primary teaching area					
Academic	-.038	-.006	.041	-.036	-.018
Physical education	-.032	-.111	-.027	-.022	-.083
Career and technology education	.026	.213**	-.010	.099	.222**
Fine arts	-.034	-.205**	-.167*	-.216**	-.242**
Other	.115	.044	.083	.125	.041
Teaching experience in agricultural science	.033	.284**	-.046	.127	.275**
Teaching experience in career and technology education	.002	.208**	-.056	.091	.196**

** Significant at the .01 level
* Significant at the .05 level

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program.

To accomplish this purpose, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Texas principals at secondary schools that have an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter?
2. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?
3. What are the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?
4. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics of secondary principals in Texas and their perceptions of leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program?

Procedures

The target population of this study was secondary principals in the state of Texas during the 2002-2003 school year at schools that had an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter. In 2002, there were 1018 schools with agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters (Instructional Materials Service, 2002). It was determined to take a random sample of the target population due to the fact that the target population was so large.

The sample consisted of 288 secondary principals in Texas at high schools that had an agricultural science program and a chartered FFA chapter. The sample was stratified among the 10 FFA areas in the state. Secondary principals were randomly chosen in each area. The number of secondary principals chosen from each area depended on how many schools that area had in comparison to the overall number of schools in Texas with agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters.

A researcher developed questionnaire was coded (for nonrespone purposes) and mailed to the stratified random sample with a cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope on April 2, 2003. A thankyou/reminder postcard was sent on April 11, 2003, to all participants of the study. A second questionnaire, new cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope were sent to nonrespondents on April 30, 2003. The cut off date for responses was May 30, 2003. There were 213 questionnaires returned for an overall response rate of 74%.

Responses to the questionnaire were coded and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. SPSS 11.0 for Windows was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics

were used to determine frequencies and percentages of responses to questions and statements on the questionnaire pertaining to the respondents' characteristics and perceptions concerning leadership and life skills attained though membership and participation in the FFA program. Correlation calculations were performed to determine if any significant relationships existed between chosen respondent characteristics and perceptions of secondary principals regarding leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program.

Findings Summary

Respondent Characteristics

The target population in this study was secondary principals in Texas at schools with an agricultural science program and chartered FFA chapter. A majority (85.9%) of secondary principals that responded were male. Over three-fourths of respondents were within the ages of 40 to 59 (82.5%). The largest number of respondents (34.6%) were raised in rural areas. Education was the area that most respondents majored in (70.0%). A majority (98.6%) of respondents received master's degrees or higher.

Over two-thirds (69.8%) of respondents had been a secondary principal for nine years or less. The largest percentage (32.5%) of respondents had been classroom teachers for ten to fourteen years. A majority (69.8%) of respondents indicated that their primary teaching area had been academics. The largest number of respondents indicated that they did not have any teaching experience in career and technology education

(80.7%) or agricultural science (91.0%). Sixty percent (60.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had work experience in agriculture.

Over half (51.4%) of respondents were at schools that were located in small towns. A majority (51.4%) of the respondents' schools were classified as 1A (29.2%) or 2A (22.2%). Half (50.0%) of the respondents identified agriculture services as the primary source of income for the school community.

A minority (38.2%) of respondents were enrolled in agricultural science/vocational programs in high school and/or college. Almost one-third (30.2%) of respondents were members of FFA and had volunteered for FFA (33.0%). In regards to 4-H, 19.3% of respondents were members and 17.9% had volunteered for 4-H.

A minority (36.8%) of respondents indicated that they have or have had children enrolled in high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s). One-third (30.2%) of respondents had children that were members of FFA and 8.5% had children that were volunteers of FFA. One-fifth (21.7%) of respondents had children that were members of 4-H and 4.7% had volunteered for 4-H.

Of the secondary principals that responded to this study, 46.9% had received recognition from their local FFA chapter. Eighty-five percent of respondents had attended a chapter FFA banquet. Respondents had also attended the following: FFA district banquets (37.1%), FFA area conventions (17.8%), the FFA state convention (11.7%), local livestock shows (89.2%), county livestock shows (85.9%), major livestock shows (63.8%), FFA judging contests (38.0%) and FFA leadership contests (27.2%).

Perceptions of Leadership Skills and the FFA Program

Secondary principals agreed very highly (*M*=3.96, *SD*=.205) leadership characteristics are of importance. They also agreed (*M*=3.71, *SD*=.473) leadership qualities are developed over time. Respondents also agreed (*M*=2.92, *SD*=.790) every student has leadership potential. Respondents disagreed (*M*=2.36, *SD*=.770) individuals are born leaders.

Respondents agreed (*M*=3.62, *SD*=.553) an officer position in the FFA chapter promotes leadership and the FFA program offers students an opportunity to develop leadership skills (*M*=3.70, *SD*=.519). Respondents also agreed that participation in the FFA helps students to: generate goals (*M*=3.50, *SD*=.606), establish priorities (*M*=3.48, *SD*=.614), develop responsibility (*M*=3.64, *SD*=.539), enhance social skills (*M*=3.51, *SD*=.623), improve problem-solving abilities (*M*=3.45, *SD*=.666), listen to others effectively (*M*=3.39, *SD*=.702), and develop honesty and integrity (*M*=3.44, *SD*=.714).

Respondents agreed they were familiar with FFA career development events (*M*=3.27, *SD*=.712) and the roles and duties of the FFA chapter officers (*M*=3.15, *SD*=.845). They were also familiar with the opening and closing ceremonies of an FFA meeting (*M*=3.13, *SD*=.966). They were familiar with the degrees of membership in the FFA (*M*=2.82, *SD*=1.034) and area leadership camps (*M*=2.51, *SD*=1.172). Respondents were least familiar with the Made for Excellence Conference (MFE) (*M*=1.95, *SD*=1.225) and the Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) (*M*=2.08, *SD*=1.256).

Perceptions of Life Skills and the FFA Program

Respondents agreed (*M*=3.88, *SD*=.327) that life skills are essential for success. They also agreed (*M*=3.87, *SD*=.332) that life skills could be improved upon throughout life. Respondents agreed (*M*=3.65, *SD*=.527) that students are given opportunities in school to develop life skills.

Secondary principals agreed a Supervised Agricultural Experience project (*M*=3.61, *SD*=.644) and the FFA program overall (*M*=3.65, *SD*=.596) allow students an opportunity to develop life skills. Principals also agreed participation in the FFA program allows students to: develop a sense of responsibility (*M*=3.65, *SD*=.544), increase social skills and relationships (*M*=3.57, *SD*=.626), build character (*M*=3.58, *SD*=.559), spend time with family (*M*=3.24, *SD*=.998), improve self-esteem (*M*=3.54, *SD*=.637), experience the pros and cons of competition (*M*=3.59, *SD*=.558), and make decisions (*M*=3.56, *SD*=.611).

Respondents in the study were familiar with FFA career development events (*M*=2.75, *SD*=1.176), levels of Star Award winners (*M*=2.67, *SD*=1.233), and proficiency award areas (*M*=2.52, *SD*=1.225) of the FFA. They were least familiar with the Food for America program (*M*=2.00, *SD*=1.236).

Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Perceptions of Secondary Principals in Texas Concerning Leadership and Life Skills Attained Through Membership and Participation in the FFA Program

The only relationships that were found to be significant in this study dealt with demographic variables and familiarity with leadership development events and career development events. A secondary principal that had experience teaching agricultural science or career and technology education was found to be more familiar with leadership development events and career development events. Also, respondents that had been members of FFA or volunteers of FFA were more familiar with leadership development events and career development events. Respondents that had been enrolled in an agricultural science/vocational program in high school and/or college were also more familiar with leadership development events and career development events. Respondents that had majored in agriculture were also found to be more familiar with leadership career development events and career development events. Respondents that had children that were FFA members were also more familiar with leadership and career development events. Respondents whose primary teaching area was career and technology education were found to be more familiar with leadership development events and career development events, whereas respondents whose primary teaching area was fine arts were least familiar.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are restricted to the population surveyed. These conclusions are based on the interpretation of data presented in the study and are subject to the limitations mentioned in Chapter I. The conclusions are as follows:

1. A majority (85.9%) of secondary principals are male and are in the age range of 40 to 49 years (44.3%).
2. One-third (34.6%) of principals were raised in rural areas.
3. The major area of study for secondary principals is education (70.0%).
4. A majority (98.6%) of secondary principals have received a master's degree or higher.
5. Less than one-third (30.2%) of secondary principals have been in their current position for more than 10 years. The remaining 69.8% have been in this position for nine years or less.
6. More than 60% of secondary principals taught in the classroom for 14 years or less and the primary teaching areas for most secondary principals were academic areas such as social studies, English, and science.
7. Almost one-fifth (19.3%) of secondary principals have experience in teaching career and technology education whereas only 9% of secondary principals have experience teaching agricultural science.
8. Sixty percent of secondary principals have work experience in agriculture.
9. Over half (51.4%) of secondary principals are at schools that are located in small towns and classified as 1A (29.2%) or 2A (22.2%).

10. The primary source of income for half (50.0%) of school communities is agriculture services.
11. Over one-third (38.2%) of secondary principals were enrolled in an agricultural science/vocational program in high school and/or college. Thirty percent of secondary principals were members of FFA and one-third (33.0%) volunteer or have volunteered for FFA. Almost one-fifth (19.3%) of secondary principals were members in 4-H and 17.9% volunteer or have volunteered for 4-H.
12. Over one-third (36.8%) of secondary principals have children that are or have been enrolled in high school agricultural science/vocational agriculture course(s). Thirty percent of secondary principals have children that are or have been members of FFA and only 8.5% have children that are or have been volunteers of the FFA. More than a fifth (21.7%) of secondary principals have children that are or have been members of 4-H and only 4.7% have children that are or have been volunteers of the FFA.
13. Secondary principals have been involved with the FFA chapter by attending chapter banquets, district banquets, area conventions, state conventions, local livestock shows, county livestock shows, major livestock shows, FFA judging contests, and FFA leadership contests. Almost half (46.9%) of secondary principals have been recognized by their local FFA chapters.
14. Secondary principals agree that the FFA program allows students an opportunity to develop leadership skills and life skills.

15. Secondary principals perceptions of leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program were not affected by demographic variables such as age, gender, or school classification. However, experience in teaching agricultural science and career and technology education helped to familiarize secondary principals with leadership development events and career development events. Also, secondary principals whose major area of study was agriculture are more familiar with leadership development events and career development events.
16. Overall, secondary principals that were FFA members or enrolled in agricultural science/vocational program in high school and/or college are more familiar with leadership development events and career development events. Secondary principals that volunteer for FFA or have children that are FFA members are also more familiar with leadership development events and career development events.

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made by the researcher as a result of this study:

1. The results of this study should be made available to agricultural science teachers in the state of Texas. The annual agricultural science teachers' conference, the Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas newsletter, The Ag Education Magazine and other publications targeting

agricultural science teachers in Texas should include the results of this study in future programs or publications. Making this information available to agricultural science teachers will help to inform them of the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program.

2. The results of this study should be made available to secondary principals in the state of Texas. The perceptions that were found in this study were very positive and would perhaps create interest in the agricultural science program and FFA program among secondary principals that do not have agricultural science programs and chartered FFA chapters at their schools. This study distinguishes the fact that secondary principals agree that the FFA program offers students a chance to develop leadership and life skills. Perhaps if this study was brought to the attention of secondary principals, their perceptions on issues such as curriculum, course offerings and graduation requirements would be influenced.
3. The findings of this study should be presented to students studying to be future agricultural science teachers. The results of this study will help prepare future agricultural science teachers by helping them to realize the perceptions of secondary principals concerning leadership and life skills attained by students through membership and participation in the FFA program. Realization of these perceptions could help future agricultural science teachers develop and establish agricultural science programs and FFA chapters that do in fact

provide students with the opportunity to develop leadership and life skills.

4. The findings of this study also revealed that less than one-half of secondary principals have been recognized by their local FFA chapter. The results of this study show that secondary principals agree that membership and participation in the FFA program gives students an opportunity to develop leadership and life skills, therefore they are generally supportive of the FFA program and should receive recognition from the local FFA chapter.
5. The results of this study also indicated that secondary principals were not especially familiar with leadership development events and career development events. This could be remedied by more communication between the agricultural science teacher and the secondary principal. Making the principal more aware of activities occurring within the local FFA chapter and inviting them to be a part of the activities might help to familiarize them with these events and increase support of the program.
6. Now that Texas secondary principals' perceptions of the attainment of leadership and life skills by students through membership and participation in the FFA have been gathered and analyzed, their perceptions regarding curriculum, course offerings and graduation requirements need to be collected and analyzed. The two studies can be compared to see if their perceptions of the FFA program are reflected in their perceptions regarding curriculum, course offerings and graduation requirements.

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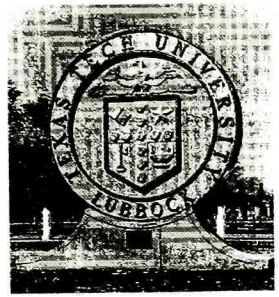
APPENDIX A

MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE



Please return survey to:

Jessica Colvin
Department of Agricultural
Education and Communications
Texas Tech University
Box 42131
Lubbock, TX 79409-2131
Phone: 806-742-2816
Fax: 806-742-2880
Email: ryanjess@prodigy.net

THANK YOU!

Code #_____

Perceptions of Secondary Principals in Texas Concerning Leadership and Life Skills Attained Through Membership and Participation in the FFA Program

TEXAS ASSOCIATION

Section I
Leadership Skills and the FFA Program

Leadership Skills – Skills that an individual can use to influence the actions of a group to reach a goal.

Please circle the number to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree
DK = Don't Know/No Opinion

Example:

I believe:	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**DK**
1. The FFA program helps students to receive scholarships.	(4)	3	2	1	0

I believe:	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**DK**
1. Leadership characteristics are of importance.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Leadership qualities are developed over time.	4	3	2	1	0
3. Individuals are "born leaders".	4	3	2	1	0
4. Every student has leadership potential.	4	3	2	1	0
5. An officer position within the FFA Chapter promotes leadership.	4	3	2	1	0
6. The FFA program offers students an opportunity to develop leadership skills.	4	3	2	1	0
Participation in the FFA program helps students to:					
7. generate goals.	4	3	2	1	0
8 establish priorities.	4	3	2	1	0
9. develop responsibility.	4	3	2	1	0
10. enhance social skills.	4	3	2	1	0
11. improve problem solving abilities.	4	3	2	1	0
12 listen to others effectively.	4	3	2	1	0
13. develop honesty and integrity.	4	3	2	1	0
I am familiar with:					
14 FFA Career Development Events (judging and leadership contests)	4	3	2	1	0
15. The roles and duties of the FFA chapter officers.	4	3	2	1	0
16. The opening and closing ceremonies of an FFA meeting.	4	3	2	1	0
17. The degrees of membership in the FFA.	4	3	2	1	0
18. Area FFA Leadership Camps.	4	3	2	1	0
19 Made for Excellence Conference (MFE).	4	3	2	1	0
20 Washington Leadership Conference (WLC).	4	3	2	1	0

17. What is the highest degree that you hold? (Circle one)

A. Bachelor's Degree
B. Master's Degree
C. Doctorate Degree
D. Educational Specialist Degree

18. What was your major area of study? (Circle one)

A. Agriculture
B. Arts and Sciences
C. Business Administration
D. Education
E. Engineering
F. Human Sciences
G. Other: (please specify)_____

19. What is your age? (Circle one)

A. 20-29 years
B. 30-39 years
C. 40-49 years
D. 50-59 years
E. 60 years or over

20. What is your gender? (Circle one)

A. Male
B. Female

Please feel free to make any additional comments concerning your own personal experiences with the FFA. (Ex. awards or degrees received)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

12. **As a secondary principal have you ever attended: (Check appropriate answers)**

	Yes	No
FFA Chapter Banquet	____	____
FFA District Banquet	____	____
FFA Area Convention	____	____
FFA State Convention	____	____
Local Livestock Show	____	____
County Livestock Show	____	____
Major Livestock Show	____	____
FFA Judging Contest	____	____
FFA Leadership Contest	____	____

13. **Have you ever received recognition by the FFA Chapter at your school?**

A. Yes
B. No

14. **Do you have any work experience in agriculture? (Circle one)**

A Yes
B. No

15. **Where were you raised? (Circle one)**

A. Rural area
B. Small town (less than 2,500)
C. Town (2,500-10,000)
D. City (10,000-50,000)
E. Metropolitan area (50,000-200,000)
F. Major metropolitan area (> 200,000)

16. **What is the primary source of income for your community? (Circle one)**

A. Agriculture services
B. Forestry
C. Fishing
D. Mining (Coal, Oil and Gas, Minerals, etc.)
E. Construction
F. Manufacturing
G. Transportation/Public Utilities
H. Wholesale Trade/Retail Trade
I. Finance, Insurance, Real Estate
J. Services (Education, Health, etc.)
K. Government and government enterprises

Section II
Life Skills and the FFA Program

Life Skills – Skills possessed by individuals that allow them to participate in individual and group activities.

Please circle the number to indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree
DK = Don't Know/No Opinion

Example:

I believe:	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**DK**
1. The FFA program helps students to receive scholarships.	(4)	3	2	1	0

I believe:	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**DK**
1. Life skills are essential for success.	4	3	2	1	0
2. Life skills can be improved upon throughout life.	4	3	2	1	0
3 Students are given opportunities in school to develop life skills.	4	3	2	1	0
4 A Supervised Agriculture Experience project allows students an opportunity to develop life skills	4	3	2	1	0
5. The FFA program, overall, allows students an opportunity to develop life skills.	4	3	2	1	0
Participation in the FFA program allows students to:					
6 develop a sense of responsibility.	4	3	2	1	0
7. increase social skills and relationships.	4	3	2	1	0
8. build character within themselves.	4	3	2	1	0
9. spend time with family.	4	3	2	1	0
10. improve self-esteem.	4	3	2	1	0
11. experience the pros and cons of competition	4	3	2	1	0
12. make decisions.	4	3	2	1	0
I am familiar with:					
13. FFA Career Development Events.	4	3	2	1	0
14. Levels of Star Award winners.	4	3	2	1	0
15. The Food for America program.	4	3	2	1	0
16 Proficiency Award areas of the FFA	4	3	2	1	0

Section III
Demographic Information

Please answer the following questions by circling the correct answer.

1. Where is your high school located? (Circle one)

A. Small town (less than 2,500)
B. Town (2,500-10,000)
C. City (10,000-50,000)
D. Metropolitan area (50,000-200,000)
E. Major metropolitan area (> 200,000)

2. What is the classification of your high school? (Circle one)

A. 1A
B. 2A
C. 3A
D. 4A
E. 5A

3. How long have you been a secondary principal? (Circle one)

A. 0-4 years
B. 5-9 years
C. 10-14 years
D. 15-19 years
E. 20 years or more

4. How many years were you a classroom teacher? (Circle one)

A. 0-4 years
B. 5-9 years
C. 10-14 years
D. 15-19 years
E. 20 years or over

5. In what area did you primarily teach? (Circle one)

A. Academic: List Subject_____
B. Athletics or Physical Education
C. Career and Technology Education
D. Fine Arts
E. Other: Please Specify_____

6. Do you have teaching experience in Career and Technology Education? (Circle one)

A. Yes
B No

7. Do you have teaching experience in agricultural science? (Circle one)

A Yes
B. No

8. Were you enrolled in an agricultural science/ vocational agriculture program in high school and/or college? (Circle one)

A. Yes
B. No

9. Do you have, or have you had, a child or children enrolled in a high school agricultural science/ vocational agriculture course(s)? (Circle one)

A. Yes
B. No

10. Have you ever participated as a member or volunteer in an agriculturally related program such as FFA or 4-H? (Check all that apply)

	Member	Volunteer
FFA	_____	_____
4-H	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

11. If you have children, have they ever participated as members or volunteers in an agriculturally related program such as FFA or 4-H? (Check all that apply)

	Member	Volunteer
FFA	_____	_____
4-H	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER

April 2, 2003

«««AddressBlock»»»

«««GreetingLine»»»

You have been selected to participate in a statewide survey to determine the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Your participation is strictly voluntary, but your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

You will notice a code number on the back of the questionnaire. This code number will only be used for follow up of non-respondents to assure they received this mailing. We further assure you that your individual responses to this questionnaire will remain completely confidential.

Again, we appreciate your time, participation and support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Fraze
Associate Professor

Jessica Colvin
Research Assistant

APPENDIX C

REMINDER/THANK YOU POSTCARD

Dear Principal,

Last week, you received a questionnaire regarding the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program.

If you have already returned this questionnaire, **Thank You** for your time and support of this study. If you have misplaced the questionnaire, or not received it, please contact me and I will see that you receive an additional copy of the questionnaire. Your responses to this questionnaire are very valuable to the future of the FFA program.

Once again **Thank You** for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jessica Colvin
Texas Tech University
Department of Agricultural Education and Communications
(806) 742-2816
E-mail: ryanjess@prodigy.net

APPENDIX D

SECOND FOLLOW-UP LETTER

April 30, 2003

«««AddressBlock»»»

«««GreetingLine»»»

You recently received a questionnaire regarding the perceptions of secondary principals in Texas concerning leadership and life skills attained through membership and participation in the FFA program. Our records indicate that your questionnaire has not yet been returned; therefore, we are sending you a second copy of the questionnaire.

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Your participation is strictly voluntary, but your assistance is greatly appreciated.

You will notice a code number on the back of the questionnaire. This code number will only be used for follow up of non-respondents to assure they received this mailing. We further assure you that your individual responses to this questionnaire will remain completely confidential.

Again, we appreciate your time, participation and support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steve Fraze
Associate Professor

Jessica Colvin
Research Assistant

APPENDIX E

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS

"Please feel free to make any additional comments concerning your own personal experiences with the FFA. (Ex. awards or degrees received)"

"I believe that FFA is a great organization for our young people. I have encouraged my own children to participate."

"FFA and Vocational Agriculture in High School had a great influence on my life and my choice of careers. My ag teacher was a strong Christian, the hardest worker I still have ever met, and the will and tenacity of a fighter. He and the FFA program greatly influenced my life and I will always be a life-long supporter. Call me and talk about what this program means to me!"

"I am a big supporter of FFA and feel it is an important part of our school."

"I think FFA/4H are great programs to steer students in the right direction. I particularly appreciate the emphasis on family."

"FFA & Ag Science are wonderful programs!"

"Outstanding program!"

"I have been in education for 23 years. I have taught, coached and been an administrator. If I started over again, I would be an ag teacher. FFA was the program at _____ High School that had the biggest impact on my life. My son and daughter have been very involved in FFA. My son is studying to be an Ag Teacher. My daughter, exhibited the Grand Champion Supreme Breeding Gilt at San Antonio this year and won a $10,000 Scholarship."

"FFA has been an integral part of every school I have been at. They are usually the most respected organization on campus."

"The only problem I see with FFA is that with the animals the parents have taken over to much & the experience has been lost in the value of the animals."

"FFA – is an outstanding Program for any Young Person."

"I am a strong believer on the positive influences that FFA can have on young people. In addition our FFA teachers do a superb job here at _____ High School."

"This is my second year as a 5A Coordinating Principal. I have much to learn when it comes to FFA."

"I gained valuable learning & social skills as a FFA member. Some of my fondest memories from high school involves FFA. As a principal I visit our Ag program almost on a daily basis."

"I had a very positive experience in FFA in high school. I attended leadership conferences, National FFA Convention and several judging contests. My positive experiences gave me a foundation in leadership and public speaking."

"I was awarded the Outstanding Future Farmers plaque at one of the local FFA banquet. I was thrilled about receiving the honor, and I had one to hang on the wall at home along with my husband's and two sons'. We operate over 5,000 acreas and it is family operated. Both sons earned the American Future Farmer Degree with row crop projects. I believe in vocational!"

"Distinguished Service Award – VATAT
Honorary State FFA Degree
Honorary Chapter FFA Degree
Voc. Ag Teacher of the Year (1989) from Texas Forestry Assoc.
Lone Star Farmer (1977)
Area FFA Coordinator – several years
WLC
Russian Exchange Program 1994
Many others."

"Taught ag for 19 years, had 2 daughters active in the program. Their success today (1 teaching ag) (1 lawyer) is attributed greatly to Ag & FFA. Great Program."

"Honorary Chapter FFA degree _____ High School. I believe this to be an honor. The recipient of this award each year feels special because of their dedication to FFA."

"Good Program."

"I feel the FFA organization can be a great asset for developing leadership skills. But, I WISH THERE WAS NOT SUCH A BIG EMPHASIS/PRESSURE TO WIN EVERY STOCK SHOW!!!!!!!"

"My sister-in-law is a graduate of the Ag program at Tech. I am very impressed with Ag programs and I am supportive of Ag."

"I had the Am. FFA Degree and my 3 sons also have this Degree. I am very proud of this."

"FFA, in my opinion is as important as sports. FFA gives an opportunity for all students to excell."

"FFA is a great program, and its success in individual schools & communities is highly dependent on the FFA sponsor/teacher."

"I am very comfortable in saying to anyone that our school has the best FFA program for a _____ school in a metro area."

"My degree is in industrial arts."

"I believe it is a worthwhile program for many students."

"We have an excellent FFA program at _____ H.S. The program is growing and our kids are involved in lots of different areas. All of our sponsors and coaches work well with each other."

"I was in the FFA for 4 years. I was star greenhand, star chapter farmer and received my Lone Star farmer degree. I also recently received the Honorary Chapter Farmer degree. I was chapter president, District officer, and Area Vice President. I showed animals all my life and competed in livestock judging and public speaking events."

"I have two daughters. One is a sophomore at Texas A&M and the other is a freshman in high school. They have had many positive experiences in FFA."

"While I was a member of the FFA chapter in high school I didn't excel in the leadership activities. I did participate in stock shows and land judging, and enjoyed both."

"Great program."

"I was an agricultural science teacher here for 20 yrs."

"I grew up on a dairy farm – besides the dairy we had chickens, sheep, goats, hogs, & horses. We also raised watermelons and broom corn as money crops. I was sec., VP, & president of our chapter in H.S. – I was Chapter Farmer & showed dairy & beef animals at the County Fair. I was in grass & dairy judging – in dairy judging we qualified to go to state 3 yrs. But our school only sent us during my Jr. year which is when we placed 1st in the Area competition. Supposedly we placed in the top 10% of the state out of over 100 teams."

"I was in FFA 4 years at _____ High School. I was awarded the Star Greenhand award. I participated in Grass Judging, County Livestock Show, Jr. Farm Skills, Radio

Broadcasting, & Chapter Conducting. My experiences have had a very positive effect on me during my lifetime & have enabled me to succeed in life."

"This is a great program for students and it would be a big mistake to do away with any part of it. However, when do politicians do the right thing for the kids, they can't vote and they have no money to support them."

"I have taught ag for the past few years. I have more experience with the FFA than the average principal."

"I am an Honorary member of 3 different chapters, have the Honorary State & American FFA Degrees as well as all active FFA degrees."

"FFA provides opportunities for many students to excel. The program, in recent years, has begun to address many business areas."

"FFA programs are important to high school education. I strongly believe that it provides students an opportunity to learn about responsibility and leadership. Our FFA program is one of the largest in the state."

"I would like to get more involved in our FFA program."

"Extensive time away from school & missing class. Students gone to stock shows weeks at a time. FFA program is wonderful – would help if could keep students & sponsors in class more."

"FFA provided for me some of the most valuable leadership development experiences in my life."

"Have carried judging teams and leadership teams to state to help ag teacher – agree that FFA is integral part of goals we strive to reach."

"I have understanding only through our students; however, our ag teachers do an excellent job. FFA is becoming a popular group. Students enjoy the program because its "real" learning. These kinds of programs are important."

"The FFA programs I have been associated with have been extremely beneficial to our youth. They have enhanced leadership, enhanced academic performance and prevented dropouts. However, the programs are only as successful as the teachers who direct them. We have the BEST!"

"Lone Star Farmer, State Qualifier Home/Farmstead Imp., State Qualifier Scrapbook."

"FFA has always been a part of my instructional focus because of the life skills it teaches."

"FFA is a great organization that provides leadership & ownership opportunities. It was a great experience for my child!"

"FFA helped me with public speaking and responsibility as a student."

"This is the worst time of the yr to ask any principal to do a survey – It's 5:45 P.M.! I do love our ag/FFA program, but don't know all I need to."

"Go Tech, Class 76, Remember TL."

"Great program – Good for kids."

"Jessica – I apologize for the calls. In fact, we DO have an FFA Program @ _____ High School. It is a small group but very active. I am still new here and learning what all we have."

* Names of schools have been replaced with _____ to insure confidentiality.

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Agree (Permission is granted.)

Disagree (Permission is not granted.)

_____ _____

Student Signature Date